

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Strategic Diversity Plan

December 2016

I. Diversity Statement

At Hobart and William Smith Colleges we strive to create a just and inclusive environment where all students, faculty and staff are valued and respected. We believe that diversity in identity and perspective enriches our community and prepares us all to lead lives of consequence. We recognize that historical practices and policies have privileged certain groups while excluding others from institutions of higher education, and thus the work of diversity at HWS seeks to account for those inequities by promoting college access and working to ensure that every member of the HWS community has an equal opportunity to thrive.

II. Background

The 2015-2016 academic year was marked by challenges and opportunities as colleges around the country confronted issues of inclusion and diversity. Students organized protests, sit-ins and occupied administrative buildings in the name of social justice and equity. Much like institutions around the country, students of color at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS) organized a protest to shed light on their experiences on campus. Months of planning between senior administrators and students from the collective “we the unheard” resulted in significant changes for the Colleges, namely the decision to hire a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) and the diversification of the student counseling center. Prior to hiring a CDO, President Gearan appointed an interim CDO and convened a committee of faculty, students, staff and the chair of the board of trustees (refer to appendix A) to develop a strategic diversity plan (SDP) which would help inform the role of the CDO as well as establish institutional priorities.

III. Introduction

Efforts to engender meaningful change depend on institutional support and resources, deliberate action, and ongoing assessment. The Strategic Diversity Plan (SDP) represents an institutional commitment to creating positive social change. It offers HWS an opportunity to declare its deepest held values and articulate ways of upholding those commitments both on campus and in the Geneva community. It is a living document which guides the institution in developing strategies that promote equity and diversify the community.

The plan includes goals and recommendations organized along five key areas: Teaching and Learning, Recruitment and Retention, Space, Student Relations and Community Development. In order to ensure community buy-in for the plan, once a draft was created, multiple

opportunities to solicit feedback were offered including two town hall meetings and an online form. Feedback from those venues were used to develop the final plan.

The first section, Teaching and Learning explores three main areas which include: the curriculum, professional development for employees and the educational environment for students. The section encourages departments to engage in conversations about their respective curriculums vis-a-vis diversity education, articulates the need for faculty and staff development and offers ways to create a more inclusive student learning environment.

The following section focuses on Recruitment and Retention explores ways to attract and retain a more diverse student and employee population. Specifically, the recommendations address the prioritization of diversity throughout all hiring and admissions efforts, the development and routinization of assessment efforts, and the strengthening of identity groups that provide support to historically underrepresented groups.

The third section is dedicated to the enhancement of the physical space to promote equity, dialogue and a strong sense of community. Recommendations include both the construction of new spaces for socializing as well as upgrades to existing spaces which serve historically underrepresented populations.

The Student Relations component of the SDP emphasizes the need to increase and enhance student engagement around issues related to social justice and diversity, measures to increase accountability around hate speech and bias incidents, and an examination of the coordinate system.

Lastly, acknowledging the important work already being done by HWS in the Geneva community, the fifth section on community development focuses exclusively on issues pertaining to economic instability and the barriers that economically disadvantaged populations face in Geneva.

IV. Terminology

In order to ensure a collective understanding of the terms used in this document, the definitions of diversity, inclusion and equity have been included below. These terms were pulled from the American Association of Colleges and Universities' framework on inclusive excellence.

Diversity: Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations) that can be engaged in the service of learning.

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase one's awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Equity: The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion. <https://www.aacu.org/making-excellence-inclusive>

V. Goals and Recommendations

The SDP committee included five sub-committees which examined key areas including: Teaching and Learning, Recruitment and Retention, Space, Student Relations and Community Development. The following section represents goals and recommendations developed by each of the committees.

Teaching and Learning

Goal 1: Ensure that the HWS curriculum demonstrates that diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice are fully addressed in a variety of ways.

Recommendation 1.1 Foster discussions within departments, programs, and offices focused on improving ways in which our courses, pedagogy, research, service, and co-curricular opportunities enhance diversity education, experiences and provide supports for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Provide tangible financial and structural supports for emergent ideas and initiatives, and create and maintain a robust accountability system that builds on existing processes and improves means for self-assessment.

Goal 2: Ensure that HWS faculty and staff are prepared to effectively address issues of diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice inside and outside of the classroom.

Recommendation 2.1: Train and support faculty and staff to enhance their ability to a) develop greater competency in cross-cultural, inclusive communication, b) effectively engage students in conversations related to diversity, inclusion, equity and justice, c) use inclusive teaching approaches that address the range of academic learning styles and needs of all students, including universal design for learning approaches and materials and d) provide safe, supportive environments that promote student learning and address classroom dynamics.

Recommendation 2.2 Provide financial and staffing resources to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) so that the Office in collaboration with the Provost's Office and Human Resources can provide support and outreach to departments, programs, offices, and the institution.

Goal 3: Ensure that HWS students are provided with an educational environment where they are respected, valued, and supported.

Recommendation 3.1: Establish a peer mentor program to support incoming first years. This program could assist in connecting first years to the wider campus and serve as a way to further build community within the first year class.

Recommendation 3.2: Expand the operational capacity of the Office of Disability Services to support an increasing number of students with disabilities and diverse learning needs at HWS.

Recommendation 3.3 Provide a fully accessible learning environment, including physical access to all buildings and grounds.

Recommendation 3.4 Address socioeconomic issues that impact access to educational opportunities such as the cost of classroom materials (books, supplies, etc.) and other economic barriers that may prevent students from fully engaging in all that HWS offers.

Recruitment and Retention

Goal 1: Create an institution-wide plan for recruiting faculty, staff and administrators to ensure that we meet clear institutional diversity goals.

Recommendation 1.1: Develop new ways to hire HWS employees, attract diverse applicants and construct diverse hiring committees that are consistent across positions in order to promote institutional transparency.

Recommendation 1.2: Adopt an affirmative action plan for hiring to better provide equal employment opportunities.

Recommendation 1.3: Establish mechanisms to consistently increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty and staff.

Goal 2: Increase the representation of students from historically underrepresented groups to more adequately represent national demographics.

Recommendation 2.1: Establish mechanisms to consistently increase the recruitment of underrepresented groups particularly students of color, first generation students, international students, and students with diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Recommendation 2.2: Review the current systems in place for awarding financial aid and consider new opportunities that will enhance diversity within the incoming classes

Recommendation 2.3: Consider the use of additional application materials (e.g. supplemental questions, as used at peer institutions) to send a clear message to applicants about our institutional core values.

Recommendation 2.4: Require training for all HWS employees involved in the Admissions process (including staff and faculty involved in the admissions process but located outside of the Office of Admissions) to make certain that issues of diversity and inclusion are understood at all levels to enhance the recruitment of a very diverse class of incoming students.

Goal 3: Strengthen the identity of cultural clubs and affinity groups such as the student cultural clubs, institutional initiatives like the First Generation Initiative, and employee affinity groups to make certain they are all empowered with appropriate resources.

Recommendation 3.1: Ensure that institutional resources are directed to the various clubs, organizations and initiatives that provide support and resources to historically underrepresented groups.

Recommendation 3.2: Consider alternative funding structures that would allow these groups budgetary freedom from the fluctuations of a student-driven budget allocation process.

Goal 4: Study and assess, in an ongoing manner, issues of recruitment and retention as they relate to diversity and inclusion across the institution.

Recommendation 4.1: Develop ongoing assessment practices aimed at improving diversity and inclusion in the recruitment and retention of faculty, students and staff. This should be part of routine institutional level assessments and evaluations.

Recommendation 4.2: Monitor tenure success rates and turnover rates for faculty by gender, race and ethnicity and take appropriate steps for improvement where needed.

Recommendation 4.3: Hire and/or adequately staff a full time Institutional Research department at HWS with statisticians who specialize in population movements to help inform long-term recruitment and admissions efforts.

Recommendation 4.4: Implement exit interviews to determine why HWS employees leave, particularly members from historically underrepresented groups. Engage in an historical analysis to determine patterns or trends among groups.

Goal 5: Ensure that all the members of the of the Colleges' community are subject and accountable to the same institutional values, and expectations designed to support inclusion, equity, and an understanding of difference.

Recommendation 5.1: Offer campus wide trainings for students and HWS employees (faculty, administrators and staff at all levels) on issues around diversity and inclusion and uphold a consistent expectation for all members of the community to engage in diversity education.

Recommendation 5.2: Recognize and reward offices, departments, programs, and individuals that contribute to promoting diversity, inclusion, equity by a) supporting diversity programming, b) valuing such contributions in teaching, service and scholarship through the tenure and promotion process for faculty and the performance evaluation process for staff and c) granting awards, fellowships and/or other formal recognitions for such activities.

Recommendation 5.3: Make diversity a campus-wide priority by aligning divisional goals and missions with the SDP, so that individual offices and employees are expected to support the work of diversity and inclusion. Performance evaluations should reflect such expectations accordingly.

Space

Goal 1: Enhance the physical environment on campus to protect the safety of all members of campus – students, faculty, and staff - while also promoting dialogue, engagement, and community.

Recommendation 1.1: Establish a committee with representation from students, faculty, and staff to advise in the planning and redesigning of social spaces across campus. This committee should have representation from a variety of student constituencies, with particular emphasis on groups that are underrepresented on campus and/or lack social spaces over which they have control. This committee should be convened by the President in consultation with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and it should be included in all conversations about the configuration of space with departments such as Buildings and Grounds and Student Activities.

Recommendation 1.2: Create a physical space (standalone building) that is dedicated to social interaction where all members of the HWS community would feel comfortable and have access regardless of race, gender identity, ability, sexuality, age, class, religion. This building must have spaces that are usable by both individuals and groups and are conducive to activities that include: informal studying, small group meetings and

gatherings, and campus-wide events (such as films, conversations, music and open mic performances). This building should provide services that support the population and activities that use it (such as food, comfortable seating, and flexible furniture arrangements).

Recommendation 1.3: Create Small Social Spaces throughout Campus that are open 24-hours a day.

A. Residential Halls: Create additional spaces in each residential building in which students can socialize. These should be configured to accommodate studying, watching TV, and hanging out. Each floor housing first-year students should have its own residential lounge for students, and each building housing upperclass students should have at least one residential lounge.

B. Arts Campus Enhancement: Create a lounge on the arts campus that provides dining options as well as places to study and congregate.

C. Relaxed Study Academic Space: Create a study lounge where students have casual seating to work and study with access to printers.

D. Extended hours for common space: Offer additional spaces that empower student interaction and connectivity and ensure that existing spaces on campus are adequately advertised to students.

Recommendation 1.4: Provide additional safety precautions and monitoring in campus spaces such as additional lighting across campus to ensure visibility, as well as Blue Light and other warning/alert systems. Balance an increased level of security patrols of common space with respect for student autonomy and independence.

Recommendation 1.5: Reevaluate and potentially redesign the Intercultural Affairs Center. Given its importance as a hub for underrepresented students on campus and its use as a social gathering space, formal event location, and potential use for academic coordination, this space needs to be welcoming and functional for student, group, and activities. Consult with the staff of the Intercultural Affairs Center as well as student, faculty, staff, and community users of the space to uncover and address the strengths and limitations of the facility.

Recommendation 1.6: Assess the accessibility of all facilities on campus for people with disabilities and take necessary steps to make them fully accessible. This assessment should take no longer than one year and must include a five to ten-year plan to achieve this goal.

Recommendation 1.7: Continue efforts to install gender-neutral and physically accessible bathrooms in all residence halls and campus buildings. Ensure that the publicity of these locations are widely disseminated and accessible to the campus community. Develop an institutional policy which ensures that all new construction includes gender neutral and physically accessible restrooms.

Recommendation 1.8: Pool and equitably re-allocate all living spaces on campus.

Equitable Selection Process: Consider mechanisms to solicit student feedback and input in the assignment of non-dormitory housing.

Equitable Distribution of Spaces: Revisit the question of fraternity housing as it impacts the equity, distribution, and access to space of overall student housing. Determine whether having fraternities is in concert with goals of equity and inclusion across student housing.

Study Impact of Coordinate System: Assess the distribution and utilization of spaces between and across both Hobart College and William Smith College to ensure equitable distribution. Things to consider as part of equity include: distance to academic buildings and the library, distance to administrative support, convenience of dining and facilities.

Recommendation 1.9: Ensure that the new common dining hall for faculty and staff supports the hours, space, and availability conducive to faculty and staff utilization and engagement.

Student Relations

Goal 1: Foster dialogue to promote understanding across different student identities and experiences.

Recommendation 1.1: Create opportunities to infuse diversity education throughout the student co-curricular experience (paying particular attention to where gaps may exist). Consider using HWS Day as a required, campus-wide opportunity to engage in conversations about diversity and inclusion. Sustained opportunities for dialogue through a cohort model should be considered as part of the first year experience and then expanded to include the larger student body.

Recommendation 1.2: Continue to utilize a Common Read to generate intergroup dialogues around issues of diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation 1.3 Support the efforts of Mosaic New York to reach larger audiences at HWS in order to increase the awareness of social justice issues.

Recommendation 1.4: Continue generating opportunities for dialogue between Campus Safety Officers and students from historically underrepresented backgrounds in an effort to support critical dialogue and conversations about race inequality and cultural divides. Efforts for increased dialogue and engagement could include implementing a liaison and or advocate from Campus Safety to work specifically with and support cultural clubs.

Goal 2: Increase accountability for hate speech, instances of discrimination and microaggression.

Recommendation 2.1: Strengthen the bias incident reporting process and ensure there are opportunities to report back to the community, where applicable.

Recommendation 2.2: Establish opportunities for the ODI to dialogue with members of the Committee on Standards to ensure fair practices in the reprimand of students, including a review of the *Community Standards* publication itself to identify places to increase lenses of diversity, justice, and inclusion and embarking on a collaborative effort to periodically review the adjudication of prior cases.

Goal 3: Acknowledge the contemporary understanding of gender identity and the implications of the binary coordinate system.

Recommendation 3.1: Facilitate a campus wide conversation about the coordinate system to inform the overall direction and configuration of the Colleges.

Recommendation 3.2: Ensure that procedures throughout the institution exist and are integrated so that transgender students can fully and seamlessly participate in both the academic and co-curricular experiences.

Recommendation 3.3: Continue to provide opportunities to educate students, faculty, and staff about transgender experiences.

Community Development

Goal 1: Ensure economic vitality in Geneva through the development of services and resources at HWS.

Recommendation 1.1: Review hiring practices at HWS to ensure local economically vulnerable populations have sufficient access to jobs at HWS.

Recommendation 1.2: Work with Sodexo to ensure local economically vulnerable populations have similar access to their jobs.

Recommendation 1.3: Implement community outreach/communication programs to better promote opportunities at HWS and Sodexo to local economically vulnerable populations. (Work with churches, neighborhoods, list serves, etc.)

Recommendation 1.4: Consider using The Ontario ARC College Experience Program as a model for implementing programs to support economically vulnerable populations.

Goal 2: Create strong outreach programs and strategies from HWS to the Geneva community to positively influence employment opportunities for residents.

Recommendation 2.1: Work with Geneva Workforce Development to identify skills gaps for economically vulnerable populations and develop regular bilingual training programs/workshops to address the gaps.

Recommendation 2.2: Develop a mentoring/job coaching/skills training program for residents who are trying to enter/re-enter the work force.

Recommendation 2.3: Identify, support, and/or establish partnerships with existing Geneva agency programs that are working to reduce barriers to employment (e.g., LAWNY's Unemployment and Employment & Reentry Program for the specific subset of formerly incarcerated population, Geneva Boys and Girls Club Education and Career programs).

Goal 3: Launch initiatives to promote and support small business opportunities within the Geneva community.

Recommendation 3.1: Establish an inventory and an historical timeline of the participation of women and communities of color in small business ownership in Geneva to better understand barriers that may exist.

Recommendation 3.2: Develop a supplier diversity policy for HWS which would promote the use of women, minority and/or LGBT owned businesses.

Recommendation 3.3: Meet with current small business owners within these populations to identify the unique challenges and barriers to small business ownership.

Recommendation 3.4: Find ways that the Colleges can address any issues/barriers that are identified. Determine what current programs/initiatives are already in place and identify ways to support them or implement new opportunities as needed.

Goal 4: Create a Community Employment Task Force using the Geneva 2020 framework to bring all appropriate community resources and stakeholders together to address and reduce the barriers local residents face to full employment.

Recommendation 4.1: Identify prospective members from HWS and the Geneva community.

Recommendation 4.2: Define a mission, vision, goals and a timeline for the work of the Task Force

Appendix A
SDP Committee

Josiah Bramble, Student
Maurice Charles, Chaplin
Donna Davenport, Dance Faculty
Mark Gearan, President
Tanisha Genao, Student
Keoka Grayson, Economics Faculty
Lou Guard, President's Office
Lisa Kaenzig, William Smith Deans Office
Mary Kelly, Education Faculty
DeWayne Lucas, Provost's Office
Heather May, Theatre Faculty
Alejandra Molina, Intercultural Affairs
Afrika Owes, Office of Diversity & Inclusion
Erin Pelkey, Chemistry Faculty
Carlos Robles, Student
Solomé Rose, Office of Diversity & Inclusion
Niame Traore, Student
Maureen Zupan, Board of Trustees