

Pathways to Equity



THE UNIVERSITY of
MISSISSIPPI

Office of the
Chancellor

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Institutional Strategic Plan

2021-26

THE CREED

The University of Mississippi is a community of learning dedicated to nurturing excellence in intellectual inquiry and personal character in an open and diverse environment. As a voluntary member of this community:

I believe in **respect** for the dignity of each person.

I believe in **fairness** and **civility**.

I believe in personal and professional **integrity**.

I believe in academic **honesty**.

I believe in academic **freedom**.

I believe in **good stewardship** of our resources.

I pledge to uphold these values and encourage others to follow my example.





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PREFACE

Greetings,

The U.S. Supreme Court has consistently affirmed that diversity is a compelling government interest in public higher education. The court cited research that demonstrates that all students benefit from a diverse learning environment and affirmative efforts to promote equity help to reduce the adverse impact of racial exclusion. Higher education institutions have embraced these tenets and initiated strategies to execute the mandates found in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The University of Mississippi is a flagship public research university that is respected for making important contributions to the state, nation and the world. UM, like many public universities in the South, has also grappled with direct and indirect consequences of state-sponsored racial segregation. The Supreme Court mandated in the 1992 Fordice Decision that the public universities in Mississippi must take affirmative steps to dismantle the systems of racial exclusion and ensure that all students have equal access to the public higher education system. The University of Mississippi endeavors to fulfill this constitutional mandate and pursue a clear path to racial justice. This work is daunting but is absolutely essential for a better and healthier Mississippi.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as a consultant during Phase 2 of the University of Mississippi diversity planning process. I was honored to assist with Phase 1 and pleased to learn of the progress made over the last six years. Per our agreement, I reviewed the Pathways to Equity Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan. I commend Chancellor Boyce, Provost Wilkin and Dr. Mead for developing a comprehensive and ambitious document. The UM team successfully incorporated the recommendations made in 2014 and the best practices outlined by the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.

Specifically, UM adopted the portfolio model for its Diversity and Community Engagement unit. This model vests the vice chancellor with significant scope and responsibility for equity and diversity and places this position at the executive level of the university. The team also recognized that UM is a complex public research university and created an infrastructure to address equity and diversity at the school, college and administrative unit levels. This model will help promote wide input and buy-in to these critical diversity efforts. Even with this well-crafted plan, the challenge and opportunity will be in the execution. All faculty and staff, administrators and students at UM must remain steadfast in their robust and meaningful commitment to the fulfillment of this plan.

Here are a few continued challenges to consider as UM begins to implement Phase 2 of the plan.

1. The University of Mississippi should continue to invest resources in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement. The division will need additional resources to complete this very challenging work. This recommendation takes into account the severe budget challenges UM and other postsecondary institutions face given the COVID-19 pandemic and other market forces. Diversity is widely considered a “compelling interest” in higher education, and UM should make a commensurate investment.



VINCENT

2. UM must address systemic racism head-on and serve as a role model for the state and higher education. Many commentators in higher education focus on Southern universities; however, institutions from all regions have been challenged by the corrosive impact of racial injustice. UM is a world-class university, and the efforts made in Phase 2 can help the state and the university remedy centuries of inequity.

3. As an educational institution, UM has an affirmative obligation to search for and tell the truth related to equity and justice. UM now has the opportunity to confront the past while also forging a positive future. I am confident that the university is ready to take on this daunting task.

Respectfully,

Gregory Vincent, J.D., Ed.D.
*Executive Director of the
Civil Rights and Education Initiative
& Professor of Education
University of Kentucky*

Greetings

As an institution of higher education, the University of Mississippi transforms lives, communities and the world by providing opportunities for the people of Mississippi and beyond through excellence in learning, discovery, health care and engagement. We are committed to providing a world-class education and everlasting opportunity that's open, accessible and affordable to serve as many students as possible. Our leadership role in Mississippi underscores the importance of our efforts and our commitment to diversity and inclusion in pursuit of an equitable living, learning and working environment for all.

“Pathways to Equity” serves as the foundation for how we embrace our institutional responsibility to actively address the challenges and disparate outcomes at all levels of our campus community. It requires us to address individual, social, organizational and systemic factors that create and sustain inequities that prevent all members of our community from fully participating and thriving at the University of Mississippi.

To generate high-impact change for underserved populations in our community, the “Pathways to Equity” plan is action-based, driven by a commitment to equity, data informed and connected to best and promising practices. Further, through this plan, we reiterate our commitment to transparency, allocation of resources and accountability.

Contributing to the overall strength and effectiveness of “Pathways to Equity” is that it is intended to be a living document and was developed to address equity and diversity at the institutional level as well as the school, college and administrative unit level. We welcome and encourage ongoing feedback.

We thank those who have been dedicated to make this plan a reality, and we honor the efforts of the many individuals who have worked before us to foster a university climate that values every individual and promotes respect. I call on all members of our university community to continue to make positive and lasting change toward being a welcoming place where all members of a diverse community can succeed.

Sincerely,

Glenn F. Boyce, Ed.D.

Chancellor



BOYCE

Greetings

The Pathways to Equity plan is an important milestone on a journey for our university, a journey that began two chancellors and two interim chancellors ago. A public plan with widespread input and support that started by engaging a consultant who challenged us to make deep institutional commitments to equity, inclusiveness and diversity. He challenged us to plot a course that would increase the ability of our institution to serve every student and support the success of all of our faculty and staff. We embraced this challenge, and I am deeply grateful to Dr. Gregory Vincent for his investment in our success and his ongoing expert advice as our consultant.



WILKIN

Ultimately, it will be our students, faculty, staff and state who will be the beneficiaries of this work and the initiatives outlined in this plan. As a public, flagship, research institution, we play a role not only in the creative achievement and advancement of knowledge to benefit our state, our disciplines and the world, we also hold the keys to a prosperous future for our employees and the keys to unlock immeasurable opportunities and possibilities for thousands of students from Mississippi, the nation and the world.

By taking this responsibility seriously, and plotting a principled and measurable path forward, we also can play a role in setting an example for the nation and the world. This starts by engaging students who come to our institution and by showing that our institution, which once was the example of how people can stand in the way of equality, can be an example of equity, an example of inclusivity and a model of diversity.

The university is its people. To accomplish the goals and objectives of this plan, to be successful, we must first start by recognizing that each one of us has identities, passions and talents that we value and are valuable. They make us who we are; they contribute to our success. In fact, these differences are not only important to our success as a community of scholars, they are the essence of a vibrant intellectual community. And it all starts with recognizing that each one's pursuit of happiness and a better life is as valuable as our own.

From there, this plan calls on us to seek unity. This path forward requires unity — unity of purpose. This plan outlines the infrastructure to ensure success — a portfolio model of initiatives with school and cross-institutional involvement and responsibility. Yet, to achieve these goals, we must work together to fulfill this commitment.

While it is easy to look at the leadership and lay progress or the lack of progress at their feet, leaders come and go and the institution endures. The university, made up of people, endures. Simply, the success of this plan falls on all of us, and I call each of you to think about how you can contribute. How can you add to the great work done by the individuals recognized in this plan? How can you add validity to the hard work of Dr. Katrina Caldwell and Dr. Shawnboda Mead and their amazing teams? And most importantly, how can you validate the work that we are doing here together by doing your part to ensure that everyone who joins our community not only feels welcome and supported, but also feels that these opportunities, this knowledge and this transformative experience is for them?

Only then, will we have succeeded.

Sincerely,

Noel E. Wilkin, Ph.D.

*Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs,
Professor and Research Professor*

Greetings



MEAD

The critical work of diversity, equity and inclusion requires a deep, sustained partnership across all areas of our institution and community. Building a culture of inclusion and elevating issues of inequity helps create an optimal learning environment and community in which all individuals can reach their full potential. These commitments are central to our flagship mission – to foster academic excellence, to build healthy communities, and to improve the quality of life at our university, our state and throughout the world.

The Pathways to Equity: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Institutional Strategic Plan lays the foundation for the University of Mississippi to improve outcomes and meaningfully advance diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives on our campus. Pathways to Equity outlines three overarching goals for institutionally advancing diversity, equity and inclusion:

- 1) **Advance Institutional Capacity for Equity:** Infrastructure, Information, Systems, Education and Processes
- 2) **Cultivate a Diverse and Equitable Community:** Recruiting, Retaining, Advancing and Succeeding
- 3) **Foster an Inclusive Campus Climate:** Support, Value and Belonging

The overarching goals, coupled with individual college/school- and division-level Equity in Action plans, provide a road map for building on existing work, promoting inclusivity at all levels for all members of our community, and advancing a more equitable environment and a better University of Mississippi.

Pathways to Equity is a collaborative, coordinated and proactive strategy for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion at UM. The plan includes challenging yet attainable goals and action items. In addition to the 2019 campus climate survey results and feedback from governing bodies, diversity liaisons, and other students, faculty and staff, this plan is equally informed by a critical and honest assessment of our past and a comprehensive assessment of institutional composition, opportunity and outcomes data.

The success of Pathways to Equity requires an engaged UM community. As we embark on this journey, I hope you'll take advantage of opportunities to provide input and feedback. Regardless of your position within the university, there is space for everyone to join in the advancement of the overarching goals and action plans. We must all work together to achieve meaningful results and hold ourselves accountable for prioritizing this important work. Thank you for your partnership as we move forward in making the University of Mississippi a more inclusive and equitable community.

Shawnboda Mead, Ed.D.

Interim Vice Chancellor for Diversity & Community Engagement

About

Division of Diversity and Community Engagement

Established in 2017, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement is led by Shawnboda Mead, interim vice chancellor for diversity and community engagement. In fall 2018, the first assistant vice chancellor for diversity and the first assistant vice chancellor for community engagement joined the team. DCE envisions a more equitable, engaged and self-transforming university, community and world. The division moves toward this vision while supporting the mission of UM by transforming people, institutions and communities. It does so through partnership, access and engagement that fosters belonging, enriches learning and development, enhances research, and creates equitable opportunities for all.

VISION

A more equitable, engaged and self-transforming university, community and world.

MISSION

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement supports the mission of UM by transforming people, institutions and communities through partnership, access and engagement that fosters belonging, enriches learning and development, enhances research, and creates equitable opportunities for all.

VALUES

1. **Mutual Respect:** Each person is inherently valuable, and we hold other people's dignity equal to our own while recognizing that their beliefs, ideas and values will differ. Mutual respect is the basis for authenticity, trust and honest communication that transcend agreement and conflict.
2. **Equity:** We are committed to identifying and removing barriers, improving fairness in systems and outcomes, and creating a more inclusive understanding of how opportunities for success and achievement can be made available to all people.
3. **Access and Opportunity:** We have a responsibility to ensure that all people have the awareness, opportunity and support to benefit from the transformative power of a college education.
4. **Learning and Development:** We acknowledge that we will always have new things to learn and skills to develop, and that learning and development challenge us personally and professionally.
5. **Collaboration:** We believe that the most pressing social, civic, economic and moral problems are best solved through interdisciplinary, collaborative partnerships within and beyond the academy.
6. **Responsibility:** We must be accountable to ourselves and other members of the community.
7. **Civic Leadership:** We recognize that the well-being of each member of our community is interconnected, and we dedicate ourselves to making our community better for all.



THE UNIVERSITY of
MISSISSIPPI

Division of
Diversity and
Community Engagement



Guiding Statements

IHL DIVERSITY GOALS

This plan is built on the foundation of past strategic plans, such as UM 2020, 2014 Diversity Action Plan and Flagship Forward. Additionally, we thoughtfully advance the Institutions of Higher Learning diversity goals listed below.

- To increase the enrollment and graduation rate of underrepresented students at our institutions
- To increase the employment of underrepresented individuals in administrative, faculty and staff positions
- To enhance the overall educational experience through infusion of curricular content and co-curricular programming that enhances multicultural awareness and understanding
- To increase the use of underrepresented professionals, contractors and other vendors





UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The University of Mississippi embraces its public flagship mission of inspiring and educating our diverse and vibrant community where all individuals are able to intellectually, socially and culturally thrive through transformative experiences on our campus and beyond. In fulfillment of this mission, we demonstrate the following commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion:

- **Diversity** is an affirmation of the intersecting individual, social and organizational identities that make our community vibrant and transformational. We commit to openly increasing, embracing and recognizing the full spectrum of diversity at all levels of our institution.
- **Equity** is directly addressing the social, institutional, organizational and systemic barriers that prevent members of marginalized groups from thriving in our community. We commit to being both proactive and responsive in mitigating barriers so that all members of our institution are able to reach their full potential.
- **Inclusion** is actively and intentionally creating a welcoming campus where all individuals feel they have a supportive and affirming space to learn, grow and engage. We commit to fostering a campus environment that fully supports, values and engages the intersectional identities of every member of our community.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

The complicated history of the University of Mississippi includes, but is not limited to, the exclusionary founding of the institution, the violent resistance to James Meredith’s integration of the university in 1962, the arrests and expulsions of the Ole Miss 8, and the longstanding conflicts regarding Confederate symbols and iconography. Every decade since integration has seen a struggle for progress toward equity and inclusion. Though there are markers of success in these efforts, there is still significant work that needs to be done. Our collective future, as an institution, state and world, depends on the development of forward-thinking and inclusive leaders. We must foster an expansive vision of leadership — broad-based, equity-minded and compassionate.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks must be extended to the hardworking colleagues who made this plan and process possible. These efforts would not exist without the dedication of those who committed their time, energy and talent to the 2014 Diversity Action Plan, which set the course for our current and future diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at the University of Mississippi.

We are forever indebted to the hard work of Katrina Caldwell, inaugural vice chancellor for diversity and community engagement. Her leadership from 2017 to 2020 included creating the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and leading the efforts to create Pathways to Equity. The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement team is small but powerfully dedicated to every facet of this work. Our campus is fortunate to have individuals who are willing to contribute so much of themselves to make this work possible. We are also eternally grateful for the work of our diversity liaisons who have been, and will continue to be, an integral part in ensuring our campus continues to strive for a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community.

Acknowledgment of Institutional Inspiration

- University of Virginia
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- University of Michigan
- Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Sincere thank you to the following individuals:

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Background OF PLAN

Since the 2014 Diversity Action Plan, UM has committed to aligning resources and support to advance diversity, equity and inclusion. In fulfillment of the 2014 and 2016 plans, the university conducted a national search that resulted in the hiring of the inaugural vice chancellor for diversity and community engagement, Katrina Caldwell. The vice chancellor was charged with building the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and leading UM's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. In 2018, a national search for an assistant vice chancellor for diversity resulted in the promotion of Shawnboda Mead. Mead and Caldwell established diversity liaisons to support the strategic planning process for departments, programs and the university. All deans and vice chancellors were asked to appoint a faculty or staff member as their respective diversity liaison to support diversity, equity and inclusion in the following ways:



- **Review and analyze** diversity, equity and inclusion-related data in their area
- **Engage stakeholders** in their area in conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion
- **Communicate widely** to all key stakeholders in the unit about upcoming strategic initiatives and incident response
- **Explore, identify and mitigate** any potential barriers to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in their unit
- **Set tangible** diversity, equity and inclusion **goals and aspirations**

Since late 2019 throughout 2020, our campus and the world have grappled with the implications of a global pandemic and continued racial injustice in our local, national and international communities. Consequently, this situation has created unprecedented financial and social challenges that have disproportionately affected our most vulnerable communities. The continued advancement of this plan through these challenges is an affirmation of our commitment to fulfilling our social, intellectual and public mission through the most challenging moments. We do not view these efforts as additive or supplemental – instead, these efforts are central and integral to the work we aspire to do at our institution. UM is both uniquely and critically positioned to become a national leader of equity in higher education given its responsibility and commitment as the flagship institution of Mississippi.

FALL 2018

Hired assistant vice chancellor for diversity.
Convened a group of diversity liaisons across the academic and administrative units to begin the process of developing a new strategic plan.

SPRING 2019 TO FALL 2019

Met to discuss fundamental concepts and principles of diversity strategic planning

FALL 2019

Conducted an institutional climate study with Rankin and Associates

SPRING 2020

Refined strategic goals, objectives and strategies

SUMMER 2020

Gathered feedback from senior leadership group, Strategic Planning Committee, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Associated Student Body and Graduate Student Council leadership

FALL 2020

Gathered feedback from shared governance groups; incorporated climate study data

JANUARY 2021

Roll out plan to campus and beyond

2021-26

Ongoing assessment and updates

Process



Guiding PRINCIPLES

The development of this plan requires us to address individual, social, organizational and systemic factors that create and sustain inequities that prevent all members of our community from fully participating and thriving at the University of Mississippi. As we embark on this journey together, we must commit to the following shared principles:

1. **Equity-mindedness¹** – We embrace the institutional responsibility and agency to actively address the challenges and disparate outcomes at all levels of our community. This requires us to be data informed and connect best and promising practices to generate high-impact change for underserved groups in our community.
2. **Institutional Accountability** – We must ensure efforts outlined throughout Pathways to Equity are acknowledged in the established systems of recognition, performance and accountability. It is vital that we work to account for the advancement of these goals in our ideas of success, merit and reward. Further, we must account for, honor and recognize faculty, staff, administrators and students in their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.
3. **Transparency** – In our execution of Pathways to Equity, our success is predicated on a highly accessible and collaborative process that actively involves university stakeholders to work as meaningful partners. To that end, we will consistently, publicly and broadly share our intended actions, goals and measurable impacts of this plan.
4. **Innovation** – Actualizing diversity, equity and inclusion will require us to deeply examine and rethink our policies, practices and procedures at the University of Mississippi. Each unit and individual across campus is invited to offer thoughts, ideas and perspectives as we thoughtfully consider ways to make our institution more equitable and inclusive through an intersectional lens. This disposition of robust inquiry and evidence-based imagination will create a community of learning, growth and development as we collectively engage in this complex work.
5. **Alignment of Critical Resources** – During this planning process, we have navigated a global health pandemic that has shown the vulnerabilities that disparately affect underserved and under-resourced communities. As we continue to navigate these unprecedented times, we must not falter in our commitment to creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community. We must recognize that our commitment to equity is more important than ever.

¹Bensimon, E. M., Dowd, A. C., Witham, K. (2016). Five principles for enacting equity by design. Diversity and Democracy, The Equity Imperative. Winter 2016, Volume 19, No 1.



The following goals represent the University of Mississippi's commitment to the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). These overarching goals represent interconnected priorities that are applicable to UM broadly, from our comprehensive divisions down to individual teams. We aim to have all units see meaningful alignment of these goals with their work. We will ensure UM embraces the transformative nature of diversity, equity and inclusion across all levels of the institution, addressing challenges to DEI at every corner of our institution by combining contextual understanding with internal and external expertise.

OVERARCHING GOALS

I. Advance Institutional Capacity for Equity

Infrastructure, Information, Systems, Education and Processes

The University of Mississippi has made many strides in its capacity to foster an equitable environment such as the establishment of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, several full-time diversity positions in colleges/schools/divisions across campus, and various Chancellor Standing Committees related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Building upon this progress, UM is now poised to take a transformative leap to mitigate the barriers to success for all members of our community. We will actively increase resources, information, infrastructure and education related to DEI while also clearly building DEI into existing systems of merit, success and accountability. We must adapt and develop our processes to clarify information on underrepresented populations on our campus, including LGBTQ+ individuals, first-generation college students and low-income students, to ensure we are able to meet their needs. DEI must be integrated into the core of our institutional research, teaching, service and public mission. We must adapt the ways faculty, staff and administrators are recruited, recognized and supported, with their engagement in DEI at all levels of the institution, for the university to address longstanding and future challenges. We will engage in teaching and learning around DEI for faculty, staff and students to conceptualize and address inequities with intersectional, nuanced and informed strategies.

II. Cultivate a Diverse and Equitable Community

Recruiting, Retaining, Advancing and Succeeding

The University of Mississippi must continue to take strategic steps in creating a university community environment that empowers every individual to thrive. To realize the full benefits of a diverse and vibrant community, UM must actively identify and mediate gaps in outcomes across groups by examining key institutional metrics such as graduation, retention, tenure, employment and advancement. As a community, we must critically engage in strategic practices that ensure a robust higher education experience for historically underserved groups at UM. Administrators, faculty, staff and students are evidence of these efforts and pivotal in advancing institutional change. Our ability to foster success for all members of our campus community enhances UM's capacity to reach its fullest potential of providing transformative educational experiences through research, teaching, learning and engagement that advance our flagship mission. Given our specific history and context, closing gaps in opportunity and achievement positions UM to be a national model for addressing and mitigating the challenges of access and equity.

III. Foster an Inclusive Campus Climate

Support, Value and Belonging

Building a diverse, vibrant and healthy community is essential to the success of UM. Our community is best when all individuals feel supported and valued across their intersecting identities. Our commitment to fostering an inclusive campus environment ensures our campus is able to reach its full potential. We must take affirmative steps in monitoring and addressing campus climate, reinforcing positive community interactions across groups, and meaningfully involving the voices of underrepresented groups in the policies, processes and procedures across UM. Thoughtful and intersectional efforts are needed to ensure administrators, faculty, staff and students from all backgrounds see UM as a community where they belong, are valued and are supported.



Institutional

EQUITY IN ACTION

To advance the overarching goals of this plan, we outline a two-fold process. First, the chancellor, provost and Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will provide institutional leadership through the 17 initiatives outlined. Second, each administrative division and academic college or school will be charged with the development of three-to-five key initiatives that advance the overarching goals outlined in their corresponding Equity in Action plans. This process ensures full engagement and synergy from all levels of our campus in the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion. For a full report of the associated metrics and responsible areas for outlined initiatives, please visit the Pathways to Equity website.

INSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS

In collaboration with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, the Office of the Chancellor and the Office of the Provost will provide leadership for the following actions to advance the overarching goals and aspirations of the Pathways to Equity plan. The chancellor will also ensure each college, school and division puts forward an Equity in Action plan.

I. Recognize and Reconcile UM's Racial History:

The Office of the Chancellor and the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will work to acknowledge, honor and recognize the racial history of our institution. We will work to elevate the stories and experiences of those who have been marginalized in our institution's history and create avenues of reconciliation. Our efforts will include commemorating the 60th anniversary of integration at UM, creating a chancellor's committee on race, history and symbols, recognizing excellence from underrepresented alumni, developing a historical display on our complex history, and connecting historically disconnected communities in Mississippi to UM.

II. Enrich the Experience of Underrepresented Students:

The Office of the Chancellor and the Office of the Provost will champion the experience of underrepresented students to ensure vibrant and enriching experiences. The chancellor and provost, in partnership with other senior leaders, will identify and charge signature programs across campus to actively address the representation, engagement and success of underrepresented students. The provost, vice chancellor for student affairs and vice chancellor for diversity and community engagement will ensure the availability of physical campus space for multicultural organizations to host programs and create community. These efforts will work to improve the campus climate, academic success and social experience of underrepresented graduate and undergraduate students including students of color, transfer students, students with disabilities, international students, LGBTQ+ students, low-income students and first-generation college students.

III. Develop a Chancellor's Diversity Fund:

In collaboration with the provost and vice chancellor for diversity and community engagement, the Office of the Chancellor will develop a funding process to support the development of innovative, clear and measurable progress in bringing about transformative and sustainable advancement of Pathways to Equity. Allocated funding will support addressing immediate administrative challenges colleges/schools/divisions may experience in advancing their equity-in-action plans including funding for strategic hires, consultant visits, position reclassifications, graduate student fellowships and undergraduate initiatives.

IV. Develop a Provost's Scholars Program:

A Provost's Scholars program will be developed to provide selected faculty and staff members with a robust professional development experience and professional mentorship to enhance their skills. This program will seek to recruit members of underrepresented groups, especially women and women of color, who demonstrate professional potential at the University of Mississippi, to increase the pipeline of talented and prepared future institutional leaders. The program will engage participants with priorities and challenges at the university while they develop their own signature initiatives to meet the institution's needs.

V. Expand Institutional Outreach:

The Office of the Chancellor will provide leadership in expanding outreach to underrepresented communities to build positive relationships with the institution. This outreach centers on engaging a diverse spectrum of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of the institution in the progress of UM.

The chancellor will host roundtable meetings with student organizations and leaders from underrepresented communities. We will also evaluate the representational diversity of existing chancellor's committees and work to increase the number of underrepresented vendors and contractors.

VI. Expand Fundraising for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

The Office of the Chancellor, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, and University Development will collaborate on expanding culturally relevant avenues for giving to invest in Pathways to Equity and other diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The university will strengthen the Inclusive Excellence Retention Fund, expand recruiting scholarships for underrepresented Mississippi

students, explore an endowed professorship for diversity, equity and inclusion, and explore an endowed fund for diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

VII. Expand Curricular Offerings on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

The Office of the Provost will charge the Multicultural Curriculum Taskforce with inventorying the diversity, equity and inclusion-centered courses on our campus and exploring diversity, equity and inclusion-based curricular requirements for undergraduate students. In collaboration with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and the Graduate School, the university will explore undergraduate and graduate credentialing (certificate, minor, etc.) programs on diversity, equity and inclusion.

DIVISION OF DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will provide leadership, consultation and support to the university as it advances Pathways to Equity and the corresponding Equity in Action plans. The DCE will also advance the following institutional-level strategies:

I. Expand Cohort and Mentoring-based Student Retention Initiatives:

The Center for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement will expand efforts to offer high-impact experiences through cohort and mentoring-based retention efforts for underrepresented students, including existing programs such as the Mississippi Outreach to Scholastic Talent (MOST) and the IMPACT Program. CICCE will also develop new initiatives to support the success of underserved undergraduate student communities, particularly Black and Latinx males, first-generation college students and LGBTQ+ students. CICCE will develop the M-Pride leadership development program for LGBTQ+ students. These programs provide students with mentorship opportunities, academic support and personal development experiences.

II. Develop an Academic Equity Scorecard:

In collaboration with various areas of campus, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will develop an Academic Equity Scorecard that will be posted publicly and reviewed annually as a part of our Pathways to Equity accountability process. Organizations value what they measure. As a result, we must meaningfully and regularly assess outcomes to identify successes and disparities. The Academic Equity Scorecard positions leadership to monitor comparative data and continue to advance nuanced, responsive strategies. As a process, this will engage individuals in a full process of identifying, compiling and analyzing data from an equity-mindedness lens. This is professional development that increases capacity for UM to address inequity as a solvable problem of professional practice. This scorecard will also be a tool for internal and external systems of accountability to monitor divisional performance.

III. Expand Diversity Awards and Incentives:

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will expand the internal awards, recognitions and incentives related to diversity, equity and inclusion. These efforts include enhancing existing processes such as the Diversity Innovator Award, the Diversity Incentive Fund, and the Achieving Equity Investment Grants, and developing new efforts such as research grants that support collaboration with underrepresented graduate students and funding to support new faculty participation in programs offered by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. We will expand awards to honor the legacy of individuals who have advanced diversity, equity and inclusion at UM.

IV. Expand Diversity Education:

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will expand diversity education services available for all faculty, staff and students at the University of Mississippi. Diversity education seeks to equip our community with the knowledge, skills and awareness conducive to fostering an inclusive campus climate, celebrating the full spectrum of diversity, working collaboratively and engaging in discourse across difference. Diversity education will continue to provide online diversity training to each incoming undergraduate class and other populations across campus. The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will explore the expansion of diversity education to meet the growing needs of our campus and advance Pathways to Equity efforts. We will place specific emphasis on increasing opportunities for faculty, staff and students to become skilled training facilitators on diversity, equity and inclusion. In partnership with the Center of Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement, we will work to expand the Allies Program to build institutional capacity for supporting the LGBTQ+ community. In partnership with the Academic Innovation and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, we will expand campuswide offerings to further inclusive teaching skills among faculty and graduate students, including

launching the first Inclusive Teaching Institute. Our evaluation of these efforts will prioritize the application of new practices, individual ability to foster an inclusive environment, and other behavioral and practical metrics.

V. Bolster Institutional Infrastructure toward Equity:

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will seek internal and/or external expertise to evaluate the current structural makeup in relation to meeting the diversity, equity, inclusion and community engagement needs of our campus. Diversity liaisons are an essential group in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion at the University of Mississippi. The potential results of this evaluation will provide direction on the organizational structure, reporting lines, support for diversity liaisons and personnel needs. These efforts will also establish formal processes that support the development and success of diversity personnel across campus.

VI. Expand Recruitment Efforts for Faculty and Staff Diversity:

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will provide support and training to deans and vice chancellors as they work to recruit a talented and diverse workforce. These efforts include creating a Visibility Project for LGBTQ+ faculty, staff and graduate students and developing formal recruitment plans for seeking talented underrepresented candidates, especially women and people of color, in their respective areas. These plans will outline current baseline of workforce demographics in their college, school or division; externally curated workforce data for each discipline; and recruitment strategies all searches will follow to maximize the available diversity of potential applicants. Additionally, these plans will include revisions to job descriptions to include diversity competency language where most applicable. We will also work to identify and support pathways to leadership for talented, high-performing underrepresented employees. Tenure-track faculty positions and administrative

staff positions (director level and above) will be considered the highest priorities to be addressed by these plans. Academic deans and vice chancellors will be able to leverage their outlined plans to advocate for strategic hires, external grants and other advantageous opportunities.

VII. Expand External Grant Funding

for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will pursue and support applications for external grant funding that strengthen our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. These efforts include working with faculty on grant proposals with explicit diversity commitments, exploring a National Science Foundation ADVANCE grant proposal, and pursuing other external grants committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education such as Lumina Foundation, Kellogg Foundation and Department of Education TRiO grants.

VIII. Expand Formal Undergraduate and Graduate Recruitment Initiatives:

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will work to improve the representation of underrepresented undergraduate and graduate students at UM. The Center for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement will explore strengthening the Mississippi Outreach to Scholastic Talent (MOST) program by providing financial incentives for students to enroll at UM. DCE and the Graduate School will develop a new initiative titled the Mississippi EDGE (Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education) program. Mississippi EDGE will provide targeted recruitment and financial incentives for underrepresented graduate and professional students, including housing fellowships and supplemental financial stipends to stack with departmental financial support to help attract talented graduate students who enhance our diverse and vibrant campus community. In partnership with the Office of Admissions, DCE will develop a new initiative titled the Mississippi Flagship Scholars Program. Flagship scholars will reach out to

counties and high schools in Mississippi that are underrepresented at UM to meet with students, families and counselors about attending our institution. Students in this program will be awarded student loans that will be forgiven after three years of postgraduation work in Mississippi. Mississippi EDGE and Mississippi Flagship Scholars students will participate in enriching learning opportunities during their time at UM.

IX. Develop Inclusive Excellence Scholars Programs:

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will explore a number of initiatives that expands the pipeline of talented underrepresented scholars into academia and supports the success and promotion of underrepresented scholars at the University of Mississippi. The efforts may include, but are not limited to, establishing a postdoctoral program for underrepresented scholars, predoctoral fellowship program, administrative faculty fellowship program and visiting scholars program. These initiatives will be explored and established over the span of this strategic plan and beyond.

X. Address Campus Climate Study Results:

The University of Mississippi contracted Rankin and Associates to conduct an institutional campus climate study in fall 2019. In spring 2021, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will outline key action items that specifically address the critical climate needs based on the results of the institutional climate study. These specific efforts and the efforts outlined above will work in tandem to ensure the University of Mississippi is a vibrant and supportive environment for all members of our community. Additionally, DCE will formalize a Chancellor's Standing Committee dedicated to the continued evaluation and improvement of campus climate. At the conclusion of Pathways to Equity, UM will reproduce an institutional climate study to comprehensively measure campuswide progress.

DIVISIONS/SCHOOLS/COLLEGES EQUITY-IN-ACTION PLANS

Each academic college/school and administrative division is charged with the development of equity-in-action plans that outline their strategic and context specific commitment to the fulfillment of the overarching goals and expected outcomes of Pathways to Equity. These nuanced plans allow us to address micro- and macro-level challenges while providing a collective framework and guidance. The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will gather annual updates on the progress of these plans that will inform our annual institutional progress report.

All academic colleges/schools and administrative divisions have appointed a diversity liaison for their planning and implementation processes. These individuals are appointed by their respective dean or vice chancellor to support advancing the implementation and adaptation of diversity, equity and inclusion policy, practices and procedures within their given context. Diversity liaisons leverage their direct experience and expertise within their area to advance specific and thoughtful diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. On the facing page is the current status of the equity-in-action plans for each area of campus.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Each year, we will engage in a process of reviewing our progress and providing transparent updates. The Diversity and Community Engagement team will work with the diversity liaisons to process the multiple streams of data, information and updates in order to synthesize our findings to gauge progression on our overarching goals. We will share this report annually to engage our stakeholders and facilitate communitywide conversation about where we are and where we are going. This progress will be assigned an icon using this rubric.



Green – This goal is being achieved with significant evidence of progress on metrics.



Yellow – This goal is being addressed but with limited evidence of progress on metrics.



Red – This goal is not being addressed, or evidence suggests there is little or no progress on metrics.



ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE EQUITY-IN-ACTION PLANS

DIVISION	SENIOR LEADER	DIVERSITY LIAISON	PLAN STATUS
Administration and Finance	Steven Holley, Ed.D.	Andrea Jekabsons	
Alumni Affairs	Kirk Purdom	Scott Thompson	
College of Liberal Arts	Lee Cohen, Ph.D.	Kirsten Dellinger, Ph.D.	
Development	Charlotte Parks	Katie Morrison, Anthony Haven, Ph.D.	
Enrollment Management	Eduardo Prieto, Ed.D.	TBD	
Graduate School	Annette Kluck, Ph.D.	Murrell Godfrey, Ph.D.	
Intercollegiate Athletics	Keith Carter	Jennifer Saxon, Ed.D.	
Marketing and Communications	Jim Zook	Lisa Stone	
Outreach and Continuing Studies	Tony Ammeter, Ph.D.	Mary Leach	
Patterson School of Accountancy	Mark Wilder, Ph.D.	Brett Cantrell, Ph.D.	
Research and Sponsored Programs	Josh Gladden, Ph.D.	Elizabeth Tettleton	
Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College	Douglass Sullivan-Gonzalez, Ph.D.	Jennifer Parsons, Ph.D.	
School of Applied Sciences	Peter Grandjean, Ph.D.	Amy Fisher, J.D., & Desiree Stepteau Watson, Ph.D.	
School of Business Administration	Ken Cyree, Ph.D.	Danielle Ammeter, Ph.D.	
School of Education	David Rock, Ed.D.	Karen Davidson Smith, Ph.D.	
School of Engineering	David Puleo, Ph.D.	Alexander Lopez, Ph.D.	
School of Journalism and New Media	Deborah Wenger, Ph.D.	Marquita Smith, Ed.D.	
School of Law	Susan Duncan, J.D.	Sandra Cox-McCarty, J.D.	
School of Pharmacy	David Allen, Ph.D.	Katie McClendon, Pharm.D.	
Student Affairs	Charlotte Fant Pegues, Ph.D.	Shannon Richardson, Ph.D.	
University Libraries	Cecilia Botero, M.L.I.S.		

Aspirations

Pathways to Equity is both attainable and aspirational for the University of Mississippi. As we project forward, we reflect upon the aspects of a multicultural organization, as defined by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman across various works. A multicultural organization:

- Clearly commits to creating an inclusive organization
- Seeks, develops and values the contribution and talents of all members
- Includes all members as active participants in decisions that shape the organization
- Reflects diverse social and cultural groups at every level
- Demonstrates the multicultural competencies to address the increasing diversity among the populations it serves
- Acts on its commitment to eliminate all forms of exclusion and discrimination within the organization, including racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, classism, disability oppression, religious oppressions, genderism, etc.
- Follows through on broader social and environmental responsibilities

With Pathways to Equity, the University of Mississippi aspires to achieve the following statements by the conclusion of this plan:

- A. The University of Mississippi consistently and comprehensively articulates diversity, equity and inclusion as essential in fulfilling the mission, vision and values of the institution.
- B. The University of Mississippi is organizationally and culturally equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to continue advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.
- C. A campus climate is fostered that ensures all individuals are valued and supported, and feel a sense of belonging at the University of Mississippi.
- D. The University of Mississippi demonstrates decreases in disparities across underrepresented groups in the enrollment, retention and graduation rate at undergraduate and graduate levels.
- E. The number of underrepresented groups employed at the University of Mississippi is increased to reflect a talented and diverse workforce at all organizational levels, especially tenure-track faculty, managerial positions and executive leadership positions.



GLOSSARY

ADVANCE: Create pathways and remove barriers to promotion of diverse and talented staff into career-expanding positions, such as managerial, leadership and tenure-track positions.

CAMPUS CLIMATE: “Campus climate is a measure — real or perceived — of the campus environment as it relates to interpersonal, academic and professional interactions. Climate refers to the experience of individuals and groups on a campus — and the quality and extent of the interaction between those various groups and individuals. Diversity and inclusion efforts are not complete unless they also address climate.” (Hurtado, “Linking Diversity”)

DIVERSITY: An affirmation of the intersecting individual, social and organizational identities that make our community vibrant and transformational.

Individual differences (e.g., personality, prior knowledge and life experiences), group and social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, indigeneity, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, country of origin, and (dis)ability), historically underrepresented populations, and cultural, political, religious or other affiliations (Association of American Colleges and Universities).

EQUITY: Directly addressing the social, institutional, organizational and systemic barriers that prevent members of marginalized groups from thriving in our community.

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 (Association of American Colleges and Universities).

INCLUSION: Actively and intentionally creating a welcoming campus where all individuals feel they have a supportive and affirming space to learn, grow and engage.

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 (Association of American Colleges and Universities).

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE: It is designed to help colleges and universities integrate diversity, equity and educational quality efforts into their missions and institutional operations. It calls for higher education to address diversity, inclusion and equity as critical to the well-being of democratic culture. It is an active process through which colleges and universities achieve excellence in learning, teaching, student development, institutional functioning and engagement in local and global communities (Association of American Colleges and Universities).

RECRUIT: Refers to directed outreach to underrepresented individuals and groups while also removing barriers that have negative impact on underrepresented groups.

UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS: This refers to groups that have been historically denied access and/or suffered past institutional discrimination in the United States and, according to the Census and other federal measuring tools, include African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics or Chicanos/Latinos, Native Americans, adult learners, veterans, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals, different religious groups and different economic backgrounds. This is revealed by an imbalance in the representation of different groups in common pursuits such as education, jobs, housing, etc., resulting in marginalization for some groups and individuals and not for others, relative to the number of individuals who are members of the population involved. These groups have also been referred to as underserved and minoritized.



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