THE

UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

**OFFICE OF
COMMUNITY, EQUITY
AND DIVERSITY**

CED STRATEGIC PLAN

2017 – 2022

*A Campus–Wide Guide
for Promoting Diversity,
Equity and Inclusion*

Table of Contents

A Message from President
David M. Dooley

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

The Office of Community, Equity and Diversity (CED) has developed the 2017–2022 Office of Community, Equity, and Diversity Strategic Plan with considerable input from University community stakeholders. The Office of Community, Equity and Diversity Strategic Plan offers a framework to inform and extend our community's diversity and social justice efforts. While the plan encompasses many of the recommendations from the University's students, staff, faculty, and related organizations, it will be the charge of CED and its departmental units (Affirmative Action, Bystander Intervention Program, Gender and Sexuality Center, Multicultural Student Services Center, and Women's Center) to provide guidance and lead these efforts.

The CED Strategic Plan affirms URI's significant progress toward our diversity and social justice goals. Currently, 23% of our students and 18.6% of our faculty members self-identify as people of color. Similarly, we have made an unwavering commitment as an institution to diversifying the faculty and staff so they better reflect the demographics of our student body, state, and nation. As an institution, we embrace all forms of diversity, including, but not limited to, race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, gender identification or expression, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, citizenship status, and veteran status.

The goals of the CED Strategic Plan focus on recruiting talent, retaining talent, and transforming the climate and culture of our institution. These goals are an extension of those outlined in the University's Academic Strategic Plan and the President's Transformational Goals for the 21st Century, that aim to foster a teaching and learning environment in which everyone has an opportunity to thrive.

This plan is only as strong as the commitment each community member makes to its success. We invite you to partner with the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity to build stronger links among our commitments to diversity and social justice and the ways in which we engage each member of the University community.

Warm regards,

David M. Dooley
President

A Message from Associate Vice President
Naomi R. Thompson

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

This Community, Equity and Diversity (CED) Strategic Plan serves as a guide to help URI in embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion while advancing social justice. URI's diversity and inclusion goals require institutional collaboration with full and complete commitment from the entire URI community; CED staff cannot implement this plan without your involvement.

The Office of Community, Equity and Diversity is comprised of the Bystander Intervention Program; Gender and Sexuality Center; Multicultural Student Services Center; Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity; and the Women's Center. The units of CED support University efforts to recruit and retain diverse students, faculty, and staff, while fostering an inclusive campus climate where each individual may learn, work, research, innovate, and thrive. These units are designed to serve URI by fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment while supporting historically marginalized individuals and groups; they stand poised and prepared to provide guidance, support, and safe spaces for individuals who may need assistance.

At this moment in history, the future of our country appears uncertain—human and civil rights, which so many people have sacrificed dearly to achieve and protect, are being attacked and challenged. At times like these, we must turn to URI's core values and collective wisdom. Our core values include respecting the rights and dignity of each individual and group, rejecting prejudice and intolerance, and working to understand differences.

This plan reflects contributions from URI students, faculty, staff, and alumni, as well as best practices from inclusive excellence theory and practice. We are grateful for each community member who contributed, and we hope that through this plan, you will find opportunities to engage and enrich your understanding of diversity and inclusion, while moving from theory to practice in an effort to inclusively embrace the values of community, equity, and diversity.

Together we are stronger.

Sincerely,

Naomi R. Thompson,
Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Vice President for Community, Equity and Diversity

About the CED Strategic Plan

We, in the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity (CED), believe that diversity, **equity**, **inclusion**, and **social justice** efforts are the shared responsibility of each member of the University of Rhode Island community. The 2017–22 CED Strategic Plan aims to codify our shared responsibility. This plan is rooted in recommendations from the URI community, inclusive of: URI's diversity councils, commissions, and committees; principles of **inclusive excellence**; best practices in diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice research and scholarship; frameworks in community and organizational development; and findings from benchmarking other college and university diversity strategic plans.

Prior to the development of this plan, the University outlined some of its goals and values around diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice in the President's Transformational Goals for the 21st Century, the Academic Strategic Plan, and URI Cornerstones. For reference, links to these documents are available at uri.edu/diversity.

The plan is organized into three goals, each related to a broad category: Recruitment, Retention, and Institutional Transformation. Each goal is defined, and then broken down into strategies and actions. Strategies are the approaches we recommend for achieving the goals. Actions are the recommended steps to use in pursuing the strategies. Our objective is that URI's divisions and departments will incorporate many of these goals, strategies and actions into their own strategic plans, fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

The 2017–22 CED Strategic Plan uses the term *marginalized* to characterize groups who have been historically excluded from the resources of society (e.g., state and federally protected classes inclusive of race, color, religion, religious creed, national origin, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, disability, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital status, citizenship status, socioeconomic class, or status as a special disabled veteran, recently separated veteran, Vietnam-era veteran, or any other veteran who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized). We recognize that some community members from marginalized groups may self-identify through human resources or admissions processes, while other members may not. We aim to address issues and concerns that both groups experience on campus.

Recruitment
PG. 6

GOAL 01

GOAL 02

Retention
PG. 8

Institutional Transformation
PG. 10

GOAL 03

Equity
Ensuring that opportunities for marginalized groups to participate in an organization are the same as opportunities for non-marginalized groups, and creating opportunities for closing any gaps in participating and achieving within the organization.

Inclusion
The active creation and fostering of an environment in which diverse individuals and groups can thrive.

Social Justice
Applying the concepts of human rights and equality to everyday interactions, work, and life in an effort to foster an equitable culture.

Inclusive Excellence
A principle used within higher education to describe the goal of creating a culture that values and fosters diversity.

GOAL 01

Recruitment

CED seeks to collaborate with appropriate offices to increase the number of students, faculty, and staff from marginalized groups who study and work at the University of Rhode Island.

Recruitment is the process of attracting, screening, hiring, and admitting qualified applicants for admission and employment at URI. CED recognizes that many URI community members across divisions have made significant strides in recruiting students, faculty, and staff from marginalized groups.

We offer the following goals, strategies, and actions to help continue and build upon these efforts. The objectives for this goal are as follows: (a) Recruit students from marginalized groups at undergraduate and graduate levels. (b) Recruit faculty and staff from marginalized groups.

Strategy 1

Continue to increase the recruitment of undergraduate students from marginalized groups across disciplines.

ACTIONS:

1. Continue to meet with leadership in Enrollment Management (i.e., Undergraduate Admission and Enrollment Services) to share ideas and pool resources to reach greater numbers of prospective students from marginalized groups.

2. Continue to work with Enrollment Management to enhance financial aid for students from marginalized groups.

3. Use existing Institutional Research data to develop a baseline data set of the majors and programs with low numbers of students from marginalized groups.

4. Use existing baseline data to work with the Office of Undergraduate Admission to develop recruitment plans for the groups that are underrepresented in specific majors and programs.

5. Coordinate social media, websites, and direct marketing with the office of Undergraduate Admission to reach undergraduate students from marginalized groups.

6. Communicate to undergraduate applicants the processes, policies, and programs that support students from marginalized groups.

Strategy 2

Continue to increase the recruitment of graduate students from marginalized groups in all disciplines.

ACTIONS:

1. Meet with leadership in the Graduate School and graduate programs to determine how to pool resources to recruit greater numbers of students from marginalized groups.

2. Analyze admission processes to identify any steps that may disadvantage students from marginalized groups (e.g., high-stakes testing).

3. Make URI undergraduate students from marginalized groups aware of the URI graduate admission process through workshops. This will benefit graduate recruitment, as well as provide a service to URI undergraduates.

4. Encourage undergraduate students from marginalized groups to apply for graduate school at URI. This will provide a valuable service to undergraduate students, with a secondary benefit to URI graduate recruitment.

5. Work with academic units to identify and expand URI's connections with minority-serving institutions (e.g., Asian American and Pacific Islander institutions, historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and women's colleges) to expand URI's network of diverse applicants.

6. Work with academic units on developing summer bridge programs that expand opportunities for URI undergraduate students to conduct research in preparation for graduate school. This will provide a valuable service to URI undergraduates, with a secondary benefit to URI graduate recruitment.

7. Work with the Graduate School to develop an incentivized graduate student ambassadors program so that graduate students from marginalized groups can share their experiences with prospective applicants.

Strategy 3

Continue to use best practices before and during the search process by working with URI Human Resources and Affirmative Action to expand opportunities for recruiting faculty and staff from marginalized groups.

ACTIONS:

1. Establish annual goals for recruitment and hiring of faculty and staff from marginalized groups, consistent with areas of underutilization as identified in the Affirmative Action Plan.

2. Educate search committees on best practices for conducting equitable and inclusive searches and addressing bias during the search process.

3. Incorporate job requirements related to knowledge, appreciation, and competence in diversity and inclusion.

4. Affirm equity in work and salary at all levels, particularly with hiring practices, promotion, and workload.

5. Conduct an annual analysis and revision of all search, hiring, and promotion policies, practices, and procedures to eliminate any unintended differential impact and exclusion.

Retention

CED seeks to support—and lead, when appropriate—efforts to increase the number of URI students, faculty, and staff from marginalized groups who advance through educational and professional pipelines at the University of Rhode Island.

Retention describes an organization's efforts to keep those whom they recruit. Like many other colleges and universities, URI faces challenges in retaining and advancing some of our students from marginalized groups through the educational pipeline. CED recognizes that there have been cross-divisional efforts to address these challenges. This work is laudable and must continue if URI is to meet the diversity and social justice goals outlined in Goal 4 of the University's Academic Strategic Plan.

At the same time, URI has committed to diversifying its faculty and staff, and we have made significant strides in recruiting new faculty from marginalized groups who produce cutting-edge research, scholarship, and pedagogy. We must continue to make every effort to retain our faculty members by creating supports throughout the tenure and promotion process. It is also one of our goals to bring in new diverse faculty and staff members from around the world.

We offer the following goals, strategies, and actions to help continue and build upon these efforts. The objectives for this goal are as follows: (a) Retain students from marginalized groups at undergraduate and graduate levels. (b) Retain faculty and staff from marginalized groups.

Strategy 1

Promote the retention, persistence, and graduation of students from marginalized groups.

ACTIONS

1. In collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research, use qualitative and quantitative research methods to gather data to understand and respond to trends in the retention, persistence, and graduation of students from marginalized groups.

2. Work with the appropriate URI divisions to interpret the data gathered and take action; develop ways to improve on areas in which the data reveals hindrances to retention and to capitalize on areas in which the data reveals URI is already working effectively.

3. Identify and recommend courses, programs, and resources that help students from marginalized groups successfully navigate higher education, especially those programs that prepare students from marginalized groups for careers/fields in which they are underrepresented (e.g., STEM fields).

4. Continue to establish programs to connect students, faculty, staff, and alumni from marginalized groups with one another.

Strategy 2

Support career advancement for faculty from marginalized groups.

ACTIONS

1. Provide support for faculty, primarily during the first year of employment and during the tenure and promotion process.

2. Offer discussion lunches for all faculty; strongly encourage faculty members from marginalized groups, along with their mentors, to attend.

3. Encourage attendance at workshops for tenure-track faculty on tenure processes and expectations (e.g., grant-writing, securing funding, post-award supports, publishing, research, teaching, service, and negotiation).

4. Help academic units find ways to acknowledge and reward effective research, teaching, and service related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

5. Create networking opportunities for new and existing faculty.

Strategy 3

Support career advancement for staff from marginalized groups at all career levels.

ACTIONS

1. Promote and encourage continuing education for current employees, allowing reasonable accommodations when education/professional development opportunities conflict with work schedules.

2. Support professional advancement for staff by creating apprenticeship and/or mentoring programs.

3. Identify professional development opportunities for staff from marginalized groups.

4. Create networking opportunities for new and existing staff.

<div style="text-align:center">GOAL 03</div>

Institutional Transformation

CED will support—and lead, when appropriate—the University's efforts to foster a climate and culture aligned with URI's diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice strategic goals.

Institutional transformation is a systemic effort to align URI's values with its practice; to promote substantive change in **organizational climate** and **organizational culture**. Institutional transformation is nurtured when every member of the community commits to engaging new paradigms that change URI's identity and image in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. CED recognizes that many student, staff, and faculty-led organizations have worked within and across divisions to effect campus climate and culture change (e.g., Equity Council; President's Commission on the Status of Women; President's Commission on People with Disabilities; President's Commission on the Status of Students, Staff, and Faculty of Color; President's LGBTQ Commission; and others).

We offer the following goals, strategies, and actions to help continue and build upon these efforts, borrowing from two existing frameworks on climate and culture: the three levels of culture (Schein, 1990)* and the four dimensions of campus climate (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen, 1999)**. The objectives for this goal are as follows: (a) Transform each level of institutional culture so that community members experience a welcoming, equitable, and inclusive environment. (b) Transform each dimension of institutional climate so that community members experience a welcoming, equitable, and inclusive environment.

Organizational Climate:
The shared perceptions and attitudes community members have about their environment.

Organizational Culture:
A shared system of artifacts, values, and assumptions that influence the patterns of daily life learned consciously and unconsciously by community members.

*   Schein, E. H. (1990). Organizational culture. American Psychologist, 45, 109-119.

** Hurtado, S., Milem, J., Clayton-Pedersen, A., & Allen, W. (1999). Enacting diverse learning environments: Improving the climate for racial/ethnic diversity in higher education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Strategy 1

Identify the artifacts and symbols at URI that do not communicate a welcoming and inclusive environment.

ACTIONS

1. Conduct an assessment of how campus imagery, symbols, traditions, forms, structures (physical and organizational), and policies communicate URI's values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

2. Establish and enhance physical spaces so that all community members feel safe and respected.

3. Collaborate with the URI community to encourage the use of images that are representative; and the creation of forms, rooms, and buildings that are compliant with **universal design** recommendations.

4. Recognize and publicize accomplishments, contributions, and career milestones for employees. Affirming innovation in research, teaching, and service of faculty from marginalized groups is a way to convey the many ways in which people from marginalized groups contribute to the community.

Strategy 2

Identify URI's espoused values and beliefs that are not aligned with Goal 4 of the University's Academic Strategic Plan.

ACTIONS

1. Work with the appropriate divisions to communicate URI's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice widely and consistently.

2. Encourage a climate that celebrates differences and abilities among all community members at URI, while affirming the many outstanding contributions of students, faculty, and staff from marginalized groups.

3. Work actively with the Bias Response Team to encourage the URI community to recognize and interrupt (i.e., intervene, report, etc.) harassment and oppressive incidents, encouraging all URI community members to become active bystanders.

Strategy 3

Address the mental models and assumptions that reflect unconscious bias, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings rooted in the oppression of community members from marginalized groups.

ACTIONS

1. Model, provide guidance, and encourage **equity-mindedness** in planning and decision-making processes across the institution.

2. Acknowledge and support individual, group, and organizational efforts at holding conversations, trainings, and workshops that support diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

3. Work with the Office of the Provost and with the Faculty Senate to encourage diversity expectations in the tenure review process and to broaden criteria for research, teaching, and service.

Universal Design:
Intentionally designing buildings, environments, interfaces, products, tools, processes, forms, etc. in a way that makes them accessible, usable, convenient, and welcoming to everyone, regardless of age, size, ability, or disability.

Equity-Mindedness:
An approach to work, projects, or any undertaking that is mindful of diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice, and a willingness to adapt the undertaking based on feedback around those issues.

Institutional Transformation (continued)

4. Use this CED Strategic Plan as a tool to communicate with the URI community. For example, CED Strategic Plan progress reports can highlight the University's successes or call attention to areas that need work in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

5. Review and, if necessary, revise policies and practices that do not align with URI's Cornerstones.

6. Encourage faculty to establish an interdisciplinary social justice minor that focuses on general or specific topics within diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

Strategy 4

Acknowledge and raise awareness of the historical context of exclusion or inclusion that shapes the experiences of URI community members from marginalized groups.

ACTIONS

1. Use qualitative and quantitative research methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and surveys) to understand the experiences of students, faculty, and staff from marginalized groups as members of the URI community.

2. Identify and showcase important moments in URI's history that define inclusive experiences of students, faculty, and staff from marginalized groups in the URI community (e.g., online diversity history timeline).

3. Conduct **diversity mapping** across the URI community (e.g., existing diversity efforts, diversity courses, general education requirements, affinity groups, social justice efforts, etc.) within an **appreciative inquiry** framework.

Strategy 5

Identify and raise awareness about how the composition of various URI community groups (staff within particular departments/divisions or at particular levels, committees, faculty groups, students in particular majors, etc.) determines and affects how individuals experience this institutional community.

ACTIONS

1. Work with Institutional Research to gather data on demographics (students/faculty/staff).

2. Develop opportunities for students, faculty, and staff from marginalized groups to participate in shared governance.

3. Conduct exit interviews to understand whether reasons for leaving employment had anything to do with climate as it pertains to inclusiveness.

4. Examine wages, benefits, leave, and other employment-related activities.

5. Monitor faculty and staff turnover, identify barriers to advancement, make recommendations for remediating barriers.

Strategy 6

Understand and address the extent to which individuals perceive conflict and discrimination on campus, feel somehow singled out because of their background, or perceive institutional support/commitment related to diversity.

ACTIONS

1. Offer programs, presentations, and trainings that educate the community about the realities faced by students, faculty, and staff from marginalized groups.

2. Study and aim to improve the sense of belonging experienced by community members from marginalized groups, and address the conditions that create alienation and intergroup conflict.

3. Provide support for faculty who enhance teaching methods to meet the learning needs of students, and integrate cultural competencies and social justice skills into their courses.

Strategy 7

Identify ways in which the interactions between and among different groups affect the type and level of their participation in campus programs, traditions, and activities and their engagement in various institutional systems.

ACTIONS

1. Continue to offer advocacy and support for students, faculty, and staff from marginalized groups by sponsoring a broad array of programming across the institution.

2. Encourage more positive and productive intergroup experiences through candid intergroup dialogues.

Diversity Mapping:
The process of inventorying, plotting, and analyzing current diversity efforts within an organization in an effort to identify what is already being done to promote an inclusive climate and what remains to be done.

Appreciative Inquiry:
Asking questions that elicit responses about the positive aspects of people and organizations, in an effort to strengthen the organization and its potential.

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the principles of
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