

## PREVIEW TO DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

*"...Promoting diversity is no longer simply a question of answering our moral and social responsibilities, but a matter of academic and institutional excellence."*

—Damon Williams, Strategic Diversity Leadership

*The University of Delaware's future success is firmly predicated on our steadfast commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion...This culture is crucial from the perspective of equity and justice, and it is essential for educating global citizens, improving learning outcomes, developing knowledge and enhancing societal impacts"*

—Delaware Will Shine Strategic Plan

Diversity is a core educational value and a guiding principle of the 2008 *Path to Prominence* and 2015 *Delaware Will Shine* Strategic Plans. Research shows that campus communities with meaningful diversity practices significantly increase the quality and value of education for all students. These transformative learning experiences enhance critical thinking, promote civic responsibility, enrich formal and informal exchanges amongst students from various backgrounds, and prepare our students to navigate in an increasing diverse and global world.

The work to build upon the university's previous experiences has already begun. Through the creation of administrative structures, academic and research units, data collection and analysis to track, enhance and provide support for the expanding diversity of our community, UD has mapped a path going forward to make diversity essential to the educational experiences at UD.

But sustaining the efforts of diversifying our student body, faculty and staff requires more thoughtful and intentional efforts. The *Delaware Will Shine* Strategic Plan aims to ensure that diversity is critical to our pursuit of excellence, key to us bridging the opportunity divide, and integral to ensuring that all members of our community have the opportunity to participate fully and realize their whole potential irrespective of their identity, background, physical ability or institutional position. Building a more equitable and inclusive academic community means we must make diversity inclusive.

### *Common Ground Values for Achieving Inclusive Excellence*

In order to accomplish the very important and necessary work of inclusive excellence, we provide the following diversity statement and six principled action items to guide us towards achieving our diversity goals:

*"Diversity is a core value and guiding principle for the University of Delaware's educational mission to prepare students to live in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world. Diversity at UD means both the recognition and appreciation of all human differences, based upon, but not limited to, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, class, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, culture, ideology, politics, religion, citizenship, marital status, job classification, veteran status, and income and socioeconomic status. We are committed to building an inclusive educational community, one whose excellence is based not only on stellar disciplinary achievement, but also on understanding people from different backgrounds and circumstances,*

*with different needs, perspectives and ways of thinking. We want to make all people who are part of the University feel welcome and valued in campus life.”*

*Guiding Principles for Action:*

*1. Recruit, develop, retain and promote a diverse faculty and staff:* Diverse students will come if they see themselves reflected in the faculty who teach them and the staff who provide student services for them. Furthermore, diversity in faculty and staff benefits all students as their exposure to individuals distinct from themselves provides a wonderful opportunity for engaged learning. Part of making excellence inclusive is to have our campus mirror the world in which we all live. We will utilize best practices for recruiting, hiring, mentoring, and promoting the success of diverse faculty in all disciplinary fields in an effort to prepare our students to live and work in an increasing global world. We will also provide space for the discovery of knowledge that capitalizes on various administrative styles, and multiple teaching, learning, and research practices. Diversity in scholarship, instruction and learning outcomes stems from having the most exceptional, creative, and diverse faculty and staff committed to excellence, and poised to lead innovation in their respective fields.

*2. Continue to create a diverse student body:* Major efforts have been made in this area to recruit and admit a more diverse student body. *But we must move from diversity to inclusion* and be prepared to cultivate a campus climate that ensures student success. We will re-engineer and strengthen the infrastructure for student mentoring, tutoring, advising, and career planning beyond matriculation; help to rebuild and strengthen ladders of access (pre-college); and cultivate learning interventions that affirm students holistically and encourages them to thrive in their respective disciplines. We will examine and refortify our retention practices, and strengthen our relationship with external communities invested in building stronger academic pipelines.

*3. Curricular and Co-Curricular Transformation:* In order to create transformative learning experiences for our students that affirms our mission to develop critical thinkers who are innovative, creative, and responsible ethical leaders and problem solvers, diversity must be fundamental to the educational experiences here at UD. Thus we will put curricular goals and measures in place that create common ground values that foster an appreciation and respect for all forms of human difference, and value the cultural traditions and customs of our local and global world communities. We will make these interactions an integral part of our daily educational practices. In this way, we not only affirm the importance of diversity as a central part of UD’s educational mission, but we also sustain our inherent belief in the diverse ways of learning and communicating human value across a wide spectrum of disciplines and cultures.

*4. Educational/Professional Development and Training:* If we want diversity to be a central component of our educational mission, we must create opportunities for professional training and development at every level of the institution that focus on effective ways to leverage diversity as a core competency that has educational and societal value. In these ways we can work towards ensuring a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable learning environment.

*5. Building Community and Improving Campus Climate within UD:* We will continue to support and strengthen multicultural programming and activities that enhance the learning experiences of all students, and encourage honest and open campus wide dialogue about the complexities of

human differences, ideological thought, and unique learning abilities. These activities enrich and sustain our collective mission of valuing and respecting diverse people and cultures as we work to make our campus more equitable, diverse, and inclusive. We will also put educational provisions and governing practices in place that allow us to vigorously uphold our principles of an academic community with a zero tolerance for bigotry, harassment, and hatred, empowered to challenge issues of social injustice and inequities in a spirit of unity, support, and respect.

*6. Community Outreach and Engagement:* We will strengthen collaborative efforts and partnerships with other universities and colleges, external agencies, educational groups, and community organizations invested in building and sustaining the academic pipeline for students, from historically underrepresented and underserved groups. Such efforts enrich the learning possibilities of all students, transform the educational experiences of the underserved and their communities, and position the university as a strong advocate in affirming our commitment to student success, access, and affordability.