



**UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTHWESTERN**  
ST. PAUL

# STRATEGIC DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FRAMEWORK

Initiatives to promote diversity at the University of Northwestern – St. Paul have been ongoing over time. This document presents a framework for diversity and inclusion initiatives as we move forward. Based on Board and Senior Leadership Team priorities and AA strategic objectives, this Framework includes a biblical foundation for this work, lays out recommendations for focused and intentional diversity and inclusion initiatives, and identifies five Strategic Directives to guide this work.

Building on past initiatives, may the work described in this Strategic Diversity Framework, and action plans aligned with it, bear fruit in ways that forward His kingdom and encourage and support all members of our UNW community as we serve in our homes, churches, community, and world.

*Global Initiatives Council*  
2018

## Introduction

The ideas presented in this Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework build on work that has taken place over time at the University of Northwestern – St. Paul. In the fall of 2009, Dr. Pete Menjares of Biola University was asked to conduct a diversity audit for Northwestern. As a result of his onsite visit (which included interviews and observations related to campus climate, purpose and goals for diversity, campus coordination, student engagement, faculty engagement, education and training, diversity leadership structure, institutional motivation, and community outreach and partnerships), Dr. Menjares prepared a Diversity Audit Report that included a summary of commendations, general findings and observations, recommendations, and conclusions for diversity at Northwestern.

The findings reported in the Diversity Audit led to the writing of a 2011 Strategic Diversity and Reconciliation Plan. The Plan, prepared by eight volunteer faculty and staff members who had been interviewed by Dr. Menjares, included goals, strategies and tactics, and was submitted as a draft to then Provost Dr. Al Ottley.

Though diversity efforts continued, the Strategic Diversity and Reconciliation Plan remained a *draft*, and was not officially adopted by the Northwestern community.

A Diversity Strategic Planning Team was convened in November 2016 at the request of Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Janet Sommers. Dr. David Fenrick and Dr. Pamela Solvie co-chaired the work of this team, which also included Dr. Randy Nelson, Dr. Ken Young, and Nina Barnes. The charge given to the Strategic Diversity Planning Team was to review the 2011 Strategic Diversity and Reconciliation Plan draft in light of the 2009 Diversity Audit, as well as current diversity efforts, and to submit to the President's Senior Leadership Team an updated Strategic Diversity Plan.

The Diversity Strategic Planning Team met at the end of fall semester 2016 and throughout spring semester 2017. Those meetings involved rich discussion around diversity issues, initiatives, and needs related to our Kingdom mandate to reach the world for Christ, our University's mission and vision, the changing demographics in our city, state, and nation, and the requirements set for us through the Higher Learning Commission related to diversity efforts. The committee also sought out additional sources, including information related to work being done at other Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) institutions, to inform this review work and to make recommendations.

The Diversity Strategic Planning Team concluded its review work of the 2011 Strategic Diversity and Reconciliation Plan draft and submitted updates to Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Sommers, on April 6, 2017. The Global Initiatives Council began developing a Diversity Strategic and Inclusion Framework in June 2017.

On April 9, 2018, Global Initiatives presented a survey to the University of Northwestern community to assess the current state of diversity and inclusion efforts across our campus. In a message to the entire campus community (including all students and all employees), President Cureton encouraged input from

our Senior Leadership Team, board, administration, students, faculty, and staff through completion of the survey.

Information gathered from the comprehensive Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks survey will assist UNW in identifying strengths and areas of need related to diversity and inclusion efforts. Analyses of survey data will be useful in evaluating current systems and processes. In addition, in using survey results, it will be possible to identify short-term and long-term goals and to measure progress in our diversity and inclusion efforts.

## **Purpose and Value of UNWSP's Strategic Diversity Framework**

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).*

### **Biblical Foundation for Our Diversity Work**

As an institution, University of Northwestern – St. Paul is Christ-centered, Bible-based, and mission-driven. As an institution whose work is informed by a biblical worldview, the Strategic Diversity Framework is built on a strong biblical foundation. This theological foundation guides the work outlined in this Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework as we consider how we might encourage, uplift, and support our colleagues and our students in the intellectual work that is our calling, as well as our calling to reach the world for Christ.

Believing in *imago Dei*, that God created all people in his image (Genesis 1: 27) and they are worthy of dignity, provides impetus for our work. The human race, male and female (Genesis 1:27), is not only unified by the image of God, but has a common ancestry: “From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands” (Acts 17:26). We have a cultural mandate to “fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). As humans, we were appointed to be God’s viceroys, extending his rule throughout creation. We are God’s representatives in this world, created for good works that we might walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

As a result of the Fall, sin and corruption were introduced into God’s creation (Genesis 3: 1-24). We are currently a fallen people living on a cursed earth (Romans 8:20-22). Our relationship with God, each other, and creation has been disrupted.

Redemption includes not only the forgiveness of sins but the restoration of relationships. This restoration will be completed with Christ’s return and the renewal of all things. Until then, we are to be “ministers of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21), confident that the walls of social separation have been torn down (Ephesians 2:14-16; Galatians 3:28).

In the context of Galatians chapter 3, verse 28 makes it clear that the Jews no longer enjoy a privileged position in their access to God. Neither circumcision nor the Law provide any advantage in the New Covenant. Everyone, regardless of their social status, is a prisoner of sin and in need of God’s grace through faith in Christ. And everyone who believes in Christ is adopted equally into the family of God. In spite of the variety in our social positions, we are completely equal before God. In Christ, we can truly experience unity in the midst of our diversity.

As a result of God's redeeming work in our lives, we desire equality of opportunity and respect that results from true Christian community where unity is present in diversity and where there is mutual support as evidence of God's presence, by His Spirit, in us. We recognize God always intended for diversity in the human race and uses it to more completely reflect His glorious image (Ephesians 3:6; Ephesians 3:10; Genesis 1:27-28, 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-12; Revelation 7:9).

The relationship established in the body of Christ with interdependent parts extends also to the relationships among us. We humbly serve others and serve with others. We work to equip those in our body for "works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13). We echo Paul's words in saying, "Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well" (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

*Because of God's compelling love, we will teach wisdom and understanding to reach all nations for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14, Proverbs 1:7, Matthew 28:19).*

### **Value of Diversity and Inclusion Efforts**

Knowing we are all a part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27) is to recognize, celebrate, and support the multiple ways that increased diversity and inclusion lead to enlarged perspectives, strengthening of understandings, opportunities to build relationships, and opportunities to prepare for service in a diverse, global society. The Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework offers recommendations for building institutional capacity and structures, and in this way to increase diversity and inclusion, and support well all members of a diverse community. Diversity and inclusion enrich us all.

Increasing diversity for diversity's sake is not the goal of this Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework. Neither does it focus on an assimilation model in which there is pressure to conform to particular cultural standards of a dominant group (Williams, 2013, Menjares, 2017). Instead, it is in recognition of the *imago Dei* that we value and honor others created in the likeness of God (James 3:9). Understanding we are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28) is to recognize, celebrate, and support individuals and to desire their success.

### **Demographic Changes, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Furthermore, demographic shifts in our country, our state, and our cities, as well as immigration patterns around the world provide evidence that a plan is needed and desired to address issues related to diversity, to maximize benefits of diversity and inclusion, and to remain culturally relevant in terms of changing demographics and the changing population we serve. In all of these things, a diversity and inclusion plan will support the vitality and viability of our University.

The need to remain culturally relevant is prompted by changes in the racial and ethnic diversity represented in our surrounding communities and in our UNW community. The PEW Research Center looking at actual and projected population numbers, stated in a 2016 report, "By 2055, the U.S. will not

have a single racial or ethnic majority” (par. 2), a change prompted by immigration. Further, millennials— children born between 1981 and 1996—are the most racially diverse adult generation with 43% nonwhite. In addition, Barna Group research notes that Generation Z (those born between 1999 and 2015) is the most diverse generation observed in American history.

Changes in demographics are described well in the book *Sustainable Futures: Recognizing and Confronting the Challenges Facing Christian Colleges and Universities*, by David E. Johnson (2017). Johnson, citing Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) data from 2016, writes

Between now and 2026-27, the annual number of white non-Hispanic high school graduates is expected to decline by approximately 6 percent, from 1.8 million to 1.6 million. Yet the total population of graduates will remain constant because a 16 percent increase in graduates of color will offset this decrease in white graduates. As a result, the percentage of high school graduates who are students of color will increase from 44 percent in 2016-17 to 49 percent in 2026-27.

This demographic shift suggests that going forward, it will be very difficult for Christian colleges to grow or even sustain existing enrollments unless they become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. . . . But in order to accomplish that in a sustainable and successful way, they must create cultures that truly embrace both students and faculty of diverse racial and ethnic heritages.

Of course, all of this means more than simply inviting students to enroll in our campus community. It will mean, as Johnson (2017) notes, “having an institutional ethos of inclusiveness.” Johnson emphasizes, “This inclusiveness must be reflected and integrated throughout the institution” (p. 23).

Some diversity and inclusion recommendations included in the Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework are not new. They have been in practice for some time and may be related to legal and policy mandates, including how we treat those with disabilities and how we respect and honor gender differences. Other recommendations are new and may be what Daryl Smith (2015) in her text, *Diversity’s Promise for Higher Education*, describes as “interrupting the usual” to build capacity as well as expertise needed to increase diversity and inclusion, and support a diverse community.

Though some efforts have been in place and have been ongoing for some time, this Framework acknowledges the urgency of this work—to continue to build on foundations already laid as we move forward. The work will be intentional and active; it will affect all areas of our community, including teaching and learning; student, faculty, and staff development; institutional decision-making; and connections to local and global communities beyond our campus. It will also be important to monitor and measure the progress of diversity and inclusion efforts. Tools for monitoring and measuring progress will need to be identified as part of goal setting, with plans identified and linked to Strategic Directives found on page eight of this document.

### **Fulfilling Our Mission and Vision**

Diversity and inclusion efforts align with and are central to who we are and what we do at the University of Northwestern. While some of our diversity efforts may resemble what is taking place at other institutions of higher education, our Vision Statement clearly articulates what is at the heart of our diversity and inclusion efforts: *Because of God's compelling love, we will teach wisdom and understanding to reach all nations for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14, Proverbs 1:7, Matthew 28:19).*

Diversity and inclusion efforts offer opportunities to fulfill our University of Northwestern mission, which is to *provide Christ-centered higher education equipping believers to grow intellectually and spiritually, to serve effectively in their professions, and to give God-honoring leadership in the home, church, community, and world.* Diversity and inclusion efforts will help us to be globally-minded, considering the perspectives students will need to serve well. The Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework highlights ways in which it is possible to equip believers to grow intellectually and spiritually through diversity and inclusion efforts, to prepare those in our community to serve effectively in their professions, and to give God-honoring leadership as a result of the diversity and inclusion work in which we engage.

Equipping and preparing are central to diversity recommendations that are a part of the Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework. Equipping and preparing begin with increasing awareness of our own and others' cultures. It also involves examining systems that support or work against diversity and inclusion efforts. An evaluation of processes and systems in light of how they support (or not) diversity and inclusion efforts precedes effective equipping and preparing work.

Promoting unity in our body is also important in the work we do. The Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework offers opportunities to demonstrate recognition of and value for others. Though some examples from our past may have impeded a valuing of others and worked against unity, our University of Northwestern Statement of Unity (2002, 2010) recognizes diversity within our society, emphasizes the need for unity within diversity, and provides direction for the future.

We acknowledge that achieving unity within diversity is a major issue in our society today. We believe that the Word of God does speak to this issue. After considerable discussion and prayer, we wish to affirm our commitment to biblical unity within the diversity that exists in the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-26). It is our desire that every person in the Northwestern Community be accepted and valued regardless of gender, race, color, social status, ability/disability, age, ethnicity, or gifts. We believe that because Christ has reconciled us to God and to one another, we must seek to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-6). Wherein we fail to do this, we should humbly seek forgiveness from God and one another. We pledge to lead our community in the process of reconciliation and the restoration and maintenance of God-honoring relationships among His people. We desire to be role models who will glorify God through our demonstration of biblical unity (University Community Policies, April 2002; Faculty Handbook, Sec. 3.3; Student Handbook, 2010, p. 38).

## **Higher Learning Commission**

In addition to addressing changing demographics and to fulfilling our vision and mission, diversity and inclusion efforts are required components of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and thus play an important role in our University's reaccreditation process. The HLC notes that

[t]he distinctive organization understands the complexity of the diverse society in which it is located, and can identify how it responsibly responds to that society while honoring its unique mission. Whether diversity marks the classroom or the curriculum, whether learning about diversity is shaped by the students and faculty who fill the classrooms or by students' off campus experiences, the distinctive organization serves the common good by honoring the worth of all individuals (HLC Handbook of Accreditation, 3.3-4).

### **Understanding Diversity and Inclusion**

Diversity is represented in multiple ways, some of these being racial, ethnic, gender, socio-economic, social, and theological differences among groups of people. Diversity may refer to "differences between individuals on any attribute that may lead to the perception that another person is different from the self" (Homan, van Knippenberg, Van Kleef & De Dreu, 2007). Williams (2013) notes that no definitive definition of diversity exists, instead, to begin to answer the question, "What is diversity?", it is necessary to consider conceptual perspectives, group identity perspectives, ideological perspectives, and institutional perspectives (pp. 83, 84).

Smith (2015) highlights the notion of multiplicity of identity and intersectionality of diversity categories and in this way points out the multiple factors that make discussion around diversity complex, and also significant to the human experience in multiple contexts.

While defining diversity may be done in a variety of ways, the important work is to engage intentionally in initiatives that value and increase diversity while at the same time addressing challenges that arise in meeting the needs of all in richly diverse contexts (Williams, 2013; Yancey, 2010; Elmer, 2006).

Addressing challenges that arise in meeting the needs of all in richly diverse contexts is part of inclusive practices. Ferdman (2014) notes that "inclusion involves how well organizations and their members fully connect with, engage, and utilize people across all types of differences" (p. 4). Ferdman, further points out that "inclusion at work has to do with *how* organizations, groups, their leaders and their members provide ways that allow everyone, across multiple types of differences, to participate, contribute, have a voice, and feel that they are connected and belong, all without losing individual uniqueness or having to give up valuable identities or aspects of themselves" (p. 12).

Intentional work related to inclusion supports those in our UNW community with equitable access to resources and opportunities. In addition, those in the inclusive environment feel welcomed, engaged, valued, and respected. They experience a sense of belonging and a sense of being recognized as valued contributors to the UNW community.

Considering perspectives and experiences of those whose voices have not been heard, and those who feel marginalized, will be part of intentional diversity and inclusion work. Discourse that recognizes viewpoint diversity and cultural difference, values diversity, and engages difference is central to an understanding of diversity and inclusion. Such discourse will include uncomfortable topics of bias,

inequity, and misunderstanding. Such discourse will necessitate response that celebrates collectivity, collaboration, and interdependence within the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12).

We are reminded again that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). While ethnicity denotes biological roots, race, often characterized as a social construction, cannot be ignored in diversity and inclusion work. Systems of racism have created disadvantage for people of color. Practices and systems that continue to create disadvantage need to be identified and changed, and relationships reconciled (Mathew 5:24; 2 Corinthians 5:18). Forgiveness, reconciliation, shalom, and restoration are central to our work as Christians in diversity and inclusion efforts.

Recognizing those who live, study, and work at the University of Northwestern come to this place with varied cultural backgrounds and lived experiences related to racial, ethnic, gender, socio-economic, social, and theological differences, we acknowledge the need to grow in understanding of others’ cultures to support and further the work being done by everyone in this place. Though we come from varied cultural backgrounds and lived experiences, we seek to create a learning community and community of learners based on the teachings and practices of Jesus Christ to offer an alternative form of reconciliation and justice that is transformative, but not always easy. Reconciling to God and reconciling to one another requires work. Advocating for justice for those who have not been fully represented will be intentional. *He has shown us what is good and what is required of us: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).*

As a result of grace we have received, and in a spirit of humility, we are motivated to serve in and beyond our community in ways that exemplify an increasing understanding of diversity and inclusion. We seek to prepare and continue to cultivate an environment that encourages engagement, and strengthens interactions, intellectual work, and decision-making processes for access and success of all. In these ways we live out our beliefs and values in this work through Christ-like relationships to the glory of God.

### **Diversity Efforts, Senior Leadership Team Priorities, and Academic Affairs Strategic Objectives**

The Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework aligns with four of the five identified Senior Leadership Team Priorities and Academic Affairs Strategic Objectives. Recognizing the significant influence of systems, work outlined in the Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Framework will affect all areas of campus and as a result, multiple opportunities will be available for us to

- Tell the Story,
- Remove Speed Bumps,
- Open New Doors, and
- Enhance the Core.

Strategic Directives to guide diversity efforts at University of Northwestern are these:

Directive 1: Examine systems that may be preventing full diversity, equity and inclusion while remaining consistent with UNW’s mission documents.



- Directive 2: Foster a campus environment that promotes a welcoming Christ-centered community that understands respects, encourages, and celebrates the richness of diversity, reflective of an institutional commitment to diversity.
- Directive 3: Increase the diversity of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and board of trustees through the intentional recruitment, retention, and representation of ethnic minorities to a level that more closely reflects the diversity of the greater Twin Cities community.
- Directive 4: Nurture reciprocal partnerships with diverse communities, businesses, churches, civic and community organizations to support diversity, increase interaction and engagement, and ensure quality experiences for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors.
- Directive 5: Develop and implement a comprehensive system of Christ-centered education and cross-cultural engagement for students, faculty and staff focused on effectively fostering growth in intercultural competencies.

Short-term and long-term goals will be aligned to these directives and strategies will be identified to address these goals for supporting diversity and inclusion efforts at the University of Northwestern – St. Paul.

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