

# ***STUDENT AFFAIRS ACTION PLAN***

**FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

**2022-2026**





## OVERVIEW

Historically, student affairs educators have championed diversity and supported underrepresented and marginalized students in keeping with our mission to support and develop the whole student. Likewise, Student Affairs at UNL has been at the forefront of many diversity initiatives. For example, the 2013 *Not Here, Not Now* campaign originated in Student Affairs, as did *Dine, Dialogue and Pass It On* (the precursor to *Husker Dialogues*). We have sponsored or co-sponsored workshops, events, speakers and other resources focused on celebrating, supporting, advocating, and promoting justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.

We continue to build capacity around diversity, equity and inclusion so that we can be more effective working with our students and our staff. Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is a lifelong journey of education, exploration and engagement that extends across all programs, resources and services. We find meaningful ways to integrate justice, equity, diversity and inclusion into experiences and environments.



## WHERE WE ARE

In the summer of 2020, the *Time to Act* initiative was created with five objectives: 1) establish a Student Advisory Council; 2) encourage ongoing dialogue about diversity, equity and inclusion to promote critical self-reflection; 3) require diversity, equity and inclusion training as part of the annual performance review process for all Student Affairs staff; 4) analyze staff recruitment and retention practices for the purpose of increasing accountability to diversify staff working at all levels in Student Affairs; and 5) conduct a critical review and evaluation of all Student Affairs policies, practices and decision-making processes to ensure alignment with social inclusion and racial equity. Understanding that everyone owns responsibility for diversity, equity and inclusion, we also established an ongoing council tasked with developing a framework for Student Affairs DEI initiatives.

Over the past two years, Student Affairs has made a concerted effort to build capacity for fostering diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the division. The list below summarizes the key steps we've taken in response to the *Time to Act* initiative.

1. The Student Affairs **DEI Council was established** with representation from a variety of units across the division. The Council helps identify and prioritize strategies for accomplishing objectives, promotes division-wide DEI initiatives and outcomes, and shares their insights and perceptions regarding divisional climate issues.
2. Student Affairs staff have engaged in **forums and small group discussions** through a series called Engage, Experience and Expand. The series includes discussion opportunities for staff, facilitated by staff, emphasizing foundational DEI principles, civil discourse, shared experiences, and the development of new knowledge and skills that can be applied in participants' work.
3. **DEI Moments are distributed** on the 2nd Friday of each month, highlighting activities and celebrating heritage and history months for diverse populations.
4. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs' **Student Advisory Council** includes representatives from key student communities and Student Affairs units. This team meets monthly to ensure student voices and perspectives about diversity, equity and inclusion issues are heard and included in our work.
5. A Student Affairs **DEI website** was created in Spring 2021 to provide information on events and resources for Student Affairs' units in need of information and guidance in keeping DEI in the forefront of decision making for programs, people and processes. The website is updated on a quarterly basis to reflect our latest initiatives and accomplishments.
6. **Diversity, equity and inclusion training** is available to all Student Affairs staff, and questions were added to the annual performance review document to encourage staff members to discuss their progression of learning related to DEI.
7. **An audit tool** was developed to guide the review of Student Affairs policies, practices and structural decision-making processes. Two pilot studies with five units were completed to establish a foundation for using the newly developed audit tool on a regular basis across all units. Based on the pilot, a regular audit schedule will be implemented in Summer 2022.







As part of our mission, Student Affairs will continue to strive to cultivate student and staff success through engagement, well-being and a commitment to diversity. As a division, we will take an active role in creating and supporting a more unified and inclusive campus. To improve ourselves and the community we create, we're committed to listening, supporting, and advocating for what is right to confront racism and to promote racial justice, inclusion and equity.

Furthermore, the university's **N2025 Strategic Plan**, published in February 2020, specifically calls for the campus to create a climate that emphasizes, prioritizes and expands inclusive excellence and diversity, and prioritizes participation and professional development for all Nebraska students, staff and faculty. In conjunction with this vision, the **Student Affairs Strategic Plan** provides our path forward to building capacity for fostering diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the division.

### **Goal Three**

Foster a culture that promotes diversity, equity and inclusion through belonging and engagement.

### **Goal Three Objectives**

- 1.** Address systemic racism issues by cultivating an environment of inclusivity and respect in which all students can access opportunities that offer a holistic and complete Husker experience.
- 2.** Increase students' sense of belonging and mattering on campus.
- 3.** Identify and close equity gaps in student access of programs and resources.
- 4.** Deliver a consistent commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through communications across the division.
- 5.** Establish ongoing conversations around racial justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 6.** Recognize, share, and promote individual and unit achievements in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- 7.** Cultivate a supportive campus environment by increasing staff members' abilities to build capacity for diversity, equity, and inclusion.







## WHERE WE WANT TO GO: 2022-2023 DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

The purpose of the Action Plan is to more fully articulate intentional strategies to accomplish Goal Three. From the seven objectives listed under Goal Three, four themes emerged. Strategies have been identified for each theme.

### *Themes and Strategies*

#### **THEME ONE: Promote an Inclusive Climate & Culture in Student Affairs.**

1. Develop a DEI staff development program grounded in the Student Affairs curriculum which includes varying levels of participation and ensure that staff development efforts regularly have tracks focused on diversity, equity and inclusion competencies at all employment levels.
2. Determine and communicate how staff evaluations in each unit will be tied to participation in staff development opportunities that address diversity, equity and inclusion.
3. Develop and execute assessment plans that measures progress towards promoting an inclusive climate and culture in Student Affairs.
4. Strengthen the Student Affairs' equity and inclusion messages in all communications, digital strategies and print materials and ensure that visual images, language and viewpoints convey our commitment to diversity and inclusion.
5. Increase support for conferences, projects, and events focused upon diversity, equity, and inclusion to build a healthy organizational climate.
6. Recognize, share, and promote individual and department success in the areas of diversity and inclusion (i.e., diversity champions, mentoring, best practices).





## **THEME TWO: Foster Belonging and Engagement**

1. Create opportunities for connection and community building between diverse groups of students and staff.
2. Conduct a review of student involvement/leadership practices and policies to remove barriers and increase access for historically marginalized students (e.g., applications/nominations, time and location of meetings, availability of childcare, meeting style, costs, etc.).
3. Assess content, format, design (e.g., universal), marketing, and other aspects of programs and services to increase inclusivity and foster belonging and engagement.
4. Initiate ways for diverse alumni and retirees to play a role in student and staff programs and initiatives (including mentorship, support for organizations, etc.)
5. Collaborate with campus partners to increase outreach efforts to underrepresented students and staff.

## **THEME THREE: Recruit and Retain Diverse Talent**

1. Assess recruitment and retention strategies based on data and adjust strategies as necessary.
2. Provide career support and mentorship for staff from minoritized groups.
3. Review and develop a template for job description criteria that considers inclusion in each component.

## **THEME FOUR: Resource Development**

1. Establish and fund a full-time, permanent position charged with advancing our investment in DEI across Student Affairs.
2. In collaboration with the University of Nebraska Foundation identify donor support for Student Affairs DEI initiatives.







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