

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Long-Term Strategic Planning Committee
Final Report
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Part I. Prologue

Lake Forest College has long emphasized its commitment to diversity, from its evocation in the mission statement—“We embrace cultural diversity”—to the progress the institution has made in recruiting a community of students, faculty, and staff who hold a variety of identities. This progress is noteworthy and merits acknowledgement. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the many areas in which progress has been slow or non-existent. Thus, we affirm that we are engaging in an ongoing process that is far from its conclusion. If we recruit a more diverse student, faculty, and staff community, but the experiences of members from historically-marginalized groups are not meaningfully equivalent in scope, safety, and opportunity to those of other students, faculty, and staff, then we will have failed in our mission.

Of course, the College does not operate in a vacuum; rather, it exists in a society marked by a history of systemic racism and prejudice that is, as a result, neither equitable nor inclusive. As such, perfection is not possible. Nevertheless, it is within our reach to continue the progress we have made, while addressing the work that still needs to be done.

Indeed, the College community has already begun to widen our perspective beyond the commitment to diversity found in the mission statement. For example, the Faculty Diversity Commitment Statement, adopted by faculty vote in February 2020, opens with a call to create “a truly inclusive community that allows all members to thrive, including those who are members of underrepresented groups in higher education.” This document and other recent efforts on campus are built on the insistence that we strive not only to bring a diverse community to campus, but that they find here equal opportunity, a commitment to challenging discrimination, and a place where every individual can feel a sense of belonging.

The faculty statement is particularly poignant in light of the pandemic that was on the rise at the very moment the document was adopted. The experience of COVID-19 has only intensified our understanding of the inequity in our community members’ experiences. Without minimizing the trauma of the pandemic for any individual, its impact was even more severe in communities of color, in poorer communities, and among other marginalized groups. We saw this first-hand: some of our students had to pursue their college education without easy access to the technology to attend remote courses; some community members struggled to find private spaces to do their work; some continued their education or work while also taking on other major responsibilities, such as jobs or caregiving. As the College slowly moves into the new reality that is emerging from the COVID crisis, we must keep these lessons squarely before our eyes as we consider how to build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive College for the future.

To that end, we, the members of the DEI Long-Term Strategic Planning Committee, make a series of detailed recommendations for community action in the final report that follows. Our recommendations are animated by the following overarching principles:

We believe that we must continue to increase the diversity of the College community, including (but not limited to) diversity in: ability status, age, body size, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, health status, immigration status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, socio-economic status.

We believe that we must commit to equity: that is, fair access to the opportunities and resources that community members need to pursue their learning and work at the College.

We believe that we must actively pursue inclusion, to ensure that all members of our community feel welcomed and affirmed. This includes both celebrating the identities and strengths of our community members and responding promptly to incidents of discrimination, harassment, and bias that occur.

We believe that when the College adopts the projects outlined below, it must commit to funding them, as opposed to folding them into the responsibilities and purview of current entities. Simply to add more work to the plates of faculty, staff, and students is not sustainable and would not reflect a true commitment to these principles.

We believe that we must build systems to assess effectively the success—or failure—of the projects we pursue and make change accordingly.

Finally, we believe that many of the systems, structures, and mindsets currently in place within our society actively work against the principles we cite here. These forces have become so entrenched that the work we pursue here will likely never be complete; crossing a metaphorical “finish line” at some point is not probable. Rather, we must commit to regular reflection about how to improve existing programs and find new initiatives.

Part II. The Planning Committee Process

The committee assembled in August and September of 2021. President Stephen D. Schutt asked us to have equal representation on the committee of students on the one hand and faculty/staff on the other. In this spirit of broad community representation, the President named tri-chairs: Anish Aloysiuswardena (student), Claudia Ramirez Islas (staff), and Anna Jones (faculty).

The chairs were joined by twelve committee members: Carlson Ayanlaja, Blythe May, Uche Okeke, Wiktorina Pedryc, Kaihan Rahimi, Ajit Sharma (students/alumna); Ajar Chekirova, DeJuran Richardson, Holly Swyers (faculty); André Meeks, Ed Neumann, Alondra Olvera (staff). In the spring semester, there were some changes to our personnel: Anish and Wiktorina had to step away from the committee due to other commitments; meanwhile, after her hiring in February 2022, Marianinna Villavicencio, Assistant Director of the Office of Intercultural Relations, has joined us. Finally, Gizella Meneses—who will take over Anna’s role as Associate Dean on 1 July 2022 and who will have an instrumental role in implementing some of these projects—began to attend committee meetings in the spring.

In the fall, the committee began by researching DEI planning efforts at institutions similar to our own. In particular, we were struck by the following documents (among others): the [Anti-Racism at Macalester plan](#); the [Community Plan for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity at Carleton](#); [Colorado College’s Antiracism Implementation Plan](#); the [AGB Board of Directors’ Statement on Justice, Equity, and Inclusion](#); and [NADOHE’s Framework for Advancing Anti-Racism Strategy on Campus](#).

Among the many common threads that we found in these documents from other institutions, we took particular note of the wide-ranging nature of their vision. The reforms and changes they proposed included reconsidering the key documents of their institutions; reorganizing the administrative hierarchy to better serve the needs of the campus community; addressing curriculum and academic policy; examining student life outside the classroom; assessing the accessibility of infrastructure and campus spaces; and so on. We were inspired by these models, as well as the charge we were given by President Schutt and the Board of Trustees, to think big.

While that kind of “big thinking” is exciting, it also required us to adopt an organizational structure conducive to discussion and generating ideas. We decided to meet as a full committee of fifteen people in alternate weeks for most of the fall. In the “off-week”, we met as three subcommittees: Academics; Personnel Recruitment and Retention; and Student Life. While these subcommittees overlapped in their interests and concerns, they were a way to conduct smaller-group discussions, research ideas that emerged from those discussions, and bring project proposals back to the main committee.

In addition, we held three forums on Zoom for the full College community in September, October, and November. Each forum was dedicated to collecting ideas and concerns surrounding one of those key areas: Academics, Personnel Recruitment and Retention, and Student Life. We also heard from a number of community members via email or individual conversations, which brought more ideas to our attention.

At the close of the fall semester, we were ready to begin writing up individual projects, both those to be implemented immediately (see “Part III: Priority Projects” below) and those to be implemented

over time, many of which we urge to be shepherded by a (yet to be appointed) Chief Diversity Officer, once that position is filled (see part III below). We created a template for those project proposals, ensuring continuity across documents despite multiple authors. The template asked the committee members to address the following in each project proposal that they wrote:

- Project Title
- Problem
- Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N); if Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional)
- Project Proposal Details
- Rationale
- Next Steps

We established a deadline of Friday 4 March for all committee members to submit their project descriptions. Over spring break, Anna Jones compiled these into a full rough draft and circulated it to the full committee for review.

After spring break, the full committee met several times to revise, supplement, and polish the report, and to identify our priority projects in two categories: those efforts that will involve significant fundraising to accomplish, and those that will require minimal or no fundraising. These priority projects were the result of discussion and a vote available to the entire committee ([see part III below](#)).

The remainder of the project descriptions in this report were the result of both individual and collaborative work within the committee. They were not “voted on” in any official way by the committee as a whole. We say this not to lessen the importance of these projects in any way, but rather to be transparent about the process that produced them. In some cases, an individual committee member or sub-group of the full committee had the expertise and the desire to work on a particular project, and the rest of the committee respected that commitment. Furthermore, we regard the assessment, prioritization, and implementation of these projects to be the purview and task of the Chief Diversity Officer (whose hire is one of our priority projects)—and the knowledge that the CDO will have oversight over this process meant that the committee did not feel the need to parse every facet of every project description as a full group.

We shall submit this completed report to President Schutt on Friday 15 April 2022.

Part III. Priority Projects

President Stephen D. Schutt and William A. Lowry, the incoming Chair of the Board of Trustees, were invited to meet with the DEI Long-Term Strategic Planning Committee midway through our work timeline. They requested that we identify a small number of priority projects amidst the many important projects and ideas that are described in [Part IV below](#). The Committee agreed with the rationale and motivation they presented for this request. After careful deliberation and discussion, a consensus was reached among committee members that the projects highlighted in this section carry the highest priority, as they are considered pivotal to the College being able to fulfill the aspirations detailed in [Part I](#). We reiterate that highlighting here what we consider to be the highest priorities does not sanction the neglect of all the other projects presented in Part IV. Although the Committee did not fully discuss or reach consensus regarding these other projects, as was the case with the priority initiatives presented here, each project in Part IV represents thoughtful and concerted effort of individual and subgroups of committee members. We present these priority projects categorized by those requiring significant funding versus those we consider to require minimal or no funding.

- **Priority Projects Requiring Significant Funding (3)**
 1. **Increase staffing in key student support offices on campus.**
 - The committee reached unanimous consensus that **this is the most pressing need for DEI work on our campus**. Currently, offices and individuals responsible for student support are either overworked (the Center for Academic Success, the Health and Wellness Center [particularly in Counseling Services]) or non-existent. This results in less effective student support, the overburdening of existing staff, and an overflow of work onto faculty and staff who do not have the skills to respond successfully. After considerable discussion and a vote, the committee identified the following four positions as the first that should be hired (and the first for which funding should be sought):
 - A full-time position in [Disability Services](#) (perhaps an Associate Director)
 - Two positions in the [Health and Wellness Center](#) to support student mental health: one for a full-time psychiatrist and one for a therapist whose specialties/identities complement the existing staff.
 - Begin to expand the staff of the [Center for Academic Success](#) with full-time hires. Our recommendation for a first hire is for a specialist in supporting either English Language Learners or the first-generation college experience (or both in one person).
 - You can find more information on these projects in the sections below on the [Center for Academic Success](#) (includes Disability Services) and the [Health and Wellness Center](#). We do wish to emphasize that the final design of these positions and choice of staff persons should be made by current staff from these offices, with expertise in the given fields.

- The committee considered a number of other sorely needed positions; each would be valuable, but we decided that the above are the most pressing. Among the other positions that should be pursued in the future (rationale and support for each of these staff hires is presented in Part IV—follow the links below):
 - A [Student Advocacy Coordinator](#) or [College ombudsperson](#), who can provide confidential support to students, faculty, and staff at critical moments—during a Title IX case, for example.
 - A specialist to support [undocumented students](#) (although this might also fall under the purview of an ombudsperson).
 - A [testing support specialist](#) (especially for students with ADHD and related learning challenges).
 - A single individual with training and expertise to support [international students/faculty/staff](#), particularly with respect to visa and related legal issues.
 - An [interfaith center director](#), to provide counsel and support to students with religious concerns.

2. [Reorganize the reporting structure of the College.](#)

- See the relevant section of Part IV (follow link above) for a detailed rationale and description of this initiative. While this initiative may not necessarily require a major fundraising effort, it is central to the hiring of an effective Chief Diversity Officer, which leads us to:

3. Hire a [Chief Diversity Officer.](#)

- We need a leader at the highest levels to coordinate and manage DEI efforts across the College, and it is essential that this individual be put into a position to succeed. As is strongly urged in Part IV (follow link above), we recommend the hiring of a mid-career individual, who holds a PhD and brings extensive experience to the position. The successful candidate should be placed at the head of their own reporting structure and should have both Vice President status and faculty status.

Why are our highest priority recommendations so squarely focused on hiring? Put simply, the committee feels that we have reached capacity in our ability to do crucial DEI work on this campus at current staffing levels. In some cases, this is due to a lack of resources in key support areas—hence our hiring recommendations under number 1 above. In other cases, it is due to a lack of campus-wide leadership; while we have individuals and offices on campus who work hard on DEI issues in faculty-facing spaces or student-facing spaces, those efforts are often not coordinated or pursued as far as they could be. This is the compelling case for a Chief Diversity Officer.

- **Priority Projects Requiring Minimal/No Funding**

We urge that all of the following projects be implemented (in an order and process to be determined by the above-mentioned Chief Diversity Officer). This list represents top priorities identified by the committee, but in cases such as these, where institutional will is required, rather than funding, we are hesitant to firmly prioritize one project over another. We should be acting on all of them (see Part IV for detailed descriptions of each project—follow links below). Thus, we do not number the projects named here but rather offer them as an unranked list. Again, we emphasize that choosing the exact course of action should be the purview of the CDO.

- Create a transparent, streamlined process of immigration sponsorship and visas for international faculty, staff, and students, centered in one office or person. This will help to ensure that immigration applications are prepared, filed, and advanced equitably and effectively, within the limits of federal law. The full project description below ([linked here](#)) includes links to the procedure at peer institutions.
- Perpetuate and expand the [Student Equity Intern/Ambassador Program](#), which will establish a way to compensate students (with pay or with credit) for their participation in equity work on campus.
- Revisit the evaluation of faculty and staff, in an effort to create more equitable and transparent processes for a more diverse [faculty](#) and [staff](#); in the view of some committee members (but not a consensus), this effort should include [eliminating anonymous course evaluations](#).
- Give the research on the accessibility of [campus spaces](#) (already funded and underway) the attention it is due when it is complete, and use the information therein to create change in our students' experience on campus.
- Move forward on [equitable academic policies](#); notably, there was near (if not complete) consensus among the committee to initiate discussion about revising the registration hold policy in particular.
- Initiate the first steps in pursuit of the [land acknowledgement effort](#), possibly beginning with an open workshop for Indigenous People's Day 2022.

Part IV: Individual Project Descriptions

Section 1: Administrative Personnel and Institutional Organization

Institutional Structure and Reorganization

Problem: Several organizational issues around DEI at the College need consideration:

- Currently, certain offices whose work focuses on DEI and crosses campus constituencies are shoehorned into a reporting structure in just one of those constituencies. For example, the Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR), while technically under the Dean of Students in the campus organizational chart, has increasing responsibilities relating to faculty (e.g., the [Bias Process](#)). The OIR will potentially become more engaged in future in DEI issues affecting both faculty and staff as well as students. Because the existing structures of governance and oversight put OIR squarely outside of the faculty domain, the important DEI responsibilities of that office appear not to apply to faculty. We could say similar things about the reporting lines of the Title IX office, Disability Services, and the Faculty Diversity Recruitment Subcommittee (FDRS). These offices/committees should report to a new CDO.
- A Chief Diversity Officer must be given the authority to do the work they are charged to do across all campus constituencies. This means that they need to sit atop a reporting structure that gives them a team whom they supervise and whose members are responsible to them. Without this, the CDO hire risks becoming a figurehead or token hire.
- The CDO should hold a PhD and faculty status, as well as Vice Presidential status, in order to carry appropriate authority among all campus constituencies.
- In addition, certain offices whose work includes (but is not limited to) DEI work should also have a reporting line that reflects that. For example, the director of the Office of Faculty Development might have a reporting line added to the CDO, while also continuing to report to the Dean of Faculty. Other possibilities to consider for multiple reporting lines include the director of the Center for Academic Success and the director of Health and Wellness.
- The persistence of certain campus groups central to DEI work is uncertain, with the risk of losing institutional knowledge or duplicating work. As a key example: over the past year, the continued existence of the Intercultural Advisory Group (IAG) was questioned, because its responsibilities, experiences, and resources seemed to overlap with another *ad hoc* group that was formed by the administration. This committee argues for the persistence of IAG, and that its chair should report directly to the CDO.
- Three different offices (OIR, Global Engagement, and Human Resources) are responsible for dealing with international students, exchange students, and international faculty and staff. It would be beneficial to centralize the procedure of immigration-related paperwork in the hands of one person who has strong understanding of the procedures and has the capacity to advocate for non-citizen members of our community, who are particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged because of their status. This individual should report to the CDO.
- Therefore, we recommend that the following offices/committees report directly to the CDO in order to ensure effective coordination and support in fulfilling their missions: the OIR, FDRS, IAG, Title IX, and Disability Services.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): N

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details:

- Reorganize the College’s administrative structure to create reporting lines to the new CDO. By moving OIR and other related DEI-engaged offices into its own segment of the organizational chart, we simultaneously signal the seriousness with which we regard diversity, equity, and inclusion work at all levels of our institution, and we also ease existing tensions of conflicting oversight. As an example, if OIR can be recast as an advocacy body for all members of campus instead of (as it is currently perceived in some quarters of campus) part of a student vs. faculty divide, it can help develop relevant programs for retention and recruitment of faculty and staff and become a mediating body as we go through DEI-related growing pains.
- We recommend assembling a team of stakeholders in DEI work at the College to report to the CDO. While some members of that team (such as the Director of OIR) might report exclusively to the CDO, some members might divide their reporting. The head of OFD, for example, might be part of the CDO’s team, while also remaining in the Dean of Faculty’s reporting line.
- Make permanent the Intercultural Advisory Group, charged with the mission to provide counsel to the Chief Diversity Officer on matters of equity and inclusion. The makeup of IAG should include students, faculty, and staff of diverse identities, with varied expertise across the institution. The IAG chair should report directly to the CDO. We wish to acknowledge the work of the Intercultural Advisory Group in its invaluable monthly Community Caucuses, which allow community members to gather and raise their concerns regarding social justice issue occurring on and off campus. Further, the IAG works to create collective community accountability. This work must continue.
- In addition, create a dedicated full-time staff position whose primary responsibility is to deal with immigration-related matters and paperwork for international and exchange students, international faculty, and staff, as well as track and follow up on immigration applications and advocate for all non-citizen members of our community.

Rationale: The reporting structure should reflect the seriousness with which we approach DEI work on this campus, and to recognize that such work penetrates into all areas of the community—it doesn’t simply “live” in the student, faculty, or staff space. We wish to avoid making our new CDO a figurehead without authority and without an effective team.

Next Steps: Even before launch of an official search for the new CDO, the College needs to initiate this reorganization effort, in order to enhance the attractiveness of the position for highly-qualified potential candidates.

Hire a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) for the College

Problem: Currently we have various groups, constituencies, and individuals on campus who do work that would more traditionally fall within the purview of a Chief Diversity Officer. Some of these groups include the Office of Intercultural Relations (OIR), the Office of Faculty Development (OFD), the Title IX office, the Intercultural Advisory Group (IAG), Disability Services, and the Faculty Diversity Recruitment Subcommittee (FDRS). What we lack is institution-wide leadership at the highest administrative levels to help oversee, lead, and coordinate this work.

The time has come to invest in hiring a Chief Diversity Officer who can take up the responsibility of moving our institution forward on DEI issues, and who can sit at the head of reporting lines relating to DEI work. This person must have the authority and resources to do this work sustainably. Therefore, this person must hold a PhD, have faculty status, and hold the title of Vice President—reporting directly to the President. This person should be reported to by the Director of OIR, the chair of IAG, the director of OFD, the chair of FDRS, the Title IX officer, and possibly others (see the ideas in the [reorganization proposal](#) above).

Hiring a CDO would help the institution to become more anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive, and would allow for implementation of policies dedicated to breaking down systemic barriers and supporting the changing demographics of the institution.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional): Funding is needed to hire an outside search firm to conduct a national search for a Chief Diversity Officer, to offer a competitive salary and benefits for this senior leadership position, and to equip the Chief Diversity Officer with all the resources to have effective oversight, influence, and authority on DEI initiatives at the institution.

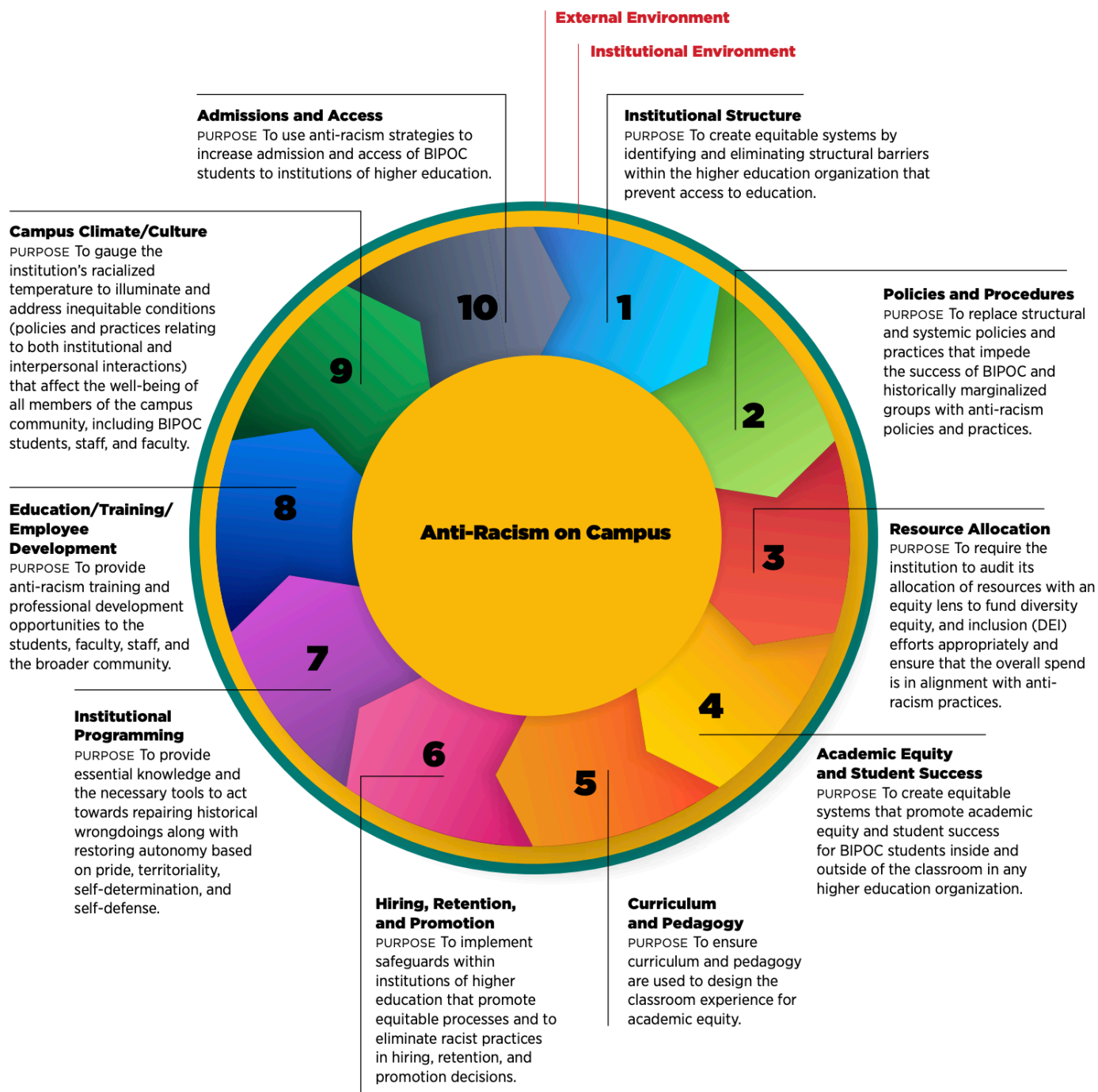
Project Proposal Details: Conduct a national search to hire a Chief Diversity Officer at the Vice President level, who will report directly to the President and be included in their most senior council of advisors.

Rationale: The Chief Diversity Officer, appointed at the senior leadership level, will have both the responsibility and the authority to implement systemic changes at the institution on diversity, equity, and inclusion that our current structures do not have the power to fully implement. The Chief Diversity Officer would be expected to follow the [National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education \(NADOHE\) Professional Standards](#).

Please click here to see the [NADOHE Report on Advancing Anti-Racism Strategy on Campus](#), to be implemented by the Chief Diversity Officer. For the Anti-Racism framework priority areas, see below.

Next Steps: Conduct a National Search for a Chief Diversity Officer utilizing a professional search firm that can help recruit and find the best possible qualified candidates. The Chief Diversity Officer must represent diverse and changing student, faculty, and staff demographics and help enhance the diversity at the senior leadership level. They must also have extensive experience and proven pedagogy that is rooted in antiracist, equitable, and inclusive practices.

NADOHE's Anti-Racism Framework addresses ten (10) priority areas where anti-racism strategies would significantly improve conditions for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, faculty, and staff and that are applicable for a variety of college and university types. It should be noted that there is no prescribed order in which these priority areas should be addressed. It is important to take inventory of your community to determine initial focus and development of a plan to prioritize the needs of your organization.



Establish a Staff Governance Structure

Problem: Often the College prioritizes the wellbeing, retention, success and recruitment of students and faculty but not of staff. This focus on some members of the community but not all leaves staff—including administrative, custodial, and other essential staff—feeling less valued by the institution, even though they are an integral part of the community. This is exemplified by the fact that staff, as a group, have no voice in policy at the College: they cannot vote on policies that affect them, as faculty and students often can.

It is true that staff governance bodies are rare at institutions such as ours; therefore, this is a real opportunity for the College to break new ground and become more equitable and inclusive by developing staff governance.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Possibly; funds might be needed for legal counsel to help develop a staff governing body.

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details:

Establish a consistent and sustainable way to allow staff to have a voice in institutional policy and reform. Faculty and students have this right, via faculty governance bodies and student government. We should consider developing a similar staff body—a Staff Policies and Personnel Committee, perhaps.

Rationale:

Staff members are more central than ever to the successful operation of Lake Forest College. As the number, variety, and importance of staff positions have grown, so has the need for their involvement in determining the direction and vision of the College. Ideally, a staff governance body would be positioned within the governance framework of the College, alongside similar bodies for faculty and students; all such bodies would be bound together by formal and legal authority guidelines.

Next Steps: We need to do research in order to determine the best strategy to introduce, develop, and sustain staff governance at the institution. One resource to consult is John W. Murray and Michael T. Miller, eds., *Staff Governance and Institutional Policy Formation*, Educational Policy in the 21st Century: Opportunities, Challenges and Solutions (2011). Follow the link to see the table of contents.

Establish Periodic Audits of Institutional Policies, Practices, and Procedures

Problem: We do not currently conduct periodic audits of institutional policies, practices, and procedures; this limits our ability to identify and eradicate systemic bias that contributes to inequities on campus.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes. The College should consider hiring an outside firm to do a campus climate assessment of the institution; the recommended new CDO should lead efforts, based on the information gathered, to edit and improve policy.

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details:

Policies, practices, and procedures should be continually assessed to ensure these affirmatively promote inclusion and equity. Doing so will improve institutional capacity for making data-driven decisions that influence campus climate. Questions to ask as we approach this task include:

- What data are we gathering now, and how is it disaggregated? How accessible is this data? What does the analysis tell us? How are we sharing the results with the campus?
- What does the data say about success rates for BIPOC students in developmental, remedial, and gateway courses into majors and specialized admissions programs? Is there an ongoing review and analysis of disaggregated course success data in all courses?
- Can we identify institutional policies, procedure, and practices that will eliminate systemic barriers? For example:
 - Has there been an examination of the institutional policies and practices that may create barriers to academic equity and student success? Does bias and/or systematic barriers exist in the following areas:
 - Academic departments/programs
 - Criteria for awarding financial aid, admissions, and scholarships
 - Housing and student life
 - Establishing and/or funding BIPOC student organizations

Potential areas/policies to assess and evaluate:

- Access issues (institution/educational type; intellectual, physical, social capabilities)
- Legacy admits/hires
- Affirmative action
- Equal employment opportunity
- Federal Government Title Programs: II, VI, VII, and IX
- Freedom of Speech/academic freedom issues
- Reclamation/renaming efforts
- Collective bargaining units
- Recruitment, onboarding, and retention
- Prison-to-pipeline programs
- Academic and employee disciplinary action
- Salary equity
- Tenure and promotion (faculty)
- Career advancement (staff)

- Financial aid and scholarships (students)
- Curricular and co-curricular programs and services
- Federal contracts
- Supplier diversity
- Auxiliary workers/services
- Town-gown relations
- Campus and community policing
- Communications and public relations (including social media, electronic communications)

Rationale: Higher education systems are complex webs of practices, policies, and procedures steeped in White normativity. Changing the system requires a disruption of business-as-usual, with an emphasis on eliminating bias and racism—and the first step is establishing where problems exist. Measuring progress toward justice requires the establishment of metrics of success with accountability mechanisms.

Next Steps:

- Be transparent and accountable in acknowledging and addressing the institution's historical legacies and current practices of exclusion, while also acknowledging progress towards achieving equity.
- Take a multi-dimensional approach to improve the campus climate and sense of belonging for all members of the campus community.
- Implement inclusive recruitment strategies and admissions policies and practices to diversify the student body as well as staff and faculty groups, senior leadership, and board of trustees.
- Appropriately engage with external entities, including local, state, and federal governments, corporate and community partners, vendors, K-12 educational partners, etc., including those who actively demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Conduct audits of the institutional culture and climate regularly and use resulting data to review and revise policies and practices, in order to achieve equitable student outcomes and optimize faculty and staff work performance.
- Conduct a comprehensive archival review of the institution's cultural history, to identify monuments, names/titles of buildings, scholarships, programs, etc. that commemorate polarizing historical figures.
- Review the institution's mission statement, diversity statement, strategic plans, and other associated declarations to identify gaps and opportunities between the rhetoric and institutional realities.
- Consider restorative justice/truth and reconciliation approaches to address harmful past and present practices uncovered during the collection and review of institutional archival data.

Develop Clear and Consistent Bias and Discrimination Policies and Procedures

Problem: First, there is not a clear and comprehensive set of protocols and procedures at the College for cases of discrimination that take place on or off campus. We need a robust and transparent process for handling discrimination cases that rise above the level of the bias policy/process. This process for discrimination cases should work in tandem with the bias process when appropriate.

Second, we currently have two different bias processes that are not consistent. One (for students and staff) is both educational and consequential in nature, but when it comes to a claim of bias against faculty, the process is purely educational, with no real consequences for a faculty member. We need a process that is accessible, equitable, and just, and that can be a resource for all members of the community regardless of title or position.

Definitions:

- [Discrimination](#) and [harassment](#) violate federal law (Title VII and the ADA, among others). “Bias incident” is often used as an overarching term that overlaps with hate crimes, discrimination, and harassment. However, the bias process has a specific purview: focusing on incidents that are not covered by discrimination or harassment policies. It can be valuable for a college to make these distinctions clear on their website, [as Macalester does here](#).
- The College needs a clear discrimination policy and procedure, developed in accordance with the standards of the [US Department of Education](#), which outlines and defines different forms of discrimination:
 - [Race and National Origin Discrimination](#) (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
 - [Disability Discrimination](#) (Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act)
 - [Sex Discrimination](#) (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972)
- What, then, is a bias incident, covered by the bias incident response process? An event rises to the level of a bias incident when speech, writing, or physical behavior is directed at an individual’s actual or perceived membership in a particular identity group and has impacted the individual’s safety, security, emotional and/or psychological well-being and lacks educational, and or artistic relevance. A bias incident can cause harm whether the behavior was intentional or unintentional.
 - Examples include homophobic or sexist jokes, racist or religious slurs, or saying the N word as a non-Black individual. A professor assigns a nickname to a student whose name they have difficulty pronouncing (when the student did not ask for a nickname). Bias incidents include incidents that are more difficult to define than harassment or discrimination, but that can nonetheless harm or threaten individuals or groups based on characteristics of identity.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): We recommend consultation with an outside law firm with expertise on discrimination, harassment, and freedom of speech cases, as well as in the development of bias and discrimination policies.

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details:

Bias reporting and discrimination and harassment procedures should all be interconnected. Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work is rooted in legal precedents from the 1964 Civil Rights Act to

the present day. A robust compliance framework must be in place, which includes affirmative action reporting, mechanisms for reporting alleged violations of Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and mechanisms for bias incident reporting. The compliance function must be supplemented with policies and procedures to mitigate discrimination in all its forms.

Thus, we urge that the College develops a single bias incident response policy that is person-to-person and that is led by the recommended new Chief Diversity Officer, possibly in partnership with the Dean of Faculty, the Director of Human Resources, and the Office of Intercultural Relations. The CDO and other College entities should work to create a clear set of policies and guidelines that dictate how bias incidents shall be handled.

A new bias incident response process should incorporate a cycle of assessment that includes the [Council for the Advancement of Standards](#) for self-assessment (see part 12 [p. 14] at the link): benchmarking, external review, and reference to standards of professional practice for chief diversity officers. By engaging in this rigorous form of assessment, the process can clearly articulate its connection to the institutional learning objectives. Another resource to consult while developing a robust bias policy is the [Journal of Diversity in Higher Education](#), which contains models and frameworks on how to [respond to bias incidents](#).

Rationale (Discrimination Policy): State and federal laws protect against discrimination and harassment, and we need to have a clear and accessible policy for managing such incidents on our campus.

- The U.S. Department of Justice ([Title IX](#) federal civil rights law), the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (or ADA), and the [National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education](#) are clear about an institution's responsibility to comply with federal laws related to hate crimes and harassment.
- The [U.S. Department of Justice defines a hate crime](#) as “violence of intolerance and bigotry, intended to hurt and intimidate someone because of their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.”
- Schools or colleges rank third among locations where hate crimes take place ([Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011](#)).

Rationale (Bias Response Process): A single person-to-person bias process would be better than the current situation because:

- It allows for education on the individual level (supporting and educating the individual victim and perpetrator) and the systemic level (creating programming, awareness campaigns, or policy change that stretch beyond the individual victim and perpetrator and impact an entire community at the institution in a nonpunitive manner).
- It allows the institution to build a better environment, at the individual and systemic levels. If one individual has a better experience, feels supported, and is retained on the institutional level, then the environment is better for that individual. On the systemic level, the bias incident response process is intended to make an impact and build a better environment for everyone who experience bias.
- It is proactive, rather than just reactive. Because the current bias incident response process was set up as a response to specific bias incidents at the institution, the process is inherently

reactive. However, building a better environment in which acts of bias do not recur makes aspects of the process proactive.

- It can draw attention to the need to change certain policies and to address elements of the campus climate.

Next Steps: Under the leadership of the recommended new Chief Diversity Officer, and possibly in partnership with the Office of Intercultural Relations, Human Resources, the Dean of Faculty, and legal counsel, develop a person-to-person bias process for the institution.

Work in conjunction with the Chief Diversity Officer and legal counsel to establish the relationship between the bias policy and the discrimination/harassment policy. Provide a clear protocol that is included in all campus handbooks. Ensure all bodies involved in the investigation process have been adequately trained and continue to get training on a yearly basis.

Develop a Crisis Response Policy

Problem: When bias incidents, hate crimes, acts of discrimination, or social justice movements that directly impact our community occur (whether on or off campus), the College often struggles to respond in a manner rooted in best practices and to provide the aid necessary to bring restorative justice and healing. By being reactive rather than proactive in such cases, we are perpetually behind the need for healing in our communities. We often hold some type of community forum, at which senior leadership (with no Chief Diversity Officer) is called upon to answer to the community, but students' voices are often the most powerful voices heard. We lack clear communication structures that inform community members about resources available to them. We have no protocol to assess our response process and improve it, based on best practices (see the [Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education](#), p. 14)

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes: funding is needed to respond to crisis needs, including more mental health services for all, safety escorting services, etc.

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details: We need to develop a robust protocol for immediate, short-term, and long-term responses to crises that is clearly outlined in all handbooks (student, staff, faculty). Having an accessible and transparent process available to all community members builds confidence in the institution and brings a level of comfort in knowing the steps the institution would take should we collectively experience trauma. Questions that need to be answered as we develop this policy are:

- What will be our communication to the community when incidents of crisis arise?
- How will we protect our most vulnerable and affected populations?
- How will we educate those who “don’t get” the impact an event had on some members of the community?
- How do we provide a space for feedback and open lines of communication, so that our community can openly and transparently express what they need in the way of policy revision? How do we stand in solidarity with those impacted in a meaningful and systemic ways rather than doing “performative justice”?
- How will we hold each other accountable as a community?
- How will we ensure that the healing process is effective and tailored to our different populations on campus (students, faculty, staff, alumni, etc.)?
- How do we ensure no further burden falls on the shoulders of survivors, the vulnerable, and marginalized population?
- What can the institution commit to do in the first 24 hours, the first week, the first month, the first semester, and the first year after a traumatic event?
- How will the institution commit funding to the necessary resources to care for its community? These could include: additional mental health staff, secure spaces, education for those who do not understand the trauma, investment in the wellbeing of the staff, faculty, and their families as they bring their expertise to help the campus heal.
- What will the role of senior leadership and the college president be in time of crisis?

Rationale: The urgency for developing processes and procedures to best support the community when instances of activism and crisis occur on campus or in the local community has been made more evident by the civil unrest that the nation experienced in 2020, but also by the student activism

at our institution in 2019, when many students believed the “senior administration” was not doing enough to protect marginalized populations. Consistent feedback we often receive from the community is that we must be more proactive instead of reactive, that we must work on solving issues before they cause further harm, and that we must be more transparent about the ways the institution, administrators, and staff will react in the case of a crisis.

Next Steps: The recommended new CDO should collaborate with the College President and Board of Trustees, as well as various crisis management experts and social justice educators on and off campus, to develop a robust crisis management plan for healing. Publish this plan in all handbooks (students, faculty, and staff). Consider NADOHE as a partner in developing best strategies as it relates to crisis management in equity and inclusion work. Specifically consider the strategies suggested in the [Advancing the Centrality and Capacity of DEI Work in the Context of Crisis Management webinar](#) presented by NADOHE.

Increase Institutional Financial Resources for DEI Efforts

Problem: We now fund many of our institutional DEI efforts from the small budgets of the Mojekwu Fund, the Office of Faculty Development, and the Office of Intercultural Relations.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

- Capital campaigns should include targeted efforts to engage BIPOC alumni in supporting students of color and other DEI initiatives. An effort to create alumni identity groups is an example of a good way to mobilize the giving efforts of a diverse alumni.
- Investments should be made in funding targeted financial aid and scholarships for BIPOC students, as financial barriers and burgeoning student debt are particular obstacles for BIPOC students. Capital campaigns and advancement work must include scholarship dollars dedicated to assisting BIPOC students in attending and graduating from college. “There has been a growing awareness within both academic and policy circles of the links between racial disparities in student loan debt and greater societal racial wealth inequality” (Morgan and Steinbaum, 2018; Steinbaum, 2019; McKay and Kingsbury 2019; Mishory, Huelsman, and Kahn 2019). Institutional financial support is needed to address these racial inequities (see the [ACE Report on Race and Ethnicity](#), 2020).

Project Proposal Details: The institution should audit its allocation of resources with an equity lens, and it should develop new fund-raising strategies, in order to fund diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts appropriately and to ensure that the overall spend is in alignment with anti-racism practices.

- **Provide appropriate funding to hire an appropriately qualified Chief Diversity Officer (see proposal above).**
- **Conduct a central audit of all institution-wide funding expenditures to support DEI efforts.** DEI is a value-added effort. Organizational budgets should be reviewed to determine the percentage of funding dedicated to DEI initiatives and the associated outcomes.
- **Allocate a pool of resources to support antiracism education and training.** Curriculum reform will need to be a funded mandate. As faculty work to revise the curriculum, their efforts should be compensated.
- **Fund and support programs that assist BIPOC students, faculty, and staff.** An investment in programs that promote diverse stakeholders’ retention and success is essential as we move to develop a thriving academic community that is working toward racial justice.
- **Equity pay analysis for employees of all designations.** Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits wage discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin. However, absent pay equity studies, many BIPOC higher education staff and faculty salary ranges may be below their White peers: “Equal pay for equal work is not a reality for many people of color. When we control for education, years of experience, occupation and other compensable factors, most men and women of color still earn less than White men” (Equal PayScale, 2020). Attracting and retaining talented faculty and staff through fair compensation practices is critical to an anti-racism framework.

Rationale: As institutions move forward with anti-racism work, overall institutional DEI budget allocation is one metric of commitment. An institution's DEI strategy must come with appropriate budget resources and human capital. If justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are part of institutional planning objectives, then strategic funds must be allocated to fulfill the goals outlined in the planning process.

In times of budget strain and the threat of declining enrollments, all too often DEI initiatives are first to be streamlined, as they are seen as cost centers and not revenue generators. This type of cost analysis is faulty. DEI cost-cutting sends a powerful message that BIPOC students, faculty, and staff are expendable. A comprehensive DEI program can lead to the retention and success of diverse communities, especially as we seek to increase the [diversity of our student body in various ways](#). Conversely, a poorly-funded DEI program can harm an institution, as students, faculty, and staff become vulnerable to racial injustice. In addition, DEI initiatives, programs, and staff can serve as a recruitment and retention tool and create a sense of belonging for BIPOC communities.

Next Steps: Conduct a major donation campaign and identify donors willing to contribute to the advancement of social justice efforts on campus. Seek the opportunity to endow a fund for diversity, equity, and inclusion programming initiatives. Consider the [NADOHE Framework for Advancing Anti-Racism Strategy on Campus](#) as guide of best practices for rationale and guidance for making Institutional Financial Resources for DEI Efforts a priority in an effort to move towards transformative change.

Explore HSI ([Hispanic-Serving Institution](#)) Status for Lake Forest College

Problem: First, Hispanic and Latinx students face systemic barriers to accessing a high-quality education. Only 40% of Latinx children participate in preschool education programs, as compared to 53% of their White peers. The high school graduation rate for Hispanic students is below the national average. Hispanic students are underrepresented in advanced courses in mathematics and science, and they can face language barriers in the classroom. Only 19% of Latinx adults have at least a bachelor's degree (compared with 1 in 3 overall), and just 6% have completed graduate or professional degree programs, versus 13% of the national population. In addition, barriers to equity in education can compound and intersect for Hispanic and Latinx students who identify as women, who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, who are English language learners, and who are individuals with disabilities.

Second, the College faces an enrollment crisis in the coming years. After the global economic crisis of 2008, the birthrate fell. While the economy has rebounded in the decade since, the birthrate has not. The nation's colleges and universities will be impacted by a rapid drop in college-aged individuals in the general population beginning in the mid-2020s. This looming enrollment cliff is being talked about in every department and office across campus. It is imperative that we have measures in place for the following:

- Demographic shifts in our prospective student populations starting in 2025.
- Institutional restructuring to meet the nuanced needs of this new student population.
- Investment in the economic and human capital needed to support our most vulnerable students.

Project Proposal Details: The College is in a unique position to respond to these two challenges by 1. broadening our institutional reach and serving an underserved population, while 2. responding to the aforementioned demographic shift. To do this, we propose the College set a course for establishing itself as a Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI).

An HSI is defined as an institution that has “an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application.” The current enrollment of Hispanic students (in 2020) at the College is 17.7%. [As of Fall 2018](#), there were 19 HSI's in Illinois—interestingly, that list does include our community college partners, but does not include our major competitor universities in the state: DePaul, Loyola, UIUC, and UIC. In 2018, only one college in each Indiana and Wisconsin was so designated. This suggests that there might be recruitment opportunities in the region tied with achieving this status. Furthermore, there are grants available from the government for institutions designated as HSI. The application process for such funding—once the enrollment level is achieved—is complex ([see here](#)), but could open many opportunities for all our students.

[First, the College must apply for a planning grant from the U.S Department of Education's Strengthening Institutions Program \(SIP\).](#) This will then allow us to [fund the construction of a competitive Programming Proposal under SIP](#). Funds from a SIP programming grant can be used to increase our capacity to meet the needs of marginalized populations through expansion of the Center for Academic Success; provide professional development for staff and faculty; and strengthen our endowment.

Rationale: The College will likely face declining or stagnant student enrollment rates beginning in about six years, a reality which will require a thoughtful, strategic approach to ensure the viability and sustainability of the College. Candidly, the College would be remiss if it did not seriously consider prioritizing the recruitment of Hispanic and Latinx students from both traditional and non-traditional backgrounds. Of all demographics the College currently serves, Hispanic and Latinx people remain the largest population under the age of 30. Proportionally, this population will be the least affected by these historic demographic shifts and thus will constitute the most robust market of prospective students.

Next Steps:

- Discuss with Admissions the challenges of achieving a 25% Hispanic student population.
- Convene a grant management team to begin this process by requesting the necessary waivers from the U.S Department of Education. This team will also survey the campus for resources available to the College to be levied in our bid to become a Hispanic-Serving Institution.
- Consider what resources we will need to invest to support Hispanic students if we seek to recruit more of them in order to become an HSI. We might consider: the need for bilingual admissions counselors; the nature of our marketing materials; the need to support mental health and student life for students at a PWI in a predominantly white community, and so on. We cannot simply seek to enroll more Latinx students without a plan to deliver an equitable experience to them once they arrive.

Make Lake Forest College a Sanctuary Campus for Undocumented Students and Community Members

Problem: Circumstances for undocumented students in higher education have drastically improved over the past decade, but there is still work to do. In particular, much of the support available is predicated on students having DACA status, leaving out other undocumented students. We believe that all undocumented students deserve to feel safe on campus, have secure food and lodging, and have support in their academic endeavors. We believe that access to higher education should be equitable regardless of citizenship status or economic background. Many of the proposed policies and programs in the resources below echo the demands of the “sanctuary campus movement,” which calls on colleges and universities to adopt policies specifically to protect undocumented people on campus. It is important to remember that a “sanctuary campus”—while a compelling concept—is not a recognized legal status, which is why it is essential not only to invoke that label, but also to create specific policies for our campus that can be implemented and enforced.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes, to do the following:

- Hiring specialist legal counsel with expertise in immigration law and knowledge of the resources and options available for undocumented students and DACA students.
- Funding initiatives to improve the experiences of our undocumented community members.
- Attorney fees to provide consultation to immigrant families to potentially explore a pathway toward citizenship.

Project Proposal Details: Being a sanctuary campus requires that protections be put into place that will ensure a safe environment for all students, reaffirm the right of access to education, and protect the rights of undocumented immigrants and other vulnerable populations. The Sanctuary School and Safe Zone Movement argues that schools and educational institutions do not have the legal authority or resources to engage in federal immigration enforcement and thus should not cooperate with federal agencies in their efforts to identify, detain, or deport undocumented immigrant students.

Some key components of being a sanctuary campus include:

- Limiting the sharing of student information with federal immigration authorities
- Restricting immigration agents' access to campus
- Prohibiting campus security from collaborating with federal immigration authorities for the purposes of enforcement
- Providing resources and information for immigrant students and their families

Resources to consult as we consider possible areas of institutional development and consideration to become a sanctuary campus:

- [Experiential and Funding Opportunities for Undocumented Students](#)
- [An avenue to Expand College Affordability, Access and Success for Undocumented Students](#)
- [Higher Ed Guide to Tuition, Financial Aid and Other Funding for Undocumented Students](#)
- [Higher Education Guide to Funding Opportunities for Undocumented Students](#)
- [FAQ for Campuses on Immigration Enforcement and Site Visits](#)
- [Alternative Income and Career Options for Undocumented Students](#)

- [FAQ: None-Employment Based Educational Funding Opportunities regardless of immigration status](#)
- [FAQ: Higher Education Access and Undocumented Students](#)
- [FAQ: Employment Practices Regarding DACA Beneficiaries](#) (for higher ed institutions)

Rationale: Sanctuary campuses benefit all students because they promote a safe and welcoming environment free of discrimination, in particular for those immigrants who are most vulnerable to enforcement actions in the current political climate (undocumented students, DACA students, families with mixed status households, Muslims, refugees, and other immigrant groups).

- Efforts to protect students and student data through the Sanctuary and Safe Schools Movement are built upon legal protections that are already in place, including FERPA and the U.S. Constitution.
- In [Plyler v. Doe](#), the Supreme Court recognized a constitutional right of access to K-12 education for all students, regardless of their immigration status. Actions taken by the school, locality, or state to chill this access to schools, including engaging in activities that increase absenteeism of students, may violate Plyler.
- [FERPA \(Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act\)](#) requires schools to obtain written permission from parents or eligible students before releasing any information from a student's education record, and it gives rise to liability if schools release students' information without that permission.
- The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution prohibits any state from denying "to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Furthermore, the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses shield all individuals from unfair and unjust treatment, regardless of race, sex, religion, or age.
- The Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution gives all people the right to be free of unlawful searches, seizures, and warrantless arrests from law enforcement agents, and the U.S. Supreme Court has interpreted this right to apply to activities by immigration enforcement agents.
- The Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states that the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution are reserved to the States or to the people. Thus, the federal government cannot force states and localities to enforce federal immigration law.
- U.S. Immigrations & Customs Enforcement's longstanding policy is to strongly discourage immigration enforcement actions—arrests, interviews, searches, and surveillance—from taking place in "sensitive locations," including hospitals, churches, and schools.

Next Steps:

[Be part of the Sanctuary campus petition.](#)

[Resolution to Designate College/University Campuses as Safe Zones and to Create Resource Centers for Students and Families Threatened by Immigration Enforcement.](#)

Establish a Land Acknowledgement for the College and Engage with Local Indigenous Community

Problem: Lake Forest College is located on the traditional unceded lands of the of the Council of the Three Fires—the Potawatomi (Bodéwadmi/ Neshnabek), the Ojibwe, and the Odawa (collectively Anishinabe)—as well as in a traditional place for trade, gathering, and healing for more than a dozen Native nations, including the Illinois Confederacy (the Peoria and Kaskaskia Nations), but there is currently no acknowledgement of this on behalf of the College. This stands in contrast to other entities of higher education in the Chicagoland area (e.g., [Northwestern University](#)) and across the U.S. or Turtle Island. A Land Acknowledgement process must be understood as an integral part of our ongoing Campus DEI work.

Opportunity:

- Generate awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in the College community and recognize the legacy of settler colonialism in the area. Create yearly Indigenous People’s Day programming at Lake Forest College.
- Land acknowledgements are an expression of appreciation and gratitude to the Indigenous Peoples, for the use of their lands on which we work, study, and learn.
- Engage with the local Lake Forest community as they move to establish a land acknowledgement of their own.
- Develop a relationship with local Indigenous nations or organizations to build partnerships and support their work and communities.
- Recognize and support Indigenous campus members (on the basis of self-identification to respect
- Indigenous ways of reckoning kinship) and involve them in the Land Acknowledgement process as integral members.

Resources/Fundraising Needed: Yes

Project Proposal Details:

- Establish a formal Land Acknowledgement for Lake Forest College, to be used at the beginning of ceremonies, lectures, or public events, in addition to featuring a page on the College website. Current draft: We would like to acknowledge that the current *campus of Lake Forest College sits on the traditional homelands of the Council of the Three Fires—the Potawatomi (Bodéwadmi/ Neshnabek), the Ojibwe, and the Odawa (collectively Anishinabe) as well as a traditional place for trade, gathering, and healing for more than a dozen Native nations including the Illinois Confederacy (the Peoria and Kaskaskia Nations). The Potawatomi villages of Mattawa and Aptakeesik were located by our campus until the 1830 Indian Removal Act and other land cessions forced many*

Potawatomi people out of the area. Other nations including the Myaamia, Wea, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Thakiwaki, Meskwaki, Kiikaapoi, and Mascouten peoples also call this region home, and one of the largest urban Native American communities in the US (or Turtle Island), resides in Chicago. Our institution is starting the work to reckon with our settler-colonization of the area and dismantle those legacies. We hope to offer scholarships to Indigenous students to recognize what we have collectively taken from them.

- Develop a detailed plan for community engagement (both with non-indigenous Lake Forest community members and with local indigenous activists and representatives).
- Email the faculty and staff mailing list, as well as the student list, to let the entire Lake Forest College community know about this work and make certain all relevant stakeholders are able to be part of this process.
- Create a yearly Indigenous People’s Day programming at Lake Forest College.
- Create a plan for “next steps” that go beyond gestures, to ensure that Lake Forest College is addressing the legacy of settler colonialism in the area. These next steps should draw upon peer reviewed literature on the subject (a list of sources is already underway). Some outcomes to consider:
 - Establishing a scholarship program for Indigenous students as part of this work to decolonize the land that the campus sits upon.
 - Connect this to a DEI statement and make sure that it goes through governance committees (e.g., CPC).
 - Observe Indigenous People’s Day 2022: have an event, invite our partners, and make this a day of work and relationship building.
 - Establish the percentage of students who self-identify as Native Americans or Indigenous in the College.
 - Consider in what ways Lake Forest College can disrupt the pattern of settler colonialism and/or address the privilege that non-indigenous people have on unceded Native territories.
 - Create a campus-wide education campaign on the subject to ensure all members of Lake Forest College are aware of and engaged with the topic, including creating a program for honoring Indigenous People’s Day at the College.
 - Engage with local activists and Indigenous community members, such as Dr. John Lowe and Starla Thompson, in addition to campus members such as the Native American/Indigenous Student Empowerment Group.

Rationale: As an institution of higher education dedicated to cementing its commitment to DEI initiatives that have an impact both locally and globally, it is imperative that Lake Forest College recognizes the legacy of settler colonialism that makes its existence a possibility. Land Acknowledgements are not just becoming more common among colleges and universities, they are a necessary first step to making their campuses more equitable for Indigenous peoples. Moreover, the larger community of Lake Forest has expressed an interest in developing a Land Acknowledgement, presenting an opportunity for faculty and staff with knowledge and interest in the subject to share their expertise with the community.

Part IV: Individual Projects

Section 2: Academic Access

Revise Key Academic Policies

Replace Course “F”s with “Not Pass” Grades; Extend the P/F Deadline; Eliminate WF Grades; Revise Registration Hold Policy

Problems:

1. F grades represent a “double punishment” (no credit, plus GPA hit) that particularly impacts those who are not experienced self-advocates. A “No Pass” grade would do the work we need (no credit, no progress to the next course) without punishing the student twice. Furthermore, course Fs currently disproportionately affect students of color, first-gen, and Pell-eligible students.
2. The current P/F deadline, at mid-term, comes before many students have a concrete sense of their performance in the course—in many cases, mid-term exams have not yet been returned, and there may be only one or two pieces of work that have been graded. Extending the P/F deadline later in the semester (as we did during COVID, and matching the W deadline) would allow students to make a more informed choice.
3. There are currently two W deadlines: an automatic W deadline at mid-term and a deadline on the last day of class, when the instructor has the discretion to award the W or WF. This can cause confusion, and it can discourage students from taking a needed W out of fear of a WF.
4. Students whose accounts are not fully paid are prohibited from registering for courses during the advising period, often meaning that by the time their hold is released, there are few if any appropriate courses for them to take. We recognize that the College relies on tuition and that bills need to be paid; nonetheless, we propose a different policy to ensure this while not jeopardizing students’ path to graduation.

Resources or Fundraising Needed (Y/N): N

Project Proposal Details: See below

Rationale: The Student Success Committee has already begun discussion on many of these issues. The points below incorporate points made in that committee as well as this committee’s additions.

Replace Course Fs with “Not Pass”: The Committee members described our current F grade have two facets: students do not earn a credit and their GPAs are adversely impacted. Members asked the question: What is the good work that F grades do for us? How are they useful? Faculty on the Committee find that Fs are often a punishment for disengagement from the course—which can be related to life circumstances that have nothing to do with the course—rather than an evaluation of their coursework. This is an equity issue and a student success issue.

- Students who are experienced self-advocates, who have parents helping them, or are in close communication with advisors can withdraw from classes in time to not suffer the “double punishment.” Those who are less supported or who may be suffering from psychological, familial, or other personal issues will find their academic records adversely impacted by not withdrawing from courses in time.
- Data analysis by Kyle Diep shows that course Fs in the last 5 years disproportionately affect students of color, first-gen college, and Pell-eligible students ([see Appendix 1](#)). Although the

College (particularly CAS) works hard to help these students succeed—and they do—to have an NP policy would make this job easier.

- International students cannot withdraw from more than one class a term without implications for their visa requirements. Having a NP grade rather than an F would offer international students the same flexibility afforded domestic students.
- Students who try one major, struggle, and then pivot to another have GPAs permanently impacted by this shift, making internships and other post graduate opportunities less available to them. A “NP” policy would also help our transfer students who can struggle as they transition to the College. Such a change should also reduce the number of students who must attend the College for extra semester(s) after they have completed graduation requirements just to recover from F grades early in their academic program.

The “No Pass” grade would still have consequences to the students’ academic records. “No Pass” will be on the transcript. Grade requirements within majors would still pertain. Probation/suspension and Deans List and Latin Honors requirements will have to be adjusted. And so on.

Extend P/F Deadline: The Student Success Committee members supported this proposal to encourage students to engage with their courses as long as possible without fear of negative implications to their GPAs. The earlier deadline may result in more end-of-term course withdrawals, which have long-term implications for graduation rates and student/family satisfaction with the College.

Eliminate the WF Grade: Currently, students have two different deadlines for course withdrawal—the earlier, automatic W deadline, and the later deadline, which carries the possibility of a WF grade. These two deadlines can be confusing. Further, while WF grades are extremely rare, they may contribute to student anxiety (especially among our first-year and transfer student populations) and they may result in students choosing not to take a necessary W, out of fear of a WF. Finally—similar to the argument regarding F grades above—this is a “double punishment” for a student: they do not receive credit and they receive the grade hit of an F in their GPA.

Revise the Registration Hold Policy: Students who have a registration hold for financial reasons should be allowed to hold a spot in a class in “R” status (i.e., advisor approval not possible, but a spot is reserved) during regular registration. Students who are unable to clear a registration hold are often our most vulnerable and lowest income students. In many cases, they also come from historically-underrepresented groups. When we prevent them from having an equal chance at registration with their classmates, we consign them to whatever classes they can get, often resulting in a poor fit between student and course and potentially slowing time to degree for a group that can least afford it. While the registration hold is being used as an incentive to ensure payment, it is not an equitable incentive. The same outcome could be achieved by allowing the students to hold a spot pending payment (the “reserved” status currently used for a course selected but not yet approved by an advisor) but not allowing their registration to shift to “current” until tuition payment is made. Most students do clear their holds before the start of the new semester.

Next steps: Support the Student Success Committee in bringing this to campus consideration via CPC (for the grade policies). For the registration hold policy, bring to the Dean/Provost, Business Office, and Registrar.

Make Course Materials Affordable and Costs Transparent

Problem: Course material costs are prohibitive for many of our students, whether for traditional textbooks or for online course platforms. In the case of online-only course platforms, credit cards are often required for purchase (which some students do not have), and options such as course reserves are not available. In the vast majority of cases, students at the College are not able to view course material costs in advance—this information would allow them to budget and plan accordingly.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Not necessarily, although a fund to provide stipends to students of limited economic means in order to purchase online course materials might be worth exploring, since those pose a particular burden to students without credit cards.

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details: The College could take a number of steps to make course materials more affordable, accessible, and transparent:

- Include a section in each course description that outlines course costs. For example: “Textbooks costing \$100-200 (used or new) are required for this course.” Or, “Books for this course are available for purchase, but can be accessed for free via Library reserves and electronic copies.” Or, “An online course platform costing \$150 is used for this course; a credit card will be needed for purchase.” We recognize that enshrining such detail in course descriptions (which require CPC approval to change) might be too cumbersome. There may be other, better means to disseminate this information—we are open to ideas.
- Require faculty to put syllabi (or course material information, at minimum) on Moodle at least one week before classes begin, so students can order books from less expensive options.
- Encourage faculty, departments, and programs to explore and adopt Open Educational Resources for their courses. Where that is not possible, ask the Library to purchase electronic copies of books (whenever possible) and ensure (whenever possible) that course materials are available on Library reserves.
- Continue to develop the new system (established 2021-2022) to help students without credit cards to purchase access to online course platforms.
- Ensure that students receiving financial aid understand how they can access help in buying their course materials.

Rationale: Access to course materials is essential for success at the College. We need to ensure that all our students are able to budget for and access course materials.

Next Steps: This will require work with CPC (on course descriptions), faculty, departments and programs, the Library, and the Business Office, and the Bookstore Committee. As work is already underway in this area from the Business Office and Bookstore Committee, it will be important to coordinate with them.

Ensure that Non-Classroom Academic Opportunities are Available to All Students

Problem: Many of the most valuable academic experiences for our students are not found inside the traditional classroom; these include summer research opportunities, internships, and study abroad. However, for students with limited economic resources, unpaid internships, study abroad, or low-paid research opportunities (especially if they have to spend money to live on campus) may be out of reach. Furthermore, some opportunities may be difficult to access for our international and undocumented students. Thus, some portion of our students find important learning experiences, which the College advertises as signature advantages of the small college experience, closed to them.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details: Explore the creation of the following:

- Grants to cover College room and board for summer term, as well as a small stipend, in order to allow more students from low-SES backgrounds to participate in summer research projects at the College.
- Are students from low-SES backgrounds really able to study abroad? Are students made aware of resources already available to them to make this work for them? Could small stipends/grants bring study abroad within reach for more students?
- Stipends to cover the costs of unpaid internships for students (e.g., transportation, food, etc.). Further, we should (when possible) cultivate the number of paid internships available. The recent development of paid on-campus internships is a positive development here, as they may be more available to international students, students with disabilities, low SES students, etc. [Work with CAC to continue their efforts in this field.](#)
- Cultivate internship opportunities with organizations willing to provide a pathway towards citizenship through visa sponsorship, for both international students and undocumented students.

Rationale: An institution seeking true equity and inclusivity—and advertising “Access” to opportunities—should strive to ensure that valuable educational opportunities are available to all students.

Next Steps: First, consult with various campus departments (CAC, GEO, etc.) to find out what efforts are already underway.

Second, ensure that students are aware of what help is already available in accessing these opportunities—could include website updates, emails, CAC events, orientation programming, etc.

Third, work with Development and Alumni Relations to raise money to create a fund that would provide small grants to cover the kinds of costs outlined above, which could put these opportunities out of reach.

Fourth, work with CAC to cultivate internship opportunities that could lead to visa sponsorship and paths to citizenship.

Professional Development for Universal Design in Teaching

Problem: Increasing numbers of students require learning accommodations within traditionally-designed courses, creating costs in both academic support and faculty time, and raising questions regarding the equity of the student experience.

Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Y

If Y, then Messaging (optional):

Project Proposal Details: Fund a series of workshops/professional development seminars in which faculty can learn principles of universal design, explore how to most effectively revise classroom pedagogy to reflect those principles, and implement changes. Create a pedagogical improvement fund to incentivize universal design.

Rationale: Universal design as a premise emerged from the world of architecture, which has as a goal to make all buildings ADA compliant by nature – in other words, it “aim[ed] to remove obstacles for someone to access the surrounding environment” (Dewi et al. 2019: 113). Pedagogical scholars picked up the question of how to remove obstacles for learners that exist in traditionally run classrooms, and in 2006, David Rose and Anne Meyer released *A Practical Reader in Universal Design for Learning*. Several research teams and universities have since entered the field of universal design.

Courses that employ principles of universal design are able to accommodate a variety of learners with less on-the-spot faculty labor, and they take advantage of technological developments. For example, a course in which audio versions of texts are available by default does not require reworking for a visually impaired or severely dyslexic student. Simple modifications to deadline and extension policies can scaffold time management skills for students with executive function disorders.

The more students who can be accommodated equitably within the existing framework of each course, the fewer will need bespoke arrangements. Faculty effort up front to re-work their courses according to universal design principles will be repaid with less *ad hoc* effort needed down the road. There will always be exceptions, and accommodations supported by Disability Services and the Center for Academic Success will always be necessary. However, we can work to minimize such cases and simultaneously advance the equity of our classrooms.

Next steps: Look into sources for such training—resources, consultants, etc. Consult with the director of the Office of Faculty Development to discuss how to implement this training.

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Ensure Equity of Access to Campus Spaces

Problem: Many spaces on campus do not provide adequate access to all students, some because spaces are perceived as “unsafe”. Others because they are literally inaccessible to anyone with mobility or related issues (e.g., Carnegie, most residence hall lounges). We can make good on our “Access” admissions campaign by making a commitment to physical access—in the broadest sense of that term—to all spaces for all students.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Y
If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details: Collect data on the accessibility (broadly defined) of all campus spaces, identify impediments to access, then invest in whatever will make spaces more accessible. This will include physical measures: restructuring, ramps, elevators, lighting. This will also include studying accessibility from a broader perspective—where do different campus populations feel welcome/unwelcome, and why? How can we make all campus spaces safer and more accessible for all? How do different racial/ethnic and other historically marginalized groups experience campus? Holly Swyers has begun this work with students in her Qualitative Methods course (SOAN 320) in 2019—see [Appendix 2](#). She will begin a new round of data collection on the topic, funded by an ACM grant, in the spring of 2022.

Rationale:

As Harwood et al. (2018) point out, “students of color tend not to experience the same campus that white students experience” (2). They identify that at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), diversity does not result in inclusion, and many campus spaces are either fortified (read: White people deliberately intimidate BIPOC students), contradictory (potentially sites of microaggression, or counter (designated safe-spaces for recovering from racial battle-fatigue) (ibid.: 6). As long as students (and faculty and staff) feel unwelcome on campus, we will struggle with retention. While Harwood et al. focus on racial/ethnic minorities at PWIs, many students experience campus spaces as exclusionary or unwelcoming. For LGBTQ+ students, campus can be experienced as THIs (traditional hetero-gendered institutions) (Preston & Hoffman 2015), with LGBTQ+ spaces more focused on mental health and suicide prevention than on inclusion (ibid.).

While racism and homophobia often manifest as microaggressions, ableism produces even more issues with literal lack of access to spaces for mobility impaired students and potentially inaccessible course material for visually- or hearing-impaired students. For neurodivergent students, there is an uneven understanding of what kinds of support enable success. Spaces already experienced as disorienting for neurotypical students often even more difficult for students who struggle with processing disorders (Walton and McMullin 2021: 83). “Out of student enrolled in any postsecondary program, 38% of students with disabilities had graduated or completed their program in comparison with 51% of similar age peers in the general education” (Long and Stabler 2021: 1-2). We need to do a complete inventory of our spaces with attention to ways in which they are unwelcoming to students from historically marginalized groups.

Next Steps:

We have already secured a Mellon grant through the ACM to do a “Mapping Diversity Project.” The intended products and outcomes of project activities are multi-layered.

- On a professional development level, the products will be a new set of tools for gathering data about our campuses, a cohort of faculty and staff who have a new or deepened experience with grounded theory/content analysis, and a strengthening of alliances across curricular and co-curricular work toward the goal of improved campus climates of diversity and inclusion.
- On a campus improvement level, the results of the data collection and analysis will be put together as a report to relevant bodies on each campus. Our hope is that the reports will help identify areas for intervention (if needed) and areas of success (to celebrate and replicate).
- On an ACM level, we propose to develop a how-to manual for both the data collection and data analysis phases of the project that can be shared with all our member campuses. We also anticipate that there may be elements of how this project unfolds on each of our campuses that are worth sharing at various disciplinary and higher education conferences.

The question is what will come of this project? The data from this project needs to inform any capital improvements on campus, and it opens opportunities for us to address any spaces that are especially unwelcoming to any subset of our students, faculty or staff.

WORKS CITED:

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- Walton, Kerry R. and Rachel McMullin. 2021. Welcoming Autistic Students to Academic Libraries through Innovative Space Utilization. *Pennsylvania Libraries: Research & Practice* 9(2): 85-100.

Equitable Access to Parking

Problem: Our growing commuter population finds limits to their ability to park. Students brought to this committee their frustration with the current parking situation.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Longer term, for building new parking lots, yes.
If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details: Collect data on parking needs and availability. Plan for further parking lots/structures—as the commuter population increases, the need for parking will do so as well. Keep in mind the need for expanded parking for those with mobility and health issues.

The issue of “access” also includes access to student parking. We have a significant (and likely growing) population of commuter students, but not enough parking for them. Students pay for a parking permit but often find parking unavailable.

As a student pointed out in an email to the committee, this is an equity issue, as a student of high economic means might simply be able to park illegally and absorb the fine incurred, while a student without those means might have to be late to class, or park off campus. If the campus is going to sell parking permits to students, then adequate parking must be available. Options should be explored, including: encouraging faculty and staff to park elsewhere; use of all available lots; incentives for non-car commuting when possible, and so on.

Next Steps: Consult with Lori Sundberg and Dave Siebert about current plans to address parking issues. Advocate for more student parking for commuters.

Part IV: Individual Projects

Section 3: Student Support

Expansion of the Center for Academic Success

Problem: As the College recruits a more diverse student body, students will arrive with differing academic preparation and therefore different academic support needs. Many students have the capacity to do well but without the high school experience in math and natural sciences that will allow them to succeed in some of our more popular programs (often identified by placement exams). Some could be brought rapidly up to speed by faculty trained in rapid remediation and differentiated learning. Other students could—with appropriate guidance—realize earlier that they do not have the passion for a given program and find other interests, enabling us to decrease time to degree and improve retention. Furthermore, the number of students arriving at the College with diagnosed learning differences and mental and physical health issues that affect their academics is increasing. The Center for Academic Success is significantly understaffed to respond to these growing needs.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional): Would it be possible to find a donor who would like to have their name on the Center? Might it be possible to have endowed, named staff positions, as we do for certain faculty lines? We can build upon our status as a top school for social mobility.

Project Proposal Details: The Center for Academic Success currently consists of the following staff: the director, who currently also serves as the Director of Writing Programs; the Writing Center Director; the QRC Director; the Director of Disability Services; an Academic Success Specialist; and an administrative coordinator. These staff work valiantly to provide our students with support and resources, but the workload is simply too large. We recommend the hiring of two new full-time positions:

- An Associate Director of Disability Services
- An Academic Support Specialist for science (in process)

Further, we recommend that additional hires be made (one or two, depending on candidate expertise, as we recognize that a single individual could have both skill sets) so that the following expertise is represented among Center staff:

- An Academic Support Specialist whose expertise is in the first-generation college experience
- An Academic Support Specialist whose expertise is in the experience of ELL students—preferably, this person would be bilingual or fluent in Spanish.

Further, we propose consideration of the idea of a “Bridge Faculty”: add 3-4 full-time lines to the Center for Academic Success in a new hybrid faculty/academic capacity. Each faculty member would teach half-time, while spending the balance of their time providing academic support counseling to students and/or professional development and curricular support to faculty, depending on their expertise. Example: Disability specialist with differentiated learning expertise who can teach courses built around weaknesses identified in student’s placement scores.

Further, please see the [Health and Wellness Center project proposal](#) (fourth proposal therein) for ideas regarding an ADHD testing expert and a staff support person to handle paperwork. Such individuals might be housed either under CAS or the Health and Wellness Center.

Finally, we recommend (1) the conduct of a survey to highlight locations on campus where access is unnecessarily limited or totally impeded for those with physical health issues, and then (2) identified issues are addressed and corrected. ([See campus spaces access proposal above.](#))

Rationale: The increasing number of students at the College warranting/requiring academic accommodation means that a one-person Disability Services office is simply unsustainable. The number of accommodation plans written each year has gone up roughly 50% over the last four years. Furthermore, we recommend reviewing whether Disability Services should have its own budget in recognition of the growing complexity of providing adequate support to students with disabilities.

The other positions would serve other changing needs of our student population: the strong interest in science and the health professions, as well as the increasing number of first-generation and ELL students on our campus. Having these specialists on our campus would both help our students succeed and relieve the workload of faculty who are not adequately trained to provide specialized academic support in these fields.

Next Steps: In consultation with the director of the Center for Academic Success and the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, begin to develop a fundraising strategy.

Expand Counseling Services to Support Mental Health at the College

Problem: There has been a marked increase in students needing mental health services. This results in over-worked existing staff—who work valiantly to do all they can to help students—waitlists for frustrated students, and spillover of the consequences for unsupported mental health challenges onto untrained staff and faculty. This proposal should be understood as inextricably linked to the proposal to expand the [Center for Academic Success](#).

Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Y

If Y, then Messaging: Make it here—Make it resilient

Project Proposal Details:

- Add a full-time psychiatrist. A campus psychiatrist is helpful for both students who need to develop an appropriate therapeutic medication strategy (notoriously complicated for newly diagnosed mental illness) and for students who need assessments of learning disabilities. A psychiatrist is also needed because international students (among others) often find it difficult to find a psychiatrist in the community, and the waitlist is significantly higher.
- Add 1-2 additional full-time therapists. Possible expertise areas could include: preventative mental health care; experience in identifying structures and issues that routinely affect mental health in higher education, who can help develop strategies to fix problems and/or address them when they arise. It is also a strong priority to hire new therapists from different identity groups than those already represented at the College, including racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- Increase funding for the doctoral internship program, which currently faces recruitment and equity challenges because the stipend is considerably lower than other internship sites.
- Add an ADHD testing expert (might be housed under Disability Services) and a support staff member (again, could be in Disability Services) who can handle accommodations paperwork, which is currently handled by HWC staff, limiting their abilities to focus on primary clinical duties.

Rationale: The de-stigmatization of mental illness has had a positive effect on many people, but it means that more students are asking for mental health support and overtaxing our existing mental health services. This is an opportunity for us to make a mark as a college that teaches good mental health hygiene and that gives students (and faculty and staff) the capacities to overcome mental health crises.

Next Steps: Fundraising for these positions. As with the [Center for Academic Success](#), might a named health center, or a named mental health center, be appealing to donors? We have raised money for resiliency before, so it seems there is at least some interest around these issues.

Student Advocacy Coordinator (or College Ombudsperson)

Problem: Students who experience violence or significant hardship during their time at Lake Forest College do not have a clear path to communicate their needs and acquiring confidential support and assistance. Further, the [Equity Internship](#) that began in 2021-2022 does not have an official home on campus and will require a supervisor.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Y

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details: Create a new staff position of Student Advocacy Coordinator (or College ombudsperson), reporting to the recommended new Chief Diversity Officer, to serve in two roles:

- As an advocate for students experiencing significant hardship (ex: going through the Title IX process or bias process, experiencing violence, housing displacement, family estrangement, death of a loved one, etc.). The duties of an Advocate or ombudsperson would include response, referral, advocacy, accompaniment, and reporting. An Advocate or ombudsperson would serve a key role in supporting students' success at the college through these duties and maintaining communication with any faculty or staff as required or requested by the student.
- As Director of the proposed [Student Equity Program](#), with responsibility for supervising and advising Equity Interns and Equity Ambassadors as they complete the requirements of their respective programs. This would require the Advocacy Coordinator to communicate with a variety of offices across campus and with faculty advisors.

Rationale: Students are in need of a campus advocate to perform the duties of response, referral, advocate, accompaniment, and reporting when students are in need or are facing significant hardship. Some students can find personal advocates in faculty or staff members they form relationships with, but these individuals may not always be able or equipped to assist students with their needs—and such individuals are not always allowed to provide confidentiality in helping students. Additionally, students who do not form these relationships are left struggling to identify who can help them.

The Equity Internship that began in 2021-2022 will need an on-site supervisor, and were it to expand into the proposed [Student Equity Program](#), then the program would require a coordinator.

Next Steps: Consider the ways in which this position will fit within the new CDO's team. Begin work to fundraise for this position.

Supporting Spiritual and Religious Life on Campus

Problem: There is a lack of formal support for students' spiritual life on our campus. We should work to develop an Interfaith Center, with resources for supporting students' religious lives and addressing their spiritual questions, concerns, and aspirations.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

- This is a DEI initiative; an international relations and intercultural initiative; a mental health initiative; an admissions recruitment opportunity.

Project Proposal Details: Lake Forest College is a secular educational institution, and that is a good thing. Our lack of religious affiliation permits each of us considerable freedom in what we think and believe. However, Lake Forest College is also committed to being a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community. Any educational community that does not provide professionally coordinated and sufficiently visible religious and spiritual resources for students to take advantage of if they so choose is, even if inadvertently, marginalizing the religious and spiritual identities of some of its members. Currently, we address spiritual and religious life largely by providing a website listing of off-campus institutions. There is also a smattering of student religious clubs or groups, which wax or wane from year to year due to the vicissitudes of student leadership. These modest measures are insufficient for students' needs at this unique time in the College's history. This proposal argues for addressing those aspirations by the formation of an Interfaith Center, offering dedicated space, staff, and resources for education in faith and spirituality, dialogue between members of diverse identities, and counseling within a framework of spiritual concerns. It also offers suggestions for shorter-term improvements we can make to the College's resources for religious observers.

Rationale: There are many reasons—some idealistic, some pragmatic—for Lake Forest College to develop a supportive and inclusive approach to students' religious and spiritual lives beyond the classroom.

If our mission statement asserts that “we embrace cultural diversity,” it is our responsibility to embrace the diverse religious/spiritual identities students bring to campus and nurture and support them. For some students, religious/spiritual identity is their primary identity. For other students, religious/spiritual identity is one important identity that they are struggling to reconcile with other aspects of their identity. Helping students navigate this powerful form of identity may play a crucial role in students' self-formation and discovery within a culturally diverse world.

Addressing students' spiritual concerns and questions and providing them with opportunities for religious community is also a mental health imperative, crucially related to the crisis of mental health among young people. Attending to students' spiritual lives should be a key facet of the support provided by any educational institution fully committed to student well-being.

Of course, while religion can serve great good, it has also been a persistent source of conflict in the world. In that regard, providing meaningful and sustained opportunities for students to interact with and learn about community members of other faiths—or even about different traditions within their own faith—can contribute to the long-term, ongoing work of intercultural peacemaking.

On a more pragmatic note, the religious and spiritual resources we do or don't offer may be a factor in the decision-making of prospective students and their families, even if not explicitly acknowledged. In that regard, providing the resources of an Interfaith Center serves also as an admissions opportunity insofar as it would enhance our claims that we care about each student as a "whole person," not just as an intellect or a body. All of the ACM peer institutions with which we would like to compare ourselves ([Grinnell](#), [Carleton](#), [Colorado](#), [Macalester](#), [Knox](#), [St. Olaf](#), [Lawrence](#)) offer significant extracurricular resources to support students' religious lives and spiritual interests; this is true even of those peer institutions that are no longer religiously affiliated. The major universities with which we compete for prospective students—Loyola and DePaul—are religiously affiliated institutions, with rich religious resources for students of faith, whether the Catholic faith each institution is affiliated with or the other faiths to which they offer hospitality. We do not want to lose any competitive edge we might have in relation to those institutions, and this is an area in which we are weak and they are strong.

Finally, this proposal recognizes religion's importance as a matter of diversity, equity, and inclusion and cultural concern. Yet, while religion has profound cultural expressions and ramifications, it is also much more than culture. The Office of Intercultural Relations staff are not specifically trained for interfaith work and spiritual counseling; therefore, we need dedicated space, staff, and resources for this significant undertaking.

Next Steps:

Long term

- Seek support from the President and the Board of Trustees for a new Interfaith Center, with a dedicated space, professional staff, and programming resources.
- Meet with Development and Alumni Relations to discuss development opportunities for an Interfaith Center.

Short term

Until funding is achieved to establish an Interfaith Center, the College should consider the following:

- Acknowledge religious holidays when they are occurring, providing the community with information about resources for supporting their observances. Consider a new "quiet days" policy for major religious holidays—while classes will be offered (with students excused for observance, as we do now), College-wide events will not take place and committees will not meet. Further, have the major religious holidays more visible on the campus calendar(s) to avoid unintentional errors in scheduling.
- Ask departments/programs to avoid scheduling required courses that are only offered in one section on Friday afternoons (especially in the I slot or G/I slot), to avoid scheduling conflicts for observant Jewish and Muslim students.
- Recognize religious or spiritual identity groups on campus as valuable forms of empowerment.
- In training faculty and staff, explicitly educate our new hires to recognize and display sensitivity to the cultural (and intercultural) importance of religion and spirituality and its role in the lives of our community members, whether students, faculty, or staff.
- Work toward devoting time and resources to the cultural understanding of diverse religions and to inter-religious dialogue, as a way of overcoming alienation and building bridges between separate individuals and groups.

Evaluate and Expand the Forester First Program

Problem: The impact of the Forester First program—which provided essential support for first-generation students at Lake Forest College for years—has not been evaluated in recent years, and the program has fallen into disuse for the last two academic years. This points to two separate but interrelated problems: first, the specific needs of first-generation students are not being met. Second, the program structure is out of date regarding best practices for supporting first-generation students and should be updated to take into account the impact of the COVID pandemic. A reconsideration and re-start of the program would provide the College with the opportunity to provide critical support for current first-generation students and to attract talented first-generation applicants to incoming cohorts. The goal is to develop a program that is sustainable in the long-run and that can adapt to a changing world to ensure continued existence of program in the future.

Resources/Fundraising Needed: Yes
If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details:

- Evaluate which aspects of the Forester First program best supported first generation students at the College in the past. Look specifically at the 8 pillars of the current Forester First program to consider any necessary updates. Review the feasibility of the previous structure, with the goal of making it more sustainable.
- Revise the guidelines for participation in Forester First program, in order to ensure that it is accessible to students who need support. For example, international students whose parents attended college outside the US may benefit from participation in the program.
- Update the program to reflect both the specific needs of Lake Forest’s first-generation students and best practices for supporting first-generation students (using data and publications from, among others, the [NASPA Center for First-Generation Student Success](#)).

Rationale: First-generation students continue to face unique challenges in higher education; Lake Forest College is no exception. As an institution with a comparatively large percentage of students who identify as first-generation, it is imperative that the College provide them with a robust support system to ensure their success both as students and beyond graduation. An evaluation of the Forester First program will accomplish this while also re-vamping the program to be more manageable for current staffing and to take into account the impact of recent global events (COVID, for example).

Next Steps:

- Gather data about past Forester First programs and develop a report that assesses the program from the standpoint of students who participated, staff that were associated with the program, and staff knowledgeable of statistical data regarding first-generation students at Lake Forest College.
- Develop an updated Forester First program, using this information, along with national guidelines for best practices for supporting first-generation students.
- Ensure the sustainability of the program by clearly defining expectations and stakeholders across campus.

- Develop a strategy to publicize the existence of our new program—as well as the wider support for first-generation students offered at the College—to prospective students and parents. Work to fundraise to support the program, perhaps among first-generation alumni.

Part IV: Individual Projects

Section 4: Recruit, Retain, and Support Faculty and Staff

Recruiting and Retaining Faculty and Staff from Historically-Underrepresented Groups

Problem: The challenge is two-fold: first, to continue to diversify our faculty and staff, by hiring more people from historically-underrepresented groups; and second, to ensure that once we hire these faculty and staff members, we strive to make their experience truly inclusive and equitable.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional): Some suggestions below would require no fundraising, but rather policy and culture changes. We also outline individual suggestions that require funding below.

Project Proposal Details: We need a comprehensive review of policies, procedure, and processes around recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion for faculty and staff. Specific suggestions include:

Recruitment Efforts: Both Faculty and Staff

- Prioritize recruiting and hiring Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) staff to professional and administrative positions, and faculty to tenure-track positions.
 - Recruit at academic and professional conferences, professional meetings, [The Placement Exchange](#) (TPE), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators ([NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education](#)), etc. Recruitment and marketing efforts come with a cost (the TPE, for example, has recently been virtual and low cost, but was previously prohibitive). Recruitment expenditures include nontraditional marketing venues, outreach, pipeline activities, and developing anti-racism marketing materials.
- Continue to support and expand the work of the Faculty Diversity Recruitment Subcommittee (FDRS). Develop an equivalent body for staff—a Staff Diversity Recruitment Subcommittee (SDRS).
- Require professional development training for all staff and faculty members of groups overseeing searches. Further, all hiring bodies must have access to the toolkits needed to effectively implement the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of faculty, staff, and students. The College should establish procedures that hold search and promotion committees and departments accountable for their procedures and their outcomes.
- Provide all hiring committees with training on how to develop inclusive and equitable job descriptions.
 - Increase awareness of, and eliminate, racially-coded and exclusionary language.
 - Ensure that job descriptions highlight institutional commitment to racial equity and DEI efforts, which are more likely to yield candidates from underrepresented populations.
 - Require a statement from all job candidates about their demonstrated commitment to DEI.
 - Collaborate with the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) to create a joint ACM job board for all member institutions.
- Orientation and onboarding activities should include DEI expectations and resources.

Retention and Persistence Efforts: Staff

Questions to consider for staff retention and persistence:

- What efforts have been established to ensure that DEI values are embedded in the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of staff?
- How do we collect data to track, promote, monitor, and report on the diverse, equitable, and inclusive recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of Black and underrepresented staff?
- Does the institution have an effective communication strategy that reflects equity, diversity, and inclusion?

Efforts to pursue:

- Review standards for promotion: research shows that often BIPOC staff are overworked, undervalued, and critiqued more harshly than their White peers. The staff handbook and initiatives to support staff success and mentoring are critical in retaining diverse staff.
- Make benefits and policies more consistent for faculty and staff. The preferential treatment and benefits that faculty receive over staff creates a demoralizing experience for staff.

Examples of disparities in benefits include:

- Housing benefits: faculty have access to housing for at least 6 years; the staff housing benefit expires after 4 years, and housing in general is not prioritized for staff.
- Tuition benefits: faculty can access this benefit within 1 year of employment at the College; administrative staff must wait 3 years prior to receiving this benefit. Meanwhile, this benefit is not available for other essential staff workers: the night shift crews, the custodial and maintenance staff, the dining services staff, or the lower-wage staff (who make up the most diverse group of our employees).
 - The College should consider providing tuition benefits for all full-time Parkhurst and Aramark (custodial, groundskeeping, and maintenance) staff, to promote educational advancement and socio-economic mobility. Tuition benefits could provide these staff and their families with access to higher education and help them advance both professional and personally. It would demonstrate our commitment to equity and inclusion for all of our community members.
- Immigration sponsorship opportunities exist for faculty but not for staff
- Conduct a comprehensive Staff Handbook and Policy Review. [See also the Staff Governance proposal.](#)

Retention and Persistence Efforts: Faculty

- Faculty from underrepresented groups do much invisible labor, including: the work of integrating homogenous spaces; extra advising labor for students who share their identities; high demand for service due to the desire to include their perspectives and expertise. The College should establish mechanisms—ranging from compensation to more accurate ways of counting service—to recognize and reward this labor and improve retention. [For data on retention of faculty, see Appendix 3.](#)
- There is also evidence that faculty doing research investigating issues affecting historically-underrepresented groups have a more difficult time placing research in journals; that specialist journals focused on historically-underrepresented groups are often regarded as “not high impact;” and that collaborative, decolonizing research with historically-marginalized groups often is designed to be given back to communities, rather than focused

on scholarly journals. All three of these scenarios potentially undermine faculty members' tenure bids. We need to ensure our standards of "rigor" in scholarship are founded on premises that are transparent and inclusive.

- Junior faculty from underrepresented groups may need more space for acclimation, especially in their earliest years at the College. The ACM/Mellon diverse faculty fellowship appointments were designed in response to this reality. In what ways (fundraising, grant-writing, College resource allocation) can we try to replicate elements of that ACM/Mellon experience for our new faculty? The College could, for example, explore the establishment of endowed chairs aimed at junior faculty from historically-underrepresented groups (like the Beerly chair or the Montgomery chair, these could be discipline-agnostic, but seek to support particular faculty with support such as course releases while junior).
- When faculty (and staff and students) from underrepresented groups report incidents of bias or point out systemic issues, listen to them and act to respond.
- Create a transparent and streamlined process of immigration sponsorship for international faculty (and staff). Adopt a provision about immigration sponsorship policy in Faculty Handbook (see. [St. Olaf College](#) handbook, the [Colorado College](#) handbook [pp. 15-16], the [Middlebury College](#) handbook, and the [UIC handbook](#)) and Staff Handbook in order to ensure that immigration applications are prepared, filed, and made progress on equally for all international faculty and staff within the limits of the federal laws. Notably, in the examples linked above, all visas (faculty, staff, students) are handled by a centralized person/office, often in the Office of Intercultural Relations (or its equivalent).

Retention and Persistence Efforts: Both Faculty and Staff

- Fund the monthly Staff and Faculty BIPOC Lunch, as an opportunity for BIPOC staff and faculty to build community and support. This is also an opportunity to promote job postings at the College. Establish a once-per-semester meeting with the CDO to share feedback from this group.
- Create and fund a Staff and Faculty BIPOC Mentor Program that connects new BIPOC faculty and staff members with more senior BIPOC colleagues.
- Ensure regular campus-wide assessment of the BIPOC Faculty and Staff experience in order to help improve retention and recruitment efforts. More on this in the [Campus Climate Survey Proposal](#). Here is an example of thinking on promoting workplace equity from the [Harvard Business Review](#).
- Expand the goals of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Summit as an opportunity to build community and celebrate achievements and spotlight our BIPOC faculty and staff.
- Organize and institute DEI training for all faculty chairs and staff administrators. See more below in the [Ongoing DEI Training](#) proposal.
- Work to ensure that shared governance bodies (faculty, staff, student) are diverse.
- Develop a BIPOC staff/faculty exit interview and use data gathered to keep track of the rate at which BIPOC staff/faculty leave the institution and why, to help inform and improve our retention efforts from year to year
- Keep accurate records of all BIPOC Faculty and Staff for targeted programming.
- Develop career pipeline programs to provide ladders of career opportunities.

Next Steps: All initiatives impacting the recruitment and retention of historically-marginalized faculty and staff should be overseen by the Chief Diversity Officer and have the full support of the

Board of Trustees and College President. We should conduct a comprehensive Faculty and Staff Handbook and Policy Review to ensure equitable and consistent treatment of all faculty and staff. Consider partnering with NADOHE for ongoing best practices in the retention and recruitment of faculty and staff. Some resources to consider include:

- [Recruiting Diverse and Underrepresented Faculty and Senior Administrative Leaders: Best Practices and Strategies](#)
- [Retention Strategies for Diverse and Underrepresented Faculty](#)
- [Evidence Based Strategies for Recruiting a Diverse Faculty](#)
 - [Evaluation of the search process](#)
- [Equity Minded Faculty Workloads: What we can and should do now](#)

Equitable and Transparent Evaluation and Compensation of Faculty

Problem: There is both perceived and real inequity in workload amongst faculty. There is concern that the College is not fully evaluating the work we actually do, nor doing so in the most effective way (i.e., are we evaluating using methods that accurately judge quality and offer data useful for improvement)?

There is a sense that the work that most supports our DEI values is not visible in the current evaluation system.

Questions have been raised about whether the College should explore ways to structure compensation so that it is both more transparent and more performance-based.

There is, currently, no clear path to promotion for long-serving part-time faculty.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Not for the initial discussions, certainly.
If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details: It is time for a wide-ranging and meaningful conversation among the faculty about how to accurately assess the work that faculty actually do and to ensure that compensation reflects that work. It is also time to discuss whether the current compensation system should be reformed: salaries made more transparent, raises or bonuses based on the year's accomplishments.

Furthermore, we need to discuss how we go about accounting for and assessing a faculty member's work on campus—see the related proposal regarding [anonymous course evaluations](#). This conversation should include both revisiting the instruments of assessment (for what we already count) and figuring out what we do not yet account for/assess at all—[especially since this can have a serious impact on who achieves tenure and promotion](#) (i.e., “invisible labor”, particularly of junior faculty, faculty who identify as women, and [faculty of color](#)).

Finally, the College should consider whether it is time to create more predictable and varied faculty roles outside traditional tenure-track faculty. We could, for example, consider creating transparent paths for promotion for part-time faculty. We might also re-visit the discussion about whether full-time, non-tenure-track positions might benefit the College and provide attractive options for faculty who do not wish to meet research requirements for tenure.

Rationale: There is, at the very least, a corrosive perception that work is not rewarded proportionally by compensation on our campus—e.g., that highly-paid senior faculty do little advising or service, that much labor is invisible, that all raises/bonuses are universal, rather than distributed based on actual workload. While the DEI Planning Committee is not certain what the answer to this perception is, we do believe that it is time for a robust conversation about this issue, with all possibilities on the table. Already begun is an effort on the part of FPPC to better account for the service that faculty perform, and to distribute service more evenly. We applaud this effort and argue for its extension into how we assess teaching, advising, and non-traditional scholarship.

Next Steps: We suggest that FPPC name an *ad hoc* task force to take up these issues. Such a task force should include representation from junior and part-time faculty.

Eliminate Anonymous Course Evaluations

Problem: Anonymous course evaluations have been shown in many studies (see links below) to be of questionable value: first, because they offer few concrete benefits for faculty development; second, because students consistently demonstrate bias against historically-marginalized faculty (women, people of color, LGBTQ+ faculty, international faculty, etc.) in these instruments.

Fundraising Needed (Y/N): N

If Y, then Messaging:

Project Proposal Details: Replace anonymous course evaluations with two things—

1. Student course feedback that is not anonymous. It would be possible to use the current forms, but simply require student names. Another option would be to make the forms confidential but not anonymous (i.e., professors would not see names, but if inappropriate comments are found, appropriate personnel could discover names and initiate a conduct process for the student). More discussion would be required to determine the best format.
2. A mechanism for students to report any inappropriate policies or behavior on the part of faculty anonymously. Again, we could build upon existing policies and structures, including the grade appeal process, the Bias Incident Response Process, and so on.

Rationale: The value of student course evaluations, especially anonymous course evaluations, have been repeatedly called into question. The American Sociological Association’s 2019 statement, [which can be found here](#), contains a useful summary of these problems as well as a bibliography of studies on this issue. From a DEI perspective, it is particularly relevant that—as the ASA statement put it—“in both observational studies and experiments, SETs have been found to be biased against women and people of color.”

As we work to diversify the faculty at a College where teaching effectiveness is the primary criterion for tenure and promotion, it would be counterproductive to continue to use an instrument that has been shown to perpetuate biased feedback.

If the College wishes to continue having student evaluations of courses (and this is up for discussion, as [serious questions have been raised about their effectiveness, above and beyond](#) crucial issues of bias), we recommend that student names be attached to their evaluations, to encourage thoughtful and appropriate feedback.

At the very least—and this is a very distant second—we should establish a mechanism for professors to report inappropriate comments (perhaps to HR, perhaps to the director of the Office of Faculty Development) and to have those comments removed from their record of evaluation.

There are occasions, however, when students use the anonymity of course evaluations to report inappropriate policies/grading/behavior/etc. on the part of faculty. Recognizing that the ability to report such matters anonymously is important, we must provide the means by which such reporting can continue.

Next steps: Bring the issue to FPPC to begin a campus conversation.

Equitable and Transparent Evaluation and Compensation of Staff

Problem: There are disparities and inequities in salary at the institution, whereby staff with similar titles are paid drastically differently. Internal hiring is not always consistent and transparent, and access to promotion or advancement is inconsistent. Establishing equitable and transparent frameworks helps articulate the priorities of the institution and aids in the recruitment and retention of staff. It also helps foster a commitment by the institution to the staff it seeks to hire and retain.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Yes

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional): Funding is needed for potential added compensation and benefits for staff. [See ideas discussed above.](#)

Project Proposal Details: Ensure equitable performance evaluations and compensation for staff; evaluations should include stated goals, rewards, and accountability if those goals are not met.

Rationale: Equity pay analysis is important for employees of all designations: [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) prohibits wage discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin. However, absent pay equity studies, many BIPOC higher education staff (and faculty) salary ranges may be below their White peers and may thus require adjustment. “Equal pay for equal work is not a reality for many people of color. When we control for education, years of experience, occupation and other compensable factors, most men and women of color still earn less than White men” (Equal PayScale, 2020; [the 2022 report is here](#)). Attracting and retaining talented staff through fair compensation practices is critical to an anti-racism framework.

Next Steps:

- Develop equitable evaluation rubrics across all departments at the institution and assess the effectiveness of evaluation tools on a yearly basis.
- Assess pay for all staff across the institution and provide transparent data on salary and pay for all employees of the institution. Make this data accessible to all, in the spirit of transparency and equity.
- Allow for salary negotiation and increased compensation after evaluations and reviews.
- Consider creative ways to help compensate staff. These could include:
 - Professional development funding
 - Tuition benefits that allow for staff to advance their education
 - Daycare services
 - Campus Housing
 - Stipend for gas, personal cellphone, Metra transportation
 - On-campus meal plan
 - Opportunity for staff sabbaticals
- Consider using the [AGB Board of Director’s Statement on Justice, Equity and Inclusion and Guidance for Implementation](#) as a guide for best practices.

Part IV: Individual Projects

Section 5: Sustained Opportunities for DEI Training and Work

Ongoing DEI Training for Staff and Faculty

Problem: Currently, there is no defined expectation for staff and faculty to actively engage in DEI training, beyond online courses at the point of hire, or after major bias events occur on campus. The voluntary nature of participation in essential equity and inclusion preparation means that only a small, self-selecting number of faculty and staff commit to participating in DEI initiatives for professional development. Students have expressed frustration in IAG Community Caucuses with lack of understanding from certain staff or faculty regarding these issues.

Resources/Fundraising Needed: Yes

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details:

- Provide recurring and sustainable training opportunities for faculty and staff to develop their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Develop a programming schedule that provides both in-person and online workshops.
- Ensure that faculty and staff attend DEI training with agreed-upon regularity.
- Opportunities should be varied enough to ensure that training addresses specific needs of different stakeholders. For example, workshops for faculty could include: “Evidence-Based and Equitable Pedagogy,” “Facilitating Critical Dialogue,” “Pedagogical Strategies for a Neurodiverse Classroom,” or “Decolonizing Your Syllabus.”
- Workshops for student-facing faculty and staff could include “Supporting Students in Response to Racial, Ethnic, or Gendered Violence in the News,” “Allyship: Becoming an Advocate on Campus,” “Addressing Micro-Aggressions in the Workplace,” “Supporting Diverse Students Through Online and Digital Engagement.”
- Consider expanding the Intergroup Dialogue program—to be launched in 2022-2023—to include faculty and staff. See also the [Curriculum Content Areas and Difficult Conversations](#) proposal.

Rationale:

In order to increase campus-wide commitment to improving equity and inclusion, we must ensure that all members of the College community are prepared to support the changes that come with expanding DEI efforts. To do this, there has to be a well-defined expectation for all stakeholders to actively engage with DEI training.

Next Steps:

- Define expectations and required level of engagement.
- Create replicable and sustainable campus-wide training opportunities. These can involve a mix of live and pre-recorded, in-person and online/hybrid opportunities, to ensure ample participation.
- Generate criteria for evaluating staff and faculty participation in DEI training.

Curriculum Content Areas and Training for Difficult Conversations

Problem: While major advancements have been made in diversifying our curriculum, particularly with the creation of the African American Studies department and the augmenting of the Latin American/LatinX Studies program, we should plan for further content diversity. Furthermore, we should explore the ways that we can encourage/train all faculty to diversify their syllabi and learn to handle classroom discussions about challenging topics.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Grant funding would be worth investigating, including the Mellon Foundation’s current “Humanities for All Time” grant line. Further, raising money for new faculty lines would be worth exploring (as was done for the hiring of key AFAM and LNAM faculty), as would funding for relevant initiatives, such as new programs or Intergroup Dialogue. Finally, we could allocate College resources in targeted ways to encourage faculty development and course development—for example, via course development and revision grants.

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details:

- Continue to build curricular content focused on historically-underrepresented groups. This could include expanding current departments and programs devoted to such content (notably, AFAM, LNAM, ASIA, and ISWS). Further, we might explore whether new programs should be added (e.g., Indigenous Studies, Disability Studies, and so on). However, we warn against founding new programs without adequate funding and staffing—this leads to faculty burnout and anemic programs.
- Encourage faculty across the curriculum to incorporate content that addresses historically-underrepresented groups, and/or engages with issues of privilege and marginalization in its myriad forms.
 - One way to do so might be to establish course development/revision grants. As an example: more than 10 years ago, there was an initiative to expand the course offerings in Islamic World Studies, and faculty were offered a stipend to revise their courses accordingly. That model could work again, both for finding courses to count for programs and/or to increase appropriate content in any course.
- Encourage faculty (and staff and students) to acquire skills in conducting “difficult conversations”. The challenge we face as faculty is not just incorporating/developing new material into the curriculum, but rather an understandable reluctance to engage in difficult conversations out of fear that we lack the skills to engage appropriately. While the Office of Faculty Development has offered ideas and training opportunities over the last three years (and will continue to do so), more systematic opportunities to build concrete skills, in programs such as Intergroup Dialogue, could be transformative. Specific ideas/areas to explore include:
 - Could Intergroup Dialogue training become part of New Student Orientation?
 - Intergroup Dialogue courses are being developed for the College—can count for Domestic Pluralism and (for student facilitators) Experiential Learning
 - Ways to encourage faculty and staff to take part in such training.

Rationale: We are, first and foremost, an educational institution, and offering educational content to our students around issues of diversity and marginalization is crucial. We need to help our

community members acquire the skills to have these conversations and to enrich our course offerings/content accordingly.

Next Steps:

- Explore expansion plan for LNAM (Office of Alumni and Development might explore fundraising opportunities to support this)
- Explore interest/funds for other possible content areas or for the enrichment of existing courses with new material (Faculty, CPC, OFD grants)
- Explore further training for faculty (and staff and students) in difficult conversations and Intergroup Dialogue (via OFD programming, student orientation, etc.)

DEI Certificate Program for Students

Problem: A large percentage of students do not actively participate in DEI initiatives throughout campus. Students associated with Office of Intercultural Relations have expressed frustration with the lack of engagement with DEI concerns and activities from the majority White population of students on campus.

Resources/Fundraising Needed: No
If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details:

- Create a Certificate in DEI. For students who rarely engage with DEI, this would create an incentive to participate in DEI initiatives and attend events by offering something tangible that they can add to their resumes and graduate school applications. For those who are already involved in DEI work, this would offer a way to recognize the work of students attending DEI events and initiatives.
- Promote the certificate opportunity to students via departments, the OIR list-serve, and other campus partners. Such promotion could emphasize the importance of DEI across different industries and professions in today's world to generate interest.
- Create safe spaces for students unfamiliar with DEI topics to discuss difficult subjects. Offer training—via Intergroup Dialogue and other means—to build skills in difficult conversations.
- OIR would offer one DEI workshop or talk per month that students could attend. Students completing a certificate would be required to attend a specific number of workshops throughout the year. Workshops will be varied, to appeal to students with different academic, career, and personal interests. For example, OIR and CAC could conduct a workshop for pre-professional students interested in healthcare on social determinants of health.
- Students pursuing a certificate would also be required to attend a specific number of qualifying events (talks, film screenings, etc.).
- Students would complete a self-reflection progress sheet as they participate in workshops and events, that would be submitted when they have completed all the requirements.

Rationale:

The College needs to take a proactive approach to encourage all students, regardless of identity group, to engage with DEI topics and initiatives. Offering a certificate recognizes the fact that engaging in these activities and working towards an equitable and anti-racist community requires hard work. ([See also the Student Equity Intern/Ambassador Proposal.](#)) This form of tangible recognition would ensure that BIPOC and other students already doing this work would receive appropriate recognition, and it would also encourage students who may not have considered participating in these events to become more engaged. Students could present this certificate in their resumes and graduate school applications, thereby making their applications more competitive.

Next Steps:

- Watch the campus conversation around the establishment of a College-wide system of certificates; if the system is implemented, propose a DEI Certificate under its aegis. In the

meantime, consider the possibility of having students enroll and complete a less formal certificate program through Moodle or my.involvement.

- Evaluate what existing programming and events would be recognized towards the certificate.
- Plan a list of DEI workshops for next academic year that would be offered to students. Specify requirements and type of recognition.
- This could also be offered as faculty programming, with a different set of workshops geared towards equitable and inclusive evidence-based teaching—see the [Ongoing DEI Training for Faculty and Staff](#) and [Curriculum Content Areas and Difficult Conversations](#) proposals.

Student Equity Intern/Ambassador Program

Problem: Students are not being compensated for the important contributions they bring to equity work at the College. This, combined with the fatigue of equity work at an institution like Lake Forest, often causes students to become significantly less motivated to participate by their junior or senior year.

Resources/Fundraising Needed (Y/N): Y

If Fundraising Needed, Messaging Ideas (optional):

Project Proposal Details: Build a program for students to receive pay and/or academic credit for the equity work they do on campus. This program would consist of two groups of students:

1. Equity Interns, who work directly with the College to do work on committees and councils, collaborate with offices and individuals on campus, and lead projects within the Lake Forest College community that focus on issues of inequity. These interns would be paid and/or could receive academic credit for their work with the College.
2. Equity Ambassadors are students who would conduct projects in an effort to gain an experiential understanding of what equity work can look like in their academic area of interest. This can look like research, advocacy campaigns, community initiatives, etc., all of which can occur within and use the Lake Forest College community as a resource, but the work done by ambassadors is not in partnership or for the institution. The student ambassadors will select a faculty advisor to serve as their academic resource, while the staff member who operates the Student Equity Program will supervise their projects on a weekly basis.

Rationale: Lake Forest College students have for years been heavily involved in equity work at the college. As our student body continues to engage in these issues and provide invaluable labor and leadership to these important efforts, it only makes sense to compensate that student work with academic credit and/or pay. The uncompensated nature of equity work at the College means that students who were vocal leaders and participants at the beginning of their academic career at the College often choose to disengage as they head into their junior and senior years. Equity work is often personal, emotional, and involves a practice of resistance, all of which makes it tiring. Such vital work on behalf of the College should be compensated and, where appropriate, appear on the transcript.

Next Steps: Consider how this program would intersect with new on-campus internships, approved in February 2022.

Consider how this program would be overseen and supervised: we suggest that it be done by the [Student Advocacy Coordinator](#) or College Ombudsperson (once hired), who would report in turn to the [Chief Diversity Officer](#). The Career Advancement Center might also be involved.

Part V. Appendices

Appendix 1: Course Fs and Student Demographics (with thanks to Kyle Diep for this data)

*In any given category, numbers may not add up to 100% as blank fields were excluded

Academic Year	% F Non-White*	% Pop. Non-White*	% F White*	% Pop. White*
2020-21	70.9%	50.8%	29.1%	49.1%
2019-20	60.2%	45.6%	39.8%	54.2%
2018-19	55.1%	42.8%	44.9%	55.9%
2017-18	54.5%	42.3%	45.5%	56.6%
2016-17	40.2%	41.9%	59.8%	56.6%
5-year average	56.2%	44.7%	43.8%	54.5%

Academic Year	% F 1st gen*	% Pop. 1st gen*	% F Non-1st gen*	% Pop. Non-1st gen*
2020-21	41.8%	31.7%	50.8%	66.6%
2019-20	41.8%	28.1%	55.1%	67.2%
2018-19	44.9%	27.4%	49.4%	66.3%
2017-18	32.7%	26.2%	50.0%	65.5%
2016-17	27.6%	26.2%	50.6%	63.8%
5-year average	37.8%	27.9%	51.2%	65.9%

Academic Year	% F Pell	% Pop. Pell	% F Non-Pell	% Pop. Non-Pell
2020-21	44.4%	36.5%	55.6%	63.5%
2019-20	44.9%	34.2%	55.1%	65.8%
2018-19	51.7%	35.2%	48.3%	64.8%
2017-18	48.2%	36.9%	51.8%	63.1%
2016-17	42.5%	35.8%	57.5%	64.2%
5-year average	46.3%	35.7%	53.7%	64.3%

Appendix 2
Campus Spaces Research

Report to the
Intercultural Advisory Group
at
Lake Forest College
on
Diversity and Inclusion at Lake Forest College

Compiled from data collected and analyzed by students
in SOAN 320: Qualitative Methods

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Gaby Silva
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Under the direction of Professor Holly Swyers, Anthropologist
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

On November 4, 2019, members of the SOAN 320: Qualitative Methods course taught by Holly Swyers conducted six focus groups on campus. The focus groups were designed to elicit feedback from members of the student body about data that the Methods students had collected about ways in which Lake Forest College students experienced the diversity of campus. The focus groups ranged in size from 3 to 8 participants and a total of 31 students participated in the focus groups. Of these, 11 identified as male and 20 identified as female. Each focus group was racially and ethnically mixed, and a total of 11 white students, 9 Asian students, 7 Latinx students, and 4 Black students participated. The Methods class had initially recruited 46 students, so fully 2/3 of those recruited participated. This is a relatively high yield, which suggests that students were motivated to participate in the focus groups, although whether that was out of a sense of obligation to their recruiter or out of a desire to discuss diversity on campus is unclear.

Each focus group was run by a moderator and had at least one notetaker (most had two). Moderators presented a slide show sharing the results of four projects the Methods students had done to explore campus climate (see appendix). As each set of results was presented, moderators solicited reactions from their focus group participants, inviting them to challenge, reflect on, or explain the results. The balance of this report is broken into subsections, describing the data that was presented and the student reactions.

Free lists: Diversity = acceptance, but only for students of color

Methods students had collected free lists from 81 students at Lake Forest College, asking them what words they associated with diversity. The most interesting finding in the analysis of the free lists was that students of color were very likely to list the word “acceptance” as a word associated with diversity, but no white student included the word acceptance in their list. After this information was shared with the members of the focus groups, moderators asked focus group participants for their initial reactions, how they interpreted the presence of the word acceptance in conjunction with diversity for students of color, and what they thought this information revealed about how Lake Forest college might be experienced differently by different races/ethnicities on campus.

One student mentioned that the results made her consider the mentality of white students versus students of color. She said since our college consists mostly of white, heterosexual students, “White students do not feel the need to be accepted.” A South Asian student in a different group observed, “White people have been in the power of position for a long time, so it is evident that white people wouldn’t put themselves in the position of those who have been oppressed for many years. Since they have been getting acceptance, it is more likely that they wouldn’t mention it.” A Latino in yet another group noted, “This might come down who wants or craves acceptance. White people have acceptance in their community whereas other races such as African Americans might want to achieve acceptance.” A Latina commuter described the atmosphere of the town of Lake Forest as very “white,” which feels very different from her home in Waukegan and contributes to a sense of needing acceptance, while in another group, a South African used the free list data to acknowledge different definitions of diversity and pointed out from his perspective, “Your race determines your definition of diversity.” In the face of conversations like this, a white student said, “Ideally, we all want to say that we are accepting, but that is not always the case.”

Maps of Campus: Where students feel safe/unsafe or welcome/unwelcome

Another project Methods students undertook was using maps to conduct interviews of students about how they experienced campus. Each Methods student interviewed at least one other student,

opening the interview by showing the interviewee three maps of campus (North, Middle, and South). Interviewees were asked to circle where they spent the most time, to put a check mark on places they felt safe/welcome, and to put an x mark on places they felt unsafe/unwelcome. Then they were asked a series of questions about their maps. Twenty students were interviewed, with equal distributions of men, women, white people, and people of color. The maps and interview responses were analyzed and aggregated, and during the focus groups, Methods students showed participants the maps of campus. Among other things, the maps identified four quasi-public spaces on campus where students described spending the most time: the library, the student center, the cafeteria, and the Sports Center. Of those four spaces, only one (the library) was consistently deemed safe/welcoming. Among more private spaces (particularly residence halls), North campus tended to be described as relatively less safe/welcoming than South, a discovery that surprised focus group participants.

In one group, a woman commented, “The reactions to South Campus surprised me because I feel very unsafe or unwelcome on South. I don’t necessarily find the Sports Center unsafe or unwelcome because I am usually there with my friends. I might feel weird if there is a sports team practicing. But the South campus quad always makes me very uncomfortable. I just don’t like the vibes there.” A male student asked her, “Is it because of the football players?” The woman responded, “A lot of the athletes live on South campus. I feel super comfortable on Middle and North campus. Maybe it’s because I am not as familiar with South campus.”

Another group engaged in a spirited conversation about why the Sports Center was perceived as welcoming to so many of the interviewees. There were no athletes in this focus group, and none of them felt comfortable on South campus. An Asian woman stated “As like a female, I am at the gym often and it can be threatening a bit. There is a swarm of football players and it is open to the community, so you have people staring you down.” A white woman said of South campus more generally, “I stayed for the summer and sometimes I would feel unsafe and unwelcome, but that was mostly because of the reputation of South campus. I heard that there would be a lot of harassment.” The theme of women feeling particularly unsafe in particular spaces came up in yet another focus group, where a woman stated, “I feel like the Sports Center feels unsafe along with the caf, because when I go, I notice that the football team clearly checks out girls. I don't want to be objectified and that's what it feels like is happening, so I stay away from both places.”

A group that was primarily composed of commuters was “shocked” to discover that people felt more uncomfortable in North than on South. They mentioned that they see more people of color in North, whereas they felt least safe and welcome in the South Campus Quad. They felt that the only people they saw on South were white athletes in groups. Another group focused on the perceptions of Middle campus, with a Bulgarian woman describing a pattern she saw in the maps where students feel safer in places used for academics than in social spaces. Every person in this group seemed surprised that North had this common stereotype of being “unsafe.”

After the focus groups, Methods students reflected that the interviews from which they built their maps included many students who lived on South, while focus group participants tended to live on North or Middle or were commuters, which may be part of what produced the strong disagreement between interview results and focus group results. This did not reflect a conscious sampling decision, but it is a useful observation. Within the focus groups, the idea of the relevance of where you live was voiced in at least three groups. There was the observation of the woman noted above who was less familiar with South campus. Then there was this comment from a Latino: “It comes to

down to where you are from, where you stay to party. If you live on North campus, you will feel most safe. When you go out to new territory, you might feel unsafe.” A similar view came from a South African man, who said he has never felt particularly unsafe or unwelcome on campus. He said that for him, and to others who live on North, North is their own space where they have built a certain safeness to it. These points connect to the next set of data presented in the focus groups.

Social Networks and Clique-ishness

One of the more surprising answers in the map interviews came to the question, “Do your friends share your relationship to different places on campus? If not, how do they experience places differently?” With only one exception, every interviewee reported that their friends experienced campus in the same way that they did. This information guided data collection for a social network analysis. Methods students each identified three people with whom they hung out the most, then asked those three people to list the three people they hung out with most, and then asked the resulting list of nine people whom they hung out with the most. After each student listed the people they hung out with, Methods students asked the gender and race/ethnicity of each person listed and asked how they knew each other. The resulting 17 networks had surprisingly few overlaps, despite containing over 300 unique individuals. Two thirds of the the social networks were homogenous along race and gender lines, and many were homogenous based on sports teams. Moderators presented this information to focus group participants, combining it with an observation from the map interviews that students tended to describe most spaces on campus as safe if they were with their friends. They also shared information they had gathered doing observations on campus: students who were in groups tended to interact exclusively with their groups, and solo students tended to avoid interaction altogether.

Methods students described what they perceived as a tendency for Lake Forest College students to find their groups and stay within them relatively exclusively and asked focus groups for their response to this observation. In one focus group, many participants said they hang out with people who have the same culture or racial identity as them because they are the most comfortable around people who are similar to them. One student of color in that group commented, “I think culture plays a big role as well. If there are similarities between people, then they tend to hang out more. I went to a UWC and I tend to hang out with other students who also went to UWCs.” In another focus group, participants acknowledged that there are obvious groups on campus but that they did not think any of this was intentional or negative. Instead they regarded it as a product of how people have met and associate. Participants in this group argued for some kind of event or way of getting people to interact more and get to know other people on campus. Another group thought it would be good for groups to branch out, but they didn’t think that people having their own groups was at all a bad thing. They perceived it as “just how students happen to get to know people.”

A junior in another focus group, after hearing the Moderator’s explanation of what the Methods students discovered, stated, “One reason for this is that we are a small school. Once you find your people you stick to them.” The participants in this group talked about how cliques can seem like they are based on “look-a-likes,” but that is not always the case. They claimed groups are formed through academic and social interests, but also through orientation groups. As they explored this theme, they also discussed the idea that discomfort is a factor in how campus groups form. A white international woman said, “Most friends I met through First Connection, and I had a hard time connecting to white native students as they did not have much in common with me. They did not make an effort to understand other students.” A Black woman mentioned that people who grew up around other people of color, regardless of their race, were friendlier towards her, thus making her

hang out with them more. She felt that white people who grew up around only white people felt a little stiff for her so she chooses not to hang out with them. A white student reinforced the point, mentioning that this was because if there is even the slightest tension or difference within a group, she felt uncomfortable.

As a point of contrast, two students of color in a different focus group pointed out that they had spent their lives at PWIs (primarily white institutions), and that put them in situations where they were forced to make friends across racial lines. As one of them stated, “People won’t come to us, so we have to go out there and talk to people.” For a white student who also had attended a primarily white high school, the effect was different. He stated, “I went to a high school that was predominantly white, so I feel like we’re exposed to more culture and diversity here. I don’t mind it but I wouldn’t go out of my way to talk to them.” Without experience of a more diverse institution to guide social interactions across racial and ethnic lines, he preferred not to make the effort. This may have contributed to a point made in another focus group: “It is easy for homogeneity to happen.”

In contrast to other groups, though, the same student went on to say, “It results in a lack of education between groups.” In one group, participants described an unspoken hierarchy established by athletic teams on campus, prompting a discussion of how the athletes should try to get more in touch with the school so that they don’t miss out on a lot of different social connections. An athlete in the group shared her experiences trying to socialize outside of her sports team, and how her team would almost shame/berate her trying to get to know other people. A note taker for this group wrote, “As she explained it, it seems like certain sports teams sought to foster almost clannish behavior that other students noticed.” A final note, which may warrant more attention, came from a focus group where a woman noted that the creation of cliques and the lack of branching out between groups on campus is due to a fear of rejection.

Conclusions

While few people would dispute that Lake Forest College is relatively diverse in terms of numbers, Methods students’ data collection revealed the ways the campus fails at inclusivity. The data collected via free lists, interviews, social network analyses, observations, and focus groups revealed that Lake Forest College students are inclined to find social groups as quickly as possible upon arrival at college and stick within them. This strategy reflects students’ deep discomfort at being alone, and, for women on campus, is a deliberate strategy to improve their sense of safety on campus. The groups that form, however, are striking for their internal homogeneity along race and gender lines. The latter may reflect the safety question for women, but the former results in a sense of alienation and lack of inclusion on the part of students of color and international students. Many perceive US white students as unwilling to accept their overtures of friendship (or see white students feeling those overtures as uncomfortable) and see themselves as a tolerated group on campus as opposed to an included group.

Ironically, measures taken to help students connect with one another in early stages of their college career seem to have a calcifying effect on student groups that may explain how this racial/ethnic divide is established. Two significant groups arrive on campus ahead of the rest of the student body: fall athletes and students who are either international students or from historically underrepresented groups. During the time before classes start, both groups are encouraged to bond internally, but there appears to be minimal connection between the two groups. This lack of connection may be exacerbated by geography; student athletes tend to live on South campus near the athletic facilities,

while many international students live in Cleveland Young, potentially making North campus the center for the First Connection group. When first year students who did not participate in either First Connection or fall athletics arrive on campus, they are confronted with two already formed polities. For those in athletics, there is a potential draw to the fall athlete group, while students of color or who might otherwise feel historically marginalized may be more likely to gravitate toward the First Connection group. The balance of students might be most influenced by geography and the sense of “pull” each group exercises on them.

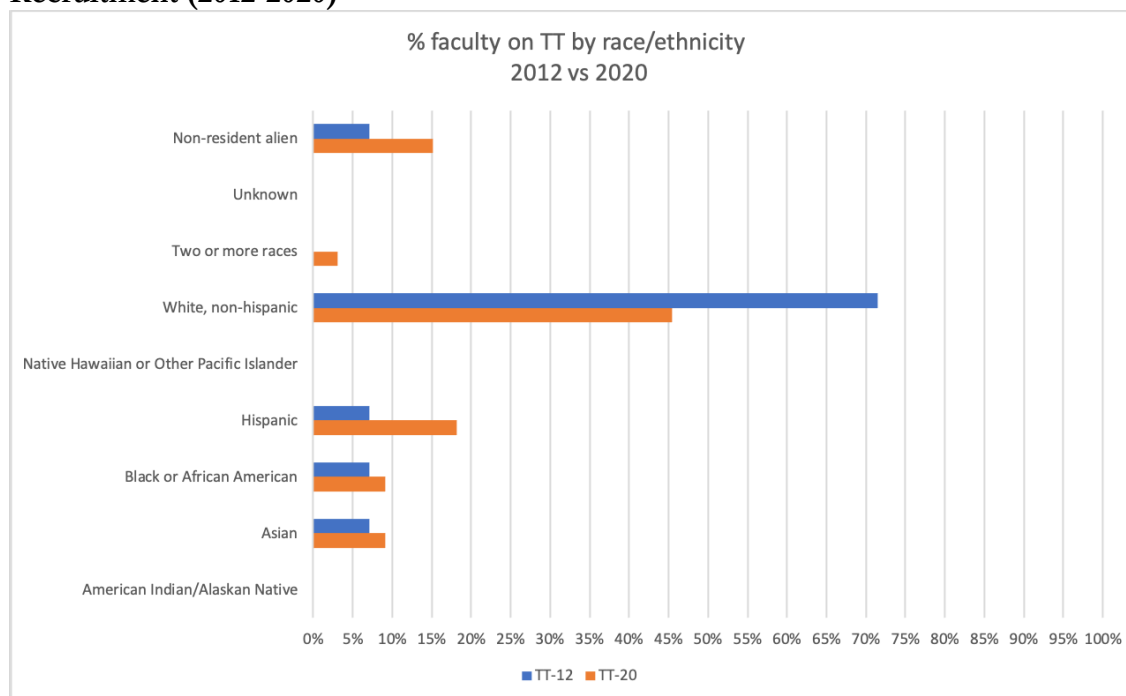
An unintended consequence of this pattern of early summer arrivals is that Lake Forest College effectively becomes a campus experienced very differently by two different groups. That these groups are also characterized as being racially distinct from one another exacerbates the biases and anxieties around race and ethnicity that students bring to campus. For many students on campus, diversity on campus means no more than coexisting in the same space, with very little cause or opportunity for connecting across social lines. The very practices that operate to help students find friends and connections on campus also serve to isolate students of different backgrounds from one another. For white US American students on campus, they can continue to exist in a PWI environment without worrying about what else might be occurring on campus, but for students of color and white international students, the passive disregard of their white US American peers is felt as dismissal and an unwillingness to connect: i.e., a lack of acceptance.

There are a number of additional angles from which to research the apparent divide on campus. The first and most obvious is to examine the perception that athletics are predominantly white and that students of color are less engaged in athletic groups. Which students bridge groups organized around athletics and those organized around cultural identity, and how do they perceive the experiences of their peers? It also would be useful to consider how events and student experiences outside of academics are scheduled. To what extent are cultural events and athletic events scheduled in the same blocks of time, compelling students to choose how to spend their time in ways that may decrease opportunities for connections between groups? A more complicated problem to consider is the way that anxieties about social rejection are playing out for students. What strategies can students learn that will help them feel less risk-averse in connecting with others? Finally, what is the experience of students who find themselves outside of both athletic and cultural identity groups? How do they navigate the social terrain of campus, and what do their social networks look like? To what extent do academic majors or social clubs produce strong social ties on par with those that appear to develop for athletic teams and cultural identity groups?

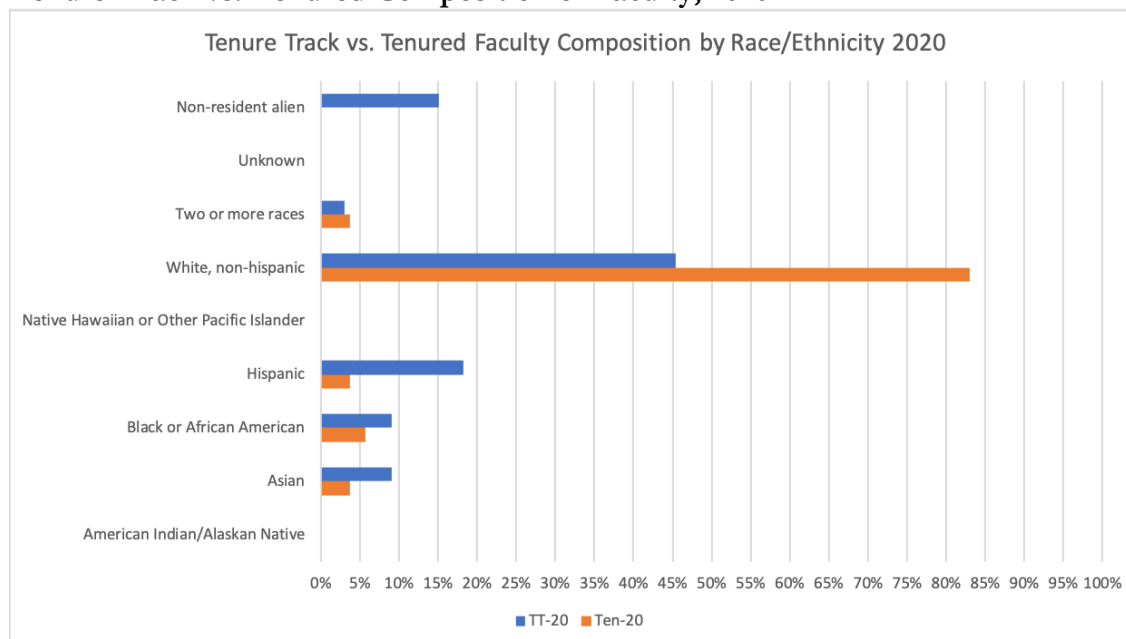
Appendix 3: Retention of Faculty (Tenured/Tenure-Track)

All data is pulled from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), to which we annually report the racial/ethnic and gender composition of all our employees. The data is maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Recruitment (2012-2020)



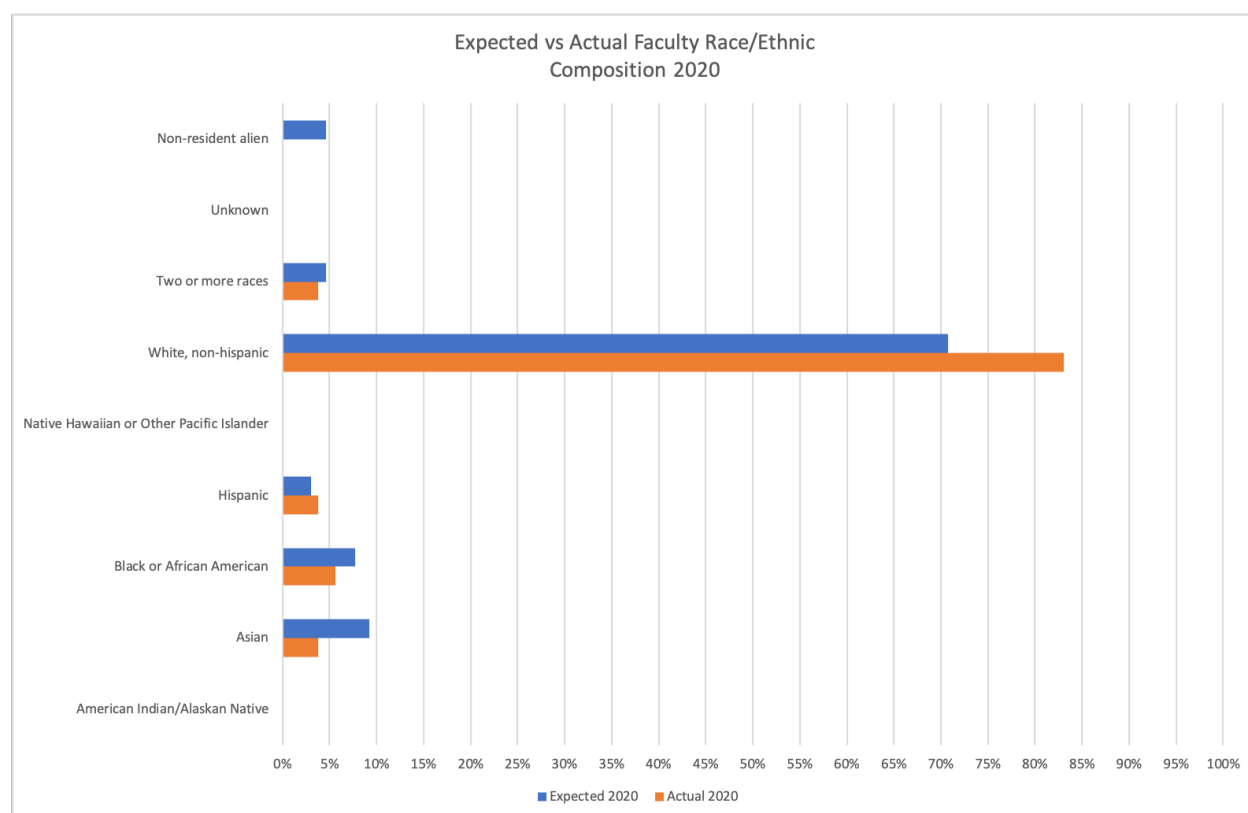
Tenure-Track vs. Tenured Composition of Faculty, 2020



Expected vs. Actual Composition of the Tenured faculty in 2020

How expected composition was calculated (assumptions):

- Faculty go up for tenure in their 6th year, which means anyone on tenure track in 2012 or 2013 (we do not have data for 2014)—if retained—would be tenured in 2020. There was some tenure track-attribution between 2012 and 2013 which could not be accounted for with an increase in tenured individuals within a particular race/ethnic group between 2019 and 2020. When this happened, I used the number of tenure-track individuals from 2012 instead of 2013.
- Between 2012-2019 there were 24 faculty retirements. I subtracted those faculty from the relevant race/ethnicity groups in years subsequent to their retirements.
- I added the tenure-track faculty from 2012 or 2013 (as noted in the first point above) to the remaining number of tenured faculty after subtracting the retirees. During this period of time (2012-2020), the overall size of the full-time tenured and tenure track faculty shrank from 89 people to 86 people.



While we appear to be retaining White and Hispanic faculty at a higher-than-expected rate, we are doing far less well at retaining Black and Asian faculty. The “Non-resident alien” category is harder to parse, since it may reflect changes in immigration status that would cause individuals in that category to be absorbed into a different demographic category over time.