Beyond Racial Equity's Strategic Review

Full Report & Recommendations

Emerson COLLEGE

BEYOND RACIAL EQUITY

Strategic Review
Full Report and Recommendations

Table of Contents

Important Note:

In this report we use the acronym DEIASJ to comprehensively represent diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and social justice work at Emerson. The DEIASJ acronym is used in consideration of the reader. Emerson does not currently have an agreed upon way to describe the work collectively or a commonly used acronym, there are likewise many acronyms used to describe diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and social justice work within and outside of Emerson. While the DEI acronym is often considered to be all encompassing, in order to honor Emerson's history of social justice work and the need of all institutions, including Emerson, to focus more on accessibility we have chosen to be all-inclusive in the usage of the acronym. We are not suggesting that DEIASJ is the term used broadly at Emerson. The terms and acronyms applied at Emerson are important decisions for the College to make as a next step in DEIASJ work.

Project Background

As a nationally and internationally recognized institution of higher learning, Emerson College sought to identify and address deeply rooted structural and systemic barriers that interfere with the full participation and belonging of BIPOC students and students from other marginalized groups in the Emerson community. Despite efforts over the past decade, BIPOC students continue to report that they do not feel significant change in their lived experience at Emerson. In addition, there has been greater emphasis placed on the need to address ableism, accessibility, and disability justice at Emerson.

Under the leadership of former President M. Lee Pelton, the College made a focused effort to redouble its commitment to diversity and inclusion a decade ago. With the guidance of a newly appointed Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion (now the Vice President for Equity and Social Justice), Emerson launched the Inclusive Excellence at Emerson Initiative in 2012. This initiative was developed on the fundamental assumption that institutional and academic excellence are not possible without full engagement with diversity across all areas of the College. Although the College has made gains in diversification of the student body, development of an articulated ethos of inclusion, and various areas of curricular reform, BIPOC students continue to report that they do not feel significant change in their lived experience at Emerson. This student experience is evidenced through campus climate surveys and other institutional surveys. In 2020 Emerson's BIPOC students held the #ESOCWeekOfAction. In addition, a group of Emerson's students recently created the organization Access: Student Disability Union, putting forth an action plan designed to guide leadership toward more intentionally addressing ableism, accessibility, and disability justice at Emerson. While the College is moving forward with addressing student concerns and demands

stemming from both the week of action and the accessibility action plan, the College also seeks to do more. Consequently, in 2021 the College initiated a process that includes this project to identify and address deeply rooted structural and systemic barriers that interfere with the full participation and belonging of BIPOC students and students from other marginalized groups in Emerson's commonwealth of learning and community.

Project Goals

Identify and address deeply rooted structural and systemic barriers that interfere with the full participation and belonging of BIPOC students, students with disabilities, and students from other marginalized groups within the Emerson community.

Project Team

The BRE project team is composed of experts with backgrounds in academia, accessibility, diversity, equity, inclusion, organizational development, and anti-oppression.
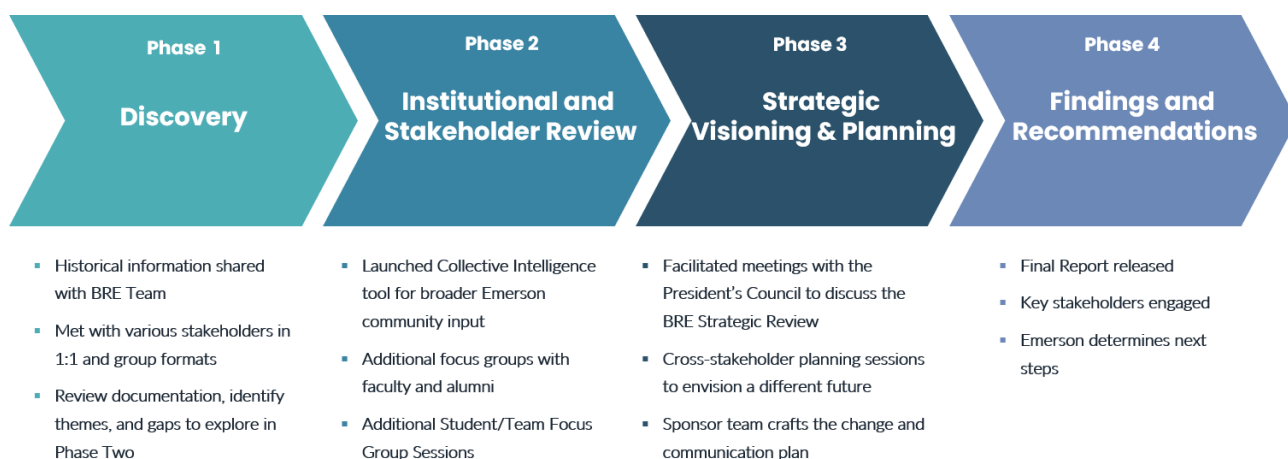
- Quionna Allen - Co-Founder of Beyond Racial Equity, Founder of Caldwell Allen Associates, 20 plus years in Human Resources, Organizational Development and DEI, Master's degree in Organizational and Industrial Psychology
- Tara Jenkins - Co-Founder of Beyond Racial Equity, Founder of Conscious Revolution Consulting, 25 years in Human Resources, Organizational Development and DEI, Master's degree in Organizational Development and Leadership
- Dr. Vaishali Mamgain - Director of the Bertha Crosby Ball Center for Compassion, Facilitator of anti-oppression curriculum in academic institutions and Associate Professor of Economics, University of Southern Maine, PhD in Economics
- Dr. Rebecca Nisetich - Facilitator of anti-oppression curriculum in academic institutions, Assistant Professor and Director of the Honors Program, University of Southern Maine, PhD English
- Meg O'Connell - CEO and Founder of Global Disability Inclusion, extensive experience in disability inclusion and accessibility

The BRE Project Team met regularly with representatives from Emerson (the Emerson Project Team) to manage the administration and logistical elements of the project. BRE would like to extend a huge thank you to the following individuals for their dedication to the project:

- Alayne Fiore - Director of Operations & Special Assistant to the Vice President, Social Justice Center
- Samantha Ivery - Director, Diversity and Equity Initiatives, formerly Social Justice Center and currently Internationalization and Equity
- Dr. Ruthanne Madsen - Vice President, Enrollment and Former Interim Supervisor, Social Justice Center
- Dr. Anthony Pinder - Vice Provost - Internationalization & Equity
- Dr. Jae M Williams - former Director of Special Projects, Social Justice Center

Project Scope & Stages

The graphic below was shared extensively across Emerson during project discussions over the academic year 2021-2022.

Phase 1
Discovery
- Historical information shared with BRE Team
- Met with various stakeholders in 1:1 and group formats
- Review documentation, identify themes, and gaps to explore in Phase Two

Phase 2
Institutional and Stakeholder Review
- Launched Collective Intelligence tool for broader Emerson community input
- Additional focus groups with faculty and alumni
- Additional Student/Team Focus Group Sessions

Phase 3
Strategic Visioning & Planning
- Facilitated meetings with the President's Council to discuss the BRE Strategic Review
- Cross-stakeholder planning sessions to envision a different future
- Sponsor team crafts the change and communication plan

Phase 4
Findings and Recommendations
- Final Report released
- Key stakeholders engaged
- Emerson determines next steps

Phase 1: Discovery
The objective of the Discovery phase was to understand as much as possible about Emerson's current DEIASJ work. This was accomplished through reviewing documents, websites, social media, and talking with varied stakeholders across the College. During this phase BRE received a comprehensive client intake questionnaire completed by Emerson that answered a myriad of questions about Emerson's history, demographics, and the current status of DEIASJ work. BRE also completed an in-depth review of Emerson's web content and social media postings. Additionally, Emerson selected an initial set of key contributors to its initiatives for BRE to interview.

Phase 2: Community and Institutional Stakeholder Feedback

With a solid understanding of the history and current status of DEIASJ work at Emerson, the Emerson Project Team selected additional individuals and focus groups to deepen BRE's understanding of both DEIASJ work and the people doing the work. This phase included meetings with 10 focus groups and 35 stakeholder interviews. All of Emerson was invited to participate in HiveWise, a collective intelligence online platform developed in partnership with MIT's Center for Collective Intelligence. In HiveWise, stakeholders shared perspectives and responded to each other's input, facilitating a way for BRE to easily identify themes in working and learning experiences at Emerson.

Given that the primary objective of this project was for BRE to deeply understand the student experience, BRE offered many student forums during this phase to reach a broader range of the student population, including five student focus groups. There was extremely limited student participation, including two focus groups where no student participation was recorded. Students previously interviewed by BRE during the Discovery phase often participated in focus groups, however, additional students offering new perspectives were not present. Limited student participation remained a concern throughout the project. Emerson leadership and students shared the following explanations for the lack of student engagement in the project:

- Student engagement is generally a major challenge at colleges and Emerson is no exception. BRE's experience validates this.
- Students are not willing to designate more time to tell their stories, further subjecting themselves to trauma. We heard from a number of students that they continuously expressed their concerns and needs to Emerson and didn't feel that they should have to keep doing it.
- Students are exceptionally busy in the spring semester.

As a result of limited student participation, BRE initially leaned more heavily on document review to better understand the student experience, including detailed review of the Emerson Students of Color (ESOC) Week of Demands, blogs, and social media posts made by students. As students stated, there are a significant number of resources available in varied media formats that help understand the DEIASJ student experience at Emerson. Additionally, in the last phase of the project, BRE was granted a request to join classes, allowing for further observation and investigation. This started with Alayne Fiore and her invitation to join her class. We piloted the approach, and it worked very well. Faculty generously opened their classrooms, and BRE had the opportunity to attend six classes in April and was further afforded the possibility to ask students a number of questions and have an open dialogue about both their experiences and challenges. The classroom focus groups significantly rounded out BRE's understanding of the student experience and led to higher confidence in BRE's understanding of the student experience.

It should be noted that promotion of participation in this project was limited to email; this includes invitations to focus groups and HiveWise. Emerson made the decision to limit social media channels in the promotion plan due to trolling, which occurred leading up to and during the course of the project.

During this phase, BRE also recognized that additional Emerson project leadership was needed to deliberately plan communication and change management. BRE requested the creation of a Sponsor Team composed of Emerson and DEIASJ leaders at the College. After thoughtful consideration, Emerson created a Sponsor Team that included Dr. Bill Gilligan, Interim President; Anne Shaughnessy, Vice President & Special Assistant to the President; Dr. Ruthanne Madsen, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Interim Supervisor of the Social Justice Center (August 2021 – August 2022); Dr. Anthony Pinder, Vice Provost for Internationalization & Equity; and Paul Dworkis, Chief Financial Officer. BRE met a number of times with the Sponsor Team to discuss objectives, plan communications, and share insights from the discovery phase of the project. Once the Sponsor Team was created, all project steps were discussed with the Sponsor Team first.

The full list of stakeholders and focus groups that participated in this project can be found in the addendum of this report.

Phase 3: Strategic Visioning & Planning
BRE held three strategic visioning sessions; a session with the President's Council, a session that invited all faculty and staff doing DEIASJ work, and a student-only session. In total, 33 people participated in these sessions, 5 of them students. In the visioning sessions participants were asked to answer and discuss these questions:
- What does it look and feel like to be in an environment where diversity and equity are on track and progressing forward?
- In this future environment, how would you describe your experiences?
- What would you be able to do differently than you can today?

During this phase, BRE also held a series of three sessions with the President's Council to learn about the neuroscience of healing and embark on introductory somatic work.

A summary of the output from these sessions is in the addendum of this report.

Phase 4: Findings & Recommendations
BRE created the final report and held communication sessions to share a summary of the discovery phase and recommendations with the Sponsor Team and with key stakeholders, as determined by the Sponsor Team.

Project Limitations
- The project was primarily completed virtually due to COVID. Visitors were permitted on campus at the conclusion of the project timeline, permitting BRE to visit Emerson one time over the course of the project.
- This project included participation of about 7% of the total student population.
- The scope of the project did not include a deep understanding of the experience of faculty and staff.
- The project did not include a detailed review of the structures, activities and plans associated with the SJC or DEIASJ work happening in many areas of the College.

Discovery Summary & Recommendations

In this section we include both themes we heard from stakeholders and important highlights, given our DEIASJ and organizational development experience and expertise. Themes were identified after hearing a similar perspective in at least four separate stakeholder sessions or instances over the course of the discovery process. Many of the themes identified in this section came up consistently and well in excess of four times. We have provided relevant examples to provide additional context. However, we have not shared an exhaustive list of examples in each section in order to share broader themes and not miss "the forest for the trees."

Leadership is an essential ingredient for transforming any organizational system. Over the course of this project Emerson leadership has indicated a genuine desire to transform its system and facilitate real and lasting change in both the learning and working experiences at Emerson. At this time, Emerson has a unique opportunity to accelerate the desired organizational transformation. Leadership transitions and the investment in this project provide the ideal opportunity to assess current leadership practices, hire highly qualified leaders, and ensure exploration of all the opportunities to facilitate leadership alignment.

Leadership and other key influencers of the student experience have been identified and divided into six focus areas. This section shares the summary and recommendations for each of the six focus areas.

It is common in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to focus traditionally on race/ethnicity, women, and LGBTQIA+ communities. Because we did not ask participants to label the identity they were talking about when sharing with us about diversity, our working premise is that participants were referencing these traditional areas of diversity unless otherwise noted. In addition, at the end

of the Summary and Recommendations, you will find reports for Accessibility and Religious & Spiritual Life. Accessibility was highlighted because it is often underrepresented when referring to diversity generally, because of its heightened emphasis across all industries, and because of the attention requested on this area by Emerson. Religious & Spiritual Life was highlighted because it is also an underrepresented area in diversity and was brought to our attention during our discovery work with Emerson.

Student Experience

The student experience was central to the discovery process for Emerson College. We recognize that the student experience does not exist in isolation, but rather, as a core area impacted by the influence of student interactions, as well as the six other focus areas covered in this report.

Student Experience Discovery Summary:
We started most student conversations with inquiries into what they most appreciated about Emerson from a general and diversity, equity, inclusion perspective. We offered a brief definition of

DEI as diversity - demographics of identities at Emerson, equity - access to fairness, and inclusion - an environment of connectedness and belonging.

First and foremost, Emerson students appreciate the hands-on and application focus of the College's programs. This was a resounding sentiment in most student sessions. During our tour of Emerson's campus, we were also able to witness the state-of-the-art tools and technologies available to students. Students also credited the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their professors as contributors to their application-based learning experiences. In this context, students shared that professors were supportive and helpful mentors for them.

The student experience is highly dependent on the faculty, specialty areas, and one-on-one interactions. That variability has created experiences of belonging in some cases and experiences of exclusion in others. The examples shared via the data portal and classroom discussions indicated that negative experiences with the Emerson community occurred in faculty/student, administrator/student, as well as student/student interactions. Positive experiences also occurred in the same types of interactions. These moments and experiences happen multiple times a day with thousands of students over the course of multiple school years, a leading contributor to the complexity of addressing these concerns.

Students, particularly those identifying as non-binary and others in the LGBTQIA community, shared positive experiences at Emerson; many feeling "like themselves" for the first time in an educational environment. They expressed feeling an openness to be themselves without hiding parts of their backgrounds or identities. One student noted receiving an email from an administrator with "she/her/hers" pronouns in the signature line and the significant impact that had on them personally. The intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality is important to note here. We also heard students talk about different experiences for gay men at Emerson compared to Black lesbian women. While Emerson is celebrated as being an LGBTQ-friendly college, exploring experiences with an intersectional lens is important.

During our discussions, students acknowledged openness, listening, and transparency from leadership and faculty. To support that sentiment, they provided examples like the BRE team engaging in learning and listening to students, providing a solution to spring break changes due to the pandemic, and the inclusion of diversity statistics online. In this same vein, students also reported continually having to advocate for themselves and push the College to do DEIASJ work, rather than the College leading the work. Sentiments were shared that if not for the students pushing for changes, these issues would not be on the radar or in the forefront of administrators and faculty at Emerson. In our discussions, some students acknowledged the complexity of these situations and that there were times when the leadership was doing all that they could to address situations.

Students also reported frustration about the College not fulfilling their commitments as related to DEIASJ at Emerson. Actions taken often felt superficial and performative. Students shared that there is a lot of talking and little "real action." A commonly cited experience was the expectation that something would change based on what was communicated and the disappointment at the subsequent lack of action or progress. This resulted in mistrust, demoralization, and disengagement. Examples included the formation of teams and committees with limited power to impact the environment or help drive change.

When asked about inclusion at Emerson, students shared concerns about their ability to build communities, particularly because of the pandemic. The impact of COVID restrictions forced separation and isolation. College-wide events that may have been held in the past to create community have been nonexistent over the past two years. Also, the siloed nature of career tracks and homogeneity within the career-focused groups impacted students' ability to create community at Emerson. For example, we heard reports of exclusion, particularly by Asian students, who without the use of their English names, were not called back for auditions. While these difficulties were highlighted, we also heard about the importance of intercultural groups and intramural sports teams, and how these groups helped to create a sense of community and belonging for students.

There was shared, proactive support toward the Access: Student Disability Union organization and their work to bring attention to disability and accessibility needs at Emerson. Many of the concerns shared from a disability perspective were shared in the context of student mental health needs and accommodations. These included student requests for flexibility with virtual learning and additional needs for mental health days due to heightened stress and anxiety connected with COVID, in addition to the general pressures of higher education.

The students with disabilities who participated in this project reported feeling that diversity, equity, and inclusion at Emerson focuses on all diversity groups except students with disabilities, leaving accessibility and disability inclusion as an afterthought. Many of the diversity efforts on campus begin with other diversity segments and often leave out students with disabilities.

Disability inclusion is not commonly understood or applied across the College. Students are asked to serve in advisory capacities when it comes to disability inclusion on-campus. Yet, students with disabilities are not compensated for their time like other diverse students asked to assist leadership in tackling the challenges associated with diversity.

Students expressed gaps in their own knowledge of DEIASJ. They shared concerns about their ability to be better allies and address microaggressions when witnessed. International students referenced

not having context of diversity issues in the US and shared it would be helpful to have additional information.

Students also expressed significant frustration with finances at Emerson and the need for additional funding. Students cited those who leave because of financial issues, students having to take out outrageous loans, and the impact on homogeneous cultures because additional avenues of financing tuition are either not available or exclusionary. They referenced unpaid internships and their impact on students who are required to work for basic necessities. Finally in this category, students referenced differences in socioeconomic status and the importance and lack of discussion surrounding financial privilege.

Student Experience Recommendations:
The specific recommendations in this section are highlighted here because of their central connection to the student experience. The six themes and recommendations in the sections that follow are designed and shared to impact the student experience from a long-term and systemic perspective.

- Continue providing opportunities for students to connect across groups. This is likely more important than ever before after the isolation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Although students are empowered to create these opportunities for connection, there are students who may need more support in doing this based on their background, personality type, and the fact that much of their college experience has occurred during the pandemic. We heard strong support in a student session for an "Emerson Day on the Common," where all students could have an opportunity to connect with one another in a fun setting.
- The Student of Color Pre-Orientation was highlighted as a "really cool idea." Consider other diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and social justice programming that may be helpful for students, such as Allyship, Microaggression, Implicit Bias, Intersectionality, Cultural Competencies, Cultural Basics for International Students, etc.

We have also included specific sections for Accessibility and Religion & Spirituality to ensure they receive additional attention, as these topics are less often thought about from a diversity perspective. These recommendations, in addition to the positive actions currently underway, should be prioritized to determine Emerson's most immediate next actions.

Compass

There is a significant opportunity to lay the foundation for a strong and aligned organization with a myriad of benefits essential for meaningful and impactful DEIASJ work at Emerson. We call this area the "Compass" because having this foundation provides essential guidance or "wayfinding" that

organizations need for direction, alignment, clarity in decision making, and prioritization. Emerson's missing Compass is significantly impacting the student experience.

Compass Discovery Summary:
While Emerson has a set of values listed on its website, these values are not felt in the lived day-to-day experience of students at the College. This was evidenced in the fact that values were not proactively mentioned at any point during the stakeholder meetings we conducted. If the values were essential to the Emerson experience, we would have heard about them continuously in our conversations, noted either as strengths or areas where Emerson is falling short. The values would have been used as a gauge to determine how Emerson is doing and how Emerson makes decisions. The espoused values are not congruent with many of the lived values mentioned as important to Emerson such as community, unity, inclusion, and collaboration. The current values may feel disingenuous, disconnected, and outdated to stakeholders.

For reference, here are Emerson's current values as listed on the Emerson website:
- Respect and equal treatment for all people of all backgrounds, orientations, beliefs, and physical capabilities.
- Appreciation for diverse ideas and the free expression of them.
- Academic excellence in formal settings such as classrooms and libraries and in workshops, internships, labs, studios, and all other collaborative environments.
- Critical and creative thinking that inspires audiences; improves the arts and communication; and advances social justice, global responsibility, and environmental sustainability in our institution, communities, nation, and world.

Another tool that organizations use to support the values and desired culture is a code of conduct, applied to everyone across the organization. We learned that Emerson has separate documentation that may be interpreted as "Code" for students, staff, and faculty. However, the expectations, style, format, and content are different for each, rendering the interpretation likely different as well. Throughout this project we desired a common code of conduct to reference when discussing challenging DEIASJ topics and were told it does not currently exist.

As an essential step in understanding what Emerson is trying to accomplish and how DEIASJ fits into those goals, we spent time trying to better understand Emerson's organizational strategy. However, Emerson's Strategic Plan is outdated, and even more important than its lack of usefulness for this project is its inability to play a meaningful role as a wayfinder and decision-making tool at Emerson. The 10-year update cadence is not reflective of our VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) world, regardless of industry. Additionally, the strategy is another key alignment and accountability tool that we heard about minimally from leadership stakeholders during the

discovery process. Moreover, the current strategy doesn't include elements of diversity, equity, and inclusion that link to a comprehensive DEIASJ plan.

The Diversity & Inclusive Excellence initiative is presented and discussed as a side project to Emerson's overall strategy and is also outdated. Effectively, Emerson does not have a DEIASJ strategy. While it's wonderful that so many areas of the college are working on DEIASJ, the missing DEIASJ strategy has led to disparate and disconnected DEIASJ work, creating a lack of clarity, focus, and accountability, and lack of measurable progress. Without a clear, agreed-upon DEIASJ strategy, it's impossible to know what to prioritize in the work and Emerson sets itself up for failure. We continuously saw examples of Emerson creating an environment where it tried to give everyone a voice, creating an expectation of immediate action, which in and of itself is admirable, yet is completely unsustainable. The College cannot serve ALL stakeholders simultaneously and meet everyone's needs. If everything is important, then nothing is important. While it's notable that Emerson has many areas working on DEIASJ, and this could be a major opportunity given the number of resources already devoted to DEIASJ, the decentralization of the work without a centralized strategy will lead to perpetual spin. The decentralized approach is largely tactical because there is no strategic plan to guide it. The College is not able to communicate progress against goals when a specific strategy with specific goals has not been set. This is another example of needing to define what the College is trying to accomplish together. More about this will be discussed in the Structure section.

Compass Recommendations:
Organizational values provide a sense of purpose and engagement for everyone associated with the organization, reinforcing the organization's goals, and feeding into everyday work and decisions. Values also provide essential guidance in times of change, important in our ever-evolving world, while also being the bedrock of organizational culture. Without a way to hold everyone accountable for the same values and behaviors there also isn't a way to curate a particular experience or culture at Emerson. Emerson is missing a significant, highly impactful, unifying organizational development tool. We recommend that Emerson update the College Values in inclusive, co-creative sessions with selected stakeholders. These sessions would include not only refreshed values, but specific behaviors that demonstrate the values. Building refreshed values is a wonderful opportunity to evolve the College and create a feeling of forward-moving collaboration and unity.

In support of and in alignment with updated Values, we recommend creating an Emerson Code of Conduct. This could be done with the same team working on Values. This "Code" allows everyone to hold each other accountable to the same expectations, creating a more consistent experience at the College, regardless of role. The Code of Conduct acts as another compass and defines what is expected of an Emersonian. It outlines common ways to work together and expectations that Emersonians should have of one another. An organization-wide Code of Conduct is highly

supportive of the organizational values and is another essential foundational component of Emerson's development and DEIASJ work.

We recommend updating the Emerson Strategic Plan to include DEIASJ. The strategy could be updated in parallel with the Values and Code of Conduct. A key opportunity we see is for Emerson to seize the opportunity to define its unique purpose in the world as a learning institution. An idea that seemed to resonate with many is how Emerson can become a creative force in shaping our society, culture, and future. The Strategic Plan will define who Emerson wants to be in the future and how it will get there in community with students, staff, and faculty. It will also define what Emerson will prioritize over the strategic planning period. We believe this clarity will be exponentially beneficial to Emerson in so many ways, including having a powerful story to share with funders.

Within the comprehensive organizational Strategic Plan, we recommend embedding DEIASJ. We have learned that DEIASJ is fundamental to who Emerson is and wants to be. Accordingly, we recommend that DEIASJ should not be an offshoot of Emerson's core work but included within. DEIASJ work should have a plan that includes key milestones and metrics that support business goals and values and include tactical, cultural, restorative, and somatic elements. The strategy should also consider the process Emerson will use to determine Emerson definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, social justice, and other commonly used terms that need College-wide specific definitions. Additionally, it should incorporate how Emerson determines they will name DEIASJ work. Once the full strategy is created, Emerson will have an incredible opportunity to align all of the resources working on DEIASJ across the College, namely the President, Vice President for Equity & Social Justice, Provost, and Chief Human Resource Officer.

While the full Strategic Plan is being created, the Vice President for Equity and Social Justice is advised to create a DEIASJ plan to guide prioritization of DEIASJ work in the next year, informed by many of the nearer term action items recommended in this report. This plan should be fully sponsored by the President's Council, including a generous budget.

Compass Action Plan:
Actions: Short-Term
- Update and define Emerson's Values
- Create a near term DEIASJ plan

Actions: Intermediate-Term
- Update the Emerson Strategic Plan, inclusive of DEIASJ
- Draft the Emerson Code of Conduct

Actions: Longer-Term
  ● Finalize the Emerson Code of Conduct

Culture

Throughout this project, distinctive elements pertaining to Emerson's culture emerged. As is typical in organizations, many of Emerson's cultural characteristics have been created over time as a byproduct of the way the organization runs. Emerson now has the opportunity to intentionally cultivate the desired culture, one that will support the strategy and experience Emerson desires for every stakeholder of the College, in particular students.

Culture Discovery Summary:
Emerson has strong community orientation embedded into its cultural language. This was reinforced by stakeholders who shared with us that there is a deep commitment to the Emerson community. While community had differing definitions as we dug more deeply into what that meant for certain individuals and groups, Emerson's community orientation is a strength to build on in the upcoming phases of DEIASJ work.

Emerson has been invested in DEIASJ work for several years, with both the work and language embedded into much of the organization. There are many teams or committees doing the work, many programs in place, such as the Teach-in on Race, Faculty programs, the Creative Cafe (2021 – 2022), the Dean's Fellowship for Racial Equity and Leadership Development, and many meetings dealing with DEIASJ agenda topics. DEIASJ is talked about consistently. While Emerson leadership can at times understandably demonstrate a lack of clarity about how to best do DEIASJ work, the shared commitment to DEIASJ work is a cultural cornerstone of the College.

We found two common cultural differentiators at Emerson: the first is a focus on practical learning and in the application of that learning in everything the College does, the second is a culture of acceptance toward the uniqueness of individuals. Outside of these two cultural elements, what distinguishes Emerson is how varied the experience is for students, faculty, and staff depending on department, school, or the people they interact with regularly. Some stakeholders have wonderful experiences at Emerson. Yet, as Emerson leadership acknowledges, BIPOC students and faculty often struggle. We also found that students with disabilities struggle because disability inclusion is often not proactively incorporated into diversity, equity, inclusion, or social justice discussions.

Common themes when meeting with stakeholders were trust, collaboration, and accountability. We heard about a lack of trust, collaboration, and accountability in almost all of our stakeholder interviews and focus groups. The lack of these cultural elements significantly impedes progress in any area of DEIASJ.

Emerson stakeholders often discussed their experiences with an "us vs. them" mindset, sharing examples of a "call-out" culture, where different factions seem to be competing with each other rather than collaborating. In our stakeholder discussions there was a lack of collaboration in addressing issues. The competition often exists between the primary stakeholder groups at the college - staff, students, and faculty, and even further refined – leadership, staff, students, and faculty. Based on the examples shared with us, the divisions between administrators and students and administrators and staff are particularly deep. The deeper divisions between these groups are not surprising, given that administrators and students are the furthest away from each other in the organizational hierarchy and that there have been contentious union negotiations over the course of this project.

To further emphasize the lack of working together to solve problems, a common story in our discovery phase emerged where students asked for things and the College quickly tried to respond. This was done without deeper discussion with students and without taking time to reflect and understand whether student requests or demands would address the root cause or issue.

Emerson has been doing diversity, equity, and inclusion work for many years, followed by a focus on social justice. During this time there have been many student protests, student demands, and leadership transitions. There was a theme of frustration in the alumni focus group that many of the diversity-, equity-, and inclusion-related issues at Emerson have been present for decades and do not seem to be improving. Based on Emerson's long history in DEIASJ, there is collective pain, trauma, and fear surrounding the work that blocks desired progress. Contributing to this pain is a strong feeling of collective cognitive dissonance about who Emerson says it is as an institution versus the experience of those working and learning there. We heard about this disconnect continuously over the course of this project.

A significant part of the described experience of working at Emerson was a feeling of being under-resourced, overworked, and overwhelmed. This came up in almost every stakeholder session. When we dug more deeply into these feelings to better understand the sources, we were often assured that while COVID has certainly exacerbated these feelings, they have been long term common characteristics of working at Emerson. Related to the DEIASJ work, in our many stakeholder discussions we found an unsustainable sense of urgency to the work, with a sprint mentality, rather than a long-term orientation that views the work as a movement or a marathon. Constantly being in sprint mode, particularly with complex DEIASJ work, and without a strategy or aligned set of goals to prioritize the work, is a recipe for burnout.

We found that Emerson's DEIASJ work does not currently attribute the same level of importance, rigor, or support to all diversity groups. While this is not unusual, it's notable because of how much

this inequity came up in stakeholder discussions. Students with a range of identities, often intersectional, expressed pain and indicated they experienced trauma due to feelings of neglect relating to their holistic needs. While Emerson can't be all things to all people, without a strategy and desired outcomes, Emerson is at a loss to set reasonable goals and expectations with stakeholders about what can be accomplished, in what areas, and over what period of time.

Culture Recommendations:
It should be noted that the recommendations in the Compass section intersect with our Culture recommendations because Compass and Culture are highly integrated.

We recommend a multiple step cultural assessment process for the President's Council, and potentially the Dean's Council, to address Emerson's cultural opportunities, once the Values and Code of Conduct work has been completed:

1. As a leadership team, spend time together honestly discussing your current culture and capturing its strengths and weaknesses. Identify what factors most significantly contribute to the identified strengths and weaknesses (such as structure, practices, policies, environment, facilities, funding, etc.).
2. Spend time defining your aspirational culture. Define what you'd like it to feel like to be at Emerson, regardless of role or function. Define what you'd want the description of what it's like to be at Emerson when faculty, students, or staff talk about Emerson with friends and family. A great resource is the output from the Visioning sessions completed during this project that can be found in the addendum to this report. The objective of this step is to create 5-7 aspirational culture adjectives and descriptors.
3. Determine the gaps between the current and aspirational culture, prioritizing the most meaningful gap to begin working on. Determine the specific interventions that will have the greatest impact on addressing the prioritized gap.
4. Make a plan with specific accountabilities and funding to address the most meaningful gap.
5. Revisit the outcomes of this process and repeat the above steps once your first gap has been addressed.

While culture work often involves a broader set of stakeholders and discovery, the combination of the President's Council's experience and some BRE Strategic Review discovery findings provide a sufficient starting point for the first stage of culture definition work, while deliberately determining how to involve other levels of leadership at the college over time. Organizational culture requires ongoing curation and will continually be refined over time as Emerson does more outreach to stakeholders across campus in the 2022/2023 academic year and beyond.

Emerson would be well-served to be thoughtful about what success looks like in DEIASJ work. In line with what success looks like, there is an opportunity to embed the mantra "working at the speed of

trust" into the culture. We learned of many examples where decisions were made too quickly without taking time to think through issues together. Input from those directly impacted wasn't considered, nor was there enough time devoted to communicating the decision-making reasons. Speedy decisions do not work with DEIASJ work because DEIASJ work is so complex. Emerson leadership must change the expectations for themselves and others about how fast this work can be done. We also know that in most organizations, decisions and output are valued more highly than relationships. Examples provided to us over the course of this project demonstrated that Emerson also operates in an outcomes-oriented mode rather than a relational mode. Working at the speed of trust incorporates the importance of slowing down, creating a focus on relationality, and emphasis that without trust there is no foundation to build upon, especially in DEIASJ work.

Culture Action Plan:
Actions:
- Cultural assessment

Leadership

As mentioned earlier, leadership is an essential ingredient for transforming any organizational system. Over the course of this project Emerson leadership has indicated a genuine desire to transform its system and facilitate real and lasting change in both the learning and working experiences at Emerson. At this time, Emerson has a unique opportunity to accelerate the desired organizational transformation. Leadership transitions and the investment in this project provide the ideal opportunity to assess current leadership practices, hire highly qualified leaders, and ensure exploration of all of the opportunities to facilitate leadership alignment.

Leadership Discovery Summary:
Emerson had the leadership foresight to invest in this project and the desire to receive a third-party assessment of DEIASJ work at the college. This project demonstrates leadership courage. Opening up the college to a third-party and being willing to share everything is a demonstration of leadership's keen desire to make change happen. There was no time over the course of this project that BRE sensed a holding back of information or glossing over the truth. The authenticity and transparency by leadership contributed significantly to the success of this project.

Over the last year plus, Emerson has seen turnover or transitions in a number of key leadership positions, including the President, the VP for Equity and Social Justice, the Provost, the VP and Executive Director for Emerson Los Angeles, the Dean of the School of Communications, the Dean of Graduate & Professional Studies, the Chief Human Resources Officer, and the Board of Trustees Chair. Many of the incumbents in these positions left during the course of this nine-month project. The so-called "Great Resignation" in the aftermath of the pandemic has certainly been a contributor

to this turnover. These leadership gaps have created great challenges for the current leadership to keep the College running smoothly with so many key positions vacant. The stress this has put on current leadership can't be overemphasized. Under these circumstances, Emerson leadership has done an admirable job conducting thoughtful searches to replace leaders in these key positions. They have been inclusive in creating the position descriptions and identifying key decision-making criteria for the search process. They have also been consistently transparent when sharing information about the search process across the college.

We learned that many key stakeholders at Emerson deeply desire building sustainable and systemic DEIASJ work. There is genuine leadership commitment to DEIASJ across Emerson, including in the investment of new BIPOC faculty and staff over a number of years, in some cases as a result of student demand. Emerson leadership has created, sponsored, prioritized, and funded new DEIASJ related positions or committees, already mentioned elsewhere in this report. The success of these positions and structures is dependent on Emerson leadership and the support for these roles seems to be unwavering.

Over the course of this project, Emerson leadership has demonstrated an admirable philosophy regarding the importance of transparency at the college. There have been times where the importance of transparency has had to be weighed against appropriate timing and change-management plans, and Emerson leadership recognized this over the course of the project. Emerson leadership has demonstrated building an understanding that immediate transparency is not always the right or responsible thing to do.

We learned that the President's Council hasn't done collective DEIASJ work as a leadership team. While leaders may be doing work on their own, based on our experience, as well as best practices in DEIASJ, we know that doing collective leadership work is an essential component for success. Collective leadership work often includes creating shared definitions and language, learning, and applying somatic practices together, alignment of leadership priorities, and developing a shared understanding of systems of oppression and power, while relating that understanding to the organization.

BRE heard from numerous stakeholders in many stakeholder sessions that Emerson leadership is reactive to DEIASJ issues. We believe the sentiment regarding "reaction" is complicated by two factors. The first factor is that, to Emerson's credit, when something happens at the College, they do take responding swiftly quite seriously; yet, there is too often an imbalance between speed and a consistent and thoughtful approach that involves the key stakeholders in decision-making. The second factor is that without an agreed-upon plan about where Emerson is trying to go with DEIASJ – a strategy that everyone is aligned with – anything Emerson does in this space will feel reactive. This is due to the lack of an articulated set of goals to link to actions and priorities.

Based on many stories we heard, Emerson leadership seems to be in a challenging cycle of trying to do their best to be responsive to student needs and demands, while inconsistently partnering with students to determine the root causes of issues and the best solutions. In many instances, examples were given of students making demands of leadership and Emerson responding without a complete assessment of whether the demands were the best way to solve the problem. Given the lack of DEIASJ strategy, there is no mechanism to prioritize issues, therefore every student-raised issue appears to be of equal importance, which is exceptionally challenging for leadership prioritization. It also seems to be accepted that students are equipped with solutions and that Emerson leadership should accept those solutions, and either attempt to implement them or determine why they cannot be implemented.

A significant theme that BIPOC students shared is that they are burdened by DEIASJ work because they feel they are solely responsible for driving the work, the priorities, and the agenda. This was the case across all areas of DEIASJ, including among students with disabilities, which we name specifically because they acutely expressed their feelings of exclusion in many forums throughout this project. In general, there is a feeling that leadership does not take full accountability or ownership for DEIASJ work. This sentiment was also confirmed by faculty during faculty sessions. Multiple faculty members indicated that when issues are proactively raised by faculty, they felt they were only listened to if students had also raised the issue.

Leadership and faculty also reported struggling with the best ways to communicate and positively work with students. This included questions regarding the best format for communication, the best approach to communicating, or how decisions should be made. Faculty indicated a need for more leadership support, specifically about how to navigate challenging student curriculum demands that may sacrifice learning objectives (i.e., a theater student declaring that they can only play a role that is within their lived identities).

It is our observation that there is a significant emphasis on roles and hierarchy at Emerson. This includes distinguishing and prioritizing whether someone is a student, administrator, staff or faculty, rather than focusing on a relational orientation, where dialogue as humans trying to solve problems together is emphasized. Leadership shared numerous times that students are prioritized in this project, a general sentiment we heard about prioritization at Emerson as well. While on the face of it, student focus at a learning institution is understandable and may be admirable, this prioritization also creates a distracting competition between groups. Without appropriate recognition that Emerson is a system, and the design of the system and interaction of its components directly impacts everyone's experience at the College, especially students as the recipients of all of the services, competition will ensue. Emerson cannot address the student experience without addressing the experience of those providing services to students. Many

stakeholders reported that Emerson feels more like a business and that decisions seem to value Emerson's image and business success over educational excellence.

Leadership Recommendations:

Sustainable, impactful, system-changing DEIASJ work requires a fully aligned leadership team with active Board of Trustees and President sponsorship. To achieve alignment and ongoing active sponsorship by the Board of Trustees and President's Council we suggest Emerson hold a series of externally facilitated alignment introductory discussions with the Board of Trustees, President's Council, and external experts to collectively learn about systems of oppression, whiteness, power, and control, and to build shared language and learn to be in conversation around these topics. These discussions should be facilitated by an external third party to allow all Emerson leadership to fully participate as a team. The leadership teams need to build stamina to be comfortable being uncomfortable with each other and discussing difficult topics. This leadership work creates the conditions possible for sustainable, systemic change.

The update of the Emerson Strategic Plan (as identified in prior recommendations) will provide the prioritization needed to address the reactive mode that Emerson leadership often finds itself in and the perception that Emerson is solely reactive. Clear strategies and metrics with proper resourcing and support will provide the framework for communication of priorities, transparency of outcomes, and clear accountabilities. The strategies will inform and embolden leadership about what to say yes to, what to prioritize and fund, and what to say no to for now, ending the era of Emerson setting itself up for failure by trying to be all things to all stakeholders.

To move from hierarchical, positionally-focused interactions to a relational approach where relationships with each other are prioritized most highly, we recommend that Emerson resource a project to explore restorative practices in education. This will allow Emerson to determine whether restorative practices in education could be a powerful way to help faculty, leadership, staff, and students connect with each other in deeper and more relational ways, seeing each other first as humans and helping each other build deeper relationships to solve problems together. We consider restorative practices in education to be one of the most important areas of exploration for Emerson and could envision leadership and faculty being trained and supported in these practices as a key component of culture transformation.

Lack of trust in leadership decision-making is a common issue in most institutions and Emerson is no exception. Lack of trust in leaders' decisions was one of the core concerns raised by BIPOC students and students from other marginalized groups. The students often stated that they do not feel represented in the decision-making process and feel that leaders are making decisions in silos.

There was significant student angst exhibited over the course of this project about decisions that students felt they didn't have input into and didn't agree with, such as housing decisions, in-person classes versus hybrid options, masking, tuition raises, and naming conventions, among many others.

Emerson has a significant opportunity to create tangible, short-term actions stemming from this project related to decision-making. In addition, a significant amount of research shows that the most effective decisions are the result of identifying the overall decision-making process and involving impacted stakeholders in that process. As with any organization, Emerson would greatly benefit from better-quality decisions. There is also a need to lift and rely on the voices of historically marginalized individuals to understand the impact of decisions and determine a process for making final decisions that are much more aware of and fully weigh the benefits and costs of decisions on historically marginalized individuals. As mentioned previously, this requires slowing down to make decisions from a stakeholder-orientation, prioritizing gathering insight and input from marginalized populations, and as much as possible allowing decisions to be made at the lowest possible levels in the organization. It's important to emphasize that a decision-making practice that allows for these types of considerations is critical in DEIASJ work.

We recommend embracing a stakeholder-orientation model to decision-making. The President's Council should start by defining the Emerson decision-making process and once well practiced within leadership levels, work collaboratively with stakeholders across Emerson to identify the decision-making process for key decisions impacting many stakeholders. This is a tangible step towards inclusive decision-making that can be acted upon quickly by the President's Council, through practice, learning, and role modeling, followed by engaging other stakeholders in key decision-making, in particular students. Questions to consider in the articulation of the decision-making process are:

- How do we currently determine when a decision needs to be made? What could be improved about this process?
- How do we currently analyze the stakeholders for each decision? How could we improve this process?
- How do we currently involve stakeholders in the decision-making process? How could we improve this going forward?
- What decisions have been made historically without student input or without enough student input? (Reflect on past decisions that caused significant issues at Emerson to analyze the gaps in decision-making and change-management approach.)
- What do we need to change about our decision-making process to ensure that student input is gathered before decisions that impact students are made?
- How do we determine which students to gather input from?
- What is our process for gathering input from stakeholders?

- How are we currently aligning key stakeholders on the problem we need to solve? How could we improve this?
- How are we identifying and assessing all of the potential solutions to the problem before making a decision? How could this be improved?
- How do we determine who makes the final decision?
- How does our decision-making process get documented, including the problem to solve, the stakeholders identified, the stakeholder input gathered, the factors considered, and the final decision?
- How do we increase confidence in our decisions and decision-making process?
- How do we currently communicate our decisions? What could be improved about that process from stakeholders' perspectives?
- How are we evaluating the quality of our decision-making process and our decisions today? What do we need to improve about this going forward?

We recommend that Emerson build leadership relationships with other colleges and universities that are as dedicated to DEIASJ as Emerson. One place to start is to review the 2020 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) recipients. Emerson could select academic institutions with similar demographics, geography, or size, and build a partnership with these institutions to learn from one another. BRE specifically recommends exploring Regis College, Union College, and Swarthmore College.

Leadership Action Plan:
Actions: Short-Term
- Start building relationships with other DEIASJ academic leaders at other colleges and universities.

Actions: Intermediate-Term
- Series of externally facilitated introductory discussions with the Board of Trustees, President's Council, and external experts to collectively learn about systems of oppression, language, frameworks, power, and ways to be in conversation around these topics to build stamina to be comfortable being uncomfortable with each other and discussing difficult topics.
- Update Emerson's Strategic Plan.
- President's Council focuses on decision-making processes and practices to learn, revise, and eventually role model.

Actions: Longer-Term
- Commission a project to research restorative practices in education and implement restorative practices in education next steps, as applicable.

- Broader decision-making process and practices extended to other leadership levels, eventually including broader stakeholders.

Structure & Programs

How Emerson structures both the organization and DEIASJ programs for its community is a significant contributor to the student and campus experience. The organizational structure determines how work is organized across the College and the programs outline both the content and actions taken to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment at Emerson.

Structure & Program Discovery Summary:

Emerson's current DEIASJ strategy is implemented through a decentralized structure consisting of the Social Justice Center (SJC) and a group of dedicated resource partners across the college, including but not limited to Internationalization & Equity, Intercultural Student Affairs, Student Success and Belonging, and Student Accessibility Services. The SJC serves as a central organization focused on social justice praxis and learning, support for those who have experienced identity- and power-based interpersonal violence, healing, advocacy, community engagement, and regulations pertaining to Title IX. In April 2022, Emerson announced the move of the Office of Access, Equity, and Title IX to create a standalone office reporting to the Vice President for Campus Life & Dean of Students. The structures within Emerson College also have dedicated resources within each School and across various areas of the College focused on creating and cultivating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. There are currently 15 committees focused on equity at Emerson College. (See Emerson College Equity Community/Committee List.)

An important area to highlight is the shift from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to the Social Justice Center in 2018. This shift increased the emphasis of social justice and shifted ways of referring to bias, and identity- and power-based interpersonal violence to incorporate trauma-informed practices to Emerson's DEIASJ efforts, an important addition to address systemic and structural inequities. This change must be celebrated and should be maintained as Emerson determines its next DEIASJ steps. This shift also appears to have been made without a robust change in management and implementation plan in place. We heard from administrators, faculty, and staff that the shift came as a surprise and the implementation of the Center de-emphasized much needed DEIASJ leadership support and attention for each of the Schools and other areas of the College that received it prior to the shift. Additionally, director-level staff within the SJC transitioned away from the College during this time, resulting in a smaller bandwidth for College-wide support during the most immediate months of transition. This de-emphasis left groups across the College to close their own strategic, resource, and knowledge gaps. Downstream implications of this shift also appear to have created duplication of DEIASJ efforts across Emerson, siloed DEIASJ strategic planning, and inconsistent DEIASJ competency and knowledge-development. This

contributes to inconsistent student experiences across Emerson and does not align with the equitable and inclusive environment sought after and highlighted through Emerson's marketing.

From an accessibility standpoint, there are multiple entities responsible for implementing access and accommodations, each with its own process (i.e., faculty have different processes for approving and providing accommodations to students; staff have different processes for approving and providing accommodations for themselves and students, etc.). In addition, there are several entities engaged in disability inclusion initiatives, but they are not coordinated, and, in some cases, one group may not be aware of other groups' activities (e.g., some faculty contact Student Accessibility Services for accommodation requests).

In addition, students believe there is a lack of learning about disability inclusion and ableism on-campus. They want to see Emerson create more learning opportunities for faculty, staff, and other students by providing suggested books, films, speakers, Ted Talks, and incorporating content into programming to help raise awareness about disability inclusion and ableism.

The Presidential Advisory Group for Community Equity (PAG) was established in the Fall of 2021, creating an opportunity for Emerson student leadership focused on equity to share ideas and receive updates about progress made in this area. An archive of the meeting minutes/notes, agenda, and participants is available through the SJC. We believe the formation of this group is an indication of Emerson's commitment to DEIASJ and its goal of addressing student, faculty, staff, and community needs. We recommend the President and President's Council review the original intent of the formation of the PAG and gather feedback from participants to determine its effectiveness.

Emerson has a high ratio of affiliated faculty that provide extremely valuable real-world and hands-on approaches to teaching and learning. Contractual limitations of affiliated faculty were shared as impediments to their ability to participate in meetings and workshops outside of core coursework delivery. The efforts led by the Director of Faculty Development and Diversity indicate a large percentage of affiliated faculty have completed the level one DEIASJ course.

Emerson's Human Resources department does not structurally have the visibility to assist in driving Emerson's culture transformation efforts to improve DEIASJ. We believe that with an appropriate role in the President's Council, a strategic Human Resources/People-level leader could have been positioned to lead the change management planning, implementation planning, and execution of Emerson's DEIASJ to Equity and Social Justice shift in a way that prepared Emerson leaders and the Emerson community for the changes. Beyond Emerson's DEIASJ transformation, a highly qualified strategic Human Resources/People-leader can provide broader cultural transformation support across the Emerson Community.

During multiple student focus group sessions, we heard that both the Bias Reporting form and subsequent process were ineffective. While the Bias Reporting form and process were recently revamped, students still shared concerns about feeling comfortable reporting issues, understanding what happens when the information is shared, and how Emerson responds to biases reported. We understand there are several individuals representing various faculty, staff, and students who meet periodically to discuss the forms that have been submitted, but there appears to be no centralized ownership reporting system or a single senior administrator within Emerson. We are concerned that without centralized management, accountability and consistency may be impacted. We also believe that the issues raised about the form and process are important to address.

It is important to note three structural changes that Emerson implemented to strengthen its ability to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. The Office of Access, Equity, and Title IX was moved to Campus Life as a standalone organization reporting to VP and Dean for Campus Life, Dr. Jim Hoppe. In addition, a new position, Director of Equity Initiatives, was created within Academic Affairs, reporting to Dr. Anthony Pinder, Vice Provost for Internationalization and Equity, to establish accountability measures that help the advancement of access, diversity, and equity within Academic Affairs. This move left a vacant position for the new VP of Equity and Social Justice to fill in alignment with the strategic direction of the organization. The Director of Faculty Development and Diversity position was also moved to Academic Affairs and reports to Dr. Anthony Pinder. This team now has three positions focused on equity in Academic Affairs: Director of Equity Initiatives, Director of Faculty Development and Diversity, and Assistant Dean of Global Equity and Education. It is well poised to support the new VP of Equity and Social Justice in the development and implementation of Emerson's DEIASJ Strategy.

Through our Discovery process we learned of several cultural and identity-specific programs or initiatives that contribute to a positive student experience and further support Emerson's desire to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. Those mentioned during this process are listed below.
- Teach-in On Race
- Creative Café (one-year program during 2021-2022)
- Intercultural Groups (particularly identity-based group, e.g., POWER, Access: Student Disability Union, Flawless Brown, Hillel, EBONI)
- Diversity Program for incoming freshmen
- Dean's Fellows Program

We were made aware of Board of Trustees support during the discovery process, however, structurally there currently isn't a Board of Trustees DEIASJ Committee.

Structure & Program Recommendations:

We recommend Emerson solidify the centralized coordinating role of DEIASJ work under the new VP of Equity and Social Justice. The SJC has the history and foundation to lead this centralization and is poised to broaden its charter to co-lead Compass-setting activities for Emerson, in partnership with Emerson's leadership, Human Resources, Internationalization and Equity, other key DEIASJ leaders, student leadership, and stakeholders on campus. It will also be important to ensure the organization is resourced and funded appropriately to implement strategies, to build alignment across all areas of the College, and to support Emerson in collectively moving forward.

The reframing of the SJC would be positioned to serve as a central point of expertise for Emerson with the following sample responsibilities:

- Lead the implementation of Emerson's DEIASJ Vision, Strategic Plan, and Metrics for use across all divisions of Emerson - faculty, staff, and students.
- Partner with leaders, students, and stakeholders across the College to localize Emerson's DEIASJ strategies based on the specific needs of their division, department, and constituents.
- Support Emerson in taking action that is reflective of and acknowledges the systemic and structural elements of oppression critical to cultural transformation across all divisions and departments.
- Create templates, tools, and resources for each division to leverage within Equity teams, creating alignment and reducing the duplication of effort to re-invent strategy, approach, tools, and templates.
- Host an annual or Fall/Spring forum for all leaders and committee members to learn together and share best practices to increase alignment and further reduce duplication.
- Outline and implement DEIASJ competencies for the Emerson community that help shape Emerson's cultural transformation. Build programming aligned with the identified competencies to help guide consistent learning, focus, and actions across the College. Healing and advocacy can be core DEIASJ competencies at Emerson, but they must be one or two of many core competencies, all equally important.

We also recommend Emerson establish an accessibility approach that consolidates planning, process, and support to improve alignment and outcomes across all areas of the College. Accessibility and disability inclusion as a centralized focus is influencing products and services, marketing, advertising, and education, while also creating thriving communities for all identities and their intersectionality with accessibility. In Emerson's case, this role could focus on coordinating Emerson's strategy that promotes universal design in physical spaces, pedagogy, programming, and marketing, in addition to Emerson's current support of student and staff need-based accommodations.

We recognize that highlighting a specific identity may raise questions about having this type of dedicated focus for all historically marginalized groups. In our experience, it is often vital to identify a support structure with resources and thought-leadership that possess the expertise to lead such a transformation. In addition, because accessibility at Emerson has resources in various parts of the College distinct from Emerson's other equity-related support structure, coordination and communication is also important to lead this work collaboratively and in new ways that enable growth and transformation.

We recommend the President and President's Council, coordinated by the SJC, review the original intent of the formation of the PAG and gather feedback from participants to determine effectiveness. This platform provides access to Emerson leadership and a forum for student, faculty, staff, and leadership engagement. Leveraging participant feedback for improvements will support to continued growth and impact of the group.

The Director of Faculty Development and Diversity's Level One is in place and has been delivered. The Level Two program was under development. It will be important to: 1) further explore the impact of both programs on pedagogy, 2) create faculty communities of support for implementation and application, and 3) identify additional learning needs for faculty.

We recommend Emerson consider elevating of the HR Leadership role to the President's Council to structurally drive transformation of Emerson's culture, inclusive of all areas of the College. It is our experience that academia typically undervalues this HR role and organizations that understand its importance greatly benefit. While the HR position at Emerson has historically been responsible for staff areas only, the skills and competencies of a strong, strategic HR leader are applicable across an organization. These can be highly influential in the success of the next phase of Emerson's organizational development.

The current Bias Reporting process is being reviewed and updated under the Office of Equal Opportunity; this is an important effort to be completed with key stakeholders, including students, to identify concerns and co-create the new process, including the form, reporting process, tracking, transparency, and accountability.

Under the leadership of the new VP for Equity and Social Justice, we recommend Emerson review its support infrastructure and connection with all areas of the College focused on DEIASJ activities. With a defined structure and alignment with a DEIASJ strategy, this type of coordination will enable greater collaboration, communication, and best-practice sharing. In thinking about groups that are important to be a part of this infrastructure, we recommend participation from Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, student leadership, Alumni Affairs, and Human Resources. There are key groups who will be key partners for the SJC including Making Emerson

IDEAS, Internationalization and Equity, Office of Equal Opportunity, Access and Belonging, Intercultural Affairs, EEJC, Student Accessibility Services, and Religious and Spiritual Life as well as other equity committees who are currently engaged in making a difference for students and the broader Emerson community. The importance of bringing people together to focus on the intersections, opportunities, and synergies of the College's DEIASJ work cannot be overemphasized.

To assist Emerson on its journey toward building an anti-oppression and social justice institution, we recommend that each level of leadership within Emerson College engages in collective learning and dialogue series focused on anti-oppression, anti-racism, historical context for racism today, racial identity, and identity intersectionality before finalizing Emerson's DEIASJ Strategic Plan. Recommended leadership levels include Emerson's Board of Trustees, Emerson's President's Council, Academic Cabinet, Student Affairs Leadership, Making Emerson IDEAS, and Emerson's EEJC. Dismantling systemic barriers to access and equity require collective understanding and dialogue. This first move enables organizations to align on creative solutions and actions necessary to remove barriers and build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment with anti-oppression and anti-racism at its center.

With the current resource infrastructure, the recent hiring of a new VP for Equity and Social Justice, and implementation of the actions recommended, Emerson College is well positioned to lead its overarching DEIASJ strategy. It will likewise be able to build an environment that promotes diversity, centers equity, and is inclusive to all who make up the Emerson community.

We encourage the creation of a Board of Trustees DEIASJ Committee. This Committee is essential to create DEIASJ sponsorship, engagement, and accountability at the Board level, where the most hierarchical power resides.

Structure & Program Action Plan:
Actions: Short-Term:
- Build an On-Boarding Plan for the new VP for Equity and Social Justice to include critical 90-day conversations and supporting documentation like the site organized for BRE, current equity plans and metrics used by different areas of the college, and BRE's Final Report.
- Establish a structure to support bringing together key partners across the Emerson community for ongoing alignment and implementation of Emerson's DEIASJ strategy.

Actions: Intermediate-Term
- Create the Board of Trustees DEIASJ Committee.
- Establish and share core DEIASJ competencies.

Actions: Longer-Term

- Support academic departments, staff, and equity resources in creating and implementing a localized DEIASJ strategy in alignment with Emerson's overarching strategy.
- Launch the Board of Trustees, President's Council, Dean's Council, and Academic Cabinet anti-oppression and anti-racism learning series.
- Launch the Student Affairs Leadership and EEJC anti-oppression and anti-racism learning series.
- Launch the staff anti-oppression and anti-racism learning series.

Communications & Marketing

Communications and Marketing emerged as themes during the interview, focus group, and HiveWise data-collection process. BRE reviewed the Emerson website, gathered input on how communication was received, listened for understanding of communications that were shared, and heard feedback from participants regarding the disconnect between their expectations and their experiences at the College.

Communications & Marketing Discovery Summary:
Emerson provides multiple avenues for students, faculty, and external stakeholders to receive DEIASJ information about projects, programs, and activities. These avenues include the Emerson website, regular Community Equity email updates, the President's Advisory Group for Community & Equity, EmConnect, Emerson social media platforms, and direct communication with specific groups whether faculty, staff, student cultural groups, etc.

A common phrase that we heard throughout the engagement was, "for a communications college we stink at communications." This sentiment seemed connected to Emerson's desire to share information and be transparent in communications and the recognition that despite its efforts, the messages were not received in a way that resonated and conveyed the full meaning of what was intended to be shared.

It is important to note Emerson's website highlights the importance of dismantling systemic barriers to equity, embracing anti-oppression practices and pedagogy, and leveraging an intersectional approach to DEIASJ. While conceptually there are pockets of understanding and an emerging use of these practices, there is still a significant gap and road ahead to create campus-wide understanding and a culture living and breathing these ideologies. This disconnect may factor into the concerns expressed by faculty, students, and staff about Emerson's desire to create a more equitable environment and the very real experiences that detract from the aspiration.

We often heard students share how communication from leadership felt performative (perfunctory) and missed the mark in earnestly addressing the changes requested by students, faculty, and staff. It is also important to recognize that a deep desire to create a campus that lives up to its espoused values of equity, diversity, and social justice was conveyed to the BRE team in our conversations with leadership. Despite this desire, behavior and actions are more powerful communication tools than words, text, and language and Emerson must reconcile behaviors and actions through culture change to impact themes we heard relating to communication and marketing.

In this area of Communications and Marketing, what BRE termed the "student value proposition" was raised by students as a potential area of disconnection. For the purposes of this report, BRE defines the student value proposition to be a direct connection between who Emerson expresses itself to be for students, in the community, and in the world. We learned there are places of alignment and misalignment.

One component of the student value proposition that we heard loudly and clearly was Emerson's hands-on and practical approach to education. In nearly every student session held, the practical approach to learning was very much appreciated. This approach is a differentiator in skill-building and competency-development across all recognizable identities. This practical approach was also on display during our brief tour of Emerson's campus.

Emerson also expressly values uniqueness and quirkiness; this value resonates with students and creates a space where expressions, ways of being, and identities that may not be considered mainstream are embraced. Students reported feeling at home and comfortable in ways that were different and more accepting than in their communities of origin. This sentiment was most often expressed among LGBTQ students.

There is one element of Emerson's student value proposition connected to being the change in the world that may not be as clearly defined or organically aligned. This may lead to different interpretations of what is meant and therefore different applications of how the value is expressed. In espousing a desire to develop future professionals who will change the future, Emerson likely attracts students who want to do just that. Yet, students are met with classroom learning steeped in long-held beliefs of the dominant culture that are not a reflection of change connected to diversity, equity, inclusion, or social justice. We heard students talk about Christian-centric content, white-centric content, and cis-gender-centric content when we asked about negative aspects of the Emerson DEIASJ experience. If aspects of the learning experience are not aligned with the espoused values of the Emerson experience, what students experience can feel misaligned.

Many of Emerson's equity communication mechanisms were one-way, with limited opportunities for dialogue and collective problem-solving. Email, the Emerson website, and a report-out format were

common approaches used to convey updates. These are non-engaging communication approaches which quickly become outdated. Lack of regular updates or understanding how and when information will be updated was frequently linked to a lack of trust in the College's intentions and actions.

There were several attacks against Emerson College during our time working on this project. These included passing out propaganda offending Chinese and Chinese American students, personal and professional attacks against faculty of color, and mobile and other billboards expressing negative attacks against the college. To its credit, in cases like these, Emerson worked with external communications/PR experts to navigate the challenging scrutiny of external "student rights" groups focused on academia.

Communications & Marketing Recommendations:

Solving communications and marketing as a standalone segment will not fully address the concerns raised and summarized in this section of the report. The fuller solution must encompass the other categories conveyed in this report: Compass, Culture, Leadership, and Structure & Programs. Communication and marketing are tools to support the enactment of DEIASJ through each of the other areas. Our recommendations are provided in that context.

- Leverage Emerson's updated Values and Strategic Plan to further define Emerson's student value proposition. Implement a collaborative process to ensure alignment across all divisions and departments, particularly with the Marketing, Communications, and Digital team to facilitate consistent use of Emerson's student value proposition in marketing collateral.
- Emerson is on a journey to transform its culture and become a college where all students feel a sense of belonging, importance, and inclusion. Assess all collateral to ensure there is a comfortable balance between aspirational goals and acknowledgement of Emerson's current state. Once the assessment is complete, incorporate updated student value proposition language and assessment language to better balance student expectations with Emerson's journey as a community.
- Increase the opportunities for one-on-one and/or small group dialogue to help convey and discuss important topics. This is important at all levels of leadership, within departments, and with students. This will also serve to humanize leadership who are regularly characterized as the proverbial "they."

Communication & Marketing Action Plan:

Actions: Short-Term

- Create an agreement amongst all administrators, academic, and student affairs leadership to engage in one-on-one and small group discussions with students, faculty, and staff.

- Periodically add to the leadership's agenda what you're hearing with the intention of learning from one another and keeping a pulse on what is happening. The goal is also to humanize the "they" group.

Actions: Intermediate-Term
- Leverage Emerson's updated Values and Strategic Plan to further define Emerson's student value proposition. Implement a collaborative process to ensure alignment across all divisions and departments, particularly with the Marketing, Communications, and Digital team to facilitate consistent use of Emerson's student value proposition in marketing collateral.

Actions: Longer-Term
- Assess all collateral to ensure there is a comfortable balance between aspirational goals and acknowledgement of Emerson's current state.
- Once the assessment is complete, incorporate updated student value proposition language and assessment language to better balance student expectations with Emerson's journey as a community.

Faculty & Staff

Overall, Emerson is made up of faculty and staff that care about students and their experiences. We saw this firsthand in our interactions with administrators, staff, and faculty who engaged with us as a part of this project, inviting us into their offices and classrooms to talk about their concerns. There was an expressed commitment to this work that is and will continue to be important as Emerson embarks on its journey to create a culture that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Faculty and staff must be at the heart of that plan.

Faculty & Staff Discovery Summary:
Emerson recognizes the importance of building a diverse faculty and staff community and has made strides with hiring and promoting BIPOC faculty and staff. We were informed of an intentional focus to diversify the pool of qualified candidates for new positions, increasing the representation of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ identities within the faculty and staff. Having greater diversity in Emerson's faculty and staff has played a vital role in creating an environment that feels safe and supportive of students. It is important to note that diverse faculty and staff bear additional responsibilities - often unrecognized and uncompensated - in their support of historically marginalized students.

There were concerns expressed about diverse staff and faculty leaving Emerson, and the impact that will have on the community moving forward. It is difficult to parse out the impact of "The Great

Resignation" and the role Emerson's DEIASJ culture played in these recent departures. Moving forward, it will be important to understand retention drivers for all faculty and staff, particularly of BIPOC faculty and staff as Emerson works to improve racial equity at the college.

Among faculty and staff, there is clear engagement and a desire to improve the experience of DEIASJ for all Emersonians, particularly for students. We saw this demonstrated in areas highlighted below.

- The committees working on equity and diversity within each division of Emerson.
- The informal working body that became Making Emerson IDEAS.
- The formation of the Deans Fellowships to enable better communication and provide financial support to students who were more formally engaging in DEIASJ work at Emerson.
- Emerson's focus on providing faculty with support in pedagogy/curriculum changes.
- Emerson's Faculty Assembly voted to include mandatory DEIASJ training for all faculty and staff, which led to over 92% of full-time faculty and nearly 63% of affiliated faculty completing the Level One course offered by the end of the fall.
- The additional criteria to tenureship, recognizing the importance of essential diversity and equity in service in becoming a tenured professor at Emerson.

There was also recognition that there is more work to be done. There were questions raised about the impact these efforts have or will have on students and faculty. Do students feel the effects in their lived experiences? In some ways students do feel the effects of these actions in their lived experience, and greater exploration of that impact within and across groups and from an intersectional lens is needed for consistency. It remains unclear if faculty feel more equipped to lead and address diversity concerns in the classroom. There are future courses outlined to support faculty development needs, an important component to Emerson's strategy.

We also heard that faculty feel blamed by both the leadership and students for the DEIASJ issues at the College. While we certainly learned of examples of harm in the classroom, it is important that there is shared accountability for creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment at Emerson.

The engagement of faculty in addressing equity at Emerson is critical to shifting Emerson's culture and the lived experiences of students. The DEIASJ work within the academic divisions is disparate and does not have an overarching strategy to create alignment and accountability that drive behavior change. While some autonomy is important and required to ensure relevancy within each department, consistent overarching guidance is missing. With the strengthening of Equity work within the Internationalization and Equity area, there is an opportunity to provide this leadership and coordination across Academic Affairs.

From a disability standpoint, there appears to be two versions of what is happening with faculty, staff, and human resources, as it relates to disability inclusion and accommodations. Interviewees shared varied experiences of how disability and accommodations are approached. In speaking with members of the HR team it became evident that they believe the right policies, processes, and procedures are in place to effectively accommodate faculty and staff in need of a disability related accommodation. They indicated there have been very few complaints or issues with the accommodations process with faculty.

Unfortunately, at the time of this report we were unable to speak with any individuals who had requested accommodations through Human Resources. We did speak with Student Accessibility Services, which indicated that some faculty come to them first for advice and counsel or even worse, as a workaround to avoid HR. There was a desire for additional support from HR for faculty and staff related to disability and accessibility needs.

Faculty & Staff Recommendations:
Early in the project it was shared with BRE that there is a desire to further examine the staff and faculty perspectives regarding their own experiences as a follow-up initiative after the student-focused project. Pursuing that understanding to improve staff and faculty experiences will help to enhance the experiences of Emerson students. Because the scope of this project was focused on the student experience, we did not delve deeply into faculty and staff experiences. We agree with the plans to explore the experiences of faculty and staff more deeply, as those experiences directly reflect Emerson's culture overall, and they impact student experiences. The goal is to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for all identities and the intersectionality of those identities.

Emerson's divisions and departments will need to leverage Emerson's Strategic Plan, competencies, and metrics for guidance and alignment in creating a DEIASJ Plan for Academic Affairs to support each division in the development of their localized plans. This approach will create the alignment, structure, and prioritization needed across academic areas.

In addition to the current coursework offered by Academic Affairs, it is recommended that Emerson create communities of practice to support ongoing faculty growth and development. Faculty need trusted colleagues who they can turn to if/when things are volatile in classroom situations. Such a cohort will be committed to the ongoing work, across disciplines, of undoing oppressive academic structures while contributing to the creation of a collaborative relational culture. It is important that these communities create a safe space for faculty who are not comfortable addressing these issues, creating a place for them to (un)learn harmful and unhelpful ways, and reorient their teaching and research with and through a more inclusive lens.

Further investigation into faculty and staff HR processes around disability inclusion and accommodations are needed to truly understand its current state on the Emerson campus. Further analysis will provide HR with data on process time, medical documentation requirements, and feedback from those being accommodated. Surveying the faculty and staff on disability issues will be important. We recommend the Amplify Survey on Disability Climate and Culture, a well-respected survey created by the organization of Meg O'Connell, one of the BRE team members for this project.

Faculty & Staff Action Plan:

Actions: Short-Term

- Gather all equity related plans for each academic area. Review the equity plans for themes and overarching areas of focus. Summarize accomplishments and impact on desired outcomes.
- Determine how the Academic Affairs Equity team will engage, interact, and support faculty's equity-related needs. Outline an approach to build and align equity actions for the 2022-2023 school year with flexibility for alignment as the new VP for Equity and Social Justice is onboarded.

Actions: Intermediate-Term

- Partner with Academic Affairs to explore a pilot approach with a willing department that would be a microcosm of the envisioned future Emerson academic experience.

Actions: Longer-Term

- Further explore the experiences of faculty and staff to determine their needs in creating a diverse and inclusive experience at Emerson. Address actions from findings from the faculty and staff equity analysis.
- Expand improved piloted approach to other areas of the college.
- Leverage Emerson's DEIASJ Strategy to build and implement academic- and staff-specific equity strategy and plans.
- Further exploration of accessibility and disability inclusion is possible with this timing because there is currently a new HR Leader and the new VP for Equity and Social Justice. With both of those positions filled, this action can be prioritized earlier and can include surveying the faculty and staff on disability issues with the use of the Amplify Survey on Disability Climate and Culture or other questions during Emerson's next climate survey.

Accessibility

Accessibility is called out as a separate category to highlight additional details discovered during the BRE Strategic Review at Emerson College. Several accessibility-related themes were shared in other

sections of this report. Summarized below are all the important accessibility findings and learnings in one comprehensive section.

In addition, within DEIASJ, accessibility is often under-addressed and can be a less well-known area in comparison to other areas of diversity. We heard extensively about accessibility concerns from students during this project.

Accessibility Discovery Summary:

There is widespread support for disability inclusion on campus as accommodation requests have risen since the global pandemic. The past two years have seen a significant increase in disability accommodations requests. Mental health challenges have risen on campus and many students are reporting stress, anxiety, and depression at much higher rates than in previous years. Additionally, requests for remote learning have increased among students with disabilities who fear grave health consequences if exposed to COVID-19 because of mandatory in-person learning.

Emerson has had many successes related to disability inclusion and accessibility. There are multiple entities responsible for implementing access and accommodations at Emerson, and each has its own process (i.e., faculty can have different processes for approving and providing accommodations).

The most prominent group is Student Accessibility Services (SAS). SAS serves over 600 students academically; this number is up 48% from the previous year. The team is small and mighty with just three people in the office. Each person manages a caseload of approximately 280 people. The top accommodation requests are for extended time on exams, ASL interpreters, and since the pandemic, a dramatic increase in students wanting to be tested for ADD and ADHD, as well as an increase in anxiety and depression. The variety and magnitude of requests is impressive, and the team is knowledgeable and agile in providing services to students across the campus.

SAS also serves as a primary resource on-campus. They serve as advocates for access and inclusion on campus, offering training and support to educate faculty and staff about accommodation processes. SAS serve as the de facto experts on disability on campus, despite their role and activities being structurally focused on student accessibility only. They often receive requests from faculty and staff to assist with accommodations and in some cases these requests are in lieu of requests to Human Resources. SAS is extremely knowledgeable about disability and accommodations, and it is widely felt that SAS does a good job in accommodating students, but students report the office is understaffed and overloaded, causing student accommodation delays.

Emerson actively engages the student body for ongoing feedback, ideas, and suggestions to improve accessibility and disability inclusion on campus. In 2019, students created the Access: Student Disability Union to reflect the Access Advocacy Project, a list of observations and perceptions about access and inclusion on campus. The project contains a list of items like training

for students and faculty alike, curriculum suggestions, governance of advisory boards, hiring and retention, policy development, improvements to communication, and much more. Emerson revised the Accessibility Advisory Board to respond to student issues and requests, working collaboratively to solve these issues and create a more inclusive Emerson. The advisory board is made up of students and faculty, including faculty with expertise in disability and accessibility. While this advisory board will be an ongoing effort, in Spring 2021, Emerson recommitted to creating a more accessible and inclusive environment for all students, especially students with disabilities. This will be critical to building true disability inclusion, whereby actions are taken with the intention of creating an environment for all Emerson community members to thrive and fully participate in all aspects of the Emerson College experience, whether disabilities are visible or invisible. In doing so, actions based on compliance will become the starting point versus the end goal.

We worked on this project over the course of the pandemic, when many organizations, including Emerson, were in unprecedented times and often faced unpredictable situations navigating how to approach delivery of services. Over the course of the pandemic there was inconsistency in the approach to delivery of classes in in-person and online formats. Based on faculty discretion some classes offered remote options and some did not.

Accessibility on campus was also raised as a significant concern. This varied and included accessibility in housing, in various campus buildings, the cafeteria, visual contrast on steps, audio cues in elevators, and accessible documents provided by faculty. These were just a few of the items pointed out by students where there was either a lack of accessibility, inconsistencies in how accessibility was provided, or that efforts were highly uncoordinated or siloed.

The most prevalent example was the use of accessible PDF documents. Students cited some faculty members were happy to provide accessible PDF documents while others refused. Library services have served as a default for providing accessible PDF documents, but this has become an overwhelming request for the library and the services are falling short of the need. This is a basic need for students with disabilities and every faculty member should understand how to create an accessible PDF document, or at the very least provide a Word version that can be read by screen readers.

A theme revealed during the discovery process is that accessibility at Emerson currently feels like an afterthought without an inclusive, informed approach integrated into all aspects of diversity work across the college. It is often prioritized after addressing other areas of diversity. Many students discussed the lack of a systemic approach to disability inclusion at the College. When Emerson takes on new diversity topics, students with disabilities advocate for themselves to be included. One student commented that they were always having to remind the College that they were there, that they matter, and that they have something to contribute.

The culture of proactive inclusion is often disability-dependent at Emerson. Disabilities that are easier to accommodate are included more readily, whereas those with more significant disabilities are often excluded socially and in the classroom. Students want to be considered in the classroom and in social events, and doing so may require proactive requests for needs at the beginning of a semester, registration forms, and other methods to gather needs during planning to accommodate as many students as possible.

Emerson has done a good job in creating a foundational approach to addressing and responding to accessibility and disability inclusion on campus. As with any improvement program, continuous and ongoing engagement between faculty, staff, and students is imperative to continue the progress and create the future vision of a more accessible and equitable Emerson for people with disabilities.

Accessibility Recommendations:
As highlighted in the Structure and Programs section, we recommend that all disability activities have a single reporting structure. We suggest setting up an office of disability access, inclusion, and belonging or having the disability functions report directly to senior leaders on campus. This reporting structure will assist with workstream coordination and accountability.

We suggest a review of all DEIASJ programs and initiatives to ensure disability has equal prioritization with other diversity issues including leadership discussions about Emerson's approach to accessibility and inclusion. Doing so will enable students, faculty, and staff to participate in meaningful dialogue to understand the intersections of disability with race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and culture.

We recommend that Emerson conduct an audit of the accommodations processes to identify any gaps or challenges in making the processes effective, efficient, and inclusive to all students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. For the most commonly requested accommodations, we recommend establishing relationships with preferred vendors that can provide the appropriate accommodations quickly and cost-effectively.

We recommend a full assessment of both physical and digital accessibility issues on-campus and the development of a detailed timeline for addressing identified issues. This will be a multiyear project that will need to be managed and maintained consistently to ensure ongoing elevation of disability inclusion and accessibility on Emerson's campus.

Emerson would benefit from a survey of students, faculty, and staff on accessibility and disability inclusion at Emerson. We understand that a survey may have been recently done outside of the

timeframe for this project. If a survey has not been completed, then the Amplify Survey is recommended.

There is an awareness and learning gap regarding disability inclusion and anti-ableism. To close this gap, we recommend disability inclusion and anti-ableism training curriculum be offered separately and incorporated into other already existing programs.

Due to the pandemic the world has significantly changed over the course of this project. No organization will go back to pre-pandemic operations completely. The demands for more online opportunities will not subside for lots of reasons, most importantly due to the needs of students with disabilities. We recommend identifying more remote learning options for students with disabilities and creating a consistent approach to online and in-person experiences.

There is a great opportunity to continue the training and development for HR team members responsible for accommodations while creating a culture of inclusion. HR team members would benefit from participation in the free disability inclusion certification program from The Society of Human Resource Management called Employing Abilities at Work.

The Emerson Facts and Figures page includes all diversity segments except the percentage of students with disabilities. In addition to adding the data for students, a best practice is to also have this data displayed for faculty and staff as a demonstration of the commitment to campus diversity. The SAS web page also omits encouraging or supportive statements about being a student with a disability on campus. Current language reflects the required ADA process and items needed to request an accommodation.

We recommend allowing students more flexibility around absences – "demedicalize" absences and diminish the hoops students have to go through for approved absences.

Accessibility Action Plan:
Actions: Short-Term
- Assess current plans for inclusion of disability and accessibility to ensure equalization of this area of diversity.
- Depending on the timing of Emerson's next climate survey, review questions for feedback related to disability and accessibility perspectives.
- Update Emerson's websites to include statistics on disabled students, staff, and faculty when providing other protected class information.

Actions: Intermediate-Term

- Explore as a part of Emerson's Strategic Plan, Emerson's views and desires for hybrid and online learning for students. Based on that strategy, determine Emerson's long-term approach to hybrid and online learning.
- Review training programs available to faculty, staff, and students and determine what disability, accessibility, and ableism content is available. For gaps, outline a plan to develop and deliver additional programs.
- Participate in the free disability inclusion certification program from The Society of Human Resource Management called Employing Abilities at Work.
- Create more flexibility around absences by demedicalizing absences and simplifying requirements for an approved absence.

Actions: Longer-Term
- Audit accommodations processes to identify any gaps or challenges in making the processes effective, efficient, and inclusive to all students, faculty, and staff with disabilities.
- Conduct a full assessment of both physical and digital accessibility needs and develop a detailed timeline for addressing all issues identified.
- Update Emerson's websites with encouraging and supportive language about what it is like to be a student with a disability at Emerson.
- Review the Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center Survey to determine next actions. (See appendix.)

Religion & Spirituality

Religion and Spirituality are separated as a category to facilitate focused attention. It is common for religion and spirituality to be excluded in the day-to-day operationalization of diversity, equity, and inclusion programming. Our goal is to raise awareness of this area of focus for Emerson as it was requested that we delve into this topic.

Religion & Spirituality Summary:
There is clear support for religious and spiritual beliefs at Emerson College. The Center for Spiritual Life is Emerson's inclusive, multifaith hub for religious and spiritual programming, support, and education. Emerson's team of chaplains and student leaders work to foster a campus environment where faith traditions and spirituality can be practiced freely. There are six student organizations supporting spiritual life at Emerson.

Outside of Emerson's Center for Spiritual Life there appears to be no clear alignment across Emerson about religion and spirituality to ensure multiple perspectives from non-religious to religious, non-spiritual to spiritual, to equally feel a sense of belonging at the college.

Students reported they felt there was a common presumption of a basic knowledge of Christianity. This was reported in the context of readings for class, whether in literature and/or by virtue of studying European and American history. They felt they were expected to have a specific religious context and "already know" the background.

Students also shared their frustration with both actively practicing their religious beliefs at Emerson to students referencing that religion has been used in the classroom to shame/harm LGBTQIA students.

When religion and spirituality issues arise, we learned there is a perception that Emerson has a reactive response. There is an inconsistent approach to holding vigils to support and grieve. Sometimes a vigil is held with no action, sometimes only action with no vigil. There's no ongoing process to assess and improve.

Religion & Spirituality Recommendations:
We recommend further exploration of views and perspectives about religion and spirituality at Emerson.

While the Center for Spiritual Life provides services and support to students, there is a need for Emerson to more explicitly include religion, spirituality, and non-belief as a core area of diversity. We recommend determining what guidance should be made available to administrators, faculty, staff, and students to ensure inclusivity is conveyed regardless of religious and spiritual beliefs.

There is a need to determine an overall approach to managing religious-based crises when students, faculty, and staff may be impacted. This approach can include the development of decision-making criteria to determine when vigils will be held, and when Emerson will make statements or take further action. Once this is established Emerson can assess how the approach is working and refine as needed.

Religion & Spirituality Action Plan:
Actions: Short-Term
- For the upcoming climate survey, review survey questions to determine if and what content is gathered in respect to religion and spirituality at Emerson. Depending on what is learned, consider adding questions to gather a broader sense of perspectives on campus regarding this area of diversity.
- As the VP for Equity and Social Justice is developing the DEIASJ strategy in support of Emerson College's Strategic Plan, we recommend the inclusion of religion and spirituality as a specific demographic area of diversity.

Actions: Intermediate-Term

- In partnership with the Center for Spiritual Life and the VP for Equity and Social Justice, outline an approach to manage religious-based crises when students, faculty, and staff may be impacted. This approach can include the development of decision-making criteria to determine when vigils will be held, when Emerson will make statements, or take further action. Assess how the approach is working and refine as needed.

Actions: Longer-Term

- Determine what guidance, training, and education should be made available to administrators, faculty, staff, and students to ensure inclusivity is conveyed regardless of religious and spiritual beliefs.

Sample DEIASJ Metrics

Emerson's DEIASJ Metrics will need to be developed in connection with its strategy and desired outcomes. Below are **sample** *metrics for Emerson's consideration. These samples are not intended to be all inclusive and will need significant refinement in alignment with Emerson's Strategy.*

Due to the longer time horizon for outcomes connected to DEIASJ work, it is important for Emerson to identify both leading and lagging measures of success. Leading indicators are forward-looking measures that provide insight into the desired outcomes. These measures connect to actions that produce the end result. Lagging measures are backward looking metrics that provide important feedback on the desired outcomes or results. Typical DEI measures or metrics tend to focus primarily on outcomes or results.

Sample Metrics

Area of Focus	Leading Measures	Lagging Measures
Diversity Demographics	Prospective student outreach within identified demographics (e.g., marginalized communities, 1st generation college-students, and international students) Implementation of hiring strategies	5 Year Demographic Trends (Race/Ethnicity, International Students, LGBTQIA+, Disability, Intersections of demographics) for faculty, students, leadership, and staff

		Annual hiring and enrollment demographics by demographic population Retention rates for diverse populations
Equity & Social Justice	Newly identified financial aid sources for marginalized student populations Bias reporting process review and changes implemented, with goals for bias report frequency Expanded current financial aid and scholarship funding Capital campaign for scholarship program launched Implementation of learning and development strategies for BOT, administrators, faculty, staff, and students	Trends of students from non-traditional areas with financial assistance Number of BIPOC and traditionally marginalized students attending Emerson without financial hardship Bias Reporting Metrics (Number Submitted, Types of Concerns Raised, and Impact Survey)
Inclusion & Belonging	Comprehensive turnover assessment process Completed leadership and staff stay interviews Retention plan created based on stay interviews Percentage of retention strategies implemented	Impact Data (Climate Survey Anti-racism Workshop Follow-up Surveys, etc.)

	Implementation of Learning and development strategies for BOT, administrators, faculty, staff, and students	
Accessibility & Disability Inclusion	Percentage of staff and faculty certified in disability inclusion program Goal determined and percentage to goal of classes assessed and offered for hybrid delivery Goal determined and percentage to goal of classes where accessible materials are provided Goal determined and percentage to goal of faculty trained in providing accessible materials Percentage of accessibility and disability inclusion interventions implemented	Disability Climate survey responses

Addendum

Stakeholder Interview Process

Stakeholder interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours depending on whether it was an individual discussion or a focus group. Interviews or focus groups followed the below interview protocol:

- An expression of gratitude for spending time with us.
- Introduction of each individual on the call, starting with BRE. Each individual was asked to share their name, role, and tenure or year with Emerson.

- Brief introduction to the BRE Strategic Review project.
- Answering questions about the project.
- BRE explaining that we will be taking notes during the conversation but will not be attributing any comments to any individual, and that we are seeking themes, not individual attribution.
- BRE explaining that we will be asking a few questions to get the discussion going and that we'd appreciate hearing from everyone and making the space for everyone to share.
- The following questions were generally asked in the below order:
    a. Tell us about how diversity, equity, and inclusion impact your role at Emerson.
    b. There seems to be a disconnect between the desired student experience and the actual student experience at Emerson. Do you agree? If so, why do you think that is?
    c. What haven't we discussed today that you think is important for us to know about diversity, equity, and inclusion at Emerson?
- Additional questions were asked based on answers to the above questions.

BRE Joining Classes

BRE was invited by faculty to join classes for time frames ranging between 30 minutes and one hour. During classes BRE followed the below protocol:
- An expression of gratitude for spending time with us.
- Brief introduction to the BRE Strategic Review project.
- Answering questions about the project.
- BRE explaining that we will be taking notes during the conversation but will not be attributing any comments to any individual, and that we are seeking themes, not individual attribution.
- BRE explaining that we will be asking a few questions to get the discussion going and that we'd appreciate hearing from everyone and making space for everyone to share.
    a. What do you appreciate most about Emerson from a DEI perspective?
    b. What has not worked well for you from a DEI perspective?
    c. What creates a sense of belonging and inclusion for you at Emerson?
    d. What would you like to see Emerson improve to increase your sense of belonging and inclusion?
    e. We haven't heard much about (Religion, Gender and Sexual Diversity, and Accessibility). Tell me about your experience at Emerson related to Religion, Gender and Sexual Diversity, and Accessibility.

Stakeholders Interviewed

Beyond Racial Equity spoke with the following people, individually, in focus groups, or as part of an Emerson committee, group, or class. We've included the committee names and class names and dates at the top of this list.

Committees:
- Presidential Advisory Group for Community & Equity
- Making Emerson IDEAS
- Academic Chairs
- President's Council

Classes:
- March 15, 2022 - Introduction to Creative Writing: Fiction
- April 4, 2022 - Book Publishing Marketing & Sales
- April 4, 2022 - Junior Pre-Thesis Seminar
- April 7, 2022 - Power and Privilege
- April 7, 2022 - Postcolonial Cultures
- April 11, 2022 - Reporting Issues of Diversity

Stakeholders:
- Alayne Fiore, Director of Operations and Special Assistant to the VP of SJC
- Allison Sampson*, Vice President and Executive Director, Emerson Los Angeles
- Amelia Broome, Senior Artist-in-Residence and Co-Chair Performing Arts
- Dr. Amy Ansell, Dean, Marlboro Institute
- Anna Biller*, Director of Annual Giving
- Anne Shaughnessy, Vice President and Special Assistant to the President
- Dr. Anthony Pinder, Vice Provost Internationalization & Equity
- Azat Jumadurdyyev, Student
- Dr. Bill Gilligan, Interim President
- Binsen JG Mejia, Alumnus
- Brandin Dear, Associate Dean and Director, Counseling, Health & Wellness
- Dr. Brent Smith, Chair of the Department of Marketing Communication
- Briana Figarella, Student
- Brooke Knight, Assistant Provost for Faculty Affairs, Academic Affairs
- Cathy Carney, Director of HR
- Chris Daly, Assistant Dean for Campus Life
- Christine Del Favero, Director, Alumni Relations and Programs
- Christopher Grant, Director, Access, Belonging and Student Success

- Cindy Rodriguez, Senior Journalist-in-Residence
- Clarisa Carrillo, Student
- Cristina Kotz Cornejo, Professor of Media Production and Chair of the Department of Visual and Media Arts
- Darian Harvin, Alumnae
- David Howse, Vice President, Office of the Arts; Executive Director, ArtsEmerson
- Diane Paxton, Director, Student Accessibility Services
- Eryn McCallum, Student
- Evonne Johnson, Student
- Gina Gayle, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Visual and Multimedia Storytelling
- Dr. Greg Payne, Associate Professor and Chair, Communication Studies, Co-Director, Emerson-Blanquerna Center for Global Communication
- Greta Spoering, former Associate Director/Survivor Counselor
- HanYing Du, Student
- Heather May, Senior Lecturer in Health Communication, Presentation Skills and Cultural Awareness
- Jabari Asim - Faculty WLP, Former Grad Program Director, Elma Lewis Distinguished Fellow (Teach-In on Race Founder)
- Dr. Jae Williams*, Director of Special Projects
- Dr. James Hoppe, Vice President and Dean of Campus Life
- Jan Roberts-Breslin, Dean, Graduate Studies (Interim Provost as of 11/16)
- Jason Beals, Director of Web & Digital Services
- Jason Meier*, Director of Student Engagement & Leadership (student organizations)
- Jehan Ayesha, Student, SGA President
- Jehan Heru Wirasto, Student
- John Malcolm*, Vice President for Institutional Advancement
- Joshua Streeter, Assistant Professor of Theatre Education
- Joshua Wachs, Alumnus
- Julie Avis Rogers, Campus Chaplain & Director of Spiritual and Religious Life
- Keri Thompson, Communication Studies Professor
- Kim McLarin, Writing, Literature & Publishing, Interim Dean of Grad Studies
- Dr. Kristin Lieb, Marketing Communication
- Kristina Smith, Alumnae
- Margaret Ann Ings, Vice President for Government and Community Relations
- Dr. Maureen Shea, Professor and Co-Chair Performing Arts
- Maximilian Mandel, Student
- Melina List, Student
- Meredith Ainbinder*, Vice President and General Counsel
- Michael Lupacchino, Alumnus

- Dr. Michaele Whelan*, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Michelle Gaseau, Senior Director, Strategic Communications and Media Relations
- Nicole Lewis, Assistant Professor, Performing Arts
- Paul Dworkis, Vice President for Administration and Finance
- Dr. Phillip Glenn, Professor of Communication Studies
- Pranit Chand, Student
- Dr. Raul Reis*, Dean, School of Communication
- Robert Sabal, Dean, School of the Arts
- Dr. Roy Kamada, Associate Professor and Chair of the Writing, Literature & Publishing Department
- Dr. Ruth Grossman, Professor and Chair Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Dr. Ruthanne Madsen, VP of Enrollment Management, Interim VP of SJC
- Samantha M. Ivery, Director of Diversity & Equity Initiatives
- Samuel Woodson, Director of Marketing
- Shari Stier*, Senior AVP of HR
- Sharon Duffy, Assistant Vice President for Student Success
- Sharon Schiffer, Coordinator, Career Accessibility & Equity
- Shruti Rajkumar, Student, Access: Student Disability Union
- Dr. Sylvia Spears, Former Vice President, Equity & Social Justice
- tamia rashima jordan, Director of Intercultural Student Affairs
- Tikesha R. Morgan, Assistant Dean, Global & Equity Education
- Timothy Chang, Associate Vice President, Emerson Los Angeles
- Dr. Tuesda Roberts, Director for Faculty Development and Diversity
- Dr. Wendy Walters, Professor, WLP, Director of Honors Program
- Xinyan Fu, Student
- Yunhan Qiu, Student

*Denotes stakeholders who are no longer at Emerson College as of the publishing of this report.

Visioning Sessions Output

Below is a summary of information collected on Jamboards during the three Strategic Visioning sessions. The exact language written on the Jamboards by participants has been maintained.

Imagining a New Future
- What does it look and feel like to be in an environment where diversity and equity are on track and progressing forward?
- How would you describe your experiences?

- What would you be able to do differently than you can today?

Student Visioning Session:

What does it look and feel like to be in an environment where diversity and equity are on track and progressing forward? How would you describe your experiences? What would you be able to do differently than you can today?

- no more committees/subcommittees
- student leaders wouldn't be carrying the weight
- if there were no student leaders, the work would still be happening and progress would be made
- students wouldn't have to do stuff about hate crimes; job wouldn't fall on them
- understanding that ppl of different marginalized group are everywhere; proactively inclusive
- satisfying accountability process
- basic understanding of admin to step in on situations of hate crimes and incidents so that students don't have to
- Crazy to say the least! Learn to make sure my voice is heard so that I bring the voices of my intersecting identities to light.
- Exhausting—advocating for accessibility has taken up an absurd amount of time and labor. I've gained some incredible skills, but at a high cost.
- Exhausting to have to carry the labor. Admin sometimes just waits for students to graduate out, and not address genuine issues. Problems don't go away and they shouldn't put it under the rug.
- Feel relaxed at Emerson instead of hypervigilant.
- Just be myself without having to worry about external factors changing the course of my career.
- decentering whiteness. white people not weaponizing their experiences with being minority to speak over people of color. including white international students, white latines, white queer/trans folks.
- On a good note- I have had really amazing professors of color at Emerson along with mentors of color from different departments. I want more of that- also recognizing the ones we already have, making sure they are taken care of and compensated for what they do (esp the extra things)
- making sure they are taken care of and compensated for what they do (esp the extra things)
- faculty and staff to learn from each other
- student leaders to be compensated for emotional and intellectual labor, committee meetings and such
- Overall tired of seeing little to no diversity within classrooms, both students and professors. We need the school to go beyond acknowledging they're a PWI and actually make changes.

- not asking someone to speak on behalf of an entire culture, identity (tokenizing) esp. during a class
- for non-members to build genuine relationships with cultural orgs. come to our meetings.
- not reaching out only to tokenize us for events, or for comments in response to a hate crime, or to get our freebies and leave
- Imagining a New Future
  - Progress forward. What's happening now, going. Pushing Emerson to do the promise.
- What does it look and feel like to be in an environment where diversity and equity are on track and progressing forward?
  - Hopeful. Working on Constantly.
- How would you describe your experiences?
  - Power organization, Deep promise for the student (Week of action, all the department, faculty, more diversity for the student of color)
  - Close for the Boston. Fall 2020, first year at Emerson. Online, Hybrid. Baseball, coming back home. Not have a lot of experience in Emerson. Spend time with community. (Sports: Recognize Athletics) Game of Baseball.
- What would you be able to do differently than you can today?
  - Being more involved. Communicate with each other. Collaborate process.

What actions are important next steps?
- Looking to other colleges for guidance on DEI.
- Retain faculty/staff who are taking initiatives to ensure systems of inclusivity are put in place.
- Learn from other colleges like HBCUs, and other colleges that have been doing good in these sectors.
- Pay the students whose labor you're using while you build better systems that will not rely on them.
- Universal design
- Raise awareness to other students who are generally oblivious to these things.
- Constant progress check ins/checkpoints
- Regular constant communication between members
- Gathering information from the community/those who are directly affected
- Making sure and trusting that faculty is on board and following through
- Providing planning and with concise goals in mind
- Gaining understanding of others' perspectives
- Ensuring that students are given prioritized accommodations
- Listening to student leaders without expecting them to do the work themselves
- Ensuring Emerson athletics can be more inclusive & involved in the community
- Build self-awareness - that learning is really important.

- Athletics: Coaches and athletes learn more about and get engaged with groups outside of sports.
- Financially support international students in Boston who need support.

Faculty & Staff Visioning Session:

What does it look and feel like to be in an environment where diversity and equity are on track and progressing forward? How would you describe your experiences? What would you be able to do differently than you can today

- Students start to have similar experiences, regardless of background
  - So would faculty
- We start to see increased satisfaction rates/graduation rates
- Students see more people that look like them within faculty and staff
- On the path to a true "One Emerson" (where we are more of a community)
- Less us v. them
- A climate would be created for DEI & justice to thrive.
- Strategic focus would be on sustainability and less for "EDI or DEI" as that would be innate and sustainability of the College would include the importance of diversity and inclusion
- It would help the search for a new president -- with top leadership supporting the climate of the future
- A more community "shared" approach for addressing challenges and determining solutions
- A more visible and intentional connection between campus DEI stakeholders would exist and stakeholders would feel like they are an extension of one another and not disparate entities
- The "equity lens" would not have to be a lens
- Faculty would feel less fear to discuss difficult topics. More trust, less fear
- We wouldn't have to argue for the need for equity
- We would be able to better retain faculty of color
- Recruitment of students may become easier as students would see an inclusive community that would be welcoming.
- A premium would be place on transparency in the process of our improvement
- If DEI were on track, the staff would not be so exhausted. There will be more trust among the entire community. Now, the burdens are too heavy, and we are incapacitated
- If the goals of DEI had already been met, at least in the area of disability, then I would have a lot less work to do! My job would be eliminated.
- Looking forward to a space where individuals in our community can be more of themselves.
- If I did not have to put out fires related to accessibility, I would be able to focus on student development, life-stage initiatives.

- Staff are looking for ways to feel more a part of the overall Emerson community and enable everyone to do their best work. DP== yes, people can't do their best work w/probs of DEI looming.
- Would be able to focus on underlying work, whatever that is for the individual, rather than focusing on the negative aspects of their experience in the workplace
- Imagine if this world could be forward thinking when it comes to equity. WOW! So many of our offices/departments would have plenty of less work, and be able to concentrate, and delve into some deeper projects for our students, and overall campus communities.
- Persons from marginalized communities don't have to make others feel comfortable while trying to manage their own insecurities.
- I think it's not what I would be able to do, but what others will do. I work globally, and find myself being the only person who looks like me. That usually brings unwanted attention. I want to get to the point where myself, and our students can explore the world without being othered, or assumptions placed on them.
- The Pandemic has had a huge effect on personality development of the students & mental health. This needs to be able to be prioritized in OUR work.
- Training wouldn't be the go-to for problem solving. Instead, intentional and prolonged individual growth/engagement + community building would characterize the college's approach.
- Revisiting the why with the intention of affirming direction, not justifying it.
- Accountability + Equity would be re-imagined for both grace and harm reduction
- Clarity + Collaboration in Methods
- Alignment with each constituency and hitting markers together
- Foundational practices/activities/learning moments for those in our community to have a common base (both generative and developmental)
- There is a clear understanding and common understanding of our diversity, equity, and social justice goals. (Even when we revisit and assess progress, barriers, and plans)
- We would have a clear and iterative goal setting that keeps what we have done in mind without being locked to it.
- Coherency in institutional aims
- Opportunities for new professional development are offered as new goals and needs are assessed. We won't naturally know everything and in-house meetings won't necessarily get us there either.
- must be able to make mistakes - use them as opportunities to learn and grow - grace around mistake making - no shame AND hold each other accountable - being sure to scaffold each other
- Progressing forward- When calls are made for new goals and methods, those who helped us reach previous benchmarks don't have to be put down. Likewise, those people don't have to take offense and defend their actions to the point of slowing progress.

- Train tracks- diversification and equity building should be done intentionally and in tandem with each other.
- The demographics of the environments (faculty, staff, students) are growing and positively impacting each other.
- Collective success is seen, felt and celebrated.
- We'd take risks without shame, guilt, or ONLY negative ramifications
- learn from each other and the work we are doing in each area - constituency and benefit from each other and the different areas
- Experiences: Conversations needed to do this work would be framed by values and necessary futures (not chronological lists of past actions).
- Experience: supportive, collegial...we would want each other to win...because when one of us wins, we all win...when one grows, we all grow
- Less siloed, we'd move more fluidly around the institution
- will feel challenged and growing
- Super exciting to come to work every day -
- Experience: It would feel challenging and exciting to participate
- Experiences?: I would not feel as though this work is territorial.
- My work would be stronger due to collective efforts and interest.
- Get more guidance on infusing IDEAS into the work from- environment of collective learning
- My projects wouldn't be as reactive. This impacts workload pressures, collaborators, quality of work, quality of satisfaction, sense of authority and authenticity in what I do.
- Get feedback, because folks would want me to succeed, grow, learn, positively impact the work/growth of the institution
- Be able to work with more colleagues because of less siloed/territorial environments
- Paths forward: when needs are identified how do we have an established path to pitch and prioritize needs being met (green post-it as often $$$ based)
- Reduced barriers because College policies and practices are crafted to support students and make resources more easy to access.
- data to anticipate/identify/predict so we can plan
- less roadblocks (often through policies and processes and gathering data and committees), more compassionate action
- Universal design and trauma-informed approaches, such as clarity, transparency, consistency, honoring people's lived experiences, recognizing prevalence of oppression and trauma, etc.
- reporting experiences of bias/harm - for the purpose of what? if it is to connect folx to resources, then why not just connect them to resources. If it is to change things, then change things when folx bring things up.
- Embodied: feels settled, at ease
- A true sense of joy rather than focus on challenges.

- paying students as advisors rather than everything be volunteer
- We have a President.
- people feel honored, seen, heard
- everyone has what they need and when they identify the need, they know the path to get the need met
- Accessibility, diversity, inclusion, equity isn't an add-on, it's at the roots of creation
- Transform
- where all (or as many as possible) feel welcomed and accepted
- feeling: to be kind, not just polite. communicate for discovery not with defense.
- Loving / Supporting others through mistakes.
- "Why would I want to be integrated into a burning house." James Baldwin
- safety with awareness, safety with responsibility
- More calling in than calling out.
- More grace, compassion and kindness
- Students introduce themselves by given names rather than Americanized names
- transforming (as verb) rather than transformed
- A rock-bottom belief in community
- More verbs fewer titles
- a place where we hear, take in multiple voices, cultures, languages
- Returning home, telling stories about how good school was today.

What actions are important next steps?
- Understand what it takes to be an anti-racist/Anti-oppressive institution
  - 1. get recommendations from consultants
  - 2. Prioritize and organize recommendations
    - Align with our own priorities
  - 3. Strategic plan
    - New President's plan
  - 4. Coordinate and communicate
  - 5 . reprioritize funding for plan
    - Manage outside relationships (alums, orgs, businesses) to increase funding
- Need a STRUCTURED way to EXPAND conversation. WHO decides on priorities for what elements of the vision get done 1st and gets resources.
- Human capital-- we don't have it. Too many open positions at all levels. Yet, this work should be able to continue even with interims/bandaids-- NEED CLEAR VISION.
- put together clear action steps. Make sure that everyone feels they have a seat at the table. Include marginalized communities in EVERY conversation.
- if the DEI work were more in the fabric of everything, it would build trust among all. Disperse the concepts and initiatives and break clumps apart, of compartmentalization.

- Including Marginalized communities in every conv. needs to be part of all meetings, woven in the fabric of everything that we do.
- We go around and around bec. of compartmentalizing this work. It's in a workshop, retreat, book group. Should be ingrained, spread out. you are going to have a bitter taste when it's just clumped in.
- Hiring of new Pres. and VP for SJ & E who have clear & fresh takes on DEI-SJ. Now is not the time to speak about this as a disconnected value. Those hires will impact the next several YEARS of what we do.
- Continue having spaces like the one being hosted today.
- Doing some internal change work so that we can actually show up differently for each other and those who we work for/with
- how will all the puzzle pieces fit together - clarity and coordination of role
- What will the change/expansion of Tony's role as V Provost for Internationalization & Equity mean for this work
- Balancing urgency with transformation...how do we communicate this
- create a group of leaders to do some foundational work and drive - be ambassadors to help the institution move forward - in each of the constituencies
- Leadership. leadership.Leadership - from the top - the Pres Counsel MUST be on board -in more than words
- look at the infrastructure and what are the ways it propels us toward the desired future and where does it inhibit? religious holidays for example - rewarding taking risks and chances
- Transparency about experience: whether you're a cheerleader, eager to learn, or on the struggle bus...we're in it together because we believe in the promise of the end goals
- We may have to leave some great ideas on the cutting room floor to make this a real priority.
- Leadership needs training/support/experiences related to culturally relevant and embodied leadership. Ex: How to communicate when ppl express frustration and disappointment with being defensive or cold.
- Match our values with our practices (without guilt, shame, judgment) - vacation time, transparency, accessibility, etc
- Strategic planning for the college to connect our work to our values
  - Strategic planning that balances the urgency of needs, reducing harm, infrastructure AND the time it takes to both build trust and make changes that can have a wider impact.
  - Re-evaluation of our work (in other words...is everything we're doing pushing us in the right direction, what extraneous things can we stop in order to forefront this work?)
- Hiring VP SJC
- Meeting materials needs of students
- AVP for SJC and resources (financial, human)

- Cross divisional communication below the VP level
- universal process for decision making
- Examination and refinement of policies, practices, and decision-making with the goal of reducing barriers for those most marginalized and vulnerable (which impacts all).
- More embodied approaches
- Deep compassionate listening for Making Emerson IDEAS team
- bring in strong leadership
- loving accountability
- re-articulate -- transform -- what we are doing - our mission
- find ways to invite new community members to shared practices and values
- find more ways to create community
- find more ways to interact

President's Council Visioning Session:
What does it look and feel like to be in an environment where diversity and equity are on track and progressing forward? How would you describe your experiences? What would you be able to do differently than you can today

- Shared Values
- More racially diverse leadership team
- Co-conspirators with the City
- My experiences would be less burdened
- Diversity, equity, inclusion is just part of our culture/decision-making. Not necessarily a highlighted point, but OUR innate values are demonstrated on a constant basis.
- EC seen as leaders of the movement
- Diversify all areas of the college..students, faculty vendors, etc.
- More trust
- Shared vision
- Marginalized populations are experiencing the campus in ways that many in the the dominant population experience the campus
- No longer us vs them, but we
- Fair and equitable compensation for staff and faculty
- Barriers are removed for students; barriers are removed for faculty and staff allowing for a well represented community
- It feels good
- Equity and Inclusion are the waters in which we swim...it is just there, part of the culture...not a performance
- Shared vision
- Financial assistance is provided that allows for lower income students to enroll and graduate without taking on extreme debt loads.

- Less tension
- We'd feel contentment. Satisfaction.
- There would be a "less about me" and "more about us" focus
- Shared sense of momentum and hopefulness gained from collective buy-in on priorities/values
- Less "walking on eggshells"; less fragmentation in the community; more collective authorship/ownership
- We'd have more activities that create the feeling yesterday's basketball announcement sparked.
- We'd be "coming together".
- Drawing on the quote from Sharon Welch. There is a general sense of trust that we are moving in the right direction. Even if not every initiative or request resolves as the initiator hopes, there is a sense that each effort moves us closer toward the goal.
- Community members feel the priority, as opposed to it being told it's a priority
- Valuing past efforts, even if we realize that the priority has evolved and changed.
- Be more open and accepting of the need to be accountable. Be more confident in our leadership so that challenges to accountability are seen as a goal to achieve not a deterrent
- Have difficult conversations. Trust each other. Be more comfortable sharing leadership more broadly. Identify expertise in our community more easily.
- Value expertise and all levels of experience.

HiveWise Collective Intelligence Summary

Total registered: 240	Total participated: 83
What is your role at Emerson? 49% Administration/Staff 26% Students 18% Faculty 7% Other/Write-in answer	What is your role at Emerson? 70% Administration/Staff 17% Students 13% Faculty
Are you an international student? 96% N/A or Not International 3% International Students 1% Other/Write-in answer	Are you an international student? 100% N/A or Not International
What is your class designation? 74% N/A or Write-in answer	What is your class designation? 83% N/A or Write-in answer

9.5% Graduate Students 6.5% Seniors 4% Freshman 3.5% Juniors 2.5% Sophomores	5% Graduate Students 5% Juniors 3.5% Seniors 2.5% Freshman 1% Sophomores
What race/ethnicity are you? *Categories provided by Emerson College.* 64% White 9.5% Multi-racial (2 or more races) 9.5% Black or African American 6.5% Hispanic or Latinx 6% Asian or Asian American 2.5% Do not wish to answer 2% Other/Write-in answer	**What race/ethnicity are you?** *Categories provided by Emerson College.* 66.5% White 9.5% Multi-racial (2 or more races) 9.5% Black or African American 5% Hispanic or Latinx 5% Asian or Asian American 3.5% Do not wish to answer 1% Other/Write-in answer
Which gender do you identify with? *Categories provided by Emerson College.* 62.5% Female 26% Male 7% Genderqueer/Gender Nonconforming 2.5% Do not wish to answer .5% Transgender Male .5% Transgender Female .5% Nonbinary .5% Other/Write-in answer	**Which gender do you identify with?** *Categories provided by Emerson College.* 60% Female 25% Male 9% Genderqueer/Gender Nonconforming 5% Do not wish to answer 1% Nonbinary
What is your religious affiliation? 43% None 28% Christianity 12% Judaism 8% Do not wish to answer 1% Pagan 1% Islam 1% Hinduism 1.5% Buddhism 1% Agnostic 3.5% Other/Write-in answer	**What is your religious affiliation?** 44.5% None 27% Christianity 12% Judaism 11% Do not wish to answer 2.5% Pagan 2% Other/Write-in answer 1% Agnostic

Do you have a disability or medical condition that is defined as a disability? *Option to select multiple answers.* 51.5% N/A 29% Mental Health 13.5% Neurodiverse 10.5% Do not wish to answer 3.5% Physical/mobility 3% Neurological .5% No known/diagnosed disabilities	Do you have a disability or medical condition that is defined as a disability? *Option to select multiple answers.* 47% N/A 28% Mental Health 12% Do not wish to answer 8.5% Neurodiverse 5% Physical/mobility 2.5% No known/diagnosed disabilities 1% Neurological
Do you identify as LGBTQIA+? 62% No 33% Yes 4.5% Do not wish to answer .5% Not sure	Do you identify as LGBTQIA+? 58% No 37% Yes 5% Do not wish to answer

Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center Dashboard

In December 2021, The Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center conducted a ranking of the 25 colleges and universities funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH). The Disability Research Center's goal was to create a ranking or score card that would enable students to understand the disabled student experience at various colleges and universities around the country. The rankings serve as a resource for students with disabilities as they choose the college or university that will best fulfill their needs. The JHU ranking is the first of its kind and currently only ranks the universities funded by NIH. However, the goal of the research team is to create a well-rounded report on disability student services and accessibility on college and university campuses. We utilized the methodology from the JHU study to formulate a disability score for Emerson College.

 The universities were assessed using four key areas:
1. Accessibility of Built and Virtual Environments
2. Public Image of Disability Inclusion
3. Accommodation Requests Processes and Procedures
4. Grievance Process

BRE contacted the researchers at Johns Hopkins University and discussed the methodology and framework for assessing the colleges and universities on their list. We wanted to apply the same methodology to Emerson to identify how the college would rank against the criteria assigned to the

disability health dashboard. Unfortunately, the Emerson College score for disability health on campus was 40, which translates to an F. Score details are provided below.

Background & Methodology:

Scoring criteria were based on policies, practices, and legal requirements that support disability inclusion and accessibility. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all programs of postsecondary institutions must be accessible to students with disabilities. The ADA requires almost all postsecondary institutions to have a disability services coordinator and grievance procedures that ensure concerns with accommodation requests are managed fairly, timely, and equitably. The Rehabilitation Act mandates that all institutions receiving federal funding ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to programs, services, and activities, including websites. Compliance with the ADA and Rehabilitation Act guards against discrimination on the basis of disability but often is not enough for equitable inclusion. Therefore, scoring criteria were not based on legal compliance alone.

Accessibility of built and virtual environment: Total 20 Points

Built environment: assessed if campus maps outline accessible paths, bathrooms, parking, and entrances.

- A university scored 10 points if 3-4 of these criteria listed above are marked on a publicly available campus map.
- A university scored 5 points if 1-2 of the criteria are marked on a publicly available campus map.
- A university scored 0 points if available campus maps do not include any of this accessibility information.

Emerson score: 0. No accessible campus map was found on the Emerson website. Additionally, we looked at the virtual tour option and that was either unavailable or inoperable at the time of review. We also contacted the Access Student Union to ask if they knew of an accessible campus map. They indicated that they did not and expressed that one should be created for students with disabilities at Emerson.

Virtual environment: assessed website accessibility and the impact on users with disabilities (Table 3). WebAIM conducted automated and manual testing of university websites. The total website accessibility scores are the average of the automated and manual scores. Total scores were categorized into three groups based on tertile cut-points derived from a separate dataset of 1 million websites. Higher scores indicate better accessibility.

- A school received 10 points if its total web accessibility score was 7 or above.
- A school received 5 points if its total web accessibility score was below 7 and at or above 4.3.

- A school received 0 points if its total web accessibility score was below 4.3.

Emerson Score: 5. Using the web aim accessibility tool we assessed several web pages and many had errors ranging from color contrast, missing or duplicate alt text, or other tagging errors. The SAS webpage scored the highest but still had a few issues.

Public of Disability Inclusion: Total 20 Points
Disability accommodation office statements assessed compliance of student disability accommodation statements with the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act. Only statements listed on disability services office websites were reviewed.

- A university scored 10 points if the disability accommodation office statement included encouraging or supportive language.
- A university scored 5 points if the disability accommodation office statement only included the required ADA and Rehabilitation Act compliance language.
- A university scored 0 points if there was not a disability accommodation office statement.

Emerson Score: 5. The student accessibility services webpage lacked encouraging or supportive language for students with disabilities needing accommodations. The page was focused on ADA related statements and other legalese about the process for acquiring an accommodation at Emerson.

Statistics on disabled students, staff, and faculty: assessed the availability of statistics on university or disability services websites or on admissions websites when presented with other protected class information.

- A university scored 10 points if statistics on student, staff, and faculty with disabilities were publicly available.
- A university scored 5 points if only statistics on students with disabilities were publicly available.
- A university scored 0 points if statistics on student, staff, and faculty with disabilities were not publicly available.

Emerson Score: 0. The facts and figures page on the Emerson website included all diversity demographics except disability figures. Additionally, there was no staff or faculty diversity demographic information, only information on students was available. Universities scoring a 10 included all diversity segments for students, staff, and faculty.

Accommodation Requests Processes & Procedures: 50 Points

Only university disability accommodation office websites were searched for this information. Contact information: assessed the available contact information for students to obtain disability accommodations.

- A university scored 10 points if the disability accommodation office website lists a telephone number and email address, or includes a method to register for accommodations.
- A university scored 5 points if the disability accommodation office website lists only a telephone number or an email address to register for accommodations.
- A university scored 0 points if the disability accommodation office website does not include information on how to register for accommodations.

Emerson Score: 10. SAS staff contact was easily found on their web page, listing email, phone number, and street mailing address.

Confidentiality in the disability accommodation process: assessed statements outlining who was responsible for maintaining confidentiality during the accommodation process.

- A university scored 10 points for having disability accommodations confidentiality statements *and* information about who must maintain this confidentiality.
- A university scored 5 points for having disability accommodations confidentiality statements, but *no* information about who must maintain this confidentiality.
- A university scored 0 points for not having disability accommodations confidentiality statements and no information about who must maintain this confidentiality.

Emerson Score: 0. In reviewing the SAS website we could not find any statements about confidentiality of the accommodations process.

Rights and responsibilities of students and disability service staff: assessed the availability of information about the rights and responsibilities of students and disability services staff during the accommodation process.

- A university scored 10 points if the rights *and* responsibilities of students and accessibility services staff are listed on the accommodation services office websites.
- A university scored 5 points if the rights *or* responsibilities of students and accessibility services staff are listed on the accommodation services office websites.
- A university scored 0 points if the rights and responsibilities of students and accessibility services staff are *not* listed on the accommodation services office websites.

Rights and responsibilities of faculty: assessed the availability of information about the rights and responsibilities of faculty during the student accommodation process.

- A university scored 10 points if the rights *and* responsibilities of faculty are listed on the accommodation services office websites.
- A university scored 5 points if the rights *or* responsibilities of faculty are listed on the accommodation services office websites.
- A university scored 0 points if the rights and responsibilities of faculty are *not* listed on the accommodation services office websites.

Emerson Score: 20. Upon review we were able to find a rights and responsibilities document for both students and the college around accessibility. Technically, the criteria asks for responsibility of staff within accessibility services, but we scored this leniently since the college did have a rights and responsibilities document.

Timeline for disability accommodations: assessed information about the timeline for requesting and approving disability accommodations.

- A university scored 10 points if there is a *flexible* timeframe for submitting accommodation requests and a timeline for responding to requests.
- A university scored 5 points if there is a *fixed* timeframe for submitting accommodation requests, but a timeline for responding to requests is not provided.
- A university scored 0 points if there is not a timeline for requesting and receiving accommodations.

Emerson Score: 0. Upon reviewing the SAS website we could not find any timelines or estimated timelines for receiving an accommodation request.

Grievance Process: 10 Points
Disability-related grievance policies: Assessed the policies to manage grievances with disability discrimination and availability of information about grievance policies on disability services or equivalent websites.

- A university scored 10 points if a third party manages grievances, and information about the grievance policy was available on the disability services or equivalent website.
- A university scored 5 points if a third party manages grievances, but information about the grievance policy was not available on the disability services or equivalent website.
- A university scored 0 points if the disability services office manages grievances, or information about the grievance policy was not available on the disability services or equivalent website.

Emerson Score: 0. The SAS website did contain information about an appeals process but we were not able to find any information about a grievance policy or process for students with disabilities.

Limitations
Data was abstracted and adjudicated on a rolling basis between June and November 2021 and may not capture current university information or accessibility indicators that have been updated since that time.

The data only includes information about policies, procedures, and accessibility that is publicly available on university websites. While this dashboard does not assess every aspect of disability inclusion, nor does a favorable score ensure an inclusive student experience, it identifies areas for improvement and can be used to track progress in publicly provided information.

Summary:
Currently, the disability health dashboard is not being used beyond beta testing with specific organizations. However, over the next few years it is anticipated that this ranking will become a national ranking and all colleges and universities will be included in this list. This methodology is being shared with Emerson in advance of any public ranking and enables the college to take action and ensure a better score when public ranking is available in a few years.

Information about Beyond Racial Equity

Beyond Racial Equity is Co-Founded by Quionna Allen and Tara Jenkins. Quionna identifies as a Black woman and Tara identifies as a white woman.

We founded Beyond Racial Equity because we know when partnered with truly devoted clients, we can significantly contribute to building equitable organizations. When you know you can make the world a better place you must try! With our decades of experience in Human Resources in many different organizations, including as colleagues in a global, $2 billion dollar company, we've done equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work throughout our careers. Throughout all those years, we were deeply unsatisfied with the typical and traditional approaches to EDI. In leadership of EDI committees and the accompanying initiatives, we have seen that despite good intentions, the solutions were superficial and ineffective at addressing the root causes of systemic racism. We decided we must do more and built our new venture, Beyond Racial Equity.

The result of our efforts is a comprehensive framework that partners with organizational leaders to build an equitable organization through the first step of understanding systemic racism to the final step of building truly equitable people practices. While the program is comprehensive, it is also customized to match where clients are in their cultural journey and their desired outcomes.