



INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AT UVM

The University of Vermont fosters an environment that allows students to succeed at academic life, explore identity, and actively build the campus culture that benefits our entire community. UVM is firm in its commitment to inclusive excellence and upholding the foundational values of racial and social justice. This document highlights programs and initiatives specifically established to: implement a framework for inclusive excellence that engages units across campus in developing action plans to carry out unit specific goals in diversity, equity and inclusion; support diverse identities across our campus; educate our students, faculty, staff and administration on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion including racism, bias, and social justice; facilitate recruitment and retention of students of color; enhance recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color; and, honor diversity, equity and inclusion through university-wide recognitions and awards. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but highlights sustained efforts to implement our commitment.

Framework for Inclusive Excellence & Action Plans across the University

[Inclusive Excellence Action Plans](#). The University of Vermont has a strategic goal to “*build a diverse and globally aware university community sustained by an inclusive, supportive, and just campus climate*.” The primary objective is to ensure that diversity and inclusive excellence are an integral part of all aspects of the university. Each unit on campus has designed its own Inclusive Excellence Action Plan specific to its work and mission, and each action plan has been developed in alignment with the university’s Framework for Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Multiculturally Competent Campus. The [Inclusive Excellence Framework](#) was developed in 2016 and unit-specific plans are reviewed annually for progress toward their one-year and three-year goals. The Framework is to be evaluated and updated every five years.

[President's Commission for Inclusive Excellence](#). The President’s Commission for Inclusive Excellence (PCIE) is an institutional advisory board at the University of Vermont whose primary mission is to advance the strategic diversity and inclusion goals of the university. The primary functions and responsibilities of the PCIE are to promote the integration of the tenets in the [Our Common Ground](#) statement throughout the culture, operations, and functions of UVM as well as create, advise, and recommend priorities for strategic diversity engagement.

Educating our UVM Community

[Diversity Requirements for Undergraduate Students](#). All UVM undergraduate students must successfully complete [two requirements](#) prior to graduation: 1) a 3-credit course from Diversity Category One (D1) (Race and Racism in the U.S.); and, 2) a second 3-credit course from either Diversity Category One (D1) or Diversity Category Two (D2) (the Diversity of Human Experience). UVM’s diversity requirement provides undergraduate students with the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to function productively in a complex global society, by fostering understanding and respect for differences among individuals and groups of people.

Climate Surveys. The University of Vermont engaged all community members in a campus climate survey in both 2011 and 2019. The data are used to drive cultural change by allowing the university to identify areas for improvement and to monitor progress. All units are asked to use these data to inform their Inclusive Excellence Action Plans. The university expects to implement a climate survey at regular intervals.

Bias Training. Training of senior leaders (e.g., President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans) occurs each semester to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion including systemic racism and bias. Sodexo staff, including all cashiers, supervisors, and front-of-house staff go through our LGBTQ training and understanding the “T” in LGTBQ and the use of pronouns. This past year Sodexo began a series on Bias and Fostering Inclusion Across Difference which includes training on Micro Messages and Empathy and Understanding. Bias training is conducted every year for the police. The UVM Campus Police have a policy on Bias-Free Policing. UVM also has a Bias Response Program, which addresses incidents of bias targeting UVM students, faculty, and staff. The program educates the campus community about bias, and institutional policies, protocols, and resources related to bias.

Blackboard Jungle. The Blackboard Jungle Symposium (BBJ) is designed for UVM faculty, staff, and all others wanting to participate in critical conversations, construct new and promising inclusive practices, and foster conversational spaces where diversity, equity, and the free exchange of ideas are welcomed, appreciated, and valued. BBJ is a collaborative opportunity to engage in an open, civil exchange of ideas, perspectives, and beliefs that will cultivate greater inclusivity of diverse populations and increase cultural understanding within communities.

MLK Education, Learning and Celebration. This is a commemorative program that honors and preserves the life and legacy of Dr. King. The University community gathers annually for a series of programs that affirms its commitment to peace and racial justice to which Dr. King dedicated his life. This includes a keynote speaker, performances at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, educational forums, lectures and community service.

Teach-Ins/Brave Spaces Programs. UVM is a community dedicated to the transformational power of education with a collective responsibility to help make the world a better place. Together, we seek justice through action; but first, we work to lay the foundation for making change through a series of educational sessions designed to explore, examine and eradicate racism as well as inform action. These include the Amazing Grace and Teach in series and the Brave Spaces series.

Center for Cultural Pluralism. The Center for Cultural Pluralism (CCP) opened in 1999 and serves as a hub to build awareness, knowledge, and skills on the intersections of our multiple identities. The CCP works to bring the UVM community together through conversations, roundtables, speakers and workshops. Utilizing these tools, the CCP fosters inclusion, equity and empowerment by providing the highest quality of education to all.

UVM and Flynn Partnership. The Office of the Vice President for Human Resources, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs has partnered with the Flynn, through the UVM President's Initiative for Diversity, to offer low-cost tickets to the UVM community for select performances. The shows in this series feature artists of color as well as themes that focus on diversity, plurality, and inclusivity.

Recruitment and Retention of Students of Color

President’s Common Ground Scholarship. UVM is initiating a focused fundraising campaign to establish a scholarship program for students from historically underrepresented and underserved groups to attend UVM. This scholarship will build upon our shared principles to further extend the opportunities presented by a vibrant, equitable, affordable and accessible education. See President Garimella’s August 27, 2020 memo.

Catamount Commitment. Initiated in 2017, the [Catamount Commitment Program](#) aims to remove financial barriers to higher education that many limited-income Vermont students and families face. The program provides access to an excellent educational environment to high-achieving students who have significant financial need. Beyond financial resources, the Commitment focuses on the day-to-day success of students through the provision of valuable academic and personal support offerings. These offerings provide guidance and serve to enhance the student's experience throughout their entire time at the university.

Academic Success Goals. Included in the [Academic Success Goals](#) (ASG) established by the Provost's Office is an ASG to increase the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and thought on our campus. This includes increasing our percentage of students of color from the current 12.2% to match that of our faculty demographics.

Abenaki Summer Happening Program at UVM. The University of Vermont and the Abenaki community have partnered since 1985 to implement the [Summer Happening Program](#). The program brings high school students to UVM for two days to experience campus life. Focused on empowering Abenaki students to take pride in their native heritage, while exposing them to the academic rigor of college with scholarly lectures and activities, the Summer Happening Program offers students opportunities to establish relationships, and provides support to seek post-secondary education.

Urban Partnership Program. Four high schools in New York, along with newer additions in Chicago and Philadelphia, make up the [Urban Partnership Program](#), a fifteen-year-old UVM effort that has attracted talented students who very likely would not have considered UVM an option for college. Over the years, UVM has successfully brought students from the Bronx to campus in an initiative that begins grooming future Catamounts soon after they start high school. Prospective students get an intensive exposure to UVM over four years of high school. Admitted students benefit from scholarships aimed at making the university more diverse.

Recruitment and Retention of Faculty/Staff of Color

Henderson Fellowship Program. The [George Washington Henderson Fellowship Program](#) was established to honor the memory of George Washington Henderson, one of the first African American students elected to Phi Beta Kappa and to graduate from the University of Vermont (class of 1877). In cooperation with academic departments, the program sponsors pre-doctoral and post-doctoral scholars who help to advance UVM's research and teaching goals and assist in reaching identified diversity goals, especially with respect to the academic curriculum. The Provost's Office is also partnering with OVPR and VPDEI to develop a Henderson Fellows' "track II" program to support target-of-opportunity diverse hires.

APLU IChange Initiative. APLU IChange initiative is designed to develop a more inclusive and diverse STEM faculty. An initial cohort of 18 faculty members completed a six-week training course (Cornell MOOC) on creating and sustaining inclusive, student-centered learning environments.

Provost's Diversity Fellows. We have formed our second cohort of Diversity Fellows. This program combines monthly meetings throughout the academic year with a two-day institute devoted to curricular design, facilitating dialogue in the classroom, and the campus climate on diversity and inclusion issues. The program goals are to discuss and enhance the understanding of diversity and inclusion concepts amongst faculty and the university community. The Provost's Faculty Fellow for Diversity has responsibility for promoting diversity and inclusion campus-wide, and assumes a leadership role in advancing specific diversity and inclusion initiatives that directly support our academic and student success priorities.

McKnight Fellows Program (Florida Education Fund). The McKnight Fellows Program is designed to enhance the pool of qualified applicants for faculty positions. The Provost's Office sponsors diverse faculty to attend the program to meet prospective diverse candidates for future faculty positions.

Recruitment Guidelines for Tenure and Tenure-Track Faculty. The Provost's Office has made significant changes in recruitment guidelines to include new language in position advertisements and appointment letters. There is now a requirement for all applicants to submit a separate statement of how they will advance diversity and inclusive excellence. The search committee is required to evaluate and weight the statement along with other information during the first round of review.

Exploring Faculty Careers at UVM. This is a faculty recruitment initiative designed to bring promising future faculty prospects to UVM for a mock interview and orientation visit.

Annual Review Guidelines and Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Guidelines. The Provost's Office is creating ongoing systemic changes in practices and procedures to foster an institutional culture that values diversity and inclusion and raises expectations for accountability. Among these are the revision of faculty annual evaluation guidelines and promotion and tenure guidelines to include criteria for appraisal of contributions to advancing diversity and inclusion; and revision of the language to all university awards for faculty to include commitment to diversity and inclusion as selection criteria.

Academic Success Goals. Included in the *Academic Success Goals* (ASG) established by the Provost's Office is an ASG to increase the diversity of perspectives, experiences, and thought. This includes increasing our diverse staff (14%) and our diverse faculty (11.9%) to the New England average of 25.5% in five years.

Supporting Diverse Identities across Campus

We have established four centers that respond to the variety of identities shared by our students.

Interfaith Center. The Interfaith Center is open to all UVM students, staff, faculty, and affiliates for reflection, spiritual practice, conversation, education, and community building. The Center is located on Redstone Campus at 400 South Prospect Street. The Center offers a peaceful space to study, pray, meditate, explore resources and talk with others who share a desire to explore faith across cultures.

Mosaic Center for Students of Color. The vision for the Mosaic Center for Students of Color (MCSC) is to create a diverse and rich community of empowered, engaged, and enthusiastic students of color at UVM. The MCSC is designed to connect students with resources to assist them in their journey and with one another. The Center fully supports the holistic development of self-identified students of color so that they can reach their goals for academic achievement, personal growth, identity formation, and cultural development.

Prism Center. The Prism Center serves the diverse queer and trans communities at UVM. The Center supports and empowers lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students, as well as students whose identities fall in between or expand beyond those categories, and works to create a campus community where people of all sexual and gender identities can thrive. The Center offers opportunities for all members of UVM's LGBTQA+ and allied communities to be together, build community and learn from one another.

Women and Gender Equity Center. The Women and Gender Equity Center (WGEC) envisions a diverse, and equitable learning environment for all members of the UVM community. The WGEC provides advocacy services for those in our community who have experienced sexual or intimate partner violence, and provides programming, education, and events that ask our community to explore the intersections of gender and other identities.

University-Wide Honors and Recognition of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Davis Center Display. President Garimella is working closely with Vice President Heading-Grant and other community members to dedicate a prominent area in the Davis Center to honor and celebrate our common commitment to unity, respect, diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging. The working group for this effort includes students, faculty and staff and has as its initial focus honoring the work of African Americans, particularly those who have touched UVM. See President Garimella's [August 27, 2020 memo.](#)

Amy and Pat Brown Black Lives Matter Flag. In the fall of 2016, UVM was the first institution of higher education in the United States to fly the Black Lives Matter (BLM) flag. Since then, institutions across the country have followed our lead. After the first BLM flag flown was stolen, our community came together to hoist a second BLM flag handmade by former Director of Student Life Pat Brown and his wife Amy. It was a powerful demonstration of our community values. This fall, we will commemorate that flag during the annual Andrew Harris Legacy Breakfast celebration, which will be held Sunday, October 4. The flag will then be permanently and prominently displayed in the university's [Mosaic Center](#) to signify UVM's continued commitment and dedication to Black lives. See President Garimella's [August 27, 2020 memo.](#)

Andrew Harris Commons. The [Andrew Harris Commons](#) on the University of Vermont campus commemorated UVM's first African-American graduate. Marked by a large plaque and five black marble monuments, the Commons, where the ceremony took place in October, 2018, is located on the green adjacent to the Davis Center. Harris, one of the first African-Americans to attend college in the United States, graduated from UVM in 1838.

Indigenous People's Day. In October, 2019, UVM celebrated the first [Indigenous People's Day](#) with a full day of activities that recognized Native American culture, education and rights.

Provost's Student Leadership in Equity and Campus Diversity Award. This award recognizes a student of color who is committed to cultural diversity and education. The recipient demonstrates leadership and persistence in multicultural education, equity pedagogy, social justice, and diversity work, making valuable contributions to the overall learning experience of the university community.

Provost's Trailblazer Award. This award acknowledges a student of color whose courage, persistence, and contributions serve to eliminate barriers and advance access, equity, diversity, and social justice in higher education.

Provost's Commitment to Equity & Inclusion Award. This award recognizes an LGBTQ+ student whose courage and persistence serve to advance equity, diversity, and social justice at the University of Vermont.

Andrew Harris Award. This award is named in honor of Andrew Harris, the University of Vermont's first African American graduate in 1838. The Andrew Harris Award is for students of color who demonstrate a commitment to creating an inclusive climate for those from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds and exemplify qualities such as courage, tenacity, and personal fortitude.