UC San Diego News Center

By Judy Piercey   Dec 05, 2019

Imagine What We Can Build Together

Seven years ago, UC San Diego forged a commitment to cultivate a diverse and inclusive university community that encourages respectful open dialogue and challenges itself to take bold actions to ensure learning is accessible and affordable for all. Standing by that commitment, the university created the Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; hired a new vice chancellor to lead the office and recruit staff; and supported the many new programs and projects that have changed the face of our student body, faculty and staff to better represent California's dynamic and diverse population.

Voices from the Campus Community

What is the one thing you plan to do to advance equity, diversity and inclusion at UC San Diego?

Thandeka Chapman
Department of Education
Associate Professor

"My one thing is teaching and mentoring students at every level of higher education. I generate programming that intertwines local communities with UC San Diego. I create opportunities for students to practice being leaders, scholars, activists and thoughtful human beings."

Read More Voices from the Campus Community

"Tens of thousands of students, faculty, staff and community members work every day to make UC San Diego a more equitable, diverse, inclusive and vibrant campus," said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "Our continued commitment to these important principles led to the latest bold action—the creation of the university's first-ever Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence."

In fall 2017, the Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion launched a call to action for each and every person at our university to recognize their role and responsibility in making UC San Diego a place where campus community members feel welcomed and valued, which in turn leads to excellence in the classroom and workplace environment. Thanks to the collective genius of our students, faculty and staff, the plan is finalized, an accountability process is in full swing, and performance-based incentives are in place.

The development of the plan was guided by three core tenets.

- *Access and Success:* Attract, retain and support a diverse faculty, staff and student body with the goal of reflecting California demographics and achieving institutional excellence.

- *Climate:* Create and foster a positive and welcoming climate where we value, include and support all at UC San Diego.

- *Accountability:* Ensure institutional accountability throughout departments and divisions.

Creating a welcoming environment

As defined by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, "inclusion" exists when an environment is created that promotes and values collaborative input, mutual respect and recognition, and diverse perspectives. Inclusion is reflected in institutional practices and actions that encourage full participation of all campus community members.

Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Becky Petitt said, "UC San Diego is at an exciting moment in its young history, a crossroads of opportunity and impact. This Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence represents our roadmap for the university's future. I hope that every member of our community will consider how they can help create the most welcoming environment for teaching, learning, living and working."

UC San Diego's commitment to being an inclusive campus is already evident with programmatic advances that have happened since the plan development was launched. For example, our campus offers students from all perspectives and backgrounds an opportunity to achieve their aspirations through the Chancellor's Associates Scholarship Program and the Black Academic Excellence Initiative, providing affordable access to a world-class education.

The expansion of student retention and success programs, including peer coaching and success coaching, connects UC San Diego students with the resources they need. A comprehensive network of academic, social and personal support helps all our talented students graduate on time, develop leadership skills and grow into the changemakers of the future.

Our Latinx/Chicanx Academic Excellence Initiative is designed to ensure that California's fastest growing student population feels welcome and supported. This means attracting and supporting a diverse faculty, staff and student community. UC San Diego is considered an emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), serving a population of 20% full-time Latinx/Chicanx students. Our goal is to better reflect the diversity of our state and become a qualified HSI, which requires at least 25% full-time Latinx/Chicanx students.

As part of the university's continuing commitment to be a student-centered, research-focused, service-oriented public university, UC San Diego recently announced the launch of a campuswide campaign to support the development of the first-ever "Statement of Student-Centered Experience." A campuswide Statement of Student-Centered Experience is one of several recommendations made in 2017 by a senate administration task force charged with helping UC San Diego become an HSI, as designated by the U.S. Department of Education.

Mechanisms for accountability

The plan establishes not only goals for the campus at large, but mechanisms for accountability at the departmental and unit levels to help reach our shared goals.

This fall, all unit leaders conducted self-analyses and reported to Chancellor Khosla, Executive Vice Chancellor Simmons, Vice Chancellor Petitt and the EDI Advisory Council on the state of equity, diversity and inclusion in their units. They discussed the past, present and future: What is the current state of equity, diversity and inclusion in the unit? How did the unit come to this point? How does the unit plan to improve? They also shared their strategies to strengthen access and success, climate and accountability. Deans, vice chancellors and other senior campus leaders will receive comprehensive feedback following the accountability meetings, and next year it is expected most will have tangible improvements and outcomes to share.

Assistant Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Diane Forbes Berthoud assisted in the plan's development and acquiring and incorporating campus input into the final draft.

"Our Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence, through shared responsibility and accountability, enables our campus to innovate strategic inclusion practices that ensure that UC San Diego is a national exemplar of the value and excellence of diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education," said Forbes Berthoud.

Vice Chancellor Petitt noted that already areas are striving to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion in their practices and processes and are more explicit about their commitments to inclusion. A recent Celebration of Diversity in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) in the Jacobs School of Engineering featured "I Sit in the Red Chair Because…" video project that included graduate students, undergraduates, faculty, staff, deans and Chancellor Khosla, among others, who came to express their thoughts on diversity—and the results were powerful.

Measuring success

Petitt adds that, as part of this plan, we will consistently measure our progress. The assessment tools and strategies UC San Diego currently uses in our accountability process include the University of California Undergraduate Experiences Survey (UCUES); the Staff@Work Survey; Faculty Experience data; focus group data; and IdeaWave campaigns. Other assessment tools include student, staff and faulty demographic data; equity data; an examination of university policies; and Campus Community Center data.

"From experience, we know that diverse minds conceive diverse ideas that coalesce into viable solutions that serve many," said Khosla. "Because of this experience, UC San Diego will continue to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion to enable faculty, students and staff to excel and to provide an opportunity for everyone to succeed."

To learn more, visit the UC San Diego Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence website.

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