



# STUDENT LIFE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



## Our Five-Year Strategic Plan to Improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Michigan

**DEI 1.0 Summary**

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## **I. Student Life's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan: Overview**

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We envision a *University of Michigan* that puts inclusive excellence at the center of its educational mission. We strive for a healthy campus climate where students, throughout their time at Michigan, are internationally engaged in ways that prepare them to be successful in a global society. Upon graduating, students should have developed the capacities to:

- Recognize how experiences, values and perspectives are influenced by identity
- Understand the impact of culture and identity on the individual, a community and society
- Acquire the tools and confidence to build inclusive and diverse communities
- Co-create open and inclusive communities by promoting respect and dignity of others

*Student Life's* intentional and robust co-curricular and curricular educational experiences serve undergraduate, graduate and professional students and provide spaces for applied learning and practice. We strive to instill skills and qualities in students and our staff team that build a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community and provide a foundation for ongoing learning.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

***Diversity:*** We commit to increasing diversity, which is expressed in myriad forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, and political perspective.

***Equity:*** We commit to working actively to challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status.

***Inclusion:*** We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our campus is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard and where every individual feels a sense of belonging and inclusion. We know that by building a critical mass of diverse groups on campus and creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities.

## Organizational Context

*Student Life's* contributions to University of Michigan's diversity, equity and inclusion strategic efforts are vast and multifaceted. Honoring both of *Student Life's* spheres of influence, we developed individual objectives and action plans for our *Institutional* (Student) and our *Organizational* (Staff) roles.

- 1) campus-wide, through our institutional role with partners to serve all students; and
- 2) internal to *Student Life*, through our role as an organizational employer (for staff and student employees).

## II. Review - Student Life's Planning Process

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Beginning in 2015, Student Life engaged a broad cross-section of students, staff, and research to ensure a grounded and informed plan to be implemented over the next five years. Our student engagement efforts included town halls and individual and group sessions with students, student leaders, student organizations and student employees. Our staff team provided input through town halls, focus groups, surveys and unit reports. Additional research included review of existing survey and other data, literature and relevant publications. A diverse 25-member staff group then worked together to consider and process input and data. Our extensive student and staff engagement and research revealed clear themes in individual needs and campus-wide investment. Students provided insight on institutional challenges, student learning, development and social identity considerations. Staff provided insight on organizational challenges, necessary culture change and human resource considerations. This robust engagement allowed for a clear set of divisional DEI 1.0 objectives

### **III. Student Life's Evaluation Summary**

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#### **Student Life's Progress – Highlighted People Initiatives**

##### **Professional Development**

The results of the 2021 Campus Climate Survey suggest that there is broad engagement across the Division in DEI activities and events. There is evidence that the messaging and importance placed on DEI professional development is strong in Student Life, as the proportion of Student Life staff participating in each type of activity is greater than the proportion of all U-M staff for the same type of activity. For example, 68% of Student Life staff attended a DEI-related training or workshop session, which is ten points higher than among all U-M staff. Fifty-five percent of Student Life staff attended a DEI-related meeting or retreat in their unit, or thirteen points better than all U-M staff. Fifty-six percent attended a DEI-related event in their unit, or 12-point difference from all U-M staff. And, one-quarter of Student Life staff served on a DEI-related committee or taskforce, five points higher than all U-M staff. These large gaps suggest success in creating a strong culture related to DEI professional development within Student Life and among its staff.

##### **Compensation Model**

During the span of DEI 1.0, Student Life fully updated and market benchmarked compensation model that is being used today. This DEI effort required significant planning, time, effort and financial investment to make it a reality. The conversations began in December 2016, with a task force that began meeting regularly for a year and developed initial recommendations that were shared with Student Life leadership in early 2018. Around the same time, SL received results from the 2017 DEI Climate survey that overwhelmingly indicated dissatisfaction around fair and equitable compensation. Bolstered by this feedback, Student Life launched a massive project in early 2019 to fully update the compensation model for the entire division (non-bargained for staff). The resources to implement this effort were significant and countless hours were devoted

by many people from Student Life and from University HR over the course of 6+ months. This included a review of every classification for appropriate and relevant market data, updating and reviewing every employee's job description for appropriate placement, assessing approximately 700 employee salaries compared to the new model, communicating and rolling out the changes through numerous town halls, employee meetings, videos and other avenues, and of course, final implementation steps.

### **Hiring and Onboarding**

Student Life had multiple strategic actions associated with the hiring and onboarding of our staff. Although we made tremendous progress in this area, we were met with many challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including a yearlong hiring freeze. As some roles and teams experienced reduced workloads due to COVID-19, new and increased workloads impacted other areas of the division as we worked to live into ongoing public health mandates and protocols. In response to these needs, we engaged a divisional approach, seeking to ensure strategic use of staff time (preserve resources), leveraging the furlough program where possible, providing meaningful work for all team members (avoiding lay-offs), meeting critical needs of the division to deliver on unique public health/safety/compliance demands, and preserving our Core Work.

## **Student Life's Progress – Highlighted Process Initiatives**

### **Culture of Partnerships**

Student Life clarified our collective understanding of “partnership,” which included developing shared definitions, principles and understanding of our current partnerships. This laid the groundwork for engaging conversations about improving and expanding partnership inside and outside of Student Life. This work was particularly impactful as it included sharing resources, expanding core competencies through collective action, avoiding duplication, increasing efficiency, and maximizing impact. The success of this effort was fueled by the integration of partnerships as a divisional priority, accompanied by yearly goals and actions. Our focus on building a culture of partnership led to the completion of two biennial partnership inventories and reports and the development of a partnership toolkit.

### **Thriving in the First Year**

When the DEI strategic plan was introduced in 2016, Student Life did not have a formal First Year Experience (FYE) office. Our first year-focused initiatives lacked connection across the division. Through the DEI plan, we aligned our efforts and infused resources into a more coordinated and comprehensive First Year Experience initiative. Formalizing an office in 2017. FYE partners within and outside of Student Life to ensure our first-year students gain the skills necessary to establish an academic pattern of success, develop sustainable and healthy relationships, and engage and connect with a diverse learning community. The development of the FYE office and investment in early welcome community building programs serves as a major investment in our work with incoming students and continues to be a critical component of strengthening student access to and engagement with campus opportunities.

### **Campus Climate Support**

Student Life, through the leadership of the Dean of Students Office, built on strategic efforts to improve campus response and support for climate concerns by working to ensure that all U-M students are aware of how to obtain support for campus climate incidents. We prioritized the implementation of a responsive and flexible campus climate support model, carrying out extensive communications with DEI Leads, Student Advisory Boards and other campus partners focused on raising awareness of the campus climate support team and highlighting pathways for conflict resolution and student engagement. Student Life also developed a sustainable model for regular engagement with student boards, leadership groups, and organizations to identify and assess campus climate needs and patterns and for the sharing of ideas, information, actions, and impacts. This included the launch of a Campus Climate Support Advisory Group, which includes student representatives from groups across campus and the development of structures which more effectively promotes restorative education and enables students to have access to the full range of voluntary adaptable conflict resolution services and resources.

## **Student Life's Progress – Highlighted Product Initiatives**

### **Intercultural Development Tools**

Starting in Fall 2016, the university piloted an innovative student assessment and training program, with the goal of administering the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) or a similar assessment tool to a large cohort of students annually. The IDI assesses intercultural acumen, defined as the ability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities. This initiative has grown to more than 1,000 annual student participants. Most students in the pilot reported becoming more self-aware and half of the groups specifically expressed a motivation to grow as a result of the experience. This effort also expanded to include content from theoretical frameworks and from other intercultural learning tools like the Intercultural Conflict Styles Inventory (ICS) and the Cultural Intelligence Assessment (CQ). Nearly 2800 students from 12 academic partners and 7 student groups participated across all intercultural learning offerings in Year 5, including 2351 students participating in the IDI and 368 students attending five new workshops featuring non-IDI content.

### **Trotter Multicultural Center**

In the Fall of 2013, three years before the launch of DEI 1.0 students frustrated by the poor state of the Trotter Multicultural Center (TMC) began organizing for a new Trotter Multicultural Center facility to be located near the center of campus. They named their effort, “A New Trotter Initiative” (ANT), which held its first team meeting in December 2013. In January of 2014 the Black Student Union released seven demands to the University, one of which one of which asked for Black students to have the “opportunity to congregate and share [their] experiences in a new Trotter Multicultural Center located on central campus.” Opportunities were organized to engage stakeholder voices through student town halls and listening sessions and in December of 2015 the Regents approved the proposal for the new multicultural center to be located on State Street. After three years of collaborative design and building development, the new TMC opened on April 19, 2019. Through the TMC, we have strengthened academic partnerships and implemented new and refreshed programming, open to all students, that focuses on promoting

intercultural and multicultural engagement, racial healing, and transformative development across all generations and cultures. The TMC represents a successful outcome on many fronts, including highly intentional design of interior spaces and the development of a multimodal and historic building project, made possible by students who continued to honor the Trotter legacy and engage the campus community.

### **DEI Infrastructure**

Our DEI structure has focused on engaging many levels within our organization. This includes our Leadership Cabinet as sponsor of our objectives, oversight leads who provide high level communication and accountability, and the engagement of staff throughout the division who oversee actions. This structure alongside institutional implementation leads, who keep us informed by the institutional direction for this work, creates a robust and collective approach to making change. Although our matrix model reaches deep into our organization and allows for us to be adaptable in changing environments providing strong interim leadership as needed in key areas, it also leans on leaders who are currently carrying full-loads of work. In order to address this challenge, we expanded our team to include DEI Project Lead and Associate Managers who allow us to continue to strengthen our Student Life DEI work into the future.

## **IV. Reflections**

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Throughout DEI 1.0 Student Life actively engaged with students, aligning our programs, services, and resources to meet current needs. Utilizing a matrix model for plan implementation, we facilitated engagement and autonomy of key leaders and teams across the division. This model reached deep into our organization and allowed for adaptability in changing environments by providing strong leadership as needed in key areas. Our Student Life DEI structure focused on engaging many levels within our organization, including support and guidance from our Student Life Leadership Cabinet as executive sponsors of our strategic objectives and actions. Our DEI Leads provided communication and accountability for our plan and led the engagement of staff throughout the division. This matrix structure alongside our institutional partnerships created a robust and collective approach to making changes to strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion throughout our division and the campus at large.