Table of Contents

2   Message from the Interim Dean

3   FSU Diversity Statement

4   How We Define EDI at CCI

5   CCI Diversity Statement

6   EDI Strategic Planning Focus Groups

7   Focus Groups’ Feedback

9   Guiding Principles

10  Strategic Approach

11  Change Forward: Our New Direction

12-18 Goals and Strategies

19  Timeline and Milestones
“Learning about others and hearing different ideas make us more creative researchers, problem-solvers, and people.”

Larry Dennis
Dean Emeritus, College of Communication and Information
Message from the Interim Dean

Our nation, state, university and college face tremendous challenges, as reflected in historical conditions and current questions about how to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion to serve all citizens. We need to do a better job at including and serving our whole community in Florida and reflecting its tremendous diversity. Among the ways we can respond is to provide equitable access to higher education. We accomplish this by including students, staff, and faculty from different backgrounds in shaping our efforts, reaching out to the world, and providing a supportive environment. Learning about others and hearing different ideas make us more creative researchers, problem solvers, and people. It also benefits our students by preparing them for the society and workforce in which they will participate.

The College of Communication and Information has multiple roles serving the public in the State of Florida and the nation. We prepare students for active democratic engagement, for leadership in their communities, and for excellence in their professions. We help build the State of Florida by addressing important issues in our research and creative work. Students and faculty engage in service to connect to our communities and to learn through this service. For these reasons, public universities are often referred to as engines of social mobility, both for individual students and the larger society.

Our College needed a strategy and a plan for equity, diversity, and inclusion. It needed to be substantive and informed by the views of everyone in the college. More importantly, the process of developing the plan needed to reflect our vision for fairness and inclusivity. Dr. Chanta Haywood led this effort for the College during 2020-2021. She has extensive experience in leading and executing strategic initiatives on a large scale. Considering our goals for equity, diversity, and inclusion, Chanta conducted research, created and analyzed surveys, organized focus groups, drafted reporting guidelines, synthesized the reports, met with and followed up with stakeholders, and produced the College’s first EDI strategic plan.

While our consultations have focused on the challenges facing the College and identifying our goals and plans, these are in parallel with university efforts. The University’s Strategic Plan 2017-2022 includes “Diversity and Inclusion” as a core goal. The University also created a Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion in August 2020, which produced recommendations in Spring 2021, and a response plan from the President in June, 2021.

This plan is an important point in an ongoing effort to understand and make real in our college some of the core values our country is built upon. We seek to make significant steps, to keep debating and researching these questions, and to communicate these efforts to the public, as is our role in a great public university.

What follows here is a joint effort across all three schools in CCI of which we are extremely proud. While this plan is an important step forward, there is still much work ahead. It will take the intentional, coordinated efforts of everyone to implement it. Diversity will make our college richer. Inclusion will ensure full participation and support of all members of our college community. Equity will ensure fairness across the board. Achieving all three cannot be done without you, so I ask you to join CCI’s effort to make this endeavor a success.

Stephen McDowell
CCI Interim Dean
Across the nation, institutions of higher education are struggling to build meaningful community from an increasingly diverse student body. With programs like Unconquered Scholars, FSU is redefining what inclusion can mean on college campuses—which has led to our being named one of only 10 “Diversity Champion” universities nationally by INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine. Our approach starts with a belief that diversity is about more than a particular head count: it must reflect the quality and depth of interactions. By valuing, celebrating and leveraging the differences and similarities within our community, we create a fertile environment for problem-solving—one that is more inventive and compassionate. We’re proud that our cohesive community has become a signature of the FSU experience. But we can, and we will, do more.
How We Define Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in CCI

Faculty, staff, and students involved in CCI’s equity, diversity, and inclusion planning efforts felt that defining equity, diversity, and inclusion puts each of us on the same page as we carry out our goals, strategies, and tactics.

Diversity

For the purposes of this plan diversity is defined as “the sum of all of the ways that people are alike and different. This includes the full spectrum of human and social identities with regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, ability, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, beliefs, or socioeconomic status.”

Equity

“Equity is the deliberate creation and reinforcement of behavior, actions, policies, and practices that ensure access, opportunities, and fair treatment for all CCI students, staff and faculty.”

Inclusion

By inclusion we mean having a college culture in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully and are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, beliefs, and perspectives.
Why EDI Matters in CCI

Faculty, staff and students felt the need for and crafted the following statement to publicly declare our internal and external commitment to creating a college that ensures that everyone enjoys the same treatment, considerations, and protections.

CCI Diversity Statement

The College of Communication and Information at Florida State University recognizes and believes in equity, diversity, and inclusion as core principles. We believe that diversity among our faculty, staff, and students strengthens the college, enriches the college culture, fuels creativity, fosters learning, promotes the exchange of ideas, prepares our students for a global workforce, and improves problem solving. We strive to ensure that all students, faculty, and staff work in an equitable and inclusive environment where they are safe, welcome, valued, respected, and have opportunities to pursue their goals.
Between October and December of 2020, the following groups of volunteer faculty, staff and students were engaged to solicit feedback for the identified goals for the plan. They were led by convening chairs and submitted thorough reports of their findings and recommendations.

**Research & Grants**

**Goal:** Identify strategies for pursuing EDI research collaborations & funding.

**Chair:** Kelly Farquharson

Jonathan Adams  
Rachel Bailey  
Shawn Banner  
Andrea Barton-Hulsey  
Nancy Everhart

Zhe He  
Lorri Mon  
Cherie Pagan  
Ren Saludo  
Margaret Zimmerman

**Curriculum & Pedagogical Strategies**

**Goal:** Develop innovative ways to include diversity in courses.

**Chair:** Mollie Romano

Nivia Escobar Salazar  
Leila Gibradze  
LaKeisha Johnson  
Kirby Kander

Donna Nudd  
Linda Swaine  
Mark Zeigler

**Student Experiences**

**Goal:** Develop strategies to ensure an inclusive graduate and undergraduate student environment & to increase student awareness of diversity issues.

**Chair:** Misha Laurents

Felecia Jordan  
John Marks  
Malia Bruker  
Jessica Wendorf Muhamed  
Jacob Garcia  
Steve McDowell  
Ebe Randeree

Danyele Martin  
Christy Chatmon  
Andrew Pitts  
Kristen Guynes  
Stephanie Vivirito  
Kimberlee Crass  
Kelly Kelly

**Faculty, Staff, & Recruitment**

**Goal:** Develop strategies to recruit and develop diverse faculty and staff.

**Chair:** Davis Houck

Melissa Gross  
Don Latham  
Shannon Hall Mills  
Art Raney

Amy Mosher  
Richard Morris  
Ariel Smith  
Estrella Rodriguez

**Student Recruitment**

**Goal:** Develop strategies to recruit and develop diverse students.

**Chair:** Aimee Reist  
**Co-Chair:** Sana Tibi

Laura Arpan  
Mafé Brooks  
Hugh Catts  
Sindy Chapa  
Russell Clayton  
Betsy Crawford  
Michaela Densmore  
Arienne Ferchaud  
Lucas von Hollen  
Amy Mosher  
Michelle Therrien
Focus Groups’ Feedback

The focus groups submitted reports which were analyzed for themes and common responses. Specific strategies and tactics were also identified and are delineated on pages 13-19 of this plan. Below are the themes from the Focus Group Reports.

**Research & Grants**
- Identifying and accessing EDI-related grants
- Supporting and funding work of individuals from diverse backgrounds
- Incentivizing faculty - especially junior faculty - for submitting and being awarded foundation grants
- Involving and supporting students on grants
- Seeking partnerships with community leaders

**Curriculum & Pedagogical Strategies**
- Conducting forums to discuss and act on strategies
- Creating EDI pedagogy committees/teams
- Considering time constraints that prevent otherwise motivated faculty from making important changes to their teaching practices and content

**Student Experiences**
- Creating an inclusive ecosystem
- Offering additional advising opportunities
- Preventing tribalism in classroom and programs
- Creating safe digital and physical spaces for students
- Educating “all” students (not just minorities) on need for inclusion and diversity
- Communicating constantly with students

**Faculty, Staff, & Recruitment**
- Considering policies and laws protecting EDI-related information
- Requesting a diversity statement from all applicants
- Advertising and promoting all positions through organizations, websites, and social media platforms
- Celebrating unique contributions of faculty and staff
- Working to dismantle social and cultural divides

**Student Recruitment**
- Hiring more staff to recruit
- Offering more online courses
- Waiving fees and test scores
- Providing funding for diverse students
- Engaging alumni and community members
“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.”

Malcolm Forbes
Guiding Principles

Faculty, students and staff involved in the strategic planning process were driven by a desire to develop and shape a long-term culture of equity, diversity and inclusion in CCI. The decisions and actions taken in the development of our plan were guided by the following principles.

1
Cross-Disciplinary and Functional Collaboration

Promoting collaboration and cross-disciplinary approaches to EDI will make our efforts more comprehensive. Leveraging the expertise and experiences of all faculty, staff, and students is needed encouraged, considered and appreciated. Working together across disciplinary and functional lines ensures the optimization of results.

2
Alignment with FSU & SUS Goals

Hiring and admitting faculty, students and staff using data that reflects the population of the State of Florida and the country is extremely important. We will also align with and support FSU’s and SUS’ goals for diversity.

3
Inclusive College Culture

It is necessary to create a cultural shift to achieve our EDI goals. Having a more diverse population is just one half of the equation. The other half is ensuring that we have a culture in our college that shows intentional efforts to be inclusive. This means that we would have to make cultural shifts in programming, course development, student recruitment, community involvement and more.

4
Openness and Inclusivity

Fostering an open and inclusive process ensures that all voices and perspectives are heard. Therefore, we listen and respond to all recommendations and views. We also allow stakeholders to pursue various paths to achieving goals. Transparency and communication are a priority.
Strategic Approach

1 Trend Analysis

In addition to studying national trends in EDI efforts, we reviewed and analyzed the University’s strategic plan, specifically its priority for equity, inclusion and diversity. A review and analysis of the strategic plans for each School within CCI were also conducted to understand their written goals on EDI, identify their goals on collaborative work and to see their similarities across units.

2 Needs Assessment

A survey was conducted to ascertain faculty, staff and student views of the equity, diversity and inclusion needs in the college. Common responses and themes were identified, and from those, the following strategic priorities emerged:

- Develop curriculum and pedagogical strategies that will enhance diversity and inclusion and explore innovative ways to include diversity in courses.
- Recruit diverse faculty and staff and create an inclusive culture for everyone.
- Recruit diverse students and create an inclusive culture for them all to thrive.
- Identify and pursue collaborative EDI research and grant funding.
- Create and ensure an inclusive student environment and increase student awareness of diversity issues.

3 Focus Groups

Focus groups of faculty, staff and students were formed based on the priorities. The Dean identified convening chairs who would organized the initial meeting of the groups and help establish the groups approach to producing the deliverables. Guidelines were developed for each group to follow during their deliberations. Each group produced a 3-5 page report.

4 Strategic Actions

We assessed the reports, looking specifically for more themes, strategic actions, and recommendations for implementation.

5 Collaborative Engagement

Engaging in a collaborative process, we composed definitions of equity, diversity and inclusion and devised our diversity statement using specific language from the focus group reports. Synthesis of the reports revealed the need for two additional goals: assessment and communication. College-wide input was solicited on strategies and tactics for those goals. The plan was then shared with groups and faculty and staff for final feedback.
The following is a plan we envision as a living document that will be updated and revised as our college culture changes. The specific goals and strategies will strengthen a college’s environment for equity, diversity and inclusion. The 7 goals, 16 strategies and 57 tactics will be prioritized and implemented by CCI faculty, staff, and students over the next three years with support from the Office of the Dean.

Our focus and direction will be guided by the following goals and strategies described in this plan:

1. Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Development
2. Student Recruitment
3. Student Experiences
4. Research and Funding
5. Curriculum and Pedagogy
6. Communication
7. Evaluation and Assessment
Goal 1: Faculty & Staff Recruitment & Development

Improve recruitment efforts of diverse staff and faculty and develop a CCI-wide and School-specific staff and faculty culture that reflects and pursues our EDI ideals.

Strategy 1.1 Develop and improve processes that effect recruiting faculty and staff

1. Develop and post an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement that is readily accessible and prominently displayed on the CCI website.
2. Ensure that faculty search committees across the three Schools request a diversity statement from applicants.
3. Create a separate page on each School’s website for the posting of position announcements, with direct links to the HR application and (importantly) to FSU EDI resources.
4. Advertise and promote all open faculty and staff positions through organizations, websites, social media platforms, and listservs that are targeted to and serve diverse populations.
5. Provide funding for any diversity-targeted promotion efforts.
6. Continue to recruit potential faculty and staff candidates at academic and other professional conferences, alumni events, and other relevant gatherings.
7. Inform candidates for all open CCI staff and faculty positions of the various Affinity Groups on campus.
8. Have school-level outreach and other recruiting efforts be made to relevant, terminal degree programs in HBCUs (in particular those within Florida) when positions become available.

Strategy 1.2 Develop a work-culture worldview that celebrates unique contributions and fosters personal and professional growth and development

1. Integrate staff members into faculty committees and other school work, especially when the decisions made therein directly affect the staff members.
2. Familiarize faculty and staff members with (when appropriate) participants in the multitude of FSU Affinity Groups dedicated to EDI.
3. Promote incidental moments of sharing information, ideas, and resources to improve their teaching content and practices.
Goal 2: Student Recruitment

Develop and execute strategies to recruit and develop diverse students.

Strategy 2.1  Develop strategies to recruit & develop diverse students

1. Grow our online degree offerings to increase diversity enrollments.
2. Waive the GRE admission requirement at the Master’s program level across all schools.
3. Reconsider requiring letters of recommendation in the application package.
4. Pursue an agreement with the university to waive application fees for students who meet diversity criteria including financial need.

Strategy 2.2  Develop EDI Mentorship Program

1. Build relationships between experienced professionals and students
2. Provide a unique opportunity for minority students to learn from successful professionals about career paths, challenges and opportunities in their field.
3. Identify and match students with alumni based on the students’ backgrounds, interests, and career goals.

Strategy 2.3  Hire staff who are dedicated to recruiting diverse students
Goal 3: Student Experiences

Ensure an inclusive student environment and increase student awareness of diversity issues.

**Strategy 3.1** Improve advising to prevent students from falling through the cracks

1. Compile and share social media platforms with advising.
2. Develop more targeted messaging from faculty members and department heads.
3. Continue online advising after the pandemic allowing students to choose virtual or in person appointments.

**Strategy 3.2** Increase awareness of diversity opportunities for students.

1. Conduct an audit of communication tools and channels used by the college and schools, student organizations across the college, and student organizations across the campus at large.
2. Create an inventory of the channels to connect diverse student groups.
3. Improve mechanisms for tracking retention and identifying and reporting trends.

**Strategy 3.3** Improve mentorship efforts

1. Develop more career development courses.
2. Improve faculty and chairs/area heads roles in communicating career and mentorship opportunities for students.
3. Find online, free workshops for students to attend.

**Strategy 3.4** Improve outreach efforts

1. Provide outreach through college and campus-based organizations.
2. Provide outreach to community via local/national/professional organizations.
3. Develop and facilitate extracurricular events with diverse content, speakers, activities, and involvement.

**Strategy 3.5** Identify, create, and promote purposeful physical and digital spaces where students come together and have a sense of place.
Goal 4: Research & Funding

Identify areas for EDI research collaborations and grant funding to support and fund EDI projects and/or individuals from diverse backgrounds.

**Strategy 4.1**

**Develop an EDI research culture**

1. Conduct annual college-wide training specific to grants that focus on EDI topics or directed towards supporting individuals and collaborators from diverse backgrounds.
2. Create an incentive structure for submitting and receiving EDI-related foundation grants.
3. Create an EDI Student Research Council to support, involve, and engage students in EDI research.
4. Partner with community organizations and leaders on their efforts to serve diverse populations.
Goal 5: Curriculum & Pedagogy

Improve the quality of EDI-related content and culturally responsive teaching practices used in CCI.

Strategy 5.1

Improve EDI-related content in the classroom

1. Create a menu of on-going options that faculty can select each year to increase the quality of EDI content and pedagogy in their work.
2. Develop a process for executing the menu of on-going teaching options.
3. Formalize the strong “hallway culture” in which faculty often informally seek out and share ideas with other faculty about how to include EDI content and pedagogy in coursework.
4. Develop a motto such as “Do life with people who look different than you” that reflects the value placed on EDI in every aspect of our lives, including our curriculum and pedagogy.
Goal 6: Communication

Enhance communication to ensure that the CCI community understands our commitment to a climate of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

**Strategy 6.1** Have reporting or mechanisms that share EDI efforts

1. Publish the EDI strategic plan in accessible and visible spaces.
2. Publish the EDI Statement in accessible and visible spaces.
3. Produce an annual EDI report with “where we have been,” “what we have achieved,” and “where we plan to go” data across all three Schools.
4. Create an EDI page on the existing CCI website and track traffic.
5. Create an EDI Canvas course.

**Strategy 6.2** Develop and promote EDI programs and initiatives

1. Host a series of round tables in which faculty, students, and staff are invited to participate and attend to talk about EDI issues.
2. Develop ways to recognize individuals and groups that show a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
Goal 7: Evaluation & Assessment

Evaluate and assess CCI’s efforts toward equity, diversity, and inclusion to develop and improve EDI practices

**Strategy 7.1** Have reporting or mechanisms that share EDI efforts

1. Assess faculty, staff, and students’ opinions of CCI’s EDI issues and provide a safe environment to discuss and address their concerns.
2. Conduct separate student, faculty, and staff surveys of EDI efforts, goals, and performance and include results in a publicized annual report.
3. Conduct exit survey for all graduating students to assess their perceptions of EDI efforts.
4. Establish outcomes and assessments for diversity training initiatives for students, faculty, and staff.
5. Evaluate all EDI events, meetings, and activities to determine participants’ views of their effectiveness.

**Strategy 7.2** Develop mechanisms to create and evaluate an inclusive climate

1. Host forums, programs, and events.
2. Track course content or internship activities addressing EDI issues.
3. Form an EDI standing committee that oversees assessment.
4. Create a Student Task Force / Committee to involve students with CCI and University EDI issues.
5. Catalogue and assess campus-wide EDI-related activities and initiatives and seek opportunities for collaborations.
Timeline and Milestones

Organization & Planning
2020-2021

Assess EDI Needs
Conduct Trend Analyses
Data Collection and Analysis
Establish Focus Groups
Develop Focus Group Guidelines
Analyze Focus Groups Reports
Devise Strategic Plan
Review Strategic Plan
Process Report

Implementation
2021-2024

Develop Budget
Develop Communication Plan
Develop Assessment system
Devise Recruitment Strategies
Create EDI Team
Create EDI Groups
Execute programs, events and activities
Engage in Continuous Improvement