



College of Education & Social Services Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan (2020 – 2023)

The College of Education and Social Services (CESS) is engaged in cultivating scholarship and practice that is student-centered, family-focused, community-engaged, culturally competent, and collaboratively developed. Central to these components is our commitment and responsibility to bring our work to life in the context of the diverse, globalized society in which we operate.

This document prioritizes values of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the strategic framework of the College. Six overarching strategic priorities guide our actions. In this document, we organize these actions along the dimensions of *People*, *Programs*, and *Place* within the College. Thus, we aspire to continue building a CESS community reflective of a diverse and global society, both physically and culturally, embodied through intentionally elevating the presence, contributions, voices, and perspectives of historically marginalized populations in the College and across the University.

This commitment -- foregrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion -- intentionally complements the College of Education and Social Services (CESS) mission statement:

"...to educate and prepare outstanding professionals in education, social work, and human services; engage in policy relevant scholarship of the highest quality; and provide exemplary professional service within the state of Vermont, nationally, and globally. Our actions are designed to promote a more humane and just society, free from oppression, which maximizes human potential and the quality of life for all individuals, families and communities."

This document consists of three parts:

- [Part I](#) introduces our six CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Priorities.
- [Part II](#) continues with an overview of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan (2020-2023).
- [Part III](#) is an Appendix containing background information on the community process through which the plan was collaboratively developed as well as the timeline and the plan's contributors.

This Action Plan is informed by and aligned with UVM's [Inclusive Excellence at the University of Vermont: A Framework for Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Multiculturally Competent Campus \(2016-2021\)](#).

PART I: CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Priorities

- 1. Diverse and Synergistic** – CESS embraces the full diversity of our society to realize the promise of liberal education in a research university setting, grounding our work in interdependent approaches, a culture of inclusion, and leadership for social change that serves CESS, CESS members, and communities.
 - We will systematically identify and work to remove structural inequities and will prioritize resources to synergistically build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society through our work.
- 2. Academically Vibrant** – CESS identifies and critically assesses learning pathways for academic and scholarly impact and distinction, which connect academic rigor, freedom of intellectual inquiry, equity, and cultural relevance.
 - We will identify, curate, and expand our existing academic resources through data-informed analysis. We will facilitate and innovate for inclusive pedagogical practices. We will foster curiosity and inquiry (free to explore, express, test, and contest ideas) and centering ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will seek relevant external partnerships or resources and opportunities to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our undergraduate and graduate academic programs. We will prepare students to thrive in their educational experience, and for complexity and change in a globalized academy and world.
- 3. Distinctively Vermont** – CESS provides research and academic programs that fully embrace the cultural, demographic, political, economic, and geographic diversity of Vermont.
 - We will systematically focus on areas in the State where our work (knowledge, service, partnerships, policy research, and pathways or cohorts) can have the most significant impacts within our scope of purpose, financial responsibility, and accountability. We will continue to cultivate a deeper contributing presence within Vermont communities and organizations for shared purposes and futures.
- 4. People-centric and Equitable** – CESS develops, implements and assesses strategies that serve to identify, recruit, and cultivate faculty, students, and staff who have been historically marginalized in higher education, and within our College. CESS works diligently towards increased development of knowledge, understanding, and skills on issues of ethnicity, race, inequality, justice, collaboration, and respect, with the intent to encompass the broadest definition of diversity.
 - We will establish and realize annual (and three-year) recruitment and retention goals for our faculty, students, and staff, demonstrating forward-leaning and accountable progress. We will identify innovative and area-specific approaches to recruitment, hiring, and retention with a focus on developing cohorts of historically marginalized identities and backgrounds, and which foreground candidates dedicated to advancing principles centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will expand and deepen our professional development strategies and opportunities.
- 5. Inclusive and Interdependent** – CESS academic programs clearly articulate the College’s commitment to the welfare and wellbeing of individuals, families, and their communities. Our work is grounded in an interdependent approach, linking students and families to the schools and human service agencies that serve and support them and others in communities. For our work to be genuinely synergistic, it must begin with establishing values and a foundation or practice towards building respectful relationships with an ethos of inclusion.
 - We will intentionally cultivate relationships, and a CESS community deeply reflective of UVM’s [Our Common Ground](#) values.
- 6. Accountable** – CESS will strategically resource its work in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion from a shared purpose and an accountability model.
 - We will annually report on realized impacts and areas for improvement, and assign lead responsibility for goals and actions.

Part II: CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan (2020 – 2023)

The development of the CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan has been and will remain a collaborative process. The success of this Action Plan requires a continued investment of the College's collective talent and resources. Included in the [Appendix](#) of this document are a description of the plan development process and a list of contributors. Our plan focuses on implementation across the broad categories of People, Programs, and Place and delineates action steps and timelines. Each action item is aligned with one CESS strategic diversity priority, and one framework pillar from UVM's [Inclusive Excellence at the University of Vermont: A Framework for Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Multiculturally Competent Campus \(2016-2021\)](#).

PEOPLE

1. **Examined Concepts.** Continue examining our understanding of concepts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the College (work towards building shared and examined knowledge). Simultaneously, explore the potential limitations of this concept as a means to achieve our collective goals related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. (CESS Priority: Diverse and Synergistic; PCIE Pillar: Pillar (P) 1 Component (C)1)
 - a. Work collectively to propose shared terminology and definitions (e.g., *critical consciousness, multicultural competency*) and establish a process for engaging faculty, staff, students and community partners in discussions of key concepts underpinning our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. (achievable within 1-year ongoing goal)
 - b. Plan and provide faculty and staff professional development opportunities that support these conversations. (achievable within 3-year goal)
2. **Performance Review Criteria.** Performance review conversations offer an opportunity for faculty and staff to reflect on their connection with the College's commitment to inclusive excellence. As core values of the College, we will incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion expectations in regular performance review processes, in alignment and conformance with existing CESS and UVM guidelines (achievable within 3-year goal) - (CESS Priority: People-centric and Equitable; PCIE Pillar: P1C1)
3. **Recognition.** Recognize faculty, staff and students for exceptional teaching, practice, research, leadership, and college/university service related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (e.g., service through the Provost's Office Diversity Faculty Fellows program, leaders in Residential Life and Student Affairs, CDCI, etc.). (ongoing annual goal) - (CESS Priority: Academically Vibrant; PCIE Pillar: P1C1)
4. **Hiring.** Continue to prioritize the hiring of faculty and staff who embrace the College's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion centered practices in their research, teaching, and practice. Continue to prioritize recruiting faculty and staff who are members of groups historically marginalized in the College and across the UVM community. (ongoing annual and within 3-year College and department yield goals) - (CESS Priority: People-centric and Equitable; PCIE Pillar: P2C1)
5. **Measurement, Resourcing, and Reporting.** Refine and enhance the measurement and reporting of the diversity of students, faculty, staff, and community partners in the College. (ongoing annual goal) - (CESS Priority: People-centric and Equitable; PCIE Pillar: P4C2)
 - a. Transition the CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan committee from its original focus on action plan development to implementation monitoring and tracking of progress. This committee will advise the Dean and be responsible for producing an annual diversity, equity, and inclusion impact report for the

College. The committee will be chaired by the CESS Director for Diversity and Community Engagement, working in tandem with the CESS Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, and the faculty governed CESS Committee for Equity Action and Diversity (CEAD). (ongoing annual goal) (CESS Priority: Accountable; PCIE Pillar: P4C2)

6. **Scholarships and Student Support.** Continue to identify and pursue scholarships and other external resources available to support in-state and out-of-state students (undergraduate and graduate) from historically marginalized backgrounds. (achievable within 3-year goal) - (CESS Priority: People-centric and Equitable; PCIE Pillar: P4C3)

PROGRAMS

1. **Professional Development and Curriculum Change/Innovation.** Based upon an inventory of current professional opportunities available within CESS and across the university, provide annual professional development opportunities designed to support faculty in 1) incorporating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in their teaching, 2) developing curricula or academic pathways informed by evolving diversity, equity, and inclusion frameworks, and 3) ensuring that syllabi, as well as teaching materials and practices, reflect high impact practices and current guidelines on diversity, equity, and inclusion. (achievable within 3-year goal) - (CESS Priority: Academically Vibrant; PCIE Pillar: P1C1)
 - a. Ensure that faculty teaching in D1 and D2 courses, as well as other interested faculty, have access to professional development opportunities that build relevant pedagogical and content skills related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. (achievable within 1-year ongoing goal) - (CESS Priority: Academically Vibrant; PCIE Pillar: P1C1)
 - b. Partner with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and Center for Teacher and Learning (CTL) to offer annual in-service trainings and resource access (orientation, faculty meetings, etc.) to increase faculty members' knowledge and skills of accessibility services, compliance, and accommodations. (ongoing annual goal) - (CESS Priority: Academically Vibrant; PCIE Pillar: P1C1)
 - c. Continue to support the annual CESS diversity lecture series hosted by the Committee for Equity Action and Diversity (CEAD). (ongoing annual goal) - (CESS Priority: Academically Vibrant; PCIE Pillar: P2C4)
2. **Course Feedback.** As end-of-course evaluation criteria are periodically revised, incorporate an item soliciting student input on diversity, equity, and inclusion aspects of CESS courses.
 - a. Review end-of-course evaluation process and instrumentation as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence. (achievable within 3-year goal) - (CESS Priority: Academically Vibrant; PCIE Pillar: P1C1)
3. **Grants.** Ensure that proposal guidelines for internal grants (e.g., the CESS Strategic Innovation Fund program) to reflect specific criteria around diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence, and give preference to high quality proposals that demonstrate impact on these criteria. (ongoing annual goal) - (CESS Priority: Academically Vibrant; PCIE Pillar: P1C1)
4. **Pathway Partnerships.** Establish external partnerships with other colleges and universities to foster recruitment, transfer enrollment, and retention of students from historically marginalized backgrounds. (ongoing annual and 3-year College and department yield goals) - (CESS Priority: Academically Vibrant and People-centric and Equitable; PCIE Pillar: P2C1)

5. **Mentorship and Retention.** Create a mentorship and retention program for CESS undergraduate and graduate students from historically marginalized backgrounds. (achievable within 3-year goal) - (CESS Priority: Academically Vibrant and People-centric and Equitable; PCIE Pillar: P2C1)
6. **Discussions.** Continue to support regular faculty-, staff-, and student-led discussions about issues of climate, discrimination, and race open to CESS students, faculty, and staff. Use exit surveys to monitor and evaluate impact for participants and leaders. (ongoing annual goal) - (CESS Priority: Inclusive and Interdependent; PCIE Pillar: P2C2)

PLACE

1. **Access.** Systematically focus on increasing access to our programs to those in areas of Vermont that have been historically underserved. This access may be encouraged through our research, service, partnerships, policy work, and transfer pathways, as examples. (ongoing annual goal) - (CESS Priority: Distinctly Vermont; PCIE Pillar: P2C4)
2. **Accessibility, Culture, and Language Assessment.** Design and implement a culture, language and accessibility assessment (e.g., physical, digital) that leads to the creation and execution of an annual physical and digital accessibility plan for the College. (ongoing annual goal) - (CESS Priority: Diverse and Synergistic; PCIE Pillar: P3C1)
 - a. Create tools to assess diversity, equity, and inclusion language and access within print and digital materials across departments and programs.
 - b. Train faculty/staff to use tool in assessing diversity, equity, and inclusion language and access within materials across departments and programs.
 - c. Identify changes in materials based on diversity, equity, and inclusion language and access assessment.
3. **Webpage/Communications.** Create a CESS diversity and inclusive excellence webpage encompassing our strategic priorities and impact, while integrating content throughout all CESS web pages. (achievable within 1- year and ongoing annual goal) - (CESS Priority: Accountable; PCIE Pillar: P4C4)
4. **Voice and Climate.** Develop a working group of CESS faculty, students, staff, and community members to collaborate with CESS senior leadership in analyzing, summarizing and disseminating results of the 2019 UVM Campus Climate Survey, with a focus on how results will be shared and used to inform future activities, human resource policies and procedures. (achievable within 1-year and annual ongoing goal) (CESS Priority: Accountable; PCIE Pillar: P4C2)

Part III: Appendix

PROCESS

Our work began in January 2018 with engagement of an inaugural faculty, staff and student committee. This work initially paced alongside unfolding campus climate dialogues, student rallies that produced new written objectives for the University, and the development of evolving and new CESS strategic priorities. CESS held a day-long diversity, equity, and inclusion retreat, with the attendance of 35 faculty and staff on May 31, 2018, to reflect on where we had been and where we aspired to go regarding CESS diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities and actions. A hiatus was planned for the summer of 2018 as CESS leadership collectively focused on its launch of the College's [CESS Strategic Plan](#) (2022).

CESS organized its next process-phase for the development of an updated and re-titled *CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan (2023)*, and began this work in November 2018, charged by Dean Scott Thomas. Lynn C. White Cloud, Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, and Tiffanie Spencer, the College's first Director of Diversity and Community Engagement, served as leaders and resource developers for this work in their role as co-chairs for the CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan planning committee, charged to produce an updated plan that included final oversight by Dean Scott Thomas. A critical component of this planning committee included the composition of work groups with CESS faculty and staff representation conceptualized in alignment with each of the PCIE Pillars, and then led by the following conveners:

- **Katie Shepherd**, Professor, DOE/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research/Convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Academics, PCIE Pillar 1)
- **Lynn C. White Cloud**, Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, Co-Chair CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan Committee/Co-convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Community, PCIE Pillar 2)
- **Tiffanie Spencer**, Director for Diversity and Community Engagement, Co-Chair CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan Committee/Co-convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Community, PCIE Pillar 2)
- **Jeanne Nauheimer**, Dissemination Coordinator for the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion/Co-convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Environment, PCIE Pillar 3)
- **Jesse Suter**, Research Associate Professor/Executive Director, Center on Disability & Community Inclusion/Co-convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Environment, PCIE Pillar 3)
- **Pam Blum**, Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration/Convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Operations, PCIE Pillar 4)

By design, this has been a collective effort involving broad CESS representation and input. Please find below a list of contributors who have been involved in helping to create a new action plan for CESS. The draft action plan document was first vetted during a half-day retreat with attendance including 30 faculty, staff and students held on March 8, 2019. Revisions were then made to the action plan during March and April 2019. A lime survey inviting feedback on the draft action plan remained open for three weeks in late April and early May 2019. The survey was completed by a total of 43 CESS faculty and staff, in addition to written survey feedback from members of the CESS Student Advisory Board who were given the option to remain anonymous in their positions as students.

Concurrently during the end of the survey feedback period, a brown bag focus group discussion was held on May 3, 2019 with 25 CESS faculty and staff in attendance. Two follow-up meetings were held in May and June with the CESS Dean, planning committee co-chairs, and work group conveners to discuss feedback collected during spring 2019. A memorandum was sent to Paul Yoon (Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs Senior Advisor for Strategic Diversity, Assessment and Research) and Wanda Heading-Grant (Vice President for Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs) providing an update on select CESS diversity-related achievements, and a summary of the progress

and process for creating a new CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan. Revisions to draft of the new plan were made during the summer of 2019. A final draft was prepared on October 19, 2019, and a final plan launched in January 2020.

The CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan committee moving forward will shift its focus from action plan development to tracking progress, helping to identify resources towards CESS' collective desired impact goals, and in writing an annual diversity, equity, and inclusion impact report. Beginning in the fall of 2019, the committee is chaired by the CESS Director for Diversity and Community Engagement, working in tandem with the CESS Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, and the faculty governed committee CESS Committee for Equity Action and Diversity (CEAD).

TIMELINE

5/31/18

CESS Diversity and Inclusion Faculty and Staff Retreat. Examination and feedback on current CESS Diversity and Action Plan.

11/13/18

Full Planning Committee Meeting (first, 2018-2019)

11/26/18

Work Group Conveners and Members Confirmed

12/1/18

Work Groups Receive Select Resource Documents

12/1/18 to 2/15/19

Work Groups Meet at a Minimum of Three Times; Engage in Work Group Tasks

2/20/19

Work Group Conveners/Technical Writers Submit Draft of Priority Action Items (Use Template)

3/8/19

Full Planning Committee, Work Group Members, and Guests Attend Retreat; Present/Review/Analyze/Edit Drafts; Work Groups Done

3/12/19

Full Planning Committee

March and April 2019

Revised Draft Plan

April and May 2019

Launched Lime Survey and Brown Bag Forum for Broad CESS Feedback

4/9/19

Full Planning Committee Meeting

May and June 2019

Compiled Feedback; Additional Vetting and Review Feedback

6/11/19

Message to Full Planning Committee Meeting

6/13/19

Memorandum sent providing an update on select CESS diversity-related achievements and summary of the progress and process for creating a new CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan; sent from Dean Thomas to Paul Yoon (Senior Advisor for Strategic Diversity, Assessment and Research) and Wanda Heading-Grant (Vice President for Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs)

June to November 2019

Final Vetting and Revisions; Dean's Decision

December 2019

Launched new CESS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

CONTRIBUTORS

Scott L. Thomas, Professor/Dean of the College of Education and Social Services

Lynn C. White Cloud, Assistant Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, Co-Chair CESS Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan Committee/Co-convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Community, PCIE Pillar 2)

Tiffanie Spencer, Director for Diversity and Community Engagement, Co-Chair CESS Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan Committee/Co-convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Community, PCIE Pillar 2)

with the following colleagues (in addition to numerous CESS stakeholders who provided general feedback):

Ellen Baker, Director of Teacher Education, DOE

Kate Ball, Business Manager, SWSS

Emma Bielicki, UG Student (Class of 2020), Secondary Education (History) with Education for Cultural & Linguistic Diversity

Penny Bishop, Professor, DOE/Associate Dean for Innovation and Technology

Pam Blum, Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration/Convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Operations, PCIE Pillar 4)

Tricia Brown, Lecturer, DOE

Lisa Cota, Director of Assessment, Data, and Accreditation

Jessica DeMink-Carthew, Assistant Professor, DOE

Hedy Eagan, Graduate Student, Higher Education and Student Affairs (M.Ed. 2018)/Program Coordinator for Residential Life

Jean Evans, Business Manager

Marisol Garcia-Bender, Undergraduate Student (Class of 2020), SWSS

Bernice Garnett, Associate Professor, DOE/Co-Chair, CESS Faculty Committee on Equity, Action, and Diversity (CEAD)

Jay Garvey, Assistant Professor, DLDS

Doug Gilman, Communications Director

Quin Gonell, Graduate Student, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Haley Grigel, Student Services Coordinator

Shana Haines, Assistant Professor, DOE

Kieran Killeen, Associate Professor, DLDS/Associate Dean for Graduate and Non-Degree Programming

Winnie Looby, Lecturer, DD Certificate Program Director

Marshall Murphy, Undergraduate Student (Class of 2020), Elementary Education with Nutrition & Food Sciences, and Education for Cultural & Linguistic Diversity

Jeanne Nauheimer, Dissemination Coordinator for the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion/Co-convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Environment, PCIE Pillar 3)

Jen Prue, Senior Lecturer, DOE

Kunie Renaud, Business Manager

Cynthia Reyes, Associate Professor, DOE

Emily Schwartz, Undergraduate Student (2021), Secondary Education (History) with Special Education

Katie Shepherd, Professor, DOE/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research/Convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Academics, PCIE Pillar 1)

Lance Smith, Associate Professor and Program Coordinator, the Graduate Counseling Program/ Co-Chair, CESS Faculty Committee on Equity, Action, and Diversity (CEAD)

Jesse Suter, Research Associate Professor/Executive Director, Center on Disability & Community Inclusion/Co-convener, CESS Diversity Action Plan Work Group (Environment, PCIE Pillar 3)

Alan Tinkler, Associate Professor, DOE

Leon Walls, Associate Professor, DOE/Former member of the UVM President's Commission for Inclusive Excellence (PCIE)