Office of the Vice President for Communications

Amended 7/11/2018, 9/17/2018, 7/8/2019, 7/23/2020

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan FY20 Actions, FY21 Plans, Five-Year Strategic Objectives and Measures

I. Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan: Overview

Introduction

In the President's Charge to the U-M Community, he stated:

> "From being one of the first universities to admit women in 1870 to our historic defense of race conscious admission policies at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2003, the University of Michigan has had a fierce and longstanding commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. This commitment rests upon our recognition of the history in the United States of racial, ethnic and gender discrimination as well as our understanding that our progress as an institution of higher learning will be enhanced with a vibrant community of people from many backgrounds."

In his statements on diversity, equity and inclusion in *On the Agenda*, President Schlissel noted:

> "We cannot be excellent at the University of Michigan without being diverse in the full sense of that word and leveraging the experiences and perspectives of the broadest possible diversity of students, faculty, and staff. We also must ensure that our community allows all individuals to thrive.
>
> "When we engage across difference as an academic community, we expand our opportunities to learn from one another – inside and outside of our classrooms. Research demonstrates that we also achieve better learning outcomes and produce more creative and important new knowledge and levels of understanding."

The Office of the Vice President for Communications (OVPC) plays a pivotal role in conveying both the ethos of U-M and information about its achievements and contributions. The commitment to engage and convey differing perspectives is a key underpinning of our work.

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Within OVPC, this strategic plan will advance that commitment, ensure that we live the principles ourselves, and guide us as we seek to operate at maximum effectiveness into the university's third century.

Additionally, OVPC's central role compels us to develop a new template, new metrics and best practices for ourselves and the university community. These new tools will enhance our capacity to advance and advise on items of institutional and leadership priority in service to the campus community and beyond.

OVPC is committed to meeting its complex set of internal and external responsibilities with a mindful and forward-looking vision, persistence and hard work.

Plan Goals: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity: We commit to increasing diversity among OVPC staff—and, indirectly, throughout the university—in myriad forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, and political perspective. So-called "Common knowledge" among communications professionals is that there is a very small, inadequate pool of qualified diverse candidates. Conversely, recent hires in Public Affairs and at the Wallace House seem to reinforce President Schlissel's observation that lack of diversity is an issue of access, not ability.

Equity: We commit to actively challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital and/or family status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status. Furthermore, we commit to support and advance, through service and leadership, the university's quest for an increasingly equitable community.

Inclusion: We commit to deliberate efforts that will ensure OVPC's work environment and our campus as a whole are welcoming to differences, listen respectfully to different perspectives and ideas, and convey to every individual a sense of belonging and inclusion. We know we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities by building a critical mass of diversity on campus and creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness.

Rationale: Mission, Vision, and Values: We seek to build a staff that represents the population we live in and serve, and a work culture that understands and celebrates differences. These actions will boost creativity and the exchange of ideas, and will ensure we are prepared to advance the university's standing among the world's great institutions of higher education, to carry forward leadership's priorities, and to draw the best students, faculty and staff who will significantly impact our complex world.

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II. FY20 Highlights and Planning Process Used

This year's planning process was conducted by the OVPC Planning Team, which meets monthly. The team considers activities and practices, and input received from the OVPC office results to the Climate Survey, published November 2, 2017. We also held an all-staff meeting to consider better methods of inclusion, including a new onboarding process. From the ideas proposed at that meeting, the team has developed a plan.

Early in the year, we held a special screening of Me, the "Other" which was co-sponsored by the Fleming DEI committee. This powerful film was screened at the Michigan Theater and included a guided discussion afterward.

We launched an adjusted "passport" this year as the OVPC DEI Journal. This notebook can be used however employees like, but we hope that they might use it to take notes at various DEI events across campus, or to journal their reflections afterward. This journal is intended to be a useful companion to the Individual DEI Activities listed on the Events page of our Handbook website. This DEI journal was distributed at our winter All-staff event which we hosted at UMMA. There was a discussion about how art is an important expression of diversity, and we heard from two UMMA staff members about the thought and process behind the reinstallation of the first floor of Alumni Memorial Hall.

We continued our open-door policy and communicated to all staff their opportunities to talk to managers about anything on their minds. Managers periodically remind staff about this policy.

Onboarding for new employees: There was wide participation to help develop an onboarding process for new employees. We want everyone to feel welcome and have the information they need for success at U-M. Each physical location has "onboarding champions" who agreed to be guides for new employees. These were established right before the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated that the majority of our staff work from home. We did onboard a new employee in Public Affairs and utilized one on one video meetings with each member of the Public Affairs and extended Internal Communications employees.

The DEI team continued to update our handbook website with activities that help orient newly hired colleagues to OVPC, as well as aid established employees in understanding our policies and procedures. The site covers resource links to many things, such as the university's staff handbook, MHealthy, parking information and maps, and dining options. It explains policies, our role in the university's mission and some pointers on how the university works. The content continues to change and grow over time. Following are some highlighted additions:

INDIVIDUAL DEI ACTIVITIES

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We recognized that not all employees were able to attend scheduled events and sessions. This section was added to enrich those employees, as well as others who wished to grow in their understanding of DEI.

- Video: Complete Heritage Month Series – This channel showcases sets of videos from all heritage months, spotlighting "hidden figures" during recognized history months like Black History, LGBT+Pride, Native American Heritage, and more. The first video will provide insights into the history of the month. There are also seven spotlight videos featuring individual history-makers.
- Audio: Same Same Different – a podcast from Michigan Radio: A show about identity and how to survive "otherness" with our humanity and sanity intact.
- Video: Conversations Across Difference – a video series from the Ford School of Public Policy. (choose Conversations Across Difference from the SERIES dropdown)
- Events: U-M Suffrage 2020 – U-M celebrates the fight for the 19th amendment and interrogate its role in the history of struggles to extend the right to vote.

STAYING CONNECTED AS WE ARE PHYSICALLY DISTANT

We launched this page once it became clear that most of our staff would need to work from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pivoting to employee support, this page provided practical work tips as well as self-care and support information.

CONFRONTING RACISM

Another mid-year pivot was providing a page of resources to actively confront racism. This was inspired by the nationwide demonstrations for racial justice and confrontation of police violence.

Finalized and launch mentorship program: Managers worked with their direct reports to map a career path, so that there is more transparency in which career possibilities exist within a job type and what needs to do to be considered for advancement. Based on interests and experience, we will work to identify pathways within OVPC. If pathways that match your goals do not exist in OVPC, we will help you identify other places in the university that may be next steps for employees to consider. Our team in OVPC is extraordinary and we want to help them attain their career goals – wherever those take them.

We continued to use diverse job boards to increase where our jobs are posted, making it more likely to attract a diverse candidate pool. We are also committing to reporting out the makeup of the pool of candidates interviewed for new positions. The intent is to hold ourselves accountable for putting enough effort into recruiting a diverse candidate pool.

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We continued to work with all Fleming Administration Building staffs on our Fleming DEI Committee, which produced events and speakers.

The OVPC DEI Committee was pleased with the success of the "Expanding Horizons DEI Series" last year. While we began with in-person events, these events will be move online while the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates physical distancing for most of our staff.

Even before COVID-19 pandemic, OVPC placed a renewed effort behind accessibility for websites and digital media, internally mandating captions for all videos produced. We utilized expertise in ITS, OIE, and internally to check compliance and improve accessibility as new tools and techniques have become available.

Institutional DEI communications support began in 2015 and continues. In addition to our committee work that supports our own staff, all of our work teams (including Michigan News, Public Affairs, Internal Communications, Michigan Creative, Photography and Media, the Freedom of Information Office, Strategic Initiatives, Web Strategy and Executive Communications) have actively worked to include DEI concepts in the overall institutional messaging and images since the inception of this effort. Support included:

- Photographed institutional events. When considering shots or hiring models for print materials, we always seek diverse representation across a variety of dimensions that remain authentic to our community.
- Lauren Love in our Public Affairs office keeps the central Diversity website updated and handles social media channels on behalf of the central cause. She remains the point person in Public Affairs for DEI issues and coordinates with ODEI.
- Michigan Creative, which produces much of the university's outward-facing material, has a variety of practices designed to advance university DEI messaging and outreach:
    - Develop communication plans that consider how marketing objectives and goals, messaging, outreach and distribution can reach the intended audiences and convey the university's dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion;
    - Identify different ways to reach target audience members through a variety of traditional and innovative channels.
    - Consider how broad and diverse audiences may require multiple touchpoints to deliver messages successfully.
    - Follow accessibility requirements and standards in the design and development of website projects to ensure online resources are available to the widest possible audience.
    - Consider how to portray a wide range of people and places for images used in design work to illustrate diversity and inclusivity.

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COVID-19 SUPPORT

Beginning in late January, OVPC began to be involved in supporting the university's response to and communication about the COVID-19 pandemic. This support utilized all OVPC departments and highlights include:

- Creation of a COVID-19 Key Issues page to gather the earliest information regarding the pandemic and the university's response.
- Supporting executive communications from the president and university leadership.
- Creating and maintaining the Coronavirus Information website.
- Tracking and responding to media inquiries.
- Writing and pitching to national media outlets stories about U-M researchers and experts across many fields and disciplines that were doing coronavirus related research.
- Designing and creating signage and other assets to support public health and safety.
- Documenting the de-densifying of campus as well as the reopening of labs later on.
- Creating and maintaining the Campus Maize and Blueprint website to support and communicate the university's plans to have a public health informed fall semester on campus.

FY 2021 Plans

In FY 2021, we have plans to continue to advance both our own division's DEI awareness and activities, and to continue our work on behalf of the entire university's DEI efforts.

We will continue to use the climate findings to strive to make this division a place where all feel their work is rewarding, fairly assigned and compensated, and a place where they can grow. Making this a place where everyone feels respected and like they belong are our highest priorities.

Additional plans include:

- Continue to retain Michigan Creative as needed to complete various communications projects, including producing materials for staff.

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- Continue to provide resources and support to staff working during these unusual and uncertain times.
- **Pivot the quarterly facilitated DEI events (Expanding Horizons DEI Series) to a DEI newsletter for the time that our staff continues to be socially distant.**
- We made progress with a mentorship program last year, but this year we will do year one learning evaluation and further rollout of the program.
- Monitor and adjust the improved onboarding process, especially while a majority of staff remain remote.
- **Our annual performance assessment process has been updated to include more discussion prompts for improving organization process and employee development.**
- Continue our annual cross division review of all materials we produce to see how we are implementing the principles in practice.
- Require some management training to enhance DEI-related knowledge and skills. For example, require that managers take courses to develop skills in reflective listening, collaboration, positive leadership and others to strengthen their ability to encourage an inclusive workplace.
- To enhance a feeling of belonging, **explore employee interest in starting groups of common interest, such as book clubs.**
- **Continue to add DEI related experiences that can be completed remotely. Explore conducting virtual events.**
- **Publicize existing University pathways for reporting concerns and to encourage students, faculty, and staff to report concerns for resolution. Annually remind existing staff and ensure that new hires are aware of these pathways.**

The OVPC DEI committee is shown below

Planning Leads: Christopher Billick
Hanna Quinlan

Planning Team: Cherie McBride
Kerri Pepperman
Ellen Perry, replaced by Holli Eaton
Margie Gonzales
Liza Mondro
Austin Thomason

III. Data and Analysis: Key Findings

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We have replaced our 2015 demographic data previously shown, with the more recent data from the Climate Survey. Although they don't directly track one another, the more recent data shows that we have fewer white employees, and more of other races and ethnicities than before.

Average Age 44.7

Gender Identity

Female	57.4%
Male	40.4%
Other gender ID	---

Race/Ethnicity

White	84% (compared with 96% in 2015)
Other Races/ Ethnicities	6.4%

**Although we have African American, Asian and Hispanic employees, the percentages are too low to be separately captured.*

Religious Affiliation

Christian	50.5%
Agnostic/Atheist	19.4%
None	17.2%

**The percentages of Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist employees was too low to be captured.*

Political Orientation

Conservative	11%
Moderate	16.5%
Liberal	70.3%

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual	85.5%
Gay/Lesbian	8.5%
Other	6.4%

Education

High School	-----
Associate's Degree	6.6%
Bachelor's Degree	64.8%
Post Graduate	27.5%

IV. Strategic Objectives, Measures of Success and Action Plans*

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All strategic objectives and related actions will be pursued in accordance with the law and University policy.

IV. A. Recruitment, Retention and Development

Constituency: OVPC staff and university as a whole

Five-Year Strategic Objective 1: To achieve a substantial increase of diversity of all sorts among OVPC staff, across all divisions and at all levels, from non-exempt staff to leadership

Measures of Success: (for Objective 1): HR human capital data. **Self-analysis of the pool of candidates after each posting is closed.**

FY21Actions: Institute policy that all senior staff purposefully expands their professional networking at conferences and other relevant gatherings to reach out proactively, including to underrepresented populations (gender, ethnicity, race, disability, etc.).
Include this requirement as a performance point.

As a part of our overall job posting strategy seek to communicate the desirability of working at U-M in channels that under- represented populations read and attend. Develop a task force team to examine this issue, including participants outside of our division, since this is a common issue.

Seek to communicate the desirability of working at U-M in channels that under-represented populations read and attend.

Continue to examine recruiting and hiring practices, including team members from more than our division.

Continue to utilize central HR resources for promotion of postings to diverse groups on campus and in the community.

Develop and implement fresh approaches to develop diverse applicant pool— meet and greets, in person and via Skype, webinar-type information sharing sessions, Twitter chats, Snapchat Q&As, etc., with prospective applicants.

Primary DE&I Goal: To engender a more diverse and creative workforce and work environment, thereby increasing our capacity to serve our several constituencies.
Other applicable domain: Service

IV. B. Education and Scholarship

Constituency: OVPC staff and university as a whole

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Five-Year Strategic Objective 1: To raise substantially: a) understanding of, ability to work with, and openness to DEI-related goals and objectives; b) management and communications skills and knowledge among OVPC staff managers and senior staff.
Measures of Success: (for Objective 1): Staff climate survey, which may be refreshed in 2020; completion of suggested training; identify and select effective intercultural sensitivity tool to assess progress in these realms.
FY21 Actions: Activate new incentives for completion by all staff and managers a minimum of two relevant training opportunities per year.

Require that managers take courses to develop skills in reflective listening, positive leadership and others to strengthen their ability to encourage an inclusive workplace.

Encourage further use of the DEI Journal for employees to write reflections, record attended events, visits, and online learnings that enhance their awareness and understanding of DEI-related subjects.

Primary DE&I Goal: Engender a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce and environment, resulting in a substantially improved work environment and more effective communications products and leadership.
Other applicable domain: Service, Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community

IV. C. Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community
Constituency: OVPC staff and university as a whole
Five-Year Strategic Objective 1: a) To increase measurably fairness and transparency among OVPC staff at all levels; b) to decrease instances of negative comments from constituents about lack of equity and inclusion in OVPC coverage, products, priorities, etc.
Measures of Success: (for Objective 1): Periodic staff climate survey; random survey of constituents; identify and select effective intercultural sensitivity tool to assess progress in these realms.
FY21 Actions: **Create service projects** that all employees are encouraged to join in on, such as Habitat for Humanity, to help develop bonds. Investigate remote service opportunities during times of physical distancing.

Poll employees to see if they would like to create **communities of interest (such as book groups)** to feel more connected to one another. **Use the DEI Newsletter to drive this research and interest.**

Primary DE&I Goal: To generate a workforce that can both reflect and lead the university's communications community in DEI-related contributions and achievements.
Other applicable domain: Service

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Publicize existing University pathways for reporting concerns and to encourage students, faculty, and staff to report concerns for resolution. Annually remind existing staff and ensure that new hires are aware of these pathways.

Primary DE&I Goal: Engender a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce and environment, resulting in a substantially improved work environment and more effective communications products and leadership.
Other applicable domain: Recruitment, Retention and Development

IV. D. Service (as applicable)
Constituency: The university community, the broad community around the state and region; university-wide communicators

Five-Year Strategic Objective 1: Demonstratively improve OVPC's and university-wide communicators' ability to work within the parameters of new DEI-related metrics, guidelines and best practices.
Measures of Success: (for Objective 1): Results of annual random check of OVPC and other institutional materials.
FY21 Actions: These actions will mainly be those that our division undertakes to serve the greater university, by supporting the central DEI effort with communication tools, photography and public affairs issues management.
Primary DE&I Goal: To ensure the university walks the walk, consistently operating at a level of DEI-relevant excellence that serves as a model in American higher education.
Other applicable domain: All others.

IV. E. Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Prevention
Constituency: OVPC staff and university as a whole
Strategic Objective: Educate our community on sexual and gender-based misconduct prevention in an effort to promote a safe and supportive environment for all members to work, learn, and thrive.
Action Item: Support central efforts to educate faculty, staff, and students on the forthcoming University of Michigan Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Prevention ("umbrella policy").
Action Item: Develop and socialize unit-specific value statements that align and reinforce the forthcoming university level values that promote culture and climate change consistent with both the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Prevention work that is already underway.

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Primary DE&I Goal: To generate a workforce that is equitable and inclusive for all. To ensure the university walks the walk, consistently operating at a level of DEI-relevant excellence that serves as a model in American higher education.
Other applicable domain: All others.

V. Goal-related Metrics

At the end of FY21, we will evaluate the following metrics in these areas:

Diversity
Demographic Composition:
• Headcount
• Race/ethnicity
• Sex
• Age (Generation cohort)
• Feelings of discrimination in work unit

Equity
Climate Survey Indicators:
• Satisfaction with unit climate/environment in work unit
• Assessment of semantic aspects of the general climate in work unit
• Assessment of semantic aspects of the DEI climate in work unit
• Perceptions of equal opportunity for success in work unit.
• Feeling able to perform up to full potential in work unit
• Feelings of professional growth in work unit

Inclusion
DEI working group will annually survey staff to measure access, inclusion, and transparency among staff and will look at presence of elements of inclusion in OVPC and university-wide communications work products and initiatives. If the Climate Survey isn't repeated this year, we will need to do our own to discover whether employees are:
• Feeling valued in work unit
• Feeling of belongingness in work unit
Finally, we will assess the work unit's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

VI. Action Planning Tables with Details and Accountabilities

VI. A. Recruitment, Retention and Development

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Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Measures of Success	Detailed Actions Planned (measurable, specific)	Group/Persons Accountable	Resources needed (if applicable)
OVPC staff and university as a whole	To achieve a substantial increase of diversity of all sorts among OVPC staff, across all divisions and at all levels, from non-exempt staff to leadership	HR human capital data. **Self-analysis of the pool of candidates after each posting is closed.**	Institute policy that all senior staff purposefully expands their professional networking at conferences and other relevant gatherings to reach out proactively, including to underrepresented populations (gender, ethnicity, race, disability, etc.). Include this requirement as a performance point. As a part of our overall job posting strategy seek to communicate the desirability of working at U-M in channels that under-represented populations read and attend. Develop a task force team to examine this issue, including participants outside of our division, since this is a common issue. Seek to communicate the desirability of working at U-M in channels that under-represented populations read and attend. **Continue to examine recruiting and hiring practices, including team members from more than our division.** Continue to utilize central HR resources for promotion of postings to diverse groups on campus and in the community. Develop and implement fresh approaches to develop	OVPC HR manager; OVPC staff managers who are responsible for hiring and supervision	Adequate funding to post to a broader selection of external websites and job-seeking searches affiliated with professional associations, including but not limited to those with underrepresented membership. **Coordination to review applicant pools at senior staff meetings.**

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			diverse applicant pool— meet and greets, in person and via Skype, webinar-type information sharing sessions, Twitter chats, Snapchat Q&As, etc., with prospective applicants.		

IV. B. Education and Scholarship

Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Measures of Success	Detailed Actions Planned (measurable, specific)	Group/Persons Accountable	Resources needed (if applicable)
OVPC staff and university as a whole	To raise substantially: a) understanding of, ability to work with, and openness to DEI-related goals and objectives; b) management and communications skills and knowledge among OVPC staff managers and senior staff.	Staff climate survey, which may be refreshed in 2020; completion of suggested training; identify and select effective intercultural sensitivity tool to assess progress in these realms.	Activate new incentives for completion by all staff and managers a minimum of two relevant training opportunities per year. Require that managers take courses to develop skills in reflective listening, positive leadership and others to strengthen their ability to encourage an inclusive workplace. **Encourage further use of the DEI Journal for employees to write reflections, record attended events, visits, and online learnings that enhance their awareness and understanding of DEI-related subjects.**	OVPC senior staff, OVPC DEI committee	Funding to cover expenses; e.g., staff time off in revenue-generating units; licensed presenter materials Funding to cover outside experts' fees and travel. Production costs of passport.

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IV. C. Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community

Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Measures of Success	Detailed Actions Planned (measurable, specific)	Group/Persons Accountable	Resources needed (if applicable)
OVPC staff and university as a whole	To increase measurably fairness and transparency among OVPC staff at all levels; b) to decrease instances of negative comments from constituents about lack of equity and inclusion in OVPC coverage, products, priorities, etc.	Periodic staff climate survey; random survey of constituents; identify and select effective intercultural sensitivity tool to assess progress in these realms.	**Create service projects** that all employees are encouraged to join in on, such as Habitat for Humanity, to help develop bonds. Investigate remote service opportunities during times of physical distancing. **Poll employees** to see if they would like to create **communities of interest (such as book groups)** to feel more connected to one another. **Use the DEI Newsletter to drive this research and interest.** **Publicize existing University pathways for reporting concerns and to encourage students, faculty, and staff to report concerns for resolution. Annually remind existing staff and ensure that new hires are aware of these pathways.**	OVPC Managers; unit HR lead.	OVPC as well as Communica-tions staff across the U Release time for training. Funding for equity adjustments when needed.

IV. D. Service

Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Measures of Success	Detailed Actions Planned (measurable, specific)	Group/Persons Accountable	Resources needed (if applicable)
The university community, the broad community around the state and region; university-wide	Demonstratively improve OVPC's and university-wide communicat	Results of annual random check of OVPC and other	These actions will mainly be those that our division undertakes to serve the greater university, by supporting the central DEI effort with communication	OVPC leadership; OVPC DEI working group	Release time for working group members

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communicators	ors' ability to work within the parameters of new DEI-related metrics, guidelines and best practices	institutiona l materials.	tools, photography and public affairs issues management.		

IV. E. Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Prevention

Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Measures of Success	Detailed Actions Planned (measurable, specific)	Group/Persons Accountable	Resources needed (if applicable)
OVPC staff and university as a whole	Educate our community on sexual and gender-based misconduct prevention in an effort to promote a safe and supportive environment for all members to work, learn, and thrive.	100% completion of training. Complete value statements published to staff handbook site	Support central efforts to educate faculty, staff, and students on the forthcoming University of Michigan Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Prevention ("umbrella policy"). Develop and socialize unit-specific value statements that align and reinforce the forthcoming university level values that promote culture and climate change consistent with both the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct Prevention work that is already underway.	OVPC senior staff	Release time for training.

VII. Plans for Supporting, Tracking and Updating the Strategic Plan

Generally: The proposed OVPC DEI working team was constituted to support, track and update OVPC's strategic plan. The team includes one member from each of OVPC's departments, recruited by Christopher Billick, appointed by the Vice President and reporting monthly.

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