LETTER FROM THE CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER

As the inaugural chief diversity officer at Furman, I am proud to support the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The committee has worked enormously hard to push Furman ahead as we seek to engage the institutional change necessary to support our efforts at building a diverse and inclusive community. As we move forward in the advancement of our diversity and inclusion efforts, I look forward to working with the committee in Furman’s continuing effort to become an institution that “embraces diversity as an implicit value and as an explicit practice in all of its endeavors.”

Sincerely,

Michael E. Jennings, Ph.D.
Chief Diversity Officer
Professor of Education

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS

This past year, Furman made new strides to realize the institution’s commitment to being “a person-centered community, emphasizing the prime worth of persons and encouraging concern for others.” While the Diversity and Inclusion Committee played a role, institutional change requires the collective efforts of all. Accordingly, we engaged our partners across campus in an attempt to provide a more robust picture of those efforts. We know we did not capture everyone’s work, and we purposefully decided against creating an exhaustive list of all the wonderful (but numerous) Cultural Life Programs focused on diversity and inclusion. If your efforts went unrecognized by this report, we still thank you for positively contributing to our campus.

The report is organized into three categories: students, faculty and staff, and university initiatives. We use a broad definition of diversity in order to capture its many different dimensions.

Although it is important to celebrate progress, it is equally necessary to acknowledge that the work of becoming a diverse, inclusive and equitable institution is a continual process. More work still needs to be done. We hope you will join those efforts in the years to come.

Respectfully,

Sarah E. Worth, Ph.D.
Professor of Philosophy

Neil E. Jamerson
Assistant Vice President for Student Development

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE:

Deborah Allen, John Armstrong, Judy Bagley, Laura Baker, Connor Bradley, Allyson Brown, Rob Carson, Teresa Cosby, Kyra Cox, Shaniece Criss, Kristen Davis, Megan Dodgens, Courtney Firman, Ron Friis, Elizabeth Geer, Nancy Georgiev, Brian Goess, Brad Harmon, Lane Harris, Kate Kaup, Sofia Kearns, Kailash Khandke, Cynthia King, Lisa Knight Savita Nair, Steve O’Neill, Liz Seman, Paul Thomas, Ron Thompson, Kevin Treu, Nick Radel, Linette Reyes-Berberena and Sarrin Warfield
CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Choosing Furman

- Admissions added new questions to the campus visit form that allowed prospective students to notify staff if they had an interest in learning more about diversity on campus.
- Admissions advanced the diversity initiative recruitment strategy by hosting a diversity counselor drive-in, and the chief diversity officer offered remarks during the guidance counselor programs.
- Admissions continued with concentrated recruitment efforts of historically underrepresented students in South Carolina. Currently, the data is trending to yield a cohort of these students with strong academic profiles.
- The student recruitment, retention and persistence sub-committee proposed a summer bridge program be developed in order to support the transition of incoming students.
- Admissions undertook efforts to highlight our new chief diversity officer’s role through campus programs and external communications to prospective parents and students. Also, it expanded its diversity communication plan to include an introductory postcard from the director of transfer and diversity recruitment.
- Admissions identified new faculty to participate in the Multicultural Achievement Program and expanded the number of faculty and staff who support the Multicultural Student Evening Program.

Life on Campus

- Student Life launched the Center for Inclusive Communities by remodeling the space, developing a strategic plan, developing learning outcomes and changing reporting structures within Academic Affairs and Student Life. The center’s two goals are to help Furman’s historically underrepresented students flourish and engage all students through five different paradigms of diversity and inclusion education. The position of assistant director for international student engagement was created, and support for degree-seeking international students moved to the center as well.
- The Office of Student Involvement and Inclusion added an international flag display in the Trone Student Center to represent the home countries of all international and dual-visa holding students.
- The Student Diversity Council sponsored 25 events this year as well as Hispanic Heritage Month, LGBTQ History Month, Black History Month, and Asian American and Pacific Islander Month.
- The orientation program engaged new students in conversations around diversity and inclusion via the “You, Me, We” program.
- To assist students with high financial need, Enrollment Services partnered with Student Life on a textbook purchase process and tasked a staff member to provide financial aid advising and mentoring.
- The Pathways pilot program included the following modules focused on diversity and inclusion: What does it mean to be part of the Furman community? Implicit Bias, and Communicating across Difference. Designed with first-generation students in mind, although applicable to all students, the following modules were also offered: Family Adjustments and Personal Finances.
• The Student Office for Accessibility Resources (SOAR) instituted an early orientation program for neurodiverse students, assisted in the development of a new student organization (DREAM - Disability Rights, Education, Activism and Mentoring), launched the “smart pen” program to support notetaking needs, and hosted a campus-wide training for faculty and staff with Director of College Autism Spectrum Jane Thierfeld Brown, Ed.D., at Yale University.

• The Counseling Center coordinated a campus training event for faculty and staff with Yan Li, Psy.D., Duke University therapist, who specializes in “providing culturally responsive services to Chinese students.”

• The Office of Chaplaincy and the 22 campus ministry student organizations it advises partnered on numerous events, including the Muslim Student Association’s Friday prayers; Purim, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur holidays with the Jewish Student Association; Orthodox Christian Fellowship lectures; Furman University Gospel Ensemble concerts; Baptist Collegiate Ministry dinners; United Methodist/Wesley Fellowship leadership meetings and Fellowship of Christian Athletes Bible studies.

• The Malone Center for Career Engagement conducted staff training supporting the career development needs of students with disabilities, and participated in an inclusive workforce forum at Michelin. They also developed a career networking event for women students.

• Enrollment Services improved service delivery by developing a one-stop model to provide a supportive environment for all required administrative transactions, hiring a diverse student workforce to make a more welcoming environment for all those served, and established staff training activities to ensure sensitivity to cultural differences.

• The Fraternity and Sorority Life adviser applied for expansion of NPHC organizations to add Delta Sigma Theta, and assisted Alpha Kappa Alpha in its intake efforts.

• Athletics brought diversity workshop leader Derek Greenfield to campus in the spring to speak to student-athletes.

• The student leadership, engagement and development sub-committee established an online reading room for topics of diversity with a fall 2018/spring 2019 launch. The online reading room is meant to be a place where faculty, staff and students can access articles and readings relevant to multiple elements of diversity.

• The Shucker Center for Leadership Development provided a grant for two students to conduct project-based work related to refugees and poverty.

• Student Health Services helped non-insured students navigate cost effective options for health services and served as primary health care providers to international students.

• Using feedback from Furman’s underrepresented students and research from the University of Vermont, Housing and Residence Life made housing assignments to ensure multiple underrepresented students lived together on first-year student floors to enhance their transition and decrease feelings of isolation. Diversity was incorporated into the departmental programming model for all residents.

• Housing and Residence Life grew and evolved the Diversity and Inclusion Resident Assistant positions (now called RAs for Inclusion, Solidarity and Equity); these students participated in the Intergroup Dialogue pilot and hosted programming for students.
Life in the Community

• The Shi Center’s Community Conservation Corps provided home weatherization for low-income homeowners in the greater Greenville area in partnership with Habitat for Humanity as well as student and community volunteers.

• First-year and sophomore Shucker Fellows in the Shucker Center for Leadership Development provided yearlong support, programming and advocacy for the New Washington Heights Community, which included an after school program, Spanish language interpretation support, community-wide social events, bringing community youth to Furman for campus events, attendance at County Council, and assisting with the planning to resurface the basketball court.

• The Office of Chaplaincy worked on diversity and faith initiatives with a number of local organizations, including St. Matthew’s Baptist Church, Greenville Area Lutheran Counsel, Greenville Area Development Corporation, Atlantic Institute Incorporated, Public Education Partners and others. They also ran a full year of programming, including several guest speakers on the topic of whiteness.

• Heller Service Corps sponsored Fall Fest with local Title I schools; sponsored Valentine’s Day for Exceptional Adults; coordinated a mentoring program for students from Berea Middle School; and placed volunteers with the Greenville Free Medical Clinic, Triune Mercy Center, Berea House, Rebuild Upstate, Neighborhood Focus, North Greenville Food Crisis Ministry, Kroc Center Boys and Girls Club, and at Armstrong, Alexander, Cherrydale and Duncan Chapel elementary schools.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Recruitment and Professional Development

• Scott Salzman, associate librarian, and Allyson Brown, associate director of admissions and director of transfer and diversity recruitment, received the Meritorious Diversity and Inclusion Awards for 2017-18.

• Faculty volunteers, the chief diversity officer and members of the faculty recruitment, advancement and tenure sub-committee met with 59 faculty candidates in 12 job searches; feedback from these meetings was provided to the hiring departments/search committees.

• All academic departments involved in job searches participated in formal training to help increase the diversity of their candidate pools.

• Eight Furman faculty and staff members completed The Riley Institute’s Diversity Leaders Initiative, a five-month program that teaches leaders how to understand and leverage the strengths of diverse stakeholders to maximize community outcomes.

• The Center for Inclusive Communities worked with campus partners to provide two Safe Zone Program trainings to faculty and staff.

• Inclusive Pedagogy Workshops held during MayX, Summer I, Summer II and the 2017-18 academic year engaged 45 faculty participants in training and conversation. All 45 participants will document how they implemented the learned strategies, best practices and future plans. These reports will be available in 2018 on the university’s diversity and inclusion website. Those interested in future workshops can participate in four upcoming opportunities in August of 2018.
• Anita Davis, Ph.D., from Associated Colleges of the South hosted a train-the-trainer workshop for two Furman professors in spring of 2018 in order to continue the facilitation of Inclusive Pedagogy Workshops for interested faculty.

• Adviser guides and the new adviser training sessions were revised to add an updated resource document that included contacts for student involvement and inclusion. Information about advising students who are on the autism spectrum was also included. Previously included was information about advising students with accommodations and international students.

• Athletics hosted the chief diversity officer in the spring at a department-wide meeting to speak to all coaches and staff.

• University Police identified implicit bias training for officers to be completed online this year.

• The staff recruitment, advancement and training sub-committee reviewed Human Resources websites of other institutions to increase information on Furman’s site regarding diversity and inclusion.

• In collaboration with the Faculty Development Center, a series of adviser/mentor workshops were developed to work with various diverse student populations. In part, these have been prompted by faculty requests.

• The Faculty Development Center presented two diversity and inclusion lunch-and-learns, “Inclusive Pedagogy: Lessons Learned,” with Jason Jones and Kate Kaup and “Identifying and Addressing Systemic Racism” with Jessica Vazquez-Torres from Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training.

UNIVERSITY INITIATIVES

Special Programs and Initiatives

• Faculty, Academic Affairs and Student Life partnered to launch curricular and co-curricular dialogues around social identity; these dialogues are based off the 30-year work of Intergroup Relations at the University of Michigan.

• A post-baccalaureate fellow for community engagement and social justice was hired to assist in development of co-curricular dialogue workshops as well as an alternative spring break program focused on service-learning from a social justice paradigm.

• The Task Force on Slavery and Justice—composed of faculty, staff, students and alumni—employed several interns to help host events that brought awareness of Furman’s history to campus and who consulted with the task force.

• The communications sub-committee worked with University Communications in launching a revised website (furman.edu/diversity) that better reflects the university’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, ensures an aesthetically attractive and easy-to-navigate site, and captures a calendar of events using a new diversity and inclusion option in R25 scheduling software.

• Faculty and the Institute for the Advancement of Community Health served on the Health Equity Task Force at Greenville Health System. The group looked at racial disparities in health outcomes for patients, with a goal to develop interventions that address those inequities. The chief diversity officers of Furman and Greenville Health System collaborated on additional connections between the two institutions.
• The university partnered with the Urban League of the Upstate and Alpha Phi Alpha Greenville Foundation to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Programs included the MLK Community Breakfast with speaker Nontombi Naomi Tutu, the MLK Day of Service with nearly 200 volunteers, the MLK Scholarship Breakfast where Furman awarded a full scholarship to a deserving student, the MLK Scholarship Gala, the Rudolph Gordon College Fair, and the Joseph Vaughn Oratorical Contest.

• The communications sub-committee developed an internship proposal that allows a student to work directly with the chief diversity officer to maintain the university website as well as engage in other diversity communication strategies.

• The library collaborated with Furman Pride Alliance to develop suicide prevention resource LibGuide, added a Disability Sensitivity Training Program LibGuide and developed a number of LibGuides for Bridges to a Brighter Future.

• The faculty recruitment, advancement and tenure sub-committee proposed a program for improving retention of faculty from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

• The Center for Inclusive Communities partnered with Academic Affairs and Student Life to introduce programming on campus to support first-generation college students.

• The Center for Inclusive Communities implemented the Safe Zone Program, which offered Gendering and Sexuality 101 in fall 2017 and is developing Allyship 201 for fall 2018.

• The internationalization and global experience sub-committee created International and Inclusive Communities Faculty Fellows Program to facilitate immersive international experiences on campus and build more inclusive communities by increasing the cultural competence of Furman’s faculty and students. Applications for the fellowship position were announced in spring of 2018, with selection planned for fall of 2018.

• The library hosted and displayed the “Diversity Photograph Contest” for Furman students and created a number of other displays on topics that promoted diversity, including Americans with Disability Act, Indigenous People Day, Better Together Week, International Education Week world map and more.

• The Riley Institute and the Department of Politics and International Affairs partnered with SCETV to host Henry Lewis Gates, Jr., Emmy award-winning filmmaker, journalist and director of Harvard’s Center for African and African American Research. The event featured a 30-minute highlight reel of Gates’ documentary, “Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise” and a conversation with Gates and SCETV’s Beryl Dakers.

• The Shi Center, The Riley Institute and the Institute for the Advancement of Community Health partnered to do a yearlong exploration around climate change; a number of events highlighted the disproportionately negative impact of climate change on marginalized communities.
Operations

- The committee funded 10 grant applications out of 16 submitted, totaling $5,400. Four of the grants were partially funded.

- The Bias Incident Response Team received six reports from students regarding bias incidents and assigned advocates to provide support and response.

- The student recruitment, retention and persistence sub-committee engaged the Office of Institutional Research in discussions around a dashboard of data for historically underrepresented students, which can be shared internally as well as externally in both aggregate and disaggregate formats.

- Finance and Administration incorporated a standard “Supplier Diversity” clause in all bid documents and required bidders to submit a list of minority and women owned businesses that they intend to utilize for projects with their proposals.

- Finance and Administration developed a database of minority/diversity vendors including contact information to current federal and state databases and higher education cooperative consortiums.

- The Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees worked alongside the investment staff to include new language in the University’s Investment Policy Statement that incorporates consideration of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) and/or Impact investing factors within investment manager research and due diligence. In fiscal year 2017-18, Furman made a commitment to a venture-oriented impact fund.

- Alumni Affairs hosted focus group study with black alumni to improve services.

- The library, SOAR and ITS installed screen reading software on all public library computers, increased accessibility of websites and course syllabi templates and scanned course books into screen reader friendly PDFs.

- The university partnered with the Greenville Chamber to sponsor the Minority Economic Development Summit, Diversity and Inclusion Partners, Diversity Summit, Upstate Diversity Leadership Awards, and ATHENA Leadership Symposium.

- The university also partnered with Greenville NAACP, Urban League, Hispanic Alliance Gala, Black Pages USA and Greenville Magazine’s Best and Brightest 35 and Under.
The above report attempted to provide a snapshot of the gains made across campus and beyond related to diversity and inclusion. It is not an exhaustive list, despite best efforts. Additionally, more work is to be done to standardize metrics for counting historically underrepresented populations. The report accepted a broad definition that included race/ethnicity, country of origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability, age and more.