

Introduction

Montgomery College at its best has stood for excellence, integrity, innovation, diversity, stewardship, and sustainability. Examining our 70-year past, we see that the College has evolved in essentially lock step with the overall changes in the demographics of Montgomery County. Montgomery College created its first Office of Equity and Diversity in 2000. While that office underwent significant iterations, it set us on a path to reassessing our needs and considering future trends. That assessment led the College to reimagining our diversity work and creating an Office of Equity and Inclusion under the Office of the President.

What does this new office look like?

The Charge of the Office of Equity and Inclusion is to build a program that addresses 10 critical areas of work:

1. Student Access, Inclusion, and Equity around the Student Completion Agenda
2. Climate and Culture Assessment, Responsiveness, and Action
3. Planning, Benchmarking, and Best Practices
4. Staffing Resourcing and Succession Planning
5. Recruitment and Hiring
6. Promotion and Retention of Employees
7. Faculty Teaching, Research, and Curriculum
8. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programming, and Policies
9. External Community Engagement, Collaboration, and Linkages
10. Business Practices, Workforce/Career Pathways, and Procurement

While the overall framework has been established, the office is expected to evolve over the next few years to be able to operationalize the 2020 Equity and Inclusion Master Plan. The overall framework for the office imbeds the following:

- **Inclusion**
- **Diversity**
- **Engagement**
- **Equity for our Students, Employees, Business Partners**
- **Access and Achievement**
- **Leadership**
- **Social Justice**

The **IDEALS** is the conceptual framework used to advance the charge and to review and make recommendations for each of the 10 critical areas of work that will be studied through this lens.

The **IDEEALS** framework builds upon Dr. Michelle Scott's 2013 Report that described the then Office of Equity and Diversity and a "reimagined office of equity and diversity." While some of Dr. Scott's recommendations were implemented, some are being incorporated into this new model. **IDEEALS** seeks to connect with the past accomplishments of the College in its previous diversity work and to introduce new areas of opportunity by establishing a broader agenda and framework for developing a national model for leadership in this work and ensuring the College's success in having an equitable and inclusive institution.

In 2013, Montgomery College developed a Diversity and Inclusion Plan that identifies its preferred future for diversity and inclusion in five key thematic areas: (a) Educational Excellence; (b) Access, Affordability, and Success; (c) Economic Development; (d) Community Engagement; and (e) Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness. The five thematic areas align with and complement the Montgomery College 2020 Strategic Plan and demonstrates good faith effort and commitment to produce measurable results for expanding and sustaining institutional diversity and inclusion. The plan includes a provision on mandatory College-wide multicultural, Title IX, and ADA compliance training.

On several levels Montgomery College has made notable progress to implement the Plan, and much of this progress has focused on increasing awareness of diversity and demonstrating our capacities to celebrate diversity. Furthermore, this progress has occurred by ostensibly implementing a compliance-based diversity model. As an example, the College has improved universal access to facilities, technology, events, and services. Currently we produce or have in place:

1. The Multi-year Montgomery College Diversity Plan: Our College Roadmap for Ensuring and Sustaining Diversity and Inclusive Excellence;
2. Annual Diversity Progress Report;
3. Annual Affirmative Action Plan;
4. Report on Title IX and Civil Rights Violations;
5. Diversity Talent Management Proposal – Diversity plans around the Recruitment, Search and Selection Process; and
6. Certain Heritage celebrations.

Supplemental to this compliance-based model, progress has also occurred through the decentralized diversity-related programmatic initiatives of various College offices and departments, some of which have not aligned with the institutional strategic and tactical plans. Despite the progress that has been made, we believe we can and must do better.

To do better, the College is moving beyond its compliance-based model and creating an intentional centralized and comprehensive institutional equity and inclusion infrastructure. By moving in this direction, the College can pursue untapped strategic opportunities to sustain organizational learning and meet evolving indicia and implications regarding equity and inclusion. Also, the College can introduce and advance an institutional equity and inclusion philosophy and develop an Equity and

Inclusion Master Plan that ensures the validity, viability, and visibility for achieving such an agenda.

We will be creating a planning document that includes the following:

- Scalable Student Success programs
- Student completion supports
- Special Awareness Months and Cultural Events
- Women's Issues
- Social Justice & Diversity Programs
- LGBTQ+
- Veterans/Combat2College
- Social Justice, Equity & Inclusion Research, and Thought Leadership
- Data Collection, Reporting, and Trend Analysis
- Liaison, Linkages & Partnerships with Businesses, Diverse Communities, and Organizations
- Social Justice and Diversity Faculty (i.e., Race, Justice, and Community Engagement Institute)
- Curriculum inclusiveness
- Employee Development
- IDEEALS Website and Communiqués

IDEEALS is a living document that will be iterative, representative, and will build upon the planning and data gathering process which includes listening tours with staff, faculty, and administrators, union leaders, student councils, governance councils, discussions with peer institutions, brown bag student conversations, and best practice research. Its purpose is to engage every individual and unit at the College in our goal to make equity and inclusion integral to the workings of Montgomery College.

The recommendations, strategies, and tactics will be designed to improve civility, intergroup connections, climate, completion rates, recruitment, retention, procurement, workforce partnerships, data analysis, advancement, public discourse, policy, and leadership for all Montgomery College students, faculty, staff, and administrators, alumni and external partners.

PROCESS:

A committee structure has been created that will be charged with addressing the key framework areas outlined in this document. These individuals have been appointed by the president. The committee of the whole and each sub-committee will be led by co-chairs and the work in its entirety will be overseen by the CEIO. Co-chairs and subcommittee leadership will be recommended by the CEIO and will be approved by the President. All co-chairs and committee members will be tasked with reviewing the community feedback we collected and evaluating current data and institutional information to set a strategy and a system for accountability for their framework areas. They will receive guidance from facilitators or consultants who will guide them in this important work, which will begin in November 2017. The CEIO, meanwhile, will be charged with designing the agenda and key learning sessions and providing oversight to all co-chairs, aiding in developing progress on each initiative, and bringing recommendations to the President. A follow-up communication will be available in the coming weeks about the team that will lead us in this work.

VISION:

Under the leadership of the Office of Equity and Inclusion in the Office of the President, and the President's Advisory Committee, IDEEALS will be an integral part of every academic discipline, administrative unit and partnerships and will become commonplace in our practices and policies. The Master Plan on Equity and Inclusion will provide recommendations that give voice to MC 2020 themes and the MC mission and values that affirm equity, inclusion and diversity as core institutional principles. We will complete this work through our sub-committees.

OUR STUDY – EIGHT (8) COMMITTEES:

Student Experience and Campus Culture

Examine reported experiences of MC students and employees through various information sources (such as "Student Voices", Equity and Inclusion survey, focus group results, etc.). We will develop recommendations that will foster a more equitable and inclusive college culture which leads to an enhanced student experience.

Develop recommendations that will foster a more equitable and inclusive college culture which leads to an enhanced student experience

Business Practices and Procurement

Establish Montgomery College's policies, procedures, and practices that are inclusive of underserved businesses, woman-owned businesses, small businesses, disability-owned, veteran-owned small businesses, LGBTQ, diverse businesses of all types.

Focus on geographic inclusion and determining MC's responsibility in helping to spur underserved businesses and economic growth in designated Enterprise Zones in the county re Silver Spring, Wheaton, Long Branch.

Faculty Teaching and Curriculum

Establish priorities for the College to offer cutting-edge course content and effective faculty pedagogy which meet student and staff needs for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Human Resources/Recruiting, Hiring, Retention, Succession Planning

We have historically had a relatively low turnover of faculty and staff at Montgomery College, which means that increasing the diversity of the institution requires us to treat every new job opening as a vital opportunity to seek top candidates who better reflect the makeup of the student body.

It is our responsibility to ensure our diversity and inclusion principles are infused throughout the hiring process for all faculty, staff, and students.

Seek to become a better workplace for equity, diversity & inclusion.

Nationwide Peer Institution Best Practices/Assessment and Evaluation/Resources

Research equity and inclusion best practices at 17 peer institutions and all Maryland community colleges and 4-year universities.

Categorize each best practice in to one of the ten critical areas of work.

Prioritize four critical focus areas for year one's work: Recruitment & Hiring; Promotion & Retention of Employees; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programming; and Climate and Culture.

Reports and Communications

Support reporting needs and requirements from Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MHEC), Montgomery County Council's Office of Legislative Oversight, and other local and state government entities, about how we are building equity into the formula for student success.

Enhance communication to employees for opportunities for professional and personal development to improve employee retention.

Increase communication in Spanish for employees.

Improve communication throughout the College for employees to regain trust within

the college community.

Training, Dialogue, Events, Celebrations

Create a safe and inclusive college community by deepening and enhancing the level of discussion and training around diversity and inclusion issues,

Expand cultural program offerings that reflect our values, and to create space for differing viewpoints regarding political ideology,

Celebrate the diversity of the college community and the richness that our diverse identities bring to education.

Workforce Development and Community Engagement

Serve as a resource for a cadre of experts to conduct collegewide training in response to diversity and inclusion, current trends impacting communities, and respond to deliberative dialogues based on political climates

Serve as thought leaders and a resource for business and the community in response to current trends.

Showcase Montgomery College as the first stop in the county and state of Maryland for leadership and training in diversity, equity and inclusion. Present the college as a partner for business, government, and organizations as a “go to” for training their employees and assisting with issue resolution.

Respond to the cultural changes in the institution as a result of the local and national climate of diversity events (e.g. Charlottesville, Freddie Gray; Trayvon Martin, etc.).

Provide support in identifying subject matter experts within the College to provide training in response to diversity and inclusion trends which serves to enhance the development and maintenance of inclusive environments.

Additional Initiatives – There are several initiatives that will be examined through this framework that did not fit into the categories above. These range from a thorough examination of the honorary degree recipient selection process to the cultivation of a more diverse Board of Trustees.

Evaluate Resources – MC is committed to supporting these initiatives and will evaluate and provide the appropriate resources to implement the ten initiatives listed above.

Conclusion

Given the importance of this plan in fulfilling our mission statement and our values, we will create a working and learning environment in which successful performance is

predicated on effectiveness as a leader or educator with respect to cultural competency. While the discussion and training, along with developing our empathy and compassion, will certainly help us all grow as individuals, our goal will be to create a culture that does not require us all to be authorities on intercultural sophistication. Rather, our culture will be one that values civil discourse, a safe environment for sharing, one that observes, measures, and rewards success so that we can create an extraordinary educational institution.