

***DEI – Report on Engagement of the UIW
Community***

October 2020

Office of the Provost

University of the Incarnate Word

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Executive Summary:

DEI – Report on Engagement of the UIW Community

Background:

At the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW), diversity, equity, and inclusion are fundamental rights grounded in the overall mission of social justice, the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, and our institutional commitment to service. They also embody the charism of the University's founders, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (CCVI) which has been engaged in acts of social justice since their founding. In 2018, UIW President Thomas M. Evans created a task force on inclusion and diversity, later known as the President's Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), "to ensure that we continue serving the underserved and elevate the dignity of every human person."

In July 2020, the President's Council on DEI submitted recommendations for consideration by the President and the President's Cabinet. The Council's recommendations reflected the complexity and anguish of our times as mass protests over racial injustice called for both action and reflection by our American institutions. UIW's foundational commitment to justice and dignity for the entire UIW family is demonstrated and embraced in the vigorous work faculty, staff, and students undertake to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion continue to inspire our path forward. These recommendations were released to the UIW community on July 24, 2020.

Engaging UIW Community in Reflective Dialogue on DEI

In tandem with the release of the DEI Council's recommendations, President Evans appointed Dr. Barbara Aranda-Naranjo, Provost, to lead an effort to engage our UIW community. The engagement consisted of reflective dialogue on DEI grounded in UIW's Mission and the University community's perspectives, experiences, and suggestions going forward. Led jointly by the Office of the Provost and the Office of Mission and Ministry, reflective listening discussions included UIW leadership, faculty, department and office staff, advisory bodies, and student groups in order to ensure full participation from various sectors of the UIW community. UIW communities' experiences, thoughts, and suggestions were encouraged throughout the sessions. It was also encouraged that participants share their thoughts through a structured matrix developed specifically for these sessions that allowed participants in each discussion group to provide their feedback. Reflective listening sessions were also tailored for specific groups, such as the student athletes composed of members of the UIW football team. The Provost also engaged in forums and informational presentations, such as DEI presentations during senior University leadership meetings, the Faculty Welcome Back, the Athletic Welcome Back, and a Student Government Association meeting. A total of 30 engagements were held

with 28 different groups from July to October 2020. Some of the groups met more than once. From these sessions and discussions, specific measurable actions with timelines were developed. Areas where UIW could improve, enhance, or replicate best practice efforts for community-wide DEI practices, procedures, and programming in conformance with our foundational commitment to justice and dignity for our UIW family.

Overarching DEI Thematic Areas from Community Engagement

Over the course of four months, over 370 UIW community members, including students, staff, faculty and administrators took part in the DEI engagements (see Appendices). The participating groups were a cross-section of the UIW campus populations, such as the Office of Alumnae and Parent Relations and the UIW Police Department. The reflective sessions were conducted by Provost, Dr. Aranda-Naranjo, and Vice President of Mission and Ministry, Sr. Walter Maher. Overseeing the overall project and participating and taking notes in the reflective sessions was Mrs. Idalia Sanchez, DEI consultant. The DEI engagement logistics and coordination was led by Dr. Denise Krohn, Special Assistant to the Provost, and Brenda Dimas, Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Mission and Ministry. During each engagement, total confidentiality and a “Do Not Distribute” statement was communicated. It was disclosed that all related information and material was for internal purposes only. While most community engagement sessions were through video conferencing and included a written matrix format, sessions with student athletes were held in person utilizing COVID-19 safety procedures. Based from all information gathered from the UIW participating community members throughout all engagements, the following are six major themes identified:

- ❖ Engage Mission and DEI Value
- ❖ Reinforce Workforce Skills and Talents
- ❖ Open New Spaces for Listening and Learning
- ❖ Integrate DEI and Social Justice within Curricula and Academic Programming
- ❖ Enhance Communications Strategies and Partnerships
- ❖ Expand DEI within Infrastructure

Key Proposed Goal Areas and DEI Related Actions for 2020-2021 and Beyond

The UIW Report *DEI – Report on Engagement of the UIW Community* provides an overview of the UIW community engagement process undertaken to elicit feedback on the DEI Council recommendations and on the community’s sense of UIW commitment to DEI, and areas of challenges, strengths, and opportunities for enhancing efforts. Overarching thematic areas are presented along with specific feedback from sectors of the community. The DEI engagement process itself uncovered numerous DEI initiatives underway, as well as spawning increased interest in new initiatives. Several DEI related projects were submitted for consideration in 2020-2021 academic year in each of the six thematic goal areas. As we continue to respond to the critical needs of the day as it relates to DEI, we will need the collaboration and cooperation

of all facets of UIW to accomplish the goals set forth and deepen the core values of the culture of DEI at UIW.

DEI – Report on Engagement of the UIW Community

Background

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The goals of the Council were encompassed within one of the UIW's strategic priorities set forth the same year, to "Strengthen our Catholic identity as expressed in the spiritual heritage of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, embodied in programs and priorities that promote human dignity and integrate intellectual and spiritual growth." In July 2020, the President's Council on DEI submitted recommendations for consideration by the President and the President's Cabinet. The Council's recommendations reflected the complexity and anguish of our times as mass protest over racial injustice called for both action and reflection by our American institutions. UIW's foundational commitment to justice and dignity for the entire UIW family is demonstrated and embraced in the vigorous work faculty, staff, and students undertake to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion continue to inspire our path forward. These recommendations were released in the format presented by the Council to the UIW community on July 24, 2020.

In tandem with the release of the DEI Council's recommendations, President Evans appointed Dr. Barbara Aranda-Naranjo, Chief Academic Officer and Provost, to lead an effort to engage our UIW community. The engagement consisted of reflective dialogue on diversity, equity, and inclusion grounded in UIW's mission and the UIW community's perspectives, experiences, and suggestions going forward. Lead jointly by the Office of the Provost and the Office of Mission and Ministry, the reflective discussions included UIW leadership, faculty, department and office staff, advisory bodies, and student groups in order to ensure full participation from various sectors of the UIW community. The reflective sessions provided an opportunity for reflection on UIW and its mission of social justice as a fundamental part of its Catholic heritage. UIW community experiences, thoughts and suggestions were encouraged throughout the reflective sessions as well as through a structured matrix developed specifically for each discussion group to allow individual members to provide their feedback.

Defining Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

The UIW President's Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion bylaws included definitions on these terms to guide their efforts in developing recommendations for administration to

consider in strengthening the institution’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These definitions were shared community-wide during the reflective sessions.

Defining DEI <i>(UIW President’s Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)</i>			
DIVERSITY	INCLUSION	EQUITY (STUDENT FOCUS)	EQUITY (EMPLOYEE FOCUS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The active, intentional and ongoing engagement with diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation of opportunities Equal and or equitable access Participation in educational programs Closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation of opportunities Equal access Professional growth opportunities and resource networks Closing the demographic disparities

Purpose of Engagement through Reflective Listening Sessions

Overall, the purpose of UIW community engagement on DEI was to facilitate review of the Presidents DEI Council recommendations through broader and inclusive UIW community dialogue grounded in the school’s overall mission of social justice and in the principles of Catholic social teachings.



Process/Methods

Purposeful engagement was undertaken with a broad range of our UIW community, including students, staff, faculty, administrators, and alumni. All sectors were engaged in a reflective and thoughtful process in which their perspectives, experiences, and suggestions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion were shared and grounded to the overall mission and ministry of the University. Whether through presentation, forums or reflective listening sessions, the process for the most part included a reflective interactive session and an opportunity to provide written feedback on DEI.

- ❖ **Administration and Faculty Senate:** Early in the process, DEI discussions took place within established advisory structures, including Provost meetings with Vice President (VPs), Senate Executive Council (SEC), and Faculty Senate. Utilizing the DEI Council recommendations, VPs, SEC, Associate Provosts (APs), and Deans were asked to provide feedback on the key areas of DEI recommendations: Forum and Administrative Outreach / Recruitment and Hiring: Policies, Procedures, and Practices; Online Presence; Institutional DEI Structure; Curriculum; Academic Recognition and Incentive; Reporting System; and Alumni Support.
- ❖ **Associate Provosts and Deans:** Following the DEI discussions APs and Deans were asked to specifically focus on their schools/departments/offices in addressing strengths, challenges, and opportunities related to DEI in the areas of academics/curricula, management/human resources, faculty development and mentorship, communications and strategic planning, and coordination/collaboration.
- ❖ **Faculty:** A second reflective session was held with faculty to broaden discussion and feedback following earlier faculty feedback organized through the Faculty Senate. A customized matrix was distributed focused on campus climate, DEI related strengths/challenges/opportunities in their school, integration of DEI in Curricula and classroom, and training and development opportunities (feedback on this recent reflective session is not included in this report).
- ❖ **Students and Staff:** Led jointly by the Office of the Provost and the Office of Mission and Ministry, the UIW community, including UIW offices, departments, advisory bodies and student groups were engaged in reflective discussions to ensure full participation from all sectors of the UIW community. Specific feedback was requested on their perspective on DEI, challenges facing UIW in the DEI arena, workplace culture and environment (campus culture and environment in the case of students), training and development needs, and meaningful interactions within diverse communities.
- ❖ **Student Athletes:** A restructuring of the reflective listening session format was requested by football student-athletes. As a result, a total of four in person DEI Football Reflective

Listening Session / Storytelling Sessions were held with our student-athletes. The nature of the discussion required a high level of confidentiality and sensitivity and therefore neither videoconferencing nor structured matrices were utilized.

- ❖ **Structured and Customized Matrix Questionnaire:** Feedback from all community engagement sessions was captured utilizing a matrix questionnaire to determine the distribution and frequency of responses within each engaged community. The section below, *Overarching Themes in the Words of Our Community*, provides a look at the key themes across the communities engaged in the DEI sessions. The appendices provide specific community engagement session feedback.

- ❖ **DEI Action Plan and Timetable:** The development process for determining an action plan and timeline was based almost entirely on the community engagement sessions and assessment of feedback from engagements. Overarching key concerns and priority areas for short and longer term response were identified and further discussed or, in some cases, acted upon.

DEI Community Engagement Sessions

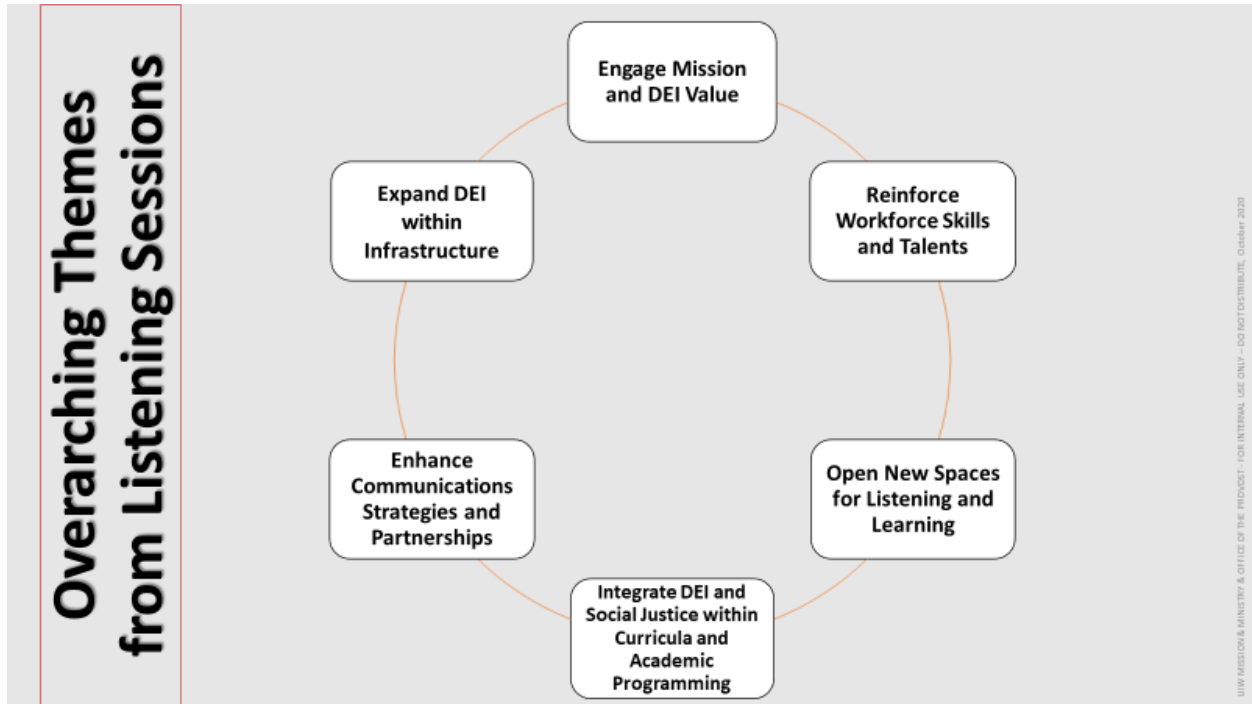
To date, a total of 30 meetings with 28 UIW community engagement sessions have been held: date:

Community Included:	Meetings Formats included:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Faculty • Office Staff • Campus Police • Athletic Coaches • Alumni Board • 4 Student Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective Listening Sessions • Forums • Presentations

A total of 316 students, staff, faculty, and administrators have been involved to date in one or more DEI community engagement sessions.

Overarching Themes in the Words of Our Community

Six thematic areas were generated from the responses provided through the DEI community engagement sessions.



Overwhelmingly, students, staff, faculty, and administrators affirmed UIW’s Mission and DEI value were clearly present and demonstrated through both words, actions and practices. The remaining five thematic areas represent areas where students, staff, faculty and administrators felt there was room for improvement whether in policy, practice, or in procedures. The bullets noted below each of the six thematic areas represent the most cited areas for enhancement stated by persons completing the matrix questionnaire. More specific and additional areas appear in the specific matrix results by session provided under the appendices section of this report.

- **Engage Mission and DEI Value**
 - Supportive learning environments
 - Inclusiveness and reflection of values experienced throughout
- **Reinforce Workforce Skills and Talents**
 - Mandatory and annual employee training/development on DEI, vulnerable populations
 - New employee training on DEI and social justice
 - Training for students on DEI

- Mentoring support for staff and faculty
- Internal and external expertise and resources to conduct broader campus-wide workshops on diversity and representation
- Annual assessment of DEI training effort

- **Open New Spaces for Listening and Learning**
 - Campus-wide safe space for dialogue by Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) and other diverse communities
 - Dedicated space for intercultural awareness, expression, social media
 - Inclusive DEI discussions to include LGBTQ+, veterans, disabled communities

- **Integrate DEI and Social Justice Within Curricula and Academic Programming**
 - Threading social justice throughout education curriculum and syllabi
 - Update current curricula on intercultural awareness and sensitivity
 - Core requirement related to DEI and social justice courses
 - African American Studies minor
 - Prioritize faculty and staff training/webinar on the history of racism, use of language, and institutional racial inequities prior to beginning any departmental and/or school conversations on DEI curricular design or recruitment

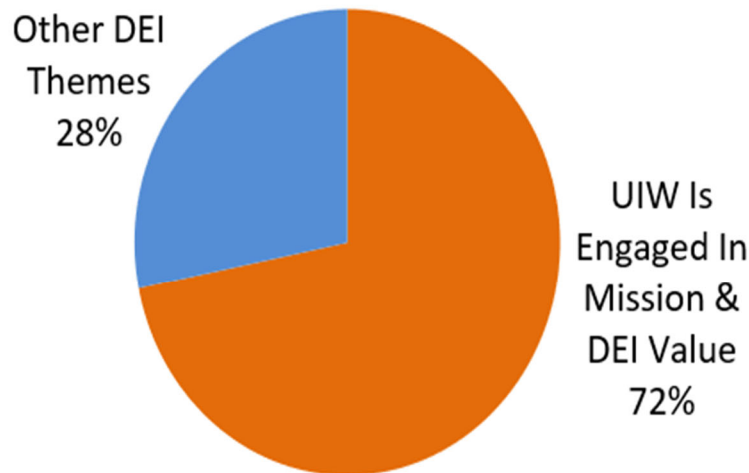
- **Enhance Communication Strategies and Partnerships**
 - Transparent and effective responses to racial crisis and social justice concerns
 - Cross campus collaborations and community building
 - Clarity and vigilance regarding language, audiences
 - Increased engagement of internal and external stakeholders
 - Regular constructive forums and community dialogue on DEI
 - Campus wide DEI/social justice discussions and forums with students, staff and faculty
 - Internal and external expertise and resources to conduct broader campus-wide workshops on diversity and representation

- ❖ **Expand DEI within Infrastructure**
 - Examine DEI within Task Forces and management structures
 - Increase infrastructure dedicated to DEI, including dedicated faculty point of contact
 - Operational budget for DEI Office without diverting current academic program funding
 - Examination of procedures for staff, faculty, and students to report DEI related incidences, grievances and bias concerns
 - Objective review of hiring and recruitment process, and DEI goals in this areas
 - Objective reviews of student recruitment process, and DEI goals in this areas
 - Alumni support, especially African American alumni, to offer a webinar and/or mentor students
 - Examine institutional structures to identify, monitor, and nurture ways of supporting Black, Indigenous, People of Color Community (BIPOC) members

Faculty were included in three community engagement sessions: the Associate Provost (AP) and Deans presentation on August 4, 2020; the Faculty Senate presentation on September 9, 2020; and the faculty-wide community engagement session held on October 14, 2020. The Associate

Provosts and Deans were asked to provide feedback on the DEI Council’s recommendations as well as respond to a structured matrix on what they saw as the DEI strengths, opportunities and challenges in relation to infrastructure, collaboration and policies, faculty development, curriculum, and communication. AP/Deans agreed that there were both strengths and opportunities in all five areas and they provided concrete ideas for strengthening DEI efforts. There was a general agreement that DEI is strong in the University’s commitment to Mission and DEI value. Examples of DEI areas of improvement include: 1) reinforcement in employee DEI training and development; 2) enhancements in external and internal communications on DEI; 3) a threading of social justice throughout education curriculum and syllabi; 4) an examination of DEI within advisory and management structures; and 5) an increased infrastructure dedicated to DEI. The Associate Provosts and Deans feedback is provided in greater detail in the appendices of the report.

PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY RESPONDING: UIW IS ENGAGED IN MISSION & DEI VALUE



There were many experiences, ideas, and opinions shared during the 30 DEI community engagement sessions. These were held in confidentiality within “listening rooms” and the matrix results do not include names of respondents. Below are some examples of what was shared:

What the UIW Community is Saying	
Who We Are	<p>"Even healers need healing"</p> <p>"Marginalization can happen to anyone in our community"</p> <p>"We are all marginalized to some degree"</p> <p><i>"As a first generation U.S. Citizen and college graduate, diversity and inclusion was a major part of my upbringing as I blended between two cultures"</i></p>
How We Feel	<p><i>"When we see and hear, 'black lives matter,' for us, it affirms our humanity"</i></p> <p><i>"When I look at the news and I look online, I see myself being shot"</i></p> <p><i>"I feel like UIW has always given their students access to learn about different backgrounds, cultures, and religions. Not only do they give access, it's encouraged"</i></p> <p><i>"there is always a need to improve especially as the population at the University changes and widens across the world"</i></p>
What We Have to Give	<p>"Transmitting a culture that you want them to take with them for the rest of their lives"</p> <p>"Giving everything of yourself to the students—we are all in the game"</p> <p><i>"We have developed a mentorship program through the Alumni Board that I think is going to be helpful in bringing together students and alumni to build relationships that will be meaningful."</i></p>

DEI Efforts To Date

Part and parcel of the Provost's Office work over the past four months has been to identify DEI efforts underway at UIW in order to highlight innovative and best practices, and targeted initiatives and recognitions. Among current DEI related efforts are the following:

- ❖ Ettlign Center DEI Webpage
- ❖ UIW School Specific Initiatives
 - **Dreeben School of Education:** Social Justice in Action Workshops
 - **School of Medicine:** Unity Task Force
 - **College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences:** Theatre for Social Change
 - **College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences:** *Racial Equity & Interfaith Cooperation Awards*
- ❖ Recognitions and Accomplishments
 - **Feik School of Pharmacy:** Received the 2020 Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education
 - **Rosenberg School of Optometry Diversity Statement:** With an entering first-year class of 43% of underrepresented minorities, the UIW RSO is one of the most culturally diverse programs in the country

Some of these efforts have been inspired by the Council's DEI recommendations and the DEI Community Engagement process itself, such as the Ettlign Center DEI Webpage which was initiated in August 2020, as well as the Dreeben School of Education Workshops and the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) Theatre for Social Change. These efforts

demonstrate the power of community engagement and discussion as well as the incentive and motivation ignited by the recommendations put forth by the President’s Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The recognitions and accomplishments affirm that UIW has been a leader and performing well in its diversity practices. Showcasing our DEI related efforts both internally and externally has been one of the very positive results of our effort to engage and understand better the gift we have and the values we uphold as part of our Mission.

Implementing a DEI Action Plan and Timeline for 2020-2021

The six overarching DEI thematic areas were identified through the DEI community engagement process have been converted to the goals to guide a UIW DEI action plan moving forward:

Goal Area #1: Engage Mission and DEI Value

Goal Area #2: Reinforce Workforce Skills and Talents

Goal Area #3: Open New Spaces for Listening and Learning

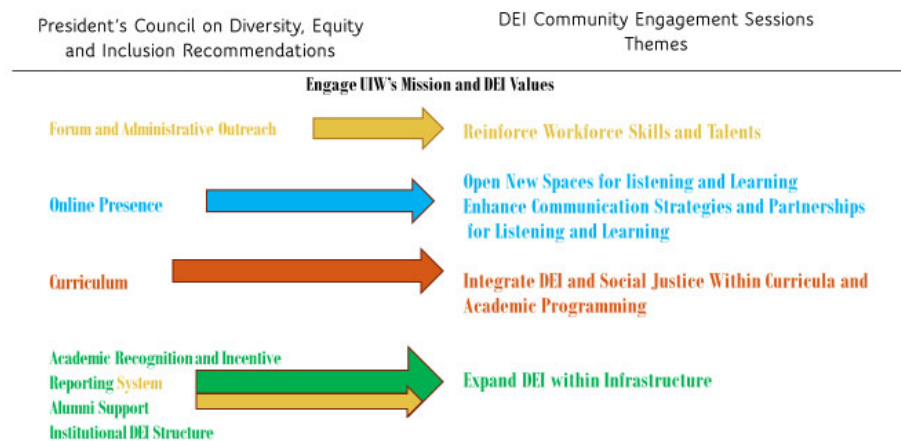
Goal Area #4: Integrate DEI and Social Justice Within Curricula and Academic Programming

Goal Area #5: Enhance Communications Strategies and Partnerships

Goal Area #6: Expand DEI within Infrastructure

These themes identified from the reflective listening sessions are closely aligned with the recommendations from the President’s Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and serve as a second data source to strengthen and affirm many of the areas raised by the DEI Council.

Aligning DEI Thematic Areas



The recommendation proposed for the conversion of these thematic areas thus moves us forward in the next steps of the DEI process at UIW. The next steps of the DEI process would begin with the report being shared with the UIW community at large and the individual groups that met utilizing a community forum and or individual meetings with the groups. The following structural steps would include the identification of a DEI coordinator and or a small committee to review the goals and establish objectives and timeline for accomplishing the goals. The EAB 360 diversity review that focuses on students would be part of the actions going forward in goal 6.

For the current 2020-2021 academic year, specific focal areas are included within the proposed DEI action plan below as well as a timeline. The specific goal areas and 2021 DEI action plan initiatives are:

Goal Area #1: Engage Mission and DEI Value

- Provide space for prayer, reflection, and contemplative dialog
- Continue to have community engagement sessions on UIW Mission and DEI value to include sessions with faculty, undergraduate and graduate, and health professions students

Goal Area #2: Reinforce Workforce Skills and Talents

- Work with Human Resources in their review of DEI inclusion in new training modules for staff and faculty

Goal Area #3: Open New Spaces for Listening and Learning

- Continue to shepherd Ettlign Center efforts to enhance its new DEI webpage as a listening and learning resource – ongoing throughout the academic year
- Work with the Office of Mission and Ministry to create new and expanded virtual spaces for reflection, listening, learning and information exchange
- Engage students, staff and faculty in development of New Spaces priority areas for 2020-2021

Goal Area #4: Integrate DEI and Social Justice Within Curricula and Academic Programming

- Under the leadership of Dr. Glenn James, Dr. Kevin Vichcales and Dr. Caroline Goulet, will begin to formulate an assessment plan for DEI integration in curricula and academic programming
- Support faculty led initiatives within each of the six DEI thematic areas.

Goal Area #5: Enhance Communication Strategies and Partnerships

- Examine potential social media sites and forums for community wide dialogue on DEI and social justice – ongoing through academic year
- Engage students, staff and faculty in development of communication priority areas for 2020-2021.

Goal Area #6: Expand DEI within UIW Infrastructure

- Designate a DEI point of contact and develop specific areas of responsibility related to the implementation of the DEI Community Engagement Report findings and Action Plan
- EAB 360-degree audit implementation
- Engage students, staff and faculty in development of DEI Infrastructure priority areas for 2020-2021.

The timeline below reflects the implementation of the DEI Action Plan described above as well as the completion of draft final report after all community engagement sessions are completed, and a communication strategy to provide specific feedback to specific community groups that engaged in the DEI discussions and the broader UIW community and advisory groups.

Summary Conclusion:

The UIW DEI sessions provided the opportunity for a cross-section of the UIW community to understand the DEI issue as part of living our UIW Mission. The participants provided their stories and voices to the DEI experience at UIW and echo the horror of the Black community member deaths occurring in our country today. Each session provided a rich diversity of stories with strong support of UIW as an institution that affirms the dignity of each person and recognizes the importance of ensuring every voice is heard and respected. Once approved, sections of this report will also serve its purpose—to further DEI dialogue and action. Next steps will begin with the naming of a Director of Community Engagement and DEI to lead UIW’s work in implementing the DEI goal areas and action steps identified in this Report.

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