CCRI Campus Inclusion Plan

2020

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND

CCRI Campus Inclusion Plan

Dear members of the CCRI community,

Providing equitable opportunities for the diverse students who walk through our doors is at the heart of who we are as a community college. We know a diverse community contributes significantly to our broader goals of access and equity and fosters a rich and inclusive teaching, learning, and working environment for all students and employees. And, I believe that a truly inclusive college community engages its faculty and staff in an environment that welcomes, respects, and values all members and embraces their contributions to student success.

I am pleased to present our **Campus Inclusion Plan.** This plan outlines the goals and strategies that CCRI will use as a guide to achieve a more inclusive and diverse community. Our priorities are clear and our goals are well-defined to ensure our work has a positive and productive effect on our college environment.

The Campus Inclusion Plan was developed by CCRI's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Employee Group. I am grateful to this group for their leadership and vision in creating this plan and carrying out many of the actions articulated within it.

I invite you to join me in engaging with this plan and consider what you can do to support it in the months ahead. I look forward to working together to build a more diverse and inclusive CCRI.

Sincerely,
Meghan Hughes

Introduction

This document was developed by **CCRI's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Employee Group**. Its purpose is to articulate a vision for how the college can strengthen its efforts to be a more diverse and inclusive educational and work environment and to provide details about the specific strategies we will prioritize in order to improve. The document articulates a plan for the coming year, at the end of which, the DEI Group will evaluate progress and develop a longer-term plan.

Throughout the document, there are many terms that may be unfamiliar to readers. If a term is in italics, its definition can be found in the glossary in the Appendix; readers can click the hyperlink and be taken directly to the definition.

The Challenges and Opportunities

The Community College of Rhode Island serves a diverse student population; 40 percent of our students identify as an ethnic minority. However, our employees do not reflect the diversity of our student population: 92 percent of faculty and 86 percent of staff identify as white.

Research shows that:

- *Students of color* perform better when they are taught by instructors of color[1]
- Students' education and experiences can be negatively impacted by the effects of *implicit bias*[2]
- Institutions are more effective when they recognize the diversity of their employees and when diversity is considered an asset to the institution[3]

While we must address issues related to the diversity of employees at CCRI, it just as important that we focus on strengthening our *cultural competency* at the individual and institutional levels. All faculty, staff, and administrators must be equipped to work with students and colleagues who come from different backgrounds and experiences from their own.

1 Fairlie, R.W., Hoffman, F., & Oreopoulos, P. (2014). A community college instructor like me: Race and ethnicity interactions in the classroom. American Economic Review, 104 (8): 2567-91.

2 Peterson, E.R., Rubie-Davies, C., Osborne, D. & Sibley, C. (2016). Teachers' explicit expectations and implicit prejudiced attitudes to educational achievement: relations with student achievement and the ethnic achievement gap. Learning and Instruction, 42. DOI: 10.1016/j.learninstruc.2016.01.010

3 Hunt, V., Layton, D., Prince, S. (2015). Why diversity matters. McKinsey & Company. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters

Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at CCRI

CCRI is working intentionally to address issues of *diversity*, *equity*, and *inclusion* (DEI), with the goal of providing equitable educational opportunities for our students, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, income, or other identity factors. CCRI's Campus Inclusion Plan consists of strategies and activities that focus on impacting our employee population – our staff, faculty, and administrators – the many people who educate and interact with our students every day.

We envision being an institution that is a champion for equity.

To do this, our vision is:

- For all employees of all backgrounds to feel valued and that they belong
- To strengthen *cultural competency* for all employees
- For more employees to be equipped to be *allies* for people from underrepresented backgrounds (particularly people of color, *LGBTQQIA+* individuals, and people with disabilities)
- For employees to feel more comfortable talking about issues of diversity and difference
- To increase the diversity of our staff, faculty, and leadership

Strategies

DEI issues are complex. As CCRI begins to intentionally address these challenges, we have identified three main strategies on which to focus. These strategies each consist of several actions, which are outlined below. Some of the following plans are already being implemented, and some are new. This plan will be implemented over the next 12 months, at which point we will evaluate progress against our goals and efforts and develop them further.

STRATEGY 1:
Build cultural competency knowledge and skills amongst staff and faculty

The college will develop an institution-wide strategy for advancing the knowledge and skills necessary for our staff and faculty to serve our diverse student population and work together across differences at CCRI. CCRI employees can become more culturally competent by:

- Participating in workshops and discussions about diversity, social justice, and other related topics
- Participating in training programs that help employees build skills for being an effective ally to specific diverse populations

To support this work, there will be increased opportunities for employees to participate in these trainings and discussions through:

- Dedicated workshops on these topics, facilitated by CCRI employees and others

- Integrating these topics into existing professional and leadership development programs such as OneCCRI, Management Essentials, Leadership Essentials, and others

STRATEGY 2:

Build inclusive work environments

A work environment is inclusive when all employees can bring their full selves to the workplace and are valued for their unique experiences and identities. Employees should feel a sense of belonging at CCRI. They should expect *respectful communication* and relationships with colleagues. Employees should also be able to feel that if they make a mistake, they will be treated with respect and given opportunities to learn from those mistakes. We are all learning together and working towards a shared mission to serve our students.

CCRI can become a more inclusive workplace by:

- Equipping managers and leaders with tools and training to build and lead an inclusive environment within their teams
- Equipping employees to participate in an inclusive environment within their teams
- Encouraging teams to do team-building and collaborative exercises
- Creating groups or spaces (such as affinity groups, book clubs, or others) for employees of various identities to come together for discussion and relationship building

To support this work, there will be more resources to build inclusion, such as:

- Team-building tools and exercises for groups
- Training and professional development for managers and leaders about building and maintaining inclusive work environments
- The creation of affinity groups (for example, Latinx Employee Group, LGBTQQIA+ Employee Group, etc.)

STRATEGY 3:

Increase diversity of staff, faculty, and leadership

As previously mentioned, the diversity of the staff and faculty at CCRI does not reflect that of our students. To address this issue, search committees must prevent any *implicit bias* from impacting hiring decisions. We must also build strong pipelines of diverse applicants for positions at CCRI. As outlined in the college's Affirmative Action Plan, CCRI's Department of Institutional Equity and Human Resources is working actively to continue to train search committees on bias-free search processes and to create systems for efficient and effective recruiting and hiring.

A key tactic for communicating the college's commitment to DEI is to review and if necessary, update, the language we use to describe the college via the website, print materials, and other channels. This language should communicate our steadfast focus on student success and closing *equity gaps*.

To support this work, there will be additional resources to build diversity into recruitment and hiring, such as:

- Required training for all search committee members
- A database of potential sources for recruiting diverse candidates
- A comprehensive review of the college's web and print content to identify opportunities to reflect our commitment to DEI

Closing

CCRI's DEI Employee Group will work to implement many of the strategies outlined In this plan, continually tracking and evaluating them, and making adjustments along the way. Employees who are interested in joining these efforts may contact Sybil Bailey, Director of Human Resources, at sfbailey@ccri.edu.

The following members of CCRI's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Group contributed to the writing of this Campus Inclusion Plan:

- Michael Archetto, Building and Grounds Officer
- Justine Egan-Kunicki, Assistant Professor of Psychology
- Naglaa Gaafar, Coordinator of Student Retention Studies
- Darthula Matthews, Donor Services Manager
- Ryan Mitchner, Director of Workforce Development Program Delivery
- Jason Moniz, Student Development Counselor
- Allison Hitte Robinson, Program Coordinator, Office of Disability Services
- Deborah Watson, Associate Director of Enrollment Services

Glossary

Ally: Someone from a dominant group (someone who experiences unearned privilege and/or power – for example, having access to opportunities that others do not because of their race) who works with and/or acts in support of non-dominant group members, or someone who is united with another for a common cause. Allies take action, reflect on their own thinking and beliefs, seek out learning opportunities, and take initiative in interpersonal relations. *(Interaction Institute for Social Change)*

Cultural Competency: set of behaviors, knowledge, will, and skills that enable just and effective work in multicultural settings. Cultural competency is never fully achieved but is an ongoing process. Cultural competency can be developed by individuals, organizations, communities and beyond. Individuals develop their cultural competency by building knowledge, values, skills, and will that help them to:

- develop self-awareness and an understanding of one's own culture(s);
- understand and appreciate other cultures;

- facilitate understanding among people of different cultures;
- confront inconsistencies, biases and unconscious assumptions of cultures; and,
- take action to ensure fairness and access and correct for the results of historic inequities.

Organizations develop their cultural competency by building the knowledge, values, skills, and will of individuals; and, by building equitable, accessible and inclusive organizational culture, expectations, policies, structures, systems and processes. *(Interaction Institute for Social Change; adapted from Garth Ham, Alliance for Nonprofit Management)*

Diversity: Each individual is unique, and groups of individuals reflect multiple dimensions of difference including: race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, cognitive styles, and much more. Valuing diversity means embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of difference that exist in groups. (*Interaction Institute for Social Change; Adapted from Diversity Initiatives Campaign, The Diversity Project*)

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used—but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values. (*Interaction Institute for Social Change)*

Equity: All groups have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to eliminate opportunity and resource gaps, and thereby, improve the quality of their lives. (*Interaction Institute for Social Change; Adapted from Equity and Inclusion Campaign*)

Equity Gaps: Unlike the term, "achievement gap," which places educational performance challenges on students of color and low-income students, "equity gaps" refers to disparities in opportunity, treatment, and access to educational advantages within the schools themselves.

Implicit Bias: Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals' attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics. (*Interaction Institute for Social Change)*

Inclusion: a value and practice of ensuring that people feel they belong and that their input is valued by the whole (group, organization, society, system, etc.), particularly regarding decisions that affect their lives.

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power. (*Interaction Institute for Social Change*; *Adapted from Equity and Inclusion Campaign*)

LGBTQQIA+: An acronym that stand for a variety of identities related to sexuality and gender identity. The letters stand for: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersexual, and Asexual. The + is included to represent any omitted letters.

Person of color: A term that is used to describe individuals who do not identify as white or Caucasian.

Respectful Communication: People have different opinions, different talents, and different abilities; respectful communication involves the ability to effectively assert your own views and fully listen to the views of others. For teams to be productive and successful, good communication skills are essential. (*All Business*)