

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan
for
Blue Ridge Community College**

Approved by DEI Council on December 4, 2020

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

BRCC embraces the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences among its students, faculty, and staff. BRCC is committed to cultivating equitable learning opportunities and an inclusive campus environment through participatory shared governance in its decision-making processes.

Like the Virginia Community College System Task Force on Diversity (VCCS), in its 2014 report, BRCC recognizes that traditional definitions of diversity have, “centered on race and ethnicity, what some have termed ‘inherent diversity’”. Current definitions of diversity are broader and include gender, sexual orientation, economic background, nationality, disability, and other factors. The meaning of ‘inclusion’ is also challenging. While definitions of inclusion are not as prevalent as those for diversity, an inclusive environment can be defined as, “one in which the diverse backgrounds of individuals are leveraged to drive value and results by creating an environment in which employees feel involved, respected, valued and connected” (pg. 5).

Virginia Community College System policy “specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, or against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities.” This document is designed to address systemic biases such as, but not limited to, gender, racial, class-based, and ethnic biases.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan, the following terms have been defined as they relate to the specific community at Blue Ridge Community College:

- Diversity: “various races and ethnicities...different economic, geographic, and religious backgrounds...age, disabilities, and sexual orientation.” (VCCS Task Force on Diversity Report, page 4).
- Equity: “Equity is the existence of an environment in which policies, practices and beliefs are grounded in the principle of fairness and that acknowledges structural racism, gender disparities and systemic poverty, while honoring the diversity of humanity. This environment explicitly prioritizes the success of all students to ensure that they have the necessary resources to fulfill their college and career goals.” (VCCS Strategic Task Force, proposed definition, 2020).
- Inclusive environment: “. . .One in which the diverse backgrounds of individuals are leveraged to drive value and results by creating an environment in which employees feel involved, respected, valued and connected” (VCCS Task Force on Diversity Report, page 5).
- Nontraditional: As outlined by the VCCS, nontraditional students possess any one of the following characteristics:

- Delays enrollment into postsecondary education
 - Attends school part-time
 - Works full-time (employment is main priority of student, not student status)
 - Financially independent (in terms of Financial Aid Eligibility)
 - Has dependents other than spouse
 - Has a GED, other nontraditional diploma, or no secondary credential
- Underrepresented populations (URP): SCHEV identified population including students who are low-income Pell recipients, who reside in a specific domicile, are first generation, or are of minority ethnicity or race. At BRCC this could also include the gender and disability status of individuals who are not adequately represented within the student body, leadership positions, committees, and other areas of the BRCC community.
 - Leadership Positions at the College: All administrators and the Head Librarian, Director of Information Technology, Coordinator of Public Relations, Chief of Police, Financial Aid Director, Financial Services Manager, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, and Director of Human Resources.

Rationale

BRCC is and will continue to become more diverse to reflect our everchanging community. As part of our mission to provide open access and learning opportunities for our entire community, we affirm our commitment to become a national leader in quality and accessibility of our academic programs through the following strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion goals:

- A structure/framework of responsibility and accountability for increasing campus diversity,
- An inclusive campus climate,
- Equitable access and opportunity for a quality education,
- A campus workforce that reflects the diversity of the College's service area,
- On-going diversity, equity, and inclusion training and development for employees and students,
- Partnerships in our service areas to promote diversity on our campus and in our community, and
- Regular assessment, evaluation, and reporting about diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Tenets

BRCC acknowledges that addressing issues pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion involves complex and imprecise processes requiring a balance of sensitivity and fortitude. Our commitment to growth requires us to acknowledge past shortcomings, and this may be disquieting. Yet, it is a vital step to moving forward. Creating an equitable and inclusive institution is an ongoing journey towards ideals that may never be fully attained. As such, we will strive for continual progress, reaching for high goals instead of maintaining the status quo simply to avoid uneasiness or failure. In our quest for betterment, we promise to listen with open minds and see in the spirit of learning.

Goals, Strategies, and Action Items

The strategies and action items BRCC will use to achieve these goals are provided in the tables below.

Category: Responsibility and Accountability				
<i>Goal: A structure/framework of responsibility, accountability, and recognition for increasing campus diversity.</i>				
Strategy	Action Items	CDO Coordinator	Notes	Priority - Timeline
Establish a framework within the current Governance structure to identify, develop, and administer diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.	Delineate framework for identifying, developing, and administering DEI initiatives in the DEI Plan.	N/A	Dr. Downey appointed three Co-Diversity Officers to work closely with Planning and the other Governance committees to identify and address needs in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. For diversity, equity, and inclusion activities, the Co-Diversity Officers will report to Dr. Young.	Complete
Create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council to be chaired by a Co-Diversity Officer.	The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council will meet approximately once a month. Working groups from the DEI Council will be established to implement strategies.	N/A	The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council is open to all BRCC employees. The Diversity Council will utilize working groups to identify needs and develop/implement strategies to address these needs. The DEI Council will collaborate with existing governance committees and BRCC departments to identify needs and develop/implement strategies to meet those needs. Dr. Panesar will chair the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council.	Complete

Designate Co- Diversity Officers (CDOs) for the College to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan.	The CDOs will meet weekly to coordinate and complete DEI activities. Individual CDOs will coordinate or lead activities to complete specific strategies.	N/A	Dr. Panesar, Ms. Pendry, and Ms. Kara will share responsibility for implementing the DE&I Plan. As appropriate, the Co-Diversity Officer responsible for specific strategies will be specified in the plan. The CDOs will report directly to Dr. Young for diversity, equity, and inclusion activities.	Complete
Designate a Co- Diversity Officer to serve as the liaison to the VCCS.		N/A	Dr. Panesar will serve as the BRCC liaison to the VCCS.	Complete
Encourage all College offices to support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan strategies.	Representatives from College offices will identify how they will support DEI activities.	All		High
Identify liaisons for different areas of college: 1) Administration (HR/Deans/Pres Council/SACS/Buildings) VP Council; 2) Faculty (courses- design/delivery/scheduling; professional development); 3) Staff (Student Services, advising, disability, career svc, career svc; prof. development); and 4) Workforce & Continuing Education (WCE).	After identifying liaisons, add names and/or positions to the plan.	All		In progress Anticipated completion: January 2021
Identify charges to Governance committees that pertain to DEI.	Add relevant charges to plan. As appropriate, provide support and coordination among committees and other BRCC areas.	All		In progress Anticipated completion: January 2021

	Include Governance committee activities pertaining to DEI in year-end report.			
Develop webpage to include DEI statement and links to information about activities, events.	<p>Delineate process for adding information to and modifying webpage is clearly defined. This is necessary because maintaining webpage will require ongoing coordination with multiple offices/persons.</p> <p>Identify who owns which pieces of webpage.</p>	CDO-Acad		Medium
Identify ways to recognize BRCC as a college to be recognized for its activities and efforts.	<p>Continually seek opportunities for BRCC activities to be recognized externally.</p> <p>Highlight individuals' activities on the DEI webpage.</p> <p>Ongoing coordination with public relations office to share activities and successes to social media.</p>	All		Low
Review College and course procedures to determine if any need updating to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Identification of college and course procedures for review.	CDO HR/PD	Convene a working group at the December 2020 meeting.	High

	<p>Publish review and recommendations for updates.</p> <p>Identify method to evaluate impact of updating procedures.</p>		<p>Utilize current research/literature to develop a framework for reviewing procedures.</p> <p>Individuals/pairs will review procedures and report to Working Group.</p>	
Establish plan for regular reviewing BRCC procedures to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Publish plan for reviewing BRCC procedures to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.	CDO HR/PD	After completing BRCC procedures review, working group will develop recommendation for ongoing and/or future review.	Med
Review of VCCS policies and recommend updates to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.	<p>Publish review and recommendations for updates.</p> <p>Establish plan for ongoing reviews.</p>	TBD	This may be part of VCCS activities.	TBD
Academic divisions will set annual goals and measures to enhance equity and inclusion within the campus community and academic programs.	Publish goals and measures.	CDO-HR/PD		Med
WCE will set annual goals and measures to enhance equity and inclusion within the campus community and WCE classes.	Publish goals and measures.	TBD		Med
Encourage supervisors to include comments in faculty, staff, and administrator evaluations about noteworthy activities that support DEI activities.	A summary of supervisors' comments about employees' activities will be included in the DEI Annual Report.	CDO-HR/PD	Supervisors will be asked to provide recommendations for enhancing employees' activities in future year.	Med

Emphasize leadership for diversity, equity, and inclusion related activities in performance evaluations of College administrators and supervisors.	Document evidence of leadership for DEI activities and support in annual performance evaluations.	CDO-HR/PD		Med
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Category: Campus Climate <i>Goal: An Inclusive Campus Climate</i>				
Strategy	Action Items	CDO Coordinator	Notes	Priority - Timeline
Develop and implement methods to assess current campus climate regarding inclusivity for students and employees.	<p>Develop Campus Climate Assessment.</p> <p>Deploy Campus Climate Assessment to faculty, staff, and students.</p> <p>Utilize results of the Campus Climate Assessment for other strategies.</p>	CDO-Acad		<p>In progress</p> <p>Campus Climate Assessment Survey expected completion: December 2020</p>
Use results of inclusivity assessments to identify areas improving inclusivity and chart a path forward to implement improvements.	Develop and implement plans for improving campus climate for inclusivity.	All		Ongoing
Establish schedule and plan for regularly assessing campus climate for inclusivity.	The schedule and methods for assessing campus climate for inclusivity will be included in the Annual Report.	CDO-Acad		Med
Foster a physical campus environment that is welcoming and attractive to diverse student, employee, and community groups.	<p>Identification of strengths and weaknesses of physical environment based on Campus Climate Assessment and other assessments.</p> <p>Make recommendations for modifications to physical environment so it is more welcoming and attractive to diverse student, employee, and community groups.</p>	CDO-Acad		TBD

Foster a physical campus environment that supports equitable learning opportunities.	<p>Identification of strengths and weaknesses of physical environment based on Campus Climate Assessment and other assessments.</p> <p>Make recommendations for modifications to physical environment so it can better support equitable learning opportunities for diverse student, employee, and community groups.</p>	TBD		TBD
Foster a campus culture that is safe and accessible.	<p>Identification of strengths and weaknesses of campus culture based on Campus Climate Assessment and other assessments.</p> <p>Make recommendations for modifications to physical environment to improve safety and accessibility.</p>	TBD		TBD
Review Clery Act Report to identify areas of concern regarding DEI.	<p>Identification of areas of concern regarding DEI.</p> <p>Make recommendations for improvement if needed.</p>	CDO-HR/PD		High
Design and implement cultural awareness/competency programs and activities for faculty, staff, students, and community.	Offer at least one cultural awareness/competency seminar/workshop/activity each semester based on Campus Climate Assessment for inclusivity.	All		Med

Category: Student Access and Opportunity

Goal: Equitable access and opportunity for a quality education.

Strategy	Action Items	CDO Coordinator	Notes	Priority - Timeline
Student recruitment: Develop diversity, equity, and inclusive best practices to increase enrollment for all populations including selected URP across academic divisions.	Identify strengths and weaknesses in recruitment practices for all populations by examining historical data for student groups including selected URP. Identify best practices to increase recruitment across all populations including for selected URP. As needed, set target for improving recruitment for student groups including selected URP. Implement best practices. Analyze data to determine whether target was met.	CDO – Student Affairs		Med

<p>Student enrollment: Develop diversity, equity, and inclusive best practices to promote enrollment for all populations including selected URP for WCE classes.</p>	<p>Identify strengths and weaknesses in enrollment practices for all populations by examining historical data for student groups including selected URP.</p> <p>Identify best practices to promote enrollment across all populations.</p> <p>As needed, set target for improving enrollment for student groups including selected URP.</p> <p>Implement best practices.</p> <p>Analyze data to determine whether target was met.</p>	<p>CDO – Student Affairs</p>		<p>Med</p>
<p>Retention: Develop best practices that will increase retention rates for all URP across academic divisions.</p>	<p>Identify strengths and weaknesses in current retention practices for all student populations by examining historical data for student groups including selected URP.</p> <p>Identify best practices to increase retention rates across all populations including for selected URP.</p> <p>As needed, set target for improving retention for student groups including selected URP.</p> <p>Implement best practices.</p> <p>Analyze data to determine whether target was met.</p>	<p>CDO – Student Affairs</p>		<p>Med</p>

Return enrollment: Identify ways to increase return enrollment for all groups including URP for WCE.	<p>Identify strengths and weaknesses in current return enrollment practices for all populations by examining historical data for student groups including selected URP.</p> <p>Document plan to implement strategies for improving return enrollment.</p> <p>As needed, set target for improving return enrollment for student groups including selected URP.</p> <p>Implement best practices.</p> <p>Analyze data to determine whether target was met.</p>	CDO – Student Affairs		Med
Develop support services that will increase the transfer rates for selected URP.	<p>Examine data for transfer rates for selected URP.</p> <p>Identify strengths and weaknesses in transfer support services for all student groups including selected URP.</p> <p>Develop and implement support services to increase transfer rates across all populations including for selected URP.</p>	TBD		Med

	<p>As needed, set target for improving transfer rates for student groups including selected URP.</p> <p>Implement services.</p> <p>Analyze data to determine whether target was met.</p>			
<p>Develop support services that will increase graduation rates for selected URP.</p>	<p>Examine historical data for graduation rates for selected URP.</p> <p>Identify strengths and weaknesses in support services to increase graduation rates for all student groups including selected URPs.</p> <p>Develop and implement support services to increase graduation rates across all populations including for selected URP.</p> <p>As needed, set target for improving graduation rates for student groups including selected URP.</p> <p>Implement support services.</p> <p>Analyze data to determine whether target was met.</p>	<p>TBD</p>		<p>Med</p>

<p>Increase opportunities for enhanced awareness of multicultural issues and foster understanding for varying perspectives in the student body and campus community.</p>	<p>Establish idea bank for activities so employees and students can make suggestions.</p> <p>Establish philosophy for prioritizing and implementing activities.</p> <p>Review ideas with Council at each meeting.</p> <p>Establish ways to measure success of activities.</p>	<p>All</p>		<p>High</p>
<p>Design and implement regular workshops, guest lectures, guest speakers, etc. on diversity, equity and inclusion related topics and issues.</p>	<p>Establish a way to determine College's needs, interest, and availability of programs.</p> <p>Establish ways to measure participation in and success of activities.</p>	<p>All</p>		<p>High</p>

Category: Employees Recruitment & Retention

Goal: A campus workforce that reflects the diversity of the College's service area.

Strategy	Action Items	CDO Coordinator	Notes	Priority - Timeline
Develop and implement an HR cultural competency training process for all search committee chairs.	Determine what is being done at VCCS level. Delineate VCCS/HR/DCO duties.	TBD		TBD
Improve the success of search processes in identifying qualified URP candidates for faculty (including adjunct) and full/part-time staff positions.	<p>Identify strengths and weaknesses in current search processes in identifying URP candidates.</p> <p>Develop strategies for increasing the number of qualified URP candidates.</p> <p>Set measurable goals for increasing the number of qualified UPR candidates.</p>	TBD		TBD
Identify qualified URP candidates for tutor and work-study positions.	<p>Develop strategies for increasing the number of qualified URP candidates.</p> <p>Set measurable goals for increasing the number of qualified UPR candidates.</p> <p>Report strategies that were implemented and whether goals were met.</p>	TBD		TBD

Identify and advertise in strategic markets designed to reach URP populations.	List each job posting in at least one strategic market.	TBD		Med
Create and implement a Faculty and Staff Mentoring Program.	Create and implement a Faculty and Staff Mentoring Program. Include process for evaluating Mentoring Program.	CDO-HR		High
Engage ALL employees in recruitment efforts to aid in attracting diverse faculty and staff to the college to create an equitable and inclusive workplace.	Set goals for representation from URP groups in search committees.	CDO-HR		Med
Emphasize retaining and promoting high quality employees.	Identify strengths and weaknesses in retaining and promoting employees particularly those in URP groups. Develop strategies for retaining and promoting employees particularly those in URP groups.	CDO-HR		Med

Category: Employee Training and Development

Goal: Provide on-going diversity, equity, and inclusion training and development for employees.

Strategy	Action Items	CDO Coordinator	Notes	Priority - Timeline
Identify gaps in knowledge and skills pertaining to diversity, equity and inclusion based on Campus Climate Survey and other assessments.	<p>Publish results of Survey and assessments.</p> <p>Develop training to address gaps in knowledge and skills. Training should include method to evaluate improvements in knowledge and skills.</p>	CDO-Acad		High
Provide diversity, equity and inclusion training for employees based on data collected from Campus Climate Survey and other assessments.	<p>Document evidence of diversity and inclusion activity and support as reported on annual performance evaluations.</p> <p>Document methods utilized to encourage and increase participation in training.</p>	ALL		High
Identify funding sources for employee training and development and resources (e.g. training materials to be housed in the library, etc.).	Document funding sources for employee training and development and resources.	ALL		Med
Identify costs and resources associated with every strategy.	<p>When monetary costs will be incurred record estimates or quotes.</p> <p>Estimate time required to complete activities related to each strategy. This information will be useful in determining the viability and prioritization of activities.</p>	ALL		Ongoing

Category: External Collaborations & Partnerships

Goals: Partnerships in our service areas to promote diversity and inclusion on our campus and in our community.

Strategy	Action Items	CDO Coordinator	Notes	Priority - Timeline
Establish a baseline of minority-owned vendors currently contracted by the College's Office of Finance and Administration.	Identify minority-owned vendors currently contracted by BRCC.	CDO-Plan		Low
Strengthen minority-owned vendor programs.	Establish best practices that foster equitable relationships with diverse vendors.	CDO-Plan		Low
Foster collaborations with individuals and organizations that actively promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness.	<p>Identify existing collaborations between BRCC and external organizations and individuals.</p> <p>Increase collaborations with external individuals and organizations that actively promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness.</p>	All		Med
Improve membership diversity within the College Board, Foundation Board, and Advisory Groups.	Increase diversity of memberships.	CDO-Plan		Low

Category: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting				
<i>Goal: An effective Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan.</i>				
Strategy	Action Items	CDO Coordinator	Notes	Priority - Timeline
Responsibility & Accountability: Review and evaluate the BRCC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan and its goals.	The CDOs in collaboration with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, will revise the DEI Plan to reflect current needs and to ensure that it 1) continues to align with the mission, vision, & values of BRCC; and 2) reflects the diversity of our changing community. Establish timeline for annual revisions.	All		In progress. Approve and finalize by January 2021.
Responsibility & Accountability: Publish a year-end report documenting College wide DEI activities.	Establish timeline for year-end report. Identify contributors to report. Coordinate contributions for report. Submit year-end report to DEI Council for review and approval.	CDO-HR/PD	The year-end report will include input from College offices, governance committees, etc. Include recommendations for priorities and new/revised strategies for the next academic year.	
Responsibility & Accountability: Publish any revisions to BRCC procedures.	Evaluate impact of revisions to BRCC procedures on DEI.	CDO-HR/PD		

<p>Responsibility & Accountability: Publish academic divisions and WCE goals and measures.</p>	<p>Evaluate measurement of academic divisions and WCE goals to enhance DEI.</p>	<p>CDO-HR/PD</p>		
<p>Campus Climate: Review existing data from student surveys to establish a baseline for assessing incoming (new and returning) students' initial views on diversity.</p>	<p>Establish plan for assessing and evaluating students' views when they first enroll and when they graduate.</p> <p>Use results of Campus Climate Survey and other assessments to inform decisions about future activities to improve campus climate.</p>	<p>CDO-Student Affairs</p>		<p>In progress</p> <p>Review of data from years prior to December 2020 expected completion: spring 2020</p>
<p>Student Access & Opportunity: Review recruitment, retention, support services, and graduation strategies across all college-credit and WCE programs.</p>	<p>Collect and report BRCC's student recruitment, retention, graduation, and transfer rate data in year-end report by student group, including URP.</p> <p>Collect and report data for prior years.</p> <p>Collect and report comparison data for service area and other VCCS colleges.</p> <p>Use data to inform decisions about future activities to improve student access and opportunity.</p>	<p>CDO-Student Affairs</p>		<p>High</p>
<p>Training & Professional Development: Review training and PD activities related to diversity, equity, and Inclusion.</p>	<p>Document participation in training and PD related to diversity and inclusion activity.</p> <p>Report findings of Campus Climate Assessment for employees.</p>	<p>CDO-HR/PD</p>		<p>High</p>

	<p>Document and feedback about training and PD. Use findings and feedback to inform decisions about future training and PD activities.</p>			
<p>Employee Recruitment & Retention: Report demographics of the BRCC workforce.</p>	<p>Report BRCC workforce demographic data in year-end report. Use data to inform decisions about future activities about employee recruiting and retention.</p>	CDO-HR/PD		Med