

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council

Annual Report

May 7, 2021

I. Diversity Committee Formation

The Diversity Committee of the University of Southern Indiana was created in response to Ind. Code § 21-27-8-7 that was implemented by Public Law 167-2007 after the passage of House Enrolled Act 1256. The Indiana Code requires the establishment of the Diversity Committee, which shall do the following:

- Review and recommend faculty employment policies concerning diversity issues.
- Review faculty and administration personnel complaints concerning diversity issues.
- Make recommendations to promote and maintain cultural diversity among faculty members.
- Make recommendations to promote recruitment and retention of minority students.
- Issue an annual report stating the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the committee to the board.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) was formed in 2018 and replaced the Diversity Committee. The Council is an educative and advisory group composed of faculty, staff and students from different racial/ethnic, social status, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, veteran status and religions that reflect the diversity within the university community, as well as advocates for those groups.

II. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council (EDIC)

As previously reported on April 26, 2019 to the Board of Trustees, the EDIC represented one of President Rochon's initiatives.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council (EDIC) of USI is to identify, understand, act upon, and evaluate initiatives and opportunities to promote inclusion for representation, involvement, and empowerment of diverse communities across campus.

Vision Statement: The vision of EDIC is to create an equitable environment where all can challenge thought and practice while embracing each other in our unique individualities to produce representation, involvement, and empowerment of all communities across campus.

Goals:

- Create and sustain a welcoming campus community that strives for structural diversity based on principles of equity and inclusion through leadership and action at all levels of the institution.
- Strengthen and improve the structural diversity of the University of Southern Indiana campus community.
- Cultivate mutually beneficial community-university partnerships that further the mission of the University with an emphasis on historically and currently underserved communities.

The Council uses the following definitions for its work.

Equity: Creating opportunities for equal access and success for historically underrepresented populations, such as racial and ethnic minority and low-income students, in three main areas:

- Representational equity, the proportional participation at all levels of an institution;
- Resource equity, the distribution of educational resources in order to close equity gaps; and
- Equity-mindedness, the demonstration of an awareness of and willingness to address equity issues among institutional leaders and staff.

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, physical or cognitive abilities, as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations) that can be engaged in the service of learning .

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical). This engagement with diversity has the potential to increase one’s awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Accomplishments 2020-2021

- Campus Climate Survey Findings Received and Shared
- Developed Pillars to connect EDIC Council Strategic Plan to USI’s Strategic Plan
- Increase in committees working on equity, diversity and inclusion
- New working groups
 - Created committee start-up toolbox
 - Designed reporting template

Campus Climate Survey Findings

Last year we reported the administering of a Campus Climate Survey. Since then, we have received and shared the findings. Our awareness of all community members is vital in creating

transformative spaces where all students and employees can flourish. However, fall 2020, as well as spring 2021, did challenge us. It also provided opportunities for us to reimagine our future and beyond through expanded collaborative engagement with one another. Having options such as in-person, hybrid, and virtual platforms enabled us to provide programming initiatives such as speakers, training, and workshops to the USI community and beyond.

Pillars

In addition to the USI Strategic Plan and the EDIC Strategic Plan, we now have four strategic pillars. These pillars help to strengthen, support, and connect the two plans. They are Intentional & Holistic Student Engagement, Faculty & Staff Development, Curriculum & Instruction Development and Recruitment, Hiring, & Promotion. Having the "pillars" helps us ensure everyone is on the same page with the goal of increasing the retention of students and employees. Although the "pillars" are new, and it's too early to determine its effectiveness, it encourages imagination and intellectual ownership at the college, division, and individual level. We believe the pillars will have a dramatic effect on recruitment and retention.

Councils and Committees

With an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council (EDIC) Strategic Plan, a Council that represents a cross-section of the community, it is critical we continue to move forward. We must explore and implement ways to ensure that all voices are seen and heard throughout campus policies, procedures, initiatives, and plans. We know all too well this work requires a collective effort of our campus and community. Campus activation and mobilization help facilitate strategies, success, and a sense of belonging. Recognizing having representation from students, colleges, divisions, and governing bodies on one council would not equate to institutional change, courageous conversations took place across campus to expand the footprint. Last year we reported one college with a formalized equity, diversity, and inclusion committee. Currently, all colleges and Student Affairs have a committee focused on this work. The responsibility of developing their action plans lies with members of the USI community. Their representative serves as the link between the council, committee, dean, or vice-president.

Working Groups

This year two additional working groups were formed. One to develop a toolkit for the formation of EDIC committees across campus and the other to design a template for reporting purposes. The "toolkit working group" was tasked with providing guidance and common language to be used by committees. The recommendation from this group is that all groups formed use the word

“committee” and not “council”. The rationale is to alleviate any confusion as it relates to the EDIC Council. Resources in the toolkit contain templates for new groups to use in terms of their language, structure, and implementation, regardless of the college, department or division in which the group is housed. Samples of invitation letters, mission and vision statements, strategic plans, survey approved by the OPRA office, activity checklists and flyers are also included.

The "reporting working group" was formed to develop and design a reporting template to be used campus-wide. They are in the final stages of making edits. The purpose of this instrument is to move us beyond a culture of compliance and checklist type of assessment process and instead aim to facilitate data-informed, continuous improvement for USI and its stakeholders. The summation of findings will be compiled into a comprehensive report that is shared. The next step is developing Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and determining how often we will report out. Having a snapshot is critical in determining if we are meeting our goals.

Next Steps

Moving forward researchers from Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) will conduct focus groups with students and employees this summer and fall 2021 to drill down deeper to supplement the findings of the Campus Climate Survey. We will continue to share data campus-wide in smaller pieces with courageous conversation to implement change. Work to expand the EDIC footprint. Develop metrics to show continuous improvement towards expected outcomes.