

**A Call to Action:  
Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Belonging  
at Central Michigan University  
2023 – 2028**

**PHASE THREE: 2025-2026**



OFFICE FOR  
**INSTITUTIONAL  
DIVERSITY, EQUITY,  
& INCLUSION**  
CENTRAL MICHIGAN  
UNIVERSITY

## **Introduction**

Sapientia, Virtus, Amicitia — wisdom, virtue, and friendship are the words that have graced our seal since 1892. From the time of its founding, Central Michigan University has sought to provide quality, in-depth educational opportunities to those that would otherwise lack access. Embedded within the ideals of wisdom, virtue, and friendship, CMU opened its doors to diverse communities since its inception. Today, we aim to expand upon past diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging (DEIJB) efforts to truly meet the nuanced needs of our students, alumni, partners, and community. Given contemporary sociopolitical contexts across the globe, it is imperative that we remain proactive in upholding our responsibility to actualize social justice and belonging as an institution of higher education. Through the work of countless institutional partners and students, this plan provides specific strategies for successfully advancing our commitment to cultivating a rich, inclusive learning environment that prioritizes belonging and social action.

At Central Michigan University, diversity is the ability to demonstrate representation of an array of identities, backgrounds, perspectives, and talents. **Diversity** work seeks to lessen homogeneity to strengthen communities, environments, and ecosystems. Diversity offers choice, options, and more equitable representation across curricula, teaching, policy, and practice. It also nurtures innovation, creativity, and a richness of experience. In turn, **equity** is a mindfulness towards ensuring that the opportunities and resources made readily available to all, are also cultivated and shared in a manner that takes context, nuance, and specificity into account.

**Inclusion** is the act of operationalizing diversity to ensure communities, departments, and units provide equitable opportunities for engagement to a diverse population. Diversity offers a seat at the table; inclusion ensures everyone at the table feels heard and valued. On college campuses, inclusion can emerge in the form of financial equity (e.g., opportunities for financial aid, grant funding for minoritized scholars, properly financing diversity initiatives), social diversity (e.g., relationships/mentorships built across identity, clubs and organizations providing open-access membership, affinity groups for faculty, staff, and students, sustained dialogue initiatives), curricular diversity (e.g., inclusion of critical methodologies, the use of intentional dialogue techniques, studies led by researchers of diverse backgrounds, course readings curated with purpose, the use of universal design in the classroom), and structural diversity (e.g., audio/visual accessibility, spiritual space, room décor, intentional displays in the library, gender inclusive restrooms, space for nursing caretakers, and accessible offerings that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA]).

**Justice** seeks to remedy inequities which stem from systemic oppression and other social issues. From policy implementation to procedural reviews, justice targets bias, discrimination, and stratifications with intentionality and offers corrective action. It involves reflexivity, interrogation, and a willingness to invest in holistic improvements. At CMU, justice is diversity, equity, and inclusion put into practice.

**Belonging** makes considerations for how individuals experience day-to-day interactions with campus and the surrounding community, paying specific attention to those who are most vulnerable within the community. These considerations disrupt policy, practice, and procedures that target or exclude populations, and offers multifaceted support which takes a diverse range of needs into account. We strive for a campus culture where everyone is welcomed and appreciated. We endeavor to achieve these goals through the cultivation of more inclusive practice, curricula, teaching, programs, and policies to ensure a sense of security and belonging throughout campus.

Finally, for the purposes of this document, use of the term **minority** considers continued experiences with marginalization and oppression, even in instances where a historically underserved community reaches a numerical majority (Chase, Dowd, Bordoloi Pazich, & Bensimon, 2014).

Active engagement in DEIJB allows CMU to nurture a holistic learning environment, rich with different experiences, ideas, and modalities for involvement. Pluralistic learning and research generate a stronger appreciation for difference and fosters the open exchange of ideas and inspiration, as well as new access points for collaboration. The full implementation of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging at CMU would demonstrate a commitment to social change by affording traditionally underserved populations with a quality education, preparing all students to serve as global citizens, improving the statistical underrepresentation of minoritized folx in critical fields of study, and utilizing cutting-edge research to address societal needs.

### Articulation of Goals

This plan centers three primary goals. Each goal is organized by three priorities to make them accessible, realistic, and achievable.

#### **1. Equalize Graduation Rates**

- a. Enhance opportunities for holistic development and socialization among Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) students.
- b. Decrease stratifications persisting between White students and BIPOC students.
- c. Reduce curricular/co-curricular challenges contributing to gaps in BIPOC student graduation rates.

#### **2. Diversify Faculty and Staff**

- a. Attract, recruit, and hire diverse faculty and staff.
- b. Increase faculty and staff understanding of contexts related to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging.
- c. Sustain diversity and equity amongst faculty and staff across units.

#### **3. Foster a More Inclusive Community**

- a. Embed a focus on DEIJB within CMU's mission, core strategies, and operations.
- b. Create a culture that allows all to thrive.
- c. Cultivate an inclusive, welcoming community off-campus.

## EQUALIZE GRADUATION RATES

**Goal 1.1:** Enhance Opportunities for Holistic, Intersectional Development and Socialization Among BIPOC Students.

**Objective:** Remove or reduce barriers for BIPOC students to engage in growth and development on and off campus.

**Strategies/Tasks:**

- Assess alignment of resource allocations with articulated retention needs.
- Examine relationship between student demographics and pathway programming.
- Explore community-based approaches to increasing structural diversity in partnering towns, cities, military bases, and alongside the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased availability of holistic development and socialization opportunities for BIPOC students.
- Improved demonstration of structural diversity on and off campus.
- Increased engagement among BIPOC students in educational opportunities available on and off campus.
- Increased feelings of inclusion, belonging, and representation.

**Goal 1.2:** Decrease Stratifications Persisting Between White Students and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Students

**Objective:** Identify and address financial barriers that prohibit BIPOC students from graduating within 4 years.

**Strategies/Tasks:**

- Assess and revise funding structures developed to reduce cost as a barrier to BIPOC student success.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Identification of barriers prohibiting BIPOC students from graduating within 4 years.
- Established social justice approach to eliminating barriers to student success.
- Increased access among BIPOC students to resources contributing to student success.
- Decreased gaps in graduation rates between White students and BIPOC students.

**Goal 1.3:** Reduce Curricular/Co-Curricular Challenges Contributing to Gaps in BIPOC Student Graduation Rates

**Objective:** Encourage use of inclusive practice and teaching strategies that support BIPOC student access, persistence, and graduation.

**Strategies/Tasks:**

- Develop funding structure to reduce inequities emergent from accessibility and accommodations analysis.
- Review and revise resources designed to provide guidance on diversifying curricula, teaching, and practice.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Decreased curricular/co-curricular challenges contributing to gaps in BIPOC student graduation rates.
- Increased awareness of culturally informed pedagogy and praxis among faculty and staff.
- Increased implementation of culturally informed pedagogy and praxis.
- Increased feelings of inclusion and belonging among BIPOC students.

**DIVERSIFY FACULTY & STAFF**

**Goal 2.1:** Attract, Recruit, and Hire Diverse Faculty & Staff

**Objective:** Enhance recruitment and onboarding processes to nurture a sense of community and belonging.

**Strategies/Tasks:**

- Continued implementation of improvements to onboarding and socialization processes.
- Review and make recommendations regarding funding structure/sources dedicated to the advancement of faculty and staff diversification.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased number of minority-identified faculty and staff across units.
- Enhanced institutionalization of culturally significant recruitment and retention techniques.
- Enhanced feelings of inclusion and belonging.
- Enhanced student experience, particularly in the areas of curricular, pedagogical, and praxis development, as well as representation.

**Goal 2.2: Retain Diverse Faculty and Staff**

**Objective:** Sustain diversity amongst faculty and staff across units.

**Strategies/Tasks:**

- Assess pathway programs to prepare current faculty and staff for leadership positions.
- Analyze data emergent from exit surveys; utilize a data-informed response to address voluntary departures.
- Engage members of affinity associations in measuring the effectiveness of those groups and review data for improvements.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Sustained diversification of faculty and staff across units.
- Enhanced student experience, particularly in the areas of curricular, pedagogical, and praxis development, as well as representation.
- Enhanced feelings of inclusion and belonging.

**Goal 2.3: Advance Central Michigan University's Commitment as an Equitable and Inclusive Community**

**Objective:** Increase faculty and staff understanding of contexts related to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging.

**Strategies/Tasks:**

- Evaluate relevance of workshop and training topics and revise, as necessary.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased faculty and staff understanding of contexts related to diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging.
- Enhanced awareness of historical and contemporary DEIJB concepts and contexts.
- Improved campus climate and culture.

**FOSTER A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY**

**Goal 3.1: Embed Focus on DEIJB within CMU's Mission, Core Strategies, and Operations**

**Objective:** Create and sustain an organizational environment that acknowledges and celebrates diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout its daily operations. This dimension refers to the objectives and strategies that enable the institution to create a supportive climate, where differing perspectives and experiences are valued.

**Strategies/Tasks:**

- Pilot senior administrator/supervisor DEIJB accountability audit.
- Assess effectiveness of centralized structure, while communicating the role of DEIJB in CMU's core strategies and operational documents.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased focus on DEIJB within CMU's mission, core strategies, and operations.
- Institutionalized commitment to accomplishing CMU's DEIJB objectives.
- Institutionalized accountability for accomplishing CMU's DEIJB objectives.
- Enhanced DEIJB skill sets among CMU leadership.

**Goal 3.2:** Cultivate an inclusive and psychologically safe educational environment.

**Objective:** Institute consistent climate review and assessment practices.

**Strategies/Tasks:**

- Expand use of culturally significant assessment instrument in evaluating course engagement and the impact of campus resources.
- Create data-informed recommendations for emergent themes identified in biannual culture and climate review.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased feelings of safety.
- Increased feelings of inclusion and belonging.
- Decreased instances of retaliation, intimidation, and harassment.

**Goal 3.3:** Cultivate an Inclusive, Welcoming Community Off-Campus

**Objective:** Engage the City of Mount Pleasant, Isabella County, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribal citizens, Detroit, Southfield, Troy, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Fort Belvoir, Lansing Community College, Macomb Community College, Northwestern Michigan College, and community organizations to surface and discuss DEIJB needs.

**Strategies/Tasks:**

- See Goal 3.2 (2025-2026) regarding data-informed recommendations.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- Increased collaboration with community partners in attending to DEIJB needs.
- Increased engagement among BIPOC students in educational opportunities available on and off campus.
- Increased feelings of inclusion, belonging, and representation.