

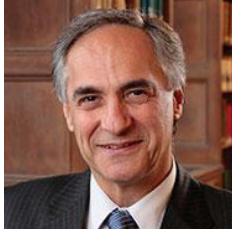
Diversity + Inclusion Initiative

Initial Activities

OCTOBER 2017



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO



Robert J. Zimmer

President

The University of Chicago

Statement from the President and Provost

A salient issue on many university campuses today is a perceived tension between two values that the University of Chicago has long espoused: a deep and foundational commitment to free expression, open discourse, and rigorous inquiry on the one hand; and the importance of the rich diversity of the campus community on the other. The University of Chicago has long been committed to the idea that these values are not in fundamental opposition: that a culture of rigorous inquiry demands an environment where diverse perspectives, experiences, individuals, and ideas inform and stimulate intellectual exchange, challenge, and engagement; and that the quality of education of every student is deeply enhanced by the habits of mind and intellectual skills that only a challenging environment provides.



Daniel Diermeier

Provost

The University of Chicago

Such discourse thrives in a climate of respect and civility, requiring an environment of inclusion and a willingness on the part of all to engage conversations that can be difficult and even uncomfortable. This in turn demands actively confronting certain climate issues on campus that may impede inclusion. These issues are varied, relating particularly (but not exclusively) to minority status due to race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability status, nationality, or political perspective. They arise in the context of our society as a whole, which has engaged in many exclusionary practices and acts of bias—both historical and ongoing, both explicit and implicit—which have limited opportunity and participation for many individuals and groups. As a university community, taking such climate issues seriously and openly addressing them is critical for ensuring that all faculty, students, and staff are able to fully participate in open discourse on campus and thus fully benefit from and contribute to the deeply enriching and challenging academic environment characteristic of the University of Chicago.

Fulfilling our highest aspirations with respect to these values and their mutual reinforcement will always demand ongoing attention and work on the part of all of us. The current national environment underscores the importance of this work. It means that we need to manifest these values more rather than less, demand more of ourselves as a community, and together be forthright and bold in demonstrating what our community aspires to be. We ask all of you for your help and commitment to the values of diversity and inclusion, free expression, and open discourse, and what they mean for each of us working, learning, and living in this University community every day.



Melissa Gilliam

Ellen H. Block Professor
of Health Justice

Vice Provost for Academic
Leadership, Advancement,
and Diversity

The University of Chicago

Statement from the Vice Provost

Diversity and inclusion at the University of Chicago are not optional efforts that we pursue on the periphery; they are fundamental to our excellence. To make meaningful and important contributions to the academy and to continue to be the birthplace of world-changing ideas, we must attract the strongest and most interesting thinkers, and then ensure they can thrive and succeed here. The University of Chicago occupies a unique place in higher education. We will retain this standing only if we are the institution everyone aspires to join: to study here, live and work here, and make one's career in this extraordinary environment that marries the freedom to speak with the freedom to be heard.

The University of Chicago's Diversity and Inclusion Initiative is informed by our campus community. We have held campus conversations, met with numerous groups and individuals, conducted the 2016 Climate Survey, and received the recommendations of the Diversity Advisory Council. We have reviewed key documents, past diversity efforts, and considered the University's foundational values. These influences and others inform the choice of initial activities that the University will implement.

To begin, we will pursue four strategies: provide an infrastructure to support diversity and inclusion; foster a climate that is inclusive of all on campus; develop and support the people who comprise our University; and engage in our community. In executing this plan, we will use evidence-based approaches where possible, adopt best practices in the absence of evidence, study our activities, and measure and assess our work to ensure progress. Over time, we will reassess our priorities and update them to reflect our evolving needs.

On the part of the administration, we will look to the campus community for ideas and solutions, work collaboratively with partners across campus to solve problems, and communicate frequently. In turn, we ask the campus community to bring their best ideas, a spirit of openness, and their passion to address these most urgent issues. While this work will be difficult, the University is grounded in the very qualities we need to ensure success: intellect, curiosity, goodwill, and an unwillingness to accept impossibilities.

This plan outlines an initial set of activities, some of them already underway, to take place over the next one to two years. Priorities and progress will be assessed at that point to determine additional goals and new directions. As we work, we must remember that our ultimate success depends not on any single activity or program, but on us all committing to a sustained and systematic effort over time.

OUR APPROACH

Creating a more diverse and inclusive campus will rely upon the many assets already present in our community: the individuals who comprise our campus; the communities, in Chicago and around the world, in which we are situated; and our rich history and institutional culture.

The Diversity and Inclusion Initiative will work alongside and in collaboration with campus entities that are already making great strides. College Admissions is a leader among peers in efforts to increase student diversity. The No Barriers initiative has broadened access to the College through an expansion of the scale and scope of financial aid and increased academic and career support, and has led to significantly greater economic, racial, and ethnic diversity of incoming undergraduates.

The Office of Civic Engagement has developed a wide range of community initiatives and partnerships that significantly strengthen our commitment to and engagement with the communities of the South Side. For example, for eight years, the Office of Business Diversity has led a distinctive and emulated program that has greatly increased the diversity of the University's professional service providers, forming long-term collaborations with minority- and women-owned firms on the South Side, across the city, and beyond.

The University of Chicago Medicine and Biological Sciences Division is a leader in community engagement and improving the health of our local communities, including opening a Level 1 adult trauma center in 2018. UChicagoGRAD, Campus and Student Life, the Center for Identity + Inclusion, the Center for College Student Success, and numerous other divisions, schools, and departments demonstrate ambitious leadership in implementing a range of crucial programs and activities.

The Diversity and Inclusion Initiative will further draw upon the expertise that exists at University centers creating scholarship and programming on issues such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, politics, socioeconomic diversity, ability, and veteran status. These are just some of the partnerships and collaborations that will propel this work.

For this effort to succeed, we must go beyond existing efforts, deepening and broadening the network of individuals striving to make UChicago more richly diverse and fully inclusive. Diversity and inclusion is an ongoing process, not unlike scientific inquiry in its inherently iterative nature—one achievement leads to the next question as we pursue a process of continual discovery and improvement.

Inquiry stands as a cornerstone of this effort. We will support our efforts with a scientific, scholarly process. Through this work, we will create a body of knowledge to support the development of new activities, processes, and skills for learning and living in complex communities.

Assessment is inquiry's counterpart. We will evaluate our efforts through a variety of measurements—focus groups, surveys, reports, and opportunities for broad community input. Climate survey data will provide a baseline to measure our progress. We will document and communicate this progress to the University community. This assessment will allow us to benchmark our efforts and will hold us accountable to our commitments.

Our approach will be targeted and agile, with a focus on developing solution-oriented strategies. We will advance this effort through working groups of stakeholders that will help identify concrete solutions that are feasible, impactful, and sustainable. If we do this work well, we will break new ground on diversity and inclusion, and create a body of evidence whose value will be felt far beyond our campus.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE

UChicago has significant activity in diversity and inclusion. Yet many efforts occur in isolation, without the benefits of sustained open communication and collaboration. A stronger infrastructure will enable us to work more efficiently and effectively and to learn from one another.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Diversity and inclusion plan for each division, school, department, unit

Each of our units has unique needs and opportunities regarding diversity and inclusion. Thus, we will offer divisions, schools, departments, and administrative units the opportunity to work with us on creating a tailored diversity and inclusion plan to identify opportunities to make their local climates more inclusive of all members. These plans should address the specific needs of each unit and draw on the strengths and opportunities particular to local environments. The Office of the Provost will work with campus colleagues to make resources available, including templates, toolkits, workshops, and consultation, to facilitate this process.

Administrative infrastructure

Achieving our goals will require identifying, engaging, and cultivating members of our campus to work locally and across campus. We will invest in appointing key diversity leaders. As part of our commitment to scholarship and cultural programming on issues of race and ethnicity, we are conducting a national search for the next director of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, bringing a new senior scholar to campus. Similarly, we are conducting a national search for the next director of the Center for Identity + Inclusion. In addition, units, schools, and divisions will be encouraged to appoint leaders to help focus their local efforts. We will facilitate greater communication and collaboration across this administrative infrastructure, creating an organizational backbone to address campus-wide goals.

Digitally mapping diversity and inclusion

One of the byproducts of a decentralized campus is that many members of the University community are unaware of existing diversity and inclusion activities. With the help of the Research Computing Center, the University's diversity-related efforts will be mapped, creating an online resource for the campus community. Our map will cover diversity initiatives, programs, events, and curricular offerings across the University. The campus community will be able to access the results of this inventory, identify resources, initiate collaborations, and create reports.

Communications infrastructure

To further our ability to share information and ideas, we will create a robust communications plan. Sustained, open communication will enable stronger cross-campus collaborations and greater transparency, and will aid in creating a broad foundation for diversity that spans divisions, schools, departments, and units.

INCLUSIVE CLIMATE

The 2016 Climate Survey demonstrated that many members of our campus community do not feel included or valued. To realize our institutional values, we must foster a climate that supports full participation of the University's members in the academic and professional life of the campus.

Building skills

In the 2016 Climate Survey, individuals reported negative daily interactions and not feeling valued by their peers. These experiences are antithetical to the inclusive community we wish to create. As a starting point, we will address this issue by supporting skills such as communicating, listening, and working in diverse groups. Key partners have already been identified, including the Harry L. Davis Center for Leadership at Chicago Booth and The Second City. In collaboration, we are integrating behavioral science research with improvisational practice to create novel skill development resources.

Funding for local initiatives on inclusion

Members of our campus community have rich insights and ideas for making their local environments and our shared campus more inclusive and diverse. Thus, a small grants program, open to all members of the campus community, will be created to develop and implement new ideas germane to those environments. Fostering a more welcoming proximal environment will contribute to a more inclusive campus for all.

Support for inclusive learning environments

The University of Chicago is committed to a rigorous and distinctive education for all of its students, yet the 2016 Climate Survey indicates that students from many backgrounds do not feel fully included in the classroom. We will support UChicago educators in considering teaching practices that enable all students to engage fully in their academic pursuits. We will encourage consideration of current pedagogical practices, as well as the development and study of new approaches to inclusive teaching. Funding will be provided as will expert assistance through a partnership with the Chicago Center for Teaching to support faculty and departments in developing new curricula, redesigning courses, experimenting with inclusive pedagogy, and sharing what they learn with colleagues across the University.

Working groups on campus experience

Through the 2016 Climate Survey, we learned that there is wide variation in the campus experience. Working groups of key stakeholders will be convened to accelerate change on these issues and will be tasked with proposing achievable, impactful, sustainable solutions to pressing challenges. For example, the survey identified opportunities to improve the experience of specific populations of students. Our first working groups will focus on these groups. Over time, more working groups will be created to address other emergent needs.

Resource groups

The University of Chicago Medicine and Biological Sciences Division (UCMBSD) has made significant strides in promoting institutional engagement. Resource groups—dedicated support networks where members of our campus community come together around specific areas of shared interest—are an emerging part of that strategy. The University will partner with UCMBSD to support the continued growth and development of these resource groups, whose membership will be broadened in order to make them accessible to the University as a whole.

Alumni engagement

Robust relationships between alumni and the University contribute to the diversity of people, perspectives, and experiences of our campus community. Initial programs will focus on student populations identified in the Climate Survey as having a more negative perception of the campus climate. A working group will be created to identify specific opportunities for alumni-campus connections to improve the campus experience for these students.

PEOPLE

INCREASING DIVERSITY

Increasing diversity is central to achieving a more inclusive campus. Without sufficient diversity, some individuals risk isolation, alienation, excessive service, burnout, and less than full inclusion.

Thus, we commit to increasing the diversity of our students, faculty, and staff. We will partner with College Admissions to support student recruitment and transition to the University. We will partner with UChicagoGRAD, along with the schools and divisions, on recruitment and retention of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. Further, we will work with search committees, divisions, and Human Resources to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.

Financial commitment to hiring faculty in areas with underrepresentation

The Office of the Provost and the University will make a financial commitment to increasing the diversity and excellence of our faculty, with a particular emphasis on faculty from groups historically underrepresented in the academy and women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.

Search committee workshops

Recruiting and retaining diverse faculty is fundamental to UChicago's excellence. There is a growing body of evidence on best practices for running efficient and inclusive search processes. We will make available evidence-based workshops on faculty searches and hiring. In addition, members of the Office of the Provost and Office of Legal Counsel will be available to work one on one with department chairs and deans on recruiting top scholars who will enhance the diversity of our faculty. We will continue to review inclusivity in faculty searches and hiring, considering other options as needed to enhance diversity.

Training on staff promotion and hiring

Our staff is one of the University's most important resources, yet insufficient attention has been paid to the issue of internal promotion and diversity of staff in leadership positions. Working with our Human Resources Talent Acquisition team, the Office of Legal Counsel, and the Office for Equal Opportunity Programs, we will provide training of senior administrative leadership on best practices in hiring staff, including promotion from within, as well as instruction on affirmative action compliance.

Increase the diversity of graduate programs

Our graduate students are central to the University's academic excellence. Ensuring that our graduate programs are broadly diverse and inclusive reflects our institutional values. Working with UChicagoGRAD, the Office of Legal Counsel, and divisions and units already engaged in this work, we will develop new programs to increase the diversity of our graduate student body and promote retention.

PATHWAY PROGRAMS

Provost's Postdoctoral Fellows Program

The University developed the Provost's Postdoctoral Fellows Program in 2016 with support from an external foundation and the input of many members of our campus community. This program offers funding to schools and divisions for scholars from under-represented populations. Fellows are appointed for two years as instructors on the tenure track, with the expectation that they will be promoted to assistant professor at the end of that period. The number of scholars funded through this mechanism will be increased, and policies will be created to make it easier for more schools and divisions to participate.

"Ivy Plus" Reimagining Pathways to the Academy Consortium

The University recognizes that our commitment to a diverse professoriate cannot be limited to the faculty of the University of Chicago alone, but must instead look outward to the academy as a whole. To that end, UChicago is heading an initiative that convenes administrative leaders from the Ivy League and other leading research universities to develop a cross-institutional approach to increasing diversity in the American academy. The initial meeting of this consortium took place on the University of Chicago campus in July 2017.

Bridge programs

Opportunities to pursue a career in academia must be provided early on and recur throughout one's academic career. The Collegiate Scholars Program creates such an opportunity for high school students. Undergraduate programs like the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, the Pritzker School of Medicine Experience in Research, the Leadership Alliance, and other programs extend this exposure. Similarly, our schools, divisions, and departments have created successful bridge programs at the pre-graduate, graduate, and postdoctoral levels. To further these efforts, the Office of the Provost, in collaboration with UChicagoGRAD and other campus partners, will provide technical assistance for investigators and units wishing to compete for new pathway program funding, request supplemental funding for their existing federally funded grants, and/or design new programs. We will also steward increased planning, coordination, and collaboration among campus partners.

COMMUNITY

The University of Chicago has deep and robust commitments to and partnerships with Hyde Park, South Side communities, and the city of Chicago. This work represents our commitment to civic engagement and a recognition that supporting vibrant cities—particularly the city we call home—is vital to our identity as a great urban research university. Guiding our work is a commitment to inclusion and collaboration—a conviction that we have much to learn from each other, and that our University, our city, and our partners will flourish if we stand together.

Community engagement

Through such entities as the Office of Civic Engagement, the Institute of Politics, the Chicago Studies Program, the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, UChicago Arts, and our centers, the University realizes its goal of connecting the campus to the city of Chicago. Our students, staff, and faculty volunteer their service in local schools and nonprofit groups, and our faculty engage meaningfully through scholarship and clinical care. As part of the small grants programs, we will prioritize projects that engage our surrounding communities. Similarly we will promote additional curricular proposals to increase opportunities for students to learn about Chicago and engage with these communities.

Supporting engaged scholarship and inquiry

The University has a long history of urban scholarship and a distinct perspective on local, national, and global urban research and education. With the Office of Civic Engagement, the Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation, the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, Arts + Public Life, our global centers, our professional schools and divisions, and other entities, the University has more platforms than ever for elevating the work of academics who conduct engaged scholarship and inquiry. In partnership with the Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation, the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, and the Office of Civic Engagement, seed grants will be provided to support projects that further such research. Moreover, we will mobilize such entities as Alumni Relations and Development, University Communications, the Office of the Executive Vice President for Research, Innovation, and National Laboratories, and other partners to support engaged researchers and communicate the value of this work internally and externally.

Arts and culture

Through such entities as the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, Court Theatre, the Smart Museum of Art, Arts + Public Life, the Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry, and other arts institutions at the University, UChicago demonstrates its interest and commitment to diversity in arts and cultural programming. These collaborative initiatives have led to local, national, and global partnerships that enhance diversity in arts production, scholarship, and education. Nevertheless, there is more to be done. We will create new partnerships between arts institutions and academic units to build programs that will strengthen the curatorial pipeline. We will consider our collections and seek opportunities to include and highlight work from artists who represent a variety of backgrounds currently underrepresented in the arts.

> NEXT STEPS

The activities set forth in this initiative reflect our fundamental commitment to creating a campus that is broadly diverse and truly inclusive. Success will rely on participation by the entire campus community. We depend on you to offer your ideas, effort, and experience to bring this initiative to life. We will communicate regularly about our progress in this initiative. We encourage you to become involved.

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