



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Action Plan

Phase I - 2021-2023

**Developed by the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Council
Spring 2021**

DEI Vision

Paul Smith's College is an institution improved by the exchange of diverse experiences and perspectives. By bringing together people from many different backgrounds, we equip the next generation to engage present and future challenges and opportunities. We are committed to attracting and retaining a diverse staff and student community. Paul Smith's College will honor these experiences and unique perspectives and strive to create working and learning environments that are inclusive, equitable, and welcoming.

This plan consists of strategic recommendations that will move the College toward improved diversity, equity, and inclusion across our campus community. This plan is intended to be a living document that will be continuously reviewed, evaluated, and refined by the DEI Council in partnership with the Executive Cabinet.¹

Introduction

The need for direct, active, and honest attention to equity, inclusivity, and diversity is as urgent today as ever. Our world faces social, economic, and environmental challenges of unprecedented complexity and scale. A paradigm shift towards embracing equity and inclusivity across our College and the region opens immense opportunities for learning and growth, while working to intentionally address the very legitimate challenges we face as a campus.

Why now?

A diverse and inclusive College community increases our cultural and ethnic awareness and enriches the educational experience. Working in diverse teams fosters understanding and respect for individuals and dispels stereotypes. It increases our communication skills and allows us to work better with people from many different backgrounds. Our institution is at a crossroads; it is crucial for us to increase enrollment and retention, and these issues should be front and center in improving our ability to attract and retain a greater number of diverse students. Our potential applicant pool will increase greatly if we are able to attract students from diverse backgrounds, something the institution has historically struggled with and continues to struggle with today.

¹ DEI Vision Statements written by PSC DEI Council Co-Chairs & DEI Curriculum Subcommittee Chair from 2020-2021 meetings with entire Council.

² Introduction and Action Plan overview written by DEI Council Curriculum Subcommittee Chair, Dean of Students, and DEI Council Co-Chairs. Multiple universities and colleges' DEI webpages were used to facilitate conversation and structure of the DEI Council meetings in which this document came from,

The creation of this Action Plan comes from the desire to improve the experience of students, staff, and faculty from diverse backgrounds or marginalized communities while at Paul Smith's College and grow into a more culturally competent community. The DEI Council and Cabinet believe if the College community dedicates its time and resources to realizing the recommendations of the Action Plan, it will begin to create a more welcoming environment for all community members, allowing each person to feel supported, safe and valued. This DEI Action Plan will address urgent campus needs and inform a campus-wide process of assessment that will lead to the next iteration of the long-term strategic plan for DEI and the College.²

Definition of Terms

Concepts and terminology used in plans such as this can vary considerably, and usage evolves over time. To ensure that readers and members of the College share an understanding of how this plan uses terminology, definitions of key words and phrases are provided below. Terms below taken and adapted from the Oregon State University College of Forestry Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

DIVERSITY is the spectrum of differences members of the College bring to our community through their variety of backgrounds, experiences, and views. These differences include but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical and cognitive abilities, national origin, religious and political beliefs, education, marital status, language, veteran status, worldviews, and other characteristics and ideologies. Embracing diversity is about moving beyond tolerance to understanding and appreciating each other by respecting and celebrating diversity at the College.

EQUITY is the guarantee of fair treatment and leveled access to opportunities that provide an equal chance for everyone to succeed. Equity seeks to reduce barriers that prevent some groups and individuals from fully participating.

INCLUSION is working together to create an open and welcoming environment that respects and affirms the inherent dignity, value, and uniqueness of all individuals and groups. Inclusive practices reflect awareness and understanding of the complexity of identity and the diversity in the world.³

including Skidmore, Lesley, University of Michigan, and Oregon State University College of Forestry, all included in reference list at end of document.

³ Oregon State University College of Forestry Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan, 2017
https://www.forestry.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/upload_files/102517_CoF_DEI_plan.pdf (all three terms taken & adapted from OSU CoF DEI glossary)

Council Structure

In August 2020, all staff and faculty were invited to participate in the first DEI Council meeting. The Council co-chairs presented initial efforts being made by the College in the establishment of a DEI working group. Out of this meeting, twenty employees joined the DEI Council and began meeting, forming working groups and drafting this plan.

Since that time, the DEI Council has adopted a formal set of bylaws and instituted a formal structure. The Council consists of two co-chairs, a secretary, a treasurer, and a communications leader, as well as four committees: Curriculum and Training, Community and Partnerships, Student Engagement and Programming, and Policy. In addition, there is a chair of each committee, four voting members-at-large and four voting student members.⁴

Analysis of DEI Gaps

The members of the DEI Council in collaboration with the College's Cabinet members identified a need to address current efforts, student experience/perception, and gaps across diversity, equity, and inclusion within the College. The analysis of this data influenced the priority action items reflected in the 2021-2023 Action Plan document and will provide a blueprint for projected strategic initiatives after this plan's timeline. The internal data the DEI Council will assess are found in the following documents and reports:

- Demographics (Registrar & Human Resources)
- NSSE annual data (Registrar)
- IPED success data (Dean of Students)
- Campus Climate Survey (CARES Team)
- Annual Campus Security and Fire Report (Campus Safety/Title IX Office)
- Bi-annual Student Satisfaction Survey (Registrar)

Identified by the plan design chart on pages 7-8, the DEI Council Community & Partnership Subcommittee Chair reaches out to the institutional offices which hold the data above, to grant access to the DEI Council. In the 2021-2022 Academic Year the DEI Council and Cabinet plan to engage

⁴ Council structure is designed to have four voting student members, as of Spring 2021 during the writing stage of the Action Plan, these students had not yet been identified. Aim for Summer/Fall 2021 student members after plan has been shared with campus during Spring 2021 end of semester meeting.

⁵ Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Institution Profile, Enrollment section, 2019.
<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/institutionprofile.aspx?unitid=194392> Race/ethnicity terminology used by IPEDS.

⁶ Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Institution Profile, Enrollment section, 2019.

an external reviewer to assist with conducting a full campus culture assessment. The aim of the external review is to provide expertise, an outside perspective to address our unseen areas from an unbiased source, and recommendations moving forward.

A snapshot data summary from the College's existing self-reporting surveys is included to give context for the Phase I action items included in this plan, along with the below student demographics.

The race/ethnicity of Paul Smith's College student population as reported in 2019 is as follows: 83% White, 5% Black, 3% Hispanic, 3% unknown, 2% American Indian/Alaska Native, 1% Two or more races, 1% Asian, 0% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.⁵ The gender identity composition of Paul Smith's College student population as reported in 2019 is as follows: 66% male, 34% female.⁶

In future years summaries should include additional breakdowns among various demographic categories other than race and gender to provide a richer reflection of the student body and community at Paul Smith's College; an external reviewer would be helpful to determine the most appropriate way to collect sensitive personal data of this type.

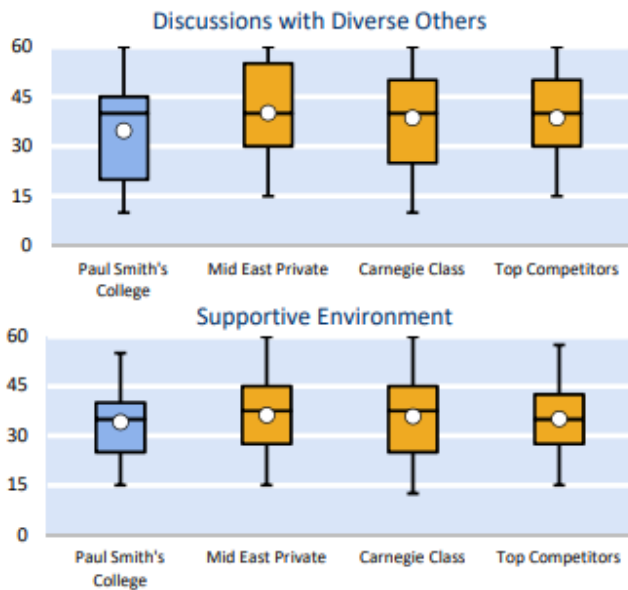
Sections highlighted below provide context from the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) 2019-2020 and the Campus Climate Survey 2019. The data reflects areas of both surveys that directly correlate to the plan proposed by the DEI Council and PSC Cabinet. According to the 2020 NSSE data, Paul Smith's College is:

- 11% below average compared to other Mideast privates in "included diverse perspectives" in course discussions or assignments
- 14% below average compared to other Mideast privates in "tried to better understand someone else's views"
- 8% below average compared to other Mideast privates in "learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept"⁷

<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/institutionprofile.aspx?unitid=194392> IPEDS limits their options for gender identity to "Male" and "Female". A summary of the IPEDS technical review panel meeting in October 2016 that addressed the reporting of gender can be found at https://edsurveys.rti.org/IPEDS_TRP_DOCS/prod/documents/TRP_51_Summary.pdf.

⁷ NSSE 2020 Engagement Indicators Paul Smith's College, 2020. [insert URL of NSSE Engagement Indicators data when on DEI College website]

Overall PSC students rank lower on engagement indicators relating to DEI and have greater variation amongst themselves, indicating a lack of common experience amongst our students. For indicators “Reflective and Integrative Learning” and “Discussions with Diverse Others” the standard deviation of PSC Seniors’ responses are 11.9 and 14.7. Such a large variation confirms that our students do not have a “standard” experience, and that the incorporation of diverse perspectives is not a broad institutional standard across curricula. Seniors at PSC reportedly have fewer opportunities to interact with students from different backgrounds than themselves; to attend events that address important social, economic, or political issues; and to be involved socially.



Where 60 is very often, 40 is often, 20 is sometimes, 0 is never⁸

⁸ NSSE 2020 Engagement Indicators Paul Smith's College, 2020.
[insert URL of NSSE Engagement Indicators data when on DEI

First-year

Highest Performing Relative to Top Competitors

About how many courses have included a community-based project (service-learning)?^a (HIP)

Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material w/other students^b (CL)

Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (...) ^b (SF)

Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member^b (SF)

Talked about career plans with a faculty member^b (SF)

Lowest Performing Relative to Top Competitors

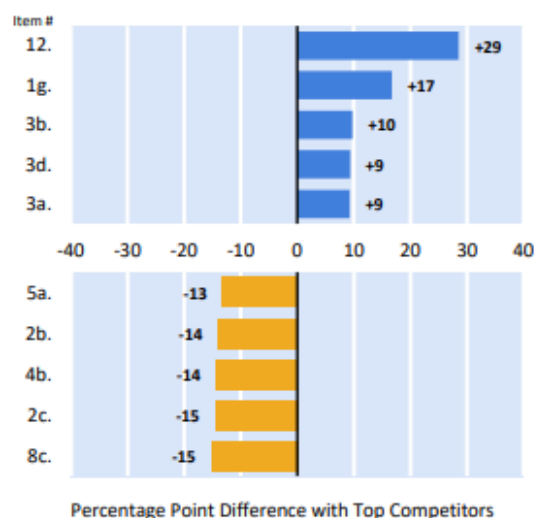
Instructors clearly explained course goals and requirements^c (ET)

Connected your learning to societal problems or issues^b (RI)

Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations^c (HO)

Included diverse perspectives (...) in course discussions or assignments^b (RI)

Discussions with... People with religious beliefs other than your own^b (DD)



Senior

Highest Performing Relative to Top Competitors

Completed a culminating senior experience (...) (HIP)

Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class^b (SF)

About how many courses have included a community-based project (service-learning)?^a (HIP)

Talked about career plans with a faculty member^b (SF)

Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (...) ^b (SF)

Lowest Performing Relative to Top Competitors

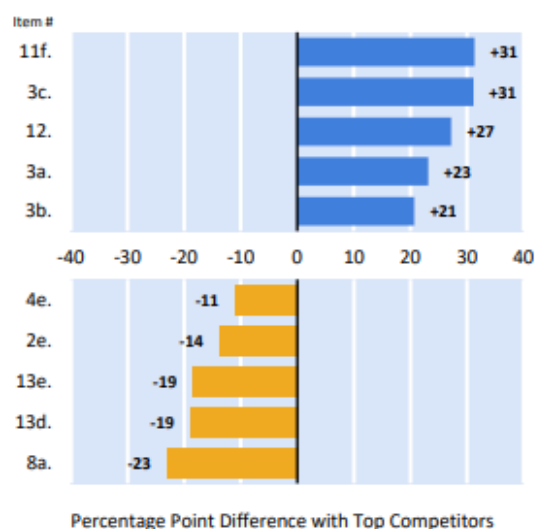
Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information^c (HO)

Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining...his or her perspective^b (RI)

Quality of interactions with other administrative staff and offices (...) ^d (QI)

Quality of interactions with student services staff (...) ^d (QI)

Discussions with... People of a race or ethnicity other than your own^b (DD)



Visuals above taken from the 'NSSE Snapshot of Paul Smith's College.' These depict areas where our students' self-assessments have the greatest variation when compared to our top competitors, both high and low.⁹

37% of the total respondents (156)¹⁰ to the 2019 Campus Climate Survey reported experiencing any sexual harassment by faculty and staff, with 24% reporting being treated differently because of their sex. 48% reported experience any sexual harassment by students, with 36% reporting being treated differently because of their sex.

Of the 156 respondents, 80% knew where to get help on campus if they experience sexual misconduct, 64% understand what happens when a claim is made, and 76% know where to go to make a report of sexual misconduct. While these numbers are encouraging, we would like to see them closer to 100% in future years. Only 56% responded that they felt the institution would handle such reports fairly. This information came from the "Knowledge of Campus Resources" and "Institutional Responses to Cases of Sexual Misconduct" sections of the 2019 Campus Climate Survey

⁹ NSSE 2020 Snapshot Paul Smith's College, 2020. [insert URL for report when available on DEI site] The figures draws from the items that make up the ten Engagement Indicators (EIs) in NSSE surveys: six High-Impact Practices (HIPs), Key abbreviations for items: HO = Higher-Order Learning, RI = Reflective & Integrative Learning, LS = Learning Strategies, QR = Quantitative Reasoning, CL = Collaborative Learning, DD = Discussions with Diverse Others,

SF = Student-Faculty Interaction, ET = Effective Teaching Practices, QI = Quality of Interactions, SE = Supportive Environment. HIP items are also indicated. Item numbering corresponds to the survey facsimile available on the NSSE website.

¹⁰The total 156 respondents for the 2019 Campus Climate Survey reflects students only.

Summary.¹¹

Much of our internal data reflects student self-assessments. We do not have assessments of college systems, curriculum, and environment. An external reviewer can help us fill in these gaps in data and make useful recommendations on actionable steps to take to both improve our systems and improve student experience and perceptions while they are here at Paul Smith's College.

Plan Design

The following plan seeks to address four key themes that emerged as Phase I areas of focus following the above-mentioned data analysis. Each theme includes five recommended actions the College plans to implement to move towards a more inclusive campus, with diverse representation, allowing for equity among all members.¹² Each theme corresponds to a "Council lead" within the DEI Council committee structure and action items contain identified Cabinet partner(s) and other entities on and off campus that relate to specific steps.

Culture - Build a Culture of Awareness & Support – Build foundational knowledge and provide support to increase awareness of, exposure to, understanding for, and acceptance of DEI among PSC members.

Curriculum - Embed DEI into the Curriculum – Provide a quality learning experience that values and promotes the importance of DEI.

Student Experience - Diversify Student Body & Improve Experience for All Students – Enhance DEI in Paul Smith's College through the recruitment and retention of a more diverse and accepting student body.

Policy - Institutionalize Long-Term Support for DEI – Make DEI an integrated, consistent, meaningful, and continual part of the PSC community.¹³

¹¹ Campus Climate Survey 2019 Paul Smith's College, 2019. [insert URL when made available on DEI website page]

¹² Plan table design adapted from Oregon State University College of Forestry Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan, 2017 <https://www.forestry.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/upload>

[files/102517_CoF_DEI_plan.pdf](#)

¹³ Plan design reflects four sections that correlate to the PSC DEI Council's four subcommittees: Curriculum and Training, Community and Partnerships, Student Engagement and Programming and Policy.

<p>THEME 1 – Culture</p> <p>Council Lead: Chair of Community & Partnerships Sub-Committee</p>	<p>Build a Culture of Awareness & Support – Build foundational knowledge and provide support to increase awareness of, exposure to, understanding for, and acceptance of DEI among PSC members.</p> <p>The following recommendations aim to increase awareness and exposure to other cultures and ways of thinking and learning to cultivate a community of faculty, staff, students, and external partners that is competent in knowing about and exemplifying diversity, equity, and inclusion values within PSC and beyond.</p>				
RECOMMENDATIONS	Action Steps	CABINET PARTNERS	Campus Community Involvement	STATUS	Deadline
1.1 Create and maintain a prominent DEI presence on the PSC webpage	Include DEI Vision, definitions, strategic plan, resources, social media outlets, DEI incident reporting mechanism	VP of Advancement & Marketing	DEI Council Communications, Marketing Team	Initiated	Ongoing
1.2 Promote the DEI plan to internal and external audiences during departmental and campus-wide meetings	Email to Campus Community, Presentation at End of Semester Meeting, reports in dept. meetings	All Cabinet	DEI Council Co-Chairs	Initiated	May 2021
1.3 Communicate with and learn from peer institutions that have succeeded at reducing DEI barriers to recruitment and retention	Participate in the St. Lawrence Valley College Consortium training, speakers, and events	All Cabinet	DEI Council Co-Chairs	Initiated	Ongoing
1.4 Review mass communication materials and media annually to ensure communication materials are inclusive and reflect diverse perspectives	College social media channels, website and digital media	VP of Advancement & Marketing	DEI Council Communications Officer, Social Media Users Group (SMUG)	Not Initiated	Ongoing
	Monthly DEI Newsletter, monthly bathroom buzz	Dean of Students	DEI Council Communications Officer	Initiated	Ongoing
	Educational Point of View and Response emails	VP of Advancement & Marketing & Dean of Students, President when appropriate	DEI Council Co-Chairs, Counseling Center/CARES coordinator when appropriate	Initiated	Ongoing
1.5 Conduct reviews of campus activities, spaces, practices and messaging to assess alignment	Review action plan’s accomplishments and external reviewer’s	Dean of Students /Provost	DEI Chair of Community & Partnership	Not Initiated	2022-2023 School Year

with PSC core values and representation of diverse perspectives	recommendations in Academic Year 2022-23 to move forward with new more extensive plan		Subcommittee, Council Co-Chairs		
	Facilities & Event spaces review for ADA	VP of Business and Finance	Chair of Community & partnerships Subcommittee, Facilities Staff, Conference Services Staff	Not Initiated	July 2022
	Reach out for all appropriate internal surveys identified in analysis DEI gaps section	Dean of Students and Provost	Chair of Community & Partnerships Subcommittee	Initiated	Ongoing

THEME 2 – Curriculum	Embed DEI into the Curriculum –Provide a quality learning experience that values and promotes the importance of DEI.				
Council Lead: Chair of Curriculum Sub-Committee	The following recommendations aim to ensure all academic departments take appropriate action to reflect DEI core values in their curriculum therefore promoting academic dialogue and practice around issues of DEI. The intended outcome: a campus that welcomes and values diverse backgrounds and perspectives.				
RECOMMENDATIONS	Action Steps	CABINET PARTNERS	Campus Community Involvement	STATUS	Deadline
2.1 Provide a wide range of learning opportunities in various formats that promote DEI across the curriculum	To be developed each academic year. May include items such as: speakers, podcasts, student town halls, internal and external professional development opportunities for employees, including curriculum development workshops for faculty	Provost	Sustainability Office, CARE Team, Counseling Center, Accommodative Services, Campus Clubs/Student Activities, Assistant Provost	Not initiated	Ongoing
2.2 Implement DEI into curricula of each degree program	Create a DEI statement for inclusion in the syllabus of each course to set the stage for a welcoming environment in the classroom	Provost	Department Heads, Curriculum Standards Committee, Faculty Senate	Not initiated	August 2021

	Appoint a committee representative of all academic programs to recommend how to integrate DEI into each one and to explore and exchange best practices and educational opportunities	Provost	Faculty Senate	Not initiated	May 2023 report
2.3 Increase curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to experience international exposure and globalization	Increase opportunity for low-income and/or otherwise underserved students to participate in international programming by integrating conversations about international opportunities with students who have not had prior exposure to them (e.g. International Friendship Program, International Global Classroom)	Provost	Faculty, Chair of Curriculum Sub-Committee, Associate Director of International Admissions, Fulbright Faculty Coordinator	Initiated	May 2022
2.4 Faculty will develop relationships with community leaders from diverse backgrounds and intentionally connect the leaders to their course design	Examples: field trips or speaker opportunities highlighting leaders and researchers from diverse constituencies and perspectives	Provost	Faculty	Initiated	Ongoing
2.5 Include and evaluate the integration of DEI content into all academic courses in the annual faculty review process	Evaluate existing DEI course content	Provost	Faculty Department Heads	Not Initiated	Ongoing
	Faculty articulate DEI goals in SME each year	Provost	Faculty, Department Chairs	Not Initiated	May 2022

THEME 3 – Student Experience Council Lead: Chair of Student Programming Sub-Committee	Diversify Student Body & Improve Experience for All Students – Enhance DEI in Paul Smith’s College through the recruitment and retention of a more diverse and accepting student body. The following recommendations aim to improve the representation and inclusion of diverse and underrepresented groups in PSC via recruitment and retention efforts.				
	RECOMMENDATIONS	Action Steps	CABINET PARTNERS	Campus Community	STATUS

			Involvement		
3.1 Identify and build recruitment relationships with High Schools and Community Colleges serving student populations that are underrepresented in the College.	HEOP, rural 1st generation student support, Women's Scholarship, Tribal student support, ADK Diversity Initiative, Emerging Stewards Program	VP of Enrollment, Dean of Students	HEOP Director, TRIO Director, Admissions Staff, Co-Chairs of DEI	Not Initiated	August 2022
3.2 Develop graduate program materials specifically to distribute to HBCUs, Tribal Colleges, and other institutions with high enrollment of underrepresented groups.	Work with Director of Graduate Studies and Admissions to establish plan for recruiting at these institutions	VP of Enrollment	Director of Graduate Studies, Admissions Staff	Not Initiated	August 2022
3.3 Increase financial support for low-income or otherwise underserved students to participate in international travel and study abroad opportunities.	Ensure all students are well informed about the Tompkins Endowment for International Study	VP of Business and Finance, Dean of Students, Provost	Department Chairs, Faculty Senate, Assistant Provost	Initiated	May 2022
	Train Academic Advisors and Support Staff to discuss international travel and study abroad more consistently with students	Dean of Students, Provost	Department Chairs, Faculty Senate, Advisors	Not Initiated	Fall 2021-Spring 2022
3.4 Incorporate DEI content into new student Orientation and Welcome Week.	Update Orientation & Welcome Week Mission and Learning Objectives to specifically address DEI elements. Include intentional programming that sets the stage for fostering an inclusive and respectful community	Dean of Students	Orientation and Welcome Week Committee, Director of Student Life and Housing, Coordinator for Orientation & Conduct, DEI Council	Not Initiated	September 2022
3.5 Build and maintain a student programming model that prioritizes DEI in the establishment of student facing events, activities, spaces, and groups.	Establish a Student Life Programming Model that prioritizes DEI activities and events. Create a DEI Student Lounge	Dean of Students	DEI Council, Students, Student Affairs staff	Initiated	Ongoing
	Incorporate students in the campus-wide DEI Assessment and establish a process to conduct a Bi-annual	Dean of Students	DEI Council Co-Chairs, Student Affairs staffs, Student Groups/Clubs	Not Initiated	Fall 2021-Spring 2022

	student survey. Actualize Student involvement on DEI Council				
	Review SGA governing documents and practices to be in support of DEI	Dean of Student	DEI Council Student Experience Subcommittee Chair, Student Affairs staff, Student Groups/Clubs and officers	Not Initiated	Fall 2021-2022

THEME 4 – Policy	Institutionalize Long-Term Support for DEI – Make DEI an integrated, consistent, meaningful, and continual part of the PSC community.				
Council Lead: Chair of Policy Sub-Committee	The following recommendations aim to develop and monitor appropriate policies and structures for continued dialogue and practice around issues of DEI.				
RECOMMENDATIONS	Action Steps	CABINET PARTNERS	Campus Community Involvement	STATUS	Deadline
4.1 Incorporate DEI training, service and performance expectations into all employee position descriptions and performance evaluations.	Develop clear performance expectations for all departments	All Cabinet	HR Director, All Supervisors, DEI Council members	Not Initiated	Fall 2021
	Insert performance expectations into new job descriptions as developed	All Cabinet	HR Director, All Supervisors	Not Initiated	As job descriptions are created or updated, Ongoing
	Incorporate into performance management training	All Cabinet	HR Director, All Supervisors	Not Initiated	As measures are created or updated, Ongoing
4.2 Require all leadership (Cabinet and department heads) to receive relevant and annual DEI trainings.	To be developed, scheduled, and disseminated	All Cabinet	HR Director, All Supervisors	Not Initiated	Begin Fall 2021
4.3 Establish clear procedures for responding to incidents of discrimination and harassment in the College.	Model procedures after sexual harassment procedures with a focus on education and progressive discipline	All Cabinet	HR Director, Interested employees	Not Initiated	Begin Fall 2021

	Create online reporting mechanism for website	VP of Marketing	HR Director, Marketing Department	Not Initiated	Spring 2022
4.4 Discuss and determine how each campus Division and its subsequent Departments will incorporate DEI into their organizational structure and day-to-day business operations.	Support departments in assessing current standards and increasing DEI practices and procedures to align with current best practices	All Cabinet	HR Director, All Supervisors	Initiated	Begin Fall 2021
4.5 Conduct annual assessment of DEI plan progress with the Cabinet and produce a written report that will be distributed to campus and debriefed at end of the year President's meeting.		All Cabinet	DEI Council Team	Not Initiated	Annually May

References

[Oregon State University College of Forestry Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan. 2017.](#)

[Diversity and Inclusion at Skidmore College. 2020.](#)

[Infusing Diversity into Our Practices, Lesley University. 2019-2020.](#)

[Improving Program Content and Framing, University of Michigan. 2020.](#)

[Beyond Traditional Measures of STEM Success: Long-Term Predictors of Social Agency and Conducting Research for Social Change. Garibay, Juan. 2018.](#)