We are here.

The Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Washington University in St. Louis

When Adrienne D. Davis was named vice provost in 2011, the University already had a robust program for diversity and inclusion — for students.

"Jim McLeod was both vice chancellor for students and dean of the College of Arts & Sciences," Davis says, "and Jim had a well thought-out system and vision for student diversity."

But very little infrastructure existed for faculty diversity. One key statistic underscored this difference: in the first 156 years of the university's existence, "we'd only had two women deans of schools."

At that time, many of WashU's peer institutions had women in the role of university president or chancellor, "so we had really become an outlier," Davis says. "And it was becoming noted when our new faculty were coming in. During new faculty orientation, we would show them the leadership team, and the new faculty — men and women — would raise their hands and say, 'What is this place?'"

Photo: ZeCora Smith/Washington University in St. Louis

"A significant moment of value setting"

The faculty diversity statistics were a concern across the institution, not just at the leadership level. That concern prompted then-Chancellor Mark Wrighton to charge then-Provost Edward S. Macias with making faculty diversity a top priority. "That was a significant moment of value setting," Davis says.

After an internal search process, Davis, who already held an appointment as the William M. Van Cleve Professor in the School of Law, was selected vice provost, with a primary focus on increasing faculty diversity, while also helping to diversify senior administration. "So we rolled up our sleeves and we got to work," she says.

That work began with a listening tour to better understand the challenge from a range of perspectives. Davis also reached out to counterparts in peer institutions, to see how they approached their work.

What she found in researching peer institutions was that many of them took a compliance approach to diversity, in which schools and departments reported on their progress. Davis saw several drawbacks to that approach.

First, she didn't have the resources to manage compliance for such a large institution. One of her counterparts at a major state flagship institution had a team of 88 people. At the time, Davis had a staff of one-third of a person — and she was only half-time vice provost.

Second, she wasn't interested in compliance work. "If I had wanted to do compliance work, I would've gone to work for the federal government at the EPA or the SEC," Davis says.

And third, she didn't think that kind of relationship would be productive — she knew "the way regulated industries think about the EPA and the SEC … they're not happy when they see you coming."

> So we rolled up our sleeves and we got to work.

A different approach

Davis envisioned a different kind of relationship. "I thought, 'I want to approach this as though the schools are my clients,'" she says. "So instead of my regulating them, where they're kind of working for me and reporting to me, I thought, 'I want to come at it this other way, which is as a consultant and problem solver.'"

She knew that to shift the mindset around faculty hiring and promotion, she would need to earn the trust of her university colleagues. Thus, rather than seeing her as a compliance officer to be avoided, she says, "I wanted the schools, the deans, and ultimately my colleagues to think of me as a free consultant for them, helping them figure out how to reach their goals."

But while she saw potential in this different approach, and knew from her listening tour that many departments did have goals to increase their faculty diversity, her expectations were modest. After all, she'd seen peer institutions struggle to sustainably improve faculty diversity, many that had "been at this for generations. They've hired a lot of people, [but] they've lost equal numbers, without a lot of net increase," she says.

Davis' mindset was, "If you've seen 30 rockets try to go to the moon and all of them are not quite making it, you're thinking, 'Well, we're going to launch the 31st, [and] we're going to do it because it's the right thing to do, but [we know] there's a very, very high chance it's not going to work.'"

Photo: James Byard/Washington University in St. Louis

We Are Here

"We democratized diversity"

As Davis prepared her rocket for launch, she got an institutional boost: the Diversity and Inclusion Grant program, which had launched in the fall of 2009. The brainchild of Leah Merrifield, who at the time was special assistant to the Chancellor for diversity initiatives, the program "made available to any full-time employee, faculty or staff, up to $30,000 to operationalize an idea they had about how to make their corner of the campus more diverse and inclusive," Davis says. "I don't think anyone had done that before, and it was a genius idea."

Those grants helped Davis change the tenor and tone about diversity and inclusion across the institution. "When I arrived at Washington University, you talked about diversity and the women faculty were frustrated and angry," Davis says. "The administration, when you brought up diversity, they seemed exhausted and defensive. And faculty of color didn't seem to believe that much could or would be done."

But the grant program helped to "change the tenor of the discourse and dialogue around diversity." Now when Davis met with people, she could say, "'Hey, do you have an idea? Because if you have an idea, I can find some money for you.' The people who didn't want to engage, we didn't hear from. Instead, we heard from all the people who had really great ideas."

Not only did many of those ideas get funded, engaging people from across the university in diversity efforts, but the colleagues, staff, and faculty who reviewed grant applications felt invested in diversity and inclusion work as well. "The ability to direct almost a million dollars is an empowering opportunity," Davis says, referencing the total amount distributed through the grants. Instead of having a room full of senior administrators deciding how to pursue diversity work, "we democratized diversity."

Davis also reconfigured the Distinguished Visiting Scholar Program. Her office funds academic departments in bringing to campus visitors who have distinguished themselves in scholarship, the arts, and other fields of endeavor. Departments identify individuals from underrepresented groups who come to campus for anywhere from three days to two weeks to deliver public lectures, visit classes, conduct studio critiques, and even choreograph dances. While on campus, they meet with Davis, the Provost, and the Chancellor. Davis expanded the program to include women in underrepresented fields. She says the program is another way of "democratizing diversity, putting the resources in the hands of our colleagues to fund their visions for diverse excellence. We've had 62 distinguished visitors across the Danforth Campus, and have created long-standing relationships and ambassadors for the university."

I don't think anyone had done that before, and it was a genius idea.

Developing a Diversified Approach

One thing Davis made sure not to do was take a one-size-fits-all approach to diversity. She saw that different Danforth schools had different challenges and different histories related to diversity and inclusion. Each also had its own culture. So she encouraged them to experiment with and develop approaches that fit their situation and needs.

The Brown School began to continuously recruit diverse candidates, even if they didn't have a position open. "They said, 'We want to be constantly identifying talented, underrepresented minority candidates and bringing them to campus for talks,'" Davis explains. Funded through a diversity and inclusion grant, this initiative introduced scholars to WashU who might not have otherwise visited campus. The Brown School also adopted the mindset that, "if we find someone good who we think we should hire, we're going to go after them and hire them."

The McKelvey School of Engineering focused on bringing more diverse candidates to campus in the search process. Their mindset was, "if we don't see enough diversity in the [hiring] pool, we're going to go deeper into the pool," Davis says. As more candidates from underrepresented groups came to campus through the hiring process, search committees met more strong candidates, and began advocating for multiple members of the pool to be hired.

Both schools began to improve their faculty diversity.

Photo: James Byard/Washington University in St. Louis

We Are Here

Examining all Stages of the Hiring Process

As Davis worked with schools and their search committees, she saw moments — before, during, and after the hiring process — where the university was losing strong scholars. She set out to develop strategies that would address those weak spots in the process.

One challenge was search committee turnover. In many industries and sectors, the same people participate in the hiring process over and over, developing expertise. In higher education, hiring committees rotate with each new search, and department chairs rotate every three to ten years, meaning a hiring committee chair might only fill that role once every seven to ten years. Davis realized that she and the school deans were the repeat players in the process, who developed significant expertise over the course of many, many hires.

To ensure every hiring committee was thinking about diversity in every search, and had strategies to support it, Davis reconfigured an annual search workshop that gave hiring chairs, or their representatives, best practices for yielding an outstanding and diverse candidate pool. She also encouraged the hiring and department chairs to view her as a resource in their searches, not weighing in on the substance of searches, but more as a consultant who could help them develop strategies for achieving their goals.

Davis also noticed that the nature of the hiring process meant that even after a successful on-campus interview, a hiring committee might not communicate with a strong candidate for several months as they completed their process. "But I could be the person who would remain in contact with the candidates," Davis says. Because she was not part of the hiring decision, she could answer candid questions about the culture and environment at WashU, and about living in St. Louis.

Photo: Demond Meek

Negative perceptions about St. Louis proved to be another challenge. Hiring chairs sometimes sensed that a candidate "seems skittish about St. Louis, about moving their family of color or mixed-race family to St. Louis." She worked with departments to bring candidates back and show off all that St. Louis has to offer. At the end of the tours, Davis says, candidates "walk away saying, 'Oh my gosh, this town is a hidden jewel.'"

Davis also heard candidates of color express concerns about isolation. "A lot of people who we recruit still would be the only person in their department, or one of two people in a department, or even a school," she says. To address that concern, she began to host dinner parties for candidates, bringing together people from other schools and departments who are connected to their work. These parties give candidates a "sense of, 'This is the rich community I can be a part of.'"

And because faculty recruited to WashU need to live somewhere, Davis looked at the house-hunting process, and found opportunity to make an impact there as well. She tells the story of a "realtor who just completely offended a mixed-race couple," and the candidate didn't accept their offer. "So I said, 'That's it. Realtors have to take me out personally before I will refer them.'" She is constantly developing a list of realtors who share the university's diversity values and believe in St. Louis, which she shares with hiring and department chairs.

Once colleagues arrive, Davis tries to ensure that they have intellectual, professional, and personal communities. She leads several programs designed to help faculty persist towards tenure, promotion, and academic excellence, while building a cohort across departments and schools. The program for tenure-track faculty was sufficiently successful that last year some recently tenured "alums" of the program worked with Davis

to pilot a successor program, to provide support in pursuing the path to full professor. Davis also leads formal and informal leadership development programs, and last year began working with her three Gender Equity Faculty Fellows to create institutional capacity building around gender equity, as well as generating opportunities for professional development and community among women faculty.

Making Measurable Progress

None of these strategies alone would have been enough to meaningfully increase faculty diversity. But the variety of approaches, combined with a university-side willingness to invest in new ideas and support from Davis' office, has made an impact on the numbers.

Between 2010 and 2018, the percentage of tenured/tenure-track faculty on the Danforth campus who belong to an underrepresented minority group has increased 93 percent, with growth among African American/Black faculty increasing 113 percent, among Hispanic/Latinx faculty growing 65 percent, and women faculty increasing 21 percent.

Davis is proud of the improvement, but quick to acknowledge both that moving those numbers has been a true team effort — and that there is still much room for improvement. She believes one key to continued progress is defeating the skepticism about what's possible. "We have to overcome our own internalized narratives about why this won't work," she says.

She's already got the evidence to prove what is possible.

Introduction

Why an Academy?

For many years, Washington University has aspired to be a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive institution, in everything from admissions and hiring to faculty promotions and administration demographics.

While we have made progress, we still have a long way to go, and many challenges still stand in the way of achieving true inclusion for all members of the university community.

One key challenge, as identified by the University's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion, has been the lack of a unified catalyst for this work across the institution.

The Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was created to be that catalyst.

This document is designed to establish a baseline from which it will do its work.

Photo: James Byard/Washington University in St. Louis

An Ideal at its Core

A personal note from Nicole Hudson, Assistant Vice Chancellor for the Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

I was sent the job description for the role I now hold, Assistant Vice Chancellor for the Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, three times before I even read it. The first time, I immediately forwarded it to people who, in my mind, were the type of people the university was looking for — people who had a "traditional" diversity, equity, and inclusion background and/or who were currently working in higher education. The second time, honestly, I just deleted it. It did not even register as something that might be in the universe of consideration for me.

But when I was sent the description a third time, I finally read it. When I did, several things stood out to me.

The first was a stated focus on culture and climate. After working in the policy world for the previous few years, the acknowledgement that culture and climate change must go hand-in-hand with policy change signaled to me that Washington University understood that you can change policy all day long, but if the culture isn't ready for that change, it will reorganize itself.

The second was that the creation of the Academy was proactive, not reactive. That the Academy was the result of a thoughtful recommendation that came from an intentional stakeholder-driven process meant that the opportunity was one with a great deal of built-in buy-in and momentum.

I also knew from personal experience the past few years working on some of St. Louis' most pressing and visible challenges that, many times, Washington University had been there at the table, and that the university's representatives had rolled up their sleeves and done the work. Thus, I knew that the university was committed to this work, not just creating something to make itself look good. This wasn't about optics, this was about taking the next step in a commitment.

Moreover, I knew that the university had resources. It is one of the largest employers in the region. It is one of the largest landowners in the region. If Washington University was indeed taking these issues seriously, and bringing its resources to bear, then there was an opportunity to make an impact not only on the members of the university community, but on the region as a whole. It was then that I began to see opportunities similar to those which had led me to say "yes" to my previous three professional homes.

Core to the mission of the Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is an ideal — a 'culture and climate of diversity and inclusion' — that has no real precedent in our country or in the St. Louis region. I am excited to help Washington University pursue that ideal, and I am thankful to be part of a university community dedicated to the significant visioning, intentionality, and investment required to do so.

Resisting the Temptation to Run

Having been enmeshed and invested in the challenge of shifting policy and behavior in the St. Louis region on a full-time basis for nearly five years, I began the position with no confusion about the depth of the problem or the need for this work.

It was also clear to me, per all of the above, that the university presents a great opportunity to do this work, not only because of the ability to make change here, but the ability to be a catalyst for change in the region.

 So when I got here, one of the temptations was to just dive in and get started. And I wasn't the only one eager to get started — many people, including key senior leaders (several of whom made sure the Academy existed) were eager to see me start running. But together, we have resisted that push.

There were several key reasons to resist:

First, I wanted to listen, to learn about the work already underway, to make sure I understood the university culture, and the context of WashU.

Second, I wanted to make sure I had the capacity within the Academy to start executing.

And third, I knew coming in that, like in any community, the Academy would be meeting people at differing levels of understanding of both the causes and effects of the issues at the core of the Academy's work.

Because of this last point, it was important to spend time communicating core messages that help move the university community toward a place of common awareness and understanding about issues of climate and culture. A common awareness and understanding is essential for people to invest in the work ahead — if people aren't on the same page, they aren't going to invest in efforts to make change, or worse, they may actively resist them. So a core part of the Academy's work is communicating the need and the realities of the current state clearly.

Creating that understanding calls for deep listening. Creating that capacity calls for establishing connections across the institution, and staffing the Academy team. Creating shared understanding across the university calls for lots and lots of presentations, conversations, and communications. All of these take time.

It's easy to never quite be ready to launch — there are always more conversations to have, more perspectives to hear, more groups to present to. But in the conversations we have had, clear patterns have emerged, and recent discussions have reinforced those patterns. In more and more meetings and presentations, people are demonstrating a familiarity with the vocabulary, and their responses have shown that they, too, are eager to see the work the Academy will produce. The guidance from the university community has given a clear sense of where to start the work, and as of July 15 of this year, the Academy has the team in place to begin the work.

The listening and learning that brought the Academy to this point will continue. But this document represents a milestone marking the end of the initial listening and learning and preparing phase, and the beginning of the implementation phase.

About This Document

What it is, What it is Not

This document is meant to provide a snapshot of where Washington University is right now in the context of diversity, equity, and inclusion, based on what we've learned so far.

It is meant to frame the need for the Academy, and clarify its charge and objectives.

It is not meant to be a roadmap or set of specific strategy recommendations.

It is meant to both invite and challenge people to participate in this work.

Like the Academy's charge, it is focused on staff and faculty, but rooted in the reality that students are an inextricable part of our university climate and culture.

The Voice (and Voices) of the Document

We have chosen a voice for this document that is personal and personable, not institutional, and have intentionally written in readable, relatable, accessible language.

Too often the language around diversity, equity, and inclusion can feel academic and theoretical, but our approach, while rooted both in the insights of scholars and, obviously, anchored in an academic environment, is not theoretical. We are working to improve the lives of every member of the Washington University community, many of whom have felt shut out, unappreciated, unheard, unseen, and misunderstood as members of that community.

We have done our best to reflect the full range of voices we heard in the year of listening across the institution. But of course, it is impossible to have heard every voice, and we know and expect that some readers will not see their experience reflected here. Again, this is not a final say on diversity, equity, and inclusion at Washington University — it is a snapshot, and it will evolve over time. If you feel that your voice, perspective, or experience is not reflected here, we hope that you will let us know (you can email us at academy@wustl.edu), so that your experience can further inform our outlook and approach.

The Opening Story

The story that opens this document is an important one, because it is a microcosm of the work ahead. It illustrates the challenges we still face, but also the progress we can make on those challenges when we commit time, attention, talent, and resources to addressing an issue. It is also an example of how climate and culture, as well as narrative and expectations, can change over time for the better.

In the coming year, we will be highlighting more of these case stories, to shine a light on the great work that is underway, to encourage the exchange of ideas, and to foster collaboration across the institution. Indeed, rather than the story of one person with a vision doing heroic work, the story of progress in faculty diversity is the story of an empowered catalyst inviting and fostering new ideas, bringing together partners from all corners of campus, and making progress through trial, error, and persistence. There is no single path forward, but with these case stories, we hope to show stakeholders across the university examples of many effective ways to approach these challenges, and help them see that they, too, can identify opportunities for growth and make progress toward a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture and climate within their sphere of influence.

Reflection Questions

What would it mean to you personally if the university could achieve a true 'culture and climate of diversity and inclusion'? What would it mean to your department or unit?

Why is it important for the university to invest in the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion? What's at stake?

What ideas or insights did you take from the opening case story? How might you apply them to your department or unit?

How Did We Get Here?

The Roots of the Academy

What is the Academy?

Academy Origins

In February of 2015, following a semester of campus activism and dialogue, Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton and Provost Holden Thorp established a Steering Committee for Diversity and Inclusion. The committee, led by Nancy Staudt, Dean of the School of Law, was charged with the creation of a university-wide plan for increased diversity.[1] The Report of the Steering Committee for Diversity and Inclusion defined a two-year, 12-point action plan that included the establishment of a Diversity Commission to implement the resulting strategy.[2] To accomplish this goal, Adrienne Davis, Vice Provost and the William M. Van Cleve Professor of Law, was appointed as chair of the commission.

27 Commission Members
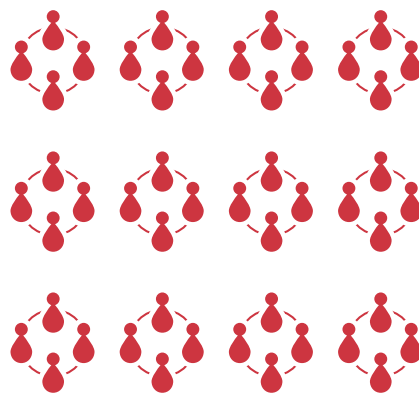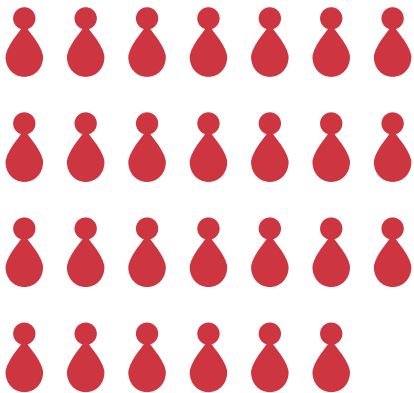
12 Working Groups

230 Faculty, staff & students included

The Commission on Diversity and Inclusion began its work in August of 2015 and was composed of 27 members of the Washington University community, including faculty members, staff, and students — undergraduate, graduate, and professional students — from all campuses. The Commission also appointed 12 working groups and utilized the perspectives, experiences, and expertise of more than 230 faculty members, staff, and students.

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[1] Executive Summary Report from the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion, June 30, 2017, p. 1.
[2] Ibid, p. 1

One of the Commission's recommendations was to: "Create an Academy for Diversity and Inclusion for staff and faculty members, to become the university's 'primary forum for changing climate and culture' by housing diversity and inclusion resources, including training resources, support for campus affinity groups, and annual events and recognition ceremonies."

In providing context for an Academy, the Commission wrote:

> Washington University in St. Louis has recently made significant improvement in diversifying the numbers of our students, faculty, and senior administrators and still has much work to do. Recent climate surveys of students, faculty members, and staff, alongside anecdotal reports, reveal another challenge — changing the university's climate and culture to become less tolerant of bias and more equitable, welcoming, and inclusive. The university has created the Center for Diversity and Inclusion to drive climate and culture change for students. The university needs to develop an infrastructure to support its growing, increasingly diverse community of staff and faculty. We propose the Academy for Diversity and Inclusion as the parallel infrastructure and set of resources for staff and faculty members."

Academy Mission

At its founding, Henry S. Webber, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Administrative Officer, described the charge of the Academy this way:

> The Academy will function as the university's primary forum for improving climate and culture, with the goal of making Washington University more equitable, welcoming and inclusive. We've made much progress in this area, but we have more work to do. While a number of diversity and inclusion resources exist on each campus, present efforts toward supporting an inclusive staff and faculty could benefit from a centralized collaborator and strategic partner."

The Academy, which reports directly to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Administrative Officer, is part of what is known as the Central Fiscal Unit. Departments in the CFU are university-wide core functions.

The Commission had proposed that the Academy would become the university's primary forum for changing climate and culture on all of our campuses. Its mission would be to:

- Create strategic visions for and house key resources to support university diversity and inclusion efforts;

- Provide a centralized resource for training university staff and faculty members;

- Create physical, virtual, and conceptual space for staff and faculty members to engage with issues of diversity and inclusion; and

- Assess and evaluate the Academy's efforts in changing climate and culture among staff and faculty members.

Desired Outcomes

The Commission also identified a set of desired outcomes for the Academy, proposing that the Academy serve as home and hub for a suite of tools, programs, and resources designed to enhance an inclusive culture and climate. With this in mind, the Academy would:

- House a broad set of training initiatives;

- Develop toolkits and programs for culture and climate change, in conjunction with Human Resources;

- Provide funding to support staff-initiated conferences and events;

- Provide funding and structural support for staff/faculty affinity groups to develop their individual and collective capacity to support an inclusive culture and climate;

- Develop and house new training structures, as outlined in the Commission's Training Report;

- House and support honors, recognitions, and signature events as outlined in the Commission's Honors & Recognition and Events reports;

- Develop community-building events and receptions supporting culture and climate change;

- Provide infrastructure for staff and faculty engagement with Academy work;

- Regularly assess and report out progress of programs, training, and culture and climate change.

Definition of Terms

It's helpful to pause for a moment to reflect on the key terms in the name of the Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Diversity. Diversity refers to demographics and representation. Are people from a wide range of backgrounds, identities, and life experiences represented throughout the university? Are university demographics representative of national demographics? Consideration of diversity includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, physical ability, and socio-economic status.

Equity. Equity focuses on outcomes. For example, it is possible to have a diverse faculty population, but have outcomes for that population, in terms of leadership appointments, tenure, or other recognitions, that do not reflect its demographics. Equity is thus different from equality — equality means treating all members of the community the same. However, because of generations of unequal treatment throughout the history of our country, higher education generally, and Washington University specifically, supporting equitable outcomes often calls for giving different support to different groups.

Inclusion. Diversity is about ensuring that the people at the table represent a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives. Inclusion focuses on making sure those people can bring their whole selves to the table, and that their voices are valued. In an inclusive culture, all members of the community are invited and able to contribute their unique talents and perspectives — and feel a sense of belonging in community life and decision-making.

Academy. The term that perhaps needs the most clarification is 'Academy.' Why are we calling this an 'Academy' rather than a division, center, or office? An academy typically refers to a place of learning and discovery. Because the work of this new entity is the pursuit of an ideal — a culture and climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion — that has no true precedent in our country, in higher education, or in the St. Louis region, this work will by definition require learning and discovery, as well as convening, facilitating, reflecting, supporting, and challenging. Naming this new entity the Academy provides a constant reminder of the need to bring people together to learn from, challenge, and support each other as we work toward that ideal.

We Are Here

It is also helpful to reflect on two key terms in the charge of the Academy, climate and culture:

Climate. Climate describes how it feels to exist in the university community. Is the climate welcoming, open, inclusive? Members of different demographic groups may feel quite differently about the university climate. The objective of the Academy is to help the university develop a climate that is welcoming and inclusive to all members of the university community.

Culture. Culture can be defined as "how we do things around here." Because policies, processes, and practices have such an impact on outcomes, examining and improving the university culture is a key element in making the university more equitable and inclusive. Policies, processes, and practices such as how decisions are made, how budgets are allocated, and who is involved in those decisions should be considered as we work toward a more inclusive culture.

"My key takeaway was that the university is actually doing something to work on inclusion. This isn't just for show. I feel like some things on this campus are done just for the spectacle. This Academy is still in its infancy but has already made great strides."

— **Attendee Feedback, 2019 Academy Open House**

How is the Academy Different?

In an institution with a variety of resources and efforts already dedicated to diversity, inclusion, and/or equity, it is reasonable to ask what makes the Academy different. There are two ways to consider that question:

How is having an Academy different from having a Chief Diversity Officer?

Many colleges, and many institutions outside of higher education, have a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). However, rather than support the hiring of a single senior administrator responsible for all university efforts in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Commission's ultimate recommendation was to lean into the creativity and excitement of the variety of initiatives that have emerged across campus in different units and departments, hold off on hiring a CDO, and first move forward with the creation of the Academy. The report did note, however, that one advantage of having a CDO was having a senior administrator focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion reporting directly to the Chancellor.

In many cases a CDO will focus on compliance, working to ensure all units of their institution are abiding by the relevant policies. The Academy's focus is not on compliance, but rather on catalyzing collaboration among the many units across the institution to engage and empower them to support a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture and climate together.

> "A lot of strong work has been done in small pockets by passionate individuals who will be instrumental in establishing the Academy as the crossroads for all efforts."
>
> — **Attendee Feedback, 2019 Academy Open House**

How is the Academy different from/complementary to other campus entities focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Different from the Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Part of the charge of the Academy is to provide for staff and faculty what students have in the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI). While there are parallels between the work of the Academy and the work of the CDI, the long-term nature of faculty and staff employment, compared to the predictable turnover of students, calls for a different way of thinking about shifting culture and climate. In addition, this focus on those employed by the university also means that the Academy's work will interface with non-academic business units, and require coordination with Human Resources, particularly in the realm of HR-delivered services.

Different from the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement and Institutional Diversity. The Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement and Institutional Diversity is within the Provost's office and focuses specifically on faculty recruitment and development.

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion, the Office for Faculty Advancement, and the Academy for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion together comprise Washington University's unique and nationally recognized approach to institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Different from Human Resources. With its charge to address climate and culture through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the Academy has a much narrower scope than HR, which encompasses employee engagement, reporting and compliance, benefits and compensation, talent management and recruitment, wellness, and much more. However, because the Academy is adjacent to HR, it will coordinate and collaborate with Employee Experience, Learning and Development, and Organizational Development. As the Academy gets more established, it may take a larger role in delivering some of the diversity and inclusion training that is currently offered by HR.

Different from School or Department Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Infrastructure. Throughout the university, schools, departments, and units have their own diversity, equity, and/or inclusion offices, staff, committees, or task forces. The Academy serves the entire university, supporting school and unit efforts and partnering with and supporting existing diversity, equity, and inclusion offices, staff, and committees throughout the university. As a part of the Central Fiscal Unit, the Academy also serves the administration.

Where Will the Academy Start?

The Report of the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion identified what the Academy portfolio could eventually look like, but the importance of choosing somewhere to start was clear. In considering that question, the Academy has been driven by three questions that inform our understanding, strategy, and decision-making:

How did we get here?

Examining both recent and distant history will help us trace a path from the decisions, influences, and biases of the past to their repercussions in the present. Understanding not only the what and when, but also the who, why, and how of that history can provide insight into our current culture and climate, and support more informed and inclusive decision-making as the institution navigates the path forward.

In its most tactical form, this means gaining a deep understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at WashU to date, how the recommendation for the Academy came to be, and the "why" behind the Commission's recommended mission and outcomes.

What does it mean to be here?

Essential to the work of the Academy is understanding clearly, for all members of the university community, the experience of being a part of this community at this moment in history. Is our community representative? If not, what efforts are in place to make the community more diverse and representative? Do all members of the community feel included? If not, who does not feel included, and in what ways are people being excluded? What elements of the culture and climate, what structures and systems, what policies and processes, what narratives and biases, are keeping people from being included? Are outcomes equitable? If the outcomes are not equitable, in what ways are they not equitable? What stands in the way of equitable outcomes? What are the present-day effects of the long legacy of unequal and inequitable decisions, policies, and practices?

Where do we go from here?

The path to a diverse, inclusive, and equitable Washington University is not clearly defined. But though there may not be a straight-line path from our current state to that desired future state, each step we take going forward must be rooted in the need to remedy current inequities while avoiding the missteps of the past that contributed to those inequities.

We know that several university entities are already succeeding in creating diverse, equitable, inclusive cultures and climates within their spheres of influence. The Academy can spotlight their successes and illuminate the investments and processes that produced them, provide useful models for leaders and teams across the university, foster and inspire connection and collaboration, and encourage similar efforts and investments in diversity, equity, and inclusion university-wide.

> "My key takeaway is that the University is serious about its intention to look critically at its history as it relates to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and I appreciate this very much."
>
> **— Attendee Feedback, 2019 Academy Open House**

So How DID We Get Here?

“What passes for identity in America is a series of myths about one's heroic ancestors.”

— **James Baldwin**

Who are Washington University's "heroic ancestors?" What stories make up how different groups of people might feel when they arrive on campus or view WashU as a neighbor? What stories have some people feeling like they are immediately part of the story? Which stories reinforce a sense of not-belonging? Which stories feel antagonistic? Inviting?

To better understand this dynamic, the Academy undertook a project in the beginning of 2019 to examine the university's history through the lenses of diversity, equity, and inclusion. A team of researchers — Sarah Hobson and Adam Layne — worked with partners, like the Library Archives, to create a timeline of significant events, not only in the history of Washington University, but also of the St. Louis region, Missouri, and the United States. As the researchers assembled this historical record, the Academy team worked together with them to identify themes and patterns that provide context for the climate and culture of Washington University today.
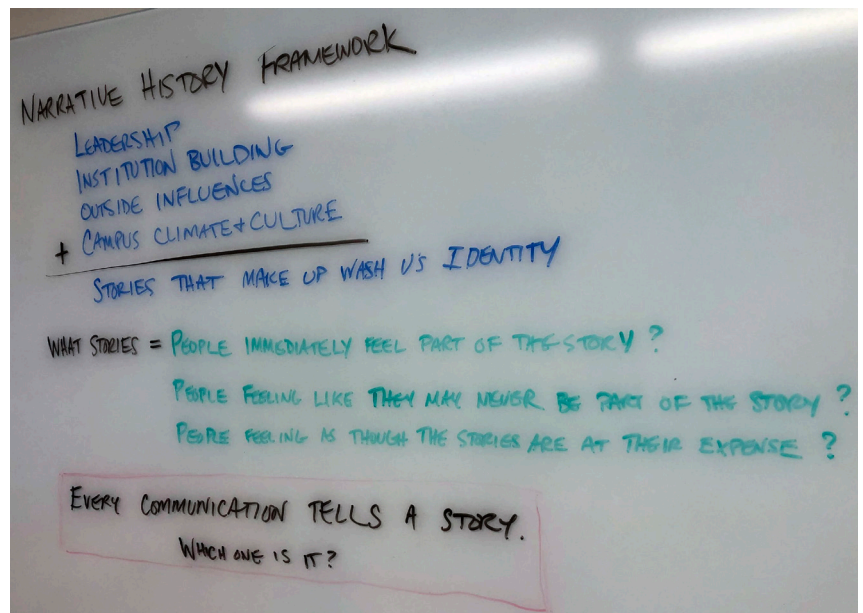
The framework that emerged from that process examines university history through the categories of Leadership, Institution Building, Outside Influences, and Campus Climate and Culture to help us not only better understand how past decisions and milestones impact the identity of WashU, but also suggest how we can use that understanding to be more inclusive moving forward.

The next phase is to use this narrative framework as an engagement tool and explore how that might serve as a grounding tool for the Academy's work with departments and units across the university.

Reflection Questions

What do you see as the value of a "centralized collaborator and strategic partner" for university diversity and inclusion efforts?

What is your understanding of the Academy's role, and how it is different from other diversity-related entities at the university?

When have you felt like you are part of the university story? When have you felt left out of the story? What does the narrative framing of the university's history make you think?

What Does it Mean to Be Here?

The Current State of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Washington University

Listening and Learning

Assistant Vice Chancellor for the Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Nicole Hudson spent much of her first year on the job listening and learning — meeting with deans and academic leaders; faculty and staff members; affinity group leaders; administrative leaders; and diversity, equity, and inclusion advocates and leaders across campus; and processing those conversations in regular discussions with key university leaders, including Adrienne Davis, Vice Provost and William M. Van Cleve Professor of Law (and now founding director of the newly-created Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity & Equity); Emelyn dela Peña, then-Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Dean of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion; Legail Chandler, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources; Ombudsman Jessica Kuchta-Miller; and several other deans, department heads, and other DEI leaders.

These conversations helped to clarify current challenges to an inclusive culture and climate, identify opportunities for progress, provide cont=ext for both challenges and opportunities, and offer a deeper awareness of the depth and breadth of current resources to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion across the university.

What Does it Mean to be Here: Challenges

A few of the themes related to challenges that emerged include:

- University "decentralization" hinders a unified sense of community, and at the same time, has become a core part of the university's identity.

- Place (campus, building) and class (parking) often serve as proxies for unspoken issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- We have general management and process challenges (title consistency, transfer policies, performance review frequency) that show up as diversity, equity, and inclusion challenges when they disproportionately impact some groups more than others.

- As a university community, we often use broad words (such as "diversity") as code for specific things (such as race and gender), making discussions about specific topics sometimes uncomfortable and leaving some groups out completely.

- The most regularly assumed code is "diversity means race, and specifically Black/White," which leaves many in the university community further marginalized by initiatives and efforts that are intended to feel supportive.

What Does it Mean to be Here: Opportunities

A few of the themes related to opportunities that emerged include:

- A sense of hope and a feeling of momentum around this moment in the university's life as it pertains to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- A good number of people consider the work toward inclusion and equity vitally important.

- A good number of units and departments have undertaken initiatives, policy changes, and/or programs in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- There is a national spotlight on the St. Louis region regarding historic, systemic challenges and their impact on the current state of the region. Washington University plays a key role in the regional understanding, prioritization, and potential solutions to these challenges.

What Does it Mean to be Here: Context

Weaving current conversations with insights from the research into university history produced several observations about our current state:

- In the arc of the university's history, the Academy (as well as the Center for Diversity and Inclusion and the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity & Equity) are the fruit of seeds planted throughout the student-resistance/administration-response patterns from the 1960s through today.

- Despite investments in programs and initiatives, staff, faculty, and student requests for shifts in culture and climate remain. The narrative around these issues has not substantively changed, nor have demands lessened for improved outcomes.

- St. Louis is in a position where the leadership and resources of the university are of critical importance to the region's ability to address and make progress on its greatest challenges.

What Does it Mean to be Here: Assets and Resources

Finally, the Academy team also set out to understand the landscape of assets and resources devoted to diversity, equity, and inclusion across the university.

The team is working to index and categorize:

- Roles across the university with responsibility for diversity, equity, and/or inclusion (which may or may not include these in their title).

- Committees, task forces, and working groups focused on diversity, equity, and/or inclusion.

- Programs and initiatives designed to support greater diversity, equity, and/or inclusion.

- Training efforts designed to foster greater diversity, equity, and/or inclusion.

- Status and progress on recommendations from the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion.

In addition to identifying potential resources and collaborators for the Academy's work, this exercise will raise awareness of the depth and breadth of the ongoing efforts in support of greater diversity, equity, and inclusion across the institution; lead to greater alignment and sharing of resources; and foster greater university-wide collaboration.

What Does it Mean to be Here: *In St. Louis*

Another key theme that emerged in these conversations was the permeability of experience on- and off-campus. How faculty and staff experience the St. Louis region, and then how Washington University shows up in relationship to that off-campus experience, can impact the on-campus experience.

On or off campus, a shift in culture relies on changes in policies, systems, and processes. It requires truth-telling, healing, and becoming comfortable with the uncomfortable. It takes individual participation, but only happens when civic, legislative, and organizational structures are different. The work it takes to achieve those things is not fast, is not easy, and doesn't lend itself to sound bites.

The In St. Louis Project was developed to address the interconnectedness of the climate and culture at Washington University and that of the larger St. Louis region, to hold space for the complexity of policy and systems change, and ultimately to explore — through the experiences, scholarship, work, and voices of St. Louisans — what it means to be in St. Louis today. The ongoing, multi-faceted, multimedia storytelling project, launched in August 2019, is produced in partnership with the Office of Public Affairs.

Reflection Questions

What challenges to an inclusive climate and culture have you seen or experienced in your unit or department? In the university at large?

What opportunities or encouraging signs have you seen in your unit or department? In the university at large?

Have you engaged with *The In St. Louis Project*? If so, what did it make you think? Feel?

Where Do We Go From Here?

Achieving a Different State

Grounding the Work of the Academy

Being mindful of how we got here and continuing to listen openly to what it means to be here are essential elements of the work of the Academy. They are also essential to determining where we go from here. Without truly understanding the choices of the past that led to the outcomes of the present and regularly exercising radical listening to ensure that all people in the university community are heard and feel understood, any efforts to achieve a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive Washington University are likely to be misguided.

That said, even with a deep appreciation of where we have come from and the challenges we face today, there is no clear path forward. A disadvantage to taking an approach different from other institutions of higher learning is that there is not an existing road map to follow.

This section describes some of the frameworks we are using to ground our work as we lean into that uncertainty and partner with you to work toward a different state.

Academy Vision

Core to a successful change is a shared sense of where you are going. As we listened and learned from different corners of the university community about their hopes and desires for an inclusive and equitable Washington University, the following vision statement emerged:

Our university will reflect the many communities it serves, while setting and achieving a new standard for respect of, opportunity for, and inclusion of every person the university impacts.

Let's explain the thinking behind some of the phrases in this vision statement.

"reflect the many communities it serves" — We heard that people want Washington University to be as diverse as the communities it serves — including the St. Louis community and higher-education community — and also acknowledge that Washington University is a global institution. Thus, our ideal future community includes a full spectrum of people, voices, and perspectives.

"while setting and achieving a new standard" — Many in our community understand first-hand the gap between representation, inclusion, and equitable outcomes for all people. Reflecting the world around us without acknowledging these gaps would result in reconstructing and perpetuating injustices for many in our community. Thus, we envision a culture and climate that is designed to empower and bring out the best in every individual who is a part of our community, that raises expectations of what is possible from individuals and the collective alike, and that in so doing sets a precedent for others to follow.

"respect of, opportunity for, and inclusion of" — One hazard inherent in diversity, equity, and inclusion work is that the repeated use of the words diversity, equity, and inclusion |can create distance between those words and their meanings. This clause aims to specify some of the outcomes we will see in this ideal future state. The earlier phrase, "reflect the many communities it serves," spoke to our vision for diversity. This phrase speaks to what we envision when we say "equity and inclusion." Respect, opportunity, and inclusion are concrete concepts that convey what it would feel like to belong to this community.

"every person the university impacts" — The Washington University community has always included a broad range of people in a broad range of roles. Though people in certain roles will always have more influence and enjoy more status by definition of those roles, this phrase emphasizes the commitment to respect, create opportunity for, and include every member of the university community, regardless of role. It speaks against the rankism that is sometimes used to "put people in their place," and it speaks to the humanity and inherent dignity and worth of every community member. This phrase also acknowledges that the university has an impact on the lives of those it educates, employs, neighbors, and invests in.

When it was founded, Washington University did not reflect the world in its makeup. Though the university community did eventually include people who did not fit the founding norm, those students, faculty, and staff often felt the need to reshape themselves to fit in to the existing culture, and find ways to work and study successfully in an institution that was built for people who were different from them. Today, the university is engaged in the work of reshaping itself so that every member of its community can thrive without having to abandon who they are.

Academy Opportunity

The Academy opportunity statement is meant to clarify and define the opportunity that the Academy represents for the university:

Our opportunity is to commit to and execute on the work of equity, at scale, in a major institutional setting, and create a model for global culture change.

Let's explain the thinking behind some of the phrases in this opportunity statement.

"commit to and execute on" — This explicitly calls the university (via the Academy) into both commitment and action. To achieve the lofty aims of the Academy will require sustained investment of resources and attention, and the diligent execution of thoughtful strategy.

"the work of equity" — Focusing on equity creates accountability to measurable outcomes. It also speaks to the need of going beyond ensuring a representative table to ensuring that everyone seated at that table has a statistically equal opportunity to enjoy success.

"at scale, in a major institutional setting" — The university has seen success in small pockets, and these successes have rightly been held up as examples of what is possible in the work of making our climate and culture more equitable. But our opportunity as an institution is to go beyond isolated examples of success, and to develop policies, processes, and practices that can scale and spread across and throughout an institution as large, diverse, and distributed as Washington University.

"a model for global culture change" — Though the university will always be a controlled environment, the work we do in this setting in the realms of policy, culture, measurement, transformation, and investment can serve as a useful model for other communities. This statement declares that our work will not only be for the benefit of our own community, but that we will learn transparently and share openly, so that others may also benefit.

How We're Thinking About Change

While the university has invested attention and resources to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion for decades, these efforts have frequently been siloed and disconnected. In these fragmented approaches, the work has generally been focused at the department, division, or school level.

The Academy was created to take a university-level view, and to be a clear, consistent champion for diversity, equity, and inclusion across the institution. Because of this positioning, the Academy can see the entire horizon, coordinate and align efforts, maximize efficient allocation and use of resources, elevate work done by dynamic individuals to the institutional level, and ensure that the wheel is not being reinvented over and over again across the university.

Sustainable change cannot be made by policy alone — changes in policy and process must go hand-in-hand with changes in culture and climate. Taking a long-term, strategic view of the entire university will help the Academy work proactively rather than reactively, and patiently rather than urgently, to support changes in policy, process, culture, and climate.

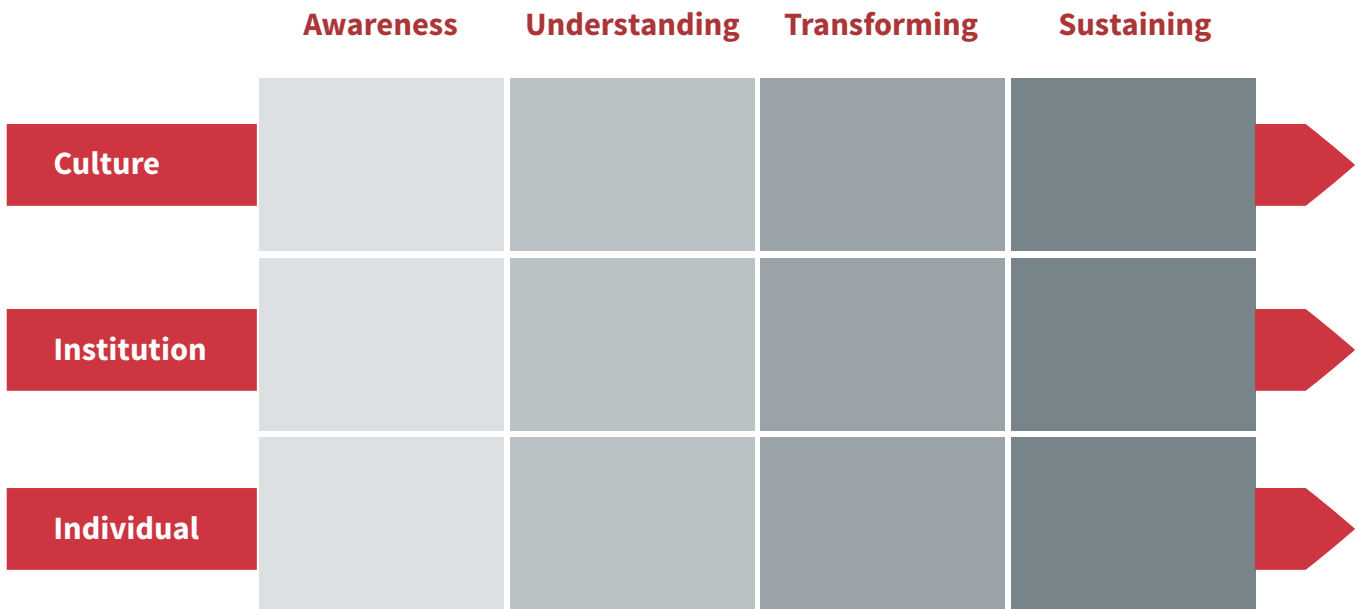## A Model for Thinking About Change

In its work toward regional change, Forward Through Ferguson developed a model, "A Path to Racial Equity," designed to help individuals and organizations see the path toward racial equity, distinguish between its different phases, and locate themselves and their projects along it. The model also presented specific language and framing for ideas that people have felt or sensed, but have not quite been able to put words to. Thus, the framework facilitates more productive conversations by proposing a shared vocabulary and model for Forward Through Ferguson's work.

The model has helped organizations that were ready to commit to being a part of regional change, but that did not fully grasp the internal work necessary to move toward implementation.

Presented below is an adaptation of that model for the Washington University context that the Academy is using to think about and discuss change.

Phases of Culture Change

	Awareness	Understanding	Transforming	Sustaining
Culture				
Institution				
Individual				

We Are Here

The row across the top lays out the phases of culture change:

Awareness of the Need for Change. The focus of this phase is helping stakeholders (see more below) become aware of the areas where culture change is needed, helping them see how the current state hurts the community at large, and bringing stakeholders into agreement that the issue is worth addressing.

Understanding of Why Change is Needed. In this phase, stakeholders develop an understanding of the root causes of the problem, and how existing systems and structures — which create, manage, and distribute resources — both originated and still maintain the problem. Understanding how the legacy of those systems and structures perpetuates the problem today is essential for addressing it.

Transforming Towards Change. The focus of this phase is acting on the awareness and understanding of the previous two phases to create measurable change. In this phase, stakeholders disaggregate data, develop transparent outcome goals, set transformation strategies, and make intentional changes to policies, processes, and practices in pursuit of equity in outcomes, culture, and climate.

Sustaining Change. In this phase, equal outcomes have been achieved and cultural change has been made. But getting to this phase will mean undoing the damage of generations of policies and practices that led to today's inequities, and the weight and inertia of those generational forces will not magically disappear once change has been achieved. Thus, the focus of this phase is sustaining the change, and reinforcing the policies, processes, and practices that made it possible.

The column down the left side of the grid identifies the different stakeholder populations that go through these phases:

Individual. This is simply an individual person, be they student, faculty, or staff.

Institution. This is any collective entity with a shared purpose — a unit or department, school, campus, or the university as a whole.

Culture. This describes a broader population that includes a wide variety of institutions and individuals — St. Louis, for example, or the world.

This column also provides a visual reminder that not all of these groups will move along through the phases at the same pace.

For example, a university-level commitment to a policy change to create more equitable outcomes might face implementation hurdles at the unit or department level if leaders there do not support or prioritize those changes, or even believe the change is necessary.

The model also provides a reminder that moving through each of these phases takes both time and effort — there is no transformative change on/off switch. Thus, the model is a reminder of the commitment necessary to do this work.

In presenting this model to a variety of groups, we have seen it serve effectively as a level-setting tool (Where are we now?), a troubleshooting and analysis tool (What's working and what's not working about where we are now?), and a planning tool (What do we need to do to move to the next phase?). The model also facilitates more productive conversations by proposing a shared vocabulary and framework for the work of organizational or group change.

Elements Necessary for Culture Change

Discussions of change often focus on tactics — training, reports, studies, events, organization charts, etc. While these are essential components of change, our ongoing conversations about creating a more inclusive culture and climate have made clear that while tactics and plans are important, several foundational elements must be in place for those tactics and plans to gain any traction.

These foundational elements — these "table stakes" of culture change — are presented in the visual below.

With these elements in place, tactics and plans are grounded in something substantial. If a particular tactic or plan doesn't work, it can be discarded and replaced with another that might work better, without abandoning the larger effort in pursuit of change.

Yet in the absence of these elements, most tactics will fail — they feel haphazard and disjointed, which can render them less effective, ineffective, or even counterproductive, especially if their lack of cohesion to a larger whole ends up disillusioning people, and making them less willing to invest their time and effort into this work. Thus, attempting to deploy tactics or plans without the elements necessary for culture change in place can hinder the work of change in the present, and make it more difficult to launch efforts for change in the future.

That's why the Academy will focus more on fostering and strengthening these foundational elements across the institution than on deploying specific tactics for change.

Academy Ethic

With this in mind, the Academy, by design and placement within the organization, will be primarily focused on infrastructure, governance, facilitation, and systems. In an environment where the general understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion work trends toward programmatic (training, events, etc), framing the Academy's focus correctly from the beginning is critically important.
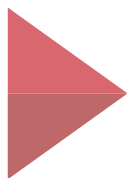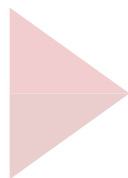
The Academy will be more vision than tactics; more infrastructure than programs; more connective tissue than compliance hammer; more coach to help teams solve their own problems than fixer to come in and fix problems for those teams.

Tactics				Vision
Programs	▶	▶	▶	Infrastructure
Hammer				Connective Tissue
Fixer				Coach

Building a Foundation for Change

Areas of Focus

In its initial years, the Academy will prioritize three key objectives to shore up our collective foundation for change:

Support

We will support existing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. This means we will:

- Work with departments and units on new and ongoing strategies and goals

- Reflect back learnings from listening and assessment efforts to the university community

- Support, develop, and expand infrastructure for staff and faculty cultural, shared interest, and/or affinity groups

- Support, develop, and expand infrastructure for committee-led signature events

- Gather and share the history of the institution regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Amplify stories where departments and units have made and are making positive change

Align

We will work to align diversity, equity, and inclusion resources and communications.
This means we will:

- Facilitate and cultivate community for campus diversity, equity, and inclusion leaders

- Facilitate improved community-wide communication about diversity, equity, and inclusion programming, resources, and offerings

- Develop a framework for department and unit assessment, goal setting, and implementation

Institutionalize

We will establish the Academy institutionally, as well as in the broader St. Louis community. This means we will:

- Establish Academy policies, procedures, norms, and operations

- Partner closely and collaboratively with other diversity, equity, and inclusion entities to understand existing systems and protocols, avoid duplication, and co-create future solutions

- Articulate where the Academy fits in the arc of the institutional story regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Explore and articulate the Academy's role in external diversity-, equity-, and inclusion-related efforts

- Develop success metrics for the Academy's work

Academy Resourcing and Staff Design

In its report, the Commission recommended that:

> It is important for the Academy to have sufficient resources to effectively drive culture and climate transformation and meet anticipated heavy demand for programming and engagement opportunities. It is especially important that there be sufficient personnel bandwidth to ensure development of initiatives and both ongoing and ad hoc programming and events beyond training. This includes both the Academy's leadership as well as Program Coordinators who will support the ongoing and ad hoc programs, events, and conferences the Academy might launch and host."

Based on the needs and objectives identified throughout this document, the Academy has assembled a staff that supports infrastructure design, institutional capacity building, and facilitation and support of existing assets, efforts, and expertise.

The initial staff allocation for the Academy is:

Assistant Vice Chancellor — Nicole Hudson

As the department lead, Nicole is responsible for the management of the team and representing the Academy at an executive level across campus. Prior to the Academy, Nicole worked on regional policy related to racial equity. The bulk of her career has been spent in areas of communication, digital and brand strategy, and the cultivation of community, on- and off-line.

Associate Director: Learning, Skill and Capacity Building — Maricela Alvarado

Maricela is primarily responsible for support, alignment, coordination, assessment, and eventually design of opportunities for learning, skill building, and capacity building utilized to execute the Academy's work regarding climate and culture change at WashU. Most recently Maricela worked in corporate learning and development, and prior to that spent over 15 years in student affairs—a decade of that founding and leading a student cultural center.

Associate Director: Community and Events — Aleah Likas

Aleah is primarily responsible for support and infrastructure for existing staff and faculty culture, shared interest, and/or affinity groups as well as committee-planned annual events. Aleah also leads the Academy's strategies to cultivate community more broadly internally at the university and in support of university entities that maintain external community relationships. Aleah has a background in events and hospitality and most recently managed all non-baseball events at Busch Stadium.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant — Melanie Houston

Melanie leads process for the Academy, both internally for the department and externally for the Academy's work with other units. Melanie is an expert at designing and facilitating dialogue to support inclusion and joins the Academy after serving as a training and education specialist for the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

Administrative Assistant — Margaret Miller

Margaret supports scheduling for Nicole, keeps the office running, and participates as a team member in all areas. Margaret joins the Academy after moving to St. Louis from New York where she was completing her masters at NYU in European Studies with a focus on examining the production of identity in cuisine.

A potential hole in this staffing structure is analysis and assessment. Analysis and assessment are included in the responsibilities and required skill set for several of the above positions, but based on the charge of the Academy, there is sufficient work for analysis and assessment to command a full-time role. In the interim, we are in conversations with various departments about partnership in this area.

What Does Success Look Like?

Success for the Academy and the university is an increased sense of community, trust, vibrancy, and inclusion among staff and faculty; a reduction in culture/climate related incidents; equitable outcomes for identity groups along traditional measures of success; streamlined, sustainable investments in diversity, equity, and inclusion across campus; increased similarity between the on- and off-campus experience for faculty and staff; and increased consistency in the perception of Washington University as an inclusive community and agent of regional growth and equity.

Reflection Questions

If the Academy is able to facilitate its vision, what will be different in that Washington University of the future? Why is this future state worth pursuing to you?

In the Phases of Culture Change model, where do you see yourself? Your unit or department?

Which of the foundational Elements Necessary for Culture Change do you feel is most essential? Which do you think your unit or department most needs to work on? Why?

What Can I Do?

A Call to Action

What Can I Do?

In so many of the conversations we have had about the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Washington University, people have expressed a desire to do something — to support the work of the Academy, and to act within their own sphere of influence to help make the university more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

But motivated as they might be to do something, people often feel overwhelmed — and understandably so. Where do you begin when you're trying to create a culture and climate here at the university that doesn't exist anywhere else in the rest of the world?

As you think about what you can do, it's important to understand the process of change, as framed in the previous section. Some change must be initiated through policy at the institutional level. But many top-down changes actually begin bottom-up, with individuals, departments, or small units asking difficult questions, challenging the status quo, or modeling a different, better way.

While the institution must ultimately play a key role in supporting any sustainable change, individuals also have a key role to play in nudging, crafting, and supporting that change. After all, the university can institute a policy that a department can actively decide not to support — and within a department, just one voice can scuttle progress or create a negative perception around the value of a new policy.

Understanding that change happens not only at the institutional level but also person by person, interaction by interaction, can help you find ways to engage in this work without feeling overwhelmed.

> "I'm excited that the Academy has been formed. I came back to my office and immediately volunteered to be on the committee in my department."
>
> **— Attendee Feedback, 2019 Academy Open House**

Principles of Community

As you and your team, department, or unit consider how you can support this work, we encourage you to adopt these principles of community to guide your efforts.

Commit to a Culture of Trying

In working to create an inclusive and equitable climate and culture, we are likely to recognize that processes, policies, and traditions we hold dear are part of what is holding us back. Things that took decades and centuries to codify and become "the norm" will not change overnight.

The idea of changing something so entrenched can be intimidating, and feel overwhelming. This is difficult work.

But if we're going to make any kind of progress, we can't be intimidated by how long it might take, how many resources might be necessary, or that we won't always get it right the first time. We've got to start trying. We've got to normalize trying, as well as grace when we fail. And we've got to start trying now.

Act with Urgency, But Have Patience

Many members of the Washington University community have been waiting their entire lives to be fully respected, included, and to have an equitable opportunity to thrive.

To ask them to wait patiently for change is like asking them to continue to suffer quietly while those with power and influence take their time changing, because change is uncomfortable to them.

A world-class institution like Washington University must work urgently because it owes that urgency to every member of its community who has chosen WashU as a trusted employer, educator, healthcare provider, or research home. Being a leader among institutions of higher learning means not waiting for others to take the lead.

Yet that urgency must be matched with patience.

There is no quick fix, and no clear solution to current inequities. Progress by definition will require trial and error, and those trials take time. Progress calls for significant investments and long-term efforts that come with no guarantee of success. Progress requires remembering that we didn't arrive at our current state overnight, and that we won't arrive at our ideal future state overnight either.

We must be patient with this work, and persistent — acting with urgency at every step.

Be Aware of Your Own Position and Power

Each of us occupies a position in relation to others in the institution, and each of our positions comes with a measure of power and influence. We may not all have broad decision-making authority, but we each have opportunities to exert influence — on the direction and tenor of discussions, on how decisions are made, on how the culture evolves, on how processes develop, and more.

To exert the maximum positive influence on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, we must be aware of the power that comes with our position, understand the size of our circle of influence, and consider how we, in our daily choices and activities, are contributing to — or actively challenging — the status quo.

Raising your awareness of the potential power and influence that comes with your position in the institution can help you identify opportunities where you can make an impact, and leverage that power and influence to support change.

Ask "For Whom?"

When you make decisions, or are a part of a group making decisions, ask, "For whom?" When you say this is a fair process, or an effective policy, ask, "For whom?"

For whom is this decision being made? Who benefits most from this new policy? Are all stakeholders impacted equally by this process? Whose voices were included in this decision?

Equitable outcomes are most often the product of inclusive decision-making. Inclusive decision-making involves a diverse group of stakeholders from the beginning of, and throughout, the process.

Listen and Learn

At every step, listening is essential.

Listening is essential to understanding who is hurt by current policies, practices, and processes, and who is helped. Listening is essential to considering new ideas that might make us uncomfortable. Listening is essential to working through that discomfort, even when our first instinct is defensiveness.

And listening is essential to learning about perspectives and experiences that are different from yours.

As we've said many times throughout this document, we don't know the specific path forward. We know the mindset necessary to continue to move forward along the path, and we know that we will need to invest time, energy, and resources to advance along the path. But we also know that along the way, there will be wrong turns and missteps. Learning from these mistakes and failures is essential to continually moving in the right direction.

Keep in mind that hearing the first-hand perspectives of others is not the only way to learn about their experiences. Too often, the expectation for educating those with power is placed on those without it: women are expected to teach men about workplace sexism and gender inequity; people who need accommodations to access or participate in activities often have the burden of having to repeatedly ask for those accommodations. This expectation places a tremendous burden on those who regularly experience discrimination and oppression — to not only deal with the everyday challenges of discrimination and oppression, but to also teach those with power and privilege how to stop discriminating and oppressing.

Yet there are countless resources available to help you learn about people who are different from you, to help you know and understand the perspectives of marginalized groups, all just a Google search away.

If you want to be an ally and an active contributor to this work, commit to listening, and commit to learning in a multitude of ways.

Reflection Questions

What feels overwhelming to you about working toward a more inclusive and equitable climate and culture?

What opportunities does your position provide for you to be an advocate for diversity, inclusion, and equity?

What diversity, equity, or inclusion topic would you like to learn more about? What resources can you access this week to learn more about it?

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