Creating a globally competent community
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education

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An issue as relevant today as it was in the 1960s – that’s more than 50 years ago.
Diversity
The variety of characteristics that all persons possess, that distinguish them as individuals, and that identify them as belonging to a group or groups.

Equity
The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff.

Inclusion
Intentional policies and practices that promote the full participation and sense of belonging of every individual in a community.

A multi-faceted issue
Middle Georgia State University

- A consolidated university with more than 8,000 students and associate, bachelor’s and master’s degree programs.
- 5 campuses and 2 instructional centers in the heart of Georgia.
- An institutional vision to transform individuals and their communities through extraordinary higher learning. Middle Georgia’s students and alumni will shape the future of the region and its connections to the global society and marketplace.
- As Middle Georgia evolves, it strives to conduct community wide conversations about diversity and inclusion that support the educational experience.

“We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr.
Stand for Greatness

Excerpt from President Blake’s 2015 State of the University address
Approach and Information Gathering

Interviews and conversations

- Middle Georgia State University executives:
  - Dr. Christopher Blake, President
  - President’s cabinet
  - Academic Affairs
  - Student Affairs
  - Various MGA campuses

- Leaders within University System of Georgia
  - Dr. Felita T. Williams, USG Associate Vice Chancellor for Partnerships & Accreditation
  - Dr. Erik Malewski, Chief Diversity Officer at Kennesaw State University

- Dr. Nanette Lee Reynolds, former Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights & Member Governor’s Cabinet

Research

- Existing data from Middle Georgia State University
- Best practices from higher education and corporate settings
  - Re:Work (rework.withgoogle.com): case studies and guides to understand how unconscious biases affect decision making and how inclusive organizational cultures are built and sustained
  - What other universities are doing: diversity plans from Brown University, Kennesaw State University and others.
- News articles and commentaries
3-D Model of Higher Education Diversity

Social Identity Characteristics
- Race/ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Language use
- National/geographic origin
- Socio-economic status
- Political ideology
- First generation
- Veteran/military

Core areas
- Recruitment & retention
- Campus climate
- Curriculum & instruction
- Research & inquiry
- Intergroup relations & discourse
- Student/faculty/staff achievement
- Leadership development
- Nondiscrimination policies
- Procurement/supplier diversity
- Institutional advancement
- External relations
- Strategic planning & accountability

Focal Groups
- Faculty
- Students
- Staff
- Administrators
- Trustees
- Alumni
- Others

Why Focus on Global Competence?

**International Exposure**
- Diversity of experience
- Work and study abroad
- Travel

**Emotional Intelligence**
- Culturally aware
- Curious
- Empathetic
- Open-minded
- Non-judgmental

**Awareness**
- Respect for others
- Global connectedness
- Mastery of subject area
- Understanding of others’ histories, religions, politics

**Communication Skills**
- Verbal and non-verbal
- Inter-cultural
- Foreign language
Lessons for Success

- Must have commitment from “the top”
- Dedicate appropriate resources
- Ensure broad involvement across the university and spread the responsibility
  - Provide means and opportunities for buy-in by stakeholders in all groups
  - Conduct climate studies and include appropriate questions
  - Manage competition among various groups
  - The right people need to be at the table at all times
  - Ensure consistency across all campuses
- Convey relevancy and significance to the university
  - Should not be perceived as a mandatory training/checklist item
  - It is important for everyone and not limited to those who have social identifying characteristics
  - Program isolation could be a challenge
- Don’t attempt to do too much at once
- This is an on-going process
Recommendations

Create and provide adequate support for a Presidential Commission

Conduct a climate survey

Assess and develop short-term opportunities

Assess and develop long-term opportunities
Short-term Opportunities

- Identify 2-3 action steps from climate survey that can be addressed and achieved 12-18 months
- Ensure there are safe zones for students
- Review existing policies and procedures
  - Revise, eliminate, and/or develop new documentation to ensure appropriateness in new framework
  - Publicize resources available to students, faculty and staff
- Identify best practices and training for leadership, HR, other areas as needed
- Adopt an annual theme that leverages initiative and reflects institutional values of Learning, Engagement, Stewardship, and Adaptability
  - Kick-off during convocation
  - Provide information on how the community will be involved in and informed of efforts
- Schedule presidential discussions with focus groups and various campus communities
- Communicate efforts, including progress toward goals and objectives and barriers to progress
- Develop website outlining resources, programming and future plans
Long-term Opportunities

- Allocate funding and cabinet-level personnel to lead effort; reprioritize, if needed
- Assess all efforts through quantitative and qualitative measures to engage in continuous improvement
- Recognize individual and group efforts along the continuum of developing a global competent university
- Enhance cultural competency through Center for Teaching Innovation, conference and professional development opportunities, cross-cultural faculty-staff exchanges, and a faculty fellows program
- Schedule seminars and speakers from off-campus to address diversity, inclusion and equity (plan far enough in advance so that faculty can integrate events into curriculum, syllabi)
- Through the First Year Experience program, implement a common reader program and pledge of respect to raise awareness
- Identify, train and financially support Student Diversity Ambassadors
- Explore external resources, such as \textit{INSIGHT into Diversity}, for program models and best practices
- Explore grant opportunities to support initiatives
What Does Success Feel and Look Like?

- Cultural competencies that promote a bias-free environment and an appreciation of world views
- Culturally aware students, faculty, staff, and communities
- Globally competent graduates who are work-force ready
- Transparent and open dialogue; ability to have “tough” conversations across group lines
- A sustainable plan that includes all members of Middle Georgia State University and all campuses

“Becoming culturally competent is a journey which NEVER ends, regardless of where you start on the continuum.”

— Dr. Nanette Lee Reynolds
What Does Success Feel and Look Like?

GLOBAL COMPETENCY
Middle Georgia State University
Macon-Dublin-Cochran-Eastman-Warner Robins
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