Atlas Diversity Benchmarking: Introduction & Methodology

This chapter describes the Atlas diversity benchmarking and its employed methodology.

*Please note that graphic representations of the data may be affected by common rounding error. All raw data calculations have been verified in our analysis.*
Atlas Diversity Benchmarking: Introduction

Atlas is a national database that showcases all diversity-related initiatives, efforts, and strategic plans for all accredited colleges and universities in the U.S. (approximately 7,500 institutions; this data source does not include online universities). Through Atlas, Halualani & Associates has nationally benchmarked University of Nebraska-Lincoln in comparison with its peer, regional, and national institutions in terms of diversity and inclusion work via our scoring mechanism and in terms of different variables and various indices.

Indeed, diversity and inclusion work in higher education does NOT exist or operate in a vacuum; some practices are deemed more effective and impactful than others for specific type of institutions. Such knowledge should be gathered and provided to institutions in relation to their peers. Through Atlas diversity benchmarking, we gauge a university’s level of incorporation of key proven factors and high impact practices associated with diversity excellence at comparable institutions in higher education. These key proven factors and high impact practices derive from the most recent higher educational literature and evidence as well as corporate best practices on diversity on the national front. Through this benchmarking, a university will discover the extent to which it has fulfilled its commitment to diversity excellence and how this status stands in relation to national benchmarks.

Halualani & Associates conducted an Atlas diversity benchmarking for University of Nebraska-Lincoln in order to highlight the current comparative status/performance on inclusive excellence in terms of their peers on the following index:

- **Diversity Strategy Index Series:**
  - Existence, Quality, and Content of Diversity Master Plan Frameworks, Goals/Objectives, Design Process, Assigned Owners, Implementation Steps/Activities, Progress, Assessment/Review Process, Outcome Measures, Metrics, and Updates, Midpoint and Final Evaluations in the Last Five Years;
  - Incorporation and Quality of Diversity-Related Goal/Objective in University Strategic Planning Process, Assigned Owners, Implementation Steps/Activities, Progress, Assessment/Review Process, Outcome Measures, Metrics, and Updates, Midpoint and Final Evaluations in the Last Five Years
Methodology

Halualani & Associates conducted Atlas diversity benchmarking on the aforementioned index through the following research steps.

- We first collect, trace, and track all data related to the aforementioned diversity index in terms of the most recent (within the last six months) efforts, programs, and initiatives for all designated peers. Such information is gathered from a combination of web scraping, electronic documents, and mandated accreditation reports, and often includes both quantitative and qualitative data.

- Then, once all of the data has been collected, our team scores each institution based on a coding scheme and set of algorithms that are informed by high-impact and “gold standard” practices (from the research literature of proven practices). Higher scores and codings are assigned to those institutions that possess high-impact practices and in relation to proven, high success-potential factors.

- Ultimately, on all indices, a scale of 1 to 100, with 100 representing the highest and most positive/successful/impact score, is used to compare the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with its peer institutions.

The following benchmarking chapter features the ranking of University of Nebraska-Lincoln in relation to its designated peers on this diversity strategy index series. All information about why the scoring was assigned and the kinds of efforts or initiatives that each designated peer engages in, is provided in detail. The quantitative information via the ranking charts are displayed along with thick descriptions of the kinds of efforts and initiatives being put on by all of the peer institutions.
Chapter 2

Diversity Strategy Index Series

This chapter features the Atlas benchmarking findings for University of Nebraska-Lincoln on this index series.

*Please note that graphic representations of the data may be affected by common rounding error. All raw data calculations have been verified in our analysis.*
Diversity Strategy Index Series

This index series highlights how your institution compares to your designated peers in terms of the creation, implementation, and assessment of a campus diversity strategic plan/initiative.

The Diversity Strategy Index Series includes the following indices:

- Strategic Vision Index
- Strategic Structure Index
- Strategic Assessment Index
- Strategic Accountability Index

University of Nebraska-Lincoln selected the following peers for comparison in this index series:

- University of Iowa
- Indiana University Bloomington
- Michigan State University
- University of Michigan
- University of Kansas
Overall Diversity Strategy Index

The Overall Diversity Strategy Index provides the comprehensive benchmarking overview of University of Nebraska-Lincoln in relation to its peer group on the creation and implementation of a diversity strategy.

According to our Atlas diversity benchmarking, University of Nebraska-Lincoln ranks 5th overall in relation to its designated peers in terms of its overall diversity strategy index. This ranking is due largely to the following:

- University of Nebraska-Lincoln does not have a current stand-alone diversity strategic plan which was the case for a few of its peer institutions (University of Kansas, University of Michigan). University of Nebraska-Lincoln also does not have an active university-wide strategic plan with diversity-related goals.

- University of Kansas is ranked 1st overall because it has both a stand-alone diversity master plan (which is framed as more of an action plan) as well as a university strategic plan with a diversity-related goal.

- It should be noted that all of the peer institutions, including University of Kansas (the leader in this index series) had Atlas benchmarking scores in the lower half of the total amount of scores for this index. This indicates that even though the University of Kansas and University of Michigan had the only current diversity strategic plans out of the designated peer group, these institutions’ plans did not incorporate the highest impact practices (i.e., a continuous plan from the previous one, with a comprehensive set of goals and innovative areas of focus; created by and participated in by all campus divisions and constituencies, and with assessment and accountability measures). Thus, these peer institutions do not represent the most excellent exemplars of diversity strategic plans like University of California, Berkeley or The Pennsylvania State University. However, we found the strategic planning process engaged in by the University of Michigan to be
extremely thorough, comprehensive, and insight-generating (details about this process are shared in this report). **Indiana University Bloomington** had several diversity-related goals in its university-wide strategic plan and had its academic schools and colleges develop their own diversity plans around diverse faculty recruitment and diverse student recruitment.
Strategic Vision Index

Indicates if the campus has a university-wide diversity plan created and implemented in the last six years or if the university strategic plan has a diversity initiative or major goal in the last six years. This index also measures the quality of the diversity strategy in terms of the imperative for its creation and its continued vision from a previous diversity strategy. If the institution has a diversity goal in the university strategic plan, the index indicates the quality and priority of the diversity-related goal in the overall university strategy.

If there is a diversity master plan/strategy (DMP) = The higher the score, the greater the quality of the strategic vision in terms of its recency in its creation/implementation as well as the justified rationale for its creation and continuity from the previous diversity strategy.

If there is a diversity-related goal in a larger university strategic plan (USP) = The higher the score, the greater the quality of the strategic vision in terms of its priority position within the overall university strategic plan.

The chart indicates the following:

- **University of Nebraska-Lincoln** (like Michigan State University) is ranked on the bottom of this benchmarking area because it does NOT have a current, stand-alone diversity strategic plan or a major diversity-related goal in a university-wide strategic plan (UNL’s revised 2015 Strategic Compass does not list a major diversity focus in its deemed priorities.)
• Only one of the external peers -- **University of Kansas** -- stands out in our benchmarking because it possesses a stand alone diversity strategic plan for their entire campus which was created in the last year as well as having a major diversity-related goal in its university-wide strategic plan. This is why this institution earned the highest benchmarking score out of this peer group. However, it should be noted that though this university has the highest benchmarking score on this index, its scores are not ranked in the top half of other comparable institutions in our Atlas database because it did not possess some of the high impact practices like incorporating key imperatives or innovative and uncharted goals of focus or specifically targeting graduate students into its goals. The University of Kansas’ diversity strategic plan also did not incorporate accountability mechanisms in case aspects of the plan were not achieved.

• **University of Michigan** ranks second in this benchmarking because while it is in the process of finalizing its diversity master plan this fall (a process that began in Fall 2015), it does not have a diversity-related goal in its university-wide plan.

• Similar to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, **Indiana University Bloomington, University of Iowa**, and **Michigan State University** do not have stand-alone diversity strategic plans. Indiana University Bloomington and University of Iowa have launched (to varying degrees) university-wide strategic plans with diversity-related goals.

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**Qualitative Information For This Area:**

**Titles of Diversity Strategic Plans:**

- University of Michigan - “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan” - 2016-2021
- University of Kansas - “Diversity Action Plan” - 2016-2017

**Why Was The Diversity Master Plan Created At The Institution?**

**University of Michigan:**

- Commitment to diversity at the institution
- Need to diversify its student body

**University of Kansas:**

- Commitment to diversity at the institution
- Need to diversify its student body
- In response to recent concerns that arose around diversity and inclusion (for e.g., a set of unspecified negative incidents)
Diversity-Related Goals in University Strategic Plans and Their Position Within Those Plans:

**Indiana University Bloomington - “The Bicentennial Strategic Plan for IU Bloomington” - 2015 - 2020**

- **IU Bloomington Bicentennial Objective 1:** A commitment to student success through an engaged, diverse, and global experience

- **IU Bloomington Bicentennial Objective 3:** IUB will esteem diversity of all kinds and ensure the full involvement of our global complement of students in our campus life, by: a. Recruiting and retaining a highly motivated, diverse, academically prepared and global complement of undergraduate and graduate students; b. Sharpening our focus on the diversity of our student populations, and on the retention and success of underrepresented and first-generation students; c. Ensuring the integration of diversity, global empathy, and intercultural understanding at all points of shared student experience, such as orientation.”

- **IU Bloomington Bicentennial Objective 5:** A Global, Diverse, Inclusive Community of Excellent Scholars and Teachers: IUB will make our academic community a global beacon for faculty diversity and inclusivity that attracts an excellent faculty, by: a. Investing in human and financial capital to develop the infrastructure to excel in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty; b. Providing career development opportunities designed for a diverse faculty “Additional IUB Metrics: Increase use of strategic hiring fund to support faculty diversity”

- **IU Bloomington Bicentennial Objective 6:** Advancing the frontiers of knowledge. IUB will seek diversity among faculty, postdoctoral fellows, undergraduate and graduate students, and institutional partners to pursue high-impact research, by: a. Leveraging our faculty and alumni to develop deep and sustained collaborative relationships with strategic minority-serving institutions; b. Developing faculty and student exchange programs as well as collaborative research opportunities with diverse institutions; c. Strengthening partnerships with IU regional campuses with diverse student populations; d. Rewarding groups of interdisciplinary and collaborative faculty with additional support to add diverse faculty and students to enhance research.”

- 2nd Goal Area (1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th Objectives)
University of Kansas - “Bold Aspirations” - 2011-2017

• “Recruit, value, develop, and retain an excellent and diverse faculty and staff; Enhance the recruitment process for excellence in hiring; Develop and retain talent and leadership at all levels to thrive in an era of change; Enhance the diversity of faculty, staff, and students.”

• 5th Goal

University of Iowa - “New Strategic Plan”-2016-2021 (in Draft Mode)

• “We will expand access by increasing enrollment over the next five years, taking into account the impact of state demographics and globalization. Expanded access will increase the diversity and internationalization of the University and will help us serve the needs of the state. Student Success: We will preserve affordability by containing costs and by the most efficient and innovative use of existing resources. Graduate and professional student success: We will continue to recruit the very best graduate and professional students from Iowa and beyond whose achievements and diversity will enrich the intellectual excellence of our programs. The total educational experience at the university will promote their academic and professional success. University funding for graduate programs will be linked to program quality and to student success (including improved and timely degree completion).”

• 1st Goal (*This is a notable positive move from this institution in that a diversity-related goal was its 5th placed goal in its previous university-wide strategic plan.)

Note: With the exception of Indiana University Bloomington, a diversity-related goal was not continuously positioned throughout the above university plans. University of Nebraska-Lincoln should continue to embed “diversity” throughout all of its strategic planning goals or at the least, position it in the top two (2) of its goals in its university-wide plan.
Strategic Structure Index

Strategic Structure Index: indicates the quality of the structure embedded into each institution’s diversity plan/strategy in terms of: a) the body or group who created the diversity plan/strategy; b) the budget allocation for the diversity plan/strategy; and c) the quantity and quality of the goals or objectives built into the diversity plan/strategy.

If there is a diversity plan/strategy (DMP) = The higher the score, the more campus-wide (university leadership, diversity leader, faculty, staff, and students) the group was who created the diversity plan/strategy, the more resources and authority allocated to the diversity plan/strategy, and more of the following embedded goals were touched upon: institutional transformation, organizational change, retention-graduation of URM students, academic excellence, academic support, diversity as a learning outcome.

If there is a diversity-related goal in a larger university strategic plan (USP) = The higher the score, the greater the quality of the strategic vision in terms of its priority position within the overall university strategic plan.

The chart indicates the following:

University of Michigan scored as one of the highest rankings on “Strategic Structure” because it was one of the few peer institutions with a current stand-alone diversity strategic plan and with five (5) key goals. These five goals touched on unique and noteworthy areas for institutional change in diversity and inclusion (Retention-Graduation of URM Students; Student Development and Leadership Around Diversity; Professional Development in Diversity for Faculty and Staff; Leadership Development) as opposed to just the
typical goals framed in most campus diversity master plans (Recruitment of a Diverse Student Body, Campus Climate). Their goals covered the following areas:

- Retention-Graduation of URM Students
- Recruitment of a Diverse Student Body
- Student Development and Leadership Around Diversity
- Recruitment of a Diverse Faculty
- Recruitment of a Diverse Workforce
- Professional Development in Diversity for Faculty
- Professional Development in Diversity for Staff
- Leadership Development Around Diversity

It is important to note that the University of Michigan embarked on a **unique diversity strategic planning process that emphasized campus consultation, voice, and feedback as well as individual unit inflection of a shared diversity framework.**

- In terms of the larger campus consultation process for their diversity strategic plan, this university spent a great deal of time gathering campus input through Diversity Summits, videotaped campus-wide forums, individual events, and email and social media mechanisms in order to gain feedback about what campus members wanted in terms of a diverse future and what the University of Michigan needed to do to make this happen.
- More specifically, in the DEI Strategic Plan, a description of its planning process lists the following as campus consultation activities undertaken by the University of Michigan:
  - “More than 750 staff attended four town halls and two staff-focused Diversity Summit events
  - Nearly 450 students participated in six town halls and 17 student life activities
  - President Schlissel engaged 80 student leaders at a Diversity Summit town hall and held meetings with a variety of identity-based student organizations throughout the winter
  - More than 2,500 members of the U-M community attended five public events at the Diversity Summit
  - Nearly 1,000 ideas were contributed on comment cards, by email and through social media” (DEI Strategic Plan, 2016, page 4).
- In terms of individual unit inflection of a shared framework, the University of Michigan wanted the comprehensive participation and engagement of all of its divisions, colleges, departments, and individual programs and units in its diversity strategic plan. Thus, it asked ALL of its individual operating units to create their own five-year diversity strategic plans (which ultimately would create the larger diversity strategic plan for the institution). Each unit was asked to create their
plans around a shared diversity goals/priorities framework as delineated below.

The specific goal areas/priority areas were as follows:

- Recruitment, Retention and Development
- Education and Scholarship
- Promoting an Equitable, Inclusive Environment
- Service (as applicable to service units)

- At the time of the benchmarking, the fully explicated overall diversity strategic plan of the University of Michigan was not finalized or made public. Our team will be on alert for that to occur and make sure that you receive a copy of this plan as it has great import for ideas for UNL’s first iteration of a diversity strategic plan or a diversity strategic framework to embed in a larger university-wide strategic plan.

University of Kansas scored as one of the highest rankings on “Strategic Structure” because it was also one of the few peer institutions with a current stand-alone diversity strategic plan and with five (5) key goals. These five goals touched on unique and noteworthy areas for institutional change in diversity and inclusion (Retention-Graduation of URM Students; Student Development and Leadership Around Diversity; Professional Development in Diversity for Faculty and Staff) as opposed to just the typical goals framed in most campus diversity master plans (Recruitment of a Diverse Student Body, Campus Climate). Their goals covered the following areas:

- Retention-Graduation of URM Students
- Recruitment of a Diverse Student Body
- Student Development and Leadership Around Diversity
- Campus Climate
- Professional Development in Diversity for Faculty
- Professional Development in Diversity for Staff
- Mentoring
- Communication and Reporting System (Discrimination, Sexual Assault)
The institutions at the bottom of the table with a “0” score next to it represent those institutions with no diversity-related goals in their university strategic plans.

The chart indicates the following:

**Indiana University Bloomington** scored the highest on “Strategic Structure” for institutions with diversity-related goals in their university strategic plans because they had a larger range of goals in its university strategic plan that touched on unique and noteworthy areas for institutional change in diversity and inclusion (especially Diversity as a Learning Outcome, Faculty Research and Grants Around Diversity, Mentoring, Diversity Partnerships in the Community) as opposed to just the typical goals framed in most campus diversity strategic plans (Recruitment of a Diverse Student Body, Campus Climate). Their goals covered the following areas:

**Indiana University Bloomington:**
- Retention-Graduation of URM Students
- Recruitment of a Diverse Student Body
- Diversity as a Learning Outcome (How Students Learn About Diversity)
- Recruitment of a Diverse Faculty
- Recruitment of a Diverse Workforce
- Faculty Research and Grants Around Diversity
- Mentoring
- Diversity Partnerships in the Community

**University of Iowa** and **University of Kansas** scored the 2nd and 3rd highest (respectively) on “Strategic Structure” for institutions with a major diversity-related goal in their university strategic plans because their diversity-related goals spanned several goal areas. We especially highlight **University of Iowa**’s visioning of “institutional transformation” which speaks to the notion that becoming a fully inclusive and diversity-engaged institution means that it must transform itself from the inside out (all of its day-to-day and major operations and business practices).

**University of Iowa:**
- Institutional Transformation
- Academic Excellence
- Recruitment of a Diverse Student Body

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Strategic Structure Index</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana University Bloomington</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
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<td>University of Michigan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
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![Strategic Structure Index - USP Institutions](image)
University of Kansas:

- Curricular Integration of Diversity
- Diversity Partnerships in the Community
- Instruction On Cultural Competence Or Intercultural Skills
- Recruitment of a Diverse Faculty
- Recruitment of a Diverse Workforce
- Retention and Development of a Diverse Faculty

Though the University of Nebraska-Lincoln does not have a major diversity-related goal in its last university strategic plan, that plan did speak to and indirectly refer to the following goal areas which is why it attained a score on the following index areas:

University of Nebraska-Lincoln:

- Diversity Partnerships in the Community
- Institutional Transformation to Improve Access for the Disabled Community

We encourage the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to consider placing untapped and unique goal areas into a diversity strategic plan. Such unique goal areas would be in terms of: Institutional Transformation, Organizational Change, Academic Excellence, Retention-Graduation of URM Students, Retention of Diverse Faculty and Staff; Curricular Integration of Diversity, Diversity as a Learning Outcome or Knowledge Domain, and High Engagement around Diversity. This will foster excellence and innovative thinking around diversity for your campus.
Strategic Assessment Index

**Strategic Assessment Index**: measures the assessment mechanisms built into the university’s diversity strategic plan or university overall strategic plan (with a diversity-related goal within it) in terms of: a) if all goals have an assessment plan and schedule, b) the number of goals that require at least two different forms of assessment evidence, c) the nature and quality of required assessment evidence for each goal, and d) the timing of assessment data collection for each goal."

If there is a diversity plan/strategy (DMP) = The higher the score, the more identification there is of an assessment plan/schedule for all of the goals of the diversity strategic plan and the more often and continuous assessment evidence is collected and required of each goal. In addition, the higher the score, the more varied (indirect measures, direct measures) the assessment evidence is for the diversity strategic plan goals.

If there is a diversity-related goal in a larger university strategic plan (USP) = The higher the score, the more identification there is of an assessment plan/schedule for all of the goals of the diversity strategic plan and the more often and continuous assessment evidence is collected and required of each goal. In addition, the higher the score, the more varied (indirect measures, direct measures) the assessment evidence is for the diversity strategic plan goals.

The chart indicates the following:

Of the peer group, **University of Kansas** is the only institution that had a current diversity strategic plan that hinted of an assessment mechanism. However, as one can tell by its low score, this institution only revealed that it collects information about the progress on its diversity plan on an annual basis. However, no other information was provided regarding its assessment measures, milestones, key performance indicators, and desired outcomes.
The institutions with no numerical figures next to it, represent those institutions that either do not have diversity-related goals in their university strategic plans or no explicit assessment measures and plans for their diversity-related goals in their university strategic plans.

The chart indicates the following:

Of the institutions with diversity-related goals in their university strategic plans, Indiana University Bloomington, University of Kansas, and University of Iowa did NOT attain a score on this Strategic Assessment Index because these institutions did NOT have an assessment plan and schedule. These institutions did not have any explicit assessment plans or measures for its diversity-related strategic goals in its university-wide strategic plan.

We encourage University of Nebraska-Lincoln to build an explicit and clear assessment plan and schedule in its diversity strategic plan and for its diversity related goals in its university strategic plan and to require two different types (direct, indirect, quantitative, qualitative, outcome-based, process-based) of evidence for such goals on at least an annual basis.
Strategic Accountability Index

Strategic Accountability Index: measures the accountability mechanisms built into the university’s diversity strategic plan or university overall strategic plan (with a diversity-related goal within it) in terms of: the extent to which there is an identification of individuals or roles who are accountable for ensuring that the diversity strategic plan and or diversity-related goals in a university-wide plan are fully implemented and making the most impact possible.

If there is a diversity plan/strategy (DMP) = The higher the score, the more identification there is of accountability mechanisms for all of the goals of the diversity strategic plan. In addition, the higher the score, the higher up the accountability mechanism is in the university power structure.

The chart indicates the following:

Of the peer group, University of Michigan and University of Kansas represent the only institutions that identified who was accountable for ensuring that the diversity strategic plan was implemented, fully executed, and in motion. University of Michigan identified the Presidential Cabinet, different Vice Presidents, and highest diversity leader (out of the Provost’s office) as being accountable. University of Kansas identified the Presidential Cabinet as being responsible for the execution of its diversity strategic plan. No other details were provided or delineated for these accountability mechanisms (which could be due to the weak assessment structure of the plans).

We encourage University of Nebraska-Lincoln to make explicit who is accountable for its diversity strategy in terms of which set of leaders is responsible and in what ways. More accountability should be placed on senior leadership and coordinated by vice presidents and or divisional heads. We appreciate a distributed model of accountability (in terms of senior leadership) but with the President and Provost bearing full responsibility for meeting its diversity strategic goals.
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Of the peer group, **University of Michigan and University of Kansas** represent the only institutions that identified who was accountable for ensuring that the diversity strategic plan was implemented, fully executed, and in motion. **University of Michigan** identified the Presidential Cabinet, different Vice Presidents, and highest diversity leader (out of the Provost’s office) as being accountable. **University of Kansas** identified the Presidential Cabinet as being responsible for the execution of its diversity strategic plan. No other details were provided or delineated for these accountability mechanisms (which could be due to the weak assessment structure of the plans).
Recap of the Recommendations Drawn From This Index

Drawing from the information gathered through this index, Halualani & Associates recommends the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to:

- continue to embed “diversity” throughout all of its strategic planning goals or at least, position it in the top two (2) of its goals in its university-wide plan;
- consider placing untapped and unique goal areas into a diversity strategic plan. Such unique goal areas would be in terms of: Institutional Transformation, Organizational Change, Academic Excellence, Retention-Graduation of URM Students, Retention of Diverse Faculty and Staff; Curricular Integration of Diversity, Diversity as a Learning Outcome or Knowledge Domain, and High Engagement around Diversity. This will foster excellence and innovative thinking around diversity for your campus;
- build an explicit and clear assessment plan and schedule in its diversity strategic plan and for its diversity related goals in its university strategic plan and to require two different types (direct, indirect, quantitative, qualitative, outcome-based, process-based) of evidence for such goals on at least an annual basis;
- make explicit who is accountable for its diversity strategy in terms of which set of leaders is responsible and in what ways. More accountability should be placed on senior leadership and coordinated by vice presidents and or divisional heads. We appreciate a distributed model of accountability (in terms of senior leadership) but with the President and Provost bearing full responsibility for meeting its diversity strategic goals;
- identify the accountability mechanisms of its diversity strategic plan and in terms of which aspects of executing the plan. This increases campus and external confidence in the diversity strategic planning process and its execution.