



Best Practices in Diversity, Inclusion, and Employee Engagement

Prepared for U.S. University



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Executive Summary

Recommendations



Update application review policies for both students and faculty/staff to minimize bias and invite applicants from diverse backgrounds to apply.

For students, marketing and outreach materials should highlight the campus diversity already existent at U.S. University. For faculty and staff, applications for employment should request a diversity statement to ensure that applicants' goals and perspectives align with institutional priorities.



Implement institutionalized supports for diverse students, faculty, and staff via dedicated student and professional services offices.

For students, ensuring that all courses promote an inclusive curriculum is important, for example. For faculty and staff, dedicated professional development is often needed and can also help to increase engagement. Finally, financial support in the form of equitable compensation practices or financial assistance for underrepresented students can ensure that inclusion practices are institutionalized.



Continually monitor how students, faculty, and staff perceive U.S. University's policies and social environment.

Climate surveys should be administered every one to three years to both students and faculty/staff. These surveys are the most common way to assess perceptions of an institutions' priorities toward diversity and inclusion (e.g., do you feel welcome on campus?).

Key Findings

Diversity and inclusion require holistic approaches, and efforts directed at faculty/staff should be managed in conjunction with student-facing efforts.

Resources and efforts in one area often depend upon, and are affected by, others. For instance, staff and faculty diversity appear to directly influence student body diversity and feelings of inclusiveness. Campus climate also spans across all individuals, both faculty/staff and students.

Diversity is largely demographic, while inclusiveness generally incorporates student and employee perceptions of the social environment as well as institutional priorities.

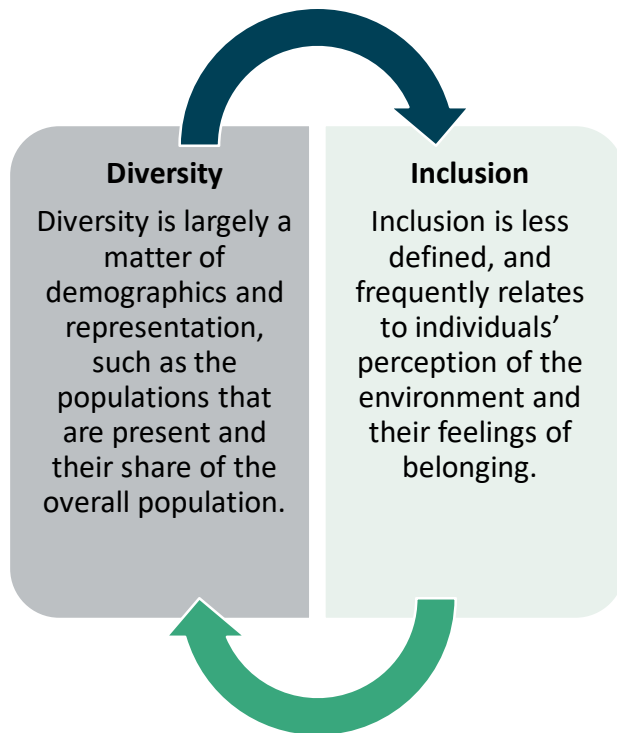
To ensure that the campus is inclusive, institutions should emphasize their commitment to equity and inclusion, make underrepresented individuals feel valued, support inter-group social and academic interactions, and establish peer support and mentorship to build professional development and academic performance.

To foster employee engagement, institutions should involve faculty/staff in decision making and provide opportunities for active development and authority.

Having direct input into institutional strategies and processes builds a sense of ownership and makes faculty/staff feel that their abilities and input are valued by the university leadership. Similarly, leadership opportunities and the ability to contribute directly to strategic efforts can build investment.

Benefits of Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education

Although often combined, diversity and inclusion represent different aspects of an organization or community. **Diversity** is often easier to define, as it relies on demographic indicators, while **inclusion** relies on gauging stakeholders' perceptions and feelings. In higher education, it is the practice of promoting “meaningful social and academic interactions among persons and groups who differ in their experiences, their views, and their traits.”



Institutional Benefits for Faculty/Staff Diversity

- Productivity benefits
- Expanded scholarship through inclusion of additional viewpoints
- Increased use of active learning strategies in the classroom
- Better support for and interaction with students from peer groups (e.g., women faculty improve success for women graduate students)
- Engaged faculty help increase profitability and reduce employee turnover



Institutional Benefits for Student Diversity

- Improved learning outcomes
- Improved economic opportunities for students of color
- Improved cognitive development (e.g., critical thinking and problem solving)
- Post-graduation increases in sense of purpose, recognition of racism, and participation in volunteer work





FACULTY/STAFF

Faculty Diversity & Inclusion in Higher Education

Strategies to Foster Diversity and Inclusion

Despite the wide variety in how colleges and universities institutionalize these traits, a number of approaches and strategies recur in recommendations for building diversity and inclusion. In general, these cluster into a few major categories: 1) hiring, 2) faculty and staff support and professional development, 3) broad institutional engagement, and 4) data-driven decision making.

One of the most effective ways to foster diversity and inclusion among faculty and staff is through unbiased and inclusive hiring practices. Key experts in the field recommend four principal ways to hire a diverse and representative faculty and staff:

-  **1. Use diversity-oriented search committees:** Departments should establish search committees that would work in consultation with the chairperson and other members toward meeting goals in appointing minority persons and women.
-  **2. Advertise in minority and women's group publications:** Recruitment plans should include advertising in appropriate publications and newsletters and the descriptions should be clear concerning teaching load, research expectations, and departmental duties.
-  **3. Seek personnel recommendations from minority- and women-run professional organizations:** Search committees should ask minority and women's caucuses for suggestions of candidates.
-  **4. Reach out to minority and women graduates of the institution:** Department leads in graduate programs should be asked to call the opening to the attention of their current students and recent graduates.



Spotlight: California College of the Arts

The California College of the Arts' goal over the next strategic growth period is to increase the number of faculty from diverse backgrounds. This effort is organized through the Diversity & Inclusion office, whose mission statement reads:

"We believe that a culturally diverse and inclusive campus is integral to academic excellence, and our student, faculty, staff, and trustee bodies should reflect the diverse world in which we live."

The office pursues diversity and inclusion initiatives across three areas: **Cultural Literacy**, which aims to create a welcoming environment by ensuring that all members of the CCA community are aware of the structural and systemic power that creates privilege and oppression; **Cultural Fluency**, which builds an infrastructure that will support and develop leaders from all backgrounds; and **Cultural & Social Diversity**, which ensures that curricula are inclusive and committed to social change and justice.

CCA also runs regular climate surveys to test the effectiveness of the office's mission. For example, it recently found that students have had positive interactions with students from different socioeconomic means (100%), sexual orientation (99%), religious beliefs (99%), country of origin (97%), and disability (81%).

Employee Engagement

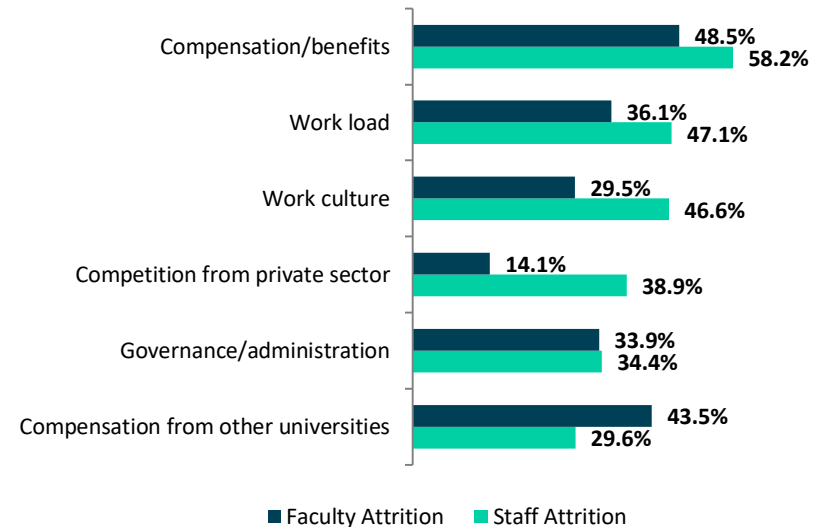
Strategies to Engage Employees

Definitions of employee engagement vary somewhat, and the concept is related to, and sometimes treated as synonymous with, job satisfaction. However, in general, engagement relates not just to happiness but to an employee's commitment to their employer and a sense of ownership or investment.

While not solely related to engagement, common causes of employee turnover are representative of engagement (see figures to the right). Institutions use a variety of specific strategies to build career progression opportunities, sense of involvement or ownership in institutional activities, and professional community, for example:

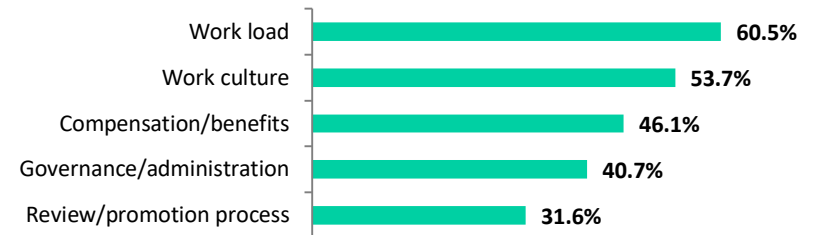
- Jefferson Medical College's dean "started hosting **social networking gatherings of diverse faculty** members from different departments" in response to faculty's reported desire for connectedness
- University of Florida **established a Faculty Affairs and Professional Development office to address key concerns** (e.g., unequal tenure promotion and advancement, transparent governance and communication)
- University of Mississippi instituted **self-nominations for promotion** and had department leaders serve as **faculty mentors**
- University of Oklahoma increased communications transparency, expanded face-to-face interactions with the dean, and provided more **opportunities for faculty to be engaged in important organization-wide decision-making**

Top Drivers of Faculty and Staff Attrition



Source: [Cornerstone OnDemand](#)

Top Roadblocks to Increasing Employee Engagement



Source: [Cornerstone OnDemand](#)




STUDENTS

Student Diversity & Inclusion in Higher Education

Strategies to Foster Diversity and Inclusion

An inclusive environment relies on demographic, organizational, social, and behavioral factors including perceptions of the institution, day-to-day student and staff behaviors, and organizational processes. A report by the AAC&U on diversity and inclusive excellence identified five dimensions (to the right) that shape campus climate and impact diversity outcomes.

Institutional efforts to improve student body diversity and inclusion often begin with increased outreach and recruitment. These efforts are then followed by ongoing student success and campus climate monitoring and supports once students enroll. A survey of college presidents identified the most common actions taken by institutions of higher education to address diversity concerns:

-  **1. Initiatives to increase diversity among students, faculty, and staff**, which specifically focus on increasing the demographic diversity of the campus.
-  **2. Resources for racial diversity initiatives**, which include institutional monetary and policy support for both student recruitment and support.
-  **3. Diversity/Cultural competency training for students, faculty, and staff**, which can be mandated (e.g., professional development) or offered as an elective or General Education course for students.

Compositional Diversity

- Diverse enrollments
- Diverse hiring

Organization/Structure

- Curriculum diversity
- Tenure policies
- Decision-making policies
- Budget allocation
- Other policies

Behavior

- Social interactions across demographic groups
- Degree of intra-racial and cross-racial campus involvement
- Classroom diversity
- Pedagogical approaches

Psychology

- Perceptions of racial/ethnic tension
- Perceptions of discrimination
- Attitude and prejudice reduction

Historical Legacy

- Resistance to desegregation
- Institutional mission



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