

The contents of this document have been taken directly from the CIC DEI Strategic Plan.

SECTION 3: Proposals

As this committee has revisited racial climate reports from 2009 and 2016 and reflected upon the efforts of the college to address DEI concerns in recent years, we have three primary areas of concern: the composition of the student body, faculty, and staff; the curricular offerings; and the culture of the college. As a result of our discussions, we make the following proposals for change, which are intended to address opportunity gaps related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the college.

The particular findings detailed involve:

1. Diversity: Despite calls in 2009 and 2016 for diversifying the student population of the college, the relative percentages of white students and BIPOC students has not been altered substantially. (See pages 15-20.) There have been modest gains, particularly among Hispanic/Latinx student enrollment, and it is crucial to maintain these gains.
2. Diversity: While the college has made modest gains in diversifying the composition of the faculty, the support staff remains 100% white. Efforts to continue faculty diversification are advisable, but more pressing is the need to diversify the staff. (See pages 22-23.)
3. Equity/Inclusion: The significant gap in the four-year graduation rate between BIPOC students and white students is concerning. Though slightly higher rates of BIPOC students ultimately graduate within six years, a much higher rate of white students complete graduation requirements within four years. The added costs for completing a degree over additional years constitute a form of inequity and can be a sign that more inclusive efforts are needed, both socially and academically. (See page 23.)
4. Diversity/Inclusion: While workshops and symposia have been offered in recent years aimed at diversifying curricular offerings, recent comments and complaints from both current students and JMC alumni require that recommendations about faculty efforts offered in the 2016 Racial Climate Report be revisited. (See pages 24-25.)
5. Equity/Inclusion: Ongoing feedback from historically marginalized student groups as well as more widely-publicized incidents of micro- and macro-aggressions demonstrate that continued work is needed to make the college more inclusive and equitable. A college-wide forum in the fall of 2019, and online feedback in the summer and fall of 2020 all spoke to problems of the culture of the college in the classrooms and residence halls. The college must be more proactive in

gathering information and educating its faculty, staff, and students about these ongoing issues. (See pages 25-26.)

The college in 2021 affirmed in its “Statement of Norms and Values” a set of aspirations that might help improve the experiences of all community members. That came about as part of a process in which the college, like the university, is now reflecting on its history in an effort to identify troubling trends. It is our goal that this reflection can prompt real structural changes in the diversity of the student body, faculty, and staff, as well as providing equitable experiences and opportunities for all.

The proposals below are guided by that statement of norms and values and by our understanding of the meanings of diversity, equity, and inclusion outlined above. We articulate in the following pages broader goals for the college, particular objectives that specify the connection between the goals and ongoing problems the college has experienced, and actionable proposals that can help to achieve those objectives. In the sections on outcomes, we propose methods to measure the outcomes that we hope to achieve.

Part I: COMPOSITION OF COLLEGE COMMUNITY

Goals

1. To make significant increases in the diversification of ***JMC faculty, staff and students***, by hiring more employees and accepting more students who identify with historically marginalized groups.
2. To increase retention rates for students, faculty, and staff who identify with historically marginalized groups.

Objectives

1. Diversify the student body to reflect Michigan demographics:
 - a. Increase the percentage of African-American students from recent percentages (5.6-7.5%) of the student body to at least 13.5%, reflecting the demographics of the state of Michigan, taking into special account of the steep decline in African-American enrollment for Fall 2021.
 - b. Maintain the current percentage of Hispanic/Latinx students (recently increased to 6.9%) to at least 5.6% of the total student body, reflecting the demographics of the state of Michigan.
 - c. Ensure that numbers for other historically underrepresented student groups, including Asian, Asian-American, “American Indian/Alaska Native”, Hispanic/Latinx and LGBTQIA+, are monitored with annual surveys, and maintained.

2. Increase four-year graduation rates for BIPOC students to match graduation rates for white students.
3. Continue efforts to diversify the faculty, and make concerted efforts to diversify the college support staff.

Action Items: Composition

As this subcommittee has been writing this report, James Madison College has already instituted three items we recommended in our deliberations:

1. The creation of a “Reading Consultancy” that pairs with the long-standing “Writing Consultancy” to contribute to a more centralized learning center that can provide a range of resources in support of student learning and progress toward their degrees.
2. The hiring of the “Assistant Dean for DEI” position that can assist with recruitment and retention of historically underrepresented students, as well as provide guidance on diversifying the curriculum and making the college a more welcoming place for all.
3. Creating a “DEI Recruitment Specialist” to assist with diversifying the student body, faculty and staff.

Because the diversification of the composition of the college community (students, staff, faculty) remains a multifaceted process, however, we further recommend these actions:

1. Develop and assess an early arrival or “early start” program for high school students that specifically expands on the success of the MADI program. This will provide an opportunity for high school students who have enrolled in JMC, which can have a dual benefit of improving recruitment and retention of BIPOC and first-generation students. This may also include a course, MC 100, to be made more widely available through the college to help BIPOC and first-generation students adapt to the college curriculum.
2. Enhance the JMC “Ambassadors” program intended to assist in building relationships with Michigan high schools that graduate diverse populations. The college should redouble these efforts begun after the 2016 Racial Climate Report, building on connections between current students and alumni to make the benefits of a JMC education more visible to those prospective students.
3. In an effort to make DEI considerations central to the hiring and retention of college employees, the new Assistant Dean for DEI as well as the Inclusion Committee play an important role in the process of hiring faculty and staff.
4. Continue to collaborate with and document joint efforts with the MSU office of admissions to implement new ways to get the student population to reflect

Michigan demographics. As we document such efforts, it can provide measures by which the college may assess its efforts.

5. Propose a by-law change to reward service of faculty who mentor under-represented students, thus contributing to retention of BIPOC students. This should be reflected in a revised annual review process.

Outcomes

In 3-5 years, the college may assess the success of efforts to diversify the composition of the college community.

1. A central concern should be how closely the percentages of underrepresented student groups, especially African-American and Hispanic/Latinx students, have come to mirror populations in Michigan.
2. Efforts at retention, particularly the development of a reading consultancy and learning center, as well as the expansion of MADI to include an "early start" program should be in process, and should offer an opportunity to assess their effects.
3. Four-year graduation rates for BIPOC students should be closer to, or should mirror, those of white students.
4. The Assistant Dean for DEI should assess the hiring process for BIPOC faculty and staff, and take note of changes in the intervening years.
5. The college should consider a change in by-laws that would reward (via annual reviews) efforts of faculty who mentor students in under-represented groups.

Part II: CURRICULUM

Goals

1. Provide a holistic education with diversity of perspectives and disciplines.

Objectives

1. Create a process by which curriculum is regularly reviewed and any changes assessed, with identification of gaps and strengths related to diversity/equity/inclusion as the focus.
2. Ensure that the curriculum includes the voices, experiences, and perspectives of historically marginalized groups. (Review could include how well such perspectives as these are represented in the curriculum: "American Indian/Alaska Native," "African-American," "Asian" (APIDA), "Hispanic/Latinx," "Two or more races," and "LGBTQIA2S+." Additional review from various fields

might consider other definitions of diverse “voices, experiences, and perspectives” based on recent research in the relevant disciplines.)

Action Items

1. A process for reflection upon and potential revision of the college curriculum writ large should be instituted, overseen by the College Curriculum Committee, with the Dean and Assistant Dean for DEI providing guidance and counsel.
2. Returning to the recommendation from the Racial Climate Report of 2016, each field should periodically (at least every two years) review its curricular offerings to identify strengths and gaps related to diversity/equity/inclusion. Faculty in each field should include student representatives in this process. Each field should share written reflections with the College Curriculum Committee (CCC) as well as the Dean and the Assistant Dean of DEI.
3. The results should be shared with the Inclusion Committee for review.
4. Strategies should be identified for filling any identified gaps, including potentially through requests for additional hiring needs.
5. The college should continue to offer faculty workshops for diversifying the curriculum in response to particular issues that arise as part of this process.
6. The college should undertake an external review to study the diversification of the college curriculum.
7. Faculty annual reviews should reward commitment to diversifying the curriculum.

Outcomes

In 3-5 years, the college may assess the success of efforts to diversify the college curriculum in a few ways:

1. The development of a process of review and reflection on the curriculum.
2. The existence of field committees and annual/biennial reports by the College Curriculum Committee, Dean and Assistant Dean for DEI.
3. Annual/biennial reviews of curricular changes by the Inclusion Committee.
4. The addition of DEI curricular success to annual reviews.
5. The institution of a process of annual or biennial review of the curriculum.

Part III: CULTURE OF THE COLLEGE AND CLASSROOM

Goal

1. To foster a college environment where all individuals are consistently conscious of present cultural and social disparities; the development of a culture that encourages the treatment of others with respect and value during course-related interactions and in residential settings.

2. Improve the culture of the classroom by creating a more inclusive and respectful learning environment.

Objectives

1. To have a significant decrease in racially-motivated and politically-charged hate incidents against students of color and other historically marginalized groups in the academic and residential halls.
2. To receive positive feedback on polls and in fora from diverse students relating to their feelings of accessibility, comfortability and acceptance within the college.

Action Items

1. In an effort to formalize dialogue about issues of inclusion, student representatives on the College Inclusion Committee, as well as the JMC Student Senate and interested student organizations should organize at least one annual open forum to discuss current DEI concerns. Guest speakers may be invited to facilitate wider conversations about equity and social justice, and the presence of a CAPS member is recommended.
2. The Assistant Dean for DEI should facilitate at least one survey each school year to solicit feedback about how students across the college are experiencing issues related to equity and inclusion in the residence halls and classrooms. The survey should be reported to the College Inclusion Committee, with the intention of reviewing the results and proposing future improvements.
3. The Inclusion Committee should collaborate with the Assistant Dean of DEI to organize and facilitate DEI workshops for faculty and staff, provided at faculty retreats or during the school year. Faculty should be encouraged to make decisive changes to their syllabus and adopt more equitable practices in classrooms. Faculty and staff should use information gathered in the survey and fora to make the college a more inclusive environment via discussion, advising, and mentoring.

Outcomes

In 3-5 years, the college may assess the success of efforts to promote a more inclusive college and residential culture in these ways:

1. The institution of annual fora organized by students and reflection on what they have revealed.
2. The institution of annual surveys of college and residence hall culture; an increased sense of community, support, and acceptance as reported by JMC students, faculty, and staff, with particular emphasis on marginalized perspectives.

3. Ongoing workshops for faculty, staff, and students that utilize information gathered to make the college more inclusive.