

**CPE DEI REPORT**  
Strategies for evaluation  
2018-19

The following strategies will be included in report:

**Opportunity:**

- Strategy 1: Actively pursue underrepresented minoritized (URM) high school juniors and seniors by cultivating relationships with families, target high schools, churches, and community agencies.
- Strategy 3: Implement a web of recruiting through Affinity Groups.

**Success:**

- Strategy 1: Implement a pre-enrollment orientation program.
- Strategy 2: Create targeted Living-Learning Communities and Special Living Options.

**Impact:**

- Strategy 3: Formalize mechanisms to infuse cultural competency within all aspects of the institution

**Opportunity:** Identification of specific strategies for recruitment and enrollment of underrepresented minoritized students along with the responsible partners and specific strategies are charted below as well as action that will be taken, and those responsible.

Strategy 1: Actively pursue underrepresented minoritized (URM) high school juniors and seniors by cultivating relationships with families, target high schools, and community agencies.

*How did you implement this strategy with fidelity? (500 words or less) Fidelity is defined as faithfulness to the implementation of the committed strategies demonstrated by continued loyalty and support. Evidence of fidelity may include, but would not be limited to the following: dedicated staff, specific examples of student or staff participation, data collected on strategy inputs and outputs, participation rates of students, dedicated funding, development of implementation timetables and milestones achieved, and narrative descriptions of the implementation process.*

In 2018, WKU developed a Diversity Recruitment Officer (DRO) position in the Office of Admissions who was tasked with creating, coordinating, and implementing recruitment efforts geared specifically to communities of color within the institution's service region and the Commonwealth. As outlined in WKU's DEI Plan, the DRO is charged with "leveraging relationships with service region high schools and community members by identifying key personnel to arrange occasions to speak with URM students, low-income students, and their families or support persons." The new DRO hosted and/or participated in 52 (fifty-two) pre-college events designed not only to recruit high school juniors and seniors, but to impress upon them the benefits of post-secondary education and to provide strategies or mechanisms to access post-secondary opportunities. During these events, prospective students received individualized on-site financial aid counseling, academic and career pathway counseling, and a projected timeline to graduation. The minority recruitment office, in collaboration with the Intercultural

Student Engagement Center (ISEC), also piloted a Multicultural Preview Day that included a free application fee waiver.

In addition to face to face recruitment, the DRO started an aggressive marketing effort specifically targeting URM students. Any student who identified as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or self-identified as two or more races within a 400 mile radius of WKU was sent recruitment materials (postcards via mail, email invitations to multicultural preview day, etc.). In total, 8700 postcards were distributed in fall 2018 and spring 2019 to URM pre-college students. In early summer of 2019, 933 postcards were sent to admitted URM students who had not yet registered for an orientation. Another 3,861 URM students with summer or fall 2019 entry terms who had inquired about WKU but had not applied were sent mailings as well.

Communication about the Multicultural Preview Day organized by ISEC began in late summer 2019. Information was sent to all students who identified as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or self-identified as two or more races within a 400 mile radius of WKU (approximately 3,860 students). Invitations for this event were sent in the form of postcards via mail and email invitations and the event was listed on WKU's calendar events, which was sent to local and regional counselors. There were 14 students who attended the preview day.

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The recruitment effort in June of 2019 aimed at URM students ( $n = 933$ ) who had not yet registered for an orientation, resulted in the following: Seventy-seven (77) students registered for a Topper Orientation Program (TOP) and were all, subsequently, enrolled for the fall 2019 semester (yield rate  $77/933$  or 8.25%). The recruitment information sent the 3,861 URM students with summer or fall 2019 entry terms who were inquiries but had not applied to WKU as of June 2019, also were targeted with digital ads. Of the URM students receiving both the postcards and digital ads, four (4) students applied, were admitted, and enrolled; a yield rate too low to report. Of the 14 students who participated in the Multicultural Preview Day and received the free application waiver, 7 enrolled in fall 2019 (50%). \*Note: Data for fall 2019 enrollment numbers was included because recruitment efforts actually occurred within the 2018-19 reporting parameters.

The 8.25% yield rate for URM recruitment materials and the lack of attendance at the Multicultural Preview Day were most likely due to late notice; many students has already enrolled in other schools. While the numbers are low in term of students who enrolled at WKU in fall 2019, there were some positive outcomes. Since the Multicultural Preview Day resulted in a 50% enrollment, this, perhaps, is something WKU should explore on an on-going bases with substantial monetary investment.

Data regarding how students hear about WKU or why they chose to attend is not collected on the admissions application. Without that data, it is hard to know if recruitment through emails, postcards, social media, etc. are effective recruitment tools.

***What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?***

It is clear that communication and contact targeted at URM students, in retrospect (and after discussions with Public Affairs), was distributed too late and that this type of marketing effort would have greater potential for high impact if moved earlier in the recruitment cycle. As a result, WKU will begin sending communication to fall 2020 URM prospects no later than February 2020. It is also clear that early intervention programs, before the junior and senior year, can be valuable in increasing enrollment. Research shows that reaching out to students as early as middle and secondary school can support and strengthen the education of minority students at K-12 levels and reinforce their interest in higher education (\*Bush, 2019). Future strategies aimed at self-efficacy for high school students will be considered because under-preparedness is mediated by a student's belief or expectations about his/her/their capacity to accomplish certain tasks successfully. For example, students who are placed in general high school tracks are not being provided opportunities that foster self-efficacy. The same is true for access to dual-credit courses. WKU's DRO reaching out earlier to URM students can increase their interest in high school college preparation programs, so students believe they are academically prepared early on and feel more comfortable discussing the possibility of attending college. WKU has not realized the full potential of working with community organization to recruit URM and low-income students and will focus attention in that area during the next recruitment cycle as well. In addition, data concerning the efficacy of emails, postcards, and other forms of marketing should be collected.

In terms of "next steps," WKU began working on a new scholarship structure in 2018-19 that would benefit URM and low-income students. Underrepresented minority students with a minimum 2.5 unweighted GPA qualify for a Targeted Award. The follow will be effective for incoming WKU freshmen as early as the beginning of fall 2020:

- WKU removed the ACT requirement from almost all merit-based and targeted academic scholarships.
- WKU increased the minimum merit scholarship award by \$1,000 to \$2,500.
- WKU reduced the minimum GPA requirement from 3.3 to 3.0.
- WKU created additional scholarship opportunities for underrepresented minority students through an expansion of the Cornelius A. Martin Scholarship.

The Cornelius A. Martin Scholarship is awarded to URM students as follows:

- Students who have a 2.5 up to 2.9 unweighted GPA qualify for \$2,000 per academic year.
- Students who have a 3.0 or greater unweighted GPA qualify for \$3,000 per academic year.

\*Bush, A. A. (2019). Same Destination, Different Journey: Towards a Conceptual Framework Exploring URM Students' Experiences Navigating Pharmacy School. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7544>

Strategy 2: Implement a web of recruiting through Affinity Groups.

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One area WKU has struggled with in past years is the involvement of alumni in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts on campus. Graduates tend to be one of the most untapped affinity groups for assisting in the recruitment of URM, low-income, and LGBTQ+ students. Alumni have the potential play an active and crucial role in mentoring students who might have difficulty finding a sense of belonging at an institution. Creating a web of alumni affinity groups can help with recruitment efforts among diverse populations in ways that other efforts cannot. After all, the best advertisement for a college or university is the success of its graduates. These groups also play a significant role in contributing scholarships to deserving students.

Under the direction of Executive Director of the WKU Alumni Association, The WKU Alumni Association's Board of Directors created the Diversity & Inclusion Task Force in 2018 with a focus on identifying how alumni can impact diversity initiatives among the alumni community and have an impact on campus efforts. In addition to the task force, the Society of African American Alumni continued to support URM students as they have in the past. A new affinity chapter, The Topper Pride LGBTQ+ Alumni, was founded in spring 2019.

The Society of African American Alumni, formed with an interest in solidifying African Americans who attended WKU, continues to support the campus URM community. The Society has grown significantly over the last year and has become more engaged with the African American population in the WKU community. The Chapter did a tremendous job fundraising for the "Society" scholarship fund to benefit current WKU African American students in 2018-19. They also built mentoring programs to encourage and assist current students to complete the path to graduation and become a member of the alumni family. They also hosted and participated in several campus events designed to mentor and encourage current and future students. One of their biggest and most visible events is WKU's Homecoming held every fall. The attendance at Homecoming has grown each year and fall 2018 was one of the largest to date. This event drew more current URM students than any other event hosted by the university in 2018-19.

The Topper Pride Alumni Chapter, formed during 2018-19, had its first organizing committee meeting on June 20, 2019. All LGBTQ+ alumni, friends and allies who share a connection to Western Kentucky University were invited to be a part of the Chapter. This includes WKU alumni from any year, program, major, department, and with any degree or certificate. Allies are alumni or friends who support Topper Pride's efforts, WKU, and the LGBTQ+ community. Friends include faculty, staff, parents, donors, and all other supporters who share Topper Pride's passion for WKU and support the LGBTQ+ community. The chapter intends to form a strong

network that supports fellow Hilltoppers and will ensure that current and future students are supported so they graduate, find employment, and become a part of the WKU alumni family.

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One of the most effective ways to demonstrate support for WKU students is financial support. In 2018-19, there were 86,912 paid members of the WKU Alumni Association:

Caucasian/European-American,  $n = 77,247$ ; Black/African-American,  $n = 5,565$ ; Asian/Asian-American,  $n = 1,628$ ; Hispanic/Latino-American,  $n = 1,078$ ; Other Specified,  $n = 1,264$ ; American Indian/Alaskan Native,  $n = 184$ ; Declined to State,  $n = 946$ . Gifts that specifically benefitted URM, low-income, and LGBTQ+ students included the following:

- Hilltopper Organization for Latin American Students Collaborative Endowment, \$1086.74
- Hope Fund (URM/Low-income), \$240
- Intercultural Student Engagement Center, \$2,972
- Minority Teachers Education Program, \$2,820
- The Pride Center Fund, \$1,903
- Society of African American Alumni, \$622
- Society of African American Alumni Association Scholarship Fund, \$435
- Cynthia & George Nichols III Fund for Diversity Programming, \$100,000
- Master of Social Work Diversity Scholarship Fund, \$440
- Total Alumni Association diversity funding, \$110,518.74

Although not directly associated with the Alumni Association, the WKU Sisterhood, formed to raise and distribute funding to campus projects, awarded \$5,000 to the Xposure High School Journalism Workshop that assists with diversity recruitment. The Sisterhood also awarded grants of \$30,000 to the GFCB Professional Clothes Closet to assist URM and low-income students with professional wardrobes, and \$14,000 to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Women's Right to Vote programming. The *WKU Sisterhood*, formed by former WKU "first-lady" Julie Ransdell, is a group of women with shared values, who financially collaborate to advance the mission of WKU. Their funding continues to support the efforts of faculty, staff, and student who are primarily interested in creating project to help promote equity. Members, many of whom are WKU graduates, pool their financial gifts and award funds to a limited number of university designations to maximize the impact of their philanthropy.

In addition to monetary help, the alumni diversity groups and chapters offer other means of support as well. Although there are no direct data to report from Topper Pride events because the group wasn't formed until summer 2019, plans for fall 2019 are to explore the needs of current LGBTQ+ students and design appropriate support programs for the upcoming year. For example, the goals of WKU's Topper Pride Alumni Chapter [that support current students] are to:

- Engage LGBTQ alumni in campus programs that support students, faculty and staff

- Empower networking between LGBTQ alumni and students for career networking and mentoring opportunities
- Promote and support the educational, professional and social interests of LGBTQ [students as well as] alumni of WKU
- Recognize the accomplishments and achievements of LGBTQ alumni and allies
- Organize fundraising events and activities that support the WKU Pride Center or other LGBTQ programs, services, or scholarships at WKU

***What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?***

One lesson learned about alumni affinity groups this past year is that most of them do not collect any type of data from their events. It would be beneficial to know how many current students are reached by mentoring programs, social events, and fundraisers, including when/where these events occur. Steps are under way to create reporting tools for all groups and chapters to use. It is also imperative that the WKU Alumni Association do a better job of recruiting diverse members who can, in turn, help support WKU students who are URM, low-income, and LGBTQ+. Of the 77,247 members, only 9,665 identify as nonwhite and there is no information collected about those who identify as LGBTQ+.

The Alumni Association has been recruited to be a part of WKU's new Strategic Enrollment plan led by Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL). In 2018-19, WKU hired RNL, a consultant group and leader in providing strategic enrollment management services, to assist in developing an enrollment plan focused on recruitment, marketing, and financial aid services. In addition to academic and student affairs teams, RNL is also working with DEI teams that include the Alumni Association. Work began in spring of 2019 and will be completed in May 2020. It is hoped that our next steps, in terms of alumni relations, will be outlined in that final report and will help guide us in fostering new, effective practices.

While the efforts of WKU alumni affinity groups raised over \$110,000 in 2018-19, there are many resources left untapped. The WKU Alumni Association's Board of Directors has committed to increasing the number of URM members during the 2019-2020 academic year and have begun to cast a wider net with their renewed recruitment efforts.

**Success:** To support and achieve student success, the following strategies include:

Strategy 1: Implement a pre-enrollment orientation program.

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According to WKU's DEI Plan, this strategy's desired outcome is to “..focus[] on socialization and expectation setting prior to arrival, setting the stage for what will be required as a WKU student.” While much of this overlaps with the WKU DEI Plan strategy to “[a]ctively pursue underrepresented minoritized (URM) high school juniors and seniors by cultivating relationships with families, target high schools, and community agencies” under

**Opportunities**, an added focus during 2018-19 was the services offered by TRiO. WKU's TRiO Program has been recruited to be a part of WKU's new Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) led by Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL). In 2018-19, WKU hired RNL, a consultant group and leader in providing strategic enrollment management services, to assist in developing a strategic enrollment plan focused on recruitment, marketing, and financial aid services. WKU TriO representatives have been active on the SEP's diversity, equity, and inclusion subcommittee in the area of pre-enrollment orientation programs and recruitment of low-income and URM students; including TRiO in the strategic planning process was crucial.

The WKU TRiO operates four programs focusing on pre-enrollment orientation; three Educational Talent Search regions and Upward Bound. Educational Talent Search (ETS) projects serve young people in grades six through 12. In addition to counseling, participants receive information about college admissions requirements, scholarships, and various student financial aid programs. This early intervention program helps people from families with incomes under \$33,075 (where neither parent graduated from college) to better understand their educational opportunities and options. More than 800,000 students are enrolled in 3,100 Talent Search TRiO projects across the United States. The WKU ETS office has 13 staff members and two (2) office coordinators. Recruitment efforts by WKU's ETS in fall 2018 and spring 2019 resulted in the enrollment of 66 students for fall 2019.

WKU TRiO also houses the Upward Bound program. WKU Upward Bound (UB) is a federally funded educational program. UB is dedicated to identifying, recruiting, and selecting students who are determined to succeed academically. Applicants must be both low income, according to current federal guidelines, and first-generation college students. This UB program serves six schools in five south central Kentucky counties: Allen County-Scottsville, Butler County, Edmonson County, Hart County, Logan County, and Russellville High Schools. The goal of WKU's UB is to prepare students for college academically, culturally, and socially. UB is a 12-month program which provides assistance with high school course selection, study skills, ACT preparation, college and career information, college selection, and the financial aid application (FAFSA). Staff visit each high school three times per month throughout the school year to meet with students. Other programs are presented once a month on Saturdays from September through May on WKU's campus. Students also attend a six-week residential program each summer that focuses on academics and provides cultural engagement and social activities. The WKU UB office has three (3) staff members and one (1) office coordinator. Recruitment efforts by WKU's ETS in fall 2018 and spring 2019 resulted in the enrollment of two (2) students for fall 2019.

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WKU Education Talent Search serves our Kentucky regions as follows:

- *Educational Talent Search 1*: Allen County Scottsville High School, Butler County High School, Caverna High School, Cumberland County High School, Edmonson County High School, Hart County High School, Logan County High School, Metcalfe County High School, Monroe County High School, and Russellville County High School
- *Educational Talent Search 2*: Bowling Green High School, Greenwood High School, Warren Central High School, and Warren East High School
- *Educational Talent Search 3*: Barren County High School, Franklin Simpson High School, and Glasgow High School

WKU Upward Bound serves our Kentucky high schools as follows:

- Allen County-Scottsville
- Butler County
- Edmonson County
- Hart County
- Logan County
- Russellville

Data (see attached):

**Educational Talent Search 1** served 821 students (143 Seniors): 68.1% of the students were First Generation and Low Income individuals, 14.0% Underrepresented Minority Students; 86 (60.1%) enrolled in an institution of higher education; 13 (15.1%) enrolled at WKU.

**Educational Talent Search 2** served 500 students (88 Seniors); 70.0% of the students were First Generation and Low Income individuals; 46.8% Underrepresented Minority Students; 71 (85.2%) enrolled in an institution of higher education; 31 (43.7%) enrolled at WKU.

**Educational Talent Search 3** serves 500 students (100 Seniors): 67.6% of the students were First Generation and Low Income individuals; 13.2% Underrepresented Minority Students (26.2% unknown ethnicity); 71 (71.0%)enrolled in an institution of higher education; 22 (31.0%) enrolled at WKU.

**Upward Bound** served 86 students (20 Seniors ): 67.4% of the students were First Generation and Low Income individuals; 23.3% Underrepresented Minority Students; 12 (60.0%) enrolled in an institution of higher education; 2 (10.0%) enrolled at WKU.

From this data, it is apparent that, currently, WKU TRiO is moderately successful in recruiting students for WKU, but highly effective in recruiting students for higher education in general. It is also worth noting the data indicated that developing programs targeting first-generation and low-income students is imperative and more should be done to target these students at recruitment events.

***What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?***

Strengthening the relationship between the Office of Admission and WKU TRiO helped identify gaps in recruiting URM and low-income students. Although TRiO programs are federally funded



at do not specifically target or show preference for one university over another, providing WKU representatives with information about the unique programs available on our campus (especially for low-income and first-generation) can help students in making informed choices about which institution to attend.

In terms of next steps, WKU TRiO has laid the ground work to create a first-generation student initiative, as outlined in the WKI DEI Plan called the “*I Am First*” Campaign. The program will be ready for implementation in early spring 2020. The “*I Am First*” Campaign is aimed at students, pre-enrollment, who are first generation and need assistance with socialization and expectation setting prior to arrival on campus. The campaign also connects faculty and staff who were first generation with students who are the “first 2 go” for the purpose of mentorship. The new “*I Am First*” Campaign is fully supported by WKU TRiO. Other “next steps” are outlined in the **Opportunity** strategy, “*Actively pursue underrepresented minoritized (URM) high school juniors and seniors by cultivating relationships with families, target high schools, and community agencies.*”

Strategy 2: Create targeted Living-Learning Communities and Special Living Options.

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The Cynthia and George Nichols III Intercultural Student Engagement Center (ISEC) promotes a culturally inclusive campus environment, cultural awareness and competence, inter-group dialogue, engagement and intercultural interaction, and supports lifelong learning about self and others. The office, with its five full-time staff, serves as a hands-on recruitment and retention resource for the many cultural, religious/spiritual, and gender identity groups reflected within the WKU community. The center provides student support services to foster academic success and sponsors culturally-based celebratory events. ISEC staff carry out programmatic initiatives designed to increase the cultural competency of students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, the center staff manages respectful spaces for students to learn about themselves and others through meaningful experiences, dialogues, and opportunities for growth. Two programs within ISEC, The Intercultural Student Engagement (ISEC) Academy and the Pride Center (LGBTQ+), offer Living Learning Communities for first- and second-year students.

The Intercultural Student Engagement Center (ISEC) Academy Living Learning Community (LLC) is for any student who identifies as a student of color (Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, and Multiracial) and/or is a first-generation college student, Pell eligible, and has some need with their transition, persistence, and graduation from WKU. In their first semester, ISEC Academy LLC participants are enrolled in two courses, UC 175: University Experience and ENGL 100: Introduction to College Writing. Common courses for subsequent

semesters vary depending on scheduling and course availability. The linked, common courses are all grounded in at least one High Impact Practice – most commonly, service learning. In addition to common courses and living spaces, students in the LCC receive intrusive peer mentoring, coaching, and academic advising from a full-time staff member. Full-time staff and mentors in the center are available for personal as well as academic engagement.

The Stonewall Suites (LGBT+) Living Learning Community, another group under the umbrella of The Cynthia and George Nichols III Intercultural Student Engagement Center (ISEC), is for students who strive to promote social integration and change for all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations. This Stonewall LLC is open to any student interested in participating, but interested participants must go through an interview process before being selected into the community. Since the Stonewall Suites are part of ISEC, students in the LLC also take linked, common courses grounded in at least one High Impact Practice, receive intrusive peer mentoring, coaching, and academic advising from a full-time staff member. In addition to the five, full-time staff in ISEC, the Pride Center and Stonewall Suites have a part-time staff member who serves as an advisor and access to specialized services offered by the WKU Counseling Center.

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General enrollment data: In Fall 2018, the total WKU enrollment for first-time, first year (FTFY) (full-time baccalaureate only) was 2,691 (nonURM,  $N = 2,251$ ; URM,  $N = 440$ ). The total enrollment for all FTFY students, including part-time, was 2,933 (nonURM,  $N = 2361$ ; URM,  $N = 572$ ). The fall 2018 to spring 2019 persistence rate for all FTFY WKU students was 86.8% (88.6%, full-time baccalaureate only) and the fall 2018 – fall 2019 rate was 70.3% (72.9%, full-time baccalaureate only).

ISEC Academy Students: Fall 2018 marked the second cohort of ISEC Academy students. Of the URM's enrolled at WKU in Fall 2018 ( $N = 572$ ), 63 participated in ISEC Academy's LLC (full-time baccalaureate,  $n = 46$ ; part-time,  $n = 17$ ). The first semester persistence rate (fall 2018 to spring 2019) for full-time baccalaureate ISEC Academy students was 93.5% and the fall 2018 to fall 2019 persistence rate was 82.6%. For all ISEC Academy students (including part-time), the first semester persistence rate (fall 2018 to spring 2019) was 90.5% and the fall 2018 to fall 2019 persistence rate was 71.4%. For comparison, the first semester persistence rate (fall 2018 to spring 2019) for full-time baccalaureate *non-ISEC Academy* URM students was 84.9% and the fall 2018 to fall 2019 persistence rate was 56.9%. For all *non-ISEC Academy* URM students (including part-time), the first semester persistence rate (fall 2018 to spring 2019) was 80.6% and the fall 2018 to fall 2019 persistence rate was 53.4%.

Stonewall Suites LLC:

The Stonewall Suites LLC was new in fall 2018. Nine students enrolled in Stonewall Suites LLC in fall 2018 (full-time baccalaureate,  $n = 8$ ; part-time,  $n = 1$ ). The first semester persistence rate (fall 2018 to spring 2019) for full-time baccalaureate Stonewall Suite LLC students was 88.6%

and the fall 2018 to fall 2019 persistence rate was 72.9%. For all Stonewall Suites LLC students (including part-time), the first semester persistence rate (fall 2018 to spring 2019) was 86.8% and the fall 2018 to fall 2019 persistence rate was 70.3%. In fall 2019, 12 more students were added to this cohort (full-time baccalaureate,  $n = 11$ ; part-time,  $n = 1$ ). There were 21 students in fall 2019 cohort, which included the nine students from 2018-19 who persisted.

Data indicated that all students in the ISEC Academy LLC are retained at greater rate than URM students who do not participate in both fall to spring and fall to fall (90% and 84.9% vs. 71.4% and 53.4%, respectively). Additionally, ISEC Academy students persist at a higher rate than *all* WKU students both fall to spring and fall to fall (90% and 84.9% vs. 88.6% and 70.3%, respectively). The rate for Stonewall Suites LLC were lower than ISEC Academy Students but on par with fall to spring and fall to fall persistence in general enrollment (86.8% and 70.3%, respectively). Since there were so few students in the Stonewall cohort, changes did not show up in the data. See data attached.

***What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?***

Data from the ISEC academy indicate that participation in these LLCs has a significant impact on the persistence of URM students. Since this LLC has a positive impact on retention, exploring the creation of similar LLCs aimed at URM, low-income, and LGBTQ+ students might prove to impact the overall persistence rate at WKU. While the Stonewall Suite LLC did not show significance in terms of fall to spring and fall to fall of LGBTQ+ students, it should be noted that a) LGBTQ+ are generally vulnerable and have persistence issues, b) the new LLC had so few students that data were not affected by changes in persistence rates, and c) WKU does not collect data on gender/sexual identity of incoming students, so data comparison of LGBTQ+ students who were not in the Stonewall Suites LLC was not possible. Measure will be taken to begin collecting information on LGBTQ+ students to the best of our ability. Part of WKU's Strategic Plan is to raise the Campus Pride index score to the maximum score of FIVE (5) by 2027/28. As a last note, WKU's DEI Committee is exploring a Campus Climate/Cultural Competence survey tool.

**Impact:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, are designed to influence organizational change. The strategy measured was:

- Strategy: Formalize mechanisms to infuse cultural competency within all aspects of the institution

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Due to state budget short-falls in 2018/19, WKU was forced to eliminate 140 positions, cut 101 programs, and dismantle a multidisciplinary college. While occupied tenured faculty lines

remained unchanged, the emotional impact resonated across the campus. In addition, vacant positions due to attrition and retirement were suspended or simply left unfilled to reduce payroll costs in order to meet the budget reductions. Despite these losses, the percentage of URM in tenure-track faculty positions increased from 8.9% (2017/18) to 9.6% (2018/19). Unfortunately, the majority of positions eliminated were among staff, which resulted in a 1.8% decrease in management occupation positions held by URM. In fact, the number of staff, in general, has decreased more than 10% over the last five years. Although there were very few open searches for faculty and staff, substantial efforts were developed to recruit and retain URM faculty and staff.

The first endeavor, in alignment with the WKU DEI Plan, included a commitment to new diversity trainings for hiring committees offered by two, dedicated full-time staff; WKU's Title IX Deputy/Investigator and Human Resource's Organizational Development Officer. In spring 2018, WKU hired DEI training consultant, Emily Duncan, to begin the process of fostering effective unconscious bias trainings for employees who participate in hiring committees. The initial workshop presented (see attached) was a three-hour seminar-style facilitation that included individual/self-reflection, group discussion, and useful tools and best-practices. The workshop was conducted again in fall 2018. Since WKU in essence, had a general "hiring freeze," there were very few new hires but search committee data were retained through EEO for use in baseline data reporting as we continue our efforts. While the data shows no new URM hires, the university now has a process in place for unconscious bias training for future search committees.

Another effort to achieve this strategy as outlined in the WKU DEI Plan was an *Intergroup Dialogue (IGD)* book club cohosted by the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, the Office of the Dean of Students, and the Department of Sociology and Criminology. Our first campus-wide book was "So You Want to Talk about Race" by Ijeoma Onuo. The book club consisted of intellectual discussions on the topics addressed in the book as well as practical suggestions for how to apply these lessons in personal and professional lives. The effort was directed at a) faculty and staff who get uncomfortable talking about issues pertaining to race, b) professors who wanted to make sure students feel included in their classes, c) staff members who want to ensure to include diverse perspectives in decision making, and d) social justice advocates who wanted to be more effective in discussions about racism and inclusion. Fifty-seven (57) people signed up for the book club – 27 staff and 30 faculty from 39 units on campus. The book club met over the course of three Friday afternoons during the fall 2019 semester.

***How would you describe the effectiveness of this strategy? The institution shall provide an analysis of the effectiveness of each strategy with a sufficient level of detail. If a strategy was not fully implemented or implemented at all, a thorough analysis and justifiable explanation of why this did not occur should be provided.***

While there are no direct-measures data, indirect survey data was collected from the two unconscious bias training sessions. In general, faculty who participated in the consultant-led trainings said the most valuable part of the training were the specific tools they were given to mitigate these biases during a recruitment process. While several commented that they didn't think they needed three to four hours to cover unconscious biases, they were surprised how quickly the time went; most felt they could have spent more time on the topic. Although it was

not possible to establish correlations between trainings and recruitment of URM faculty at this point (too few hires), the process and self-reported data uncovered a need for these workshops on multiple levels. Responses were as follows in spring 2018 (n = 21):

- “As a participant I found the group discussions beneficial” (95% agree or strongly agree)
- “As a participant I anticipate using what I learned/experienced in my work with this committee” (90% agree or strongly agree, 5% neutral)
- “The session content was relevant to our charge on this committee” (95% agree or strongly agree)
- “The facilitator, Emily Duncan, demonstrated expertise in the subject matter” (95% agree or strongly agree)
- “Overall I felt this session would be beneficial for other search committees” (95% agree or strongly agree; within 95%, 63% strongly agree)

Responses in fall 2018 (n = 30)

- "As a participant I anticipate using what I learned/experienced in my work with this committee" (96% agree; 1 disagree)
- "The session content was relevant to our charge on this committee" (100% agree)
- "Emily Duncan demonstrated expertise in the subject matter" and "Emily Duncan fostered a comfortable learning environment" (100% agree)
- "Overall I felt this session would be beneficial for other search committees." (92% agree; 2% neutral)

Through open-ended responses at both sessions (see attached), it became apparent that retention rates of URM faculty and staff should also be considered in trainings and open dialogues aimed at shifting the climate and culture of the university are imperative.

Fifty-seven (57) people signed up for the book club – 27 staff and 30 faculty from 39 units on campus. The book club met over the course of three Friday afternoons. Forty-seven (47) people attended the first session and 22 attended the second meeting. At the conclusion of the second meeting, participants indicated they would like one more session, so a third session was added; 13 attended that last discussion. Although attendance decreased due to other commitments, no one indicated they lost interest or had an adverse reaction to the readings and discussion. Again, there were no direct measures of assessment but qualitative, self-reported data were collected from the participants. All but one of the respondents (n = 18) indicated they would change some aspect on their teaching or professional behavior based on the book club and discussion (see attachment for all data).

### ***What lessons were learned regarding this strategy and what are your next steps?***

WKU recognizes diverse faculty and staff are key to the recruitment and retention of students. It is imperative that hiring practices, unconscious bias trainings/conversations, and quality continuous education and improvement programs are geared toward campus diversity, equity, and inclusion. The new Provost/Vice-President of Academic Affairs is committed to the efforts underway and is in the process of examining the budget for ways to dramatically increase funding for projects and data collection that support DEI.

While massive cuts to staff were unavoidable, unconscious biases can lead to poor working conditions and the desire of employees to seek jobs elsewhere. The unconscious bias trainings and the book club served as inaugural attempts to open campus-wide discussions and dialogue about difference. Human resources and academic affairs are also devoting time, energy, and funding to explore resources obtained through our membership with HERC (Higher Education Recruitment Consortium), which provides excellent micro-learning topics on diversity hiring best practices. WKU's newly formed university DEI Workgroup has begun discussions within colleges/units on diversity hiring best practices and training. In short, while it might take some time to collect direct-measure data on the effectiveness of unconscious bias training, feedback from participants in these workshops has shown this to be an effective strategy in several ways: a) reinforced the need to continue these training to collect longitudinal data; b) offered the prospect of using the workshops for cultural competence among faculty and staff; c) demonstrated a need for continued funding and allocation of new monies for these efforts; and d) supported our efforts in creating equity in the classroom and curriculum.

In addition to offering workshops to hiring committees, a plan is being developed for 2020-2021 to deliver online trainings for all faculty and staff. This is in response to the WKU DEI Plan to *“create an online training module for faculty and staff to convey institutional expectations and values related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.”* While training search committees is crucial, all employees must be aware of internal biases. “Next steps” include designated diversity officers in each college/unit who will act as liaisons to the university DEI Workgroup as well as advocates for hiring committees and unconscious bias trainings.

While indirect measures and self-reported data weave a story, creating an assessment plan for this strategy is essential. During 2020, there will be a concerted effort to create a database for reporting assessments and clearinghouse for DEI related projects. It also appears more book clubs and deliberative dialogues are welcomed, so plans are underway to have variable meeting times using different methodologies (number of meetings, types of readings, structured conversations, etc.). The last plan for the next year is to exam tenure and promotion guidelines, employee evaluations, and internal promotion practices for consistency in terms of URM employees. We will also investigate processes for exit and “staying” interviews. “Staying” interviews are designed to gather information from employees while they are still employed, so problems can be addressed before they make the decision to leave.

## Narrative Report of Campus Diversity Western Kentucky University

*As such, when evaluating enrollment per the Rubrics, it is done on a pass or fail basis (2 or 0) based on the following analysis:*

*For enrollment, the institution shall demonstrate that the diversity of its student body provides its students with the opportunity to receive the educational benefits of diversity as described in the Policy. This may be substantiated by providing evidence that goals outlined in an institution's plan were generally attained or significant progress was made toward those goals, that students have been provided the opportunity to interact with diverse peers both inside and outside the classroom, and through other means identified by the institution as supported by valid research. Progress toward any one goal shall not determine whether or not expectations have been met; an institution shall be evaluated based on the entirety of its report in this area.*

Over the past five years, WKU's enrollment of students who identify as American Indian/Alaskan, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and two or more races has increased incrementally (2013-14 = 10.1%; 2017-18 = 11.8%). Additionally, WKU's International student enrollment between 2013-14 (5% undergraduate; 9% graduate) and 2016-17 (6.1%; 11.7%) increased dramatically, especially among graduate students. Unfortunately, due to global political conflict in the last two years, the enrollment has been in steady decline. In 2017-18, our International student population was 3.5% undergraduate and 7.9% graduate. As evidenced by the new strategic plan, WKU is wholly committed to the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of a diverse student body:

- Goal 2 of the University's new ten-year Strategic Plan: 2018-28 calls for creating "a diverse body of students" [who are] "fully prepared for a rigorous, fulfilling college experience at WKU."
- Goal 4 of the Plan mandates that we "enact and practice all aspects of WKU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan" (<https://www.wku.edu/strategicplan/>).

In light of this strategic, campus-wide commitment to DEI efforts, WKU appointed two Chief Diversity Officers to oversee efforts to recruit, nurture, and retain diverse students.

WKU houses many social, professional, and support groups for diverse student populations including religious/faith-based, International, and those supporting students with disabilities. A few examples of WKU's commitment include WKU's Council of International Student Organizations (CISO), the Pride Center, the Distinguished Minority Fellows (DMF), and a chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

The CISO, formed in 2016, is committed to helping international student organizations collaborate and participate in cooperative activities. The organization successfully coordinated an "International Olympics" and took the lead in participating in a Spring World Festival on

campus. The CISO is a representative body comprised of one designated representative from each of the 14 international student organizations at WKU.

The Price Center serves the LGBTQ+ undergraduate and graduate student body. Over the past two years, WKU has increased the Campus Pride Index from 2 to 3 stars and, as outlined in the Strategic Plan, has a goal of achieving a five-star rating by 2027. The Pride Center is funded by a grant from Cynthia and George Nichols III and is supported by the recently-formed WKU Topper Pride Alumni Chapter. The Center houses the Queer Student Union (QSU), the QSU Transgender Non-Binary Association, and the LGBTQIA+ Support Group.

The Distinguished Minority Fellows (DMF) program assists African-American, American Indian/Alaskan native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Latino graduate students with obtaining masters and doctorate level educational goals by providing tuition and campus employment opportunities related to their field of study.

In addition to student social/professional organizations, WKU has a National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Chapter, a support group for current students struggling with anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues. NAMI provides students the opportunity to connect with, and encourage other students struggling with mental health issues and is led by two NAMI certified facilitators.

These programs are exemplars, not an exhaustive list, of the work underway at WKU to provide opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds.