



Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion

Two-Year Report and 2023-2025 Strategic Goals

Submitted by
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Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

~ Nelson Mandela, Nobel Peace Prize Recipient

INTRODUCTION

The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) was started in August 2020 under the leadership of Chancellor Dan Greenstein who appointed PASSHE’s inaugural Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer. I am humbled and honored to have been selected to serve in this role, which focuses on students, faculty, and staff, and the policies and practices that impact their experiences as members of the PASSHE community. The Office of DEI places a special emphasis on the assessment and outcomes of populations historically excluded from higher education. The Office of DEI is a core component of System Redesign, organizational sustainability, and workforce development.

As the Commonwealth’s only public system of higher education, we have a mission to provide high-quality education at the lowest possible cost to students; to increase educational attainment in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; to prepare students at the undergraduate and graduate levels for professional and personal success in their lives; and to contribute to the economic, social, and cultural development of Pennsylvania’s communities, the commonwealth, and the nation.

This report culminates with a three-year strategic plan that reflects myriad inputs and collaborations including research, formal and informal meetings, stakeholder interviews, and other forms of engagement with various stakeholder groups. It represents a collaborative approach to decision-making that includes input from students, faculty, staff, trustees, board members, and community leaders. Together we continue to be mission-driven (Illustration 1) to co-construct and implement a bold and values-driven plan designed to positively impact the lives of students, faculty, staff, businesses, families, and communities across the Commonwealth and beyond.

Illustration 1. Office of DEI Mission, Vision, and Values

Our Mission: *The State System is committed to ensuring accessibility and championing the success of all members of its community regardless of one's identity.*

Our Vision: *The State System endeavors not only to be a national model but a global model for inclusive excellence.*

Our Values: *Accountability; Respect; Transparency; Excellence; and Involvement.*

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Key Definitions

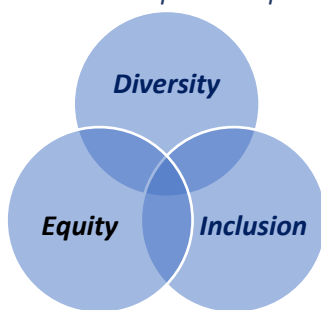
Diversity describes the myriad ways in which people differ including psychological, physical, and social differences that exist among all individuals, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, religion, economic class, geography, education, age, gender, sexual orientation, and learning styles. Diversity is about understanding these differences and moving from simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of our differences. Diversity transcends gender, race, and ethnicity. The level of State System diversity is manifested in the full spectrum of differences among faculty, students, staff, and experiences – within and outside the classroom including the curriculum.

Equity refers to the concept of fairness. Equity ensures that individuals are provided the resources they need to have access to the same opportunities. While equity represents impartiality, the distribution is made in such a way to even opportunities for all people. Conversely, equality indicates uniformity, where everything is equally distributed among people. Equity recognizes that people have different starting points in life and provides resources and opportunities and promotes policies and practices that result in equitable outcomes. PASSHE will be a more equitable system of higher education when one's group identity does not predict their success or failure. It means providing an education that meets admitted and enrolled students, along with faculty and staff, where they are by providing the support they need to succeed. PASSHE's emphasis is on equity, not equality, as part of systemwide efforts to close performance gaps measured through Board Approved Metrics.

Inclusion refers to actions that foster feelings of being respected, valued, and embraced in the curriculum, co-curriculum, and university community. It means authentically and intentionally bringing historically excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power. An inclusive State System is one where all admitted and enrolled students, along with faculty and staff, feel a sense of belonging. An inclusive State System promotes and affirms the transformative power of higher education including its ability to expand knowledge, challenge assumptions, improve lives, strengthen communities, and disrupt generational poverty.

Although the terms are different in their definition, they cannot be decoupled from a systemwide or institutional strategic approach to DEI (Illustration 2). Diversity cannot be sustained in the absence of equity and inclusion in its policies, standards, and practices. An inclusive State System is fundamental to sustainability as well as workforce and economic development. An inclusive State System develops diverse talent pools to meet the diverse needs of students, faculty, staff, and the Commonwealth in general. Our strength and excellence as a State System will be measured by our diversity, our equitable policies and practices, and our inclusive campus communities.

Illustration 2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Each coupled component thrives and is sustained by the others.



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STATUS UPDATES

“But freedom is not enough. You don’t wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: ‘Now you are free to go where you want, and do as you desire, and choose the ladders you please.’ You do not take a person, who for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, ‘You are free to compete with all the others’ and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.

Thus, it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates. And this is the next and more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity. We seek not just legal equity but human ability, not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result.”

~ Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965 Howard University Commencement Speech.

2020 - 2021

The Office of DEI came into being in 2020 following the death of George Floyd and during the Covid-19 pandemic, as a part of System Redesign that included the integration of six PASSHE universities into two: Pennsylvania Western University (formerly California University, Clarion University, and Edinboro University) and Commonwealth University (formerly Bloomsburg University, Lock Haven University, and Mansfield University). These local and national events will continue to impact the lives of PASSHE students, faculty, and staff, now and into the future.

State System and university leadership remained focused on our mission and established the Office of DEI in August 2020 to partner with campus leadership to build on their success and develop and operationalize an outcomes-oriented strategy that addresses persisting inequities across the State System, particularly those that impact student access, outcomes, employee recruitment, retrenchment, and progression. The work is informed by analysis of the problems and opportunities based on stakeholder input, and it considers both process and impact perspectives. Together, the Office of DEI’s strategy seeks to optimize the cultural competencies, policy/procedural landscape, and overall level of engagement required for the effective and respectful operation of more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campuses.

A critical and representative *DEI Board of Advisors (BOA)* was established in August 2020 to engage university and system leaders to develop, implement, and evaluate outcomes-based strategies that address inequities throughout the State System. The BOA provided invaluable insights and advice to the Office of DEI leadership through December 2022. They represent the epitome of selfless advising and a steadfast commitment to ensuring accessibility and championing the success of all members of its community regardless of one’s identity. We are grateful for their generosity and commitment to creating a strong State System DEI foundation to build upon. See page 14 for 2020-2022 *DEI Board of Advisors*.

2020-2021 Highlights

- Board of Governors chair Dr. Cynthia Shapira established the Board’s DEI Commission to recommend a framework for the Board’s ongoing role in fostering DEI at the System level as central to the mission of PASSHE and critically important to achieving its strategic goals.
- Chair Shapira established an ad hoc committee to explore the development and implementation of a policy review framework.

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- Board of Governors completed DEI Readiness Survey, which found 100% agreement that “DEI is important to the future success and sustainability of the State System and its universities.”
- Engaged in listening tours with a wide range of internal and external stakeholder groups including students, university presidents and their staffs, and community leaders.
- Produced baseline inventory of existing DEI-focused practices across State System universities
- Established *Council of Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs)* to function as a system leadership group (SLG)
- Convened first-time retreat of university Chief Diversity Officers to strengthen capacity, collaboration, and systemwide network to help achieve DEI goals
- Surveyed system-level DEI-related initiatives across university functional areas
- Established *Connectivity* bulletin as a strategic communications vehicle to elevate DEI work throughout the State System and beyond
- Established [DEI webpage](#) to introduce internal and external stakeholders to our work
- Progressed toward cultivating critical relationships with university leadership and other stakeholder groups
- Collaborated with Office of Advanced Data Analytics and university CDOs to develop and implement the [DEI Data Dashboard](#) to inform planning and decision making across the State System and track progress
- Issued guidance to university leadership for establishing Community Response Teams to address incidents of discrimination and bias.

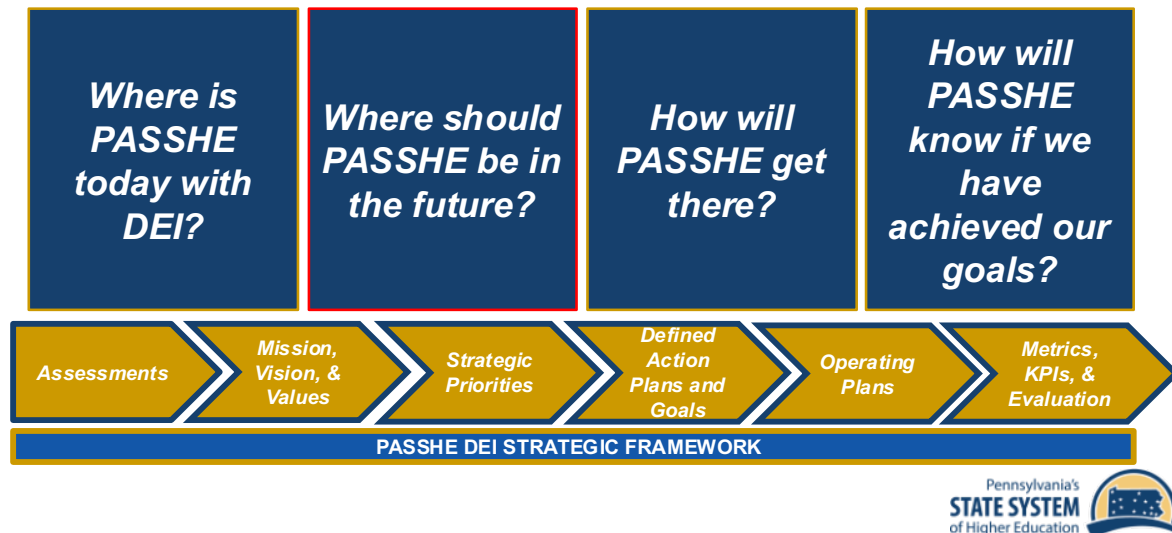
2021 - 2022

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion launched a comprehensive strategic planning process (Illustration 3) in the spring of 2021, that enabled this status update and three-year DEI Strategic Plan. Input from a wide range of internal and external stakeholder groups was and remains integral to elevating DEI and achieving our shared goals. With assistance from OGx Consulting, multiple measures were used to assess the State System’s current state, future state, and any gaps in between and included: (1) extensive internal research and document reviews, (2) administration of a [CUPA-HR DEI Maturing Index](#) to establish a baseline understanding of our DEI maturity level as a State System comprised of [then] 14 universities, (3) stakeholder interviews including Board members and trustees, and (4) a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) Analysis.

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Illustration 3. The Office of DEI Strategic Framework and Planning Process

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



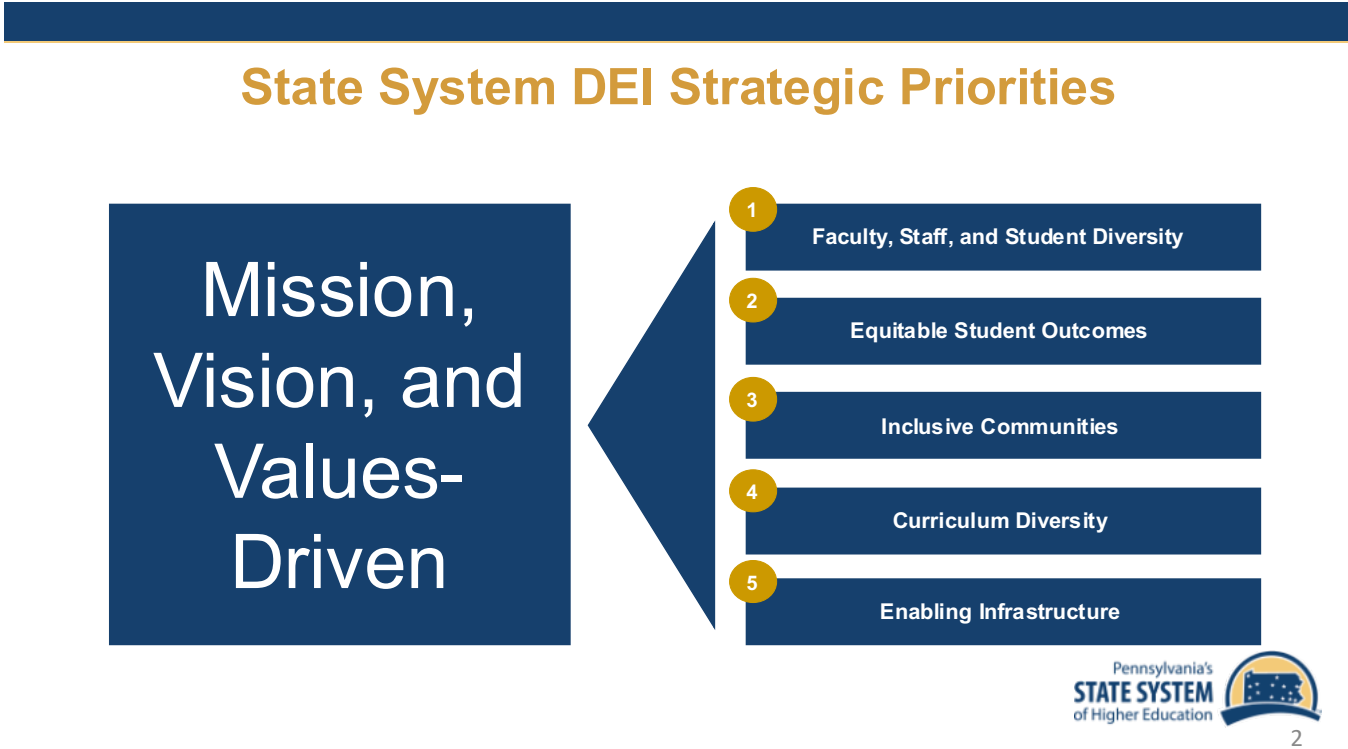
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State System Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Framework

The DEI Strategic Framework that resulted from this work was affirmed at the April 2021 Board of Governors meeting and serves as the foundational roadmap for the DEI Strategic Planning Process. It includes five systemwide strategic priorities (Illustration 4), representing a critical next step toward building a coordinated and comprehensive State System DEI operation to serve the needs and interests of students, faculty, and staff. It is inextricably linked to System Redesign and sustainability, combined with workforce, economic, and moral reasoning.

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Illustration 4. DEI Strategic Priorities



With the Board’s affirmation of the DEI Strategic Framework and its five strategic priorities, the State System’s Executive Leadership Group (ELG)—comprised of university presidents and the Chancellor—charged the various System Leadership Groups (SLGs) [Chief Academic Officers, Chief Student Affairs Officers, Chief Diversity Officers, Chief Information Officers, Faculty Council and others] with establishing foundational actions to support goal achievement. A *DEI Action Committee* was subsequently formed by the Office of DEI through consultation with the SLGs to respond to these charges. Coordinated by the Office of DEI, the DEI Action Committee convened at Shippensburg University October 3-5, 2021, to engage in discussion and create an action plan aligned to the DEI Strategic Framework and its five strategic priorities. A final report including recommendations was submitted to the ELG for consideration. Illustration 5 provides an outline of charges and progress updates as of November 2022.

Illustration 5. Strategic Priorities and ELG Charges to SLGs and Their Status

Strategic Priority	Charge	Status
1. Faculty, Staff, and Student Diversity		
Faculty Diversity	Develop and recommend a high-level outcome- and evidence-based strategy including disaggregated measurable goals, disaggregated performance indicators, and timelines to increase hiring, tenure, and promotion of diverse faculty; identify opportunities for coordinated action (systemness); present to ELG for consideration by January 2022.	

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<i>Staff Diversity</i>	<i>Develop and recommend a high-level outcome- and evidence-based strategy including disaggregated measurable goals, performance indicators, and timelines to increase recruitment, retention, and promotion of diverse staff; identify opportunities for coordinated action (systemness); present to ELG for consideration by January 2022.</i>	
<i>Student Diversity</i>	<i>Develop and recommend an outcomes- and evidence-based recruitment and retention strategy including disaggregated measurable goals, disaggregated performance indicators, and timelines to increase student diversity; identify opportunities for coordinated action (systemness); present to ELG for consideration by January 2022.</i>	
2.Improve Equity Outcomes for Students		
<i>Existing practices</i>	<i>Review existing practices to improve student outcomes that demonstrate evidence of impact and progress. The review should include student performance data and research literature to identify critical student loss points. Present findings to the ELG by July 2021.</i>	
<i>Improve student outcomes</i>	<i>Develop evidence-based strategy with disaggregated measurable goals, performance indicators, and timelines to improve student outcomes and close performance gaps between student populations including URM; incorporate Board Approved Metrics and other appropriate forms of measurement to set goals and evaluate progress. Present to ELG for consideration by January 2022. consideration by January 2022.</i>	
3. Inclusive Communities		
<i>Inventory current practices</i>	<i>Inventory and assess impact of practices currently being utilized to improve campus climate, sharing and potentially scaling best practices and identifying gaps that need to be filled, reporting by July 2021.</i>	
<i>Recommend Best Practices to Scale</i>	<i>Recommend for scaling those practices that are demonstrably effective, with a focus on education and awareness raising including advocacy, effective restorative justice-based approaches, and training around preventing and reacting to racial harassment, speech, and aggression. Present report to ELG by August 2021.</i>	
4. Curriculum Diversity		
<i>Inventory Curriculum Committees</i>	<i>Research and inventory university curriculum committees for existing curriculum diversity development practices, including program arrays, to inform strategy of curriculum committees.</i>	
<i>Develop tiered strategy to diversify the curriculum</i>	<i>Develop and recommend an outcomes- and evidence-based tiered (e.g., course, minor, major, general education, etc.) strategy to diversify the curriculum that will reflect the relationship between curriculum diversity and academic and inclusive excellence. Present to ELG by January 2022.</i>	
5. Enabling Infrastructure		
<i>Establishes a framework to review policies, standards, and practices through a DEI lens and develop systems of reporting by August 2021.</i>		
<i>Reviews Board policies and Procedures and Standards (existing and prospective) to ensure they support DEI strategy goals. To be completed with changes recommended to the Board by January 2022.</i>		

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<i>Establish plans and accountability systems to achieve System and university DEI goals.</i>	
<i>Organizes and supports the work of the Board so: 1) members are fully aware of DEI challenges and opportunities; 2) Board actions are fully vetted with respect of potential DEI impact – intended and unintended; and 3) Board has role advising systemwide work.</i>	
<i>Develops and implements enterprise management tools (strategy development and goal setting, budgeting, progress reporting and related individual and institutional accountabilities) so they reference and incentivize measurable progress toward achieving university and system DEI goals including: 1) demonstrate progress with diversity and equity goals by disaggregating Board affirmed student and employee metrics; 2) extending Board approved metrics to integrate measures of inclusion; and 3) maintaining measurement dashboards that give visibility into progress meeting DEI goals by end of 2021.</i>	
<i>Collaborates with ELG, SLG, and CDOs to ensure commonly required resources to support work in DEI are procured at the system level.</i>	

Legend

Fulfilled	Progressing	No evidence of Progress	Continuous Progress

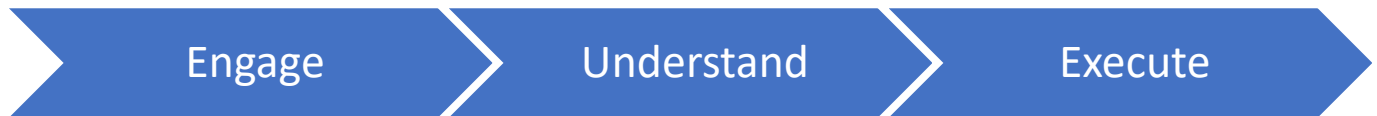
2021-2022 Highlights

- Implemented required DEI training for all faculty, staff, and students.
- Collaborated with university enrollment management (admissions) leadership to identify best practices and recommendations to increase student diversity; submitted summary report to ELG.
- PASSHE team participated in a National Association of System Heads (NASH) Equity Action Framework to promote explicit and sustained engagement with equity with other NASH members; essential equity practices explored: Public Commitment; Leadership; Data; Policy; Curriculum and Co-Curriculum; Student Success Interventions and Treatments; Faculty and Staff Hiring, Retention, Promotion and Rewards; Professional Development; and Community Engagement. Applying framework to ongoing internal assessments for continuous progress.
- Hosted systemwide DEI Summit to raise awareness and build capacity to achieve DEI goals, November 3-5, 2021, attended by more than 500 people; theme: *Onward and Upward: Advancing DEI Mindsets through Impactful Action*. Program sessions including keynote speakers that addressed strategic priorities.
- Onboarded Manager of Special Projects, Research, and Reporting to build capacity for collaboration; Assistant Vice-Chancellor for DEI and Title IX Coordinator to focus on student engagement and strategically integrate Title IX coordination at the system level into the Office of DEI; part-time Executive Director of the Frederick Douglass Institute (FDI) to leverage its capacity to help achieve specific DEI strategic goals – faculty diversity, curriculum diversity, and equitable student outcomes.
- Convened DEI Action Network for 2 ½ days to discuss charges and make recommendations. Submitted report to ELG for consideration.
- Staffed *Working Group to Increase Understanding of the 1st Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to Improve Campus Climates*. Drafted report of findings and recommendations. Collaborating with system leadership to implement recommendations.

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- Administered first-time systemwide campus climate survey to improve State System and university climates. Reported findings.
- Expanded DEI website to include priority-aligned resources for stakeholders.
- Established strategic relationships with local and state leaders to strengthen partnerships and increase visibility.

2022 – 2025 Plan



During 2021-2022, the Office of DEI identified its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (assessment), established its aspirations for the future (mission, vision, and values), created a path forward to achieve its goals (strategic priorities), developed an action plan including key performance indicators (accountability measures). We also made substantial progress toward goal achievement as highlighted above.

The following **2022-2025** plans and goals, service areas, and targeted stakeholders are informed by progress from previous years and in alignment with the State System/Chancellor's goals. It builds on the connectional intelligence cultivated over the years and emphasized when the Office of DEI opened in August 2020. Erica Dhawan (CxQ) describes *connectional intelligence* as "the ability to build and realize value from networks of relationships, to harness units of knowledge and reuse them to innovate, to convene communities, to marshal a variety of resources for breakthrough results."¹ Since its inception, the Office of DEI has sought to connect its evolving body of work with the initiatives and innovations occurring across the State System universities. It was and will continue to be central to our collective success.

Illustration 6 provides the listing of State System goals, DEI Strategic Priorities, Office of DEI service areas, and stakeholder groups. Illustration 7 presents the Office of DEI's goals in alignment with DEI Strategic Priorities, service areas, and primary stakeholder groups. It is important to note that students are the ultimate stakeholders and are at the center of this plan.

Illustration 6. Goals, Priorities, Service Areas, and Stakeholders

State System Goals	DEI Strategic Priorities	DEI Office Service Areas	Primary Stakeholder(s)
1. Expand Student Opportunities and Improve Student Outcomes	A. Faculty, Staff, and Student Diversity	I. Consult	a. Students
2. Expand Student Affordability and Grow	B. Equitable Student Outcomes	II. Research	b. Faculty
3. Operate Sustainably	C. Inclusive Communities	III. Report	c. Staff
4. Enhance Partnerships with the State		IV. Convene	d. ELG/SLG
		V. Catalyze	e. BOG/Trustees

¹ Dhawan, E. In Slim, P. (2013). *Body of Work: Finding the Thread that Ties Your Story Together*. N.Y. Portfolio Penguin, pp. 132-133.

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5. Invest in Our People and Infrastructure to Prepare for the Future	D. Curriculum Diversity E. Enabling Infrastructure	VI. Facilitate	f. State g. Other
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Illustration 7. Office of DEI Goals, Alignment with State System Goals, Service Areas, and Target Stakeholder(s)

Goals	Alignments
Refine framework for review of Board policies after pilot phase of selected reviews and recommendations. Complete review of all Board policies and make recommendations.	1, 5 B, C, D, E ii, iii, vi d, e
Develop and maintain Knowledge Management System to manage the work of the Office of DEI, build capacity and awareness, and communicate with stakeholder groups.	3, 5 A-E iii, v a - f
Plan and host systemwide DEI Summit annually in collaboration with university representatives. Align content with mission and goals. Leverage event to strengthen collaborations, build awareness, and support goal achievement.	1, 3, 5 A-E iii - vi a-f
Integrate Title IX operations into the Office of DEI including infrastructure to enable effective and efficient coordination of training, annual reporting, and convenings. Work closely with Office of Legal Affairs to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.	3, 5 B, C, E i-vi a-d
Facilitate work with State System and university leadership to support implementation of new System Campus Climate Policy including guidelines for a uniform student code of conduct. Incorporate Student Inclusion and Title IX internal audit findings.	1, 5 B, C, E i - vi a - d
Collaborate with university leadership to support use of campus climate survey findings to improve State System and campus environments. Support identification of evidence-based best practices, barriers, and policies that support campus climate improvement.	1, 5 A - E i - vi b - e
Collaborate with Chief Academic Officers and others to develop policy and practice environments that support evidence-based framework for curriculum diversity.	1, 5 A - E i - vi b, d, e
Leverage findings from Frederick Douglass Institute's SWOT analysis to build faculty diversity capacity. Scale search advocacy and other initiatives to strengthen infrastructure including training and resource development.	1, 2, 5 A - C, E i - vi c, d
Expand DEI Dashboard and Connectivity bulletin to measure progress and elevate DEI work. Expand distribution to include strategic external audiences.	1 - 5 A - E ii, iii, v a - f

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PASSHE is part of a national network of state systems of higher education, and we believe in the power of systems. The National Association of System Heads (NASH) defines *systemness* as the state, quality, or condition of a complex system, that is, of a set of interconnected elements that behave as, or appear to be, a whole exhibiting behavior distinct from the behavior of its parts. The term is new and has been applied to large social phenomena and organizations (healthcare and higher education) by advocates of higher degrees of system-like, coherent behavior for delivering value to stakeholders.

As the only public system of higher education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, PASSHE is well-positioned to execute on this plan in addition to being responsive to unforeseen challenges and opportunities. We will continue to leverage our growing connectional intelligence (CxQ) comprised of five fundamental capabilities, according to Erica Dhawan. This report concludes with an eye toward continued growth of our connectional intelligence through a deeper understanding of these capabilities that can inform our work going forward to build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive State System. [Five Fundamental Capabilities of CxQ](#) are:

1. *Contextualization*: the ability to gain a broader, peripheral perspective on a phenomenon and use it as a catalyst for action.
2. *Community*: the ability to bring together people to spark, create, and care together.
3. *Combination*: the ability to take different ideas, resources or products and combine them to create an entirely new concept or product, generate a new way of thinking, and develop surprising results.
4. *Combustion*: the ability to mobilize and ignite diverse networks and resources in pursuit of a goal.
5. *Courageous conversation*: the ability to begin charged and difficult discussions, keep them alive, amplify them, and raise the level of awareness around them for the greater good.

PASSHE's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion recognizes the complex challenges and opportunities involved with collaborating and bridging the space between 10 unique universities (as of July 1, 2022) to create and maintain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive system of higher education. However, we know that our positive impact on students, faculty, staff, and the Commonwealth will expand when we leverage our collective strengths, uplift one another, and enable the success of the entire PASSHE community. We also know that the work will not always be easy - change is hard, engaging in difficult conversations is hard. Nonetheless, the future and sustainability of PASSHE demands that we continue to work hard, do more, and do better – together.

We welcome feedback on our plan as we continue to apply principles of contextualization, community, combination, combustion, and courageous conversations to the work of creating a world-class, diverse, equitable, and inclusive state System.

Thank you to everyone who helps PASSHE better understand our individual and collective responsibility for ensuring accessibility and championing the success of all members of our community regardless of one's identity. We have made great advances, and we will continue to learn and grow - together!

In service and partnership,
Denise Pearson
December 2022

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Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team

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Joseph Croskey, Executive Director, FDI and Associate Professor, Pennsylvania West University

Emily Howe, Manager of Special Projects, Research, and Reporting

Denise Pearson, Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer

Maureen Uleau, Executive Assistant

Board of Advisors

Michael Berdar - Student, Penn West University, California (Student)

Nichole Book - CDO, Commonwealth University, Mansfield

John Burnette - Title IX Coordinator, Shippensburg University

Sheleta Camarda-Webb - Assistant Vice President, Penn West University, California

Zeb Davenport - Vice President, West Chester University

Kenneth Hall - Chief Diversity Officer, Commonwealth University, Lock Haven

Stephanie Jirard - Professor, Shippensburg University

Jasmine Kelliehan - Student, Millersville University

Deryl Johnson - Professor, Kutztown University

Rosa Lara - Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chancellor

Rogers Laugand - Assistant Vice President - DEI, PennWest University, Clarion

Tena Maurer – Associate Vice President, Human Resources, Commonwealth University, Bloomsburg

Kizzy Morris - Provost Cheyney University

William Parrish - Chief of Police, East Stroudsburg University

Larry Skinner - Board of Governors, Trustee, Cheyney University

Aaron Walton - President, Cheyney University

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