

The background of the cover is a photograph of the Central Connecticut State University clock tower and portico. The clock tower is a prominent brick structure with a white clock face and a small dome on top. The portico is a grand, white, classical-style structure with several columns. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

# **Progress Report on Transforming CCSU Culture**

**August 3, 2020**

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## Introduction

As the oldest public university in the state, Central Connecticut State University (CCSU, Central) strives to adapt, advance and grow to meet the needs of the communities it serves. CCSU firmly believes that education is the most effective vehicle for social mobility, and over the years the University has become an engine of significant economic and social development in Connecticut. In order to achieve its mission, CCSU has made a substantial effort to diversify and transform its culture to create a more inclusive campus, eliminate the racial divide, and foster a safe environment for everyone.

### *Where We Were*

Over the last decade, CCSU has been in the preliminary stages of addressing diversity and inclusion on campus. From the University's last administration to today, the demographics of the Central community have changed significantly. In 2010, minority student enrollment (which includes



Black/African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and Two or More Races) was at 21 percent. In 2019, minority student enrollment was at 34.8 percent, gaining 13.8 percent over the nine year period. Similarly, the total percentage of minority employees in 2010 was 19 percent and rose to 22.5 percent by 2019.

Even further back, the Faculty Senate Diversity Committee was formed in 2008, with a mission to “advise, recommend and promote policies, curricular enhancements, and campus events designed to foster respect for all people.” The Committee’s purpose was to support events and initiatives which:

- Promoted diverse student and faculty bodies.
- Promoted and advocated that the principles of diversity are incorporated into all hiring and promotion decisions.
- Promoted multicultural competence and the outcome of diversity education by developing the skills and understanding necessary for students to succeed and thrive in a diverse nation and an increasingly interconnected global society.

One of the Diversity Committee’s most valuable initiatives was the creation of a d-Designation for CCSU courses that incorporated issues and concerns of diversity, equity and social justice through course content, pedagogy, and climate. In the summer of 2008, Dr. Beth Merenstein,

CCSU Professor of Sociology, was awarded a grant to run a workshop where she trained five University professors and assisted them in redesigning their courses to include diversity. Dr. Merenstein took the lead role in this initiative, and several d-Designated courses were developed from 2008 to 2014, after which the initiative was tabled until its recent resurrection in 2019. While the d-Designation was never fully developed, the initial work that was done provided a solid foundation for integrating diversity into the curriculum at Central.

During the 2016-17 academic year, [Dr. Zulma R. Toro](#) became President of CCSU. Upon her arrival, it became clear that there was a need to further develop a sense of community and unity on Central's campus. There was also a sense of racial division across the institution. These issues led the President to pledge her commitment to enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at CCSU. To bridge the division and explore ways to prepare all students to work and live in a diverse and global world, the President implemented various initiatives in the beginning of her tenure. For example, she created the [Diversity Curriculum Development Grant](#), which led to providing funding for 23 diversity initiatives from 2018 to 2020. President Toro also championed the naming of the Social Sciences Hall after the African American educator, abolitionist and civil rights activist, Ebenezer D. Basset.



In an effort to create an inclusive campus culture, she allocated \$22,000 to the [Man Enough Support Initiative](#) – a personal development program created to support the success of Central Connecticut State University college men. In addition, she funded the expansion of the [Educational Opportunity Program \(EOP\)](#), a five-week summer program designed for low-income, first generation students who have the potential for college-level work, but do not meet CCSU's regular admissions standards. In the 2017-18 academic year, the incoming EOP class increased from 50 to 75 students, providing more students the opportunity to benefit from EOP experience.

In 2018, allegations of sexual misconduct by a faculty member, as well as claims of misconduct within the CCSU Police Department were reported. After that, several clear and purposeful steps were taken toward creating a safer and more inclusive environment, including the development of the [Task Force on Sexual Misconduct, Bullying and Campus Climate \(Task Force\)](#) and hiring Sibson Consulting to complete an analysis of the Department of Human Resources (HR) and the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI, formerly the Office of Diversity and Equity).

In April of 2019, racist graffiti was painted on the walls of the Student Center and Welte Garage. In addition to the racist graffiti on campus targeting African Americans, there were also reports

of other hateful acts, specifically directed at Central’s LGBTQ community. An anti-gay brochure promoting conversion therapy was strategically displayed in a classroom where LGBTQ fiction is



taught. In February 2019, a sign outside the LGBTQ Center was ripped down, and a student reported overhearing several people outside of the Center using gay slurs. These cases were actively investigated by CCSU Police. In response, CCSU PRIDE and the Black Student Union (BSU) held a Blackout rally on April 11 to protest racism and homophobia, and hundreds of students attended the event in a show of unity. After the event, the President met with representatives

from PRIDE and the BSU commending them for a job well done. In her [April 15, 2019 letter](#) to the CCSU community, the President reaffirmed CCSU’s zero tolerance policy for acts of bias and hatred and asked everyone to give their “voice to diversity.”

Recent racial incidences occurring in the nation have led to a great deal of social unrest and have once again brought the need for substantial cultural change to the forefront. On May 25, 2020, the murder of an African American man, George Floyd, by a white police officer in Minneapolis ignited ongoing protests in which millions of Americans across racial, ethnic, socio-economic, educational, regional, gender, generational, and state boundaries demonstrated and demanded changes to the policing and criminal justice systems. In response to these events, President Toro sent out a communication to the Central campus acknowledging the anger, frustration and pain millions of Americans are feeling about the racial, political, and economic climate, stating that this event was *“an undeniable example of the racism and police brutality that continues to plague our nation.”* To further address the outrage felt by CCSU students, President Toro is in the preliminary stages of creating a John Lewis Civil Rights Leadership Program, in which students will honor the work of the public servant and civil-rights leader by addressing important issues related to racism and social justice.

The President recently reaffirmed her commitment to ensuring that Central is safe and inclusive for all, and assured the campus community that bigotry, racism, and discrimination have “no safe haven” at CCSU. She stressed that Central’s executive leadership take a strong lead-by-example approach to influence the campus community and emphasized the need for a significant collaboration of efforts toward this important transformation. While there is work to be done, Central is committed to making progress and becoming an agent of change within the community and the nation.

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*The following pages outline the recent work that has been done to transform CCSU’s culture, as well as future plans to create a diverse, inclusive and safe environment for everyone.*

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## Changing the Culture – What We Have Done

CCSU has already begun the journey toward improving its campus climate and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all. Since President Toro’s arrival, the University has increased its commitment to diversifying the campus and enhancing the connection and experiences of students, faculty and staff. Reinforcing this overarching message throughout her tenure, President Toro has emphasized the importance of transforming CCSU’s culture at every level of the institution. As a result, several initiatives have been implemented, changes have been enacted, and efforts have been shifted toward a brighter future for the entire Central family.



### *Action Plan to Change CCSU Campus Culture*

In 2018, the University assembled the [Task Force on Sexual Misconduct, Bullying and Campus Climate \(Task Force\)](#). The interdisciplinary group reviewed University policies and processes to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, faculty and staff. After eight months of work, the Task Force’s [report](#) was finalized and submitted to President Toro on January 14, 2019. Recommendations from the Task Force included reengineering the Department of Human Resources (HR) and the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI, formerly the Office of Diversity and Equity), improving tracking and documentation of training activities and compliance with policies, regularly administering a campus climate survey, and adopting a new model for investigations of sexual misconduct.

Upon receiving the Task Force’s report, President Toro charged her Executive Committee with the creation of an action plan. With the help of AAUP and SUOAF leadership, the Committee drafted and refined the [Action Plan to Change CCSU Campus Culture](#), which was ultimately finalized in August 2019. The document includes a detailed, 15-point plan outlining the actions

necessary to ensure the achievement of a safe and inclusive campus environment for all students and employees. It outlines the objectives and establishes a timeline for each action to be completed, and it identifies the Executive Committee member responsible for each element of the plan. The plan also provides the foundation for Goal Three in the University's new strategic plan.

Since then, Central has begun implementation of this robust plan (see [progress report](#)), including examining policies and processes related to bullying and hazing, exploring a new investigator model for sexual misconduct claims, and partnering with faculty and union leaders to achieve 100 percent employee participation in Title IX training.

### *Sibson Consulting Analysis*

As part of the action plan, CCSU hired Sibson Consulting to reengineer the Office of Equity and Inclusion and HR. Per Sibson's report, OEI's name was changed from the Office of Diversity and Equity to the Office of Equity and Inclusion, and its mission was expanded beyond compliance



to leadership in the cultural transformation of the University. The structure and staffing model for the department was also revised, elevating the position of Chief Diversity Officer to a Vice President level with direct report to the President. Dr. Nancy (Rusty) Barceló, a nationally recognized expert in diversity and equity, is now the Interim Vice President for Equity and Inclusion. In

addition, a Senior Equity and Inclusion Officer and two Equity and Inclusion Associates were hired.

Sibson's analysis of Central's HR department included reviewing the organizational structure, policies, procedures, tools and technologies and staffing levels. Consultants found that the department did not have the staff or full range of capabilities necessary to support broader strategic workforce needs. They suggested providing professional development opportunities to HR staff and redefine select positions to support the transformation and improve campus culture. *While transformation of the department is ongoing, it is clear that reengineering the Office of Human Resources will be a multi-year endeavor.*

In addition to OEI and HR, Sibson's analysis was then expanded to include the Ombudsperson's (OMB) office. Seeing a need for restructuring, the consultants recommended a transition to an in-house conflict resolution function. As a result, President Toro, as well as her Executive Committee and the Integrated Planning Council (IPC) worked on the development of a new Ombudsperson job description. To avoid bias and conflict, the Ombudsperson will have no teaching or administrative responsibilities and will report directly to the President.

Development of this position and the functions of the OMB office is ongoing.

### *Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI)*

Following Sibson’s analysis and recommendations, the OEI underwent significant restructuring. Its mission was expanded to include spearheading a campus-wide cultural transformation, and with that charge there was a need for strong leadership. As a result, President Toro appointed Dr. Barceló as the Interim Vice President for Equity and Inclusion. After Dr. Barceló’s arrival, OEI shifted its focus toward:

- enhanced investigations of sexual misconduct complaints;
- increased responsiveness to underrepresented populations; and
- increased collaboration between OEI, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs.

Since the redesign of OEI, several changes have been implemented that have already proven beneficial to the University. The office was moved to a new, more welcoming space better suited for confidential conversations. Staffing levels in OEI have more than doubled, moving from two full-time and four part-time employees in fall 2018 to six full-time and two part-time employees in spring 2020. The budget for the office has also been expanded.

Increased personnel allowed CCSU to move from a single-investigator model with support from outside investigators, to a two-investigator model that aligns with best practices and uses no outside investigators. In collaboration with President Toro, Dr. Barceló also worked to achieve 100 percent participation of the management/confidential team, Campus Police, directors, and department chairs in at least one diversity, equity, and inclusion training per year.



*In collaboration with President Toro, Dr. Barceló also worked to achieve 100 percent participation of the management/confidential team, Campus Police, directors, and department chairs in at least one diversity, equity, and inclusion training per year.*

Once staffing in the office was enhanced, a great deal of emphasis was placed on understanding and improving the campus culture. One of President Toro’s first charges to the Interim Vice President included the creation of the President’s Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion ([Commission](#)). Creation of the Commission is one of the goals in the [Action Plan to Change CCSU Campus Culture](#) and it includes nearly 45 “Diversity Liaisons” representing students, faculty, staff, and administration. The liaisons were nominated by schools, departments, affinity groups, the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association. The goal of the Commission is to lead the transformation of CCSU’s campus climate, providing various perspectives that represent many facets of Central’s campus community. This group, as well as OEI, would also play a role in the development and implementation of a diversity and inclusion plan for CCSU.

OEI has begun to pave the way for new projects, workshops and trainings related to diversity and inclusion. Collaborating with the President, the Interim Vice President developed several programmatic initiatives to help increase awareness of racial, cultural and social issues. Some of the initiatives included:

- Book Discussion with the Executive Committee – *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*
- Workshops
  - Beyond Hate: A Call for Campus Unity
  - Use of Less Force and Other Strategies as We Transform the Culture of CCSU
- Culture Over Coffee I and II
- A Conversation on Race with the Executive Committee based on an interview with Dr. Sylvia Hurtado
- Panel Discussion: Understanding Unconscious Bias: We All Have Them
- Work Session with Executive Committee – A Call to Action: CCSU Plan to Eliminate the Racial Divide and Racism
- Webinar: [Racial Injustice: Speaking Your Truth](#)

As part of its charge, OEI has increased efforts to ensure appropriate training and compliance takes place. Employee Diversity & Title IX trainings were administered campus-wide. In addition, OEI worked to develop specialized training plans for units such as Athletics, Residence Life and the Police Department. Some of these trainings include:

- **ATHLETICS**
  - Bystander Intervention and Intimate Partner Violence training
  - Title IX training
  - Student athlete diversity and inclusion training
- **RESIDENCE LIFE**
  - Title IX training for Residence Life staff, including Resident Directors and Resident Assistants
- **CCSU POLICE DEPARTMENT**
  - Unconscious Bias and the Impacts of Trauma
  - Cultural Awareness Training
  - GOAL New England
  - Police Legitimacy and Implicit Bias



In addition, below is a summary of the programming available through the Office of Victim Advocacy and the Women’s Center, which are overseen by OEI:

**Office of Victim Advocacy Programming**

- 2019 Fall Semester: [Red Flag Campaign](#) – The Red Flag Campaign is a campaign aimed at educating the campus population about the “red flags” or warning signs of an abusive relationship. The campaign includes a visual element with red flags placed around campus along with a poster campaign, classroom presentations, information tables, and campus events.
- 2020 Spring Semester: [Stand Up CCSU](#) – Stand Up CCSU is a student-led violence prevention campaign that educates the campus about bystander intervention and taking a stand against interpersonal violence. The campaign includes a poster campaign, information tables, campus events, and classroom presentations.



**Women’s Center Programming**

- Support Groups: The Women’s Center holds a number of support groups for students during the semester. For the end of the Spring 2020 semester, support groups were held virtually via WebEx. Support groups include:
  - United Sisters - Student Parent Support Group
  - Throwback Thursday - A weekly video post on social media with CCSU alumnae sharing information about their career since leaving CCSU.
  - Woman Crush Wednesday - Weekly posts on social media about a woman they admire.



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***Dr. Barceló and OEI staff are working to refine campus-wide and specific training to include many more offerings in the future.***

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## Strategic Plan 2030

In early 2019, CCSU started a year-long process to develop its new strategic plan. The process was led and facilitated by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC), chaired by President Toro and composed of representatives from all campus constituencies, including the



president of the Faculty Senate. CCSU faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community and business leaders were all invited to help develop a new path forward for the University by contributing to the planning process. What resulted was a plan with a renewed mission, a new vision and core values, and five bold goals. [Strategic Plan 2030: Changing Lives, Building Communities; Central to Connecticut](#) (SP2030) builds upon a foundation of high impact practices and community engagement to educate career-ready graduates who are well-informed, civic-minded citizens and prepared to contribute to the needs of an increasingly diverse society. The plan also presents a new vision for advancing social mobility while driving economic, cultural, and intellectual vitality

within the communities CCSU serves.

Throughout the planning process, improving the campus culture was a prevalent theme. For example, the final plan includes nine Core Values that distinguish CCSU from other institutions. Of these principal values, three of them explicitly speak to equity, social responsibility, and justice:

- **ACCOUNTABILITY.** We commit to holding ourselves and each other Accountable to the highest ethical standards and to fostering a culture of civility, collegiality, and justice.
- **EQUITY.** We commit to embrace and strengthen Diversity and Inclusion, providing an enriching and equitable learning environment where every individual is valued, and promoting diversity of people and ideas.
- **RESPONSIBILITY.** We commit to Social Responsibility to promote the public good and contribute to global understanding.

In the early stages of development, President Toro asked the SPSC to consider a goal related to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all. This recommendation resulted in *Goal Three: Foster an Inclusive and Safe Campus Culture that Values and Encourages Individuals to Participate in a Free and Respectful Exchange of Ideas*. This goal focuses on accountability, diversity, equity, inclusion and safety, stating: “[CCSU] is dedicated to the development and preservation of an equitable, inclusive, safe, responsible, accessible, and accountable campus environment, ensuring that all can achieve their full potential as active citizens and lifelong learners.” CCSU pledges to play a lead role in equity and social justice and become a “national model for community built on mutual respect, compassion, and support.” In addition, CCSU commits to ensuring that every member feels safe and secure, and to communicating a policy of “zero tolerance” for acts of violence, bias, and discrimination.

### The Objectives of SP2030 Goal Three are:

1. Welcome and engage a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff
2. Integrate diversity into the curriculum, pedagogical methods, professional development, and co-curricular activities that contribute to cultural competency
3. Use data to inform and develop accountability measures in support of a diverse 21st-century university
4. Identify best practices that align with federal and state policies to increase safety both on and around campus
5. Enhance recognition of faculty and staff for their value and service to the institution

Similarly, *Goal Two: Increasing Access to Higher Education and Ensuring Student Success* also plays a role in improving the campus climate. This goal focuses on the creation of an inclusive and “student-ready” institution that meets 21st-century students where they are and eliminates obstacles and

achievement barriers. While much of the Goal’s objectives focused on increasing support services, flexible course options, and co-curricular opportunities, emphasis is also placed on developing greater connection with the underrepresented populations of Connecticut. Central commits to expand outreach to historically marginalized socioeconomic



groups to provide equal opportunity for a quality and affordable education. This commitment includes developing and expanding targeted recruitment activities toward growing populations (Hispanic, African American, and other underrepresented populations), as well as becoming a

Hispanic Serving Institution as defined by the U. S. Department of Education (20 U.S. Code §1101a).

Implementation of the SP2030 has already begun. An [Action Plan](#) has been developed to guide strategic planning efforts, and a robust list of Key Activities identified, developed and prioritized. Thus far, twelve of the Key Activities for Goal Three have either been initiated or completed, and nearly 40 total activities have been initiated to support the plan. Activities will be evaluated on a three-year rolling planning horizon; as conditions change, activities may be substituted or augmented.

### *Climate Surveys*

As part of the SP2030 and the Action Plan to change CCSU Campus Culture, the University sought to administer a set of nationally recognized campus climate surveys for students, faculty and staff. President Toro, the Interim Vice President of Equity and Inclusion and the Associate Vice President for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness worked to develop a call for proposals to conduct a campus study that would include pre-preparation and post analysis and development. Proposals were collected and evaluated by a team of selected CCSU staff. Ultimately, UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) was chosen.



In Fall 2019, a suite of three campus climate surveys from the HERI were selected for administration in Spring 2020. The surveys were administered simultaneously to students, faculty and staff from February through mid-March. Initially, the surveys were scheduled to remain open until the end of April but had to be closed early due to the coronavirus. Results from the survey are expected in early fall. At that point, the Interim Vice President of Equity and Inclusion and the Associate Vice President for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness will work with the Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to analyze the survey results and develop recommendations. Tentatively, these surveys are scheduled to be administered annually for the first two to three years and then a rotation schedule will be implemented.

### *Title IX Training Redesign*

The Office of Equity & Inclusion is responsible for providing state-mandated training on diversity, sexual harassment prevention, and Title IX. While CCSU has been compliant with federal and state Title IX policies that require the institution to provide training, it has been less successful with its own policy of requiring employees and students to participate in training each year. During the 2019-2020 academic year, Title IX was redesigned in order to cover a broader scope and ensure 100 percent employee and student compliance. Given the recent U.S. Department of Education changes regarding Title IX, Sexual Assault and Interpersonal Violence on college campuses, OEI is offering several training sessions on the topics. It is critical that all students, employees, including managers, understand both the full range of behaviors that define sexual harassment, sexual assault and interpersonal violence and the pro-active steps they can take to prevent it. Currently all employees at the university are expected to take either the online or in person training regarding sexual assault and interpersonal violence prevention on an annual basis. Additionally, one of the key metrics to be measured in Goal Three of the SP2030 is the number and percent of employees and students who have received Title IX and diversity training.



All new CCSU employees must complete a three-hour initial Title IX Training, which includes Sexual Harassment Prevention and Sexual Assault, Interpersonal Violence and Stalking Awareness. In this three-hour program, new employees learn:

- *Information about the Office of Equity & Inclusion and Office of Victim Advocacy*
- *Definition of discrimination and identification of protected classes*
- *History of Title IX and its application in higher education*
- *Definitions and examples of sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, and stalking*
- *Overview of CCSU sexual misconduct policy, including responsible employee policy and policy on mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse*
- *Scenarios for employees to practice responding to a disclosure of sexual misconduct*
- *Information about on- and off-campus resources*

Once an employee completes the initial three-hour Title IX training, there is an Annual Title IX Refresher training course requirement. Title IX Refresher sessions are 45 minutes in length and can be completed either by in-person sessions or via an online module. The primary purpose of the refresher is to review the various laws, policies and procedures related to sexual violence, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence and stalking. There are annual updates, changes and announcements from the various governmental agencies. The refresher provides updates on the Board of Regents (BOR) policies and procedures as well as best practices for college

campuses that often come from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights. These sessions provide real life examples and allow participants to work through case examples and scenarios.

Employees may also complete their Title IX Training through an online program called “Not Anymore.” Not Anymore is managed by the company Vector Solutions and is used across the CCSU system. The Not Anymore program uses video modules, text, and quizzes to assess knowledge. The program includes:

- Definitions and laws related to sexual misconduct
- Overview of sex discrimination and prevalence
- Prevention and bystander intervention
- Trauma-informed response to disclosures
- Campus-specific reporting requirements and resources



*In 2019-20, **43%** of employees have complied with Title IX training, an increase of **22%**.*

In 2019-20, forty-three percent of employees have complied with Title IX training, an increase of 22 percent, over 2018-19 and a 95 percent increase in number of people trained. Furthermore, Central achieved 100 percent Title IX training compliance for athletics and management/confidential personnel. Upon completion of the new training, participants gave an overall rating of 4.89 on a scale 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest.

In 2019-20, new students received Title IX training during orientation, while returning students completed the online module. Unfortunately, only 36 percent of students successfully completed their training. This represents a ten percent decrease from the prior year where all the training was completed online.

### *Diversity and Inclusion Plan*

When the Interim Vice President of Equity and Inclusion was appointed, she was charged by the



President with developing a comprehensive diversity and inclusion plan for the University. This plan, which is essentially an extension of the SP2030, will include programmatic initiatives and detailed diversity training and professional development plans. *The plan will also focus on diversity curriculum development, enhanced*

*affirmative action training for searches, student engagement, data analysis and accountability measures within the context of collaboration and coordination.* The President, OEI, Executive Committee members and individuals across Central’s campus will essentially take part in the implementation of these important cultural initiatives. Since Dr. Barceló’s arrival in the summer of 2019, she and President Toro have combined efforts to develop initiatives that would eliminate the racial and social divide at CCSU and create a campus that is tolerant, accepting and safe.

***While the plan is still being developed, several steps have been taken to move the University forward and bring awareness to these important issues:***

- The President’s Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion has played an integral role in improving the University’s climate. At its inception, a special meeting of the Commission was called to explore a variety of efforts to provide students, faculty and staff with a safe space to share their perspectives, stories, experiences and recommendations. The Commission discussed possible training/professional development webinars designed to bring different groups together to explore the intersections and parallels of racism and other forms of oppression. The framing of the discussion was to promote a respectful, accessible, and inclusive community for all CCSU students, faculty, and staff.
- In the 2019-2020 academic year, President Toro once again funded the Diversity Curriculum Development Grant. Nine proposals were submitted by faculty; three of these were fully funded and six received partial funding.
- The President, Executive Committee, and student and faculty leadership worked to advance the idea of including diversity, equity, and inclusion as a curriculum requirement.
- President Toro increased the funding to the LGBT and Women’s Centers. She also partnered with the Chief Operations Officer and Chief Information Officer to renovate the space occupied by the Center for Africana Studies. Forty thousand dollars was allocated to the Center for Africana Studies renovation in 2019.
- The Office of Student Affairs has undergone several changes, including hiring a new Vice President. After the arrival of Dr. Michael Jasek in June 2019, steps were taken to develop a robust, multi-tiered training program for new and returning students. In addition, recommendations from the report of Counseling & Student Development were



implemented, including dedicating an on-call counselor to answer after hours student phone calls. The CCSU Police Department can also access the on-call counselor. Additional counselors were also added to the budget requests for the 2021 fiscal year.

- Several steps were taken to strengthen the CCSU Police Department. First, the federal court lawsuit by Jane Doe was settled, and the President participated in the arbitration hearing of the police officer that was dismissed. The University's decision was upheld by the arbiter. Next, the CCSU police force was increased to approximately 30 people, 23 of which are sworn police officers. The CCSU Police Department is a fully sworn nationally accredited police agency, and Police Officers are subject to the stringent requirements imposed upon all police officers in Connecticut. In addition to state requirements, Chief Gregory Sneed and OEI have worked to improve and expand diversity training programs for the department. Officers now receive training on topics of Unconscious Bias and the Impacts of Trauma, as well as Police Legitimacy and Implicit Bias, and the force is planning to further expand its training throughout the next several years.

Under the direction of the President and Interim Vice President of Equity and Inclusion, OEI has made significant progress in the development of the diversity and inclusion plan. Once the plan is finalized, action items will be shared with the CCSU community in order to emphasize Central's commitment to creating a better campus environment for everyone.



## The Future of CCSU – A Path Forward

Due to the work of the President, executive leadership, various committees and other dedicated faculty and staff, the past few years have been a transition period for CCSU. Emphasis has been placed on improving Central’s campus culture, and racial and social issues have become part of the daily dialogue. While this is encouraging, the nation’s current social climate indicates a need to take bold and purposeful action to eliminate the racial divide and foster a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone. In an increasingly diverse 21<sup>st</sup> century world, cultural transformation is integral to the achievement of the University’s mission. As such, every member of the CCSU community must be involved in this change. Central must be proactive in its approach and create goals and objectives that are sustainable in nature, while remaining committed to providing the quality, affordable education that created the public, comprehensive university that CCSU is today.

*The nation’s current social climate indicates a need to take bold and purposeful action to eliminate the racial divide and foster a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone.*

***The University has developed a list of actions to complete in the coming academic year and beyond. Increasing its efforts, CCSU will become an institution where all feel accepted, supported and part of the Central family.***

### ***Strategic Plan 2030***

Transforming Central’s campus culture is a prevalent theme of the new strategic plan. The SP2030 [Action Plan](#) includes a robust list of Key Activities that has been developed and prioritized – each in support of a specific strategy. Start dates for each of the activities have been prioritized and staggered, and evaluation will occur on a three-year rolling planning horizon; as conditions change, activities may be substituted or augmented to ensure goals are met.

Implementation of the SP2030 has already begun, and there are several key activities that are either in progress or on track to begin within the next year. In preparation for Fiscal Year 2021 division and department leaders were asked to align their budget request(s) with the five goals outlined in the SP2030. As such, the objectives and activities in this plan coincide with many of the other diversity and inclusion efforts described within this document.

As part of Goal Three, several key activities regarding diversity and inclusion have been prioritized:

- ***Welcome and engage a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff.***
  - Implement at least three initiatives recommended by the President’s Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
  - Collect the diversity and inclusion plan from every department and unit and implement an accountability system.
  - Support OEI’s continuation of its Culture Over Coffee series.
  - Strengthen and encourage CCSU’s existing academic cultural centers and affinity groups.
  - Hire an Ombudsperson, transitioning to an in-house conflict resolution function.
  - Continue to foster a culture of respect, collegiality, and teamwork within the Central family.
  
- ***Work with faculty and students to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into the curriculum.***
  - Continue to fund the Diversity Curriculum Development Grant Program.
  - Increase professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on diversity and inclusion.
  - Explore the possibility of a learning outcome associated with the general education program for diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.
  
- ***Use data to inform our decisions.***
  - Review and analyze the results from the climate surveys administered during spring 2020.
  - Create and start implementation of an action plan based on the results from the previous bullet point.
  - Implement a tracking mechanism to measure progress and guide future planning.

Within Goal Three, there are also two Objectives and three strategies that specifically relate to Title IX compliance. The key activities are:

- Identify opportunities to incorporate Title IX and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Inventory all state and federal compliance policies relating to Title IX, equal employment, ADA, equity and discrimination.
- Professionalize the CCSU Police and incorporate training on diversity, cultural competency, mental health, and Title IX.

In addition, SP2030 Goal Three includes several key activities pertaining to ensuring the safety of students, faculty and staff on campus.

- Continue to work with local and state authorities to ensure compliance with the most up-to-date campus safety measures and procedures including completion of required safety training and emergency drills.
- Perform annual shelter-in-place drills, emergency drills and fire drills on campus.
- Maintain Emergency Management Response Program that complies with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- Develop and present trainings and seminars on how to manage cyber bullying and keeping personal information safe.
- Maintain CCSU Police Department accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.
- Foster trust between CCSU Police officers and the campus community by strengthening community policing efforts.
- Implement best practices to address safety both on and around campus.
- Partner with the CCSU leadership team and System Office to implement the new Title IX regulations.
- Strengthen CCSU Police Department training program to include diversity, cultural competency, mental health, and the new Title IX regulations.
- Support the next phase of the CCSU Police Department accreditation process.

### *Office of Equity and Inclusion*

While the Office of Equity and Inclusion has already made significant progress, their work has only just begun. OEI's mission is to build an inclusive community where students, staff, and faculty can participate in a free and respectful exchange of ideas without fear. By establishing this community of understanding and respect, CCSU will ultimately prepare students to serve in an increasingly diverse world.

Playing a lead role in fostering a safer, more inclusive and diverse campus, OEI must create innovative and sustainable diversity initiatives that will reach students, faculty and staff. The Interim Vice President of Equity and Inclusion has been charged by the President with a list of



important tasks to complete in order to move the University forward and create a solid foundation for the institution’s cultural transformation. The following is a list of the top goals and initiatives that OEI has committed to complete:

- Finalize the University diversity and inclusion plan.
- Continue to improve and implement campus-wide training, as well as specialized training for such units as the Police Department, Athletics and Residence Life.
- Continue to offer required Training on Title IX & Sexual Misconduct, and work to achieve 100 percent participation.
- Develop a series of Webinars for students, faculty and staff that will address racism and all forms of oppression, ranging from personal interactions to diversifying the curriculum, as well as CCSU’s connection to the broader community.
- Build and leverage existing partnerships with community leaders to enhance the facilitation and implementation of diversity initiatives on campus.
- Support grants that will promote diversity leadership opportunities.
- Reestablish the University Hour, hosting events for people from diverse backgrounds to get to know each other/hosting discussions on common reading materials.
- Continue the Culture Over Coffee series.
- Work in collaboration with departments to ensure a more welcoming and diverse campus.

### *President’s Commission on Equity, Inclusion & Diversity*

Like OEI, the Commission has already begun the process of developing goals and initiatives that will help to move the University forward. The following are some of the priorities for which the Commission will focus its efforts in the coming year:

- Bimonthly Webinars highlighting special events such as Pride Month for the Month of June and Black History Month during the month of February.
- Collaboration with OEI on panel discussions and lecture series related to diversity, unconscious bias, global impact, identity development, and other topics.
- Trainings and professional development opportunities addressing sexual harassment, discrimination, and diversity topics in general.
- Collaboration with departments and other campus units to foster the exchange of ideas and the development of programmatic initiatives.
- Review of University policies and practices related to diversity, equity and inclusion.



- Monitor the progress of SP2030 Goal Three.
- Host an annual diversity symposium on the status of diversity at CCSU.
- Development and review of policies for displaying artwork and other images or signage across campus.
- Creation of professional development opportunities that contribute to a greater understanding of social inequality and intergroup relations.
- Conversations with departments regarding incorporating diverse viewpoints into the curriculum.
- Assistance with the development of scenario-based training for faculty and staff.

### *Professional Development and Recognition*

CCSU recognizes that cultural transformation is only possible when students, faculty and staff are provided the tools and knowledge necessary to incite change. Moving forward, emphasis has been placed on the development and successful implementation of professional development programs, both campus-wide and unit-specific. *Frequent training and professional development will ensure CCSU's success in providing quality education and preparing students to live in an increasingly diverse world.*

Encouraging the campus community through recognition of good work and implementation of programmatic initiatives is another important step in the process. Recognizing positive changes in the CCSU culture will ultimately help the institution to become proactive in the creation of a safer and more inclusive campus.

Central's plans for professional development and recognition are as follows:

- **OEI and the President's Commission on Equity, Inclusion and Diversity**
  - Continue to improve and implement campus-wide and specialized training on diversity and inclusion, as well as on Title IX and sexual misconduct.
  - Develop scenario-based professional development for faculty/staff, and train the faculty to facilitate conversations about equity, inclusion and diversity among peers and in the classroom.
    - Some possible training topics include:
      - History of Social Movements
      - Nonviolent Protest – how to protest peacefully and respond to violence with nonviolence; de-escalation training
      - Foundation discussion: Evolution of a Racial Paradigm
      - Global Impact
      - Equity vs. Equality
      - Student Workshops: Preparing Students to Work in a Diverse World

- Community Building: Intersections of Local Communities and the University
- Identity Development: Mixed Races
- Power of Language: What is meant by Diversity, Equity, Inequality
- Series of Racism Workshops focusing on different affinity groups
- Series of Racism Workshops focusing on faculty and staff: Doing Personal Work
- Unlearning Bias in Fields of Study/Academia
- Practical skills for unlearning bias
- Unconscious bias and its impact on specific identities
- Unconscious bias in different settings – i.e., workplace and classroom
- How culture affects people’s behavior to form bias
- **Academic Affairs**
  - Enhance recognition of faculty and staff for their value and service to the institution.
  - Expand how service is valued in the evaluation and promotion guidelines to incorporate activities such as community engagement, advising, and committee assignments.
  - Establish criteria to recognize faculty who adopt innovative practices that:
    - Increase access to higher education
    - Support student success
    - Enhance advising
    - Promote and foster community engagement
  - Explore innovative ways to support, recognize and compensate part-time faculty for their contributions to the advancement of the University.
  - Develop a collaboration among AAUP, Faculty Senate, SUOAF, and administration to develop guidelines on valuing the service component of employee performance review and/or promotion.
- **Student Affairs**
  - Continue to incorporate educational material on Title IX, bullying, and civility into student programming.
  - Increase student participation in Title IX and sexual misconduct training.
  - Collaborate with OEI to develop new training material.
- **Police Department**
  - Incorporate new defensive training programs for officers to improve their self-control, discipline, and mindfulness to safely resolve confrontational situations.
  - Professionalize the CCSU Police and incorporate training on diversity, cultural competency, mental health, and Title IX.

## *Diversifying the Campus Community*

Diversifying Central's students, faculty and staff is a top priority for the University moving forward. The SP2030 includes several key activities related to expanding the campus community, and CCSU is committed to becoming an inclusive campus at all levels of the institution.

The following are some of the goals for diversifying CCSU's students, faculty and staff:

### STUDENTS

- Continue to explore programmatic initiatives that will create access to quality and affordable education.
- Invest in student support and wellness services such as advising, tutoring, mentoring, and counseling.
- Identify and create opportunities to celebrate the diverse populations of students.
- Develop stronger partnerships with international institutions by creating innovative 2 + 2 undergraduate programs and graduate programs.
- Develop dual enrollment programs with high schools in surrounding communities.
- Develop and expand targeted recruitment activities toward growing populations, such as Hispanic, African American, and other underrepresented populations, first-generation students, and international students.
- Define the mission of CCSU's cultural centers as they relate to student success.
- Develop an annual symposium focusing on the status of equity and inclusion at CCSU.
- Expand the Summer Bridges Program and EOP program.
- Expand activities for community engagement and civic responsibility.
- Diversify the curriculum and prepare faculty to teach a diverse student population.



### FACULTY

- Develop and implement a Target of Opportunity Program.
- Establish partnerships with institutions to develop a diverse pool of faculty candidates.
- Create an Endowed Professorship for the study of social justice, Civil Rights, and equity.
- Develop school/college specific outreach and retention programs that focus on diverse faculty.
- Enhance the efforts of departments, schools and colleges, encouraging the development of specific actions to address their diversity priorities.

- Create professional development opportunities for faculty to incorporate diversity initiatives and concepts into pedagogy, research and curriculum development. Work to make diversity a more visible and accepted part of the faculty model.
- Develop and implement a Target of Opportunity Program to remedy a general lack of diversity, address underrepresentation of diversity faculty within departments and promote a faculty demographic that better reflects those of our surrounding communities.

## STAFF

- Establish partnerships with institutions to develop a diverse pool of staff candidates.
- Diversify various campus departments, such as Institutional Effectiveness.
- Diversify CCSU Foundation Board.
- Develop diversity training for hiring committees and Department Evaluation Committees (DEC).

## *Diversifying the Curriculum*

CCSU's educational foundation rests on scholarly excellence, prepares students for successful careers upon graduation and promotes lifelong learning. To prepare graduates to meet the demands of the 21st century, Central is committed to exposing students to differences in culture and ways of thinking, equity issues, and the advantages of an inclusive society. One of the objectives of the SP2030 includes integrating diversity into the curriculum, pedagogical methods and co-curricular activities that contribute to cultural competency. To accomplish this, the University will take a multipronged approach that includes everything from faculty professional development to modification of course offerings. Ultimately, Central's goal is to remedy a general lack of diversity in the curriculum, address the underrepresentation of diverse faculty within a department, and promote a faculty demographic that better represents the communities that CCSU serves.



The d-Designation was first created to include courses that incorporated issues and concerns of diversity, equity and social justice through course content, pedagogy, and climate.

***When first developed, the d-Designation requirements included the following:***

- A d-designated section will address the culture of equity and social justice with the United States through course content, pedagogy, and classroom climate.
- A d-designated section will incorporate issues of diversity and social justice into their established course content with an emphasis on inclusive pedagogy and classroom climate.
- A d-designated section will examine and explore bias and discrimination within the United States based on a variety of individual and group factors.
- A d-designated course will not simply input one or two lessons on “other cultures” into the curriculum to satisfy the d-designation requirement.

Building upon the work of members of the Faculty Senate Diversity Committee and the Curriculum Committee, CCSU will move forward in the development of the d-Designation. *This work has provided a solid foundation for exploring ways in which Central can incorporate diversity into its curriculum in a relevant and sustainable manner.*

Moving ahead, CCSU’s continued goals for diversifying the curriculum include:

- Expansion of previous work, and successful development of a d-Designation for CCSU courses.
- Continued exploration of the current General Education program to identify courses that incorporate issues of diversity and globalization; expand upon current course offerings wherever possible.
- Developing innovative diversity curriculum models and identifying best practices associated with integrating diversity into the curriculum, advising and pedagogical approaches.
- Developing study away courses and programs that expose students to diversity within the U.S.
- Encouraging faculty, staff and students to apply for grants that support or promote student exposure to diverse cultures, ideas and perspectives.
- Increasing professional development opportunities for faculty and staff that focuses on diversity and inclusion.
- Ensuring community engagement activities are culturally responsive, including the development of a “Culturally Responsive Checklist” complete with supporting guidelines.
- Supporting innovative and inclusive teaching, scholarship, and creative activities.
  - Fund grants in support of developing and exploring inclusive teaching methods and creative activities.
  - Develop data-driven accountability measures that will be used to assess and inform future strategies to ensure all students are prepared to work in a diverse world.
  - Create a lecture and workshop series dedicated to the exchange of ideas around innovative and inclusive scholarship.