

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) PLAN FOR WILLIAMS DINING SERVICES

June 16, 2021

*“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.” - Maya Angelou*

**Dining Services is developing the capacity to think critically about how our department impacts our students, faculty, and staff in terms of equity and inclusion. We adopt the following definitions of diversity, inclusion, equity, and equity mindedness from the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AACU).<sup>1</sup>**

**Diversity:** Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations).

**Inclusion:** The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity — in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect — in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

**Equity:** The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion.

**Equity-Mindedness:** A demonstrated awareness of and willingness to address equity issues among institutional leaders and staff (Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California).

## CORE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES GUIDING OUR WORK

The Office of Dining Service’s mission is to provide our students a community environment that delivers nutritious, fresh, diverse, and sustainable dining experience.

These interrelated goals further reflect our department's mission:

- Deepen understanding of relationship building with people different from ourselves
- Use community engagement as a tool to listen, learn, and build mutually beneficial relationships and programs
- Support the college’s waste goals and look for opportunities to decrease waste through the Lean Path program
- Plan arrangements, with the student group WRAPS, to donate any usable leftovers to a food pantry

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<sup>1</sup> 1.Association of American Colleges & Universities. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/making-excellence-inclusiv>

- Utilize Mission Park Kitchen as a production kitchen to eliminate purchases related to convenience foods including local products to provide healthier options for our student's holistic well-being.
- Host and collaborate with students to produce authentic cultural meals including but not limited to Recipes From Home, Black History Month, Lunar New Year, CASO. etc.
- Provide robust yearly training to continuously advance learning and growth.
- Make accommodations to support dietary restrictions, religious, and allergen needs through support and work with the Dining Nutritionist.

## **DEI GOALS AND MEASURES:**

Diversity, equity and inclusion matter because they help build a fair society that allows all people to get equal opportunities. DEI brings together people, perspectives and ideas to help create stronger bonds among individuals and stronger organizations. Dining Services is committed to working with BSU, MINCO, LGBTQ Organizations, along with student groups representing other oppressed and marginalized identities. We will collaborate and align with the campus's short- and long-term goals to encourage and support program, learning, and other initiatives to guide our efforts to ensure all community members feel heard, safe, included, and valued.

## **WILLIAMS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

1. Our team, our staff, are a group of newly hired and tenured, dedicated, compassionate, and loyal members.
2. Our student body is a collection of diverse, educated, and passionate members.
3. Our faculty, a group who embodies education, social awareness, and practical application of learning in an active environment.

## **GOALS AND STEPS FOR THE FUTURE:**

### 1. TAKE STEPS TO INCREASE DIVERSITY, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE DEPARTMENT

- Embrace policies in place to ensure hiring procedures reflect our commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- During the onboarding process (orientation), build and promote relationships with colleagues to ensure all feel comfortable.
- Training for all staff on the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Continue department growth and leverage that growth into opportunities for promotion from within.
- Actively and continuously encourage creativity and innovation for all staff.
- Have active, intentional, and ongoing efforts to promote the full participation and sense of belonging of every employee, customer, and strategic partner.

### 2. TAKE STEPS TO INCREASE MENU DIVERSITY , EQUALITY IN HIRING, AND INCLUSION IN OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop our team through robust training and development programs to prepare them to be in the best position possible to be promoted from within.
- Investing in current employees throughout levels of growth, in return they become the best fit for our operation due to institutional knowledge, great rapport with colleagues, and great moral/drive/equity/inclusion amongst the ranks.

- Assist with social and economic issues dealing with food insecurity.
- Increase diverse authentic dining offerings that make menus more inclusive of our multicultural community and commitment to sustainability.

### **ACTIONS WE HAVE TAKEN**

1. Partnering with HR to post positions in multiple locations to attract the most diverse pool of applicants for each and every job posting.
2. Participation in bias workshop training for all staff on hiring committees to ensure that our staff have training in order to conduct searches free from biases related to a candidate's age, race, gender, sexual orientation, and other personal characteristics unrelated to their job performance.
3. Create internal promotion and advancement opportunities for current staff in Dining Services.
4. Continue to have active interaction between the director of dining, unit managers and staff to harness an environment of open and productive communication to better understand our staff's onsite experience, as well as continuous customer interactions.
5. Director of Dining to continue meeting with direct reports weekly, unit managers monthly, and continuous staff conversation through daily, weekly, & monthly walkthroughs.
6. Continue to conduct monthly all hands meetings with a state of business update, future plans, birthday announcements, employee of the month announcement, and words of encouragement (Thank You).
7. Training by the Culinary Institute of America to provide a one week "train the trainer" program
  - Attendees of this training included the director of dining, executive chef, unit managers, 1st cooks, 2nd cooks, supervisors, and leads.
  - Virtual training modules were assigned to all trainers, cooks, cook's assistants, and offered to all prep service attendants and utility workers.
  - Each trainer was assigned 3-5 mentees to provide demonstrations of culinary foundations and assign a virtual training module, which the mentee can now apply to daily assignments to create the building blocks of culinary excellence.
  - Second week of training by the Culinary Institute of America to invite all cooks, along with our trained trainers from week 1, to join in for the history, culture, and cuisine of authentic Asian/Latin cooking.
8. Implementation of menus from training into our cycle menus for the academic year.
9. Dining seating area - new seating to expand seating capacity and set our dining area to a more inviting area not only to eat but engage in conversation and community building.

### **MEASURES WE WILL TAKE TO ENSURE SUCCESS**

1. Formal onboarding process for all new employees.
2. Implement formal one on one with the director and all new staff members and also with all current staff members every two years.
3. Collaborate with Environmental Studies to implement practical educational opportunities.
4. August annual orientation days: Introduce dining's new mission, values and vision and begin the process of taking active application of our dining program, student collaboration, and talent development campaigns. We will map out the criteria for our internal recognition program through peer voting and will highlight awarded staff members via dining social media platforms and post outside of the dining halls. We will also begin selecting one staff member weekly/monthly to start a staff spotlight where we will introduce our staff member to the campus community with a picture, position, tenure, duties and hobbies. Along with the introduction of new dining initiatives, we will complete all state required training and our new nutritionist will build and implement wellness/allergen training programs and will enforce these new trainings with campus audits and continuous coaching. Create team building activities through a market basket challenge where team meals are voted by peers and will be

awarded by their dish being added into the dining menu cycle for the fall semester and marketed via social media, signage and via verbal communication.

5. 1st Annual Training Days: During winter study our culinary team who attended the classes with the Culinary Institute of America will develop a training workshop for all staff to rotate through over the course of four weeks.
6. Individual weekly dining unit: Working with staff in the nomination process and using our new mission, vision and value statements as core values in being recognized.
7. Dining Vendor RFP Process - We have a set of requirements when sending out our primary and secondary RFP. We evaluate the company's sustainability, DEI, corporate structure, social responsibility, and leadership demographics (complete every three years).
8. Dining Feedback Process - We will look into eliminating the Dining Food Committee and host one or two town halls per semester and invite all students who have feedback to contribute to our overall performance and offerings. We will continue to promote students to use our feedback portal to communicate to our leadership team on how we are performing and how we can do better.
9. All Campus Events - Continue to work on diversifying our offerings beyond sandwiches and burgers to promote healthy and global cuisine .
10. Monthly All Hands: Recognizing staff who have gone above and beyond the call of duty nominated by staff and managers.
11. Safety Committee: Assigning ambassadors and having enhanced ability to communicate and remind staff on how to work safely in the workplace. Take advantage of Facilities safety skills platform to provide staff more robust virtual training.
12. Recruitment: Expand relationship with McCann, BCC & Taconic High School
13. Regional/local Competitions: Nominate staff members who are in leadership positions such as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> cooks, lead and supervisors from each unit to enhance skill set and bring unity with dining leaders in other venues together.
14. ServSafe Training: offer opportunities for staff to study and prepare during work hours and offer tests/materials and tutors/instructors in other languages as well as offer the test and questions to be read to those with difficulties.
15. Allow staff the opportunity to be included in campus wide committees.

## **OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME**

1. As staff grow, develop, and get promoted from within, vacancies will arise in our typical job classifications and hours such as late night operations, utility positions, and prep service attendants. Our best path forward in fulfilling these positions with the best opportunity to attract a diversified group of people is to develop and foster relationships with Mccann High School, BCC Hospitality Program & Taconic High School, as well as adding job postings to the Immigration Center in Pittsfield.
2. Explore what would be the best approach to confront our transportation and affordable housing availability shortages in our county.
3. Due to the length of service our staff have dedicated to our department, we are heading within the next one to three years, 30% of our staff reaching retirement age requiring a strategic approach in making this turnover as seamless as possible.
4. Dining lost three members of staff of color due to retirement in 2020.
5. Our students also seek educational and partnership opportunities in developing cultural meals amongst the dining staff, which often creates staffing and space restraints.
6. Our faculty seeks an opportunity to collaborate with dining and can create difficulty in terms of how our staff's regular work can be compromised to fulfill these requests.
7. Donations and partnerships within the community can create the same obstacles as partnerships with our faculty and stretch our staff thin during busy periods.
8. Schedules will be a challenge to allow staff to be involved in committees outside of Dining due to the time meetings are held.

## **REFLECTIONS ON HOW DINING WILL HOLD ITSELF ACCOUNTABLE TO THE OVERALL PLAN**

This DEI Plan is intended to establish goals, outline obstacles to overcome, and encourage commitment and participation at every level through staff understanding and buy-in and without creating resistance or anxiety. This DEI Plan will be posted on the Dining web page for internal and external groups to know our goals for the department and the obstacles we are working to overcome. Our office will regularly review our goals and metrics to determine what is working and what isn't. We will meet with current dining management as well as reach out to other departments to continuously share thoughts and ideas on how to continually improve and move forward.