



GRADUATE COLLEGE

Inclusive Excellence Action Plan

General Information

1. **Dean:** Cynthia Forehand
2. **Person submitting plan on behalf of College:**

Name: Rebecca Prigge
Title: International Student Services Specialist
Department/Office/Unit: Graduate College
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3. Departments within the College

- a. Graduate Student Enrollment Management – Recruitment, Admissions, Progression, Graduation
- b. Graduate Student Services
- c. Graduate Student Funding
- d. Graduate Curriculum
- e. Graduate Faculty
- f. Graduate Education/Student Policies through Graduate Executive Committee
- g. Graduate Catalogue
- h. Cross-college Interdisciplinary Program Management

4. Implementation team members (including team lead/chair):

Name	Title	Department/Office/Unit
Cynthia Forehand	Dean	Graduate College
Rebecca Prigge	International Student Services	Graduate College

Components of Inclusive Excellence Summary

Pillar 1: Academics

Component 1: Faculty Support and Engagement

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Approve Graduate Faculty Status	Graduate Executive Committee
Provide training at graduate faculty meetings	Invited Guests
Added Center for Teaching and Learning's resources for teaching international and multilingual students to our website. Sent link in emails to professors teaching Master's International Year program (MIY)	Center for Teaching and Learning; International Student Services Specialist
Created an International Admissions Guidebook to aid faculty members in reviewing international applications. This guidebook is continuously updated and sent out at the start of the new admissions review cycles	International Student Services Specialist

Component 2: Student Support and Engagement

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Co-host a Resource Fair to ensure new graduate students know about campus resources related to diversity	Graduate Student Services staff in collaboration with Graduate Student Senate
Provide mentoring for international students in Master's International Year program (MIY)	International Student Services Specialist
Identified designated writing tutors in Graduate Writing Center for international MIY students	Director of Graduate Student Writing Center
Created a Speaker Series Conversation Hour for all international graduate students (AY 2017-2018)	International Student Services Specialist
Offered a session during New Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Orientation on Universal Design for Learning (Fall 2018)	Center for Teaching and Learning; Student Services Team
Offered a one-day presentation workshop for international graduate students (Spring 2018)	ESOL Faculty; International Student Services Specialist
Offered a six-week Oral Communications Workshop for international graduate students (Spring 2019)	ESOL Faculty; International Student Services Specialist

Component 3: Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Research

As an administrative office we have no direct responsibility for curriculum, pedagogy or research. However, the Dean of the Graduate College works with the Faculty Graduate Executive Committee (GEC) to approve courses and curricula. As part of that process, the GEC will consider diversity and inclusive excellence within the curricula. The Graduate College also sponsors workshops and training, some of which directly provide opportunities to develop effective interpersonal and intercultural skills.

Pillar 2: Community

Component 1: Representational/Compositional Diversity and Equity of Staff, Students, and Faculty

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Offer application fee waivers to past participants of McNair or other TRIO programs, Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) and Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT)	Graduate College Admissions staff
Pay for membership to the IRT and send a College of Education and Social Services faculty member to represent UVM at annual meeting.	Dean of the Graduate College
Added DACA recipients, active military and veterans to list of applicants who can apply for an application fee waiver	Graduate College Admissions staff
Work with Study International marketing agency to advertise to prospective international applicants abroad	Graduate College; University Communications; Study International

Component 2: Multicultural Competency Development of Staff, Students, and Faculty

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Provided staff training in retreats and encouragement to attend on-campus or off-campus events	Dean of Graduate College
Offered a session in New GTA Orientation on “Teaching to a Multicultural Classroom” for Graduate Teaching Assistants (Fall 2019)	Student Services staff; ESOL Faculty
3 staff members attended “Discussing Support for Transgender and Non-Binary Students and Colleagues” forum (Spring 2019)	Graduate College Staff

Staff member attended the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) national conference (May 2017 and May 2018)	International Student Services Specialist
Staff member attended the Association for Graduate Enrollment Management (NAGAP) national conference (April 2018 and April 2019). Staff member attended several sessions on increasing international graduate student enrollment.	Director of Admissions and Enrollment
8 out of 12 staff members attended Blackboard Jungle Symposium (Spring 2019)	Graduate College staff
2 staff members attended the “Seeing and Disrupting Racism” professional development class	Graduate College Staff
A staff member attended a “Meet the Centennials” professional development presentation	Graduate College Staff
Neuroscience Graduate Program (NGP) and Cellular, Molecular and Biomedical Sciences (CMB) interdisciplinary programs had Dean’s Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (DACDI) presentations during recruitment (2018)	NGP and CMB staff

Component 3: Inclusive Campus Climate for Staff, Students, and Faculty

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Changed address form fields in application to be more inclusive of international applicants by using the standard format for international addresses and including language for “given” and “family” name in addition to “first” and “last” name	Director of Admissions and Enrollment
Dean held open forum for graduate students to discuss campus climate during student-led protests (Spring 2018)	Dean of the Graduate College
Added video testimonials from international graduate students to International Student Admissions page	International Student Services Specialist
Added a link to the UVM “You are Welcome Here” campaign video to our International Student Admissions page as well as to staff person’s email signature and social media account	International Student Services Specialist
Graduate College provided donations to Indian Student Association for Diwali Night and Iranian Student Association for Nowruz Festival	Dean of Graduate College
Provide business support for graduate student groups such as Nepali, Indian, Iranian student associations.	Business Assistant

Added a field in application for applicants to voluntarily share additional information about their gender and continuously updating language	Director of Admissions and Enrollment
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Component 4: Programs, Services, & Events

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Hosted a staff retreat with training in cultural competence	Graduate College staff
Organized the first annual Graduate Student Appreciation Day	Graduate College staff
Organized and hosted a Thanksgiving Potluck for the Master’s International Year program students to introduce them to an American Thanksgiving celebration. Students are encouraged to bring food from their own cultures to share with the group.	International Student Services Specialist

Pillar 3: Environment

Component 1: Physical Accessibility

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Ensured wheelchair accessibility when reconfiguring main office and satellite office	Physical plant and facilities
Ensure graduate college commencement has wheelchair accessible seating	Graduate College staff
Asked students attending New GTA Orientation if they required ADA accommodations in registration	Student Services staff

Component 2: Technology Use and Accessibility

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Staff member attended a technology accessibility training with UVM Web Team; Made website accessible when converting to Drupal	Graduate College Web Content Editor; UVM Web Team
2 staff members attended a UVM Communicators meeting to discuss visual accessibility of all digital and print communications	Graduate College staff

Component 3: Cognitive Accessibility

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Sign language interpreters and closed captioning provided for Graduate College Commencement and Hooding ceremonies	Graduate College staff

Component 4: Inclusive Spaces

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Neuroscience Graduate Program (NGP) and Cellular, Molecular and Biomedical Sciences (CMB) interdisciplinary programs study area was designed to be wheelchair accessible	Graduate College staff

Pillar 4: Operations

Component 1: Policies, Procedures, and Practices

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Attended the National Diversity College Fair, as well as other graduate recruitment fairs, which reach diverse students	Graduate College Admissions staff
Collaborated with Office of International Education (OIE) to post clear admissions deadlines for international applicants that correspond with obtaining their immigration documents. Deadlines have been added to the international admissions website and letters of admission	International Student Services Specialist; OIE
Created a practice of contacting program coordinators to notify them of international application deadlines and give them lists of applicants who still need a decision	International Student Services Specialist; program coordinators

Component 2: Evaluation and Assessment

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Assess graduate student demographics	Dean of the Graduate College; Business Assistant
Assess success of international students in Pre-Master's Program	International Student Services Specialist
Gathered and analyzed data from application about how international applicants are hearing about UVM	International Student Services Specialist

Analyzed data about international graduate students for enrollment purposes	Business Assistant
Administered a needs assessment survey to international graduate students (Fall 2017)	International Student Services Specialist
Added question to application to allow applicants to identify as first-generation students	Graduate College Admissions staff
Track Google Analytics for Graduate College website to gather data on location, age and sex of site users	Web Content Editor
Provide data on first generation students and students of color to programs that use it to offer scholarships to target populations	Business Assistant

Component 3: Financial

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Provide academic deans matching scholarship funds for diverse student recruitment – domestic students of color, low socioeconomic, and first generation. On occasion, a GTA or Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) stipend is provided to support recruitment of diverse students.	Dean of the Graduate College
Created curated Pivot searches for external funding that does not require U.S. citizenship for eligibility. This is to aid international or undocumented students in their search for external funding.	International Student Services Specialist

Component 4: Internal/External Communications

Action/Initiative/Activity	Responsible Unit(s)/Role(s)
Specific admissions page for international applicants	International Student Services Specialist
Created a Graduate College Newsletter (Fall 2018) to inform students of important policy or process changes as well as provide a place from campus partners to	Students Services staff
Increased promotion of Career Services events specifically for international students in Graduate College Newsletter	Student Services staff; International Career Counselor

Collaborate with Office of International Education and program staff to advertise events and workshops for international students	International Student Services Specialist; OIE; program staff
Social media campaign to highlight women in STEM during International Women in STEM Day on our social media	Web content editor

Action Plan for the Four Pillars of Inclusive Excellence

Pillar 1: Academics

Central to the mission and strategic goals of the University of Vermont is excellence in the academic experience to help prepare members of our community to be globally responsible and engaged citizens, advance knowledge, and build critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The Graduate College has increased academic programming significantly in the past two years for graduate students. In February 2018, the Graduate College administered a needs assessment survey to international graduate students to gather information about their English proficiency and areas in which they would like to develop in regard to language. We had a 34% response rate to the survey.

Based on the areas in which students indicated that they could benefit from additional academic language supports, the Graduate College developed two workshops for international students. We offered a one-day Presentation Skills & Clear Speaking Workshop in March 2018 and a six-week Oral Communication Workshop for international students from March-April 2019. 10 students across 9 different programs (1 CE; 5 master's; 4 doctoral students) participated in the Presentation Skills & Clear Speaking Workshop. 10 students across 8 different programs (2 master's; 8 doctoral) participated in the Oral Communication Workshop.

The benefits from these workshops can be seen in this excerpt from an email (shared with permission) from a participant in the Oral Communications Workshop to the faculty member who taught the course:

“This week, I got to do a few presentations and guest lectures; and I found myself being more comfortable and confident thanks to your workshop. I wanted to reach out and send this thank you note. Thank you so much for all that you have been offering in our workshop, you have been an amazing resource for me. :)”

Also, grad school had been unfortunately a fairly isolating/lonely experience until I started joining the Friday workshops with you. In our workshop community, I finally feel heard, supported, and seen by you and others (unlike in my department and in the classes I am taking).”

The Graduate College has also focused on preparing Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) to teach to a diverse classroom by offering special breakout sessions during our first New GTA Orientation in August 2018. We offered sessions on Universal Design for Learning and how to teach to a multicultural classroom. We had a total of 73 students register for the “Variety of Students? Variety of Teaching Strategies!” session and 47 register for the “Teaching to a Multicultural Study Body” session.

These breakout sessions helped GTAs develop their teaching skills and multicultural competency when teaching undergraduate courses.

Sample of anonymous responses from exit survey from GTA Orientation when asked about learning outcomes from these sessions:

“Coursework needs to be flexible and diverse enough to engage multiple types of learners.”

“I learned about how different cultural background might affect learning experiences.”

“To be open to student’s suggestions on the best ways to communicate the information. What might have worked for me in a classroom won't necessarily work for the new generation of college students.”

Future Goals:

Goal	Leadership Responsibility	Timeline	What we need to accomplish this	How We Will Measure Goal
Offer 2 academic workshops for international graduate students throughout each academic year	Dean; International Student Services Specialist	AY 2019-2020	Money to pay ESOL faculty member	Student attendance at workshops
Work with Graduate Student Senate (GSS) to develop a series of 2-4 workshops for Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants on how to manage difficult conversations in the classroom/lab regarding civil discourse, addressing racism and use of inclusive language	Dean; International Student Services Specialist	AY 2020 - 2021 or sooner if possible	Money to pay faculty or staff member to teach workshop	Student attendance at workshops

Pillar 2: Community

The University of Vermont aspires to be a community that affirms and demonstrates the value of the diverse identities and backgrounds of its members, promotes multicultural competence, and builds positive and productive connections throughout the community.

In the past two years, The Graduate College has created new programming which is focused on supporting students and building a graduate community. The addition of events such as Graduate Student Appreciation Day, Master’s International Year program Thanksgiving Potluck, International Student Conversation Hour and Graduate Student Hockey Night help bring students together build the feeling that they are part of a community.

The Graduate College has also focused on developing the multicultural competency of its staff members. Staff have voluntarily attended many professional development workshops, conferences and classes to learn more about best practices regarding inclusion and how to support our diverse student population. The staff have used the information learned in these professional development opportunities to examine our own processes and improve our practices to be more inclusive.

Previous Goal: Develop opportunities for training staff that support graduate students in the academic units.

Progress towards goal: 3 staff members attended “Discussing Support for Transgender and Non-Binary Students and Colleagues” forum (Spring 2019); 2 staff members attended the “Seeing and Disrupting Racism” class; A staff member attended the NAFSA: Association of International Educators annual conference (May 2017 and May 2018); A staff member attended the Association for Graduate Enrollment Management (NAGAP) national conference (April 2018 and April 2019); 8 staff members attended Blackboard Jungle (Spring 2019)

Future Goals:

Add a diversity and inclusion session for GTAs in Orientation	Student Services Staff	August 2019 - August 2020	A staff or faculty member to teach session	How many students enroll in session
Build communication with student organizations like PRISM, MOSAIC, Interfaith Center, Women's Center, and add campus events in our newsletter	Student Services Staff	AY 2019 - 2020	Communication with partner offices	How many advertisements are put in the GC newsletter for each office throughout academic year 19-20

Pillar 3: Environment

The University of Vermont strives to create physical, virtual, and educational living, learning and work environments that are inclusive and accessible to all in our community.

There is little we can do related to physical environment as we are a relatively small office in a building for which we have no oversight. We have no direct curriculum. However, we manage Graduate College Commencement and ensure it is physically accessible and has sign language interpreters. We also have been increasingly been including space for students to request ADA accommodations in RSVPs to Graduate College events. We also regularly collaborate with the Office of Student Accessibility Services to ensure that graduate students who require accommodations are being referred to the proper office on campus.

Previous Goal: Update our website and marketing materials to be more accessible.

Progress towards goal: The Graduate College web content editor has also undergone the web accessibility training with the UVM Web Team. This training ensures that each UVM website meets the ADA guidelines and that all content is accessible to anyone who interacts with our site.

Future Goals:

Goal	Leadership Responsibility	Timeline	What we need to accomplish this	How We Will Measure Goal
Update all pdf forms to make sure they are accessible	Web content editor; Graduate College Staff	August 2020	Staff training on what accessibility means for forms	Conversion of all pdf forms
Gather information about making the door to the Graduate College Main Office more accessible to those with physical disabilities	Dean, Dean's Assistant	AY 2019 - 2020	Money to make improvements to door	Improvements to accessibility of door
Monitor campus-wide offerings to graduate students (curricular and co-curricular) to ensure that the spaces graduate students use are physically accessible and inclusive of those from diverse identities and cultural backgrounds.	Dean, Graduate College Staff	AY 2019 - 2020	Staff training	By noting when changes are made at our request

Pillar 4: Operations

Business operations and organizational processes (e.g., policy development, fiscal and capital planning, human resource functions, and organizational practices and procedures) are critical to the daily functioning and long-term health of the University of Vermont.

Providing recruitment funds for diverse students will increase their number and support inclusive excellence in the demographics of our graduate programs. Offering application fee waivers for a variety of minority applicants will increase the diversity of our applicants and provide small financial assistance for applicants from a low socioeconomic background.

Previous Goals: Increase the percentage of both international and domestically diverse graduate students. Long term goal is to double the number of international students (starting with a small number of 140). Increase domestic diversity to 15% of graduate student population.

Develop a way to track first generation and low socioeconomic status graduate students to ensure we are addressing those populations in our goal of creating a more diverse student body.

Progress towards goal: The Graduate College has faced many roadblocks to increasing our international student population under the current federal administration. As of Fall 2018, our new international student enrollment fell by -5%. However, this is in-line with an overall trend in the national new enrollment numbers which has been down -1% for the past two academic years. This information is based the “International Graduate Applications and Enrollment” report by Council of Graduate Schools.

Total enrollment of international graduate students fell -6% from Fall 2017 to Fall 2018, but we are still well above the national average of new graduate enrollment in doctoral program (42%) at 66%.

Based on data from the Graduate College and Office of Institutional Research (OIR), the diversity of our enrolled domestic students has increased slightly from 11.3% in Fall 2017 to 11.9% in Fall 2018.

We started tracking first generation students in the application. We have been able to use this information in awarding scholarships to this target population.

Future Goals:

Goal	Leadership Responsibility	Timeline	What we need to accomplish this	How We Will Measure Goal
Continue long-term goal of increasing international enrollment by 50%	Dean of GC, Director of Admissions, International Student Services Specialist	On-going	Collaboration with EducationUSA and UVM's Communication Office	OIR and Graduate College data; Council of Graduate Schools for national comparison data
Continue long-term goal of increasing the diversity of domestic graduate students to 15%	Dean of GC, Director of Admissions, Business Assistant	On-going	Communication with colleges; data analysis	OIR and Graduate College data