

## University System of Maryland Inclusion and Diversity Council

In the summer of 2015, then Chairman of the Board of Regents, Jim Shea, appointed a workgroup of Regents to address the challenges facing our institutions around diversity and inclusion. The BOR workgroup met on three occasions to address the following major agenda items:

1. Identify “the problem”; understand the complexities and import of diversity (of all kinds) to society and our institutions
2. Determine the role of the Board of Regents (BOR)
  - Embrace the mission statement with a focus on “educating students, faculty and staff and the external community about the value of diversity and its importance to the attainment of excellence”
  - Review data and background materials as needed
3. Determine actions to be taken
  - Activate a Diversity Council to determine the best way to approach the achievement of goals including, but not limited to:
    - Collecting and providing materials and research for the Board
    - Educating the BOR and broader community on the issues, goals, and actions

The BOR Workgroup, Chancellor Robert Caret, and USM Presidents knew it was necessary for the work of the Workgroup to be taken to the campus level. Subsequently, the Chancellor called for the activation of a Diversity and Inclusion (later changed to Inclusion and Diversity or I&D) Council, which began meeting in 2016. Members of the Council represent multiple constituencies including, but not limited to, provosts; vice presidents for student affairs; chief diversity officers; LGBT program/office staff; legal counsel; Title IX officers; and members of the student, staff, and faculty system-wide councils, and institutions. The original charge to the Council included:

- identifying specific challenges regarding inclusion and diversity facing the USM;
- doing research and data collection as needed;
- proposing actions, activities, policies, and processes;
- recommending programs and sharing good practices that serve to improve the campus climates around issues of diversity (of all kinds), inclusion, and equity;
- defining the role of the BOR in leading, promoting inclusive climate, and suggesting policy or procedural changes to be endorsed by the BOR; and
- providing advice on the development of guidelines, policies, and accountability processes for the System.

In addition to sharing successful practices and addressing the System’s and institutions’ understanding of and familiarity with how inclusion and diversity issues affect students, faculty, and staff, the I&D Council has contributed to:

1. the System’s statement and guidelines on Freedom of Expression;
2. the development of the Symposium on Diversifying the Faculty;
3. important adjustments to the annual report on Cultural Diversity;

4. amendments to inclusion and diversity-related Board of Regents policies;
5. time-sensitive inquiries about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues; and
6. conversations and/or presentations about student activism and post-election campus climate issues as well as immigration and the effects of White House executive orders and associated issues on USM students, faculty, and staff

The I&D Council will continue to work on contemporaneous issues that arise and affect our institutions. However, ultimately, the Council serves to provide guidance and insight into the University System of Maryland meeting its inclusion and diversity goals. Therefore, the Council will also review its work thus far, make suggestions as to how it can be of service to the USM, and consider USM's goals around these issues. As has been done before, suggestions from the Council will be shared with the regularly-meeting groups of presidents; vice presidents for student affairs; provosts; and system-wide faculty, staff, and student councils who also frequently consider inclusion and diversity issues. Additionally, recommendations from those stakeholder groups can also be put forward to the Council for consideration.

The Inclusion and Diversity Council is staffed by Dr. Zakiya Lee, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs; and Dr. Joann Boughman, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, and will report to the Board of Regents through the Committee on Education Policy and Student Life when appropriate.

The next meeting of the I&D Council will be on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at the University System of Maryland Office in Adelphi.