



President's Commission on Inclusive Excellence

Summary of Spring 2016 Community Forums

On April 18, 20, and 22 of Spring 2016, the President's Commission on Inclusive Excellence hosted three community forums. Members of the UVM community were invited to attend these forums and specific outreach was made to UVM groups representing:

1. **Identity Centers/Organizations**
2. **Diversity Committees/Councils/Task Forces (in colleges/units/divisions)**

The purpose of these forums was to provide members of the UVM community with information about the development and structure of *Inclusive Excellence at the University of Vermont: A Framework for Building a More Inclusive and Multiculturally Competent Campus*. Additionally, feedback from these forums was used to help inform the implementation of *The Framework*. Three questions were asked during the forums and key themes from the discussion are presented in this summary. Given the flow of the discussion, there is some overlap between the themes under the three main questions.

- A. Given what you have read and seen about *The Framework*, what questions do you have (within the scope of your role and within the scope of your department/unit)?
- B. Based on your knowledge, are there activities/initiatives/ programs that are in direct alignment with the *Framework*, or not?
- C. What do you think needs to happen to make this document come "alive" for your department/unit?

A. Given what you have read and seen about *The Framework*, what questions do you have (within the scope of your role and within the scope of your department/unit)?

1. **Representation and Buy-In**
 - a. Successful implementation will require buy-in across the levels and units at UVM.
 - b. Several departments are actively doing work that support inclusive excellence and have the infrastructure (e.g., diversity task forces) to support these efforts, while some do not.
 - c. Faculty and students (but not staff) are specifically named in *The Framework*. Staff should be specifically named too.
 - d. Expressing and cultivating values around inclusivity is important, but in order for change to happen, there needs to also be a method of accountability.

- e. Need to specifically look at how to engage and motivate faculty (e.g., professional development; reappointment, promotion, and tenure; incorporating inclusive excellence in courses).
- f. How do freedom of speech and expression come into play?

2. Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability

- a. What kind of assessment/evaluations will take place to support the implementation of *The Framework*? Ideas include:
 - i. Annual performance reviews
 - ii. Creation of an inventory
 - iii. Consider building inclusive excellence into other review processes of UVM
- b. How can we ensure this is resulting in changed behavior/programming, etc.?
- c. Training and professional development are needed.
- d. What exactly will be measured and how will success be determined?
- e. Will a centralized process be used?
- f. Strategic use of “carrots” versus “sticks” (rewards versus repercussions)

3. Process Questions

- a. Who will coordinate and implement *The Framework* in the units?
- b. Of the components and strategic priorities in *The Framework*, how should UVM prioritize?
- c. Which actions/priorities are routine and which require strategic and active attention?
- d. What support and resources are available to support the implementation process?
- e. How can we collaborate with each other to share knowledge? Are there opportunities to connect with internal expertise at UVM?
- f. What is the role of the President’s Commission for Inclusive Excellence in this implementation?
- g. Will the entire framework be implemented at once, or will it be one pillar at a time?

B. Based on your knowledge, are there activities/initiatives/ programs that are in direct alignment with the *Framework*, or not?

1. Faculty

- a. Professional development is needed for faculty (e.g., facilitation, classroom climate, work with different identities, pronouns).
- b. There is tension between the value placed on research/publishing versus supporting students.
- c. Centralized course for D1 -- everyone has same information presented to them

2. Operations

- a. Are there strategies to help protect centers from budget cuts so that UVM doesn’t take resources from diversity work?
- b. Providing adequate funding where needed. How are resources allocated to support inclusive excellence?

- c. Need systemic assessment of problems and challenges.
- 3. **Students**
 - o Listening to students and respecting what they have to say is important.
 - o We need to do more outreach to students.
- 4. **Inclusive and Accessible Physical Environment**
 - o Physical accessibility of campus spaces and facilities
 - o Bathrooms - Queer and trans students have limited access, which limits academic success and impacts health/safety).
- 5. **Supporting Engagement for all**
 - o There is a need for addressing the difficulty around diversity conversations and emotional vulnerability (in professional and other settings where there are different levels of knowledge and potential consequences).
 - o There are constraints around union issues
 - o Do we include alumni and donors in this work?
 - o With decentralization, there can be a lack of cohesion and buy in.

C. What do you think needs to happen to make this document come “alive” for your department/unit?

1. **Accountability and Buy-In**
 - a. Accountability and tracking
 - b. We need a clear action plan on how we will implement the framework in our departments.
 - c. There needs to be an inventory of what is currently done.
 - d. Important to provide clarity in how inclusive excellence is measured.
 - e. Buy-in is ideal, but to get everyone involved, we need mandates.
 - f. Use faculty/staff evaluations to assist in incentivizing efforts.
 - g. Can evaluations be universal for all who work here?
 - h. Need incentives (including reappointment, promotion, and tenure for faculty).
 - i. Role of governance groups
 - j. More outreach to a wider variety of employees, rather than a “trickle down” approach
2. **Cultivating Accessibility, Openness, & Multicultural Competency (Awareness, Knowledge, & Skills)**
 - a. Professional development (e.g., for faculty, issues relevant to specific positions and roles, speakers, and presentations)
 - b. Clarity around safe space(s) for students, staff, faculty
 - c. Share promising and best practices across the institution
 - d. Greater collaboration
 - e. Keep current -- need to stay up to date on all issues around diversity.
 - f. Share resources (e.g., sheet for faculty for diversity conversations, possibility of “cross utilization” and how to enhance many aspects of understanding).
 - g. More focus/balance on networking and community building versus individual expertise.

3. Communication

- a. It is important to note where we have made progress and strive to improve.
- b. Would benefit from more understanding of the plan.
- c. Make use of technology.
- d. Gather stories, experiences of discrimination, and consider making video.