



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION REPORT

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
Division of Student Affairs



INTRODUCTION

Inclusivity is one of the core values of Florida State University and the Division of Student Affairs (DSA):

“Honoring the intersectionality of all people, we create inviting spaces to learn from each other and build more complex ways of being. We value and advocate for an equitable campus community.”

In response to events in 2020, students, staff, administration, and faculty engaged in conversations and dialogue to further shape FSU as an inclusive campus. Departments held listening sessions across the institution. In addition to centering and affirming marginalized identities, the dialogue encouraged solidarity from allies. The DSA continues to move forward with actions motivated by hope for a better future.

This document serves as an update on the Division’s DEI work in the past year. This work will continue in fall 2021 and beyond. For the most part, this newsletter does not contain the work occurring beyond the Division of Student Affairs in the area of DEI, such as the President’s Task Force or the work of FSU’s Diversity and Inclusion Team.

DSA DEI INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Over the past year, the Division of Student Affairs has continued efforts that began prior to 2020 as well as initiated new efforts.

OFFICE OF STUDENT EQUITY AND INCLUSION

One objective in the DSA strategic plan is to enhance FSU's capacity for equity and inclusion by establishing a resourced office for student equity and inclusion focused on education, training, and student engagement. In January 2021, Dr. Sierra Turner was hired as the inaugural Director of the Office of Student Equity and Inclusion, which is part of the Center for Leadership & Social Change. In the June 2021 DSA newsletter, Dr. Turner talked about the most fulfilling part of her role, "I have a great team of program coordinators, administrative support, and graduate students. Right now, we're focusing on getting our processes in place for the office and also thinking about the types of workshops, trainings, and activities we want to do."

NAMING A CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER FOR STUDENTS

Dr. Brandon Bowden serves as the Associate Vice President who leads the Inclusive Community Portfolio. In this role, he represents the Division of Student Affairs as the Chief Diversity Officer for Students. Dr. Bowden is responsible for working across the division to optimize campus culture for students and ensuring that the divisions' diversity and inclusion goals align with divisional strategic outcomes. As the Chief Diversity Officer for Students, he is also responsible for collaborating with the Chief Diversity Officer for the University to ensure that all diversity and inclusion goals within the division align with those of the university's core values and strategic plan.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS CALENDAR

Each semester the Vice President for Student Affairs sends an email reminder to faculty, staff and students to consult the religious holiday calendar and also to be aware of the religious holiday class attendance policy. While not strictly a benefit to our Jewish students, these efforts help to ensure broader awareness of all religious holidays and hopefully avoid conflicts.

NCBI AT FSU

The past year has been one of growth for the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) affiliate at FSU. Before the start of the fall 2020 semester, the Division of Student Affairs and Human Resources sponsored the first train-the-trainer session for Florida State since 2016. It was the first such session ever conducted virtually by NCBI. The team is now 48 members strong and eager to return to in-person facilitation.

PREFERRED NAMES AND PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Through a collaboration between FSU's Pride Student Union, Office of Student Equity & Inclusion, Student Government Association, Office of Human Resources, the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Academic Affairs, Canvas now recognizes preferred names. For students who have already designated a preferred name using an official process (HR name change request, Student Central, etc.), that name is now the default Canvas name. Additionally, students can now select personal pronouns and gender identity through Student Central. The pronouns and gender identities were developed in collaboration with the Pride Student Union and the Office of Student Equity and Inclusion.

LGBTQ+ HOUSING

University Housing and Residence Life launched LGBTQ+ housing accommodations, which has been an important addition to our housing inventory. Prior to gender neutral housing, students were accommodated on a one-on-one basis and the program was not broadly marketed to students. The new program was piloted in spring and is fully launched this fall 2021. There are roughly 500 students who are utilizing this offering in fall 2021.

GENDER NEUTRAL RESTROOMS

The Division of Student Affairs worked with Facilities to standardize gender neutral restroom signage, identified Facilities as the department to oversee these efforts, updated the campus-wide map of gender neutral restrooms, and developed a plan to address areas of campus without these restrooms.

COLLABORATIONS WITH FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY

As part of the Black Lives Matter statement, the DSA committed to strengthening our relationship with Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) in order to facilitate connections and dialogue for our student affairs professionals and students. In 2020 – 2021, seven DSA departments collaborated with FAMU for programs and events such as The Big Event day of service, CARE Educational Talent Search Program at FAMU, FSU Votes Stroll to the Polls, a joint event between FSU and FAMU National Panhellenic Council organizations, and collaboration through the Victim Advocate Program tri-campus prevention group.

DIVERSITY TALKS PODCAST

In spring 2021, the Center for Global Engagement launched the Diversity Talks Podcast, made possible by the President's Diversity and Inclusion Mini Grant Program. To date, the podcast has been heard more than 1,200 times. Episodes highlight the voices of leaders at FSU who drive change to create more inclusive cultures. The podcast has incredible potential to help build and foster a rich learning environment for all FSU students, staff, and faculty by offering participants lessons from diversity and inclusion leaders. The project also promotes interaction and understanding among students of all backgrounds and cultures to build stronger communities.

DIALOGUE SESSIONS

One of the objectives in the DSA strategic plan is to amplify voices and seek feedback related to an inclusive campus community by creating task forces and facilitating opportunities for dialogue. In 2020 – 2021, 11 DSA departments facilitated 123 dialogue sessions with over 2,600 participations.

DSA DEI TASK FORCE

Following events in 2020, the DSA launched the DSA Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) task force and implemented Student Life task forces. Over the past year, these focused work groups have addressed timely and important questions to help move the needle on DEI work in the DSA.

In 2020-2021, the 40-member DSA DEI task force was charged with making recommendations to the DSA. The full task force met every three weeks and focused on sharing resources, discussing timely topics, and providing committee updates. Each task force member served on one of four different committees that had specific goals to explore and address diversity, equity, and inclusion with a focus on DSA staff. To support the committees in their work, year one wrapped up with a four-hour workshop facilitated by Human Resources where colleagues came together to review data and address questions raised by task force members.

DSA DEPARTMENT & SUPERVISOR ACCOUNTABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE

This committee focused on examining methods in which departments and supervisors can be held accountable and receive feedback on DEI efforts in their departments.

DSA STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SUBCOMMITTEE

This committee is exploring strategies to recruit and retain diverse staff members to the DSA.

DSA DEI PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING SUBCOMMITTEE

This committee is leading efforts to determine gaps in DSA professional competencies surrounding equity, diversity, and inclusion and identify or develop opportunities for professional staff to engage in DEI competency acquisition.

NATIONAL DEI CONFERENCE SUBCOMMITTEE

This committee is planning a nationally-recognized DEI conference hosted by the DSA in spring 2022.

STUDENT LIFE TASK FORCES

Student Life Task Forces are groups of students, faculty, and staff who come together to discuss the needs, challenges, and goals of groups of students and make recommendations for action to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The task force focused on areas identified through student requests, and new task forces can be created in the future as students express interest. The task force recommendations are a starting point and not a final solution to FSU's inclusivity efforts. While the recommendations are important to our work, ensuring students feel heard and valued is another benefit of the task forces.

HISPANIC/LATINX STUDENT LIFE

Recognizing the needs, challenges and goals of Hispanic/Latinx students at Florida State University, the Hispanic/Latinx Student Life task force strove to enable the academic, professional, and social success of Hispanic/Latinx students on our campus. The task force explored ways to better connect and create lasting resources for Hispanic/Latinx students. The task force represented a diverse population within the Hispanic/Latinx community at FSU to ensure accessible and representative resources remained the utmost priority.

Formed in October 2020, the task force delivered recommendations to Dr. Hecht by February 2021. Kristian Diaz, former director of the Hispanic/Latinx

Student Union, and Adela Larramendi, director of the Hispanic/Latinx Student Union, presented recommendations to the Student Affairs Leadership Team in March. The presentation of findings included recommendations related to namings, the President's Cabinet, the Latinx Cultural Celebration, identity-based counseling, identity-based orientation, resources for undocumented students, a Hispanic/Latinx affairs department, and a Hispanic/Latinx house or center. Dr. Hecht and her team will consider the recommendations as part of both short- and long-term planning for the DSA as well as collaborations with campus and community partners.

JEWISH STUDENT LIFE

The DSA created the Jewish Student Life task force in response to a series of anti-Semitic events on campus in summer 2020. As a result, students and the leadership from Hillel at FSU expressed concerns to university administration. After hearing these concerns, the DSA worked with the Director of Hillel and Jewish student leaders to create a list of action items. One of the action items was the creation of a task force to address issues and concerns. The focus of the Jewish Student Life task force has been to offer a set of recommendations that the Division of Student Affairs could consider to enhance Jewish student life on campus. The committee had great representation from Jewish

students, faculty, staff, and alumni. They are in the final stages of developing recommendations including the development of anti-Semitism training for staff. As part of the research process, the DSA also provided data for a national climate survey regarding Jewish Student Life.

In addition to the efforts of the Task Force, the Vice President for Student Affairs championed for the creation of the Jewish Alumni Network, which was established in 2020. Also, in 2020, the Student Government Association voted to create a Jewish Student Union that has agency status within Student Government. Efforts need to continue to ensure equitable support for this new agency.

ASIAN-AMERICAN STUDENT LIFE

The goal of this task force is to provide a forum to discuss issues Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) students see nationally, on campus, and within the Asian American community at FSU. The goal is to continue a plan for dialogue, encourage students to have a voice, and elevate their concerns. The ultimate goal is to act as advocates for student needs to champion change. This task force started meeting recently, and discussions are beginning to take a deeper dive. They have broadly discussed what is happening nationally, with AAPI communities at other institutions, and their experiences at FSU. The task force plans to add more members in the fall. The group is looking at engagement data from the New Student Survey and high impact practices from the 2020 National Survey of Student Engagement to provide a perspective on FSU student engagement that will be helpful in guiding future conversations.

LGBTQ+ STUDENT LIFE

One of the topics that brought this committee together was gender inclusive housing on campus. Moving forward, the committee will focus broadly on the experiences of LGBTQ+ students. Through conversations and recommendations from students and staff, the group has been developing formal recommendations. When the task forces regroup in the fall, this committee plans to support recommendations through research and looking at peer institutions.

BLACK STUDENT LIFE

The Black Student Life Task Force held its inaugural meeting in April 2021. The primary focus was developing innovative solutions to enhance the Black presence in Student Affairs programming. The committee fostered community and received pertinent updates on the University's progress with DEI. With this knowledge and support, students participated in civic engagement by serving as change agents. The task force is meeting to finalize recommendations to submit to the Vice President for Student Affairs.



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS