

Worcester State University Campus Climate Committee

Academic Year 2020-2021 Draft Report

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Committee Membership

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“When you name something as sexist or as racist you are making that thing more tangible so that it can be more easily communicated to others. But for those who do not have a sense of the racism or sexism you are talking about, to bring them up is to bring them into existence.

It might then be assumed that the problem would go away if you would just stop talking about it or if you went away.”

- Sarah Ahmed

The following recommendations, compiled by the members of the Campus Climate Committee’s implementation and data subcommittees, emerge from a combination of our analysis of survey data, special reports compiled by IR, the Renz equity audit, information from the Department of Higher Education, experience at Worcester State University, and combined expertise in the areas of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (see 2020 report for DEI definitions). These recommendations are made based on multiple sources, including data from the 2020 and 2021 campus climate surveys and with the open acknowledgment that the campus climate has not improved significantly, and in some ways has worsened.

Worcester and indeed Worcester State is not impervious to the national climate on race, the growing white supremacy movement and countering calls for social justice and liberation. As a committee we are frustrated at the slow pace of change on our campus. We grow weary about serving on committees and initiatives that bring mostly incremental change. This is a moment of inflection for the university.

These recommendations are made with the hope that they are a step towards building trust on campus and continuing the process Towards a More Inclusive Climate, through which the university both live up to its mission and meet the lofty goals set out by the new strategic plan. For the sake of clarity, not priority, we have organized the recommendations into three general areas.

Area 1: Increase transparency and accountability.

1. All university divisions and departments should make annual assessments of their support for diversity and equity on campus. These reports should be public to increase transparency. This should include:
 - a. Sharing Racial Equity and Justice Institute (REJI) disaggregated data provided by IR with department chairs and faculty directly and using it to identify and address disproportionate outcomes for ALANA students within programs.
 - b. Conducting new staff and faculty searches with an emphasis on diversifying the university (see hiring recommendation below).
 - i. Departments should establish benchmarks for diversity.
 - ii. A special procedure should be triggered when departments fail to make progress over multiple years. This could include expanding the search committee to include members of the CCC.
 - c. Academic Affairs should provide targeted funding and closely monitor departments and programs to address individual disparities in student outcomes among ALANA students.
 - d. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
 - ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high- quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
 - iii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making
2. The University Administration should provide a detailed presentation of the university's budget to faculty, staff and students on an annual basis. Specifically, information should be provided regarding how financial decisions are made to prioritize and support diversity, equity and inclusion at Worcester State University.
 - a. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
 - ii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making
 - iii. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

3. We are alarmed at the number of intimidation and bullying incidents occurring on our campus reported by students, staff, and faculty in the survey. In response, the committee recommends the following:
 - a. Review BIRT recommendations for practices so that it better captures and addresses bias incidents occurring on our campus.
 - b. The focus groups conducted as part of equity audit should query why incidents are not reported or made known to the general campus.
 - c. Confirm that WSU is following all reporting requirements related to hate crimes in Massachusetts.
 - d. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
 - ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high- quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
 - iii. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
 - iv. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
 - v. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making
4. The recommendations from the 2019-2020 report be revisited and expanded by publicizing the full membership of each university committee once constituted by the President's Office to show progress on:
 - a. 2019-2020 recommendation on University Wide Committee Composition: "The CCC recommends that all university wide committees strive to represent, in their composition, the diversity of the campus community and the employee groups (classified/ non classified). Committee appointments should, ideally, ensure an opportunity for all members of the campus community to serve."
 - i. As student participation is vital to shared governance, the committee believes that all university-wide committees should make every effort to fill the spaces reserved for student participation through open and consistent communication between the committee chairs and the SGA.
 - ii. Additionally, the number of student positions on the Climate Committee specifically, and university-wide committees broadly, should be taken as a minimum, except where otherwise specified, with the goal of reaching parity with the number of faculty and staff appointed to said committees.
 - b. Specific adjustments to the CCC committee as recommended in 2020: "Moreover, the committee believes that staggered membership, or multi-year terms, to ensure continuity would best enable the work of the committee."
 - i. To this end, we note that only one faculty member returned to the 2020-2021 committee from the previous year, which both hampers the work of the committee and, more importantly, we believe reflects the

broader point about a sense that campus climate is worsening for the reasons discussed above. Therefore, it is recommended that the call to DEI committee membership should highlight the staggered membership as well as the minimum 2-year commitment while providing exceptions for campus community members whose situations do not permit this commitment, namely contingent faculty members and students.

- c. This item relates to the following elements of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized group
 - ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high- quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
 - iii. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
 - iv. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
 - v. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity
5. Report out CCC annual recommendations by having co-chairs and different committee members present last year's report and recommendations to the different governance bodies on campus, such as SGA, Chairs, Cabinet, Deans, and AUC. This report would take place in the fall and spring of each year and include action steps and solicit feedback from these constituencies.
 - a. Recommend that all other DEI committees report their recommendations to SGA, AUC, Chairs, Deans, solicit feedback from these groups, and incorporate the recommendations from these groups into their work before presenting to the president.
 - b. Present the recommendations to Faculty and Staff via Opening Day during a breakout session that shares the work and findings of the previous year.
 - i. Include climate committee report and recommendations in the opening day materials.
 - c. Present the recommendations to the campus community through the Campus Conversation venue in Fall and Spring.
 - d. Deans of both schools should present to their faculty and staff on initiatives and programs aimed at improving campus climate within their respective school.
 - e. Department chairs should initiate a discussion of student outcomes with respect to DEI within the first two department meetings.
 - f. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
 - ii. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus

- iii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making
- 6. Campus Police Audit
 - a. Expand police data to include data on incidences beyond parking enforcement.
 - b. University Administration should provide presentations describing the scope and power of the newly formed oversight committee to the campus community and ensure it includes cross-institutional campus representation.
 - c. Develop a report process for the WSU community on concrete accountability and progress towards RENZ recommendations.
 - d. See also Area 4: University Police Reform of this document.
 - e. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
 - ii. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
 - iii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making
 - iv. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

Area 2: Financially commit to prioritizing diversity

- 1. The hiring process for all new staff and faculty should be equipped with resources necessary to recruit diverse employees in a timely and competitive fashion, with a goal of meeting (or exceeding) AA goals for each department and division. This would include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Support for broad and targeted advertising of positions, moving beyond an over-reliance on personal networks for recruiting candidates.
 - b. Fund incentive programs that both make new positions attractive to and demonstrate a commitment to diverse candidates, such as:
 - i. Startup funds for building a research program and/or creative practice
 - ii. Covering relocation costs
 - iii. Course releases or alternative assignments in first two years of employment
 - iv. Partner hires where applicable
 - v. Opportunity hires
 - c. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 3.3: Increase the diversity of the faculty and staff to better reflect the WSU student body and applicant pool
 - ii. STRATEGY 4.4: Establish WSU as a research and policy hub where faculty, staff, and students actively engage in developing solutions to meet regional challenges

- iii. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
 - iv. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high- quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
 - v. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity
- 2. For the long term viability of WSU, invest in a strategic plan to recruit and graduate ALANA students. WSU invested in plans to recruit international students and out-of-state students but has not invested similarly in terms of ALANA students.
 - a. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 2.1: Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps
 - ii. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
 - iii. STRATEGY 2.4: Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need
 - iv. STRATEGY 3.5: Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups
 - v. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
- 3. Given that DEI work done by Faculty and staff in DEI committees often requires commitment above and beyond what is contractually required of service work and that many BIPOC faculty and staff are double-burdened by the task of serving on multiple DEI committees simultaneously, the committee recommends that the university recognize and support work done by ALANA faculty and staff in support of DEI by offsetting the commitment of time and energy to that work in relation to their other campus responsibilities, such as:
 - a. Create APRs to support DEI work done by faculty.
 - b. Offer course releases to faculty who co-chair DEI committees.
 - c. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan
 - i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
 - ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high- quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
 - iii. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

4. Recognize, support, fully fund, and expand existing programs that have demonstrated positive impact on DEI, including:
 - a. Office of Multicultural Affairs
 - i. A.I.D. Program and WSU Summer Bridge Program
 - ii. Pipeline programs: Upward Bound Program & 100 Males to College Program
 - iii. OMA-Multicultural Programming Committee
 - iv. MLK Youth Breakfast
 - v. ALANA Preview/African American read-in Day
 - vi. Heritage Month Celebrations
 - b. Education Department
 - i. Future Teachers Pipeline & Call to Teach Program
 - c. Office of Diversity, Inclusion, Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity
 - i. expansion and enhancement of search committee orientation
 - ii. provide further opportunities for all department chairs relating to development of inclusive job descriptions
 - iii. faculty led development of inclusive pedagogies learning sessions
 - iv. further development of training for hiring managers
 - d. Latino Education Institute
 - i. Early College Worcester -- placing WSU students as paid mentors for dual enrollment classes
 - ii. Teaching Corps - Workbased learning for WSU students
 - iii. LASOS - Pipeline program for girls
 - iv. ENLACE - Pipeline program for boys
 - v. My Voice, My Community -- Faculty led community learning academy
 - vi. LIDER -- College Preparation
 - vii. YCU College Readiness and Leadership
 - viii. Club E -- Adult ESL and family engagement
 - e. Intensive English Language Institute
 - f. Sexual Assault Violence Education (SAVE)
 - i. We Stand Up Bystander Intervention
 - g. Military Affairs and Veterans Services
 - h. Student Accessibility Services
 - i. Expand funding and support to better meet faculty needs in accommodations for students (for example, pdf text conversions, closed captioning services, etc.)
 - i. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan
 - i. STRATEGY 1.5: Enhance support for scholarly and creative work that is applied, innovative, interdisciplinary, and inclusive of marginalized traditions
 - ii. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative

- iii. STRATEGY 3.5: Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups
 - iv. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
 - v. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
 - vi. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity
5. Provide funding to develop the following new student initiatives and programs to promote diversity on campus:
- a. Establish and fully support an LGBTQI+ Center. This includes allocating space for students to congregate on campus as well as hiring a full-time coordinator.
 - b. Establish and fully support a Women's Center. This includes allocating space for students to congregate on campus as well as hiring a full-time coordinator.
 - c. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
 - ii. STRATEGY 3.5: Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups
 - iii. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
 - iv. STRATEGY 5.4: Promote greater unity, communication and sense of institutional pride across campus
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6. Finally, at the time of these recommendations, we are aware that an Interdisciplinary Studies Department will be created but have not yet received details of the department's structure, so we will limit our recommendations to reiterating those made by the IDS committee: the department should be provided adequate funding, staffing, and a cluster hire of diverse faculty.

**Area 3: Prioritize an open and effective university-wide equity audit process
Implementation**

- 1. Previous Data Review
 - a. Review and assess current DEI committee recommendations and list the outstanding recommendations that have not been met
 - b. Review and assess the previous data gathered by DEI survey instruments and other available data for further planning.
 - c. Assess the impact of the RASE plan on historically marginalized and under-represented students

- d. Create an implementation plan to implement outstanding recommendations
 - e. This item relates to the following area of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making
2. Open Audits
- a. Assess the efficacy of wraparound services including the Academic Success Center and Academic Advising with regards to Worcester State's diverse student population, including historically underserved students, first generation students, and newly admitted students under the changed GPA requirement.
 - b. Make recommendations for more culturally aware wraparound services. Develop policies and services focused around cultural sensitivity and competency for the center.
 - c. Assess cost of course materials in STEM/other fields. The committee recommends supporting the adoption of low-cost or open-access educational resources across fields. This may include allocating resources to the library to purchase course textbooks to be made available to students.
 - d. Broader monitoring/assessment of RASE plan impact on BIPOC students and student outcomes.
 - e. Provide REJI data to Chairs and Deans with the intention of developing baselines and benchmarks for increasing outcomes for BIPOC students.
 - f. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 2.1: Increase overall retention and graduation rates and close achievement gaps
 - ii. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
 - iii. STRATEGY 2.4: Ensure all students, including non-traditional students and distance learners, have full and equitable access to the academic resources, support services, and technology they need
 - iv. STRATEGY 3.5: Position and promote WSU as a first-choice university for students from traditionally under-represented groups
 - v. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making
3. RASE Plan Assessment: The Student Diversity and Outcomes Report demonstrated a trend that ALANA students are less likely to complete their major of choice, which prolongs their time to degree. This is especially the case among STEM fields. The university needs the flexibility to modify the RASE plan accordingly.
- a. Assess the impact of the RASE plan on historically underrepresented populations and address disparities related to time to completion, graduation, and drop-out rates.
 - b. Adjust the RASE Plan with regards to its impact on ALANA students, with an eye towards making the RASE Plan more equitable for ALANA students.

- c. Audit of programs indicated by the Student Diversity and Outcomes Report to be struggling to retain students, specifically STEM fields, and to determine the root cause.
- 4. Equity Audit: Building on commitments of Areas 1 and 2 (that is, increasing transparency and accountability and financially committing to prioritizing diversity), the university should begin its equity audit as soon as possible with the following caveats:
 - a. Recognize that the scale and scope of an equity audit is beyond the sole-capacity of members of the CCC committee and other DEI committees on campus. Therefore, the equity audit should be conducted with a similar level of funding and support set by the precedent of the RASE plan.
 - b. Maintain the commitments to transparency and diverse participation in all decisions to hire outside consultants. To accomplish this, funding and compensation should be provided to faculty and staff to participate in the auditing process as part of their regular work and not in addition to it.
 - c. The contract for the equity audit must include the development, implementation, and monitoring of an action plan.
 - d. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - i. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
 - ii. STRATEGY 5.2: Recruit, retain and reward high- quality and diverse faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
 - iii. STRATEGY 5.5: Foster a culture of assessment and data-based decision making

Area 4: University Police Reform

- 1. FYS should include a module explaining student rights under the student code of conduct as well as a module on student rights under the law and student conduct.
- 2. Provide UPD training on student rights under the code of conduct as well as their intersection with state and local law.
- 3. Implement recommendations from the 2020-2021 RENZ Consulting equity audit of UPD.
 - a. Take proactive steps to address the culture of police within UPD with the goal of shifting from a warrior mentality to a community engagement and service model as outlined in the Executive Summary.
 - i. In implementing recommendation 1 of the RENZ Consulting Executive summary, position community engagement and cooperation as a cornerstone of developing the department's policing philosophy.
 - b. The CCC especially supports recommendations 7, 8, and 9 of the RENZ Consulting Executive summary regarding the relationship between UPD and WSU Counseling Services. See also Area 5.2 of this document.
 - c. In implementing recommendation 5 of the RENZ Consulting Executive summary, require UPD to participate in cultural awareness and competency training.

- i. Recruit and compensate WSU faculty to participate in developing UPD cultural awareness and competency training. The university should prioritize utilizing the excellent WSU faculty expertise in this area rather than or in addition to seeking outside firms.
 - ii. Offer the opportunity for UPD to take university coursework focused on diversity and inclusion. To avoid the introduction of dangerous power dynamics into classrooms, it may be advisable that such opportunities be offered either asynchronously or separate from regular WSU course curriculum. Under no circumstances should officers be permitted to participate in in-person courses with WSU students and faculty while armed.
- d. Expand recommendation 11 of the RENZ Consulting Executive Summary to include evaluating all UPD enforcement practices through the lens of racial equity.
- e. Engage with campus stakeholders in developing a Bias-Free Policing policy as described in recommendation 12 of the RENZ Consulting Executive Summary.
- 4. Engage in an additional audit with specific emphasis on UPD interactions with the campus community along the lines of gender, sexuality, and disability.
- 5. Examine use of force policies and revisit the 2007 decision regarding the arming of UPD.
 - a. Audit use of force policies to assess impact on the campus community along lines of race, gender, sexuality, and disability.
 - b. Reconsider the justifications for the 2007 decision to arm UPD and whether they continue to apply today.
 - c. Utilize the Campus Conversation venue to educate the campus body, including dispelling common myths and re-imagining the meaning of campus safety.
- 6. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - a. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative
 - b. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
 - c. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
 - d. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity

Area 5: Institutional Support Recommendations

1. University and departments need to provide extensive and proactive support services for incoming students including, but not limited to:
 - a. Cultivating a university wide climate where students feel empowered to ask for help.
 - b. Discipline specific tutoring to address student pedagogical needs.

- c. Robust early warning mechanisms not focused on “counselling out” students, but addressing student needs.
2. Provide more funding to counseling services to have more resources for preventative support and care.
 - a. To the extent possible, expand services to include all Worcester State students not fully served by existing services, specifically IELI and graduate student groups.
 - b. Encourage the hiring of diverse counselors or counselors with expertise in engaging with marginalized populations to address the unique needs of Worcester State’s population.
 - c. Explore collaboration with local mental health and advocacy organizations with experience and expertise in serving marginalized populations.
 - d. Extend and enhance the case management structure.
3. Offer a series of intercultural communication workshops through CTL and OMA, especially on difficult topics.
 - a. Parallel efforts around difficult conversations with CTL ,OMA & TWA programming to offer strategies for campus staff, faculty, and offices to address issues around diversity and equity.
 - b. Develop CTL workshops on having uncomfortable conversations within personal relationships.
4. Build out OMA’s Multicultural Programming Model (multi-tiered membership and development of themes that are centered around current events and workshops geared at diversity and equity.)
 - a. Provide ongoing funding to OMA’s multicultural programming committee to support ongoing efforts through the office.
5. Investigate whether departments have the capacity to offer Intercultural Communication Courses specific to their discipline and department.
 - a. Recommend the creation or offering of discipline specific coursework on Intercultural Communication.
6. Ensure resources allocated to the CTL are adequate to support University-wide priorities relating to academic excellence and distinction as outlined in the strategic plan, with specific reference to the university’s diversity goals in instruction.
 - a. Provide instruction on how to include BIPOC experiences across all courses.
 - b. Provide instruction on culturally informed pedagogy.
7. Create an instructional design position in the CTL to develop best practices for universal design components and including diverse experiences in course design and pedagogy.
8. This item relates to the following areas of the Strategic Plan:
 - a. STRATEGY 1.2: Support and celebrate excellent teaching, and expand opportunities for broadening pedagogical expertise through both internal and external professional development
 - b. STRATEGY 1.5: Enhance support for scholarly and creative work that is applied, innovative, interdisciplinary, and inclusive of marginalized traditions
 - c. STRATEGY 2.3: Embrace student-centeredness as a guiding principle for faculty and staff, and adopt holistic student support as a University-wide imperative

- d. STRATEGY 2.5: Adopt a mentoring model of advising and ensure faculty and staff are appropriately trained to deliver effective support to a more diverse student body
- e. STRATEGY 5.1: Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
- f. STRATEGY 5.3: Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
- g. STRATEGY 6.3: Ensure technology, facilities, and systems are adequate to support operational needs and strategic goals
- h. STRATEGY 6.4: Ensure administrative policies and practices promote greater efficiency, entrepreneurial thinking, and equity