

CPE Report 2020-21: Western Kentucky University

Enrollment Narrative:

As such, when evaluating enrollment per the Rubrics, it is done on a pass or fail basis (2 or 0) based on the following analysis:

For enrollment, the institution shall demonstrate that the diversity of its student body provides its students with the opportunity to receive the educational benefits of diversity as described in the Policy. This may be substantiated by providing evidence that goals outlined in an institution's plan were generally attained or significant progress was made toward those goals, that students have been provided the opportunity to interact with diverse peers both inside and outside the classroom, and through other means identified by the institution as supported by valid research. Progress toward any one goal shall not determine whether or not expectations have been met; an institution shall be evaluated based on the entirety of its report in this area.

WKU's Strategic Plan outlines aggressive steps to "enroll a diverse body of regional and global undergraduate, graduate, and nontraditional students who are fully prepared for a rigorous, fulfilling college experience at WKU. Particular goals include:

- Goal 2: "[create] a diverse body of students" [who are] "fully prepared for a rigorous, fulfilling college experience at WKU."
- Goal 4: "enact and practice all aspects of WKU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan."

In addition to target enrollments of URM/low-income students (defined by CPE), one of WKU's strategic plan metrics is to raise the Campus Pride Index from the current 3-star rating to 5-stars by 2027-2028. Through collaborative efforts, WKU worked diligently during 2020-21 to increase that rating, creating a more welcoming environment for all LGBTQ+ members of our campus community. The revised report was submitted; revised 2021-22 ratings forthcoming.

International student recruitment plays a critical role in diversity on college campuses. Due to global tensions and the Covid pandemic, WKU's International student enrollment between 2015-16 and 2020-21 (Students_by_Origin.pdf) has continued to drop dramatically. Additionally, in 2019, *English as a Second Language International (ESLi)*, the company employed by WKU, went out of business, leaving WKU without an *English as a Second Language (ESL)* provider. In response, WKU overhauled the International Pathway to Academic Success (IPAS) program and offer most services in-house. Part of this plan included adding foundational courses covering critical thinking, reading, study skills, and information for students making the transition to education in the United States. The goal for 2021-22 is to ramp up recruitment efforts and fully implement the IPAS.

WKU houses many social, professional, and support groups for diverse student populations including religious/faith-based, International, and those supporting students with disabilities and mental health issues. Some examples include:

- Amazing Tones of Joy Black Gospel Choir
- The Intercultural Student Engagement Center
- ISEC Graduation for Black/Hispanic/Asia students
- Hilltopper Organization for Latin American Students

- Lavender Graduation for LGBTQ+ students
- The Pride Center serving the campus queer community
- The Distinguished Minority Fellows (DMF) assists URM graduate students

The Student Accessibility Resource Center also ensures students with disabilities are provided access to all facets of the Western Kentucky University experience. The Center facilitates and coordinates support services and programs enabling students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential and increases awareness that students with disabilities can achieve academic success based on their abilities, not their disabilities.

Why Knot US?, WKU's Black Male Initiative ([Why_Knot_Us.pdf](#)) was inceptioned in the fall of 2020; full funding was provided by/named after Mr. George Nichols. Fourteen participants were inducted in the first cohort (16 will be included in the fall 2021 cohort). Success metrics included:

- 93% retention-rate from Fall 2020 to Fall 2021
- Increased Cumulative GPA (.10%)

ISEC staff also spent a good portion of 2020-21 working on parallel project for women of color, *Why Knot Us, Too?* Much like the Black Male initiative, the purpose of the program is to improve the mental, emotional, environmental, and academic success of women of color enrolled at WKU.

Opportunity: Identification of specific strategies for recruitment and enrollment of underrepresented minoritized students along with the responsible partners and specific strategies are charted below as well as action that will be taken, and those responsible. The four (4) strategies to enhance opportunity are:

- Strategy: Actively pursue underrepresented minoritized (URM) high school juniors and seniors by cultivating relationships with families, target high schools, churches, and community agencies

How did you implement this strategy with fidelity? (500 words or less) Fidelity is defined as faithfulness to the implementation of the committed strategies demonstrated by continued loyalty and support. Evidence of fidelity may include, but would not be limited to the following: dedicated staff, specific examples of student or staff participation, data collected on strategy inputs and outputs, participation rates of students, dedicated funding, development of implementation timetables and milestones achieved, and narrative descriptions of the implementation process.

Recruitment of URM students is one of our top priorities at WKU. In 2018, the University hired a Diversity Recruitment Officer (DRO) in the Office of Admissions who was tasked with creating, coordinating, and implementing recruitment efforts geared specifically to communities of color within the institution's service region and the Commonwealth. As outlined in WKU's DEI Plan, the DRO was charged with "*leveraging relationships with service region high schools and community members by identifying key personnel to arrange occasions to speak with URM students, low-income students, and their families or support persons.*" It became apparent in 2020 that the position would be better utilize if housed in Cynthia and George Nichols III Intercultural

Student Engagement Center (ISEC). Since ISEC has become the hub for recruiting, retaining, and graduating URM students, it was just a better fit. The office, with its five full-time staff, serves as a hands-on recruitment and retention resource for the many cultural, ethnic/racial, religious/spiritual, and gender diverse groups reflected within the WKU community.

In 2020-21, the DRO hosted and/or participated in 42 (forty-two) pre-college events designed to recruit high school juniors and seniors, to explain the benefits of post-secondary education, and to provide strategies or mechanisms to access post-secondary opportunities. During these events, prospective students received individualized on-site financial aid counseling, academic and career pathway counseling, and a projected timeline to graduation. Unfortunately, the face-to-face minority recruitment events were halted again in 2020-21 due to Covid-19. As a result, the DRO worked with the marketing team to find other ways to recruit. For example, much of the recruiting efforts were done digitally and campus events were held virtually.

In Fall 2019, WKU hired Ruffalo, Noel, Levitz (RNL) to lead the 2019-2029 Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP), which will include increased opportunities for ISEC and the DRO. During 2020-21, the SEP steering committee, comprised of leaders across campus, worked, in earnest, to execute a plan drafted the previous year for increasing enrollment. The steering committee identified the nine strategies below for inclusion in Phase 1 of WKU's SEP implementation, all of which have DEI components:

1. Adult learners
2. Financial aid counseling
3. Gateway course redesign
4. Living learning programs
5. Online outreach coordinators/advisors
6. Out-of-state recruitment
7. Transfer recruitment
8. URM recruitment events
9. URM recruitment marketing

How would you describe the effectiveness of this strategy? The institution shall provide an analysis of the effectiveness of each strategy with a sufficient level of detail. If a strategy was not fully implemented or implemented at all, a thorough analysis and justifiable explanation of why this did not occur should be provided.

While not directly targeting URM students, social media advertisements for all major recruitment events were disseminated between March and June 2021 for Head for The Hill's Virtual Open House, DiscoverWKU (virtual information fair), and virtual counselor meetings. In 2020-21, several new URM-targeted efforts also began:

- Society of African American Alumni Note Writing Campaign: Alumni sent 66 personal notes to incoming Black/African American freshman students from the Nashville Area.
- Diversity Recruitment Officer participated in 42 pre-college hosted/participated recruitment events.

- Enrollment and Student Experience (ESE) Staff ran a list-match social media ad targeting 24,450 to URM students.
- The Intercultural Student Engagement Center (ISEC) hosted a spring Meet & Greet via Zoom (8,816 students invited; 2,769 parents invited).
- ESE Staff hosted the first URM faith-based organizations outreach meeting via Zoom
- ESE Staff hosted the first Community-based Organization Outreach Breakfast
- An “Apply Early” email communication to URM students from the Diversity Recruitment Officer (n=6,340).
- Targeted Scholarship Opportunities emails were sent to URM high school students (n=21,478).
- ISEC sent a “Welcome to WKU” personalized note to URM students registered for a campus tour.

In short, WKU directly targeted 45,928 URM high school seniors in the service area (approximately 600-mile radius) using the above tactics and “Yield Calling Lists.” A “Yield” calling list is a computer-generated telemarketing list that allows users to target populations. By June 1, 2021, 11,253 of those URM students targeted either made inquiries about the University, attended one recruitment event, or enrolled at WKU. WKU used Slate by Technolutions to create lists for targeted mailings. Slate is a comprehensive platform for admissions and enrollment management, student success, and alumni/advancement, designed and developed exclusively for higher education. The higher education platform is primarily used for targeted outreach and communications, online applications, and student’s success and retention.

In 2020-21, WKU began a new scholarship structure aimed at benefiting URM and low-income students. Underrepresented minority students with a minimum 2.5 unweighted GPA qualified for a Targeted Award:

- WKU removed the ACT requirement from almost all merit-based and targeted academic scholarships.
- WKU increased the minimum merit scholarship award by \$1,000 to \$2,500.
- WKU reduced the minimum GPA requirement from 3.3 to 3.0.

The Cornelius A. Martin Scholarship is awarded to URM students as follows:

- Students who have a 2.5 up to 2.9 unweighted GPA qualify for \$2,000 per academic year.
- Students who have a 3.0 or greater unweighted GPA qualify for \$3,000 per academic year.

In terms of other incentives, WKU began “The Hilltopper Guarantee” in Fall 2021. The purpose of The Hilltopper Guarantee is to close the gap for Kentucky students who may not otherwise be able to afford college. WKU will guarantee 100% tuition coverage for any first-time, first-year freshman from Kentucky who receives Pell Grant assistance and has at least a 3.0 cumulative unweighted high school GPA. The implementation of Target Scholarship program, The Cornelius A. Martin Scholarship, and the Hilltopper Guarantee all target some of the financial hurdles of attending college for URM and low-come students.

What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?

First, while targeted advertising is difficult, it is extremely necessary in recruiting URM students. Even with face-to-face recruiting events canceled due to Covid-19, WKU did a stellar job

targeting, recruiting, and enrolling URM student for Fall 2020 and Fall 2021. Much of this success was due to the University' commitment to financially support Slate, the Alumni Association, and our marketing team to do this work. Strategies are being crafted to further utilize the Nashville Society of African American Alumni, including creating URM mailing lists and participating in email marketing campaigns to high school students of color in our region regarding ISEC and its programs. In the addition, it is crucial for admissions to collect the appropriate data needed to make informed decisions about marketing. The SEP Implementation team will continue collecting data in Fall 2021 via random sample regarding students' experiences with the pre-enrollment process including information on interactions and communication with admissions, points of contact, experience with social media information, and pre-enrollment events. One critical lesson learned is that data is scattered across campus and kept by a variety of entities. It is imperative that data be collected, reported, and stored in a consistent and accurate manner and be easy to access when needed. Academic Affairs and ESE will work during 2021-22 to create a shared database so that data-informed decision-making is front and center in the collection processes.

Second, the Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) committee will continue to meet and work on the rollout of strategies to support the components identified in Phase 1. In 2021-22, The SEP committee will begin to collect data on implemented initiatives (Phase 2) addressing URM students who a) are adult learners, b) are in need of financial aid counseling, c) completed redesigned Gateway courses, and d) are members of Living Learning Communities.

Lastly, WKU will be hiring an Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management (AVP) to assist in the cultivation and development of new enrolling students and continuing students at WKU. The AVP will be responsible for the coordination, supervision, and leadership of the Enrollment Management departments within the Division of Enrollment & Student Experience (ESE). As a member of the ESE team, the AVP will collaborate with the other senior staff of the division, and the Deans of each respective college, to provide for the overall cultivation of new student enrollment, retention, and engagement of WKU students. The team leadership model provides cross-collaboration opportunities and professional development across the traditional roles of enrollment management and student affairs professional responsibilities. The AVP will also provide the leadership and coordination of the marketing, recruitment, cultivation, and matriculation of new WKU undergraduate students annually, particularly URM and low-income students.

Success:

Strategy 2: Create targeted Living-Learning Communities and Special Living Options

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Data indicated an overall increase in retention during the 2020-21 academic year. First generation student retention rose from 85.5% to 87.1% and low-income retention increased from 86% to 88.6%.

This represented the highest retention of our students since the university began tracking this data over a decade ago; a substantial gain pointing to the effectiveness of our student success initiatives. Underrepresented minority (URM) students returned at a rate of 85.7% in spring 2021, which was on par with the general student population retention rate. WKU dedicated significant resources to closing the achievement gap among our students by providing students with the equitable resources needed for success.

Over the last two years, WKU has invested a great deal of time and money to our new *First-year Village*. Construction of two new residence halls began in 2019 in the lower hub of the campus, but they didn't open for residents until fall 2021. The two residence halls will house up to 635 first-year, full-time students engaged in faculty mentorship and peer interaction around important ideas connected directly to student success and learning. The First Year Village now serves as the home for many of our Living Learning Communities (LLCs). While LLCs not new to WKU, we have expanded the number offered, with all five academic colleges represented. In Fall 2020, 650 students participated. The Center for teaching & Learning (CITL) in Academic Affairs and staff from Housing and Residence Life work together to embed high impact practices with the goal of increasing student retention, persistence, and success, especially for URM students. (Living_Learning_Communities.pdf).

Two LLCs within the Intercultural Student Engagement Center (ISEC), The ISEC Academy and the Pride Center's LGBTQ+ Stonewall Suites, are offered first- and second-year students. The ISEC Academy LLP is for any student who identifies as a student of color (Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, and Multiracial), is a first-generation college student, Pell eligible, and/or has some need with their transition, persistence, and graduation from WKU. Stonewall Suites LLC is for students who strive to promote social integration and change for all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations. In Stonewall Suites, Transgender individuals are given the opportunity to pick the gender of their roommate, which helps alleviate a host of safety concerns and stressors for these students. Students interested in this LLC must go through an application and interview process before being admitted (ISEC & Stonewall LLC.pdf).

Grounded in the literature on college retention and borrowing from best practices across the nation, WKU now also offers a new residential Summer Scholars program for high school graduates with below-threshold GPAs (2.00-2.49). The program provides a unique, five-week opportunity for students to experience a trial run at college level classes and WKU campus life. With some extra support and assistance, peer mentors, career coaches, academic advisors, instructors, and financial aid counselors all collaborate to provide each participant with tailored support with the goal of increasing each student's likelihood of earning a degree (Summer Scholars Retention.pdf).

How would you describe the effectiveness of this strategy? The institution shall provide an analysis of the effectiveness of each strategy with a sufficient level of detail. If a strategy was not fully implemented or implemented at all, a thorough analysis and justifiable explanation of why this did not occur should be provided.

What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?

ISEC Academy: For recap, the fall 2019 began the third cohort of the ISEC Academy (n = 56). For all ISEC Academy URM students (including part-time), the first semester persistence rate (fall 2019 to spring 2020) was 100% and the fall 2019 to fall 2020 persistence rate was 95.5%.

The overall retention rate for 2019-20 was quite high, 73%, but the ISEC students still did remarkable well in comparison. It's important to note the data for 2019-20 was also impacted by Covid-19. WKU set in motion several pandemic-related policies that impacted retention rates. Two of particular contribution were the P/D/F grading that kept many from failing courses and waivers to allow student to enroll and return to school in Fall 2020 even if they owed tuition money from the previous semester.

In Fall 2020, WKU welcomed the fourth cohort of the ISEC Academy (n = 69; 47 FTFY/9 not FTFY and 22 second year students). The first semester persistence rate (fall 2020 for spring 2021) ISEC Academy FTFY students was 94.6% (100% for not FTFY) and 81.8% for ISEC Academy 2nd Year students. The retention rate (fall 2020 for fall 2021) ISEC Academy students was 78.6% and 68.2% for ISEC Academy 2nd Year students. For comparison, the over-all retention rate of URM students at WKU is 65.9%. Looking ahead, the enrollment for Fall 2021 in the ISEC Academy is 51 and the enrollment for ISEC Academy 2nd Year is 47 (n = 98). These numbers indicate the persistence and retention rate is greater for student who participate in the LLC (ISEC & Stonewall LLC.pdf).

Stonewall Suites LLC:

To recap, in fall 2019, there were 25 students (full-time baccalaureate, n = 24; part-time, n = 1) in fall 2019 cohort, which included the nine students from 2018-19 who persisted. The first semester persistence rate (fall 2019 to spring 2020) for Stonewall Suite LLC full-time students was 91.7% (part-time 100%) and the Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 retention rate was 88.3%.

There were 27 Stonewall Suites students (15 FTFY and 12 not FTFY) registered in Fall 2020. In 2018-19, the rate persistence and retention rates for Stonewall Suites LLP were quite lower than ISEC Academy students but there were so few students in the Stonewall cohort. As the number of participants began to increase (2019-20/2020-21), the data collected were more meaningful. The Fall 2020 to spring 2021 persistence rate for Stonewall was 80% for FTFY and 75% for non-FTFY students. The retention rate (Fall 2020 - Fall 2021) was 66.7% for FTFY and 41.7% (55.6% total). The enrollment going into to Fall 2021 has increased substantially (39 FTFY and 16 non-FYFT, respectively), yet the persistence and retention rates seems to be in decline (ISEC & Stonewall LLC.pdf).

What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?

In retrospect, it has been difficult for students who are homeless and “unhomed” to find safe shelter during the past couple of years. Covid-19 has put a strain on many marginalized student communities, but it also has been a learning experience laced with some positive take-aways for DEI leadership at the university. For various reasons, students in some of these communities are ostracized from family and friends and find even daily, basis needs hard to meet. Many of these students find themselves in a situation where basic survival takes priority over college and studies. Since LGTBQ+ students are particularly vulnerable, Stonewall LLC Suites have remained open even when campus was shut down, creating a safe space for marginalized students in need. In addition to housing accommodations, WKU's Opportunity Fund served as a source for easing financial problems when they arose. This is only one example of how the University has worked to assist students with unique needs during the pandemic.

One issue we encountered, and plan to address next academic year, was that many of our LLCs in the Freshman Village are newly added to the existing list and the sheer number of programs (14 academic and 7 interest-based) is tasking already over-worked faculty on campus. For LLCs to work well, dedicated faculty members are expected to serve the demanding role of LLC leader. The faculty members must be skilled at interacting with students outside the classroom and dedicate time to facilitating LLC programs and events, meeting with students, and collaborating with the housing staff on LLC-related activities; all duties that are outside of classroom time. Since WKU has lost many faculty over the course of the last few years, those participating are having a hard time balancing heavy teaching, research, and service loads with the commitment needed to make the LLCs successful. Faculty involved in LLCs targeting students who are underprepared for college or who have added mental and emotional stressors are particularly overburdened. WKU is on track to fill a good number of faculty positions in 2021-22, so it is hoped that these LLC leaders can be given a reduced course load and other forms of support.

Impact:

Strategy 1: Increase representation of faculty and staff of color through formalized, mandatory “best practices in hiring practices training sessions” for search committees.

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This strategy has been revised since 2019-2020. The previous wording, “Increase representation of faculty and staff of color through a formalized recruitment and retention process,” was broad, nonspecific, and more indicative of a goal than a strategy. The new wording is specific, making it an intentional strategy for increasing the representation of faculty and staff of color.

In order to accommodate the surge of hires approved for 2020-2022, the Co-chief Diversity Officers, Associate Provost for Faculty & Academic Excellence, Manager of Organizational Development (HR), and Director of Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action (EEO) joined forces to restructure the hiring process at WKU, with an emphasis on decreasing biases in hiring and recruiting candidates of color. The initial step was to renew WKU’s membership with HERC (Higher Education Recruitment Consortium). HERC is a leader in providing training and resources for recruiting and retaining URM faculty and staff. Since WKU has entered full implementation of our new RCM (Responsibility Center Management) Budget Model, we first had to create a *permanent* shared and reoccurring responsibility chain for paying the annual fees.

In fall 2020, we revamped the recruitment and application processes through HR and EEO. During the open call for applications period in 2020-2021, search committees were given the opportunity to request a preview of applicant demographics at any point of the process. In the past, this was not possible until after the top three or four candidates had been selected for on-campus interviews. The new requested report gives the committee aggregate demographic

information and provides a “snap-shot” of applicants at any point in the search process, so the committee can make informed decisions about the pool in terms of diversity. This allows search committees to determine if applicant pools have adequate representation of URM for the position and provides committees an opportunity to cast a wider net, if needed, in order to reach a more diverse audience. Again, in early summer 2020, WKU began using the new recruitment process resulting in the following 2020-21 hire: WKU hired 46 faculty: 5 Asian/Pacific Islander; 4 African America; 1 Hispanic (Faculty_Hires_2020_21.xlsx). There were also numerous staff and faculty (including part-time) hires and reclassifications that included 31 employees who were American or Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic, and/or two or more races (Staff_Faculty_Reclass_2020_21.xlsx).

Lastly, our team designed and presented three “best hiring practices” trainings workshops/Zoom webinars, integrating HERC resources and information about decreases bias in the hiring process. In addition to the live sessions, the team built two, one and half hour training modules – one for faculty and one for staff – from the materials and uploaded the to the HR Hiring Tool Kit (Hiring Process | Western Kentucky University.pdf). The videos were separated into three segments: 1) Before the search; 2) During the search; and 3) After the search (Faculty Search Workshop Videos | Western Kentucky University.pdf). The recorded webinars are available on the WKU HR website if the option of doing the workshops virtually is needed.

How would you describe the effectiveness of this strategy? The institution shall provide an analysis of the effectiveness of each strategy with a sufficient level of detail. If a strategy was not fully implemented or implemented at all, a thorough analysis and justifiable explanation of why this did not occur should be provided.

To recap, due to state budget short-falls, WKU was forced to eliminate approximately 140 faculty and staff positions, cut over 100+ programs, and dismantle a multidisciplinary college and its departments in 2018-19. In 2019-20, WKU lost an additional 27 full-time faculty, 42 part-time faculty, and 49 full-time staff due to attrition and retirement. The University also implemented a hiring “pause/frost,” meaning that only positions deemed essential were filled between 2018-20; many were hired in temporary or short-term positions. In 2020, WKU announced a one-time, Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) providing eligible employees the opportunity to retire with a full year’s pay as an incentive for leaving the university at the end of June 2021. A total of 125 employees applied and were approved for the program, including 73 staff members and 52 faculty members. Of the 73 staff, 4 were Black/African American, Hispanic, or two or more races, and of the 52 faculty, 1 was African American. In short, WKU lost 383 faculty and staff over the course of three academic years, and, in many cases, those positions were not filled.

Despite these overall losses, the percentage of URM in tenure-track faculty positions increased slightly from 9.2% in 2019-2020 to 9.7% (2020-2021). On the staff side (URM management occupation), there was also an increase from 12% (2019-2020) to 13.3% (2020-2021). WKU did not, however, hit the project 2020-2021 targets, quite possibly due to the sheer number of eliminated or vacated positions between from 2018 and 2021. Fortunately, budget concerns have diminished, resulting in lift on the hiring pause. In 2020-2021, over 60 searches for new permanent faculty and staff positions approved. These data will be reflected in the 2021-22 report.

In summary, the most recent data on the following shows increases in the following (see attachments beginning with “HIRING”): (a) full-time positions; (b) part-time positions; (c) waived positions (individuals hired for six months to one year); (d) less than six month positions (individuals hired for less than six months); and (e) assessments conducted by EEO, in which minorities were not part of the initial pool of candidates selected for interviews but after EEO contacted the appropriate departments, the individuals were added to the list of interview candidates. This pool resulted in the following URM employees being added in 2019-20 at least on a temporary basis: 1 American or Alaskan Native; 12 Asian/Pacific Islander; 12 Black/African American; 5 Hispanic; 1 Two or more races. In 2021-2022, WKU hired 46 faculty: 5 Asian/Pacific Islander; 4 African America; 1 Hispanic (Faculty_Hires_2020_21.xlsx). There were also numerous staff and faculty (including part-time) hires and reclassifications that included 31 employees who were American or Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Hispanic, and/or two or more races (Staff_Faculty_Reclass_2020_21.xlsx).

What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?

While the hiring pause did not lend itself to dramatically increasing the representation of faculty and staff of color, it did give us a framework for the recruitment and retention of new faculty/staff. In the past, there were no “best practices” training for search committees; we now have that system in place. In terms of next steps, participation in these new trainings will be required for all search committee participants going forward. Our plans for 2021-2022 include 1) workshops for determining target percentages for search pools in specific disciplines, 2) implementing on-boarding programs for new URM faculty and staff, and 3) creating mentoring programs for tenure-track faculty of color.

Though 2020-2021 proved, once again, to be a challenging year due to Covid-19, there were some positive outcomes. In addition to creating new hiring processes and bias trainings, WKU developed a plan for recruiting and retaining faculty of color specifically using funds set aside by the President for a Targeted Opportunity Program designed to enhance our recruiting of faculty from underrepresented groups. The program will provide funding to support 8-10 new faculty positions with funding split equally between academic affairs and the hiring college. This will ensure our deans have the resources they need to attract a diverse faculty and also reaffirms our commitment to creating a diverse and rich academic community at WKU. Some proposed ideas for this program include a diversity postdoctoral fellowship, a dissertation diversity fellowship program, and a university-wide cluster hiring program designed to transform WKU’s expertise in, and research on health, education, and well-being in communities of color, while also creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for diverse faculty.

WKU recognizes it is not enough to simply recruit employees of color. In 2019-20, we restructured our new employee orientation to include cluster orientation practices through connecting new hires with each other to share the common experience and orientation (this will be discussed in-depth in Impact Strategy 4.). We have also reinvigorated several URM faculty & staff mentoring programs/organizations including Brother to Brother (for faculty & staff men of color), the Black Faculty Association, Women in Science, and The Hilltopper Pride Network (for LGBTQIA+ faculty, staff, and allies).

Strategy 2: Conduct a faculty/staff and student Campus Climate Survey in alternating years in order to create data-driven initiatives aimed at creating a positive campus climate that embraces diversity.

How did you implement this strategy with fidelity? (500 words or less) Fidelity is defined as faithfulness to the implementation of the committed strategies demonstrated by continued loyalty and support. Evidence of fidelity may include, but would not be limited to the following: dedicated staff, specific examples of student or staff participation, data collected on strategy inputs and outputs, participation rates of students, dedicated funding, development of implementation timetables and milestones achieved, and narrative descriptions of the implementation process.

WKU is committed to providing the best possible environment for all individuals within the campus community. One important step in creating a truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive community is to understand faculty, staff, and administrators' perspectives and experiences related to their work at WKU. Developing data-driven initiatives is the core of good Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts. Above all, the perceptions of leadership, faculty, staff, and students about policies, practices, and actions of the institution should be assessed frequently and consistently. In 2020, WKU began the process of constructing a new Cultural Climate survey to collect data from faculty and staff (Campus Climate Survey_Text.pdf). Since we had begun our renewed efforts in 2019, it was important to measure and assess the strengths and weaknesses of our work as we continue to plan for the next few years. It is imperative we also understand the experiences and perceptions of diverse individuals on campus in order to create an environment where everyone feels safe, welcome, valued, and respected. We had developed some innovative initiatives aimed at creating a cultural shift on campus but, at this point we had no baseline data about the overall climate on campus. In 2019-20, the CDOs a) created the "ONE WKU" Campaign, b) piloted the ONE WKU Academy, c) established the Center for Innovative Teaching & Learning (CITL) DEI Faculty Fellows, d) formed a campus-wide collaborative DEI workgroup, and e) hosted Deliberative Dialogues, Book & Media Groups, and CITL Inclusivity Workshops. It was imperative we solicit feedback and assess the general perceptions and experience of the campus faculty and staff.

The scales embedded in the survey were designed to measure aspects of the campus climate in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). For example, the survey asked faculty, staff, and administrators about their perceptions of WKU's climate in general, their personal experiences with discrimination and harassment in the last 12 months, and perceptions of how WKU supports campus DEI efforts. The questions, developed from several validated scales, some nationally normed, were constructed to gain a better understanding of the extent to which WKU supports DEI, and to inform/improve support, policies, programs/trainings, and practices including those to prevent or respond to discrimination and harassment and the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority (URM) faculty, staff, and administrators. The survey was administered through Qualtrics, WKU's electronic, online survey platform, to all part-time and full-time faculty, staff, and administrators in the campus community and took an estimated 15 minutes to complete. Participants' responses were anonymous.

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The survey was sent, first, on Sept 9, 2020 with follow-up reminders on October 13 and October 21, then closed on October 26 at 4pm; data analysis began in January, 2021.

The purpose of the survey was to develop a better understanding of the extent to which WKU supports DEI, and to inform/improve support, policies, programs/trainings, and practices including those to prevent or respond to discrimination and harassment and the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority (URM) faculty, staff, and administrators. The data will serve as a baseline for measuring the cultural climate at WKU over the next several years. It will be distributed to faculty, staff, and administrators in even numbered years and students in odd numbered years.

Participants were informed, prior to agreeing to take the survey, that the survey was designed to help us gain an understanding of issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion by learning about our community's perspectives and experiences. Participants were also informed their responses will remain anonymous and will not be part of any academic, medical, employment, or any other university record. Participation was completely voluntary.

Usable quantitative data were collected from 562 faculty, staff, and administrators. On a scale of 1 – 5, respondents rated the over-all satisfaction of the Campus Climate 3.2; satisfaction regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion at WKU 3.3; sense of belong 3.4; sense of community 3.3; and recognition of diversity issues by campus leadership 3.1. In addition, respondents rated level of agreement of the following statements on a scale of 1 -5:

- The campus community is free from tensions related to individual or group differences (2.7).
- Recruitment of historically marginalized students, faculty, and staff is an institutional priority (3.2).
- Retention of historically marginalized students, faculty, and staff is an institutional priority (3.2).
- Senior leadership demonstrates a commitment to diversity and equity on this campus (3.2).

Of the respondents 32.5% report being discriminated against or harassed at work. Of the 32.5% percent, the majority identified gender and age as the attribute of treatment ($n = 94$ and $n = 68$, respectively) (for data see 2020-21_campus_climate_survey_faculty_staff.pdf).

From the qualitative, open-ended data analyses, the following primary themes were identified:

- Issues with lack of trust in reporting discrimination and/or harassment to supervisors (e.g., immediate, secondary, “higher ups”);
- A lack of acceptance, support, and empowerment from those who feel they are victims of “reverse” discrimination in terms of race, religion, and sexual orientation; and
- The need to create/implement safe spaces for people to express their viewpoints without being chastise or disciplined/terminated due to the voicing of their points of view.

Although not noted as primary themes, the need for representation of race and sexual orientation and gender identity in positions of was mentioned numerous times. There also seems to be an overwhelming desire for our employees to receive DEI-related training (e.g., *Not Suitable for Work*, where to access resources and policies, who handles what), with the additional steps of creating and implementing those spaces of safety to talk through these topics when changes do occur.

What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?

In general, the response to the Campus Climate Survey was positive. Many qualitative responses indicated respondents were appreciative of the ONE WKU Campaign and the efforts toward marked action rather than rhetoric with no action. The DEI workgroup has assigned a subgroup the task of further analyzing the survey data. It is important that we break down the data in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and department/college/unit so we know where to target our efforts and what topics to cover in future trainings. The Equal Employment Office, Human Resources, DEI Officers, and Provost Office have begun to explore outside programs for bias training targeting faculty and staff. Since we have a Title IX training contract with the company, Catharsis, we are in negotiation with them to bring us the *Not Suitable for Work* microaggression training program. *Not Suitable for Work* is an engaging microaggressions training designed to help faculty and staff better understand one another and “create a respectful work environment, dismantle bias culture, and recognize harmful predispositions and stereotypes” through interactive talk and exercises. WKU plans to finalize the contract in Fall 2021 and pilot the first group in Spring 2022.

Since plans are well underway for creating initiatives for faculty and staff based on results of the first survey, a student Campus Climate Survey will be administered in spring 2022. The survey will mirror the faculty and staff survey. This will give us a baseline like the faculty and staff survey and measure similar issues from the student perspective. To help navigate this work, we have created the Provost DEI Faculty Fellowship Program to be implemented in Fall 2021. The fellowship is a one-year appointment, renewable for a second year, and will focus on strategies to support faculty-related DEI efforts on our campus. The work will be guided by the DEI strategic plan and the results of the Campus Climate Survey. The Fellows will be responsible for the following DEI tasks:

- Assisting with assessment of Campus DEI efforts
- Assisting with the Campus Climate Survey
- Promoting DEI initiatives and programs
- Assisting with the creation and management of DEI faculty mentoring programs
- Assisting in the development of the state-wide Council on Postsecondary Education’s Cultural Competence Certificate for students and faculty/staff/administration
- Working with the WKU Institute for Inclusive Teaching
- Promoting and presenting DEI-related workshops through the Center for Innovative Teaching & Learning (CITL)

Most of these tasks were identified through an analysis of the Campus Climate Survey. The list of tasks above is intended to address the findings of the survey. The faculty and staff survey will be repeated in 2022-23 as one means of measuring the efficacy of the initiatives implemented in response the 2020-21. This “every two years” rotation will be the same rotation used for students.

Strategy 3: Establish an Institute for Inclusive Teaching (for faculty)/Academy for Workplace Inclusiveness (for staff)

How did you implement this strategy with fidelity? (500 words or less) Fidelity is defined as faithfulness to the implementation of the committed strategies demonstrated by continued loyalty and support. Evidence of fidelity may include, but would not be limited to the following: dedicated staff, specific examples of student or staff participation, data collected on strategy

inputs and outputs, participation rates of students, dedicated funding, development of implementation timetables and milestones achieved, and narrative descriptions of the implementation process.

This strategy has been revised since 2019-2020. The previous wording, “*Formalize mechanisms to infuse cultural competency within all aspects of the institution,*” was broad, nonspecific, and more indicative of a goal than a strategy. The new wording is specific, making it an intentional institution-wide strategy for infusing cultural competence.

In 2019-20, the Co-Chief Diversity Officers created the “We Are ONE WKU” Campaign. The campaign was designed to engage the entire campus in dialogues. We hosted book and media groups, campus dialogues concerning WKU buildings named after slaves, and workshops on biases and microaggressions. In Fall 2020, the campaign piloted what we coined the *ONE WKU Academy for Faculty and Staff*. Participants in the pilot Academy ($n = 31$) all participated in three, two-hour sessions: a) Microaggressions/biases, b) Intercultural/Interracial Communication, and c) Allyship. These cultural competence workshops used the book, “*What it I say Something Wrong? 25 Habits of Culturally Effective People*” as a text. In addition, participants were also asked to attend three other events offered by the ONE WKU Campaign (Deliberative Dialogues (Short Guide_Confederates in Our Attic.pdf), Book & Media Groups, CITL Inclusivity Workshops, etc.). At the end of the Academy, those who completed all the workshops were surveyed and asked to examine what worked and what didn’t (see ONE WKU Assessment.docx). On the qualitative portion of the survey respondents overwhelming reported gaining a lot of useful information but felt they could benefit for more targeted training. Specifically, faculty believed it would be beneficial to focus more on pedagogical issues in the classroom and staff felt they needed tools unique to workplace inclusivity [Quantitative data will be discussed under Success Strategy #4].

Our first focus in response to faculty and staff reactions was to create professional development workshops and trainings for faculty area of Inclusive Teaching for 2021-2022. In order to achieve this goal, the Provost’s Office, in collaboration with the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, created the DEI Community of Practice in the fall of 2020. Six Faculty Fellows were chosen through an application process based on their proven commitment to teaching and learning innovation and relentless pursuit of addressing DEI at WKU and beyond. The Faculty Fellows were charged with designing modules for what would be called the ONE WKU Inclusive Teaching Academy.

How would you describe the effectiveness of this strategy? The institution shall provide an analysis of the effectiveness of each strategy with a sufficient level of detail. If a strategy was not fully implemented or implemented at all, a thorough analysis and justifiable explanation of why this did not occur should be provided.

Since this initiative is new, it has not been fully implemented yet, but a great deal of work was done in 2020-2021 in terms of developing the modules for the ONE WKU Inclusive Teaching Academy.

The WKU Inclusive Teaching Academy (ITA), an initiative of the “One WKU” campaign, will be a four-month professional development opportunity for all faculty ranks. Faculty from each of the five WKU colleges will be selected through a competitive application process each semester.

The ITA will launch its inaugural cohort in January 2022. The ITA was created to fulfill four interrelated functions:

- To introduce and/or deepen participants' knowledge of inclusive and culturally responsive teaching.
- To create opportunities for participants to apply evidence-based DEI principles to course design and pedagogy.
- To offer a collegial space for participants to reflect on their current and proposed teaching practices.
- To grow the community of practitioners focused on inclusivity.

The ITA is designed to develop advocates rather than experts. The academy and its architects (the Community of Practice Fellows) do not assume the role of authority on DEI issues and do not seek to train participants to become experts. Rather, the goal is to cultivate a mindset of continuous growth through praxis and reflection as a way to foster DEI advocacy at WKU. Through participation in the ITA, participants will be able to more effectively:

- Support an inclusive learning environment.
- Intentionally approach difficult interactions.
- Promote the academic success of diverse students.

The ITA will be a four-month program in which faculty meet once a week to study, reflect, discuss, and implement key principles of inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive teaching. On average, faculty will spend 2-3 hours preparing for workshops, participating in sessions, and then implementing and reflecting on the concepts introduced in each module. It is anticipated that faculty will spend approximately 32 hours on academy-related functions over the course of the program.

ITA's curriculum is composed of four key content modules:

- Module 1: Integrating Inclusivity into Course Set-Up
- Module 2: Course and Classroom Climate
- Module 3: Teaching with Transparency
- Module 4: Grading for Equity

These modules address issues related to both course design and teaching practice. Each module will take a month and is broken up into three weekly sessions that will allow for an overview, discussion, application, and reflection of each topic. Sessions will be conducted both virtually and face-to-face as well as synchronously and asynchronously. All the materials will be made available online.

What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?

The next steps are as follows:

The ITA was designed to become a part of the CPE's Cultural Competence Certificate Program and will follow the A4 model:

Module 1: Integrating Inclusivity into Course Set-Up (Competencies addressed: Awareness (A1); Acknowledgment (A2))

Two of the goals for this module will include:

- Articulating the impact of the assumptions that underlie the faculty’s teaching, classroom, and curricular goals.
- Recognizing how the instructor’s culture shapes expectations of student behavior, learning, and performance in the classroom.

Module 2: Course and Classroom Climate (Competencies addressed: Acknowledgment (A2); Acceptance (A3)). This module’s focuses on facilitating and participating in courageous conversations with students inside and outside the classroom allows for a deeper dive into the concept of intersectionality. The very act of conducting intentionally courageous conversations leads to reflection on how our identities impact those with whom we interact and explore how identities are influenced by several cultural categories. Furthermore, because the faculty will engage in simulated scenarios of courageous and tough conversations, faculty will be able to identify their own personal biases and how they shape their worldview while determining how to facilitate conversations that allow for opposing views that challenge one’s assumptions and beliefs.

Module 3: Teaching with Transparency (Competencies addressed: Acknowledgment (A2); Acceptance (A3)). Given that this module focuses specifically on designing assignments with transparency, it directly acknowledges the idea of a hidden curriculum. By making expectations and standards visible and legible, this module asks faculty to examine and explore their own privilege. To discuss how our identities impact those with whom we interact acknowledges faculty privilege as members of a PWI of higher education.

Module 4: Grading for Equity (Competencies addressed: Awareness (A1); Acknowledgment (A2); Acceptance (A3); Action (A4)) By the end of the final module, the academy participants will have examined various approaches to grading, evaluated and corrected their own impact of implicit biases on grading, and designed more equitable classroom grading strategies. Given that grading is very much conditioned by implicit bias and can, therefore, be a form of manifesting a micro-aggression that can have a long-lasting and deleterious impact on a student’s academic performance, this is a module essential for the academic success of our students.

The program will be submitted to the State CPE in Fall 2021 with an anticipated start date of Spring 2022.

Strategy 4: Conduct diversity workshops/trainings for all new WKU hires as part of the on-boarding process.

How did you implement this strategy with fidelity? (500 words or less) Fidelity is defined as faithfulness to the implementation of the committed strategies demonstrated by continued loyalty and support. Evidence of fidelity may include, but would not be limited to the following: dedicated staff, specific examples of student or staff participation, data collected on strategy inputs and outputs, participation rates of students, dedicated funding, development of implementation timetables and milestones achieved, and narrative descriptions of the implementation process.

This strategy has been revised since 2019-2020 and is new this year, so most of the data is from a pilot study/initiative. For this new strategy, we combined the notions “Promote equity and inclusion

on campus in order to create a positive campus climate that embraces diversity” and “Formalize mechanisms to infuse cultural competency within all aspects of the institution” to create a measurable strategy. This is an additional strategy making the wording more indicative of a strategy rather than broad goals.

In 2020, WKU appointed a new Associate Provost of Faculty & Academic Excellence. Part of the responsibility included in this position is the on-boarding process of new faculty. Past methods for new faculty orientation included a week-long process of touring campus, getting an ID, creating email accounts, introductions, and all the “nut and bolts” of the campus. After that week, not much was done to further conversations and explore the values and mission of the institution. In response to the national climate and anti-racist efforts on our campus, it was important for us to include some sort mandatory DEI training for new faculty and staff hired at WKU. Initially we piloted the project with faculty since they are essentially hired and begin employment at the same time. The shared start date made the group large enough to assess.

All new hires in fall 2020 were required to attend and participate in the ONE WKU Academy Pilot. Participants in the pilot Academy included all new employees ($n = 11$), all CITL DEI Faculty Fellows ($n = 6$), and members of the DEI workgroup ($n = 14$). The sessions include three, two-hour sessions: a) Microaggressions/biases, b) Intercultural/Interracial Communication, and c) Allyship. These cultural competence workshops will use the book, “*What it I say Something Wrong? 25 Habits of Culturally Effective People*” as a text. In addition, new hires were required to attend three other events offer by the ONE WKU Campaign (Deliberative Dialogues, Book & Media Groups, CITL Inclusivity Workshops, etc.), two Deliberative Dialogues in Spring 2021, and complete a survey designed to measure their experience in the Academy.

How would you describe the effectiveness of this strategy? The institution shall provide an analysis of the effectiveness of each strategy with a sufficient level of detail. If a strategy was not fully implemented or implemented at all, a thorough analysis and justifiable explanation of why this did not occur should be provided.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (or Theory of Reasoned Action) interventions, or initiatives, can be assessed by measuring participants behavioral intentions. In order to assess the efficacy of the ONE WKU Academy’s impact on new faculty hires, the participants were asked to rank their intentions to engage in certain behaviors based on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The survey was used to measure all participants, so identifiers were used to pull new hires only. The questionnaire was designed to measure the following: 1) Attitudes, 2) Behavioral Intention, 3) Subjective norms, and 4) Social norms. In order to gather this information, the following scale was used:

- I would like to join an organization that emphasizes getting to know people from different countries.
- Persons with disabilities can teach me things I could not learn elsewhere.
- Getting to know someone of another race is generally an uncomfortable experience for me.
- I would like to go to dances that feature music from other countries.
- I can best understand someone after I get to know how he/she/they is both similar to and different from me.
- I am only at ease with people of my race.
- I often listen to music of other cultures.

- Knowing how a person differs from me greatly enhances our friendship.
- It's really hard for me to feel close to a person from another race (reverse coded).
- I am interested in learning about the many cultures that have existed in this world.
- In getting to know someone, I like knowing both how he/she differs from me and is similar to me.
- It is very important that a friend agrees with me on most issues (reverse coded).
- I attend events where I might get to know people from different racial backgrounds.
- Knowing about the different experiences of other people helps me understand my own problems better.
- I often feel irritated by persons of a different race (reversed coded).

Crosstabulations by “new hire” and scaled items indicated that 71.38% of the new hire either agreed or strongly agreed on items related to positive intent and 75.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed on reverse coded items (negative intent) (see ONE WKU Assessment Data.csv).

What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?

This strategy could be considered “partially implemented,” because it was considered a pilot with faculty only. There were several issues that occurred with the roll-out of this initiative as well that will be corrected in Fall 2021.

First, the “new hire” project began in conjunction with the ONE WKU Academy Pilot, which meant that new faculty were grouped with participants who were testing the methodology of the project (the CITL DEI Fellows and the DEI Workgroup). While this approach seemed like a good idea at the time, the goals of the participants were vastly different, so Zoom discussion rooms were not balanced well. While the comments were positive about the experience, the new hires really did not know why they were involved in the project. Going forward, only new faculty will be included in the workshops. We also plan to use the Catharsis *Not Suitable for Work* microaggression training as an introduction, with the DEI on-boarding sessions only occurring in the fall. The hope is the Inclusive Teaching Academy will be available for all interested parties every spring; new hires can be included.

Second, the intention was to do a pre-test/post-test so we could get an idea of participant attitudes and behavioral intentions before and after the two-semester program. In the process of planning the sessions, coordinating the book & media groups, and writing deliberative dialogue materials, the design of the survey got lost in the shuffle. It is imperative that assessment include the pre-test/post-test or some form of valid assessment next year.

Third, the faculty cohort (n = 11) was rather small, so validity is difficult. We wanted to test the pilot project before the 60+ approved positions were filled. We now have a better idea of what the training workshops should look like and we can incorporate “lessons learned” from the pilot for this much larger group. We have also implemented some of these strategies for the on-boarding of new, internal-hire departments heads. Those efforts include dealing with DEI issues in relation to faculty and students.

Finally, we are working on a similar program for staff in conjunction with an Academy for Workplace Inclusiveness (staff only). Since staff start employment as varied times, it is a little more

difficult to create a timeline and must be driven by *when* staff are hired and *how many* are hired at one time. We plan to start our first staff diversity trainings/workshops in Fall 2022.