



DEIA

**Diversity
Equity
Inclusion
Accessibility**

**Office of
Diversity and
Inclusion
Annual Report
2022-2023**

Syracuse University
Office of Diversity and Inclusion

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Message from vice president

Mary Grace A. Almandrez

Dear Syracuse University Campus Community,

It is with great pleasure and immense pride that I present to you the inaugural annual report for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion for the 2022-2023 academic year. This report serves as a comprehensive overview of the initiatives, programs, and achievements we have made in our collective efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility across our campus.

Since its inception, our university has recognized that to attract and engage the best scholars we would need to be at the forefront of embracing diversity in its many forms. This has not always come with ease, and we are immensely grateful to the students, faculty, and staff who have continuously pushed us to do, and be, better. In our continuous pursuit of academic excellence and rigor, we strive to foster an environment that celebrates the diverse cultures, perspectives, and experiences that, in great part, make Syracuse University a place where change-makers thrive.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) are under immense scrutiny in this country. Leading up to, and after, the landmark decision by the Supreme Court of the United States to prevent universities from considering race in its admissions processes, states across the nation are analyzing their DEIA offices, programs and initiatives in new and, in some cases, concerning ways. Although our recruitment strategies may look different, our commitment to DEIA remains unwavering. The goal of this office remains the same, to ensure that Syracuse University is a place where all feel welcomed and valued.

Throughout this report you will find examples of DEIA progress from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as well as our many campus partners. We hope these examples will inspire you to strategize and implement DEIA plans and initiatives within your respective areas. The report is organized within the five focus areas of our office:

- Communications - the exchange of information and promotion of DEIA work that benefits staff, faculty, students, alumni, and the local community.
- Disability Access - the advancement and full inclusion of accessibility for students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities in all campus classrooms, workspaces, and event venues.
- Inclusion and Belonging - the purposeful engagement with campus members to enhance a sense of community and connection for all.
- Learning and Development - the enhancement of professional development through the facilitation of DEIA education.
- Research and Assessment - the measurement and evaluation of the impact of DEIA projects across campus.

Included in the report are exemplars which further illuminate DEIA initiatives that had significant outcomes. The result is not only a celebration of our accomplishments but also a reminder that our work is deeply challenging and demands persistence and sustainability. We are grateful to the multitude of campus members and groups whose passion, resiliency, and commitment continue to propel DEIA work across our campus. As you read this report and reflect on our progress, and the work to come, we hope you share in our enthusiasm and optimism as we continue to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility at Syracuse University this academic year.

All my best,
Mary Grace A. Almandrez
Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Syracuse University



DEIA Landscape

Syracuse University has a rich, extensive history of inclusion. We were founded on the principle of promoting equal education for women. We established the first disability studies program in the nation. We have the longest continuous running U.S. Army Reserve Officers' Training Corp (ROTC) in the country.

Our academic strategic plan embeds diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) within it as part of its shared and cross-cutting values. In addition, each incoming student takes the First Year Seminar, a course that centers on transitioning to campus with DEIA as a key focal point.

The majority of our schools and colleges, as well as some non-academic units, have dedicated diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) leaders. We have a conglomerate of multicultural centers several of which are physically co-located in the Schine Student Center to provide students with continuity and easy access to resources. Our National Veterans Research Center serves as the center of veteran life on our campus, in the local community, and across the country. We have launched our first five-year strategic diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility plan (DEIA plan).

We have made tremendous strides as a university - many of them in response to student voices, as well as the voices of the faculty, staff, and alumni who support them.

119 Euclid, the space on campus that celebrates Black students and culture recognized its first-year anniversary in 2022.

The purview of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is to support and advance DEIA for staff, faculty, and students across campus. Our areas of focus include:

- Communications
- Disability Access
- Inclusion and Belonging
- Learning and Development
- Research and Assessment

In the recent year, our efforts have centered on properly staffing the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to enhance the level of service that we can provide to staff, faculty, and students. In addition to the implementation of the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility plan and the expansion of our team, our key priorities were community-building as a way to build inclusion and increase retention, and proactive communication on DEIA-wide initiatives to connect more campus members with necessary information, resources and supports.

On the following pages you will find details on the work of our office, as well as selected exemplars that showcase the DEIA initiatives that occur across the university.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion Key Priorities

2022-2023: office expansion, implementation of DEIA plan, community-building, proactive DEIA communications





**DEMOGRAPHIC
AND DIVERSITY,
EQUITY, INCLUSION,
AND ACCESSIBILITY
DATA**

Demographic and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Data

The outcome of the two Supreme Court cases *Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard*, and *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina* has changed some of our admissions processes. However, our commitment to diversify our campus and make every student, staff, and faculty member feel welcomed and valued remains unwavering. The below information provides you with a snapshot of our campus makeup during the 2022-2023 year.

- 32% of students are studying at a graduate level.
- 27.5% of all students identify as people-of-color.
- 3,180 students were serviced by the Center for Disability Resources.
- Nearly 630,000 people engaged with Hendricks Chapel via its in-person and virtual events.
- Approximately 40% of students participate in a study abroad program.
- 2500 students engaged in programs led by the LGBTQ Resource Center.
- 22% and 20% of faculty and staff respectively identify as people-of-color.
- 1280 students are veterans or military-connected (e.g. veteran spouse, currently serving, military college program).
- 15 chaplains serve at Hendricks Chapel.
- The disability access team in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion held over 670 consultations as part of resolving over 170 reasonable accommodations.
- Over 50 registered student organizations are led by minoritized student populations.
- Five multicultural living learning communities in the residence halls were created to foster the inclusivity of students
- 31% of those in the incoming College of Law JD classes are students of color.
- 13% of students are the first in their family to attend college.





OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AREAS OF FOCUS

Communications

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) makes great effort to communicate transparently and continuously about the work of the office and campuswide diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts. In addition, ODI exchanges information with the campus community on key DEIA aspects that will facilitate enhanced knowledge.

The volume of DEIA efforts that occur on campus requires a consistent cadence of communications that detail and define our strategy, highlight our progress, and identify opportunities for improvement.

Key ODI communication methods include:

- Campus Forums - held each semester, the campus forums are led by Vice President Almandrez and share key DEIA updates. These hybrid events are interactive with participants engaging with each other to discuss issues and brainstorm potential resolutions.
- Office Hours - this academic year Vice President Almandrez held in-person and virtual office hours at the Intercultural Collective, the Shaw Center, 119 Euclid, and the Center for Disability Resources. Open hours give campus members an opportunity to meet directly with Vice President Almandrez in their familiar settings and share concerns, ideas, and opportunities.
- Monday Memos - each working Monday a communication is issued from ODI to key DEIA campus partners that provides updates on ODI efforts and, therefore, serve as a progress tracker.
- eNewsletters - issued each semester and during the summer. The ODI enewsletter provides campus members with updates from the office, DEIA exemplars, key definitions, and action-oriented

recommendations to implement change and foster inclusion.

Campuswide DEIA Communication Exemplars:

ODI held “A Conversation with Nikole Hannah-Jones” to engage faculty, students, and staff in an exchange of information and education regarding the true contributions of Black Americans with the Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and creator of the landmark 1619 Project.

Exemplar Highlight: The university’s Community Review Board (CRB) is responsible for reviewing appeals of civilian complaints regarding Department of Public Safety (DPS) officer conduct; reviewing and commenting on prospective new DPS policies, procedures and trainings; and reviewing key community-facing functions of DPS. The CRB held an open forum with campus members and issued its first public annual report.

The spring ODI Campus Forum had nearly 125 virtual and in-person attendees. After key priorities were shared by Vice President Almandrez, participants offered ideas to DEIA issues as raised by student leaders including, but not limited to, enhancements in accessibility, faculty and staff diversity, professional development, belonging, bias incident reporting, Indigenous student support, and support for LGBTQ+ students.

In support of its efforts to create robust and diverse applicant pools, the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs upheld its track record of recruiting outstanding faculty from under-represented groups. A detailed manual on best practices for conducting faculty searches was created and included clear timelines and transparent guidelines for addressing each step of the search process, examples of evaluation rubrics, and suggestions for addressing implicit bias.

Follow the Office of Diversity and Inclusion on Instagram: @syracuseudiversity and visit our updated website diversity.syr.edu.







Disability Access

Syracuse University is one of the few institutions that holds intentional space for disability access in its naming convention and its diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts. The addition of the word “accessibility” is not simply semantics. We recognize that it is a fundamental aspect of inclusion. We also ensure that our accessibility work upholds the understanding of disability as an identity and culture that is to be celebrated.

Comprehensive Focus on Disability Access

Established in 2021, the Disability Access and Inclusion Council was charged by Chancellor Kent Syverud to lead the effort to dismantle structural ableism at Syracuse University and serves in an advisory capacity to the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Mary Grace Almandrez. In line with its guiding principle of “nothing about us without us,” the council includes staff, faculty, and students.

Key 2022-2023 Disability Access Inclusion Council Accomplishments:

- Revised the university emergency evacuation procedures to be more inclusive of people with disabilities and those with temporary impairments.
- Provided counsel on advancing a pet-friendly living space on the university's South Campus to be inclusive of people with emotional support and service animals.
- Accompanied a contingent of students to Albany on Student Empowerment Day an initiative which works to increase funding for students with disabilities.

Exemplar Highlight: The National Veterans Resource Center which houses the Institute for Veteran and Military Families, Office of Veteran Success, Veteran Career Services, Army ROTC and Air Force ROTC, has been heralded as a model for universal design.

Campuswide Disability Access Exemplars:

Disability Pride Week (DPW) is held each year and honors the lived experience of disability and disability culture as a proud part of the university's full and diverse identities. This year DPW was more successful than ever and included a wide range of events such as a keynote with human rights advocate Eddie Ndopu, a workshop on Unlearning and Relearning Disability, and the annual OrangeAbility adaptable sports and initiatives event.

The JMA Dome will incorporate a host of accessibility improvements as part of its upgrades including the addition of numerous wheelchair seating platforms to

achieve over 200 wheelchair spaces in the facility, movable armrests in some seating for those with mobility impairments, and an increase in the width of all aisles to name a few.

The Center on Disability and Inclusion, in partnership with the Office of Government Relations, hosted over 150 campus and community members in a town hall to discuss the realities, challenges, and priorities for pre-kindergarten through college-aged students with disabilities.

Syracuse University campus members presented on digital accessibility at the annual Association on Higher Education and Disability Conference, one of the largest professional development and networking events in the nation.

The Center for Disability Resources created a new professional role, an access and success advocate. The advocate conducts targeted outreach to underserved populations and students who are reluctant to disclose their disability status due to stigma. In addition, the advocate partners with departments and offices that provide students with essential services and supports.



Inclusion and Belonging

From the time that they enter campus, Syracuse University becomes home to people across a full spectrum of diversity that includes race and ethnicity, faith-based affiliations, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, veteran and military-connected status, geographic location, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, and age just to name a few. This range of diversity results in enhanced research, scholarship, experiences, creativity, and outcomes. Our goal is to foster a campus environment where every student, staff and faculty member feels welcomed and valued.

“... a better sense of belonging among students leads to higher rates of personal and academic successes later in their college experiences ...”

- According to *Inside Higher Ed*

Campuswide Inclusion and Belonging Exemplars

A campus climate survey conducted in partnership with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) highlighted that staff and faculty members seek a sense of community on campus. Affinity groups bring campus members together with shared personal or professional interests based upon mutual understanding or identifies. ODI supports staff affinity groups and partners with the Office of Strategic Initiatives to develop guidelines and provide support for faculty affinity groups.

Syracuse University was selected as a 2023 Racial Justice Award Recipient by InterFaith Works for its commitment to supporting racial equity and quality of life for our Central New York Community. In addition, SU students and alumni, Khadija Mohamed, Maggie Sardino, and Rickey T. Brown respectively, were honored by the organization for their dedication to racial justice.

ODI hosted a series of events throughout the academic year and summer that brought a variety of groups together. The results were expanded professional networks, increased collaborations and partnerships, and community-building.

Each month, Diane Shenandoah, the Honwadiyenawa'sek /One Who Helps Them, conducts a full moon ceremony with campus members. She states, “This is a time when we take a pause to thank Grand Mother Moon for continuing her duties, she watches over the nighttime skies, she controls the Ocean tides, cycles of Life and the cycles of women. We give our best greetings and thanks to Grand Mother Moon and the life force of the waters.”

The Community Folk Art Center (CFAC), a cultural and artistic hub committed to the promotion and development of artists within the African Diaspora, celebrated its 50-year anniversary with a performance by Ailey II of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. CFAC serves as a local community connector and held the performance at the historic Landmark Theater in downtown Syracuse.

The Office of Strategic Initiatives held two faculty reading groups that focused on the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People-of-Color.

The S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications (Newhouse) hosted its first Historically Black College or University (HBCU) open house in which 30 students from eight HBCUs participated. In the open house, undergraduate HBCU students were introduced to the university's domestic and abroad programs and Newhouse specifically as a viable option for graduate school.

Breana Nieves Vergara is the mentoring programs coordinator in the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) the manages the Kessler Scholars program, a holistic scholarship program dedicated to helping first-generation, limited-income students thrive as part of a cohort-based campus community.



Learning and Development

The academic rigor that Syracuse University imparts is not just upon students but upon faculty and staff as well. It is understood that learning and development are essential to not only maintaining our reputation as a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research university but also to ensuring that our campus is inclusive. We have the capacity to attract and engage the best scholars, employees and administrators from around the world.

Learning and development in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) includes a mixture of designated workshops for staff, faculty, and students as well as professional development opportunities for administrative, academic, and student

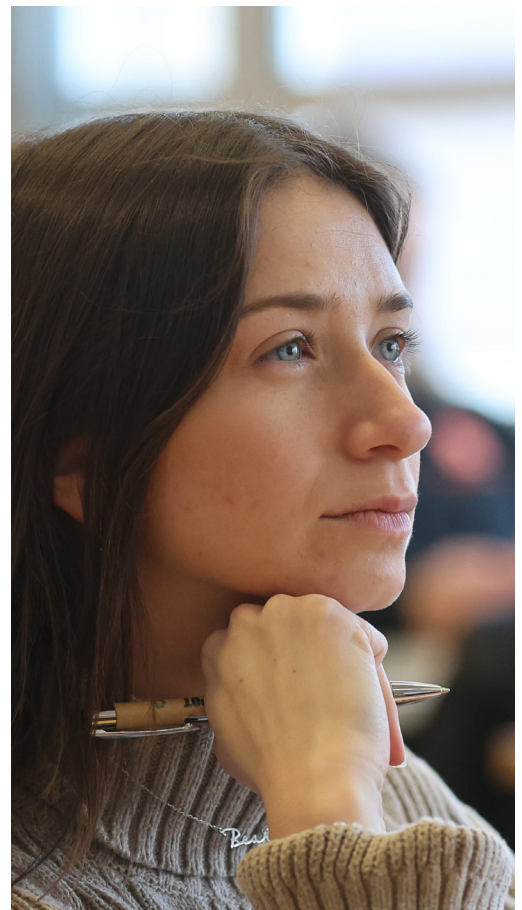
groups that seek to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA).

Campuswide Learning and Development Exemplars:

The Diversity Council of the College of Art & Sciences and Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs hosted professional development workshops for 85 faculty members from across the university. Faculty attended one or both of the following: Speaking Up: Bystander Intervention, PowerPlay which explores how moments of bias shape the workplace through interactive theater. Follow-up Coffee Chats with small groups of faculty were held after the workshops to provide

and gather input on next steps.

Student Living's DEIA Committee had its first lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual conference. The topics focused on queerness, identity, intersectionality, privilege, oppression, and perseverance. Syracuse University's Student Outreach and Support (SOS) team assists students comprehensively no matter the issue or challenge. SOS conducted its Distressed Students Training to 430 students, faculty and staff to help them identify students who may be in crisis and how best to support them. SOS has extended its services to more than 2,800 students since fall 2022.



Research and Assessment

The strength of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) is truly within its impact and outcomes. The curiosity, creativity and analysis that is the underpinning of DEIA work is critical to the development of the principles, strategies and initiatives that shape DEIA efforts. The ability to measure and assess DEIA outcomes results in the illumination of successes as well as opportunities for improvement. The five-year DEIA strategic plan calls for accountability as it charges not just the Office of Diversity and Inclusion but the full campus community with the work of DEIA. This level of accountability can only be achieved through rigorous research, measurement, and evaluation.

Campuswide Research and Assessment Exemplars:

The Lender Center for Social Justice was awarded a \$2.7 million dollar grant to

launch new research initiatives that will address the racial wealth gap and wealth disparity and held a two-day symposium that centered on the same topics. Syracuse University's hub for student wellness the Barnes Center at the Arch's (Barnes) DEIA Committee Assessment Workgroup received the One University Assessment Award for Best Use of Results. The workgroup used mixed-methods research to understand how students with diverse cultural identities utilize Barnes and implement policy changes that improve services and initiatives. The One University Assessment Award is presented to groups that use data to inform decision-making and identify and implement action to improve student learning and the campus environment.

The Hire Local initiative is part of the University's Go Local efforts. The Hire Local objective is to provide meaningful employment opportunities to Syracuse city

residents to positively affect the area in which the University operates. The original goal was to fill 35% of new benefits eligible staff positions and new temporary staff positions with employees from the local area by the end of fiscal year 2025. Through aggressive and proactive local recruiting, the Office of Human Resources exceeded its goals, filling 36% of new benefits eligible staff positions and 42% of new temporary staff positions with individuals from the city of Syracuse by the end of fiscal year 2022.



Meet The Team

For more information about the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) and the university's campus diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility outcomes, email diversity@syr.edu



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Syracuse University
Office of Diversity and Inclusion