**Vision Statement**

*Academic excellence at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania requires reflective engagement with diversity. We take this as a call to transformative action as we go about our daily work in all aspects of campus life: recruitment, teaching, scholarship, learning in and out of the classroom, and with external constituencies. Through these pursuits, we will create an inclusive community that prepares all who come to the university to recognize and draw on the challenges and richness of diversity.*

**Executive Summary**

**Commitment:**

Bloomsburg University shares PASSHE’s commitment to diversity, as articulated by the PASSHE Social Equity Council:

PASSHE must sustain each of its academic communities with a shared sense of purpose, core values, and respect for a diversity of cultures, perspectives, backgrounds and experiences. To that end, the members of these communities are expected to advance fair practices and the elimination of systemic practices that serve as barriers to the full inclusion of all university constituents, and above all preserves the dignity and safety of every person.

Bloomsburg University is committed to principles of excellence. In order to achieve these goals, the university must interweave diversity into all areas of the institution: the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, students and administration, a curriculum that reflects the dynamic, diversity of our world, a supportive, and an inclusive environment that promotes the growth of all of its constituencies.

**Defining Diversity:**

Bloomsburg University takes its cue from PASSHE’s definition, recognizing with them that a definition is constantly evolving. For the purpose of the Bloomsburg University Strategic Plan, diversity encompasses the presence and participation of individuals who differ and are similar by characteristics such as, but not necessarily limited to, race, age, color, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, religion,
disability status and community affiliation. A diverse environment includes individuals from historically underrepresented populations, various socio-economic backgrounds, and with a multitude of ideas, attitudes and beliefs.

**Plan:**

This Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan offers a sustained, collaborative approach to making diversity and meaningful inclusion a reality. It offers specific directions, initiatives, and strategies with the goal of meeting the promise of the University’s mission, values, and strategic plan. It was drafted in spring 2010 by a Diversity Task Force made up of faculty, staff, students and administrators appointed by the President\(^1\) and identifies five major directions. In establishing these goals, initiatives, and strategies, the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan aims to articulate engagement with diversity and inclusion as a responsibility of all campus constituencies. The plan identifies five priorities that will each have a series of measurable outcomes.

1. Increase recruitment, retention, and graduation rates for historically underrepresented and underserved students.
2. Improve recruitment and retention for a diverse administration, faculty, and staff.
3. Strive to improve inclusivity in teaching and to incorporate diversity and inclusion in significant ways in teaching, learning, and research.
4. Work on campus and in local communities to develop partnerships, establish programs, and plan events that create an environment that supports diversity and inclusion.

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\(^1\) Chair: Kambon Camara, Asst. Prof. of Psychology. Participants: Megan Acevedo, student; Gia Adornetto, student; Richard Baker, Prof. of Accounting; Jim Dalton, Prof. of Psychology; Belinda Deleon, Safety Administrator, Law Enforcement; Terrell Garrett, student; Maggie Gillespie-Hill, Protestant Campus Minister; Brian Johnson, ACT 101 Instructor; Dan Knorr, Mayor, Town of Bloomsburg; Stephen Kokoska, Prof. of Mathematics, BU APSCUF President; Jeffrey Long, Interim VP for Student Life; Cristina Mathews, Assoc. Prof. of English; Vickey Rainis, Admin. Asst. for Social Equity; Mehdi Razzaghi, Prof. of Mathematics, Statistics & Comp Sci; Madelyn Rodriguez, Dir. of Multicultural Center; Richard Rugen, VP for Finance; Rosalee Rush, Dir. Of Communications; Caryn Terwilliger, Asst. Prof. of Early Childhood & Elementary Ed.; Mark Usry, Assoc. Prof. of Finance & Legal Studies, Chair, LGBTI Commission; Julie Vandivere, Assoc. Prof. of English; Bob Wislock, Dir. of Social Equity; Irvin Wright, Asst. to Provost for Diversity Initiatives, Dir. of Act 101.
5. Develop and maintain a permanent system of accountability and responsibility involving all campus entities to ensure diversity and inclusion. This system should exist independent of, but work with, University Planning and Assessment.

We understand that diversity and retention require care and diligence in recruitment if the community of Bloomsburg University is to attract and select prospective students and job candidates from historically underrepresented groups. These groups may include persons from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, historically underrepresented communities, and other legally protected groups. Our commitments to diversity and inclusion, then, dictate the necessity of creating sustainable programs and initiatives to ensure retention of diverse peoples. This plan outlines goals and objectives for 2010 to 2015 but should be considered a living document, one that must be revisited as BU and the world change.

Bloomsburg University, like most institutions of higher education in the 21st-century, recognize the need to sustain and nurture a campus community that reflects U.S. society. More, universities have recognized the causality between diversity and inclusion and the three central missions of the university: research, teaching, and community service.²

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Valuing and promoting diversity is, while noble, difficult work at best that can hold different meanings for people in the same community. Due to the differences in how people discuss and define diversity, there is no “template” or “right” way to have such conversations or enact change. Complicating such conversations are concerns regarding inclusion, legal and financial obligations. With this in mind, we must better understand our conceptions of diversity and base these conversations on both general higher education and BU community contexts.

**Goals/Directions and Supporting Initiatives/Actions**

**Goal/Direction #1**: Increase recruitment, retention and graduation rates for historically underrepresented and underserved students.

**Initiatives/Actions and supporting strategies:**

1. **Increase student populations from historically underrepresented and underserved groups.**
   a. Review marketing materials to ensure they are inclusive and communicate BU’s commitment to recruiting and retaining underrepresented and underserved populations.
   b. Assess current recruitment plan.
   c. Review current and create new partnerships and outreach efforts with a greater range of middle, high school, and community colleges.
   d. Develop and create an awareness of a cohesive financial system that supports the educational access and options for underrepresented and underserved students. (i.e. identify scholarship money to attract better qualified students who compete in the same market as elite institutions, explore alternative strategies for lowering costs, provide preliminary award letters early in the recruitment process)
   e. Continue to enhance, connect, and expand programs that support low income and first generation students (e.g., Act 101, TRIO Student Services, Living & Learning Communities, Board of Governors programs, Multicultural Center, Accommodative Services, ESL Program)
   f. Create a technological feedback system to help track student progress towards graduation.
   g. Assess essential programs such as academic advising, tutoring, and testing that lead to higher graduation rates.

2. **Promote an inclusive, supportive environment for all under-represented and underserved populations.**
   a. Emphasize various leadership opportunities available to historically underrepresented individuals to increase student involvement. Increase collaboration between student life and academic affairs to provide opportunities
for significant interactions across diverse populations (e.g., LLCs, concerts, lectures).

b. Establish spaces and structures/policies that expand opportunities for full inclusion (multi-faith prayer space, ADA compliance, culturally appropriate dining options to meet various dietary needs). Increase opportunities for faculty-student research and collaboration and mentoring.

c. Establish “pipeline to professions” programs that focus on recruitment, retention, graduation, and placement of historically underrepresented community members.

**Goal/Direction #2: Improve recruitment and retention for a diverse administration, faculty and staff.**

**Initiatives/Actions and supporting strategies:**

1. **Recruit a diverse administration, faculty and staff.**
   
a. Emphasize a candidate’s commitment to diversity as an important criterion for hiring.
   
b. Expand recruitment efforts at national and diversity-focused conferences to attract diverse faculty, staff, and administrators from historically underrepresented groups.
      i. Send recruitment teams to the annual Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) conference to make contact with and invite historically underrepresented individuals to apply for the Frederick Douglass Teaching Scholars Program and tenure-track faculty positions;
      ii. Create opportunities for scholars to visit campus;
      iii. Expand opportunities for BU scholars and administrators to participate in a campus exchange with campuses focusing on diversity initiative implementation;
   
c. Provide professional development opportunities for individuals responsible for hiring (e.g., send BU representatives to attend SREB and PASSHE Social Equity and Human Resources Symposium).
   
d. Host forums on diversity that include strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and staff.
   
e. Promote Bloomsburg University’s commitment to diversity initiatives and services (e.g., ACT 101, Disability Services, LGBT Resource Center, Women’s Resource Center) in orientation programs for new administration, faculty and staff.
   
f. Enhance partnerships with local organizations to provide information and community resource guide [online] to new faculty, administrators and staff that may address the cultural needs of potential employees (e.g., employment opportunities in region for spouse/partner, housing, religious organizations, social integration in the region.
   
g. Include a diversity statement in all recruitment publications.
   
h. Develop a *Guide to Hiring for Diversity* for use in the search process, including interview questions focused on diversity.
i. Continue to allocate funding to advertise in publications widely read by underrepresented groups.

2. **Retain a diverse administration, faculty and staff.**
   a. Conduct faculty, staff, and administrators exit interviews to understand reasons for departure.
   b. Utilize information gathered in exit interviews to inform retention initiatives.
   c. Organize activities to welcome new faculty, staff, and administrators to the University.
   d. Provide mentoring opportunities for new employees.
      i. (Faculty) to include structures to ensure the professional success (tenure, promotion, etc.) of new employees.
      ii. (Staff) to include structures to ensure the professional success (professional development and promotion) of new employees.
   e. Develop a clear and consistent message to faculty, staff, and administration that diversity is an institutional priority and that efforts to create and maintain an inclusive campus community include faculty, staff, and administrators as well as students.
   f. Conduct a study to investigate the relationship between departmental and University climate and employee retention.
   g. Utilize data collected from climate study to develop retention initiatives.
   h. Promote faculty-staff collaboration in the creation and implementation of diversity initiatives.
   i. Develop assessment measures to ascertain the rate of retention of underrepresented faculty and staff.
   j. Annually assess strategies that are being used to retain students, faculty and staff for their effectiveness.

3. **Establish professional development that engages faculty, administrators and staff to exchange knowledge and experiences for reflecting on the challenges and value of diversity from multiple perspectives.**
   a. Develop grants that encourage work on diversity and inclusion available for faculty, administrators, and staff.
   b. Invite more scholars and high profile professional who engage with diversity, providing role models and intellectual engagement and excitement on issues related to diversity and inclusion (e.g., Provost’s Lecture Series).
   c. Provide professional development opportunities for staff, faculty, and administrators to increase their understanding of diversity and create and implement initiatives on campus.
   d. Provide and encourage participation in professional development opportunities for individuals responsible for developing and implementing diversity-focused initiatives.

**Goal/Direction #3:** Strive to improve inclusivity in teaching and to incorporate diversity and inclusion in significant ways in teaching, learning, and research.

**Initiatives/Actions and supporting strategies:**
1. **Improve the effectiveness of teaching to all constituencies.**
   a. Provide ongoing professional development for creating inclusive classroom environments.
   b. Evaluate courses with high failure rates and work to improve student success through changes in pedagogy and other measures, such as support services, remedial or preparatory classes, summer institutes, and relationships with secondary schools.
   c. Expand English as a Second Language (ESL) services.
   d. Develop an online resource through to share successful inclusive teaching and assessment strategies.
   e. Establish the Frederick Douglass Institute as a center of excellence on diversity initiatives in the curriculum and in faculty professional development.

2. **Assure that each student’s educational experience significantly address diversity, inclusion, and global perspectives, and expand opportunities to deepen student engagement in these areas.**
   a. In coursework:
      i. Modify general education diversity requirement so that it provides our students with the tools to interact with the variety of individuals in our current culture (including but not limited to definitions of gender, sexuality, race, nationality, and ethnicity). This diversity requirement ought to include significant content for understanding power and systematic oppression in all of its manifestations.
      ii. Integrate diversity and inclusion into the entire curriculum, across all colleges, departments, and programs, including majors, program curricula and university seminars.
      iii. Provide expanded funding and support for existing minors focused on areas relevant to diversity and inclusion (e.g., Ethnic Studies in the US, Gender and Women’s Studies, and the Africana Studies Minor).
   b. Outside the classroom:
      i. Build alliances between Multicultural Center, Academic Affairs, and academic units.
      ii. Develop clear pathways for funding to support multiple diversity programs and initiatives (e.g. International Studies, the LGBT Consortium, the Commission on the Status of Women, Black History Month, Women’s History Month, and the summer Migrant Worker Program.)
      iii. Create a diverse body of freshmen across all of the Living and Learning Communities (LLCs). Integrate first year courses in diversity into the first year experience for the LLCs.

3. **Support scholarly activity that broadens understandings of diversity, equity, and inclusion.**
   a. Foster a research community on campus for faculty and administrators investigating issues relevant to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
b. Establish a separate pool of competitive money for reassigned time and/or grants for research that stresses diversity and inclusion.

c. Provide opportunities for staff to engage in professional education on topics of diversity and inclusion.

**Goal/Direction #4:** Work on campus and in local communities to develop partnerships, establish programs, and plan events that create an environment that supports diversity and inclusion.

**Initiatives/Actions and strategies:**

1. **Strengthen commitment to diversity initiatives on campus:**
   a. Determine effective methods and venues to that support critical dialogue about policies and practices. Examine and align ongoing commitments to campus/community efforts to create an inclusive environment.
   b. Increase visibility of existing programs that support historically underrepresented populations on campus.

2. **Provide greater visibility of commitment to diversity initiatives with regional public school systems:**
   a. Create and support professional development opportunities for educators.
   b. Support diversity conferences at regional high schools.
   c. Develop and implement programs that support diversity initiatives in local schools.

3. **Support a commitment to diversity initiatives within Town governance and in the community:**
   a. Collaborate with community groups (e.g., TFORE and local Chambers of Commerce, businesses, town police, and clerics) to develop a statement of values and/or anti-discrimination ordinance for the town.

**Goal/Direction #5:** Develop and maintain a permanent system of accountability and responsibility involving all campus entities to ensure diversity and inclusion.

**Initiatives/Actions and supporting strategies:**

1. **Establish a reporting and accountability structure to examine inclusivity and diversity practices.**
   a. Establish a University-Wide Council on Diversity and Inclusion with the mission of sharing ideas, reporting progress, and setting broad goals.
   b. Each university division develops a structure which meets the goals of this plan: to prioritize, to implement practices, to evaluate progress and to report within the structure established within the Strategic Plan.

2. **Require that departmental five-year reviews include assessment of diversity and inclusion.**