

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

PHASE TWO: 2024-2025



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:

- Analyze relationship between faculty and staff demographics, student demographics, and student retention.

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:

- Develop funding structure to reduce inequities emergent from financial analysis.
- **Educate faculty and staff on resources and referral processes for services on and off campus.**
 - Provide faculty and staff with updated listing of resources and contact information.

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:

- **Assess effectiveness of existing unit-based DEIJB interventions, curricula, and initiatives dedicated to eliminating barriers to BIPOC student success.**
 - **Determine how units are assessing needs, designing curricular/co-curricular initiatives/interventions, evaluating outcomes, and using data-informed decisions to refine their efforts.**
 - Design curricular/co-curricular rubrics to assess implementation of culturally informed 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:

- Measure effectiveness of Diversity Advocate enhancements.
 - Academic units will receive a survey to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the DA in searches conducted by their unit.

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:

- Implement pathway programs to prepare current faculty and staff for leadership positions.
- Develop data analysis structure and process for completed exit surveys.
- Implement and support the growth and development of affinity associations.

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:

- Implement comprehensive DEIJB professional development for faculty and staff.

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:

- Develop senior administrator and supervisor DEIJB accountability audit to ensure consistent evaluation of DEIJB efforts.
- Assess effectiveness of embedded DEIJB focus within CMU's mission.

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:

- Initiate biannual climate and culture review with students, staff, and faculty.
 - Climate survey supplemented with focus groups, roundtable discussions, and unit-based discussions.
 - Evaluate, discuss, and identify what is core to CMU's culture, which allows for people from diverse backgrounds to thrive.
 - Evaluate, discuss, and identify items requiring revision, which serve as barriers for people from diverse backgrounds to thrive.
- Embed culturally significant assessment instrument in performance evaluations and reviews.

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:

- Design and implement DEIJB community collaborative programs that attend to emergent needs.
- Allocate funding for strategic collaborations with community partners.
- Analyze relationship between faculty, staff, and student demographics, local laws, and regulations.

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.