

A Foundation for a More Equitable University: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) — Strengths, Gaps, and Recommendations for Penn State

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM
THE SPECIAL ADVISER FOR
INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY

APRIL 2023



PennState

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
DEIB-DEFINED.....	4
DEIB STATUS AND PROGRESS AT PENN STATE	4
CHALLENGES: DUPLICATION OF EFFORT, SILOS, AND NO COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTIONAL DEIB VISION OR PLAN	6
INFORMATION-GATHERING AND ANALYSIS	8
STRENGTHS AND FOUNDATION: INVENTORY OF EXISTING INITIATIVES & SCHOLARSHIP.....	9
DEIB DATA: KEY TAKEAWAYS.....	11
RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS	15

INTRODUCTION

In November 2022, President Neeli Bendapudi shared four DEIB goals – which include:

- Closing gaps in graduation rate outcomes across identity groups.
- Increasing faculty diversity across ranks, tracks, and disciplines.
- Expanding access to staff professional development.
- Improving sense of belonging for all Penn Staters.

Bendapudi also named a special adviser for institutional equity to lead a University-wide evaluation and inventory of DEIB-related initiatives and programs underway across Penn State, as well as to synthesize the many DEIB-related reports generated at Penn State in recent years.

Special Adviser Jennifer Hamer – interim associate vice provost for Educational Equity; professor of African American studies and women’s, gender, and sexuality studies; and director of the Mid-Career Faculty Advancement Program – led this work with the support of a small volunteer work team of faculty and staff from across the University, and in consultation with the Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research (OPAIR) and others, to inform a strategy for the collection and analysis of available information on Penn State DEIB-related activities.

The special adviser was charged with:

- Distilling key DEIB data and report recommendations into a series of actionable measures that can move the needle on DEIB outcomes at Penn State.
- Identifying successful DEIB activity throughout Penn State, focusing on initiatives that can be enhanced or further supported to increase DEIB outcomes.
- Recognizing President Bendapudi’s key diversity goals and formulating an initial wireframe plan indicating key investments and areas of focus that will drive progress toward successful completion of these goals.
- Define executive leadership accountability.

During a short eight-week period, the special adviser and work team conducted a rigorous process to review and evaluate existing University data, reports, and materials, in addition to meeting with a variety of University groups, subject experts, and administrators. The evaluation identified a variety of strengths, challenges, and opportunities unique to Penn State to promote equity across every campus and address President Bendapudi’s DEIB goals.

The initial phase of the special adviser’s charge ended with a report written by the special adviser for the purpose of informing and sharing key information. The following offers an executive summary, findings, analysis, and recommendations in the report, *Building on Our Foundation: Our DEIB Strengths, Gaps, and Recommendations for Meaningful Steps Forward*. As the analysis was completed in a short time frame, the full details, including additional data and appendices, will be available this summer.

The following faculty and staff members were members of the volunteer work team that lead the evaluative process:

- Karen Armstrong, director of inclusion, equity and diversity, Outreach and Online Education
- D. Scott Bennett, senior associate dean for Research and Graduate Studies and distinguished professor of Political Science, College of the Liberal Arts
- Ashley Citarella, associate director of operations, programs and events, Student Affairs
- Adidi Etim-Hunting, director of diversity, equity and inclusion, Development and Alumni Relations
- Annette Fetterolf, analysis and planning consultant, Outreach and Online Education
- Jennifer Hamer, special adviser for institutional equity, Office of the President
- Ashley Jackson, equity research specialist, Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity
- Susan Johnson, assistant director of research funding, planning and operations, Office of the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, College of the Liberal Arts

-
- Lance Kennedy-Phillips, vice provost for planning, assessment, and institutional research, Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research
 - Linda Klimczyk, IT manager, Libraries Strategic Technologies, University Libraries
 - Roderick Lee, director of Information Technology Degree Programs and associate professor of Information Systems, School of Business Administration, Penn State Harrisburg
 - Laura Leites, associate research professor of Quantitative Forest Ecology, College of Agricultural Sciences; Equity Leadership Faculty Fellow, Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity
 - Nivedita Nagachar, undergraduate studies adviser, Division of Undergraduate Studies
 - Daniel Newhart, assistant vice provost for planning, Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research
 - Rheno Pradikta, graduate research assistant, Public Policy
 - Carly Sunseri, director of data science, Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research
 - Amy Tegeder, administrative support coordinator, Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity

DEIB-DEFINED

All students, faculty, and staff should have equal opportunities and equal rights, such as being valued, respected and protected from harm. But how these opportunities and rights are made accessible are not the same for everyone and especially differ by social identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disabilities, and economic status. The different ways that we achieve equal opportunities and equal rights is DEIB work.

For the purposes of this document, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are defined in the following ways:

- **Diversity** – refers to a university where demographic composition (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, age, religion, nationality, disabilities, military/veteran status, economic background, and other identities) is representative of the human complexity of our state, nation, and global constituencies. Diversity fosters innovation in research, knowledge production, and classroom learning; greater creativity in decision-making; and better preparation of students for work and citizenship in an increasingly global society.
- **Equity** – refers to a university that intentionally minimizes and eliminates barriers to success and actively maintains environments where all members, regardless of differences in social identities and backgrounds, have a fair and equal chance to access resources and engage in opportunities that facilitate their ability to grow, advance, and meet their individual goals.
- **Inclusion** – refers to everyone being treated respectfully in their engagements with others and across University spaces, regardless of social differences and backgrounds.
- **Belonging** – refers to people feeling welcomed, appreciated, respected, and valued for their presence and contributions to the University, regardless of social differences and backgrounds.

DEIB STATUS AND PROGRESS AT PENN STATE

Penn State must more intentionally foster a University community that is more just by facilitating greater diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging for all of its students, faculty, and staff. Meeting this goal is central to its land-grant mission to provide unparalleled access to education and public service to support the citizens of the commonwealth and beyond.

In essence, a just university is achieved by DEIB efforts when all of us, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, religion, disabilities, age, and other social identities, are valued as full participants in Penn State; are treated respectfully; feel appreciated for our contributions; and when successful outcomes such as graduation rates for students and career advancement, trust, and job satisfaction for employees do not vary by social identity groups. At present, achieving these aims is a challenge because DEIB at Penn State functions more as a set of professed

values than a description of how the institution regularly engages and operates.

While Penn State has made some progress in the areas of DEIB, recommendations from the special adviser propose that movement forward demands an equity-centered vision/plan that fosters attention to empathy and the greater good, informs changes to the institution's current operational practices, and integrates accountability for identified goals toward progress ([inclusive excellence](#) and [A Framework for Advancing Anti-Racism Strategy on Campus](#) are frameworks that the University may want to consider).

Based on these understandings, equity and inclusion are of central significance because together they create the conditions for greater diversity and belonging. Diversity and belonging are indicators of how well we actually practice or “do” equity and inclusion. Equality in outcomes across social identity groups is our aim. Equity and inclusion work is difficult and complex, but it is not impossible. As evidence, data indicate that Penn State demographics are in line with Big Ten peers and there has been some growth in diversity, but neither Penn State nor its Big 10 peers have achieved model DEIB institutional status.

Still, Penn State has established a foundation on which to make continued headway. For example, its academic and administrative units have established DEIB strategic plan action items, and many have appointed DEIB leadership; there are institutional surveys and considerable data that serve as a baseline to assess change; and considerable DEIB-related scholarship is produced by our faculty members.

With hundreds of DEIB-related programs, centers/institutes, and action-items across the University, Penn State has a strong foundation on which to grow. Many of these programs have had impactful and important successes within individual units. Adding to these strengths, the institution has an engaged student body, University Staff Advisory Council, Faculty Senate, Council of Academic Deans, Academic Leadership Council, President's Council, Equity Commissions, the University Equity Leadership Council and multiple layers of DEIB-appointed professionals, generous alumni, and energized intellectual and professional talent contributing to DEIB thought, application, and scholarship. All of the above, along with professional talent and ongoing production of scholarship, present Penn State with expansive opportunities for change.

At the same time, key metrics indicate that efforts to become a more diverse Penn State are resulting in slow and mixed progress. Among other items to address are:

- Persistent underrepresentation of African American/Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, and Native Hawaiian and Asian Pacific Islanders among student, faculty, and staff populations.
- Persistent underrepresentation of women, relative to men, in the composition of faculty, as well as within the highest faculty ranks.
- Overrepresentation of white women (77.3%) and white men (75.1%) among administrators, including academic administrators.

Low levels of diversity are the logical consequence of persistent inequities across the organization. Students, faculty, and staff from racialized and other marginalized populations are more likely than majority groups to report dissatisfaction, distrust, a lower sense of belonging, and that they are on the receiving end of harmful bias and discriminatory behaviors from other Penn Staters.

Addressing these indicators of inclusion and belonging demands institutional intentionality around equity. In other words, good intentions and commitment — which are present at Penn State — must be better translated into actions and purposeful outcomes. Among areas to target for improvements are:

- **For students:** Equitable access to adequate resources that support accomplishment in academic progress; degree completion; and a greater attention to addressing the academic and campus experiences, including student organizations and engagement of all students, but especially those with disabilities, military/veterans, change-of-campus students, LGBTQ students (particularly those of color), first-generation

and Pell Grant recipients, racialized minority students, and other marginalized student undergraduate and graduate groups.

- **For faculty and staff:** More intentionality to address gaps in access to information and opportunities that support career development, advancement, and accomplishment, especially for racialized and marginalized populations and women; concerns that may affect low job satisfaction among nontenure-line faculty; and longstanding concerns about the institutional response to reported incidents of bias and discrimination.

By implementing a strategic focus on becoming a more just University, with DEIB as the set of tools toward this goal, Penn State has the opportunity to fulfill its land-grant mission, enhance its national and international reputation, improve the experiences of and outcomes for Penn State community members, attract and retain the best talent, and best serve the citizens of the commonwealth and beyond.

Recommendations from the special adviser are about acknowledging longstanding concerns and elevating the voices and efforts of those actively engaged in DEIB work. They are about rethinking “how” Penn State conceptualizes DEIB; practices routine operations; and works with greater coherence, collaboration, and purposefulness to enable successful unit-level work that benefits the whole University. Making observable progress means that Penn State cannot look to others to do this work on its behalf, nor can the institution rely on a single office, a sole administrator, or small group. Instead, movement forward to become a more fair and welcoming public university that better supports and cares for the whole of its community, rests on our leadership and the collective effort of all Penn Staters for the greater good of the University.

CHALLENGES: DUPLICATION OF EFFORT, SILOS, AND NO COMPREHENSIVE INSTITUTIONAL DEIB VISION OR PLAN

While it is an accomplishment that Penn State has experienced even modest growth in diversity, progress has been mostly disconnected from an institutional vision, plan, and set of coherent, meaningful diversity goals. While important DEIB work is taking place at the unit level, observations indicate that at the heart of slow and mixed progress is a lack of an intentional institutional approach to DEIB that facilitates disconnectedness. Persistent inequities indicate that Penn State has not wholly invested in structures and practices to reduce barriers to fairness and prioritize care for community members. Penn State’s hundreds of programs and action items are generally siloed in units, duplicate efforts, and are disconnected from a clear comprehensive plan toward institutional DEIB goals. This routine operation and structure undercuts potential DEIB strengths by underutilizing resources, creating disparities across units, and hindering access to knowledge and opportunities that support the success of everyone. This is not to say these efforts are not valuable, but without a central plan and objectives, they may not be best aligned to drive improved outcomes.

Key themes emerged as part of the evaluative process as areas where a dedicated approach and investment need to be made to enable equity-centered goals that drive outcomes. Duplication of effort, silos, and the lack of a comprehensive equity-centered vision contribute to:

- a lack of resource sharing (including people and knowledge);
- an inability to improve experiences, retention, and career success across Penn State; and
- an inability to make progress in diversifying our student, faculty, and staff composition.

Confusion on where to go, unequal access to resources supporting student progression and graduation, and missed opportunities for faculty and staff professional development and advancement are all barriers to equity, especially for

members of minoritized and marginalized groups who are often excluded from social spaces that grant access to these tools.

- **Duplication of effort:** Duplication of effort is when two or more offices or units are building and maintaining similar programs, activities, and initiatives around the experiences and success of students, faculty, and staff, such as faculty development programming, staff training workshops, public engagement programming, or the creation of student advising centers. In many cases, duplication of effort stems naturally from the absence of a broader institutional vision and critical gaps in University-wide resources, leaving units to proactively create their own efforts to support their communities. From an institutional standpoint, this can result in inefficiencies and reduce the potential broad impact of this work. In addition, when University-wide efforts are ineffective, they place undue pressure on units to fill gaps with resources that could be used for other elements of their respective missions. Throughout the analysis, we have seen that duplicative efforts are offering important support to specific audiences or groups (e.g., women in STEM, scholarship recipients, underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students, and tenure-line faculty in varied colleges) within different areas or communities across the University. Future work should consider what we can learn from these successful programs and efforts; how we can better align, support, and connect DEIB staff members across the University who support and lead these efforts; how we can invest and scale successful strategies and programs that deliver on established goals and desired outcomes; and improve and enhance University-wide efforts that supplement unit-level activities.
- **Organizational silos:** In large part, duplication of effort seems to stem from silos within the organization, where localities (e.g., colleges, campuses, offices) build and maintain programs in pursuit of their respective goals and to support their communities, but which are not intentionally aligned with a broader institutional plan and vision to address inequities. Silos contribute to uneven access to opportunities and resources, unexplored opportunities to build synergies across areas of work at the University. Resources and personnel are not networked. Building and maintaining programs in pursuit of broader institutional plans and vision can more directly address inequities and encourage idea exchange, resource sharing, collaboration and more equitable access to information and opportunities on behalf of institutional goals. Attention to silos is not about downsizing or centralizing, but about a need to make existing DEIB resources more accessible, sustained, and connected.
- **Need for a comprehensive, cohesive equity-centered vision and plan:** There are fifty-five administrative and academic unit strategic plans, each with a set of DEIB goals, which indicates a commitment and interest to continue to advance DEIB. Penn State does not have a comprehensive, cohesive institutional vision and plan that centers on DEIB, coordinates our best efforts, identifies goals and outlines activities that better utilize our financial resources and talent, and brings intentionality and accountability to the practices and protocols toward the vision. The University's capacity to meaningfully address longstanding DEIB issues demands an equity-centered institutional vision and plan that will bring greater coherence to our many initiatives and programs; foster more purposeful integration of equity into routine operations; provide a guide to unit goal-setting, assessment, definitions, and measures of forward movement; and facilitate Penn State's ability to hold individuals, offices, and other units accountable for the progress and change that will assure Penn State's assumption of leadership in this space. For instance, Penn State is one of six Big Ten institutions without a vice president/chancellor coordinating this comprehensive, cohesive work (eight institutions in the Big Ten do have that role).

Additional challenges:

- **A focus on strategic planning and inputs rather than outcomes and impact.** Developing a more holistic and comprehensive approach to data and information-gathering will enable an intentional approach to the outcomes and impact of programs and activities, help identify best practices, and support community needs.

- **A lack of common language and definition of diversity, equity, inclusion, or belonging as related to strategic planning.** DEIB should not be a separate goal category in strategic planning. Fully integrating DEIB into everyday operations and all unit goals will break down barriers in routine everyday practices that are often not considered “equity” matters though equity is a fundamental component (e.g., staff, faculty and curriculum development).
- **Inconsistent response to reports of bias and alleged discrimination.** Addressing the multiple mechanisms of reporting for students, faculty, and staff is an issue that requires us to review our practices related to DEIB in this area. Implementing standard training and protocols for investigators across the University and developing a central mechanism for tracking, recording, and bringing closure to reporters around cases and investigations will build trust between groups and institutional offices, telegraph care and value for those harmed, and foster a greater sense of belonging.
- **A diminished sense of belonging in the working and learning environment.** By addressing equity and inclusion we can address diversity and belonging as an organization. Individuals who see themselves supported and succeeding, regardless of social differences, not only gain a deeper personal sense of being accepted and included, but from an institutional standpoint can also increase job satisfaction and performance, increase student and employee retention, and reduce employee turnover, among other benefits – moving us toward a more fair and welcoming work environment.

INFORMATION-GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

The team approached the process with urgency and aimed to be as equitable and inclusive as possible in information gathering, given the short time frame allotted for the analysis. Information gathering included reviewing strategic plans, data, reports, and other documents, and meeting with various professionals, scholars, groups, and administrative offices.

Strategic plans, with a special focus on their DEIB goals, were a primary source of information collected from administrative and academic units, fifty-five of which had existing strategic plans available in Nuventive, a platform units use to track progress on their strategic plans. Leaders of these units were also asked to provide summaries of their respective DEIB-related action items, the impact of these activities and supporting documentation, and any barriers that inhibited their ability to meet stated DEIB goals.

Examples of sources include, but are not limited to:

Sources of Data	Reports and Documents	Outreach and Meetings
Academic and administrative unit strategic plans (55 units)	A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State (1998 – 2020)	Select student organizations: Black Caucus, Latino Caucus, and Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Caucus
OPAIR, including new data from deans and chancellors on faculty attrition	Select Presidential Commission on Racism, Bias, and Community Safety report (2020)	University Staff Advisory Council, University Equity Leadership Council (UELC), Commission Co-Chairs
Penn State DEIB-related scholarship and research, including contacting all associate deans for research	President’s Commissions for Equity: Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Equity (CLGBTQE) – Enterprise and Structural Approach to DEI (2022); Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity (CORED) – Executive	Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

	Summary and Recommendations (2021); Commission for Women (CFW) – DEI in the Cycle of Employment (2020)	
Penn State Community Survey (2020)	Disability Access Initiative (2021 Network and Web-Access proposal briefs)	Office of the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses
Starfish and Starfish Inventory	Faculty Senate reports (e.g., Faculty Professional Development for Realization of an Equity-Centered, Anti-Racist Curriculum and Pedagogy; Enhancing Academic Advising Across Penn State)	Select University executive administrative offices
University Equity Leadership Council (UELC) Fall 2022 survey information	Taskforce on Faculty Promotions (2020)	University professionals from varying offices and units
Report Bias annual report data	Taskforce on Policing and Communities of Color (2021)	Division of Undergraduate Studies
Affirmative Action Office	More Rivers to Cross reports (2020 and 2021)	Center for the Study of Higher Education (College of Education)
Nontenure-track survey (“Understanding experiences and identifying resource needs for the support and advancement of non-tenure track faculty at Penn State”)	Leading Advocacy and Action for Diverse Leadership (LEAADS): “Changing the Future for Women Leaders” proposal (2022) and “Upholding Penn State values through support of faculty hiring and retention” white paper (2023)	Restorative Justice Initiative
Penn State Living Our Values Survey (2017)	Senior Faculty Mentors: Report to the Provost and President, 2020; Conversation with Penn State Harrisburg Faculty of Color (2020)	Ad hoc meetings with varying groups of students, faculty, and professional staff (by their invitation)

>> Analysis

The information gathered is not exhaustive as it was impacted by the time frame, gaps, and variation in Penn State’s routine data collection and management practices. More time and a more centralized and standardized practice of data collection, for example, will contribute to a more robust information gathering yield for future institutional equity leadership. While there are still areas where additional data gathering and analysis need to happen, clear themes and patterns have emerged to guide recommendations and next steps.

STRENGTHS AND FOUNDATION: INVENTORY OF EXISTING INITIATIVES & SCHOLARSHIP

In large part, Penn State’s successes and strength in advancing DEIB are grounded in the commitment of the University community and the strong existing foundation on which Penn State can continue to build. Among other critical elements, Penn State has established administrative and academic unit strategic planning processes that include attention to DEIB-related action items. There are hundreds of DEIB-related programs and activities, and scholarly production in this area has increased over the past decade. Perhaps most significant is the steadfast commitment of hundreds of dedicated individuals and groups from across the University who have taken up this work – in both formal and informal capacities.

The following inventory is a snapshot of these efforts and not a complete list of these activities. It represents some of the multitude of actions taken by units, colleges, and campuses for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader Pennsylvania community. Activities such as these may provide opportunities to scale and invest in order to create greater equity in access and outcomes.

Academic and Administrative Strategic Planning

DEIB-related programs and action items identified in unit strategic plans

<p>The number of student programs and activities could not be calculated due to incomplete data and reporting. However, there are 261 undergraduate student interventions in Starfish and 243 graduate student action items across Penn State.</p>	<p>There are 244 faculty professional and leadership development action items across Penn State.</p>	<p>The number of staff programs and activities could not be calculated due to incomplete data and reporting.</p>
<p>Examples: Student Disability Resources (University Park and Commonwealth Campuses), Engaged Scholars program (Division of Undergraduate Studies), Multilingual Student Programs (Brandywine), Center for Undergraduate Excellence (DuBois), Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity (Student Affairs, UP), Antiracist Development Institute (Dickinson Law), Digital Fluency Project (Greater Allegheny)</p>	<p>Examples: Antiracist Leadership Professional Development Series (College of Education), Midcareer Faculty Advancement Program (College of the Liberal Arts & Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity), President’s Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, NonTenure Track Faculty (NTTF) Connections (Vice Provost for Educational Equity)</p>	<p>Examples: Administrative Fellows Program for staff and faculty (Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs), Penn State Emerging Leaders (PSEL), Smeal Together Achieving Change (faculty and staff), Trailblazer Program (Medicine), SMARTIE goals (Office of Physical Plant), HUB-Robeson Center annual staff development program (Student Affairs)</p>

Inclusion-Focused Groups, Professional Development, and Programming

Assorted groups and efforts to promote inclusion and equity

<p>Support groups and programs designed to enhance belonging and create a more inclusive environment.</p>	<p>An array of staff training and professional development opportunities is offered throughout the University. Many are available only at University Park, while some colleges and campuses share programs and educational content.</p>	<p>Various colleges, units, and campuses apply for Equal Opportunity Planning Committee (EOPC) funding to implement programming aimed at advancing DEIB within the University.</p>
<p>Examples: Penn State Hillel, Parenting/Caregiving and Work/Life Balance (Development and Alumni Relations), Forum on Black Affairs, Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, LEading Advocacy and Action for Diverse LeaderShip at Penn State (LEAADS), Black Male Symposium, Lavender Graduation (Student Affairs, UP), Center for Spiritual and Ethical Development (Student Affairs, UP)</p>	<p>Examples: Safer People, Safer Places Foundations workshop; BUILD @ Penn State; College of Engineering’s Inclusive Leadership in Equity, Allyship, and Diversity (ILEAD) Program, Health Promotion and Wellness (Student Affairs)</p>	<p>Examples: “Establish the Brandywine Anti-Hate, Anti-Bias Council” (Brandywine 2022-23); “Integrating Diversity, Equity & Inclusion into the Curriculum (IDEIC), Part II” (Great Valley 2022-23); “Community Diversity Conference” (University Park Summer 2022)</p>

Advisory Groups

DEI advisory groups – with student, faculty, and staff membership – are instrumental in giving individuals a voice, enhancing leadership opportunities for staff members, offering professional development, and providing recommendations for advancing DEIB efforts.

College-level	Campus-level	Unit and administrative
Examples: Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Transformation (College of the Liberal Arts) and Diversity Council (College of the Agricultural Sciences)	Examples: Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Alliance (Fayette) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (York)	Examples: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group (Penn State Global); University Equity Leadership Council (UELIC); President’s Commissions for Equity (Women (CFW), Racial and Ethnic Diversity (CORED), and LGBTQ (CLGBTQE)), Directors of Student Affairs

Research and Scholarly Production (Over Last Decade)

DEIB-related research and scholarship exist broadly across the University

900+ faculty and researchers have published 1,000+ articles on DEIB-related topics ranging from improving educational outcomes for children from different identity groups, to understanding medical interventions for individuals from different racial or gender groups, to institutional change and outcomes for students and faculty.	130+ grants awarded to Penn State totaling nearly \$57 million .	100+ research centers, projects, and initiatives receiving formal recognition and support that touch on DEIB topics.
Examples: “AAPA Statement on Race and Racism,” American Journal of Physical Anthropology (2019); “Discrimination in the credential society: An audit study of race and college selectivity in the labor market,” Social Forces (2015); “The essence of innocence: Consequences of dehumanizing black children,” Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (2014)	Examples: Mellon Foundation’s “Just Transformations” grant awarded to the College of the Liberal Arts (2020); American Covid Vaccine Poll (R. Block, et al, 2021); Broadening the Participation in Computing – Demonstration Project: Cultivating Academic Inclusion and Career Engagement to Strengthen the Persistence of Minoritized Students in Information Sciences and Technology (Yarger, L. M., Lee, R. L., Hu, Margaret, & Gamrat, C. NSF, 2022); Interdisciplinary Studies in Science, Education, Communication and Technology Network (C. M. Grozinger, Sloan, 2023); Penn State Blue (anti-racism training for community police) (Scranton)	Examples: Restorative Justice Initiative (College of Education), Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (College of Medicine), Africana Research Center (College of the Liberal Arts), Health Equity Charter (Medicine), Alliance for Education, Science, Engineering & Design with Africa (Eberly)

DEIB DATA: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key insights from collected data indicate that our current practices have yielded some modest upward progression in diversity.

>> Snapshot

- Penn State's student, faculty, and staff demographics are consistent with Big Ten peers.
- The percentage of women administrators has increased since 2018 and inequity between men and women in this category has declined.

Yet, there is more that Penn State still needs to do to build more representation within its student, faculty, and staff composition.

- Despite modest increases, the percentages of underrepresented racial and ethnic minority (URM) students, faculty, and staff at Penn State has not changed by a significant amount in the past seven years.
- Racialized minorities and other marginalized groups report greater levels of dissatisfaction and subjection to bias and discriminatory behaviors than other Penn State populations.
- Real-time and routine data collection, analysis, and accountability for progress and outcomes related to the complexities of student, faculty, and staff experience are dispersed and insufficient, and current practices do not adequately identify all gaps or strengths in organizational operations.

Data also shows issues specifically related to the lived experiences of those from racialized minority and marginalized groups who report experiencing microaggressions, or indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination as members of a marginalized group. (e.g., racial, sexuality, gender, disabilities, etc.); other biases in learning, living, and work-spaces; and difficulty identifying and navigating the University's offices, processes, and protocols available to address these harmful experiences.

- Students in these groups are more likely than majority students to experience failing grades and withdrawals (DFWs) in gateway courses, less likely to be retained after their first year, more likely to take longer to progress to graduation, and are more likely to leave Penn State without a degree in hand.
- Employees in these categories report lower levels of trust in University administrative decision-making and job satisfaction, report challenges to transparency and access to information and resources for career advancement opportunities, and are more likely than others to remain at lower ranks and status, whether staff or faculty. Among staff, regardless of identities, there are concerns about access to opportunities for professional development and advancement.

There are a variety of sites available to view demographic data, including the [Penn State DEIB Dashboard](#) (which will continue to be updated with new categories of data), [Community Survey dashboard](#), [Living Our Values Survey results](#), and [Penn State's Data Digest](#).

>> Snapshot of student DEIB information

- There is a 23% gap in the six-year graduation rate between Black/African American and a 12.6% gap between Hispanic/Latino students and their white counterparts across the entire University.
- There is a 14.8% gap between Black/African American and white students and a 9.1% gap between Hispanic/Latino and white students in the most recent one-year retention rate data.
- More than half of the Black/African American (61%) and Hispanic/Latino (54%) undergraduate students who were not retained between 2018-2021 were Pell eligible students.
- Degree completion for undergraduate first-generation and low-income students at Penn State is lower than the institutional average.
- DFW rates in STEM-gateway and other high-enrollment courses significantly impact time to retention and graduation rates across all populations. However, the impact is more pronounced for first-generation students, low-income, and underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities.

-
- Underrepresented racial and ethnic minority students and those who identify as LGBTQ+ are more likely than peers to report that their Penn State experience includes identity-based biases and discrimination. Relative to peers, they report lower levels of dissatisfaction with their Penn State experience and lower levels of belonging.
 - Resources to adequately support the experiences of other marginalized students, such as military/veterans, change-of-campus students, and those with disabilities are dispersed, inadequate, and inequitable across the University.

How inequities matter

- Bias and discrimination are forms of violence, harmful to mental and physical health and well-being, and academic retention and success, especially for racialized and marginalized groups who disproportionately report being victimized by these behaviors by peers, staff, and faculty.
- Bias and discriminatory behaviors experienced by racialized and marginalized students discourage their full participation and engagement in curricular and extracurricular activities, which inhibits belonging, community building, and the expansion of meaningful social and professional networks from which all Penn Staters receive career and lifetime benefits.
- All Penn State demographic groups do not have equitable opportunities to complete their degree programs. The burden of degree incompleteness on students is multi-fold:
 - Diminishes access to careers that facilitate social and economic mobility.
 - Burdens them and their families with greater financial debt than experienced prior to their enrollment, which disproportionately affects racialized, first-generation, and low-income students more than others.
 - Dissatisfied graduates may hamper prospective student recruitment yields. Demographic groups who have less than satisfactory student experiences and less than optimal outcomes may be less likely to encourage others to consider Penn State as their higher education destination site, thus inhibiting Penn State's ability to successfully recruit the most talented pool of diverse prospects.
- Persistent inequities are contrary to Penn State's land-grant access and mobility mission. Inequities, which are evidenced by demographic group differences in graduation rates; retention; DFWs, reports of bias; and a lack of belonging, access, and mobility, which are consequently denied to historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, low-income, first-generation, and other marginalized populations under current practices.
- Negative experiences and outcomes undermine Penn State's ability to grow and cultivate a more diverse alumni base interested in supporting the recruitment of potential students and supporting the institutions capital campaign goals.

>> Snapshot of employee DEIB information

Employees at Penn State consist of varying categories of faculty and staff, including multiple classifications of administrators. Domestic underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities are significantly underrepresented among faculty and staff; women are underrepresented in overall numbers of faculty and at the highest faculty ranks; and administrators are disproportionately and persistently white women and white men. However, there are some modest positive changes.

- Penn State sits around the median for gender representation among doctoral-granting institutions, and the University is making slow progress in increasing the overall proportion of women faculty. Since 2018–19, Penn State's proportion of women tenure-line faculty has risen from 36.3% to 37.9% (2022–23 data).
- The greatest gender equity exists at the mid-level or assistant professor rank. This trend describes both University Park (UP) and the Commonwealth Campuses (CWC), though a greater proportion of CWC full professors are women (35%) when compared to UP (27.76%).

- Progress toward greater diversity among faculty is slow. However, among both tenure-line and nontenure-line faculty, there has been a modest growth in the overall diversity of the population reporting “nonwhite” designated identities, with the exception of American Indian/Alaska Native whose numbers are unchanged.
- There has been a modest increase in diversity among administrators. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American have increased overall since fall 2018 from 3.53% to 5.76% and 6.09% to 7.49%, respectively.
- In the executive category, Hispanic/Latino has increased 2.22% in fall 2022 and Black/African American has increased from 6.52% to 11.11%.
- The percentage of women administrators has increased since fall 2018 from 38.1% to 44.4% in fall 2022.
- 66.6% of all employees (full-time and part-time) are white, and white women (77.3%) and white men (75.1%) are overrepresented among Penn State’s administrators.
- Staff and technical-service positions have also seen minimal change, with some slight decline for American Indian or Alaska Native, which has decreased from 38 (.28%) in fall 2018 to 32 (.24%) in fall 2022. Black/African American has increased minimally from 2.65% in fall 2018 to 2.68% in fall 2022. Hispanic/Latino has increased from 1.8% in fall 2018 to 2.2% in fall 2022.
- Overall for 2021-22, faculty had an 8.6% turnover rate. Black/African American faculty left the University at a rate of 12.8%; Hispanic/Latino faculty left at a rate lower than the overall rate at 5.5%; and male and female faculty members left at similar rates, both close to the overall rate with the male turnover rate at 8.3% and female turnover rate at 8.9%.
- Underrepresented racial and ethnic minority employees are more likely than other groups to report dissatisfaction with their Penn State experience and distrust in the ability of the institution to improve culture.
- Resources that target the career cycle experiences of all faculty are generally dispersed and disconnected, and overall lack mechanisms for identifying areas for improvement and greater accountability, particularly as it relates to the experiences of racialized faculty and staff.
- Staff in varied categories express frustration and confusion about accessing opportunities for professional development and advancement within and across units. DEIB appointed staff especially report a lack of support and resistance to the actions and goals that are their charge.

How inequities matter

- A lack of diversity and inequitable practices contribute to work and career dissatisfaction and may foster higher levels of attrition, especially among racialized minorities and those from other marginalized groups.
- The land-grant mission of access and mobility is denied to potential professional scholars and to potential staff when the University does not intentionally seek to recognize a diversity of talent and to break down barriers to equity in employment, advancement, and opportunities for leadership.
- Disparities and barriers to leadership for underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups discourage their contribution to the organization and minimize the promise they can bring to multiple areas at Penn State.
- Enrollment and retention are negatively affected by a lack of racial/ethnic diversity because prospective historically underrepresented racial and ethnic students, for example, do not see themselves reflected in the classrooms, offices and student spaces that will support their presence or success.
- Students from majority groups and all students are denied the enriched learning opportunity afforded by diverse learning environments, which relative to more homogenous spaces, offer students greater opportunities for innovative thought and a range of multiple and varying perspectives, opportunities to appreciate multiple ways of knowing, and opportunities to be better prepared for careers, leadership, and living in an increasingly global society.
- Opportunities are lost for innovative and creative decision-making, especially when hiring bodies, administrators, and other decision-makers are a homogenous group. A lack of diversity impedes excellence in scholarship, pedagogy, and professional development and harms the value proposition of higher education in an increasingly global society.

- Despite decades of conversation and public emphases on growing a diverse faculty and staff, Penn State persists as a mostly white place of employment, unrepresentative of state or U.S. demographics, with little indication of intentional institutional effort to improve. Consequently, there have been public demands to address longstanding inequities in racial and ethnic composition, especially. For those historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, this means that they are often isolated in their respective units.
- We may lose our talented staff when they experience frustration and dissatisfaction when Penn State does not minimize barriers to opportunities that enable all staff to realize their potential. This includes the many DEIB appointed and other staff whose efforts are critical to real progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The special adviser listed and described recommendations to implement over time based on observations and analysis of data. Those that appear below are:

- High-level initial steps to begin to address the organizational structures and practices (e.g., silos and duplication of efforts) that once fully implemented will facilitate more equitable access to information, resources, and opportunities for all for students, faculty, and staff and align with President Bendapudi’s DEIB goals.
- High-level enhancements of resources and initiatives that target the barriers to greater access, opportunities, outcomes, and belonging for racialized minorities and marginalized groups, in particular.
- Mid-level opportunities that can make an impact if the University works to enhance these efforts.

>> Recommendations to implement over time

To foster a more welcoming University community:

- Develop a **comprehensive vision that centers on equity**, minimizes silos and better coordinates duplicative efforts, identifies goals, and outlines a plan with leadership accountability that better utilizes financial resources and talent to elevate fairness in learning and working environments. Organizational structure may be a factor in achieving this outcome.
- Address persistent problems in the management of **reporting of bias and discrimination** for improved responsiveness and closing the loop.
- Minimize a siloed approach to data management and enhance the capacity of the Office of Planning, Assessment and Institutional Research as a **central data collection and site of analysis**.
- Invest in existing **DEIB-centered research and scholarly activities** to better elevate Penn State as a site of talent, thought leadership, and scholarly production as it relates to DEIB.

To facilitate greater equity in academic progress and outcomes and enhance belonging for students:

- To minimize silos and better coordinate duplicative efforts: Establish a **multi-tiered, equity-centered “one-stop” resource hub** that drives all undergraduate students to one place for answers and connection to the multiple units and resources that contribute to the student experience (e.g., application, progression, graduation, career placement, alumni experience), better joins curricular and co-curricular resources, and that is responsive to the complexities of the student body (e.g., social identities, geographical location, student status) and the varied pathways to success. The resource would include investment in the creation or enhancement and coordination of tiers for receiving information and support:
 - Tier 1: An interactive online student self-service information hub that serves the general population of students and more effectively facilitates their navigation to tools and resources that support and

enhance progress, degree completion, and the overall student experience. The resource will provide equitable access to the general population of students such as information and navigation to curricular resources and co-curricular engagement activities, housing, parking, student organizations, health, campus-to-campus transfer and career services based on the identities, campus location, concerns, and questions students input at any time during their Penn State experience.

- Tier 2: A physical, people-serviced-center and network that is responsive to concerns and questions that go beyond the capacity of the online self-service tool; works alongside academic advising to bridge connections for individuals to existing general support and specialized resources, such as identity-based offices, counseling, and extracurricular activities and support groups (e.g., Black Male Symposium in Smeal College of Business; Center for Sexuality and Gender Diversity in Student Affairs; Counseling and Disability Services at Penn State Shenango; Women of Color Empowerment Group in the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity; Change of Campus student resources), as well as resources that support those with more specialized health and well-being, academic, and economic need.
- Tier 3: Enhancement of existing student care resources that foster the well-being of students whose student experience demands specialized and significant attention so as not to disrupt their ability to progress and complete their academic goals (e.g. Gender Equity Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, emergency funding).
- To foster a more equitable graduate student experience, invest in the existing equity-focused initiatives for **graduate students** in the following ways:
 - Enhance the pipeline from undergraduate studies to graduate studies.
 - Expand the number of diversity educators to address faculty biases and microaggressions toward underrepresented students.
 - Build intercultural teaching, mentoring, and advising professional development into faculty workplace expectations.
 - Create spaces for graduate students, including postdoctoral appointees, to intentionally build community.
- For all students, enhance orientations and opportunities to create greater equity among **student organizations, Penn State traditions, and student engagement** to support belonging and greater participation in the Penn State student experience.
 - Build opportunities for student learning on freedom of expression, student organizing and support for speaker and event applications and processes into routine Student Affairs activities for students and student organizations.
 - Address barriers to the creation of student organizations (e.g., the numbers of required students, identification of advisers) that inhibit the ability of some students to start/maintain organizations, especially racialized and marginalized students at Commonwealth Campuses.
 - Elevate attention to racialized and marginalized student organizations and events as part of Penn State traditions in ways equal to majority-focused traditions, especially in campus tours, publications, and orientations.

To foster a more equitable faculty experience and work environment; facilitate greater diversity; and enhance equity in professional growth, advancement, and career outcomes for faculty:

- For greater diversity: Minimize silos and develop a **comprehensive faculty hiring program** for Penn State, including:
 - Establish a clear spousal hiring policy.
 - Enhance equity-centered search committee training, including addressing implicit bias in the search and hire process.
 - Establish hiring accountability procedures that augment outcomes.

- To enhance equity, inclusion, and belonging:
 - Better coordinate duplicative efforts and minimize silos and establish an **equity-centered resource** for faculty that brings greater information transparency and facilitates career experience and progression from hire through retirement for all faculty regardless of identities, geography, rank, and tenure/nontenure track.
 - Enhance **institutional-level initiatives** that address inequitable outcomes, inclusion, and belonging for racialized minorities, nontenure track faculty, women, and others in teaching evaluations, promotion, and leadership opportunities, as appropriate.
 - Develop a **faculty pipeline** through existing graduate and postdoctoral programs for underrepresented faculty in collaboration with minority-serving institutions and similar initiatives.
 - Continue funding via **President's Opportunity Funds and Women's Recruitment Funds**.
 - Build **equitable leadership opportunities** that facilitate the leadership development of racialized faculty women, and other marginalized groups, in particular.

To foster a more equitable staff experience and work environment; facilitate greater diversity; and enhance equity in professional growth, advancement, and career outcomes for staff:

- For greater diversity: Minimize silos and develop a **comprehensive staff hiring program** for Penn State, including:
 - Enhanced equity-centered search committee training to address implicit bias in the search and hire process.
 - Exploration of potential opportunities to establish apprenticeships for underrepresented groups and trade support programs for women and minorities.
 - Establishment of hiring accountability procedures that augment outcomes.
- To enhance equity, inclusion and belonging:
 - Minimize silos, better coordinate duplicative effort and establish an **equity-centered resource** for staff that facilitates greater access to professional development and advancement opportunities, regardless of classification, geography, and identity differences.
 - Invest in **peer coaching and mentoring** to enhance access to professional development and community building for all staff.
 - Support **professional development opportunities**, including allocated time for engagement for staff.
 - Build **equitable leadership opportunities** that facilitate the leadership development of racialized staff women and other marginalized groups, in particular.
- Invest in **enterprise-wide identity and affiliation-based employee resource groups** (ERGs) that represent the multiple minoritized and underserved faculty/staff communities to foster a greater sense of belonging for employees across the University.

>> Next steps

The full series of recommendations put forth by the special adviser has been considered by the president. The president will move forward on a subset of initial recommendations and continue further deliberation over the days and months ahead on how best to approach and implement initial recommendations and subsequent actions. These steps will happen in collaboration with unit leads, administrators, faculty, staff, and students, as appropriate.