

UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISVILLE



INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE OPERATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

DRIVEN BY STUDENT SUCCESS

Year One of a Five-Year Plan

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OUR PLEDGE



President Kim Schatzel
University of Louisville

“I strongly believe that you cannot deliver a high-quality university education without a diverse classroom and campus – inclusive of all demographics, identities and ideologies. Only in such circumstances and with such experiences will our students be prepared to foster their own and others’ excellence in a diverse global economy. In short, a diverse and inclusive campus better prepares our students to lead.

My first presidential priority is an unwavering commitment to inclusive student success. That is, ALL students – again inclusive of all demographics, identities, and ideologies – should successfully complete their degrees at the University of Louisville.”

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY

As the Vice President for Institutional Equity, I’m thrilled to introduce year one of our five year operational strategic plan aimed at fostering inclusive excellence throughout our university community. This plan prioritizes student success and sustainable educational excellence, reflecting the voices of our students, faculty, and staff. Built on six pillars—education and training, climate and infrastructure, recruitment and retention, research and scholarship, strategic partnerships, and leadership support and development –each element is tailored to reinforce our University goals and Cardinal Principles while driving collaborative work and innovation.

Developed from broad departmental feedback, our goals are ambitious yet achievable, aiming to attract talent, foster open dialogue, and enhance educational outcomes. This plan is our pledge to create a thriving, inclusive environment for all.



Vice President Lee Gill, J.D.
Office of Institutional Equity

“As Provost, I am keenly focused on the academics of our institution and the ways that our faculty and staff can help ensure student success. We know there are a number of factors that go into ensuring student success, and one of those factors is connectedness. A strong sense of belonging and feeling valued is critical to our students’ academic and personal development. We enhance the Cardinal experience when we foster an inclusive environment where everyone feels their identity is respected and appreciated.”



Executive Vice President and
University Provost Gerry Bradley

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE STATEMENT

The University of Louisville strives to foster and sustain an environment of inclusiveness that empowers us all to achieve our highest potential without fear of prejudice or bias. We commit ourselves to building an exemplary educational community that offers a nurturing and challenging intellectual climate, a respect for the spectrum of human diversity and a genuine understanding of the many differences — including race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion, diversity of thought and political ideology — that enrich a vibrant metropolitan research university. We expect every member of our academic family to embrace the underlying values of this vision and to demonstrate a strong commitment to attracting, retaining and supporting students, faculty, and staff who reflect the diversity of our larger society.



BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHICS



“ Student success is the driver.
Student success is the outcome.
This plan guides us on how to get there. ”

Student success is the foundation of everything we do at the University of Louisville (UofL). Our commitment to educating and empowering students on their journey to becoming enlightened and engaged global citizens makes UofL a great place to learn, discover, connect, and work. Guided by proven strategies, we have overcome challenges to arrive at a point of untapped potential and limitless opportunities for all students, staff, and faculty.

It began in 2003 with the *Achieving Our Highest Potential: A Diversity Plan for the University of Louisville* that affirmed the belief that racial diversity enriches the quality of education for all students, and established a framework that embodied UofL’s “choice and commitment to the creation of an academic and social environment from which faculty, students and staff from diverse groups derive equal benefits and in which all can feel equally ‘at home’.” Since then, UofL has continued its journey in advancing inclusive excellence for students, staff, and faculty, as evidenced by the numerous accolades received along the way, including national recognition in 2018 as one of the top universities in the country for serving the needs of African American students.

23,225*
TOTAL STUDENTS

13,016*
FEMALE

10,209*
MALE

42.1%*
PELL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

34.4%*
FIRST GENERATION

(TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION - FALL 2023)
Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.06%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.17%
Race and Ethnicity Unknown	1.61%
Non-resident - non US Citizen	4.57%
Asian	6.23%
Hispanic or Latino	7.70%
Two or more races	5.39%
Black	14.01%
White	60.26%

* Indicates all first-time, full-time, baccalaureate degree-seeking students entering Summer/Fall 2023
*Data retrieved from "Just the Facts 23-24" publication by the Office of Academic Planning & Accountability

THE CHARGE

In 2023, President Kim Schatzel charged the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) team to lead the implementation of an Inclusive Excellence Operational Strategic Plan that emphasizes UofL’s commitment “that all members of our community—inclusive of all identities, demographics, life experiences, abilities and ideologies—will be welcomed and supported so they can thrive and reach their fullest potential.” To accomplish this goal, the OIE team employed a year-long, multi-staged approach to conceptualize a university-wide plan to support inclusive excellence efforts.



The framework was informed by the integration of the UofL Strategic Plan (2023-2025) strategies or actions, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) policies on inclusive excellence, and the CARA report recommendations, leading to six identified strategic pivotal priorities (or pillars): Leadership Support and Development; Strategic Partnerships; Research and Scholarship; Recruitment and Retention; Climate and Infrastructure; and Education and Training.



OUR APPROACH

To ensure the Inclusive Excellence Operational Strategic Plan was fully informed and embraced by the entire campus community, the OIE team met with stakeholders to introduce the strategic priorities as a “roadmap” to each administrative unit, college, school, or division with a one-page template to use as a guide and to record individual or group recommendations.

Next, the OIE team met with university-designated groups and governing bodies, including the student government association, staff and faculty senates, both the President’s Commission on Diversity and Racial Equity (CODRE) and Commission of Status of Women (COSW), and various DEI groups—including college, school or division DEI Practitioners and unit diversity committees—and the Equity and Student Success Council to seek input and consultation as the plan was developed and vetted throughout the campus community.

The data was collected from multiple individual, or group templates received from DEI Practitioners or unit diversity committees, university-designated committees, individuals, and groups.

The Office of Institutional Equity planning and assessment division, using Microsoft Excel recorded each written comment separately, cross-checked by searching for references to key terms associated with each strategic priority, then sorted each comment to remove duplication in submissions. Attempts were made to avoid reliability problems arising from ambiguity in references. The goal was to capture each comment, but not to decide on the quality or relevance of comments.

This qualitative approach and examination of the data yielded N=71 condensed, separate recommendations for each strategic priority: Education and Training (n=14); Climate and Infrastructure (n=15); Recruitment and Retention (n=19); Research and Scholarship (n=9); Strategic Partnerships (n=6) and Leadership Support and Development (n=8).

To develop the most comprehensive and integrated plan possible, each of the recommendations were then cross walked and aligned with each appropriately identified “learn, discover, connect and work” strategies and actions outlined in UofL Strategic Plan (2023-2025); the fifteen KY CPE diversity strategies to enhance and measure opportunity, success, and impact for diversity, equity and inclusion; and the seven recommendations from the CARA report.

TABLE 2:

University-wide Groups and Sources Informing the Inclusive Excellence Operational Strategic Plan

- Assistant and Associate DEI Practitioners in Units
- Cardinal Anti-Racist Agenda Report (CARA)
- Commission on Diversity and Racial Equity (CODRE)
- Commission on the Status of Women (COSW)
- Council of Academic Officers
- Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) Diversity Requirements
- Cultural and Equity Center
- Disability Resource Center
- Employee Resource Groups
- Equity and Student Success Council
- Faculty Senate
- HSC Office of Health Equity and Engagement
- Inclusion and Equity Council
- International Students and Scholars
- Office of Community Engagement
- Office of Student Affairs
- Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
- Staff Senate
- Student Government Association (SGA)
- University Strategic Plan (2023-2025)

Table 2 lists all the entities that informed the university plan.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE:

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOALS 1 - 2: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

GOALS

GOAL 1: Provide a variety of ongoing voluntary educational offerings to faculty, staff, students, administrators, and members of the Board of Trustees to enhance interpersonal skills and build community.

Responsible Units: Human Resources, Institutional Equity

GOAL 2: Create ongoing opportunities to educate the campus community on free speech.

Responsible Units: Student Affairs

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Possible Actions: Create and adopt processes to assess current offerings, campus priorities, and national best practices to provide services designed to enhance interpersonal skills and build community. Create a communication plan to enhance engagement.

Possible Actions: Create and increase opportunities that focus on educating the campus community regarding free speech. Assess awareness of policies and processes about free speech and address any gaps or areas of concern. Research, implement, and model best practices that support inquiry and offer various perspectives.

Possible Collaborators: Human Resources (Employee Success), Faculty Affairs, Institutional Equity

GOALS 3 - 4: CLIMATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOALS

GOAL 3: Cultivate a community where all backgrounds, experiences, identities, and perspectives are welcomed and valued.

Responsible Units: Institutional Equity

GOAL 4: Create and enhance intentional spaces, programs and services to foster a more accessible campus for all.

Responsible Units: Student Affairs, Institutional Equity

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Possible Actions: Assess the campus climate/experience regularly and communicate results in a transparent, timely manner through the lens of the Cardinal Principles as the accountability measure.

Possible Collaborators: Academic Accountability and Assessment, Student Affairs, Human Resources, Faculty Affairs

Possible Actions: Assess and address stakeholder needs related to physical, emotional, and language accessibility. Create systems to help ensure all members of the campus community have access to participate in campus events and programs.

Possible Collaborators: International Affairs, Office of Communications and Marketing, IT Delphi Center

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE:

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOALS 5 - 7: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

GOALS

GOAL 5: Expand outreach and partnerships with Kentucky Community Technical College System (KCTCS) to enhance recruitment and funding opportunities.

Responsible Units: Provost, Community Engagement

GOAL 6: Continue and enhance collaborations with our signature partner schools developing pathways for recruitment directly to the University of Louisville.

Responsible Units: Community Engagement, Institutional Equity

GOAL 7: Collaborate with Fortune 500 corporations for experiential learning opportunities, and internships to increase student success.

Responsible Units: Institutional Equity, Philanthropy, and Alumni

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Possible Actions: Assess current programs, services, and collaborations for effectiveness (i.e., ULtra, Transfer Student Services, Metropolitan College). Make sure student needs are the focus. Research best practices from other institutions/collaborations.

Possible Actions: Launch Cardinals Rising. Secure the Gear Up grant. Solicit feedback from signature partnerships schools: Central High School, Shawnee High School, Western Middle, and Westport Middle regarding ways to enhance recruitment.

Possible Actions: Launch initiatives with corporate chief diversity officers. Launch Inclusive Excellence Scholars program. Research best practices from other institutions/collaborations.

Possible Collaborators: Student Affairs, Philanthropy and Alumni

GOAL 8: RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

GOALS

GOAL 8: Organize an annual meeting for research principal investigators and staff across all schools/units to facilitate information sharing, idea generation, collaboration, and innovation.

Responsible Units: Vice President for Research and Innovation, Provost

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Possible Actions: Assess current programs. Research best practices from other institutions. Gather campus partners to launch the first event.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE:

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

GOALS 9 - 11: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

GOALS

GOAL 9: Develop voluntary training modules for employees and supervisors that support employee career advancement.

Responsible Units: Human Resources/
Employee Success Center

GOAL 10: Increase funding opportunities to support student retention and persistence to graduation.

Responsible Units: Philanthropy, Provost

GOAL 11: Explore dual-career partner assistance and cluster hires as a crucial element in recruiting and retaining excellent faculty and staff.

Responsible Units: Provost, Human Resources

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Possible Actions: Define career pathways and ensure information is available to members of campus employees. Establish a culture that encourages new employees to attend the Employee Success Center's six-month check-in to help assess attitudes and behaviors as new employees. Create action plans to address areas of concern and celebrate successes.

Possible Actions: Cultivate untapped, under engaged community resources and partnerships to better reflect the greater university community and stakeholders being served. Continue, create, and enhance programs to educate faculty and staff about university policies and processes related to fundraising, cultivating relationships, and engaging the community to support funding that supports student retention and persistence to graduation.

Possible Actions: Assess current process and identify challenges. Research best practices from other institutions regarding cluster hiring expanding interdisciplinary research and scholarship.

GOAL 12: LEADERSHIP SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

GOALS

GOAL 12: Establish a centralized professional development fund for faculty and staff to attend workshops and conferences.

Responsible Units: Provost, Human Resources

POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Possible Actions: Beginning in 2025 submit budgetary request.

***All recommendations will adhere to the parameters of applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In conclusion, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to faculty, staff, and student senates, COSW, CODRE, DEI practitioners, and all committees and groups whose invaluable contributions have been instrumental in shaping the first year of our Inclusive Excellence Operational Strategic Plan. Your dedication and insights have been crucial in creating a roadmap that embodies our shared belief that all means all at the University of Louisville—ensuring that every student, faculty, and staff member has the opportunity to thrive. At the heart of all our efforts is student success, and it will continue to be the foundation that guides us forward.

Though we've made meaningful progress, there is still much work ahead. The next phase of this operational strategic plan will focus on aligning key budget priorities and seeking feedback on proposed action items from the campus community through follow-up listening sessions. Together, we will continue to progress toward a future that is more inclusive and full of opportunity for all.

Lee Gill, J.D.
Vice President
Office of Institutional Equity

