

JUNE 2021 PROGRESS REPORT ON  
CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY'S  
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, SUBMITTED TO SCHEV MAY 2020

*Executive Summary*

Christopher Newport University's academic and administrative units are invested in doing the work to make equity visible, and demonstrate our commitment to inclusive excellence. This executive summary offers a brief view of specific areas of progress since the initial submission of our Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion, to SCHEV in May of 2020.

**Goal 1, Pathway 2.** Create a recognition program to highlight our students, faculty and staff who are doing work to advance diversity and inclusion on our campus.

- The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) has proposed a Faculty Award for Excellence in Inclusive Practice, currently under review by the Faculty Senate and Provost for adoption in the 2021-22 academic year (AY).

**Goal 2, Students, Pathway 1c.** Attract first-generation students and students from underrepresented groups through the establishment of programs like Community Captains.

- The Community Captains program celebrated its first two-year cohort's graduation with an on-campus ceremony in June 2021. We anticipate the matriculation of 18 students from that cohort in the fall semester at CNU. Those students will include 11 Black / African American, five White, one Hispanic / Latinx, and one self-identified as two or more races. (see attachment)
- Fall 2020 Census data show increases in our underrepresented minority groups that appears to continue for fall 2021.

	Black / AA	American Indian / Alaskan Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian / PI	Hispanic	Two or More Races	Total
Fall 2019	6%	0% (2)	4%	0% (1)	6%	4%	20%
Fall 2020	7%	0%	4%	0% (1)	7%	5%	23%
Fall 2021*	8%	0%	4%	0%	9%	4%	25%

Source: CNU Institutional Research, Fall Census data; Fall 2021 enrollment data

**Goal 2, Students, Pathway 2b.** Investigate current mentoring and transition programs supporting underrepresented students, including first-generation college students and international students.

- ODEI has developed external corporate partnerships to facilitate mentoring opportunities for underrepresented minority students in STEM, internships and job opportunities in banking, and mentorships and shadowing opportunities in healthcare.
- The newest addition to our inventory of student support programs is our pilot transition program for newly admitted, first generation, first-year students. This program creates a supportive environment for first-generation college students, provides information on and access to campus communities and resources; provides students with information about leadership opportunities; offers dialogue with first-generation faculty, staff and students; and assigns peer mentors and/or success coaches as a resource, thus increasing retention and degree attainment of this under-represented student population.

**Goal 2, Faculty and Staff Recruiting, Pathway 1f.** Require instructional faculty applicants to include how they support diversity and inclusion in their teaching and research, if applicable, in their application materials (e.g. narrative statement, teaching statement).

- The Provost and Director of Faculty Recruiting revised job posting procedures to require narrative statements from all applicants about how they support diversity and inclusion.
- Recruiting efforts, as well as training of Search Committee members and Department chairs, are under development to include unconscious bias training.

**Goal 3, Pathway 1.** Establish a budget to support diversity and inclusion education, training and professional development of students, faculty and staff.

- A budget to support professional development and education initiatives for faculty, staff, and students was established that will provide resources for the next three years, at an investment level of over \$100,000, despite the pandemic and its ensuing budget impacts.

**Goal 3, Pathway 2.** Conduct an inventory on what diversity, inclusion and cultural literacy principles are currently included in the curriculum for students.

- The ODEI partnered with the Center for Community Engagement to secure a Bonner Foundation grant that supports one faculty member supervising a student worker researching the University curriculum to identify courses with specific keywords in their course descriptions (University Catalogue) or syllabi (on departmental shared drives).
- Faculty members across the campus have revised syllabi and engaged with the Center for Effective Teaching to ensure greater inclusion in classrooms.

**Goal 3, Pathway 5.** Develop incentives in the form of certificates or other recognitions to promote the participation in personal and professional development programs related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

- The ODEI offered a series of ten online panel discussions, and will provide certificates of recognition to those who participated in at least seven of the events live. The President's Leadership Program (PLP) designated the DEI Dialogue Series as a Passport Event, so that students in the PLP would receive program credit for attending the DEI Dialogue Series events.
- A learning path for diversity, equity and inclusion will be made available in AY21-22 to faculty, staff, and students via LinkedIn Learning, so that each course completion will yield a certificate for the learner to add to their LinkedIn profile and (for faculty) to their professional dossier.

**Goal 4, Pathway 2.** Establish unique networking, shadowing, development opportunities and other experiences with community organizations and persons to build collaborative relationships that benefit both the university and community.

- New corporate partnerships that led to job opportunities, scholarships, and internships were established with TowneBank and Dominion Energy.
- The ODEI is establishing a unique relationship with the Scholars Latino Initiative (SLI) program, through which Hispanic/Latinx high school students complete precollege preparation and visit prospective colleges.
- The ODEI is establishing a unique relationship with the Peninsula YMCA, to benefit Christopher Newport's underrepresented minority, low-socioeconomic status, and first-gen students (both from the Community Captains program and in the general student population) with soft-skill

development, community resources, mentoring, and other services to support them throughout their Christopher Newport career.

- The newly appointed Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer partnered with local nonprofits such as the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters, Hampton Roads Community Outreach, and others to provide workshops, panel support, and resources to the University and community in mutually beneficial engagements.

**Goal 5, Pathway 1.** Clearly define and publicize the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion through use of websites, social media platforms, public displays, and newsletters.

- The ODEI created a virtual tribute to help Christopher Newport celebrate its first-ever Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The tribute email included a video of University and community members reflecting on the impact of Dr. King's words and works, as well as multiple links to local and virtual celebrations such as the Urban League's annual breakfast event. (see attachment)
- Social media posts allowed the ODEI to celebrate Women's History Month and Black History Month.
- A campus-wide email commemorated Juneteenth 2021, and Christopher Newport had representation at two local Juneteenth events. (see attachment)
- The ODEI and the Office of Student Affairs' Diversity Officer partnered to completely overhaul the University's duplicate Diversity and Inclusion websites, with the Christopher Newport website team combining the two into one informational and interactive site.

The summary above provides just a brief look at the work the ODEI is documenting, using the framework of the Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion, to make equity visible.

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### *Introduction*

Christopher Newport University is a 60-year-old public four-year institution offering primarily undergraduate education to students from Virginia and beyond. The stated values of the institution, in the University Handbook<sup>1</sup>, are that:

- a. We will always put students first!
- b. We will remain committed to liberal learning.
- c. We will provide access and opportunity to a diverse community.
- d. We will be actively engaged in shaping the economic, civic and cultural life of this community.
- e. We will always offer outstanding teaching.

Christopher Newport has defined, as its University Strategic Plan<sup>2</sup> in the University Handbook, a set of five University Priorities:

1. *A vital curriculum.* An excellent liberal learning curriculum, providing students a rigorous higher education rooted in the liberal arts and sciences and responding to the values inherent in the University's mission.
2. *A culture of student learning and engagement.* Independent, disciplined, and dedicated students who are committed to learning, scholarship, and civic responsibility in a community of honor.
3. *An inspired faculty.* An exceptional faculty of respected teacher-scholars who thrive in a community of honor committed to liberal learning and civic responsibility.
4. *A purposeful campus community.* A safe, aesthetically pleasing campus of beauty and function that promotes community and achievement as well as intellectual and social engagement.
5. *An engagement between the campus and the larger community.* A dynamic university community whose members will transform and energize the cultural, intellectual, and economic lives of the region.

### *Council for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

In 2018, President Paul Tribble convened the inaugural Council for Diversity and Inclusion, since renamed to include the key principle “Equity” in the title of the group. By November 2018, the Council had developed a University Statement on Diversity and Inclusion, which was (and remains) posted on the University website<sup>3</sup> and which reads:

*The Christopher Newport University community engages and respects different viewpoints, understands the cultural and structural context in which those viewpoints emerge, and questions the development of our own perspectives and values, as these are among the fundamental tenets of a liberal arts education.*

*Accordingly, we affirm our commitment to a campus culture that embraces the full spectrum of human attributes, perspectives, and disciplines, and offers every member of the University the opportunity to become their best self.*

*Understanding and respecting differences can best develop in a community where members learn, live, work, and serve among individuals with diverse worldviews, identities, and values. We*

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<sup>1</sup> [https://cnu.edu/public/handbooks/current/cnu-university\\_handbook.pdf](https://cnu.edu/public/handbooks/current/cnu-university_handbook.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> <https://cnu.edu/whoweare/diversity/>

*are dedicated to upholding the dignity and worth of all members of this academic community such that all may engage effectively and compassionately in a pluralistic society.*

By the fall of 2019, the Strategic Planning Committee of the Council had worked to propose five strategic goals specific to diversity and inclusion, all of which were accepted by the Council:

1. Create and maintain a culture that is inclusive, welcoming and respectful of the various backgrounds and perspectives of the Christopher Newport community.
2. Recruit, retain, and engage students, faculty, and staff whose diverse backgrounds and perspectives demonstrate the University's commitment to inclusive excellence.
3. Provide comprehensive education, training, and professional development programs for faculty and staff.
4. Expand community engagement and local community connections.
5. Effectively communicate the University's efforts to increase diversity and inclusion on our campus.

The Council approved a comprehensive **Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion**<sup>4</sup> in the 2019- 2020 academic year. Christopher Newport submitted this inaugural Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion in May of 2020 to the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia.

**This progress report** is submitted in compliance with the ONE Virginia initiative, demonstrating that not only does Christopher Newport have a strategic plan in place, but that the University is making progress on its strategic goals for diversity and inclusion.

#### *Academic Year 2020 - 2021*

In the summer of 2020, Dr. Angela Spranger was appointed to be Christopher Newport's first Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) was launched in August of that year. The stated priority of the Chief DEI Officer was to "work to ensure all members of the CNU community feel seen, safe, and valued." Through a series of seven broad mandates, the President announced to faculty, staff, students, and alumni that the University would work to make equity visible, with a clear focus on issues of diversity and inclusion across all campus activities and domains. The seven mandates were:

1. Fully engage the University community in launching the Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion recently approved by the Council on Diversity and Inclusion. The Council is composed of students, alumni, faculty, administrators, board members, community leaders and friends of the University, and chaired by Sheriff Gabe Morgan, a member of the Board of Visitors.
2. Plan and implement a series of community conversations about the Black experience, racism and the systemic injustice in housing, education, healthcare, jobs and other institutions.
3. Plan and implement a training program on racism and the importance of diversity and inclusion and equity that will be required for all students, faculty and staff.
4. Work with the Provost, deans and faculty to develop curricular and co-curricular opportunities for our students to understand racial inequity and how to effect change as they lead, serve and engage in our society.
5. Work to recruit, engage and retain faculty, staff and students of color at Christopher Newport.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://cnu.edu/life/diversity/pdf/cnu-diversity\\_and\\_inclusion\\_strategic\\_plan.pdf](https://cnu.edu/life/diversity/pdf/cnu-diversity_and_inclusion_strategic_plan.pdf)

6. Facilitate ongoing and regular dialogues about policing and individual rights.
7. Plan and hold meaningful programming to consider the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and how we can carry on his important work.<sup>5</sup>

### Fall 2020

Upon launching the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI), the University began to learn about “the strategic pursuit of a set of balanced diversity objectives which repositioned diversity and inclusion as fundamental to institutional excellence and quality.”<sup>6</sup>

The basic framework guiding the efforts of the ODEI came from “the balanced scorecard literature”<sup>7</sup> as expressed in Damon Williams’ book, *Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education*. Specifically, the University began to view excellence in terms of:

1. *Access and equity of outcomes* – working to ensure the presence of diverse communities of students, faculty, and staff in our campus community, and to publicize opportunities for success and development particularly for underrepresented minority groups. In this area, measurable performance indicators are critical to document progress.
2. *Climate and Relations* – Williams<sup>8</sup> states that “measuring the multicultural and inclusive campus climate to understand and ultimately address differences in perceptions of the environment, feelings of belonging, spaces for inclusion, and campus diversity crises that may emerge.”
3. *Training and Education* – learning opportunities for the campus community to include students, faculty, and staff to encourage cultural competence<sup>9</sup> and preparation for global interaction and leadership. This includes supporting diversity-related research, scholarship, and creative activities.

Christopher Newport has begun to consider these additional domains of inclusive excellence:

4. *Infrastructure and Accessibility* – create and sustain an infrastructure and systems of accountability and resources that reinforce the University’s commitment to inclusive excellence<sup>10</sup>
5. *Community Engagement* – Christopher Newport has a long-standing commitment to community service, offering students, faculty, and staff many opportunities to connect with the local community and the nonprofit organizations that serve it.

As the ODEI learned more about the five terrains, or pillars, of inclusive excellence, that information was shared and communicated to the Council on Diversity and Inclusion. The Council met, virtually, in the fall and spring of the 2020 – 2021 academic year. It had been expanded to a total of 25 members, to engage with students and student organizations more significantly, while linking members of the community, alumni, Board of Visitors, and academic and administrative units across the University. The Council meets quarterly to review progress against the strategic plan, and to consider current events and campus activities.

<sup>5</sup> <https://cnu.edu/news/2020/07/07-cnu-spranger/#skipheader>

<sup>6</sup> Williams, D., Berger, J. & McClendon, S. (2004). *Towards a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Post-Secondary Institutions*. Washington, DC. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

<sup>7</sup> Williams, D. (2018)

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Winters

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/toolkits/ONEVirginiaPlan-HigherEd.pdf>

*ONE Virginia Strategic Plan Congruence*

In February of 2021, the Commonwealth of Virginia Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion released the *ONE Virginia Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence in Higher Education*.

A valuable and well-thought-out resource, the *ONE Virginia Strategic Plan* offers clarity for what the five terrains of inclusive excellence might look like at a public institution for higher education in Virginia. Specifically:

1. Achieve and maintain a more diverse and inclusive undergraduate and graduate/professional student body, faculty, and staff – Access & Success
2. Create and sustain an organizational environment that affirms and respects diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout its daily operations – Climate & Relations
3. Engage students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community in learning the varied perspectives of domestic and international diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice – Training & Education
4. Create and sustain an institutional infrastructure that effectively supports progress and accountability in achieving DE&I goals – Infrastructure & Accountability
5. Leverage institutional philanthropy and community partnerships to improve outcomes in local and regional communities – Community Engagement

This detailed document included tools, recommended objectives and strategies, and valuable metrics by which performance to strategic goals can be evaluated both internally and externally. Upon careful review of the ONE Virginia Strategic Plan goals in comparison to the Christopher Newport Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion goals, the following assessment emerged: **each of the ONE Virginia Strategic Plan goals was already addressed** in the current Christopher Newport Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan's goals.

- Achieve and maintain a more diverse and inclusive undergraduate & graduate / professional student body, faculty, staff, and administration.
  - ✓ **D&I SP Goal 2:** Recruit, retain, and engage students, faculty, and staff whose diverse backgrounds and perspectives demonstrate the University's commitment to inclusive excellence.
- Create and sustain an environment that affirms and respects diversity and inclusive practices throughout its daily operations.
  - ✓ **D&I SP Goal 1:** Create and maintain a culture that is inclusive, welcoming and respectful of the various backgrounds and perspectives of the Christopher Newport community.
- Engage students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community in learning varied perspectives of domestic and international diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.
  - ✓ **D&I SP Goal 3:** Provide comprehensive education, training, and professional development programs for faculty and staff.
- Create and sustain an institutional infrastructure that effectively supports progress and accountability in achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

- Note: no stand-alone goal addresses infrastructure and accountability, but those concepts are addressed in D&I SP Goal 1, Goal 3, and Goal 5. (see Fig. 1, Inclusive Excellence at CNU)
- Leverage institutional philanthropy and community partnerships to improve community engagement.
  - ✓ **D&I SP Goal 4:** Expand community engagement and local community connections.

Additionally, Christopher Newport’s fifth strategic plan goal addresses communicating the work done in these areas to ensure that our campus community recognizes our institutional commitment to inclusive excellence:

- ✓ **D&I SP Goal 5:** Effectively communicate the University’s efforts to increase diversity and inclusion on our campus.

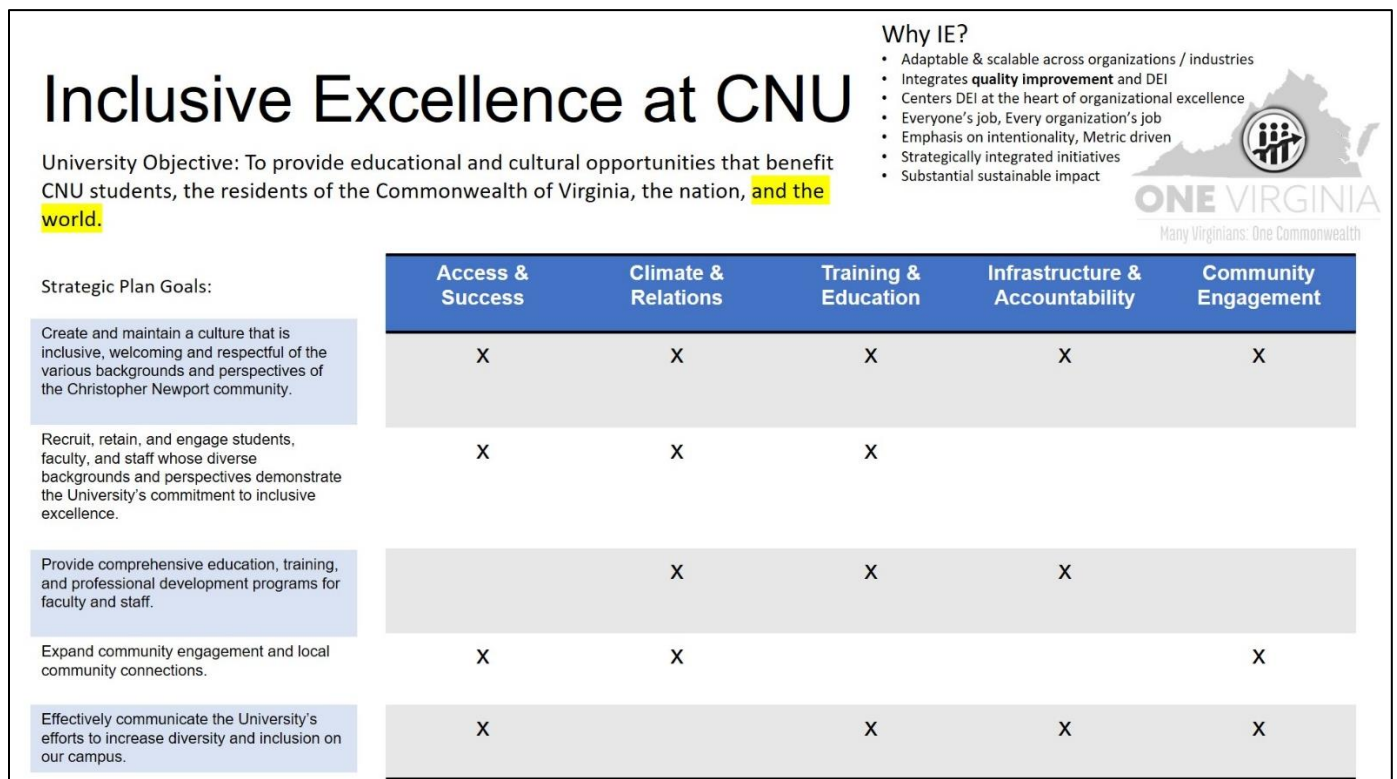


Fig. 1, Inclusive Excellence at Christopher Newport

*Mapping CNU D&I SP Goals to ONE Virginia Plan Goals and Objectives*

The Christopher Newport University Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion provides five high-level goals, with pathways to achieve those goals, and drivers (owners) specifically named. In this section, comparisons are provided to show the congruence between the ONE Virginia Strategic Plan goals and objectives and the Strategic Plan goals and pathways. A table shows that each of the five ONE Virginia Strategic Plan goals (column headings in Fig. 2, below) is addressed by one or more of the Strategic Plan pathways (objectives) identified in the column underneath. The Strategic Plan Goals are shown in the rows on the left side of the graphic.



IE at CNU	Access & Success	Climate & Relations	Education & Scholarship	Infrastructure & Accountability	Community Engagement	Other
Strategic Plan Goals:	<b>MAPPING CNU SP GOALS 1 - 5 AND TASKS TO ONE VIRGINIA PLAN GOALS 1 - 5</b>					
Create and maintain a culture that is inclusive, welcoming and respectful of the various backgrounds and perspectives of the Christopher Newport community.	1-1 1-3	1-2 1-5	1-5	1-2		
Recruit, retain, and engage students, faculty, and staff whose diverse backgrounds and perspectives demonstrate the University's commitment to inclusive excellence.	2 – FS 1, a – f; FS 2, a, e, f, g 2 – S 1 a-d 2- S 2a 2- S 2b	2- S 2c 2- S 2d	2-FS 2 b, c, d		2- S 2d	
Provide comprehensive education, training, and professional development programs for faculty and staff.	3-1 3-2 3-3	3-3 3-4 3-5	3-1 3-3 3-4 3-6 3-7	3-5		
Expand community engagement and local community connections.	4-1	4-3	4-3	4-2	4-1 4-2 4-3	
Effectively communicate the University's efforts to increase diversity and inclusion on our campus.	5-1	5-1 5-2	5-1 5-2	5-1 5-2	5-3	

Fig. 2, Mapping CNU Strategic Goals and Pathways to ONE Virginia Plan Goals