VPAASS INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE PLAN, 2023

Background:
> Formed mid-pandemic, VPAASS is a young unit that is still in a generative process of creating mission and vision statements that reflect the varied, but shared work of the unit. As a division, we have been energized by this planning process and the ways it can inform those efforts- grounding all divisional efforts in diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices.

Inclusive Excellence Committee Team Members:

NAME	TITLE	COLLEGE/DIVISION/DEPARTMENT/UNIT
Jennifer Dickinson	Associate Professor and Vice Provost	Academic Affairs & Student Success
Danielle Gallant	Assistant Director of Networking, UDC Member	Career Center
Clark Sheldon	Career Coach	Career Center
Haydee Miranda	Program Director for Tutoring Center	Center for Academic Success
Caitlyn Clark	Global Experiences Coordinator	UVM Go
Sharon Mone	Program Director of Student Accessibility	Center for Academic Success

Units within College, Division, Department or Unit:
> Career Center, Center for Academic Success, Undergraduate Writing Center, UVM Go

1. **ACADEMIC & CO-CURRICULAR GOALS**
   1.1 Identify & address unmet needs
   1.1a- Improve data collection & reporting to include demographic data whenever possible
   1.1b- Analyze utilization (and other) data to identify underserved audiences and listen to understand their needs/interests.
   1.1c- Develop/acquire resources and/or pilot programs to serve identified audiences with targeted outreach
   1.1d- Improve access to experiential learning opportunities for students with marginalized identities

   1.2 Combat Imposter phenomenon (AKA: syndrome)
   1.2a- Teach to the hidden curriculum - intentionally making explicit all that students need to know to be successful in school and beyond.
   1.2b- Leverage groups (e.g., First Scholars, tutoring groups, writing groups, UVM Go cohorts, SAS Peer Mentors, Career Interest Groups) to foster a sense of connection / belonging / community and combat isolation
   1.2c- Elevate the voices and stories of students and alums from varied backgrounds in our stories of success, enabling a wide array of students to see themselves / their realities reflected in the narrative.
   1.2d- Review & update resources to replace coded language with plain English; departments may pair up to provide feedback to each other on key resources

   1.3 Improve familiarity with VPAASS services across campus; increasing promotion of our key messages and services

1.3a- Further develop partnerships across campus (e.g., Admissions, Orientation, Grad College) to: 1) better promote services through enhanced, nuanced, & accurate information provided to prospective & current students/families (with a particular focus on support for students by identity groups); and 2) engage stakeholders in service improvements for students with marginalized identities (may include, as appropriate, the creation of advisory groups).

1.3b- Develop & deliver educational trainings to Academic Advisors, faculty and other staff in areas of VPAASS expertise as related to DEI matters. For example: twice annual department-specific trainings for professional advisors on topics such as coming out at your internship, supporting the academic success of students with disabilities, writing tips for student new to academia, immigration issues in getting experience, etc. - to be offered in person and via an online/on demand format.

2. RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

2.1 Build VPAASS community (trust, belonging, awareness & purpose)

2.1a- Encourage the use of VPAASS_Announce listserv, the general feed of the VPAASS Staff Team, and VPAASS newsletter to share information, improve connections, and foster virtual conversation.

2.1b- Include "lightly facilitated" points of connection at divisional gatherings in addition to several divisional socials* annually (*not tied to work but understood as a restorative practice to build the depth of human connections necessary for open/honest DEI conversations. E.g., pre-break cookie social, lunchtime walks, craft circles, meet up or University events (talks; games)

2.1c- Develop divisional Onboarding Toolkit used in tandem with department-specific tools that supports smooth onboarding of new staff members to better retain new staff (esp. those under-represented); include intentional reflection on what Our Common Ground means to you as an individual - see 2.1e

2.1d- Create divisional "mentorship" roster connecting new staff to current staff – available to all and including information on mentors' identities. (Only 54% of faculty and staff agree or strongly agree that they have received the mentoring they need.)

2.1e- Engage in meaning-making around Our Common Ground through: 1) DEI reflections tools (akin to go.uvm.edu/careerready) for use by students and staff alike); 2) Communications campaigns re: Our Common Ground values and Campus Climate Survey results; 3) Programs encouraging self-reflection ranging from small group discussions (how these values translate into behaviors on campus/at work), to keynote speakers.
> See also Section 3: Professional Development

2.2 Run affirmative searches with the goal of continuing to diversify VPAASS staff

2.2a- Develop a set of core DEI-specific interview questions to be leveraged by all units; a standard list of postings to reach diverse audiences; and offer division-wide training on how to screen for DEI and how implicit bias shows up in interviews. (Track success through trends in the diversity of each hiring pool.)

2.2b- Map out ideas to create hiring pipelines for diverse candidates.

2.3 Develop explicit retention strategy for staff from underserved and/or marginalized communities.

2.4 Partner with identity centers, OIE & Res Life to support student success

2.4a- Participate in Identity Center events to show our investment in the success of these student groups (e.g., Mosaic Breakfast, Home for the Holidays, WAGE Welcome back BBQ).

2.4b- Streamline communications from VPAASS to identity-center audience (e.g., info re: accessibility of experiential ed opportunities could include scholarship info on both internships & study abroad; info re: academic help could include CFAS & WRC services)

2.4c- Engage in creative approaches to bring services to students where they're at (e.g., drop-in hours at Prism, tutoring w/ Mosaic)

3. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
   ### 3.1 Evolve D-DEI Committee
   3.1a- Recruit committee members (typically 2 per department + VP Office rep) for a 2-year term of service with ½ of the members rotating off annually; transition the committee charge to advancing the execution of these goal; establish sub-committees as necessary
   3.1b- Committee members liaise with their departments regarding the development / update of department-specific DEI statements / plans

   ### 3.2- Coordinate cross-divisional trainings/point of connection
   3.2a- Host multi-modal, cross-division trainings on the work of various units as related to DEI to expand staff knowledge AND develop divisional cohesion / familiarly (e.g., what we each do and how it overlaps / intersects). E.g., supporting the academic success of neurodiverse students.
   3.2b- Once or twice annually, offer division-wide DEI-based training for all staff on an identity-focused issue (inviting local, national, or even international guest speakers).
   3.2c- Offer small group / affinity space programs in complement larger sessions (3.2b) -and/or campus speakers- to process (or prepare for) the content addressed. Can be done at both the divisional & department level; and could be coordinated around divisional themes over time to focus some depth of learning on a given topic. Survey staff to gauge interest in potential activities (e.g., book club, watch & learn (short videos), lunch & learn (Our Common Ground discussions).

   3.2d- Leverage Davis 100 ("the Hub") to support connection across our division and/or to support student groups fostering human connections in the DEI spirit (e.g., location for lunchtime meetups and book discussions).

4. **ACCESSIBILITY**
   ### 4.1 Digital Access Audit
   4.1a- Audit of department-level technology solutions and how the data they collect supports DEI (preferred names, demographic data, etc.) efforts.

   ### 4.2 Physical Space Audit
   4.2a- Audit accessibility of departmental spaces using an assessment checklist and consider necessary/appropriate changes.

   ### 4.3- Cognitive Accessibility
   Cognitive accessibility is the process of creating a digital environment to include people with cognitive and learning disabilities. The goal is to create an environment that's accessible for all people and accommodates those who may have a disability and require different modes of instruction and engagement.
   4.3a- Convene task force to develop training and/or informational materials for staff re: working with neurodiverse people & other topics (e.g., TBI) - training will be made available in different formats- video/online; in-person, etc.
   4.3b- Use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach for continual evolution of our program/content offerings. Begin by auditing content/materials (e.g., introductory services available in multiple formats); apply UDL to design divisional retreats; ask departments to employ similar approaches in their peer-facing trainings.

5. INTERNATIONAL INCLUSION & GLOBAL EDUCATION

    5.1 Analysis of Supports & Systems

        5.1a- Design data collection to be able to parse out internationally identifying individuals during analysis (campus climate survey has two model questions)

    5.2 Foster Global Mindset among students

        5.2a- Develop and highlight opportunities helping students to develop a global mindset - valued as an intellectual pursuit, a personal asset, and a career competency

        5.2b- Contribute perspectives from each office's expertise to the development of Catamount Global offerings, including UVM Go.