



American University's PLAN FOR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE SUMMARY

January 30, 2018

American University was founded to respond to the needs of a changing world, with a set of guiding values—among them diversity, equity, and inclusion. In today's climate on campus and around the nation, the need to live up to those values has only become more pressing. AU cannot be excellent without taking specific steps to improve inclusion on campus.

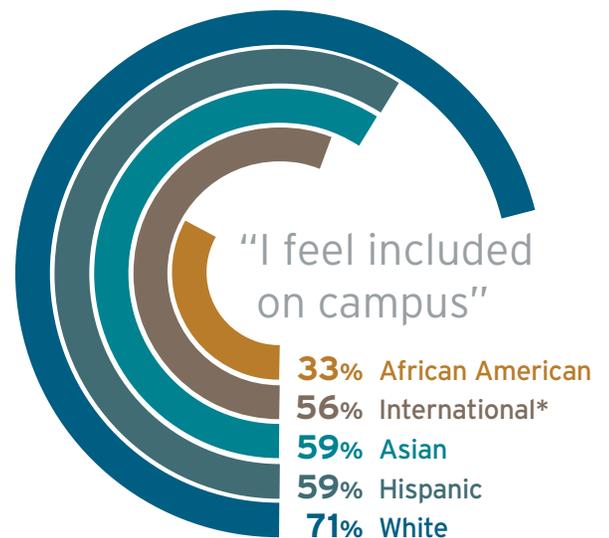
In 2016 and 2017, the university faced egregious acts of hate and bias. While responding to those incidents and making progress on training, hiring, diverse scholarship opportunities, and changes to curriculum, university leadership became more acutely aware of the sharply different campus experiences of people of color, especially African American students, faculty, and staff.

Under President Sylvia Burwell's leadership, the university has undertaken a close analysis of the opportunities and challenges it faces with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The new Plan for Inclusive Excellence summarizes the university's findings and its next steps, including a two-year action plan for implementation and clear metrics to track progress.

WHERE WE ARE More students of color experience bias, and feel alienated and unsafe, than their white peers—for example, 33 percent of African American students feel included on campus, compared to 71 percent of white students.

Institutions, policies, and practices that could respond to those experiences are considered at best inconsistent and opaque; at worst, biased. As one example, the training programs that could foster a sense of cultural competence and mitigate bias are varied and voluntary, and their effectiveness has not been adequately measured.

While diversity across AU has grown—44 percent of new faculty in the fall of 2017 self-reported as people of color, for example—inequities still exist.



SOURCE 2017 Campus Climate Survey
*International students are defined as people with student or non-immigrant visas.

PROMISING PRACTICE

While there is work ahead, we identified programs that will support our new efforts, including some that have already shown promise.

Among them are the founding of the President's Council on Diversity and Inclusion, new hiring and training programs that led to significant results in faculty hiring, new course offerings that bring racial identity and cultural competency to the core curriculum, new centers of scholarship like the Antiracist Research and Policy Center, a new major on African American and African diaspora studies, and the most diverse Alumni Association Board in AU's recorded history.

ACTIONS AU recognizes that inclusive excellence must be infused not just in our rhetoric, but in the steps we take. With that in mind, the plan sets out a series of concrete steps, organized under five goals.

- Goal 1 **Training, learning, and development** to equip members of our community to lead change in a complex world. Example: Implement institution-wide training for all community members, tailored to the needs of AU constituencies and designed to focus on unconscious bias and cultural competence as critical aspects of orientation, learning, onboarding, and professional development.
- Goal 2 A focus on **campus climate, culture, and community**, so that all community members feel safe, satisfied, and that they belong here. Example: Provide grant incentives to encourage collaboration across departments and student organizations to develop innovative diversity and inclusion programs, build a sense of community, and positively impact climate for faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
- Goal 3 Changes to our **systems, policies, and procedures** to promote diversity, inclusion, transparency, and accountability. Example: Adopt consistent hiring committee policies and practices across the university to further equitable outcomes.
- Goal 4 **Access and equity** in the way we recruit, hire, train, develop, evaluate, and recognize faculty, staff, and administrators. Example: Pilot a training program for faculty hiring and reappointment/promotion review committees focused on recognizing and eliminating bias in recruitment and promotion processes.
- Goal 5 A focus on **curriculum and instruction** to seek to ensure that our core curriculum demonstrates critical inquiry, intellectual engagement, and respectful discourse. Example: Each school will participate in professional development and learning programs to enhance classroom climate.

IMPLEMENTATION As part of our plan to take actionable steps, we lay out the timeline of implementation, the resources we have invested and will invest, and how we intend to measure success. A commitment to change requires a commitment to accountability.

IMPACT American University will live up to our values, seek to ensure that everyone in this community feels included, and strive toward excellence in the 21st century. Change will take time and the engagement and commitment of all members of the AU community.

We encourage the entire AU community to read the plan, engage with it, and identify the ways we each will support its objectives and goals.

Read the plan at www.American.edu/Diversity



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D.C.