



**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

# OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UPDATES

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What a difference a year makes!

Last year, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) spent the majority of its time and energy organizing its operations and staffing in order to better support the University at both a centralized and decentralized level—consulting with colleges, departments, programs, and individuals on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues and solutions. Centrally, this organizational change resulted in the hire of Nkenge Friday, assistant vice chancellor for strategic initiatives, and three existing office shifts to ODI: a) Charlie Foster, assistant vice chancellor for inclusive student excellence and director of the Office for Academic Success and Intercultural Services (OASIS); b) Gwendolyn Combs, director of faculty diversity and associate professor of management, and c) Karen Kassebaum, assistant vice chancellor for inclusive leadership and learning. Additionally, ODI shifted to a direct reporting line to the Office of the Chancellor. This realignment has allowed ODI to better work across the institution, be responsive to DEI concerns, opportunities, and collaborations spanning academic, administrative, and student offices, and make connections where activities impact faculty, staff, students, alums, community members, or at the intersection of any or all of these roles.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ODI has allocated its financial resources and expertise of its team members to developing virtual and online resources, meeting with faculty, staff, and students, responding to diversity-related campus climate issues, modifying its programming for remote access, and building out additional learning webinars and experiences. While our outreach and engagement is grounded in research, theory, and context, this summer was certainly informed and shaped by the heightened call for racial justice and the level of trauma, pain, frustration, and fatigue experienced by individuals—especially minoritized communities. We remain committed to supporting our university and extended communities in creating more inclusive and equitable work and learning environments.

Lastly, ODI continues its efforts with the Diversity Engagement Team and Council on Inclusive Excellence and Diversity. The Diversity Engagement Team has been instrumental in ensuring administrative coordination of diversity-related efforts, and the Council has provided an opportunity to directly engage and support institutional leaders in their development of inclusive excellence strategies—this is especially important given our N2025 strategic aim of emphasizing and prioritizing inclusive excellence and diversity. We also intend to elevate and profile the efforts of everyday Huskers—faculty, staff, and students—who have been actively involved in addressing structural barriers, advancing equity and inclusion, and advocating for justice in their teaching, research, and/or service and engagement.

We have provided this summary document noting specific ODI led and ODI collaborative accomplishments during the 2019-20 year. While this summary does not provide a full detail of our efforts or the efforts implemented by UNL colleges and units throughout the institution, it does demonstrate a deep commitment to supporting our institution in its quest to embolden an inclusive excellence mindset.

Doing inclusive excellence is how we do BIG things. Go Big Red.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marco Barker'.

Marco Barker, Ph.D.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion provides vision, leadership, and advocacy in fostering an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming campus central to the land-grant mission of UNL; leads and facilitates the development of institutional policies, protocols, and practices intended to create a more equitable, and inclusive campus culture; and utilizes an inclusive excellence framework to foster an engaged, creative, and innovative learning environment for all. The vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion reports to the Chancellor.

**Figure 1:**  
Areas of Operation



### **Strategic Initiatives**

Support and manage the development, growth, and goals of ODI, assist campus unit leaders in developing and implementing strategies for inclusive excellence, and play an instrumental role in advancing the University's diversity and inclusion strategy.

**Responsibilities Include:** Diversity Strategic Planning and Implementation, New Ventures and Partnerships, ODI Specific Activities - Assessments and Data Analysis, Communication and Fundraising, Budget and Financial Management, Quality of Programs, Initiatives, and Projects

### **Faculty Diversity**

Develop and implement faculty engagement activities and strategies to address diversity issues particularly relating to recruitment, promotion, and retention of faculty.

**Responsibilities Include:** Faculty Diversity Development and Recruitment, Academic Diversity Committee Support, and Underrepresented Faculty Engagement

### **Leadership and Learning**

Develop and coordinate efforts that build diverse talent searches, onboarding, retention, and success. Develop and lead education and training in support of formal diversity, equity and inclusive-based practices and policies.

**Responsibilities Include:** Diversity Education and Training, Inclusive Leadership Development, Talent Identification and Search Support, UNL Community Building and Support

### **Inclusive Student Excellence**

Develop and coordinate opportunities that increase the participation of minoritized students in high-impact practices and implement inclusive leadership activities and programs for all students.

**Responsibilities Include:** Office for Academic Success and Intercultural Services, Underrepresented Student Success and Support, Diversity and Intercultural Education for Students, Cultural Heritage Experiences and Awareness, and Advising and Supporting Recruitment and Retainment of Diverse Student Populations

### **University Committees and Capacity Building**

Develop and coordinate opportunities that increase collective and organized thinking and action, provide opportunities for collaboration and innovation, and opportunities to build capacity among leaders to advance our institutional prowess for inclusive excellence.

**Opportunities:** Council on Inclusive Excellence and Diversity, Diversity Engagement Team, Nebraska Community of Learners - Understanding Diversity Through Education (NCLUDE)

### **External and Community Engagement**

Establish practices and initiatives that focus on engagement and outreach through community networking, alumni relations, donor development, marketing, and outreach throughout the state to build increased visibility of UNL's diversity efforts, increased access to higher education for members of underrepresented groups, and greater responsiveness by the University to the interests of previously underrepresented communities.

**Opportunities:** UNL Vice Chancellor of Diversity Foundation Fund, Diversity Education and Consultation

To operate as an effective and centralized unit, ODI has identified eight priorities. These priorities represent areas of need as identified through diversity reports, engaging with UNL community members, and following best practices for diversity and inclusion in higher education.

**Figure 2:**  
Eight Priorities



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## **Communication**

ODI will gather and share information on diversity and inclusion events, practices, and data in an effort to better centralize DEI occurrences and update the institution and community on UNL's opportunities and progress in DEI.

### *ODI has accomplished:*

1. Expanding university diversity central hub: diversity.unl.edu and resources for students through the OASIS website: unl.edu/oasis
2. Creating a monthly newsletter "Igniting Inclusive Excellence" and ODI listserv
3. Developing social media presence and expanded vice chancellor's social media communication
4. Establishing ODI internal diversity reporting and auditing

## **Coordination**

ODI will create structures and mechanisms that connect faculty, staff, students, and administrators across the institution and foster professional learning, information sharing and collaboration.

### *ODI has accomplished:*

1. Forming the Council on Inclusive Excellence and Diversity and Diversity Engagement Team
2. Hiring an assistant vice chancellor for strategic initiatives, shifting and elevating existing offices to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to develop a central support mechanism, and organizing ODI into function areas
3. Monthly meeting with ASUN Diversity and Inclusion Committee Co-Chairs
4. Aspire IChange Team

## **Culture and Climate**

Assessing and addressing campus climate, forming community among affinity groups, recognizing accomplishments and service, and celebrating successes.

### *ODI has accomplished:*

1. My Husker Action
2. Climate Related Reporting Processes and Support (*in progress*)
3. Faculty of Color Symposium
4. Support and Coordination of the Office of the Chancellor's Journey to Antiracism (*in progress*)
5. Hall of Fame Celebration (*in progress*)
6. Vice Chancellor Office Hours

## **Leadership Development**

Baselining and increasing competency among institutional leadership.

### *ODI has accomplished:*

1. Search Education for Faculty and Staff (*in progress*)
2. National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (Co-Sponsor)
3. CEO Action

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## ***Learning and Education***

Increasing institutional cultural competency and incentivizing diversity education.

### ***ODI has accomplished:***

- 1.** Professional Development Collaborative (*in progress*)
- 2.** Diversity Education Request Portal
- 3.** Nebraska Community of Learners - Understanding Diversity Through Education (NCLUDE)
- 4.** Virtual Husker Dialogues

## ***Policies and Practices***

Identifying and evaluating data and addressing inequity and barriers in policies, processes, and other institutional structures.

### ***ODI has accomplished:***

- 1.** Serving on Gender Identity and Chosen Name Policy Committee
- 2.** Annual Report (*in progress*)
- 3.** Development of Diversity Data Dashboard (*in progress*)

## ***Strategy and Structure***

Monitoring and mapping unit-specific and institutional diversity strategies.

### ***ODI has accomplished:***

- 1.** College and Unit-Level Diversity Strategies and Planning (*in progress*)
- 2.** Inclusivity Brunch with Multicultural RSO Leaders
- 3.** N2025 (*in progress*)
- 4.** Chancellor's Native American and Indigenous Work Group (*in progress*)

## ***Branding***

Telling our story, making the case for inclusive excellence, and increasing our national reputation.

### ***ODI has accomplished:***

- 1.** Igniting Inclusive Excellence
- 2.** Special Editions of Dish it Up
- 3.** Representation from ODI Leadership as Thought Leaders on National Diversity Related Efforts

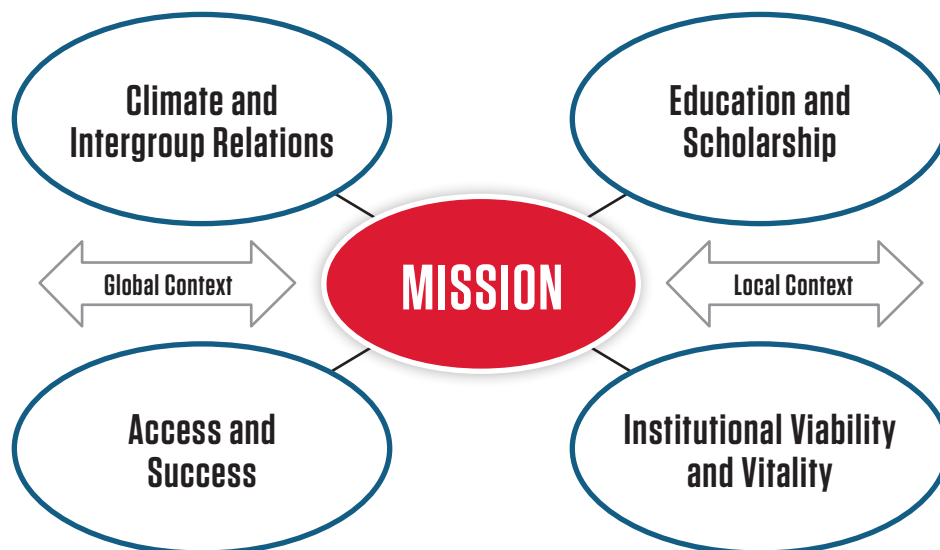


An overarching framework is used often in setting a tone. Furthermore, a diversity framework is meant to guide decisions, dialogue, and actions across the entire university and provide leaders with a tool for driving college-specific and unit-specific diversity and inclusion efforts. It intends to foster a coordinated approach to developing strategies.

There were several options that mirrored an inclusive excellence framework. After review, ODI identified Daryl G. Smith's Four Domains framework for UNL. This framework emerged from diversity's historical roots and from current issues impacting college and university campuses, while shifting the responsibility from groups to institutions and organizations. It engages the entire spectrum of identities and differentiates the concerns related to each.

The four dimensions are access and success of underrepresented populations, campus climate and intergroup relations, education and scholarship, and institutional viability and vitality (Smith, 2015 p .71). The four domains will provide colleges and units with an approach to organizing thoughts and ideas, while serving as a way for ODI to map efforts across the institution.

**Figure 3:**  
Mission-Driven Domains (Smith, 2015)



The Office of Diversity and Inclusion continues to shape its mission in response to national best practices and trends and to the needs of the institution and state. ODI is identifying opportunities to develop, leverage, and support efforts that elevate and advance the institution's capacity to fully activate an inclusive excellence agenda. Several future activities allow the office to accomplish this:

- *University Diversity Awards.* ODI will establish a university-wide annual award ceremony, recognizing individuals and groups who actively advance diversity and inclusive excellence through the development and promotion of initiatives that are exceptional and innovative in areas of academic and co-curricular service, teaching, research, and public service.
- *Diversity in STEM.* Through the APLU's, Aspire: The National Alliance for Inclusive and Diversity STEM Faculty, this joint effort between the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Office of Diversity and Inclusion, will continue to advance diversity and inclusive teaching practices, while providing comprehensive support and resources for institutional change.
- *BRIDGE/Search Education.* ODI will establish a university-wide resource tool for faculty and staff search committees to discuss strategies in advance of beginning a search. It is designed to provide strategies to support the university's commitment to promote equal opportunity and enhance excellence through faculty diversity.
- *Campus Climate Efforts.* ODI will collaborate with units to develop a process for addressing bias and other actions that negatively impact campus climate and culture. These processes will consider all members of the campus community while engaging and coordinating with campus departments to ensure alignment with institutional policies.
- *Health Science Scholars.* OASIS, in partnership with the Explore Center, will extend its academic support services and peer mentoring to health-science scholars through the Success Scholars Program. The previous two-year scholarship has been expanded to a four-year scholarship.

In addition to the items listed above, ODI will continue to connect with and learn from other institutional and community partners.

The formation of a new office requires extensive coordination and an adoption of ongoing operational practices to provide the most promising efforts reflective of inclusive excellence. There has been a tremendous amount of support from committed faculty, staff, and students. Transforming institutional culture to an inclusive excellence mindset will take everyone. It is a process where members of the University will need to be open to learning, and being nimble, critical, empathetic, and patient.

There is a great deal of work ahead of us, but we are an institution where we believe in working hard and going BIG.

For more information regarding inclusive excellence at UNL, visit [diversity.unl.edu](http://diversity.unl.edu).