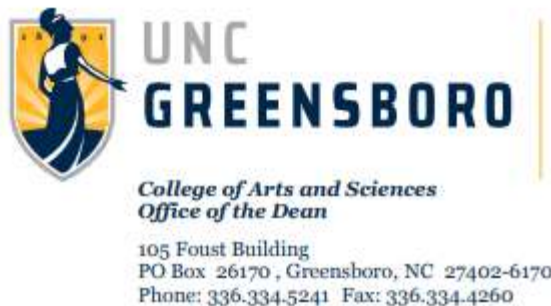




Statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion

Dayna R. Touron, Ph.D.

Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences and Professor of Psychology
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

I am pleased to have this opportunity to present my experience and values related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. At UNCG, I have been fortunate to be part of a university and college with an authentic culture of valuing the diversity of our community and also the will to implement concrete measures that support equity and inclusion. We benefit from a diverse student body, with 55% students of color and 45% first generation college students. As a minority serving institution, our commitment and responsibility to these principles and actions is particularly important.

Our action framework for inclusive excellence includes concrete steps including assessment and evaluation, intentional policies and management, and educational programming to foster self-awareness, knowledge, and a shared sense of belonging. It is critical that we develop and nurture a climate of value and safety inclusive of all social identities and group memberships. Concrete steps that invest in equity outcomes must be planned and implemented with an eye toward measurable outcomes. I will share a few examples from our work at UNCG. We recently developed a racial equity website and a diversity dashboard series for information and conversations related to inclusion. We have initiated interdepartmental support teams to document and address the impacts of incidents of bias. We have embraced and supported faculty development and leadership programs such as the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity.

I am a member of the recently established executive Affinity Group Council on campus; we define affinity groups as formations of faculty and/or staff around a shared identity with goals that include building community, fostering inclusion, and providing support to members who have been historically marginalized in higher education. Our goals are to support group leadership and provide channels of communication with university administration, provide resources to support affinity group-led initiatives, promote engagement within and across these groups, and facilitate new group formation. To address gaps in women's leadership, I and a fellow dean launched an affinity group in 2020 - the UNCG Women's Network, coordinated with the NC American Council on Education. We have since organized a speaker series, panel discussions and workgroups on issues of need and interest, and a leadership mentoring program. This group has generated tremendous energy and support, and now includes over 180 faculty and staff.

Fostering a genuine culture of inclusion helps to recruit a diverse faculty and empowers our community. Our College of Arts and Sciences has made recent strides in the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty. We instituted a DEI committee that coordinated a best practices document and

coordinated workshops and discussion groups for search committees. Recent efforts have improved our faculty diversity such that over 36% are of traditionally underrepresented ethnicity.

I have advised with and helped to promote our Spartan Advance program, a three-year NSF award to implement organizational change strategies to support the advancement of mid-career women and faculty of color in STEM fields. I helped develop and co-supervise our new CAS Connects mentorship program, a network that supports graduate students from underrepresented groups. Other initiatives in the college include diversity mini-grants that facilitate department-level projects and an annual diversity award.

At a broader level, I believe that the mission of today's university is to first meet our diverse body of students where they are and foster their intellectual and cultural growth from that point. Our approach must continually evolve to keep up with the opportunities and challenges of the modern world. I believe strongly in the teacher-scholar model of higher education and the inclusion of students in a climate of contemplation, discovery, and real-life application. A core distinction of a College of Arts & Sciences is the collaboration of diverse disciplines and methodologies toward the same fundamental goal – advancing students' knowledge, abilities, and civic engagement. Our campus communities must embrace and reflect these ideals. I hope to have the opportunity to talk with you in more detail about how I would champion diversity, equity, and inclusion as your next Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.
