

Our UD/One UD Community Framework

Campus Culture and Engagement (CCE) Task Force

The University of Delaware is fully committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community where students, staff, and faculty feel valued, recognized and safe. We show this commitment by offering university programs and opportunities that are open and available to all eligible members of the community, consistent with applicable law.

Building and sustaining such a university community is a shared responsibility. The guiding Our UD/One UD Community Framework presented here articulates the principles by which we will carry out this responsibility and will guide our strategy and implementation. This work complements, not replaces, the University's existing policies, compliance obligations, collective bargaining agreements, and established processes for addressing complaints or concerns including but not limited to discrimination, harassment, or other legal matters. Community members should continue to use established University processes for such concerns.

The framework builds from the observations gathered by the [Campus Culture and Engagement Task Force](#) during the Fall 2025 semester, reported in [Campus Culture and Engagement Task Force Summary of Observations](#). The ideas are intended to guide conversations and encourage informed, creative, and collaborative thinking as we work as a community to find ways to operationalize our values and assess the success of our efforts at all levels of the university.

This framework will be woven into the strategic plan that will be organized around the UD Declarations, specifically

- Inquire with impact
- Create with connections
- Innovate with intentions
- Grow with purpose
- Welcome with promise
- Educate with outcomes
- Work with trust
- Belong with joy
- Stand with pride

This linkage is important, because it is the means by which the framework is integrated into our institutional mission. This linkage enables identification and implementation of strategies and tactics and the articulation of outcomes and process by which we can measure our progress.

We view this framework not as a completed work but as an ongoing dialogue. We will continue to solicit feedback, and we will continue to build upon and refine this framework's recommendations and assessment measures over time. Relevant research and other information will be available on the Campus Culture and Engagement website.

A Campus Culture and Engagement Framework

Part I: Our Guiding Principles

The Campus Culture and Engagement Framework presents a collaborative operating system designed to bridge the gap between where we are and where we aspire to be. The framework itself consists of 6 guiding principles:

1. Representation and Belonging. Focusing on who is visible in our community, how we sustain cultural centers, organizations, and spaces where community members find belonging, and how we foster an institutional culture where all students, staff, and faculty are valued and supported. We are committed to sustaining and strengthening the spaces and organizations that serve our community while ensuring that university programs and opportunities remain open and available to all.

2. Equitable Access. Ensuring that opportunities, services, resources, and support are accessible to all members of the UD community regardless of location, background, or circumstance. This includes strengthening support for international students, improving transitions for commuter, transfer, and associates students, addressing economic barriers to full participation, and extending meaningful resources and institutional attention to all UD sites across the state.

3. Inclusive Communication and Transparency. Ensuring the university communicates with transparency and accessibility, and building communication networks that account for the diversity and complexity of our community. This includes improving transparency in decision-making, improving how community members can find the resources and information they need, and telling the stories that foster institutional connection.

4. Respect and Recognition Across Roles. Focusing on the gap between how faculty, staff, and students experience the institution based on their role and position. This includes assessing workload equity, performance recognition, respect, and improving communication and consultation on changes to tools that affect daily work. Building a culture of everyday respect, with attention to the daily tasks and functions, how we get things done, and how we show up for each other.

5. Academic Freedom and Open Inquiry. Protecting the ability to teach, research, and discuss topics in the classroom, and support academic inquiry and the expression of ideas in academic settings. The University is committed to fostering spaces for open conversation, recognizing that productive dialogue depends on mutual respect, principled debate, and the freedom to engage with challenging ideas.

6. Accountability. Tracking progress and reporting outcomes through regular assessment, periodic reporting, and integration of these principles into the University's strategic plan. This is a shared responsibility for all in our community.

Part II: How We Operationalize Our Guiding Principles

The following operational mechanisms describe an initial set of mechanism for organizing, supporting and sustaining the work. These mechanisms will evolve and grow over time.

Campus Culture and Engagement Facilitation Committee

We recommend a standing advisory committee, chartered by and reporting to the President, to continue the work of soliciting community feedback and facilitating community connections and shared ideas, ensuring the dialogue never stops.

The Committee will serve in an advisory and facilitative capacity, making recommendations to the president and senior leadership on matters related to campus culture and engagement. It will monitor progress on framework implementation, report regularly to the community on outcomes and measures, and collaborate with Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Student Governments, and other campus-wide entities.

Community Engagement Exchange Forum

We recommend the creation of a Community Engagement Exchange Forum, managed by the CCE Facilitation Committee, to collect and share practices and ideas that can be applied more broadly across the University.

The Community Engagement Exchange Forum will provide a mechanism for sharing these ideas, practices, suggestions and activities across the University. The CCE Facilitation Committee will review submissions to the Exchange Forum and, before any practice is promoted more broadly, will confirm in coordination with the Office of General Counsel and other appropriate University offices that the practice is consistent with applicable law and University policy.

Regular Assessment

We recommend that UD conduct regularly occurring and consistent assessments to measure our progress in fostering an inclusive and engaged community and to measure the effectiveness of this framework over time.

The CCE Facilitation Committee will make recommendations on the timing, content and delivery of campus culture and engagement surveys for our campus that complement existing assessment efforts. Any new instruments will be developed and implemented with the guidance of assessment professionals. Aggregate results that protect confidentiality and anonymity will be made available to the community as a whole, in a manner consistent with applicable privacy laws and protections.

Community Events

We recommend more university-wide events that give the broader community opportunities to connect and celebrate all that we appreciate about UD. “Community” should be something we experience together, not just talk about.

We encourage additional events at all levels that bring communities together to celebrate

what is unique and distinctive about the University of Delaware. We also recommend recognition of the faculty, staff, and students whose efforts foster community and advance the goals of this framework.

Part III: Integration with Institutional Principles and the Strategic Plan

These guiding principles and mechanism provide a structure for the work ahead. They will be fully integrated into the strategic plan, aligned with the guiding elements established by President Carlson: who we are; how we work; what we do; when we make progress.

This alignment offers a means for documenting our activity, measuring outcomes, and defining success. By linking these elements to the strategic plan, the focus on Campus Culture and Engagement remains vibrant, visible, continuous, and distributed across our community.

Each of the framework guiding features can be considered in the context of each strategic plan declaration. For example, we should ask: What does *Representation and Belonging* look like in the context of *Belong with Joy*? What does *Inclusive Communication and Transparency* look like in the context of *Work with Trust*? What does *Academic Freedom and Open Inquiry* look like in the context of *Inquire with Impact*?

To help us answer these questions, we can take each combination and ask how it impacts Who We Are, How We Work, What We Do, and When We Make Progress. For example, if we are a community that prioritizes *Equitable Access* as an important feature of *Welcome with Promise*, what does that mean for *Who We Are*? What would we expect to see if this is true? Similarly, what does it mean for *How We Work* and *What We Do*? How would that show up? What would we expect for ourselves and for our community if these were true? And how will we measure whether we are succeeding? What can we expect to see if we are making progress?