



Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

2021 – 2026



**Samuel Merritt
University**




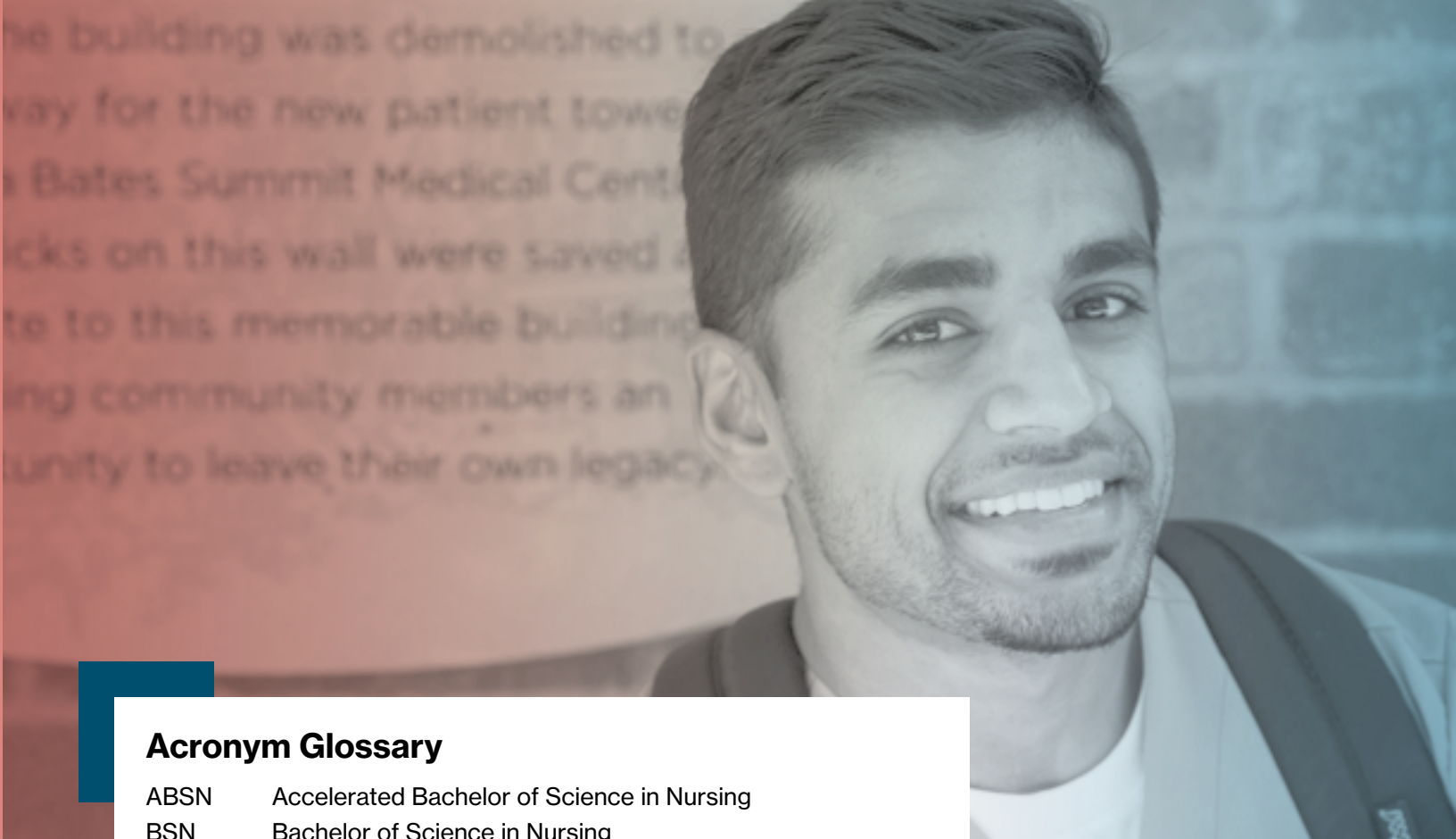
Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 2021 – 2026

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Acronym Glossary

ABSN	Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing
BSN	Bachelor of Science in Nursing
CIEL	Center for Innovation and Excellence in Learning
CON	College of Nursing
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
EHl	Ethnic Health Institute
ELMSN	Entry-Level Master of Science in Nursing
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
HEALS	Halt, Engage, Allow, Learn, Synthesize communication model
HR	Human Resources
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
HSI	Hispanic Serving Institutions
IPE	Interprofessional Education
MPA	Master of Physician Assistant
NCLEX	National Council Licensure Examination
OPC	Office of People and Culture (formerly Office of Diversity and Inclusion)
PED	Professional Enrichment Day
SMU	Samuel Merritt University
RePAIR	Restoring Personal Accountability in Relationships
UCSF	University of California, San Francisco
URM	Underrepresented Minorities ¹
WSCUC	WASC Senior College and University Commission

Samuel Merritt University educates students to become highly skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals who positively transform the experience of care in diverse communities. We are steadfastly committed to upholding our institutional values, ensuring that we foster:

- A learning environment where we challenge ourselves and our students to think critically, seek mastery, and act compassionately
- A collegial environment where we are fair, respectful and behave with integrity
- A collaborative environment where we partner with one another and with others in the community
- An innovative environment where we take reasoned risks and move nimbly
- A results-oriented environment where we provide and expect exceptional performance and service

A pillar of Samuel Merritt University's Strategic Plan is to foster a sense of belonging of our diverse leadership, faculty, staff and students who advance learning, scholarship, and service to the community.

This Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 2021-2026 both reflects and furthers Samuel Merritt University's mission and will ensure that we achieve our institution's vision to become nationally recognized as a premier, multi-specialty health sciences institution.

With pride,



Dr. Ching-Hua Wang
President



Dr. Fred Baldini
Provost & VP, Academic Affairs



Eva Gonzalez Hillard
Executive Director,
Office of People & Culture

diversityequityinclusion



Executive Summary

As the Office of Diversity and Inclusion transitioned to the Office of People and Culture (OPC), this Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for 2021–2026 highlights the progress Samuel Merritt University has made under previous diversity action plans and outlines the next steps we will take to achieve the university's goals for preparing a diverse and inclusive healthcare workforce committed to making high-quality, patient-centered healthcare equitable and accessible to diverse communities in California and nationwide.

This Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) does not exist in isolation; it informs the implementation of several other university initiatives, such as the development of a new Academic Master Plan, the university's strategic plan, the university's institutional learning outcomes, the new student-success framework, and the ongoing enrichment of the university's culture of inclusion.

To ensure that a Samuel Merritt University education provides its health sciences students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences they need to improve health outcomes for underserved and vulnerable communities, the university will increase the diversity and diversity-consciousness of faculty, staff, and students. Specific objectives toward meeting this goal include:

1

Recruit, develop, retain, and promote faculty from groups that are underrepresented in the healthcare professions¹ and faculty who demonstrate an inclusive diversity consciousness.

2

Implement holistic admission review in all SMU academic programs.

3

Increase the percentage of enrolled Latinx, Black/ African American, Native and Indigenous, and Asian-American/Pacific Islander students, and enhance the preparation of all students to serve medically underserved and vulnerable communities.

4

Eliminate disparity in the on-time graduation rate for all students in all academic programs.

5

Partner with the Vice President of University Advancement and Communications to increase the university's current-use grant funds available for scholarships for groups underrepresented in the healthcare professions, first-generation, and low-income students.

6

Collaborate with the university's President's Cabinet to create a DEI plan for each academic program and division.

7

Implement restorative practices training across all departments and programs to create a culture for resolving conflict that also fosters a supportive and nurturing community for faculty, staff, and students.

¹ For the purposes of this report, references to "groups that are underrepresented in the healthcare professions" and "Underrepresented Minorities" may include, but are not limited to: a) underrepresented minorities (URM) determined by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to be underrepresented in the healthcare professions (<https://bhwh.hrsa.gov/grants/resourcecenter/glossary>): American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Hispanic (all races); b) Two or more races, when one or more are from the preceding racial and ethnic categories listed by HRSA; c) groups in racial or ethnic categories deemed to be underrepresented in healthcare professions based on current data from credible sources; d) minority groups not categorized by race or ethnicity that are deemed to be underrepresented in healthcare professions, based on current data from credible sources.

celebrating

In 1999, Samuel Merritt University embraced “celebrating diversity” as one of its core values



STUDENTS	SMU 2019	CA 2019*	USA 2019**
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%	1.6%	1.3%
Asian	31%	15.5%	5.9%
Black/African American	7%	6.5%	13.4%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1%	0.5%	0.2%
Two or More Races	6%	4.0%	2.8%
Unknown	6%		
White	30%	71.9%	76.3%
Hispanic/Latino	19%	39.4%	18.5%

*Source: www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/CA/PST045219

**Source: www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219

diversity

Introduction and History

In 1999, Samuel Merritt University embraced “celebrating diversity” as one of its core values. The university created its first Diversity Action Plan in 2009, when the president and the Board of Regents identified “creating a culturally diverse university” as one of the institution’s strategic goals. That 2009 plan featured the following details:

- » Delineated SMU’s history of efforts to address discrimination and increase diversity
- » Established core definitions for diversity and inclusion
- » Identified diversity principles, and
- » Outlined the university’s first set of measurable diversity-related goals.

SMU has been building on the diversity goals from this first plan, establishing new benchmarks and refining our shared vision of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive university community.

SMU’s next diversity action plan (Catalyst for Change, 2012-2015) detailed the reasons why creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture is fundamental to achieving the university’s mission “to educate students to become highly skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals who positively transform the experience of care in diverse communities.” Catalyst for Change also set benchmarks for students from under-represented

groups to comprise at least 25% of the total student population by 2015. The university has since surpassed this target. Student demographics for Spring 2019 were 19% Latinx, 7% Black/ African American, 6% two or more races, and 1% Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander.² The next step is to address this representation within each region served by one of the four campuses (East Bay, San Francisco Peninsula, San Joaquin Valley, and Sacramento Valley) and bring the representation of URM students on each campus to the levels that mirror demographics of each regional population. Further examination and planning must occur to ensure that all programs / departments participate in this action.

Among the tools SMU uses to assess our progress toward sustaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture are regular surveys of students, staff, and faculty. The Department of Institutional Research administers an overall climate survey to all campus community members every two years. Sections of that survey contain questions about inclusion and equity, such as whether or not the respondents feel the campus climate is welcoming and inclusive. Since the university began administering the climate survey in 1995, surveys have reported generally very positive responses from students on the Oakland campus, while the responses from students on the Sacramento and S.F. Peninsula campuses have been less positive.

² See “Institutional Data” on Samuel Merritt University’s Institutional Research page: https://www.samuelmerritt.edu/institutional_research

Highlighted Achievements 2015 – Present

Samuel Merritt University's two earlier diversity action plans (2009 and 2012) contain a wealth of history about the university's work toward becoming a more diverse and inclusive institution. The 2012 plan, Catalyst for Change, continued to guide the efforts of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion through the end of 2019. Strong and committed leadership from President Sharon Diaz and, more recently, President Ching-Hua Wang, with the support of the university's Board of Regents, led to a number of significant, measurable achievements.

In 2015, the university launched a new advancement initiative to raise \$20M in philanthropic and public current-use funds to support URM students at SMU over the next ten years. Successes to date include HRSA Nursing Workforce Diversity funds (2016-17, \$348,700; 2018-2022, \$1.5M) and HRSA Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (2016-2020; \$7.8M). The university has applied those funds to student aid, including scholarships and supportive programs in focused mentoring and tutoring. A portion of these resources have been used to increase data collection and evaluation on student success and the number of students working in medically underserved areas after graduation. The following additional achievements mark progress toward a dynamically diverse and inclusive campus:

- 1 Acceleration of partnerships with pipeline programs (FACES for the Future, Mentors in Medicine, National Youth Leadership Forum) that ensure the diversity of a highly qualified application pool and retention of admitted students.
- 2 The SMU Health Justice Speaker Series, created in 2015, brought labor leader and civil rights activist Dolores Huerta; philosopher, social critic, and political activist Dr. Cornell West; and renowned researcher and educator in race relations and social justice, Dr. Joy DeGruy, to campus. Between 2015 and 2019, attendance at each of these events averaged 600 people.
- 3 The SMU Annual Community Reads series, launched in 2014, provides opportunities for SMU faculty and students to examine issues related to health equity through group discussions, additions to course curricula, and presentations by authors. Book selections have included: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*; *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*; *Five Days at Memorial*; *The 57 Bus*; *You're in the Wrong Bathroom*, and *The Deepest Well*.
- 4 In 2016, a Faculty Diversity Coordinator half-time position was created in the former Office of Diversity and Inclusion with the goal of providing an SMU faculty member release time to focus on DEI training, monitor and address DEI issues, and develop and/or address strategies to increase diverse faculty recruitment, retention, and professional development. The position helped devise the current faculty recruitment and retention goal and strategies stated within this Strategic Plan. In 2019, the role, still a half-time position, was transitioned to one focused on a restorative practice model (RePAIR) that includes facilitation, training and individualized coaching. In 2020, the position transitioned to the Center for Innovation and Excellence in Learning (CIEL) which resides in the division of Academic Affairs.

5 In early 2016, the Ethnic Health Institute (EHI), originally founded in 1997 through a collaborative venture between SMU and Sutter Health, joined Samuel Merritt University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Drawing on the deep relationships its administration and staff have developed with a wide variety of community organizations, EHI has refined its vision to align with SMU's mission: "EHI will become a national model for university and community-based partnerships that benefit underserved and ethnic community members, prepare and support SMU students to serve diverse communities, impact health equity, and increase workforce diversity." Beginning in Fall 2019, EHI became part of the Center for Community Engagement.

6 In 2016, the University's Fall Faculty Preview Day, an annual event that marked the opening of each new academic year, was transformed to *Professional Enrichment Day (PED)*. The significance of this change is that the 6-hour internal conference, formerly designed for full-time faculty, is now an explicitly inclusive event, open to all faculty and staff. The 2016 PED was collaboratively planned by the Office of Diversity of Inclusion and the Faculty Development Committee and featured Dr. Howard Pinderhughes from UCSF, the first of several health equity and justice keynote speakers at annual PEDs in subsequent years.

7 In 2017, OPC created internal partnerships with the CIEL, the SMU H*E*A*L*S Group, the College of Nursing (CON) Structural Determinants of Health Nursing Curriculum Integration Task Force, as well as an external collaboration with the Bay Area Structural Competency Working Group.

8 Between 2017 and 2020, the planning of the annual PED has been a highly collaborative process, always involving at least three SMU stakeholder groups. Professional Enrichment Day keynote speakers have included Erica Monasterio and Dr. Teresa Scherzer (UCSF Diversity in Action leaders) in 2017; Dr. Camara Jones (physician, epidemiologist, anti-racism activist in 2018; Haben Girma (disability rights advocate) in 2019; and Brooke Gregory (Vice President of Pacific Educational Group, a consulting firm committed to forging racial equity) in 2020.

9 Between 2017 and the early half of 2019, the initial draft of this plan was developed by SMU's Office of Diversity and Inclusion through consultation with multiple university stakeholders, including SMU's HEALers group³, the CON leadership, CIEL members, and academic program chairs.

10 In November 2019, the Diversity Action Plan 2020 – 2025 was submitted to the President's Cabinet by Shirley Strong, SMU's Chief Diversity Officer from 2015 to December 2019 for vetting and approval.

11 In July 2020, President Ching-Hua Wang charged a task force of SMU students, faculty, and staff to vet with the campus community and external stakeholders the draft strategic vision developed over the previous three years. The charge included four specific tasks toward the finalization and operationalization of a plan to be implemented beginning January 2021:

- » Discuss successes and opportunities regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion with campus stakeholders
- » Gather input on implementation feasibility for plan objectives
- » Deliver recommendations about the vision, along with goals and metrics to measure the success of the plan
- » Deliver recommendation for a long term diversity, equity, and inclusion standing committee.

³ H*E*A*L*S sub-group who completed master training with UCSF consultants (Monasterio and Scherzer)

Following is a table of key events and timelines pertaining to the vetting of the draft Vision Statement with the campus community and external stakeholders.

Key Events and Timelines (2020)

July 8 – November 9	16 weekly task force meetings to plan community review process and timeline for finalization of plan
July 23	Methodology for community engagement identified. Mentimeter selected for instant polling.
July 27	Online course shell created in Canvas to enable student and faculty engagement related to DEI Plan
August 18	Draft DEI Plan and introduction video distributed to students, faculty, and staff via email. An online discussion board was opened to collect community feedback.
August 20	Faculty and Staff Community Dialogues
August 21	Student Community Dialogue
September 1	Professional Enrichment Day activities included five breakout focus group sessions to discuss DEI Plan drafts
September 4	Survey Closed
September 21	Analysis of survey results, discussion board, and community-dialogue feedback incorporated. Survey and discussion results organized within 8 themes. ⁴
October 12	Incorporate summarized findings into DEI Plan draft
October 23	Review of new DEI plan draft completed by President Wang
October 31	Full DEI plan finalized
November 13	Final DEI plan presented to SMU community
November 30	President Wang presents <i>Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2021-2026</i> to SMU Board of Regents for formal adoption

This Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 2021-2026 both reflects and furthers SMU's mission to “educate students to become highly-skilled and compassionate healthcare professionals who positively transform the experience of care in diverse communities.” With each step toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusion, the university community understands more fully how critical those steps are to the university's ability to achieve our mission. That understanding is foundational to the new goals we set in this new strategic plan.

⁴ Eight Themes consist of: 1) University Culture; 2) Student recruitment and retention from under represented identities; 3) Faculty recruitment and retention from under represented identities; 4) Staff recruitment and retention from under represented identities; 5) Fundraising for under-represented groups; 6) Training; 7) University Leadership; 8) Community Engagement



Major goals for 2021-2026 include:

- 1** Recruit, develop, retain, and promote faculty from groups that are underrepresented in the healthcare professions and faculty who demonstrate an inclusive diversity consciousness.
- 2** Implement holistic admission review in all SMU academic programs.
- 3** Increase the percentage of enrolled Latinx, Black/African American, Native and Indigenous, and Asian-American / Pacific Islander students, and enhance the preparation of all students to serve medically underserved and vulnerable communities.
- 4** Eliminate disparity in the on-time graduation rate for all students in all academic programs.
- 5** Partner with the Vice President of University Advancement and Communications to increase the university's current-use grant funds available for scholarships for groups underrepresented in the healthcare professions, first-generation, and low-income students.
- 6** Collaborate with the university's President's Cabinet to create a DEI plan for each academic program and division.
- 7** Implement restorative practices training across all departments and programs, to create a culture for resolving conflict that also fosters a supportive and nurturing community for faculty, staff, and students.

building
sustainable
change
from within



Looking Forward: Goals for 2021-2026

The Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 2021 - 2026 focuses on building on successes in generating a more diverse student population and inclusive campus climate to improve the experience under-served populations have with healthcare. This plan intentionally engages all of the university's academic and co-curricular programs, along with institutional administration, to build sustainable change from within.

The DEI Task Force recommended that the Office of People and Culture lead a collaborative group of students, community members, faculty, and staff in creating and maintaining a dashboard to track progress toward all goals. The Provost will report progress toward goals to the Academic Affairs Committee, the President, and the Board of Regents twice per year.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Standing Committee

In December 2020, President Wang appointed a standing committee of faculty, staff, and student representatives to launch the DEI Strategic Vision 2021-2026. The committee serves an oversight and supportive advocacy role, charged with driving initiatives that facilitate the university-wide adoption, operationalization, fiscal management, and evaluation of progress toward the seven established goals. The committee will also serve as a body of experts on diversity, equity, and inclusion at SMU, consulting as needed with internal and external stakeholders throughout the implementation and evaluation process. *See Appendix X for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Standing Committee Charter.*

Committee Membership - November 2020

- » **Ché Abram** (Co-Chair), Associate Director of Diversity, Office of People & Culture
- » **Craig Elliott** (Co-Chair), Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs
- » **Keamiyah Walker**, Student, Entry-Level Master of Science in Nursing program
- » **Cheng Yu**, Student, Master of Physician's Assistant program
- » **Jessica Arauza**, Academic Support Coordinator, Staff Council
- » **Brandy Beazley**, Assistant Professor, College of Nursing
- » **Kay Davis**, Associate Professor, Health Sciences Simulation Center
- » **Goli Hashemi**, Assistant Professor, Department of Occupational Therapy
- » **Shawna Holbrook**, Interim Dean of Admission
- » **Marcus Penn**, Assistant Professor, College of Nursing & Faculty Diversity Restorative Coach, Center for Innovation & Excellence in Learning
- » **Emily Prieto-Tseregounis**, Chief of Staff to the President & VP of University Initiatives
- » **Nancy Stollon**, Administrative Assistant to VP of University Initiatives
- » **Celeste Villanueva**, Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs

Goal 1.

Recruit, develop, retain, and promote faculty from groups that are underrepresented in the healthcare professions and faculty who demonstrate an inclusive diversity consciousness.

Metric

The intent of this objective is to increase the representation of URM faculty. In doing so, SMU will attract students who similarly identify as underrepresented in the healthcare professions. A more diverse pool of SMU graduates will in turn inform and strengthen the diversity of California's healthcare providers.

Background and Rationale

Diversity consciousness is rooted in practices and conceptual tools that enable critical thinking about complex social issues such as identity, power, and difference. As the university's student body has become more diverse, the healthcare professions have also become more cognizant of the social and structural determinants of health. Together these changes support student success by preparing students to address health inequities as culturally sensitive and socially responsible healthcare providers. Hiring faculty with diversity consciousness and diversity literacy, with demonstrated commitment to teaching from a multicultural perspective and conducting inclusive research, will serve all SMU students well.

The large number of vacant faculty and leadership positions in SMU's College of Nursing in 2019 has presented an opportunity for hiring faculty with a deep knowledge of and commitment to inclusive teaching and research. Thus, our first metric for increasing the diversity of SMU faculty is that a majority of all new hires in the College of Nursing will be from HRSA-defined URM groups. The

intent here is to attract a diverse pool of highly qualified URM students by promising a diverse and inclusive campus community, with special attention given to ensure faculty diversity. During the 2019-2020 academic year, nearly a dozen full-time positions were open in nursing programs at all SMU campuses. The College of Nursing also hires more than 60 adjunct professors each year, which may provide an additional pipeline to full-time status for professors from minority groups that are underrepresented in healthcare within each region served by one of the campuses.

In January 2019, SMU nuanced the tracking of demographic data to learn about identity of faculty applicant pools, including where applicants of color drop out of the hiring process. The university also identified a pool of diversity-fluent faculty and staff to serve as diversity advocates on search committees, including those individuals who have undergone H*E*A*L*S training. With the disability-rights advocate Haben Girma as its keynote speaker, the Fall 2019 Professional Enrichment Day focused on diversity for the fourth consecutive year.

Actions (Responsibility)

- » Embed in all vacancy listings desired experience in research, teaching, or service to URM communities. Adopt a process to certify that applicant pools are sufficiently diverse and/or have a record of desired experience before moving searches forward. (OPC, Institutional Research)
- » To address concerns about obtaining a pool of highly qualified URM candidates, ensure that OPC has an expansive list of URM-directed resources for advertising vacancy listings (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science, AAAS Minority Scientist Network, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, branches of the military, etc.) (OPC)

- » Encourage and incentivize the inclusion of highly competitive adjunct faculty (where diversity is often greater) in candidate pools for full-time academic appointments. Support this objective further by re-instating SMU's loan forgiveness program for all faculty pursuing terminal degrees in their field, with priority given to URM faculty. (OPC and Academic Affairs)
- » Increase the representation of URM faculty in executive academic and administrative positions.
- » Enhance SMU's partnerships with healthcare pipeline programs in local schools as a long-term investment in increasing the diversity of the pool of applicants for faculty positions (OPC, Center for Community Engagement).
- » Create a dedicated fund to aid in recruiting and retaining URM faculty. This fund might be used to partner with HBCU and HSIs, award signing bonuses and startup packages, fund course releases, etc. (President and Academic Affairs)
- » Train all search committees in the role implicit bias can play in all elements of the selection process. (OPC, CIEL)
- » Use the newly-hired 0.5 FTE faculty-development support position to help clinical and adjunct faculty in the College of Nursing transition to full-time academic faculty. This position supplements the existing position of nursing-faculty recruiter, who helps new hires understand the SMU system and available resources. (College of Nursing)
- » Leverage SMU's Center for Innovation and Excellence in Learning (CIEL) to support greater attention to the social and structural determinants of health in all SMU curricula and all pedagogy. (OPC, CIEL)
- » Provide group mentoring for research and scholarship through CIEL. (OPC, Academic Affairs, and CIEL)
- » Protect first year URM full-time faculty from course overloads and/or give new faculty dedicated release time, in recognition of the greater demands for University service often experienced by URM faculty. (Academic Affairs)
- » Provide anti-bias training to faculty, staff, and students, starting with the College of Nursing and then including other university leaders. The three phases of this training will be 1) discovery, 2) cultural development and assessment, and 3) implementation. Phases one and two will begin in 2021; phase three will launch in 2022. (OPC, CIEL)
- » Track data from the annual employee Experience of Work and the biennial climate surveys to understand which actions have been successful, and which areas present challenges. Embed DEI-related questions into course evaluations to capture student perceptions of faculty commitment to an inclusive culture (OPC, Institutional Research, and Academic Affairs)
- » Develop and implement consistent method of communicating all actions to campus community toward achievement of transparency and accountability.

Goal 2.

Implement holistic admission review in all academic programs.

Metric

By 2023, all academic programs will use holistic admission review.

Background and Rationale

Implementing holistic admission review is important for achieving Goal #3, increasing the diversity of SMU's student body by seeking and supporting applicants underrepresented in the healthcare professions. Over the past several years, many of our degree programs have been moving toward a more holistic approach to evaluating candidates for admission. Non-cognitive variables, such as experience in fields relating to healthcare, knowledge of multiple languages, or time living and working in an underserved community, are given greater emphasis, while grade point averages

and scores on standardized tests are given less weight. In 2018, with a four-year grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration's Nursing Workforce Diversity program, SMU's College of Nursing committed to implementing holistic admission review in a systematic fashion, with assistance from the National Association of Colleges of Nursing. The next step is expanding training for holistic admission review throughout all programs on all campuses of the university. As of 2020, graduate programs with current funding from HRSA's Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students program (Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, and Family Nurse Practitioner) are using an admission rubric that prioritizes URM students who are educationally or economically disadvantaged. Review processes, however, must include a baseline academic competency level to ensure the success of admitted students as they advance through the program. At the same time, academic support programs must increase capacity for those students who encounter difficulty, to ensure advancement to graduation.

Actions (Responsibility)

- » Continue holistic admission review training and implementation in the College of Nursing. (College of Nursing, Admission)
- » Systematize holistic admission review training and implementation in all academic programs. (Academic Affairs, Admission, and Program Chairs)
- » With the assistance of program chairs and staff in Admission and Institutional Research, develop metrics for tracking faculty and staff training, implementation of holistic admission procedures, and the impact of both on the diversity of admitted and enrolled students. (Admission, Program Chairs, Institutional Research, and OPC)
- » Establish programmatic support to ensure

retention, advancement and graduation of all students currently enrolled and those to be admitted under the holistic review admissions process.

- » Support transition to holistic review process with ample financial aid resources to ensure students from underresourced communities will be able to afford the SMU education while minimizing educational debt.
- » Develop mentored network program to support a diverse student population.

Goal 3.

Increase the percentage of enrolled Latinx, Black/African American, Native and Indigenous, and Asian-American/Asian Pacific Islander students, and enhance the preparation of all students to serve medically underserved and vulnerable communities.

Metric

Enrollment of academically qualified underrepresented students increases by a minimum of 1% in each of the five years of this plan.

Background and Rationale

With the goal of increasing health equity by changing the face of healthcare, Samuel Merritt University will continue to increase the diversity of the university's student body, prioritizing those racial and ethnic groups that are the least represented in the healthcare workforce of each region served by one of the campuses. The university will also track data about application, admission, matriculation, and success of Asian students from groups that are underrepresented⁵ in the healthcare professions, in preparation for increasing outreach to those groups.

⁵ As defined by HRSA in 2019, these Asian groups that are underrepresented in the healthcare professions include students from Myanmar, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and certain populations from Taiwan and Singapore.

Actions (Responsibility)

- » Set individualized departmental goals for increasing representation from desired targets so increase is noticeable and meaningful throughout the academic programs and contributes to the broader institutional goal of 1%. (Vice Presidents, Department Chairs)
- » Hold departments / programs accountable for ensuring their majors have adequate disciplinary-specific academic and mentoring support to ensure retention and advancement to graduation.
- » Apply for HRSA funding for Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS) for the maximum number of programs allowed, and for continued funding for the HRSA Nursing Workforce Diversity program. Where possible, include funds for training in holistic admission review in the proposed budgets. (Programs and Vice President for Advancement and Communications)
- » Track applications, admission, matriculation, and success of students from all under-represented groups, in preparation for increasing outreach to students from those groups. (Admission and Institutional Research)
- » Establish departmental and/or institutional guidelines for ensuring every student graduates with the ability to work sensitively and competently with a diverse, multi-cultural patient population. Establish similar benchmarks for students planning to pursue research-oriented advanced degrees.
- » Build on diversity outreach activities specific to each program. (The BSN, ABSN, and ELMSN programs have the Nursing Success program in place, along with a dedicated diversity-outreach admission staff member. Nurse Anesthesia also has a diversity outreach program in place, as does Podiatry. New outreach programs will be created for the Department of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy Department, and MPA programs.) (OPC, program chairs, and admissions leadership)⁶

- » Increase student preparation to serve underserved communities by developing and implementing an interprofessional curriculum on working with vulnerable populations. (IPE program, Academic Division, WSCUC accreditation team)
- » Leverage the university's student success model to enable students to practice "critical examination and revision of existing perspectives and structures." (IPE program, Academic Division, WSCUC accreditation team)

Goal 4.

Eliminate disparity in the on-time graduation rate for all students in all academic programs

Metrics

- » By 2023 the BSN program will eliminate the disparity in on-time graduation experienced by minority students in the BSN program, such that all students will graduate on time, regardless of their URM status.
- » By 2026, all other programs will have developed and embarked on a five-year plan toward achieving equity among all students with respect to on-time graduation rates.

Background and Rationale

The aim of this goal is to continue the mitigation of the on-time graduation-rate disparity experienced by URM nursing students through evidence-based strategies developed under the Nursing Workforce Diversity program. In the same period, this plan charges SMU's other academic programs with identifying and addressing similar disparities in on-time graduation.

According to data from Student Affairs, students from underrepresented minority groups often need to re-take a course due to family challenges or

⁶ The University is considering centralizing these outreach programs within the Division of Student Services.

lack of academic preparation, resulting in a longer time to degree. To address this challenge, the university has increasingly sought to provide for students from minority groups the wrap-around academic, economic and psycho-social support that will allow them to bring their talents to bear on the task of achieving health equity for all. For example, using funds awarded by HRSA's Nursing Workforce Diversity (NWD) program, the College of Nursing's BSN and ABSN programs have increased the on-time graduation and GPA of URM students in those programs through tutoring, mentoring, psycho-social support, and access to emergency funds. Between 2016 and 2020, 100% of Nursing Workforce Diversity (NWD) program students in the BSN and ABSN programs have graduated on time; 91% passed the NCLEX exam on the first attempt; 40% assumed alumni tutor or mentor roles for new program participants; and 83% are working in health professions shortage areas.

Building on the success of the NWD program, the university has implemented several university-wide programs to allow students to devote themselves to their studies. For example, the Division of Student Affairs partners with the Alameda County Community Food Bank to host a food pantry on campus. Student Affairs also provides assistance at orientation for students to sign up for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), so that no student goes hungry. Through a philanthropic campaign initiated in 2016, the university has also created a student emergency fund for those who need a small, one-time grant for essential needs. These needs include but are not limited to a month's rent, a car repair, new glasses, or emergency childcare.

Despite these support enhancements, a success disparity still exists for underresourced students, with those students often taking longer to graduate, and longer to pass the licensing exam. This disparity exists among students across all programs.

Actions (Responsibility)

- » Implement a university-wide early-warning system so that support can be offered to students as early as possible. Building on program-specific systems, implement regular meetings between program chairs, OPC, and Financial Aid to share information about students in need. (OPC, Program Chairs, and Financial Aid)
- » Implement a summer intensive program for admitted students whose records suggest they would benefit from early support for study skills and course content. (Student Affairs, Program Chairs)
- » Increase the amount of money in the Student Emergency Fund. (Financial Aid Office, Vice President for Advancement and Communications)
- » Make available psychosocial counseling by a counselor of color for minority students at risk of not graduating on time. Goals of such counseling include creating a more supportive and inclusive community for minority students, and creating a stronger sense of belonging at the university. (OPC, Student Affairs)
- » Track the impact of these actions by discipline / program on graduating GPA and time to degree for minority students. (Student Affairs, Institutional Research)

Goal 5.

Partner with the Vice President of University Advancement and Communications to increase the university's current-use grant funds available for scholarships for URM, first-generation, and low-income students.

Metrics

- » Secure \$500,000 in new dedicated current use scholarship funds, over and above tuition discounts funded by SMU by the end of 2026.

- » Raise \$5,000,000+ (\$5M+) in new endowed funds for scholarships for URM, first generation, and low-income students by the end of 2026.

Background and Rationale

URM students often must cover the difference between the financial aid they are awarded and the cost of attendance. For example, high-need BSN students have a yearly gap of nearly \$7,000 between aid and the cost of tuition. Costs for housing, food, transportation, and books are additional expenses they must cover. Given the very high cost of living in the San Francisco Bay Area, and the likelihood that such students have few family financial resources to draw on, students may have to take on paid work that interferes with their ability to complete their coursework.

According to the Education Trust, URM students reside predominantly in low-income communities where schools receive as much as \$1800 per student less than comparable low-income districts serving predominantly white student populations.⁷ If they matriculate from underresourced school districts, these students are also in greater need of additional academic support and mentorship than their peers from higher-resourced districts. To receive that support, they must have the time to engage in tutoring, study groups and other co-curricular activities, the access to which is undermined by the need to hold one or more jobs. Raising philanthropic funds and new public grants enables scholarship recipients to increase the time and energy they are able to devote to their studies. This strategy supports inclusive access leading to academic success, and will help close the achievement gap between URM students in need of financial aid and students matriculating from predominantly white communities.

Goal 6.

Collaborate with the university's President's Cabinet to create a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plan for each academic program and division.

Metric

Plans in place by 2022, with yearly assessments of progress toward identified goals.

Background and Rationale

Increasing student and faculty diversity has the greatest potential to occur at the department level, where faculty members have substantive influence on the selection of student candidates for admission and faculty hires. Successfully reaching the objectives of this goal will depend largely on the commitment of departmental leadership and all associated faculty and staff to identify and adopt policies that lead to a measurable culture shift in each of the university's degree-granting programs. The OPC can help departments and programs develop specific plans for increasing diversity and inclusion.

Actions (Responsibility)

- » Submit the Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 2021 – 2026 for review and approval. (OPC)
- » Work with the university's vice presidents to implement a yearly review protocol that measures and reports on departmental/ program-level progress toward the goals of the Strategic Vision for DEI 2021-2026. (OPC, Vice Presidents)
- » Assist degree-granting programs in creating action plans by 2022, in assessing progress each year toward greater student and faculty diversity and inclusion, and in training faculty and staff around implicit bias and health inequities. (OPC, Vice Presidents)
- » Work with the vice presidents to integrate results of the annual Experience of Work survey and the

⁷ <https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/students-color-face-steep-school-funding-gaps/>

bi-annual climate survey into the yearly review of progress toward diversity goals. (OPC, Vice Presidents)

- » Identify representatives of existing SMU affinity groups (Veterans, Asian Pacific Islander Committee, Latinx Legacy Committee, and African American History Celebration Committee) to sit on new Committee on Inclusive Excellence. This new committee will come together to discuss broader issues relating to campus climate, incorporating feedback from each affinity group. (OPC, Vice Presidents)

Goal 7.

Implement restorative practices training for the university community, to create a culture for resolving conflict that also fosters a supportive, inclusive, and nurturing community for faculty, staff, and students.

Metric

Beginning in June 2021⁸, evaluate and modify the restorative practices program for implementation across all departments and programs.

Background and Rationale

Restorative practices training is an evidence-based method for establishing relationships and building healthy communities. With the success of the university's ongoing initiatives to address health inequities by changing the face of healthcare have come some challenges to effective communication among and between students and faculty. Restorative practices training will support the university's efforts to maintain an inclusive community for all.

Restorative justice practices as a protocol for

addressing concerns regarding conduct has been shown to support healthcare education (Acosta and Karp, 2018). Implementation of a restorative practices protocol has been shown to result in higher first-year retention rates and lower attrition rates, in higher graduation rates for students who participate in Restoration Circles, in higher student satisfaction with faculty who participate in Restoration Circles, and in fewer grievances against faculty and departments (Ibid).

Actions (Responsibility)

- » Implement a pilot restorative practices program in SMU's College of Nursing, to be completed in June 2021. (OPC, CIEL, Dean of the College of Nursing)
- » Beginning in June 2021 evaluate and modify the restorative practices program for implementation across the university. (OPC, CIEL, OAA)
- » Allocate adequate resources to staff program expansion with paid professional appointments.
- » Create ethics and values committee to review and respond to Bias Report Forms that are submitted to OPC. (OPC)

⁸ It is not yet clear if the University's transition to virtual classes and meetings, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, will delay the evaluation and wider implementation of the pilot restorative practices program.

Table: Samuel Merritt University's Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 2021-2026: Goals, Metrics, Baselines

Goal	Metrics ¹⁰	Baselines
Goal #1: Recruit, develop, and promote URM faculty and faculty with an inclusive diversity consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A majority of all new faculty hires will be from URM groups with greatest gap in representation to that commiserate with the annual Affirmative Action report provided by Sutter Health. (Black/African American and Latinx). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In 2019, 25% of SMU's full-time faculty (out of a total of 163) were people of color, including those who identify as Asian.
Goal #2: Implement holistic admission review in all academic programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Departmental / program-level plans with rigorous assessment component completed by 2022. » Holistic review admissions process implemented across all majors by 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » CON plan /trainings / metrics already in place. » New departmental / program plans /training expand on CON practice.
Goal #3: Increase the percentage of enrolled Latinx, Black/African American, Native and Indigenous, and Asian-American/Asian Pacific Islander students, and enhance the preparation of all students to serve medically underserved and vulnerable communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 1% increase each year, over the percentage of enrolled Latinx, Black/African American, Native and Indigenous, and Asian-American/Asian Pacific Islander students from the previous year, disaggregated by department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Enrollment by race/ethnicity, by program in Fall 2020
Goal #4: Eliminate disparity in the on-time graduation rate for all students in all academic programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » By 2023, the graduation rate for minority students in the BSN program will match that of White students. » Remaining programs will have measurable objectives to meet goal by 2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » On-time graduation rates as of Spring 2020, disaggregated by program and student race/ethnicity.
Goal #5: Partner with the Vice President of University Advancement and Communications to increase the university's current-use grant funds available for scholarships for URM, first-generation, and low-income students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Secure \$500,000 in new dedicated current use scholarship funds, over and above tuition discounts funded by SMU by the end of 2026. » Raise \$5,000,000+ (\$5M+) in new endowed funds for scholarships for URM, first generation, and low-income students by the end of 2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » FY 2020 total current-use funds for URM scholarships received as philanthropic gifts. » Federal title grants with direct student aid under contract by year end FY2020.
Goal #6: Collaborate with the University's President's Cabinet to create a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plan for each academic program and division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Plans in place by 2022, with yearly assessments of progress toward identified goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Demographics of students, faculty staff, disaggregated by race/ethnicity within programs.
Goal #7: Implement restorative practices training for the university community, to create a culture for resolving conflict that also fosters a supportive, inclusive, and nurturing community for faculty, staff, and students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Beginning in June 2021 evaluate and modify the restorative practices program for implementation across all departments and programs. » Create ethics and values committee to review and respond to Bias Report forms submitted to OPC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Restorative practices programs within departments/programs of Fall 2020.

¹⁰ The timeline for achieving these goals was developed before the global Covid-19 pandemic required the University to move University functions, including teaching, online. We do not yet know how the required adaptations might affect the University's ability to achieve these goals by the aspirational deadline.

Appendix



Samuel Merritt University

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Standing Committee Charter

Goal and Objective

Launch and drive initiatives that enable the university to achieve institutional strategic goals as detailed in the Strategic Vision for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2021-2026 (DEI Plan).

Role and Function

- » Implements current DEI Plan
- » Sets priority of initiatives and planned outcomes of DEI Plan
- » Develops, controls, and monitors budget in consultation with President's Cabinet for initiatives related to the execution of DEI Plan
- » Develops ad hoc project teams to ensure proper progression of DEI Plan initiatives
- » Advises President's Cabinet of major impediments delaying the achievement of established goals, making recommendations for adjustment to goals based on campus climate and current events
- » Represents campus stakeholders in the shared governance system
- » Ensures a consistent, transparent, and circular flow of information regarding the progress of the Plan's goals throughout the University
- » Initiate the process for authoring the next iteration of the DEI Plan

Outcomes and Products

- » Satisfactory progress toward reaching goals set forth in the Plan throughout the duration of the Plan timeframe, including verified achievement of goals by the end of 2026
- » Regular status reports to current DEI Plan projects delivered quarterly to UAC, the President, and made available to the campus community
- » Publication of DEI Annual Report for members of the Board of Regents, administrators, faculty, staff, and students highlighting the following areas:
 - Demographic information (veteran status, age, gender and sexual identity, disability, ethnicity, etc.)
 - Report on progress toward goals and priorities set forth in the Plan, indicating any revisions or additions made relative to goals
 - List of current committee membership and positions due for re-appointment
 - List of project working groups and contact information for project leads
 - Report on the priorities established and milestone goals for upcoming year

Membership

Roster guidelines

- » Continual Members:
 - Marcus Penn, Assistant Professor, College of Nursing & Faculty Diversity Restorative Coach, Center for Innovation & Excellence in Learning
 - Ché Abram, Associate Director for Diversity, Office of People and Culture
 - Eva Gonzalez Hilliard, Executive Director, Office of People and Culture
- » Appointed Members:
 - Two students, nominated by the Student Body Association
 - Two faculty, nominated by Faculty Organization
 - Two staff, nominated by Staff Council
 - One community member nominated by the Center for Community Engagement
 - One member of any status nominated by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
- » Within this membership, representation must include:
 - At least one person representing the interests of the Fresno campus
 - At least one person representing the interests of the Sacramento campus
 - At least one person representing the interests of the San Francisco Peninsula campus

Length of Term

- » The terms of appointed faculty and staff members shall be two years, renewable once, for a maximum appointment of four years
- » The terms of appointed students shall be for one year, renewable once, for a maximum appointment of two years

