

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council

Annual Report

May 5, 2023

I. Diversity Committee Formation

The Diversity Committee of the University of Southern Indiana was created in response to Ind. Code § 21-27-8-7 was implemented by Public Law 167-2007 after the passage of House Enrolled Act 1256. The Indiana Code requires the establishment of the Diversity Committee, which shall do the following:

- Review and recommend faculty employment policies concerning diversity issues.
- Review faculty and administration personnel complaints concerning diversity issues.
- Make recommendations to promote and maintain cultural diversity among faculty members.
- Make recommendations to promote recruitment and retention of minority students.
- Issue an annual report stating the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the committee to the board.

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) was formed in 2018 and replaced the Diversity Committee. The Council is an educative and advisory group composed of faculty, staff, and students from different racial/ethnic, social statuses, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, veteran status, and religions that reflect the diversity within the university community, as well as advocates for those groups.

II. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council (EDIC)

The mission and vision of the EDIC council align with the core value of the "Inclusive and Diverse Community" of the University of Southern Indiana's Strategic Plan.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council (EDIC) of USI is to identify, understand, act upon, and evaluate initiatives and opportunities to promote inclusion for representation, involvement, and empowerment of diverse communities across campus.

Vision Statement: The vision of EDIC is to create an equitable environment where all can challenge thought and practice while embracing each other in our unique individualities to produce representation, involvement, and empowerment of all communities across campus.

Goals:

- Create and sustain a welcoming campus community that strives for structural diversity based on principles of equity and inclusion through leadership and action at all levels of the Institution.
- Strengthen and improve the structural diversity of the University of Southern Indiana campus community.
- Cultivate mutually beneficial community-university partnerships that further the mission of the University with an emphasis on historically and currently underserved communities.

The Council uses the following definitions for its work.

Equity: Creating opportunities for equal access and success for historically underrepresented populations, such as racial and ethnic minority and low-income students, in three main areas:

- Representational equity, the proportional participation at all levels of an institution;
- Resource equity, the distribution of educational resources to close equity gaps; and
- Equity-mindedness, the demonstration of an awareness of and willingness to address equity issues among institutional leaders and staff.

Diversity: Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, physical or cognitive abilities, as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations) that can be engaged in the service of learning.

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical). This engagement with diversity has the potential to increase one's awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Accomplishments 2022-2023

- Expansion of EDIC committees
- Focus groups
- Onboarding new members
- New initiatives

Expansion of EDIC Committees

The level of progression of DEI efforts to support equity, diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging has increased. We have eight areas across campus with nine committees focused on DEI work. Athletics is the most recent area to form a functioning committee. A framework of committees allows USI to have a larger footprint. Student Government Association continues to

have a dedicated position responsible for chairing the SGA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. The responsibility for developing action plans continues to lie with members of the USI community. It is through their work belongingness and feeling value flourishes.

Focus Groups

Dr. Charles Blaich and Ms. Kathy Wise of the [Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium](#) (HEDS) continue to provide their expertise. They conducted nine focus groups from October 24 to October 26, 2022. USI intentionally used HEDS as an outside entity so that participants would feel comfortable sharing their personal experiences at USI. HEDS was also used to protect their anonymity. Participants included students, faculty, and staff. On December 2, 2022, HEDS shared the findings with President Rochon, Provost Khayum, and the EDIC Council on March 13, 2023. The goal of conducting focus groups is to develop a deeper understanding of the ways people see themselves in the USI community and to leverage this to establish innovative initiatives and resources that will support members of campus.

Onboarding

With over 50% of the Council members new members, it was critical to conduct onboarding. The Council chair met with each new dean and connected with all new representatives. Establishing these new relationships took place in addition to reconnecting with returning committee members.

New Initiatives

Areas are revisiting their mission statement to ensure it aligns with the Institution's mission, vision, and core beliefs related to DEI work. Aligned core beliefs and mission and vision statements will help guide them in their work, such as curricula development, assessment, implementation, and programming. For example, the Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education EDIC committee is updating its mission and vision to affirm the desires of Pott College and align with University statements. Likewise, the College of Nursing and Health Professions has strategically assessed its policies and practices by implementing holistic admissions criteria and intentionally developing programs to serve underrepresented student populations. Outside the classroom, Student Affairs continues to offer division-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion training so that employees are prepared to engage with students, staff, and family members of different identities.

Opportunities

There are four areas of concern expressed by those doing this work—funds, time, resources, and training.

Next Steps

- Focus groups
- Resources
- Celebrate accomplishments
- Campus climate survey

Focus Groups

The EDIC Council believes in transparency. Transparency helps us raise institutional awareness and allows us to move toward accountability. Therefore, the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) will continue to share the findings with the broader campus community.

Resources

Having a bank of resources will aid colleges and divisions in their DEI work—for example, resources on infusing it within the curricula, programming, and workplace.

Celebrate Accomplishments

Through DEI work, the Council will explore ways to celebrate the accomplishments of those working to make our great campus a better institution for all.

Campus Climate Survey

The first campus climate survey occurred spring of 2020. It is now time to administer another survey. The National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) recommends higher education administer the campus climate surveys every two to three years. USI contracted with HEDS to conduct the first survey to create a baseline. The next survey should provide insight into whether we have progressed in DEI work.