

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council

Annual Report

May 3, 2024

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.

III. Accomplishments 2023-2024

- Diversity Inventory Training
- HEDS Workshop
- Focus Group Update
- 2024 Campus Climate Survey
- New Initiatives/Highlights

Diversity Inventory Training

In September 2023, Dr. Brandi Hendricks and Dr. Pamela Hopson launched in-depth training sessions with the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Council (EDIC) representatives. The council members represent their respective areas and are recommended to the Council by their dean

or vice president. They serve as the linkage between the council, deans, and vice presidents. Sessions included a review of prior reporting documents, suggestions for improvement of the reporting process, and discussions on the importance of data accuracy. January 2024, during the University Meeting and Professional Day, a special workshop was held with representatives to review expectations and share exemplars, which included lessons learned.

HEDS Workshop

March 2024, Dr. Pamela Hopson and Dr. Laurie Berry, members of the EDIC Council, along with faculty member Dr. Sukanya Gupta, had the opportunity to attend the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium [HEDS workshop on DEI and Student Success](#) in Crawfordsville, Indiana. As a team, they were charged with reflecting on the progress of USI's diversity, equity, inclusion, and student success efforts, focusing on lessons learned from our efforts. One key objective for this team was to develop a toolkit that would guide USI's efforts and serve as a resource for the stakeholders. They were able to learn best practices from representatives from other institutions.

Focus Group Update

In the spirit of transparency, Dr. Charlie Blaich & Kathy Wise from [\(HEDS\)](#) shared their findings from the nine focus groups they met with to the entire campus community on December 7, 2023. The groups represented the following:

- African American/Black students
- Latinx students
- Students with disabilities
- Academic support staff
- Hourly support staff
- Minority staff
- Student Affairs staff
- Non-tenured faculty
- Tenured faculty

This rich data will help leverage how we continue to improve our support to the members of our USI community. In Fall 2024, representatives of HEDS will return to conduct a second round of focus groups.

2024 Campus Climate Survey

Seven weeks prior to the launch of the survey, on Monday, February 5, 2024, with the assistance of Greg Johnson, Interim Chief Data Officer, and other community partners, we began to prep data, draft communication pieces, and move to the testing phase. Members of our campus community rallied together as we launched USI's second Campus Climate Survey on March 25, 2024. The survey closed on Monday, April 15, 736 students took the survey, 440 employees, and 40 who chose not to identify themselves. Total participants: 1,216.

New Initiatives/Highlights

Administrative Senate - although they do not have a DEI committee, they have an outreach committee to welcome new administrative hires and facilitate connections among employees. They see this as a way to show USI culture and acclimate new hires to campus and its people.

Athletics - a DEI Review Committee was formed in 2022-23 and is still finalizing everyone. However, the department hopes to create a new DEI committee.

College of Nursing and Health Professions – uses a holistic admission criteria that includes interviews. Intentional efforts are made to accommodate students who need clinical experiences in their hometowns.

College of Liberal Arts – provides educational opportunities for students, faculty, and staff that raise awareness, knowledge, and skills to support recruiting and retaining diverse students, faculty, and staff.

Finance and Administration - Public Safety provides implicit and explicit bias training for officers and serves as a liaison across campus. Archie's Book Bundle program provides access to academic materials on the first day of school to all students. Human Resources provides training. Finance and Administration partners with the Dean of Students Office to implement Swipe Out Hunger, which provides free meals to students suffering from food insecurity.

Marketing and Communication - we do not have a committee, but equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the forefront of conversations and content, from photographs, stories, and videos to the Illume University magazine.

Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education - multiple initiatives have taken place through curriculum innovation to support the retainment of individuals already in the Pott

College, already increased faculty engagement with DEI initiatives by creating an “EDI Moment” in each college semester kick-off meeting. Created a newsletter highlighting the EDI efforts of students, faculty, and staff to further develop, strengthen, and sustain relationships with diverse constituencies.

Romain College of Business – joined the PhD Project to recruit faculty from racially diverse backgrounds. This project helps institutions recruit faculty from underrepresented and diverse populations.

Student Government Association – worked to advance inclusivity and collaborative efforts among student organizations.

IV. Opportunities

Those doing this work continue to express four areas of concern: funding, time, resources, and training.

V. Next Steps

- Sharing of information
- Focus groups (fall 2024)
- Toolkit
- Celebrate accomplishments

Sharing of Information

The first campus climate survey was conducted in the spring of 2020. Although more than two years of data are needed to establish a trend, the 2024 survey should indicate whether we are progressing in cultivating an inclusive campus of excellence where everyone can thrive. The target date for the release of data is fall 2024. Sharing the information will enable us to determine gaps and how we can address them.

Focus Groups

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

Toolkit

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

Celebrate Accomplishments

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