



# CONFRONTING THE WALL

A Report by the Faculty Senate Committee for Action on  
Intersectionality, AntiRacism, and Equity (C.A.I.A.R.E.)

This report is a comprehensive environmental scan of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice initiatives, recommendations, and progress at Eastern Michigan University.

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The links below provide a brief history of the original Task Force. The first link to the Standing Committee page provides access to “About the Task Force,” a white paper on the origins of the Task Force and its mandate. The next links present its first two major projects: 1) a Diversity Resources Guide for Faculty and Instructors (in long and abbreviated forms) to keep track of campus and local resources that support our diversity student body and that assist faculty in creating inclusive classrooms; (2) the *Creating a Culture of Belonging* (three part) video series featuring EMU students and faculty experts addressing the needs of historically marginalized students at our institution.

Faculty Senate Standing Committee Page

Diversity Resources Guide for EMU Faculty/EMU Diversity Resources Short Guide

*Creating a Culture of Belonging Video Series (2021)*

Additional collaborators: Stephen Jefferson (Psychology); Dyann Logwood (Women’s and Gender Studies); Christopher Robbins (Teacher Education).

- Part 1: Creating a Sense of Belonging in the Classroom
- Part 2: Classroom and Mentoring Tips
- Part 3: Creating a Culture of Belonging: Actions Large & Small to Effect Change



October 23, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

One of the rewards of doing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice work at Eastern Michigan University has been the opportunity to discover and meet many inspiring, dedicated individuals working as teachers, researchers, and program administrators to support DEIJ on our campus and in the broader community. We want to take this occasion to thank the individuals, as well as our colleagues in Student Affairs, for all the work that they have done, and continue to do, to create a culture of belonging at EMU. Since the object of this scan is to explore the progress we have made as an institution in transforming our own organization, the DEIJ work covered in this document will not cover the many important public-facing DEIJ initiatives run by faculty, individual programs, or departments, as well as the Office of Community Engagement. Needless to say, there will be initiatives that should have been covered in this document but are not. In some cases, the work is still in progress—as with the committee exploring Student Evaluations, where it is not clear what results will emerge that address DEI concerns around instructor evaluations. In others, we can only apologize that we did not find you. One goal in producing this report is to argue for better communication to ameliorate the siloing that frequently obscures this work.

A macro systemic analysis such as this, which focuses on the interactions of groups, also does not adequately acknowledge important individual actors. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Dr. Barbara Patrick, who has been a galvanizing force for change at Eastern Michigan University. Her visionary leadership lies behind the most impactful faculty initiatives at EMU. We thank her for her tireless efforts. We also want to thank the Provost, Dr. Rhonda Longworth, for her ongoing support of faculty initiatives around DEI. We hope that this document will be useful in the Provost's Strategic Planning process, as it is executed in the spirit of our shared belief in the importance of integrity and transparency, our commitment to mutual accountability, and our shared vision of Eastern Michigan University as a leader in inclusive excellence.

Respectfully submitted,

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**We will document symbolic commitments to diversity and the lived experiences of faculty and staff; the institutionalization of diversity obscures racism and the brick walls we've run into.**

Sara Ahmed (2012)

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## Introduction

As an “Institution of Opportunity,” with a long and venerable tradition of training generations of teachers, Eastern Michigan University prides itself as a university that serves a diverse community where “All are Welcome.” This commitment is reflected by many dedicated employees who work to advance the goals of diversity, inclusivity, equity, and justice as teachers, practitioners, organizational leaders, and researchers. In 2016, however, faculty and administrators received a wake-up call when a racist incident on campus galvanized BIPOC EMU students to demand institutional accountability for their sense of disenfranchisement and vulnerability on campus. The protests, the challenges EMU experienced addressing them and subsequent incidents in 2019 and 2022, not to mention the Title IX lawsuits the university has faced, made apparent that a more intentional, coordinated and strategic approach to creating a culture of belonging at EMU was needed.

With the creation of DEI committees at the colleges and University Senate in response to the protests and an increasingly volatile political climate, EMU faculty have become a driving force for change on campus. And yet among those involved there is a fear that the institutional work we are doing may fall into a trap described by Sara Ahmed in *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, where systemic obstacles to true inclusion and equity remain entrenched under the “shiny veneer of diversity” created by our efforts. If we do not ensure a policy-driven, systemic approach to addressing inequalities at our institution at an infrastructural level, DEI efforts at EMU can be dismissed as a performative marketing ploy and will further harm the very members of our community (both students and faculty) that we seek to attract and support. Indeed, the fact that at EMU (as with most institutions) “diversity labor” is done primarily by individual volunteers who are themselves members of historically marginalized communities illustrates the systemic challenges that remain unaddressed at our institution.

In the spirit of collective accountability, the Faculty Senate Committee for Action on Intersectionality, AntiRacism, and Equity has undertaken a study of the status of DEI work at Eastern Michigan University. We have conducted an environmental self-scan of EMU reports, guidance, and recommendations generated by committees whose work is related or applies to DEI efforts. Our goal is to identify what has been done, the institutional progress we have made, and what obstacles we face, in the hopes that this will assist the Administration in developing action items on the level of policy and infrastructure to support the work done by faculty and staff to create a culture of belonging at EMU. With the appointment of EMU’s first Chief Diversity Officer and the Provost’s current Strategic Plan initiative, our institution has a unique opportunity to articulate and manifest what diversity, equity and inclusion means at EMU.

The purpose of this paper is to complete an intentional environmental scan of EMU reports, guidance, and recommendations generated by committees whose work is related or applies to DEI efforts. In an effort to continue to meet the goals of this committee, this paper will examine these reports to determine which action items remain to make explicit recommendations to EMU administration on how to make meaningful cultural change at EMU through policy and organizational structures. All documents referenced in this report can be viewed [here](#).

## Environmental Scan Methods

In order to understand the progression of DEI work at EMU and where we are today, it is necessary to understand how EMU has worked in the past. This environmental scan method synthesizes both internal and external information that has been collected and to collect new data to better understand faculty experiences on campus. Therefore, the primary focus of this environmental scan will be to conduct an internal capability analysis centered on DEI efforts in the wake of the 2016/2017 academic year, which we consider to be watershed year in the activation of both Faculty Senate members and the Administration (in the creation of the Presidential Commission) in response to student protests in Fall 2016. While it is important to review what type of work is being done in this arena in other institutions, we must begin with an identification of areas that have and have not been addressed at EMU. The identification of these areas will provide an opportunity for further research so that we might be better prepared to determine future directions and make meaningful recommendations.

### Process

Some previous surveys and measures included student data, which we have referenced or hyper-linked where noted, but otherwise this report will focus on faculty, part time and full-time lecturers.

### Purpose and AIMS of Environmental Scan

Conduct an environmental scan of the EMU campus and EMU community to learn the institutional experiences of faculty in regards and their experiences in issues surrounding identity and belonging, with particular attention to service faculty take on in doing this work. This environmental scan will provide a road map of actions that have been taken, areas where there still needs to be action, and establish areas of accountability.

The purpose of an environmental scan is to identify and monitor factors influencing an organization from both internal and external sources that can have long-term impacts on an organization. This process allows us to look at the “big picture” of this DEI issue. The purpose of this endeavor is as follows:

1. Review actions taken at EMU related to DEIJ and representation efforts in order to assess progress towards meaningful change
2. Critically examine factors that have supported or hindered implementation of the abovementioned actions.
3. Create a call for action at all levels of the university.

### Identified Goals

This report will describe the initial environmental scan project designed by the CAIARE, share key findings from these efforts, summarize previous surveys and committee work on campus,

reference specific results detailed in the report appendices, and share recommendations generated based upon findings. These recommendations are an important first step in acknowledging the efforts made in informing university diversity and inclusion efforts and considering implications for enhancing faculty recruitment, retention, and success endeavors.

Ten data collection sources were prioritized for the faculty experience at EMU environmental scan process in 2022 (See Table 1).

**Table 1**

Internal	
Committee and Task Force Existing Report Analysis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presidential Commission on Diversity and Inclusion</li> <li>• Campus Climate Survey</li> <li>• Higher Learning Commission</li> <li>• Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate Race &amp; Diversity Issues</li> <li>• College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committees</li> <li>• Commission on Women COVID-19 Task Force</li> <li>• Hanover Study</li> <li>• Age-Friendly University Environmental Scan</li> <li>• Provost's Work Group on Disability Issues</li> <li>• Critical Disability Studies Steering Committee White Paper on Disabled Faculty</li> </ul>	
New Data Analysis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty Leadership Service Obligation survey</li> <li>• All Faculty Service &amp; Belonging survey</li> </ul>	

The *existing reports* methods included summarizing recommendations from: (a) [Presidential Commission on Diversity and Inclusion](#); (b) [Campus Climate Survey](#); (c) [Higher Learning Commission](#); (d) [Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate Race & Diversity Issues](#); (e) [College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Committees](#); (f) [Commission on Women COVID-19 Task Force](#); (g) [Hanover Study](#); (h) [Age-Friendly University Environmental Scan](#); (i) [Provost's Work Group on Disability Issues](#); and (j) [Critical Disability Studies Steering Committee White Paper on Disabled Faculty](#).

The *new data* methods included: (a) [faculty leadership service obligation survey](#) and (b) [all faculty survey on service and belonging](#). Each method is briefly described in the following narrative and a report of findings is included in an associated appendix of this report. All data collection methods that included human subjects were approved by EMU's University Human Subjects Research Committee.



## Reviewed Reports

Because of the number and volume of documents reviewed for this report, all sources are linked and archived in a Google Drive accessible to EMU. The committee has done its best to collect as much information and supporting documentation as possible. We acknowledge that there may be initiatives of which we are unaware or areas where we were unable to gather adequate information, particularly given that this work was completed over a series of semesters during which campus work on DEI issues was ongoing.

## Presidential Commission on Diversity and Inclusion

The [Presidential Commission on Diversity and Inclusion](#) was a task oriented ad hoc commission created in December 2016 to provide specific recommendations to the university to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion of the EMU community. The commission first met in January 2017 and created a Commission on Diversity and Inclusion Vision Statement. The commission issued a report with a set of eight recommendations, which can be seen on the EMU website and are listed in brief below, with those recommendations that have been fully or partially met are highlighted in bold.

1. **Biennial Campus Climate Assessment** (See #2 Campus Climate Survey as this was partially completed)
2. Periodic Institutional Diversity Audit
3. **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion led by a Chief Diversity Officer Reporting Directly to the President (Interim: Dr. Doris Fields appointed in Winter 2022; a permanent CDO, Dwight Hamilton was hired in Fall 2023)**
4. Comprehensive University Strategic Action Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
5. Diversity Impact Analysis
6. Accountability Driven Performance Evaluation System
7. Curricular Improvement and Development
  - 7.1.1. [Master's degree in Africology and African American Studies](#)
  - 7.2. General Education assessment of student learning outcomes for DEI.
  - 7.3. Inclusion of student representation in General Education Assessment.
  - 7.4. Required team-taught, interdisciplinary, interdepartmental undergraduate course on systemic and structural inequity.
8. Community Engagement and Transformation Study Group

## Campus Climate Survey

In October 2019, the initiative *Diversity in Action* administered a survey, hosted town hall events, and conducted focus groups to provide an opportunity for our diverse campus community to voice their concerns to an interested body. The survey targeted a random sampling of 20% faculty and 10% students and received 893 responses, a 35% response rate.

- [Summary of Campus Climate Survey](#)
- [Campus Climate Assessment Report Summer 2021](#)
- [PowerPoint Presentation to Faculty Senate on Data Analysis of EMU Campus Climate Survey](#)

- Slide 4 indicates the final written report will be shared next week (1st week of February 2021). No written report was forthcoming and the results of this survey were never officially disseminated due to the data being lost by the host university.

## Higher Learning Commission

In fall 2021, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) visited EMU for their Mid-Cycle Review which included an on-site visit by HLC personnel. A final report was provided by the HLC which included concern with the criterion about the financial index of the university. This current state of the financial health of EMU is attributed to “a significant decrease in enrollment” as well as a decline in state appropriations, expenses related to the pandemic, and fixed operating costs. No comprehensive plan is laid out by EMU to address the issues.

- [Higher Learning Commission Assurance Argument](#). This document was submitted in preparation for the HLC site visit. It is unknown what, if any, faculty input was included in the creation of this document.
- [Higher Learning Commission Final Report](#). Following the site visit on 10/25/2021 the HLC provided the final report to EMU administration.
- [Faculty Senate Response to Assurance Argument](#). Report submitted to HLC from Faculty Senate.
- [Faculty Senate Addendum](#). Faculty Senate was concerned about how little the administration involved faculty in developing the university’s 2021 HLC Assurance Argument. One key concern was the misrepresentation of the university’s support of Students of Color in 2 sections: Criteria 1 (Mission) and 5 (Institutional Effectiveness, Resources, and Planning). Senate requested that they be able to include an addendum to EMU’s Assurance Argument in order to register our concerns.
- [Summary of HLC Mid-Cycle Review Documents](#)

## Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate Race & Diversity Issues

In winter 2019, the Faculty Senate Executive Board assembled the Task Force on Campus Climate Race, & Diversity Issues with the specific charge to examine what concrete actions were being taken to improve the campus climate as a result of the Presidential Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. This document written in August 23, 2021 serves as an analysis and comparison of and between the [President’s Commission on Diversity & Inclusion report](#) and the [Black Student Ten Point Plan](#).

- This ad hoc task group developed the following goals as part of the task group’s proposed action plan: 1) Assess university progress on expanding cultural competency and meeting the needs of minoritized students; 2) Pursue new initiative demonstrating and promoting faculty involvement in enhancing campus climate; 3) Create a faculty development seminar on cultural competency and diversity and; 4) Develop a clearinghouse of diversity and inclusion initiatives at EMU, with a report providing an overview of faculty driven campus initiatives submitted to the Faculty Senate Executive Board.
- Action Items and completed tasks by this task force include:
  - Student listening sessions on diversity
  - Faculty listening sessions on diversity needs
  - Race Matters: Equity & Action in Higher Education and Beyond Faculty Workshop

- This two-day faculty workshop was cosponsored with the EMU AAUP and voluntarily attended by approximately 135 EMU faculty during July 2020.
- Faculty Diversity Resource Guide
- Post-Election Discussion with EMU Faculty Experts
  - The panel of experts offering process expertise, mental wellness and stress relief tips, and helpful insight included faculty and administrators represent eight different departments and university outlets. More than 100 participants attended the informative event.
- [EMU Standing Against Injustice Video](#)
- Faculty Senate Statements on Racist Attacks Against Asian Americans and the George Floyd Incident
- College of Engineering & Technology Diversity Initiatives
  - Listening Sessions with Minority Students
  - Conversations with the School of Engineering
  - Conversations with Dean and Association
  - COT Diversity & Inclusion Committee Formation
  - Student Leaders and Peer Mentoring
- Removing Informational Silos & Expanding Diversity Initiative Awareness
- Action Item: Faculty Course Modules on Diversity & Inclusion
- The task force documented their work, complete with recommendations and suggestions in the [White Paper: Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate Race & Diversity Issues](#).

## College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committees

In 2021 the Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate Race, & Diversity Issues recommended that each college form their own DEI committee to address issues and concerns that may be specific to their faculty and students. Each of this committees have met and identified areas of concern in their college.

- [GACET](#): Game Above College of Engineering and Technology DEI committee identified 5 main concerns: (1) faculty pay disparities, (2) faculty input process, (3) underrepresented minority student attrition rate, (4) faculty demographics don't align with student demographics, (5) program support bias.
- COB: [Recommendations presented to the Dean March 1, 2022](#)
- Library: [Committee report 2021-2022](#)
- COE: No report available
- CHHS: No report available
- CAS: [Diversity and Inclusion Committee Website](#)

## Commission on Women COVID-19 Task Force

In Winter 2021, the EMU President's Commission on Women COVID-19 Task force conducted a COVID-19 Impact Survey in the Winter 2021 term and made a series of recommendations based on the results of the survey. Some recommendations included retroactive salary adjustment to faculty whose timelines to tenure, promotion and/or salary adjustment were delayed due to the impact of COVID 19, and institutional weight be given to Covid-19 impact statements for receipt of internal grants, awards, and releases. The task force's recommendations were unanimously affirmed by the Faculty Senate at the June 2021 Senate meeting. The report and recommendations were shared with Academic Human Resources, EMU AAUP, President Smith, and the Board of Regents in July 2021 for further discussion and implementation, no response

was ever provided by the administration.

- [COVID-19 Impact Survey Faculty Senate Summary](#)
- [Resolution on the Covid-19 Impact Task Force Recommendations](#)
- [Response from President Smith November 7, 2021](#)
- [Faculty impact statement guidance presented to Faculty Bargaining Council 2021](#)
  - [Faculty impact statement example](#)

## Hanover Study

In February 2018, the Hanover Research Group compiled a report for EMU administration. The report specifically examined leadership structures, graduate student teaching loads, FTE instructional staff, academic programs, and EMUs Carnegie Classification.

- [Hanover Research Group Organizational Benchmarking Analysis](#)
  - Key findings include:
    - Leadership structures at comparison institutions include fewer administrative units
    - Most common structures are academic and student affairs, finance and administration, and athletics
    - Few institutions report the percentage of courses taught by graduate assistants.
    - EMU has a higher proportion of FTE instructional staff relative to comparison institutions
    - EMU offers a higher number of academic programs than the 400 SCH comparison institutions included in this analysis
    - Among the reviewed institutions, SCH does not strongly correlate with research spending or Carnegie Classification.
  - Recommendations include:
    - Restructure and reduce the number of administrative units at the executive level
    - Optimize academic program portfolio to include academic programs that align with the institution's mission as well as student and labor market demand indicators
    - Anticipate potential changes to staffing needs, particularly as it relates to FTE instructional staff.

## Age-Friendly University Environmental Scan

In December 2019 members of the Aging Studies Program Steering Committee compiled a report examining age-friendliness at EMU. Recommendations that have been met are highlighted in bold.

- [Initial Environmental Scan of Age-Friendliness at Eastern Michigan University - Executive Summary](#)
  - Employ the “Great at any age” marketing campaign highlighting students across the life-course.
  - Create physical and virtual spaces for older learners to cultivate a sense of community and belonging at EMU.

- Deliver professional development opportunities for instructors to be better prepared to support students of all ages through information clearinghouse, training modules, and other wide-reaching information sharing efforts.
- Incorporate current and prospective student needs into strategic decision making to create growth opportunities with predicted demographic shifts.
- Engage emeritus faculty and staff and alumni in expertise sharing through mentoring programs, lecture series and investments in technology to stream educational events
- Enhance accessibility (physical, wayfinding, virtual) for everyone who interacts with the university, either in person or online.
- Carry out a needs assessment to consider expanding non-degree offerings.
- Develop a tuition discount program for older adults (60+) that is similar to peer institutions within the MAC.

## Faculty Leadership Survey

In Winter 2022, a survey was distributed to the Faculty Senate and the DEI committees in each College. The survey received responses from 21 faculty in leadership positions. This survey specifically focused on service responsibilities, attitudes towards service contributions, and the impact of COVID on their service responsibilities.

- [Toplines Summary of Faculty Leadership Survey](#)

## Faculty Survey on Service and Belonging

In Winter 2023, a survey was distributed to all faculty, part time lecturers and full-time lecturers. The survey received 303 responses; 54% tenured faculty, 18% tenure track faculty; 20% part time lecturers, and 8% full time lecturers across all colleges and the library. The survey explored demographic characteristics related to health status and disability, sense of belonging, community culture, stressful experiences, and student evaluations in the context of service obligations.

- [PowerPoint of results important to issues being addressed by Faculty Senate](#)
- [Toplines Summary of Faculty Survey on Service and Belonging](#)

## Provost's Work Group on Disability Issues

The provost convened a working group in June 2020 to assess COVID-19 and disability issues in advance of the fall 2020 semester. This group was asked to systematically identify potential issues that needed to be addressed and propose solutions and specifically address six areas: 1) facilities and furnishings, 2) PPE usage, 3) accommodations processes, 4) adaptive technologies, 5) professional development, and 6) other issues the group believed were important to address.

Recommendations focused on providing as much access as possible to campus facilities and courses. We recommend reviewing processes for entering and exiting buildings, evaluating room capacity, providing PPE, and course scheduling in order to enable the greatest amount of

participation by people with disabilities. Doing so requires acknowledging and, ideally, addressing existing limitations including facilities that are not fully accessible, accommodation processes that do not function properly, and understaffed campus offices. Our key recommendations are: allowing faculty and staff to work remotely whenever possible, moving all courses online that can go online, and providing additional staff support to the disability resource center. This group reviewed recommendations and progress on those recommendations in December 2020. Select still relevant recommendations are included below and those items completed are highlighted in bold below.

- [Report – Provost's Work Group on Disability Issues for Fall 2020 Campus Reopening – annotated December 2020](#)
  - Facilities and Furnishings – partially completed.
    - Assessment still needed for:
      - Universal entry into buildings (e.g. paddle or swiping for automatic doors)
      - Signage and wayfinding, including those for the visually impaired
      - Ensure entry device into buildings are operational
      - Bathroom accessibility
      - Appropriate height for wheelchair users for hand sanitizers, paper towels, etc.
      - Including capacity and accessibility for wheelchair users in classrooms
      - Update fire and safety evacuation policies for those with disabilities
  - Accommodations processes
    - **Accessible protocols for contacting departments and offices**
    - **Instructor policies to address difficulties getting to/from classes**
    - **Provide additional staff at the DRC**
      - ADA coordinator is still needed
    - Assessment still needed for:
      - Transparent faculty ADA accommodation process
      - Online teaching – inconsistently applied & not prioritized for students and faculty with disabilities
  - Adaptive technologies
    - **Hybrid delivery options**
    - Assessment still needed for:
      - Canvas accessibility (e.g. voice to text capabilities, etc.)
      - Use of e-books
  - Professional development
    - Universal course design training
    - Education to faculty about grading policies and online learning
  - Additional areas
    - Create a disability advising group including appointment of faculty and students

## Critical Disability Studies White Paper on the Needs of Disabled Faculty at EMU

Members of the Critical Disability Studies Steering Committee produced a [White Paper](#) in Winter 2023, which they presented to the Faculty Senate at the beginning of the Fall 2023. This White Paper expressed two primary concerns: 1) EMU is not following the current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation process; and 2) EMU's collective commitment to excellence demands that we create a University where disabled faculty are not merely accommodated but are respected and valued as critical to this effort.

The paper indicates that EMU faculty who have approached HR with accommodation requests have not received the quality of response that demonstrates EMU's ostensible commitment to respect and inclusiveness and observes that the failure to meet faculty accommodation requests in a timely manner has a profoundly negative impact on a faculty member's ability to do their job. It also states that an institution that strives for inclusive excellence must go beyond merely meeting legal requirements to centering access rather than accommodation in ways that acknowledge disability as an aspect of human diversity. Given that EMU's support of faculty and employees ensures a thriving student and campus community, the Committee proposes the following recommendations that center access and accountability:

- Focus on access rather than accommodation. Access is about creating an environment, institutional structures, and culture as sites of collective accountability that serve all members of the institutional community in contrast to an accommodations framework that views disability negatively and as an individual “problem” or “special case” that needs to be “fixed.”
- Center the voices of disabled faculty and other employees by including them as stakeholders in important campus decisions (e.g. building renovations; campus policy development, such as public health emergencies, or scooter rental on campus property).
- Revise accommodations policies and procedures to ensure transparency, ease of access, and equity, using best practices research and in consultation with disabled faculty at EMU.
- Center respect in the new processes and policies. According to our core values, we “care for our people, communities and the environment and show respect for the dignity of the individual” - make that clear in how disability access is approached.
- Clarify and solidify direct communication lines and responsiveness in the new processes and policies. This includes allowing people to have representation and support in any meetings or communications related to accommodations. This representation should include union representatives as well as other people those seeking access provisions would like to have present.
- Establish a timely process that allows accommodations to be put in place at the start of each semester. This process should include a mechanism to ensure the accountability of AHR/HR in meeting these standards.



- Create a paid position for a Disability Navigator that reports to the CDO. This person would oversee ADA accommodations, help faculty navigate the accommodations process, create and handle an independent reporting process for disability discrimination issues for employees, and compile resources for disabled employees, among other duties.
- Create a robust anti-discrimination policy for hiring and prioritize access during the hiring process.
- Create a process that ensures that disability does not disadvantage faculty during promotion processes.
- Address the culture and climate as it relates to EMU employees with disabilities, raise awareness about EMU's disability community, support efforts to increase the accessibility of EMU's digital and physical environments, and respond to other disability equity issues at EMU.

#### Faculty Senate Resolution

On Oct. 4, 2023, the Faculty Senate formally adopted a resolution endorsing the White Paper, and affirming its recommendations, highlighting in particular that need for the administration to:

- address the conflict of interest inherent in Human Resources assessing its own accommodation process.
- create a paid Disability Navigator position that reports to the Chief Diversity Officer to oversee ADA accommodations, help employees navigate the accommodations process, create independent reporting processes for disability discrimination issues, and compile resources for disabled employees, among other duties.





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**“The official desire to institutionalize diversity does not mean the institution is opened up; indeed, the wall might become all the more apparent, all the more a sign of immobility, the more the institution presents itself as being opened up. The wall gives physical form to what a number of practitioners describe as ‘institutional inertia,’ the lack of an institutional will to change.”**

Ahmed (2012)

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## Findings

During the course of the completion of this environmental scan, we found numerous recommendations made by various committees to meet the vision set forth by the President's Commission. We also found that many of these recommendations have not been followed up on, completed, or further explored. In Section 5.C of the HLC Assurance Argument administration argued that "EMU increased its investments in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs as part of its mission to serve a diverse community" and explicitly mentioned just two tasks: the creation of a new master's degree program in Africology and African American Studies in 2018, and the campus climate assessment in late 2019. This demonstrates that the authors of the Assurance Argument were aware of the lack of progress at that time. Therefore, there are no recommendations in this report, rather a summary of our findings using the [President's Commission Vision Statement](#) as an outline.

Ensures the well-being and empowers the voice of all members of the university community

***Faculty are committed to make EMU a more inclusive institution.***

The faculty, staff, and students who are doing committee work are wholly invested in a more inclusive EMU campus. However, there is no mechanism to accurately reflect who is doing service at EMU outside of the few committees that have their members listed on the EMU website, and even then, these lists are not always kept current. Since COVID, faculty have expressed that they have spent more time teaching as that has taken the bulk of their time and energy, and less time on research and service ([Women's COVID](#)

[Survey comment](#)) and 36% of faculty have little energy for anything other than teaching ([All](#)

[Faculty Survey](#)). In fact, it is largely through the efforts of faculty in service that any movement on any recommendations has been made. Faculty led initiatives led to the creation of the [Culture of Belonging](#) videos and Faculty DEI training program that has been carried out in the 2022/2023 academic year. The [Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate, Race, and Diversity](#) was formed because concerns were raised by student leaders to the Faculty Senate about the degree faculty were involved in efforts to create a more welcoming and inclusive EMU. The Task Force determined they could better understand the concrete efforts that could be taken by the Faculty Senate by reviewing the President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. This initial effort resulted in a report in Winter 2021 that reviewed what had been accomplished since preliminary recommendations were presented by the President's Commission on November 27, 2017. Listening sessions with students and faculty were held by the President's Commission and



**How are our voices  
being heard and  
honored by the  
decision makers?**

Ahmed (2012)



the Task Force resulting in recommendations to administration how they might be able better understand the lived experiences of students and faculty.

**Overall, EMU does a very good job of collecting the voices of the EMU community**, but consideration of those voices is less obvious and even missing. We could find little evidence of student or faculty voices being empowered unless it was as a point of data collection in surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The sense of belonging for students drops significantly over time ([Campus Climate Survey Summary](#)) which reveals an enormous opportunity to be inclusive of all students, not just when attracting students to EMU. Less than half of non-traditional students feel they are a part of the EMU community ([Age-Friendliness Environmental Scan](#)) and students with disabilities also feel less included in the EMU community ([Campus Climate Survey Summary](#)). African-American students in particular offer fewer indicators of feeling safe and valued at EMU ([Campus Climate Survey](#)). As traditional structures in academia are changing, students want a space where they feel welcome, safe, as though they are a part of a community. The outcome of this overarching culture of collecting voice but not evolving based on those voices at EMU has no doubt been a contributing factor in close to 40% of students considering leaving EMU, close to one quarter of staff members pursued leaving the University, and over one-third considered doing so but did not pursue this course of action ([Campus Climate Survey Summary](#)). Since that survey was conducted in fall 2019, enrollment has dropped 20% but BIPOC student enrollment decreased by 33.3% during this same time frame. Without systemic changes to address issues that emerge from these multiple data collection efforts, the continued use of surveys, focus groups, and interviews give an illusion of inclusion and are, in fact, exploitive of those who are invited to share their experiences.

**Faculty are doing DEI related work even as institutional supports are being dismantled.** Small programs that represent EMU's commitment to diversity (e.g. AAAS, WGST, the Critical Disability Studies minor) are deeply impacted by the removal of administrative assistants, and threat of GA cuts. With 41.6% of faculty taking on more service than they would prefer *because of* a reduction of staff or faculty ([All Faculty Survey](#)), the burden of work is quickly becoming untenable. If trends of focusing on budget and student credit hour production aimed at faculty—who have no voice in these decisions—continues, it will ultimately result in an overall negative impact on well-being and a reduced, diminished, and even removed voice of faculty and staff. The lack of institutional support of faculty is replicated on the Student Affairs side of the institution. The understaffing of resources faculty rely on to help their students, whether this be CAPS or the DRC, contradicts our claims toward inclusivity and well-being. Programs like MAGIC, once run by professionals are now staffed by graduate assistants. One of the greatest indicators of the fact that our institution has much work to do is the shocking number of staff from Student Affairs who have left the institution in recent years (Joy Rencher, Bre McKamie, Amy Finkenbine, Elise Sturdivant, LaMarcus Howard, Amir Franklin, to name a few,). The exit of so many dedicated staff members whose work specifically focused on supporting students from historically marginalized communities creates chaos—making it hard for faculty to know what supports are actually available and how to navigate them. While communication with students about resources was addressed in the strategic plan documents circulating in Fall 2022, delays in the Strategic Planning process mean that it remains unclear how this goal will be met.

**Resources are necessary.** Many recommendations have been made regarding the development of resources for students, staff, and faculty including continued development of resources that aid faculty in their quest to create a more inclusive environment ([Faculty Senate White Paper](#); [Faculty Senate Resolution on the CDS White Paper](#)). However, there is specific mention of faculty concerns regarding ineffective *communication* on plans, proposals, and

As a university, we need to examine the level of service we place on faculty members with a 4-4 load. We've lost SUBSTANTIAL faculty members, and their work and service is (sic) shifted to those that remain, who are already overwhelmed. I have never been this stressed. Each night into to bed wondering how I'm going to get it all done.

*Women's COVID Impact Survey Response*

recommendations in the [HLC Assurance Argument \(page 26\)](#) which confirms the administration was and is aware of communication concerns. However, the solution presented to HLC was a one-way communication in the form of a newsletter and a website and no acknowledgement of the tremendous amount of work faculty have been asked to take on to collect the data and make recommendations presented in this report. Some recommendations made prior to the

HLC Assurance Argument regarding communicating resources to faculty, staff, and students include: creation of an information clearinghouse for faculty to better understand non-traditional students ([Environmental Scan on Age-Friendliness](#)), streamlining advising communications to facilitate consistent messaging to students from faculty ([GACET DEI Committee](#)), developing a coordinated approach towards age-friendliness through improved communication ([Environmental Scan on Age-Friendliness](#)); and directed communications with faculty, FTLs, and PTLs about disability student resources and accommodations ([Provost's Working Group on Disability Issues](#)). Unfortunately, HLC reported concerns about communication were reported as resolved ([HLC Report, Page 15](#)) which absolves the administration from doing anything more than meet HLC requirements. The current strategic plan does mention an internal communication audit ([3.2.d](#)) and internal communication plan dependent on the completion of the internal audit ([3.2.e](#)), it is unclear if this was met by the August 31, 2022 deadline. Any additional action on the part of administration to respond to any of the recommendations made by the multiple faculty-led committees would be voluntary in an attempt to incorporate voice and ensure well-being of faculty, staff, and students *beyond* the minimum requirements of HLC.

## Integrates diversity, equity and inclusion as a threaded strategic imperative of all dimensions of institutional excellence

The President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion implies that the work of the commission is done through the statement "[With the Commission having completed its work, other University groups are continuing the important work of pursuing DEI initiatives on campus...](#)". An outsider may view this website and assume that EMU is doing the work, but a closer examination of the recommendations that were generated shows that while some recommendations have been implemented, others have not. When considering the needs of students, Faculty Senate's [HLC](#)

[Assurance Argument Addendum](#) noted that “all significant action around developing support for Students of Color on campus were initiated by faculty through college diversity committees and the Senate Task Force”, which supports what is documented thoroughly in this report.

[The Black Student Ten Point Plan](#) was a student initiative that continually resurfaces at EMU and is often used as a point of disconnect. This plan was developed by students who felt invisible and had a need to be seen and heard. While administration and faculty alike may agree some of the issues in the ten-point plan are not feasible, it does continue to be on the EMU website and is relevant to include in this document. The failure to address some of the points and not others, may be related to the decline in enrollment. Racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination are omnipresent at EMU. While there have been many recommendations, there have not been many concrete solutions other than “checking boxes” (e.g., trainings and videos) or policy changes to influence the culture of EMU.

**Unfulfilled recommendations.** If we examine the recommendations from the President’s Commission that have not been fulfilled, we see that they lie firmly in the administrative domain. Uncompleted large-scale projects such as the Biennial Campus Climate Assessment; Periodic Institutional Diversity Audit; Comprehensive University Strategic Action Plan for DEI; Diversity Impact Analysis; Accountability Driven Performance Evaluation System; Curricular Improvement and Development require the commitment of significant institutional resources and, above all, an institutional will. So far, this will have not been evident.

**Impact on enrollment and faculty.** Overall enrollment at EMU has fallen 48.4% since 2015 and in that time, there have been additional publicly known racially motivated incidents, a very public lawsuit around Title IX, and reductions in BIPOC faculty which all undoubtedly impact student decisions to enroll at EMU. The administration has created a [public archive of statements](#) made in reaction to three public incidents at EMU aimed at BIPOC and Jewish students, but has yet to make any meaningful long-term and sustainable changes in policies to affect the culture at EMU. From 2015 to 2023, enrollment of BIPOC students fell from 43.2% (n=3270) of all students in winter 2015 to just 20% (n=1523) in winter 2023 (Source: [EMU IRIM Tableau dashboard](#)). Data available for faculty through the IRIM Academic Decision Support Tools are available by fiscal year from 2019 to 2023, which shows a 22.2% decrease in Black faculty while there was an overall faculty reduction of 15.9%. While data on non-instructional staff is not publicly available, it is not lost on faculty that the vast majority of staff leaving are BIPOC or in positions that support a diverse student population. It is impossible to reasonably consider this significant percentage change without also considering the impact of these very public incidents on past and future enrollment.

In 2017, the [Campus Climate Survey](#) indicated that both faculty and students who report any disability scored lower on **all indicators** of inclusivity, in 2019 the [Environmental Scan of Age-Friendliness at Eastern Michigan University](#) recommended and enhancement of accessibility both on campus and online, and in 2020 the [Provost’s Work Group on Disability Issues](#) made a recommendation to form a disability advisory committee made up of students and faculty. With 24.7% of faculty report having a sensory impairment, 8.8% have a mobility impairment, and

25.9% with a long-term or chronic illness ([All Faculty Survey](#)), lack of movement on this particular aspect of work is distressing. The Critical Disability Studies White paper reports serious problems in EMU's treatment of faculty and staff with disabilities at the most basic level: the institution fails to meet its legal obligations to its employees according to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Its observations that faculty's interactions in HR reflect typical forms of discrimination experienced by minoritized faculty--surveillance, disbelief, minimizing, apparent inability to understand straightforward requests, gaslighting, microaggressions, open cruelty—reveals that EMU has much work to do to meet its goals of inclusive excellence.

In fact, the [current strategic plan](#) does not even mention accessibility, disability, or inclusivity. However, the strategic plan does mention the launch of a comprehensive DEI training program for all employees with a deadline of May 31, 2022. The Provost's support for faculty led DEI initiatives is deeply appreciated, but it also highlights that there are no official paths to funding that indicate an explicit and identifiable systemic investment in DEI work at EMU. Consequently, the work is being done with minimal funding, relying to a large degree on volunteerism, and in contexts where such faculty service is not necessarily adequately acknowledged in their departmental context as less than half of faculty feel their service is meaningfully acknowledged by colleagues in their department ([All Faculty Survey](#))—which is to say, at a professional cost to the faculty member.

As the HLC report acknowledges, ***the majority of work being done on DEI at EMU is initiated and carried out by faculty and staff.*** Since the 2016/17 academic year, faculty have organized several campus wide events and initiatives, such as the FDC Difficult Conversations series, and contributed their expertise in FDC programming, which has increasingly included learning opportunities on DEI subjects. Faculty also self-organized DEI committees at the College level. The introduction of a [Financial Empowerment and Equity Center](#) in Fall 2023, and the ongoing work of Halle librarians on the [Textbook Affordability Initiative](#) are just two examples of the cutting edge work being done by faculty and staff to effect change at an institutional level. The Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate Race & Diversity Issues took on a leadership role through its initiatives, creating a [Diversity Support Guide of Faculty and Instructors](#), and holding listening sessions for students which led to the Creating a Culture of Belonging video series: [Creating a Sense of Belonging in the Classroom](#), [Approaches in the Classroom and Beyond](#), and [Actions Large and Small to Effect Change](#). In 2021, the Faculty Senate transformed the task force into an official [Senate Standing Committee](#). The [Committee for Action on Intersectionality, Anti-Racism, and Equity \(CAIARE\)](#) The Chair of CAIARE was the co-organizer of a massive campus-wide DEI training involving providing three 90-minutes seminars to all academic units on campus. Both the video series and DEI training was generously supported by the Provost's office.

## Aligns policies, procedures and outcomes with official expressions of mission, goals and values

While there has been support from various administrative offices, including the Provost and the FDC, for select initiatives there continues to be a lack of commitment to implementing top-down



policies to positively impact the culture at EMU. The [Core Values](#) of the university including inclusiveness, responsibility, and integrity and the work highlighted in this report clearly demonstrates administration has been provided with comprehensive evaluative reports with data-driven recommendations that uphold these core values. However, the alignment of policies, procedures, and outcomes remains unclear and the mechanism by which the administration determines priorities is opaque.

***Listen to faculty.*** The [Campus Climate Survey](#) found non-white faculty members scored more than one full point lower in answering the question about the extent to which members of their racial group are respected at EMU. The [All Faculty Survey on Service and Belonging](#) found that POC and Black faculty feel their colleagues acknowledge their service less than their White colleagues and that 33% of Black faculty have had a student question their teaching competency in an evaluation compared to 21% of White faculty. These findings are a select highlight of the experiences of BIPOC faculty at EMU. These disparities are also seen when exploring gender and disability. These findings require, at a minimum, acknowledgement by administration. They require significant attention across the different stakeholders at the University, but has not yet been officially recognized, acknowledged, or acted upon by administration on a systemic level.

**The urgency to recognize the experiences of faculty who belong to historically underrepresented groups is crucial to ensure the administration understands that these same faculty who feel disrespected, unrecognized, and minimized are the same faculty who they rely on to create, monitor, and implement the forward-facing DEI efforts of the university.**

***Accountability is the first step towards meaningful culture change at EMU.*** With the disbanding of the President's Commission, there is no accountability mechanism to assess what progress has been made on the recommendations. This is imperative to continue to mention because the President's Commission continues to be used as evidence that the university is committed to DEI and culture change. The 2022 appointment of a Chief Diversity Officer to the top EMU executive ranks is one goal that was met in the past year and this office would ostensibly be in charge of these matters. However, this office has, until recently, been potentially constrained by an interim status, and has not provided any evidence of movement on these issues. Presentations to Faculty Senate on the work of the CDO's office in 2022/23 were focused entirely on university Diversity event programming and events. It is important to note these types of events have taken place at EMU consistently for many years without the presence of a CDO.

Implementation of the ***Culture of Belonging*** training has been supported verbally and financially by the Provost. The office verbally agreed that new faculty hires will not be approved until the department or program has completed DEI training. These statements have also been made publicly, but as of the end of winter 2023, one entire college has not engaged with the trainings and three of the remaining four colleges have a 100% completion rate. University wide, approximately 69% of departments/schools have completed the training. Barriers to working with some departments include structural issues around empty and interim administrative positions that prevented an organized approach to scheduling and other issues. This is an opportunity to

create systemic change through the investment in programs that have committed to making changes within their own structures. While this training is meaningful, it requires an ongoing commitment to make an impact on student learning.

The HLC explicitly references the lack of action on the President's Commission's recommendations as a point of contention with faculty in their response to the Assurance Argument submitted by EMU. The Higher Learning Commission also reported that "no plan was provided by the administration for follow-up" and little action has taken place since then. Section 1.C of the report goes on to say:

"The Faculty Senate leadership response to the 2021 assurance argument observed the faculty dissatisfaction with the pace of implementation of recommendations from the 2017 President's Commission. This document observed that the faculty have moved forward with a number of diversity initiatives with the support of the Office of the Provost and College dean's offices and are impatient with delays on more support and infrastructure for DEI activities. The slow response is consistent with facts presented throughout the assurance argument and highlights the commitment and engagement of the faculty on issues also demonstrated as high priorities in the strategic plan. It was clear from on-site discussions that there is widespread commitment to advancing issues of DEI and that there is energy and passion for this work. This energy and passion could better serve EMU through executive leadership action on the DEI priorities in the strategic plan, including an organizing office and appointment of a chief diversity officer".

Additionally, while the HLC did conclude that the "institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly" and "it guides the institution's operations" they also explicitly made the recommendation to "more fully address the diversity, equity, and inclusion components of the mission, EMU leadership is encouraged to establish infrastructure and dedicated leadership to coordinate and lead these initiatives". This recommendation mirrors the President's Commissions own vision statement and serves as an explicit example of how the university is fully aware of the need to invest in DEI efforts beyond revising the mission statement, developing strategic plans, or the formation of yet another committee, task force, or work group.

***Declining enrollment is complex and must consider the campus experience.*** Per the HLC report, the current state of the financial health of EMU is attributed to "a significant decrease in enrollment" as well as a decline in state appropriations, expenses related to the pandemic, and fixed operating costs. No comprehensive plan is laid out by EMU to address the issues through implementation of policies that would begin to address the culture at EMU. The focus of university level action has been thus far focused on the perpetual examination of student credit hour production, course enrollment, and data collection. More discussion needs to happen at the administrative level about improving the experiences of students, and the morale of the faculty, and providing adequate administrative support to students and faculty, all known contributors to



student retention. Furthermore, communication to faculty about initiatives that do emerge remains a significant problem. For example, EMU's designation as a [First-gen Forward institution](#) was announced in September 2022. Initiatives focused on meeting the needs of First-gen students are an essential part of diversity work, and yet faculty, whose close interactions with students mean they are on the frontlines of identifying and supporting First-gen students, receive little to no information on what this designation means in terms of concrete support for students or advice on how to assist First-gen students in accessing these resources. A search (Oct. 2023) of EMU's website provides no information, except official announcements and news coverage. This siloed approach to student support is detrimental to the retention efforts with which we are all tasked.

While the Campus Climate Assessment was conducted one time, and therefore partially completed, it has had no impact since its data was never properly disseminated outside of one PowerPoint presented to Faculty Senate. However, the following statement in the [current strategic plan](#) (3.2.a): *“Identify specific campus climate metrics that impact students and set goals for improvement as measured by the campus climate assessment (deadline for assessment and goal-setting: November 30, 2022),”* strongly suggests the plethora of data collected and recommendations that have already been collected, disseminated and reported on since the failed Campus Climate Survey has not been critically considered. Rather, another goal was created to collect more data, including determining an appropriate instrument for surveying workplace satisfaction and engagement ([3.2.b EMU Strategic Plan](#)). This shortfall has been documented multiple times including in the HLC Final Report 2021 (page 11):

“In 2017, EMU convened the President's Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. That Commission issued a number of statements, including efforts to consider the Black Student Plan of 2015. A 2019 Climate Survey was launched under the aegis of this commission; a preliminary summary report was provided to the community at the 2020 MLK Symposium, although no final report with recommendations and action plan have been issued. This lack of action on these recommendations is a point of contention with faculty. As of the time of the visit, no plan was provided by the administration for follow-up.”

The [Campus Climate survey](#) found that close to 40% of students have at least considered leaving EMU, and close to 30% have at least considered dropping out of college. Close to one quarter of staff members pursued leaving the University, and over one-third considered doing so but did not pursue this course of action. Obviously, the campus climate cannot be blamed for all of these concerns, but it clearly factors into it.

## Eliminates process, structural and systemic barriers to achieving institutional diversity, equity and inclusion;

Inequity is present across disciplines, particularly in areas such as pay and service load. The administration has been made aware of these inequities and has yet to recognize that EMU has systemic issues that promote this inequity.

One area where inequity exists is with service. Around 65% of EMU faculty have strongly felt they have been on committees that generated outputs that were ignored or not acted on. This finding from the All Faculty Survey is confirmed over and over again in this report. Considering the majority of service is conducted by female faculty and DEIJ work is largely done by BIPOC faculty, wasting time on committees to only have the results ignored is exploitive and reinforces the devaluing of service work.

A 2020-2021 [American Association of University Professors' pay equity survey](#) found that wages for full-time faculty decreased for the first time since the Great Recession, and average wage growth for all ranks of full-time faculty was the lowest since the AAUP began tracking annual wage growth in 1972. After adjusting for inflation, real wages decreased at over two-thirds of colleges and universities, all of this while the number of full-time faculty decreased at over half of institutions during the same time period. Pay equity in academia is essential for attracting and retaining top talent and promoting innovation. Professors should be paid based on their experience, service load, qualifications, and expertise to ensure fair compensation and bridge the gap between skill level and compensation. Unfortunately, many highly qualified professors receive inadequate salaries that fail to reflect their years of dedication to research, service to the university community, teaching, and professional development. This imbalance can lead to frustration causing talented individuals to leave the academic community.

In 2022, the AAUP at EMU negotiated for and won a pay equity study to be conducted by the administration with the intent to correct any inequities that were substantiated. However, while the administration requested input from the AAUP leadership in the process of conducting a salary study, it is unknown how or if they considered the given input. For example, the union leadership advised that faculty belonging to underrepresented minority populations in certain disciplines be analyzed individually relative to other faculty in the same discipline. This process was opaque at best, as there has been no official report released to the faculty from administration or AAUP regarding the process, progress, or outcomes of a faculty salary equity study. However, it is believed that the results and/or data have been made available to select groups and there have been questions about the methods used by the administration. It has been suggested the administration chose to aggregate the data and pool all minority faculty together. As a result, members of C.A.I.A.R.E were told, during the data compilation process for this environmental scan, that the union leadership, while aware of the results, has chosen to not release the results to faculty until a discussion with the administration can take place. This has not happened yet, nearly six months after the report was due per the latest collective bargaining agreement.

The union leadership has made the administration aware that they have conducted a small-scale study with the faculty of the GACET where they found various cases of inequity between Black, Latino, and female faculty and the rest of the faculty in the college. Moreover, addressing pay equity in academia has the potential to rectify the existing disparities in representation among marginalized faculty. Taking substantial steps towards achieving pay equity would foster a genuine sense of belonging for BIPOC faculty members. These inequities were potentially

erased in the study commissioned by the administration, but without the study we are unable to come to any definitive conclusions.

It is important to note that these problems are not unique to EMU. Numerous studies have indicated growing inequities in higher education, which require action (Blackshear and Hollis, 2021; Domingo, Gerber, Harris, Pasion, Rebanal, and Rosser, 2022; Porter, Toutkoushian, and Moore, 2004). Any dismissal of these issues manifests institutional resistance to concrete action and change.

***Each challenge presents an opportunity for creative solutions and intentional action.***

When preparing for the departmental DEI training, it was difficult to obtain data we could use as a point of reference to better understand the need for DEI efforts in programs. In order for the programs that participated in the trainings to make meaningful plans and changes, data must be de-aggregated and available to those who need the information to make informed decisions. As an example, we were never able to get clear graduation/attrition rates for each school and department. Additionally, the current categories are outdated and potentially discriminatory. For example, data collected by the university include traditional gender categories, no opportunity to assess for disability needs, and use census-approved categories for race and ethnicity. This last point in particular is important because each distinct ethnic and racial group has different challenges and needs. Currently, the Asian category in particular homogenizes everyone from Asian regions but their identity includes those who are from South and Southwest Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc.) and East and Southeast Asia (China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, etc.). Additionally, those from the Middle East or North Africa are often categorized as White, erasing their ethnic and racial identities. While EMU has made strides towards inclusivity through the ability of students to include their pronouns when registering for courses, there was no attention brought to this significant change other than an email to all faculty. These are areas of opportunity for systemic change that values the identities of faculty, staff, and students. EMU has a choice to commit to DEI efforts by making changes in the way we collect this data from students and faculty by being intentional in going beyond what categories are required by IPEDS.

***An institution that is dedicated to DEI efforts will be intentional to provide dedicated administrative support and consistent funding to these efforts.*** In researching DEI efforts at EMU it is apparent that there are many dedicated individuals among the faculty and in Student Affairs who are doing excellent work supporting our diverse campus. However, it is also apparent that these efforts are often invisible to, and disconnected from, each other because of a lack of administrative support that organizes and connects things through clear and consistent communication to the various stakeholders across campus. The appointment of a Chief Diversity Officer provides EMU with the opportunity to address some of these problems. The investment in such an office must also be accompanied by a commitment to provide adequate funding and staffing for the various offices on campus that work directly with our diverse student body (CORE, DRC, LGBTQ+ Center, Women's Resource Center) so that they can provide adequate and expanded support services, in addition to event programming.

As the HLC has also observed, EMU must improve its approach to communication. According to Ahmed, “Doing diversity requires expanding one's means of circulating information; for practitioners, diversity work is often about developing diverse communication strategies. We might even say that diversity workers are communication workers. You do diversity by working out how to circulate the matter of diversity around” (30). DEI efforts at EMU suffer significantly from a lack of communication from Student Affairs to faculty. Faculty require regular updates on what supports Student Affairs offers students, as well as timely notification of changes that affect that support: I.e. changes to processes (Ombuds Office, etc.), changes in staffing (directors of programs leaving or joining), changes to where support programs are housed (I.e. the recent dismantling and redistribution of Academic Success Partnership programs). The Faculty Senate’s Diversity Support Guide for Faculty and Instructors attempts to offer such an overview and to mitigate the challenges faculty experience navigating a unintuitive and frequently out of date university website. But CAIARE has difficulty ensuring that the guide is distributed, particularly to more fluid populations of instructional staff, like PTL.

There are also instructor limitations in understanding student populations, including those with disabilities, older learners, students with children, and other student groups, that impact their teaching and learning experiences. A centralized approach to support for faculty seeking to learn about and meet the needs of diverse populations would also be invaluable. Instructional support materials, such as those at the FDC and DRC, are available only to faculty who know to look for them. Information regarding programming and new supports circulates primarily through newsletters, whose recent proliferation and broad scope diminishes their effectiveness as a way of sharing pertinent professional information. The creation of a permanent Canvas shell with resources that can be accessed by faculty and students linked to the CDO’s office, as well as the official distribution recommended syllabus language around diversity (similar to that provided each semester by the University Writing Center) would go a long way in helping to create consistent messaging about EMU’s investment in its diverse community.

***COVID was a missed opportunity to make long-lasting changes to be more inclusive.***

Since the emergent COVID-19 situation has ended, the university has made decisions regarding online course offerings that have been a direct contradiction to recommendations made by the [Provost’s Work Group on Disability Issues](#). While this committee was in place specifically for the fall of 2020, many of the issues raised then persist three years later. It was specifically recommended that “People who

I personally also appreciate the ability to hold various department meetings and service activities online--I would love to see more of my meetings remain virtual. My time is so limited that just having the extra 45-50 minutes in a week (saved from not having to drive into school on a non-teaching day) makes a difference.

*Women’s COVID Impact Survey Response*

*live with immune-compromised individuals should also be able to work, teach, and learn remotely*

*whenever possible*” and as we have begun to return to campus in larger numbers, online offerings have continued to be popular with both students and faculty without consideration of how much more accessible classes are for everyone when offered both online and in person. Many departments have also mandated in-person meetings without faculty input, even though many have voiced the desire to continue having faculty and other meetings virtually.

In July 2021, the Faculty Senate shared the findings of the COVID Impact Survey with recommendations to Academic Human Resources, EMU AAUP, President Smith, and the Board of Regents for further discussion and implementation. EMU administration did not respond to this report. Issues of inequities experienced during COVID were eventually addressed in the most recent contract negotiations through the inclusion of a [COVID impact statement](#) and salary equity study only after faculty went on strike in fall 2022. The difficulty faculty had in negotiating items that are explicitly a part of the strategic plan of the university and the vision statement of the President’s Commission illustrates the barriers to affecting real cultural change at EMU.

**Support must include systemic change through policy.** The new [Faculty Fellow for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) position in the Faculty Development Center is also an excellent initiative funded by the Chief Diversity Office and clearly illustrates that the administration is aware of the need for DEI initiatives at EMU and, in select cases, will dedicate resources in the form of funding and course releases. In fact, the strategic plan does mention DEI, but in the context of work already covered in this report (e.g. campus climate survey and DEI training program); and thusly, areas already assessed and convened by faculty service committees and groups. With these items included in the strategic plan and being the most visible, it continues to seem that most changes are forward-facing events and initiatives that engaged faculty are burdened with developing, organizing, and implementing rather than systemic policy changes.

The presence of DEI statements as part of the hiring process in some departments is also evidence that the administration is aware of the importance of diversity at EMU. However, it is not clear that resources are provided to improve the intentional recruitment and support of BIPOC faculty. Currently, bias training is required of the chair of the search committee only, revealing a gap in support. Some departments at EMU have been successful in recruiting and retention of BIPOC faculty and there need to be efforts to share their strategies so diversity can become EMU culture. This would be a clear demonstration of using the talent of the university to forward initiatives as laid out in the strategic plan rather than exploiting those most impacted and harmed by poor or absent diversity initiatives.

## Integrates the creative talents of the entire university community into university programming, decision-making, and operations

Much of the work highlighted in this document was proposed, developed, and implemented by faculty. EMU is host to experts on a variety of subjects, including disability studies, aging studies, labor market analysis, marketing, educational design, human resources, communications, and much more. However, the talents of our faculty are rarely used in the capacity of their skills. Aside from discipline specific expertise, EMU faculty are also skilled in a great deal of work to

maintain university programming and operations through their service ([All Faculty Survey](#)), and while faculty are often solicited for committee work to uphold the strategic mission of the university, there is a long-standing pattern of using their creative talents in committees, and little evidence of follow-through on recommendations made through this committee work.

***The creative talents of the university are currently being used to do the forward-facing work***, creating an illusion of progress and culture change but not in programming, decision-making, and operations. In fact, 63.6% of faculty have been on a committee where outputs were either ignored or not acted on ([All Faculty Survey](#)) including the majority of DEI-related efforts recorded in this report.

Moreover, when one examines the rosters of presenters and committee members, it is apparent that EMU DEI initiatives replicate a phenomenon noted by scholars of diversity in Higher Education: EMU's DEI work is done primarily by non-white, non-male, and First-Gen faculty, who take on this labor because it impacts them directly [Ex. See Rogers, A. J., & Jayasinghe, T. (2021). "The hidden cost of DEI work—And what to do about it." *Non Profit News|Nonprofit Quarterly*; Matthew, Patricia (2016), *Written/Unwritten: Diversity and the Hidden Truths of Tenure* (University of North Carolina Press); Ahmed, Sara (2012) *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Duke University Press)].

If, as the HLC report acknowledges, the majority of work being done on DEI at EMU is initiated and carried out by faculty and staff, we must go further to acknowledge that this labor has been provided primarily by faculty who are themselves members of historically marginalized groups. Since the 2016/17 academic year, faculty have organized several campus wide events and initiatives, such as a campus-wide "Teach In" on Racial Justice in response to the protests in November 2016, the "Race Matters: Equity & Action in Higher Education and Beyond Faculty Workshop" in July 2020 (attended by 135 faculty) and a Difficult Conversations workshop series. They have contributed their expertise in FDC programming, which has increasingly included learning opportunities on DEI subjects. Faculty also self-organized DEI committees at the College level. The Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate Race & Diversity Issues took on a leadership role through its initiatives, creating a [Diversity Support Guide of Faculty and Instructors](#), and holding four listening sessions for students, which were attended by students representing dozens of student organizations and groups including multicultural, Greek, LGBTQ, African American, Native American, and Hispanic American organizations. These listening sessions led to the *Creating a Culture of Belonging* video series: [Creating a Sense of Belonging in the Classroom](#), [Approaches in the Classroom and Beyond](#), and [Actions Large and Small to Effect Change](#). The Task Force also held a [Roundtable/Listening session](#) to support students during the political unrest surrounding the 2020 Presidential elect. In 2021, the Faculty Senate



transformed the task force into an official [Senate Standing Committee](#). The [Committee for Action on Intersectionality, Anti-Racism, and Equity \(CAIARE\)](#) The Chair of CAIARE was the co-organizer, with Dr. Barbara Patrick, of a massive campus-wide DEI training involving providing three 90-minutes seminars to all academic units on campus. The training modules were developed by a team of EMU faculty experts over the summer of 2021. A group of 24 faculty volunteers then received training as facilitators in order to deliver this training to over 30 academic units across campus in Fall 2022/Winter 2023.

Many of the DEI initiatives in recent years described in the sections above have been faculty-driven with support provided by the Provost's office upon request. Examples of some of the most impactful include:

- Race Matters: Equity & Action in Higher Education and Beyond Faculty Workshop
- Difficult Conversations series
- FDC programming focused on DEI issues
- Faculty organized DEI committees at the College level
- Faculty Senate Task Force on Campus Climate Race & Diversity Issues initiatives, including creating a [Diversity Support Guide for Faculty and Instructors](#), holding listening sessions for students, the Creating a Culture of Belonging video series
- Campus-wide DEI training for academic units

Despite the work that has been done and the achievements of the various committees on campus, decision makers are still not the same people doing the work. While the administration does a very good job at seeking input on a variety of issues, this feedback is often not considered when making final decisions. In fact, when asked, 80% of faculty report they have been on at least one committee that generated outputs that were then ignored or not acted on ([All faculty survey](#)).

## Implements a coordinated accountability driven, continuous improvement model of programming, staffing and operations

Many proposed solutions read like suggestions, rather than concrete steps to be taken (e.g., timely response, demonstration of commitment to belonging). Much of the work lacks transparency, particularly as full reports of completed efforts are not publicly available, making it difficult to know what recommendations were made and whether EMU is making changes accordingly. The current strategic plan does have a goal ([3.3.d](#)) to “develop and implement dashboards” to “help hold offices accountable to meet institutional strategic goals” but it is unclear if this goal was met or what actions would be tracked. This illustrates the administration is aware that accountability is an ongoing issue at EMU.

***The question of accountability is a significant one for our institution***, particularly when the official measures recommended have not been taken, leaving the institution, colleges and departments with few benchmarks to create objectives and assess improvement. Even faculty-led initiatives, such as the DEI training--which worked to help departments begin to develop objectives, and thereby generate meaningful data for use in broader strategic planning--are

precarious because they must navigate an administrative system that has yet to articulate what its objectives are for DEI and how its members shall be held accountable. Moreover, as the [Faculty Senate Resolution on the CDS White Paper](#) indicates, there is currently no accountability mechanism for AHR/HR when it comes to its treatment of university employees.

The Campus Climate Survey was first administered in 2019 and listed as evidence of addressing DEI concerns. Per the recommendations of the President's Commission, a biennial campus climate assessment (marked complete on the website), should have been administered again in 2021. Faculty Senate raised concerns in their response to the HLC Assurance Argument stating "the 2019 Campus Climate survey had yet to be analyzed and disseminated." In February 2021, a PowerPoint presentation was given to the Faculty Senate. This presentation highlighted preliminary data analysis of the EMU Campus Climate Survey. Slide 4 of this presentation says that final written report was to be shared the following week (1st week of February 2021). To date, there has been no published or publicly available final written report made available. In Winter 2021, the Faculty Senate Task Force recommended a timely release of Campus Climate Assessment data and diversity assessment data. It was only through the compilation of this report that we learned the Campus Climate survey was administered to several universities and the university that is the IRB of record lost or otherwise was unable to retrieve and share the campus climate survey data, and this is why no further data analysis was every conducted beyond the frequency level data presented to the faculty senate.

***Information sharing and transparency are essential to demonstrate commitment to this work.*** Related to the lack of transparency is also a lack of information generally, which presents the illusion of work in progress without providing actual updates, further suggesting DEI work is performative at best and non-existent at worst. Some examples include:

- As of fall 2022, the President's Commission website reads, "recommendations have been submitted and several have been completed", with preliminary recommendations from November 17, 2017 listed, as well at a timetable and mechanism for input with "face-to-face listening sessions, dates and times TBD".
- A Diversity Impact Analysis was a recommendation from the President's Commission in November 2017. In Winter 2021, the Faculty Senate Task Force noted the task had not yet been started. As of Winter 2023, it still has not yet been started.
- Accountability Driven Performance Evaluation System was an original recommendation from the President's Commission in November 2017. Per the recommendations, this will be linked to metrics from the Comprehensive University Strategic Action Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, which is currently underway as a part of a larger strategic plan revision process.
- Curricular Improvement and Development included two distinct points related to the General Education Program. The Gen Ed assessment process was to be expanded to include Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for DEI. As of Winter 2023, projects outlined on the [Gen Ed website](#) indicate the Gen Ed Program has not yet begun this process.
- Inclusion of student representation in General Education Assessment.



- Creation of a required team-taught, interdisciplinary, interdepartmental undergraduate course on systemic and structural inequity. As of Winter 2023, this class has not been created and therefore, has not been implemented as a required class.

***The culture of EMU is a campus-wide issue.*** Macro level problems have been identified across colleges and inclusive of staff suggesting a need to acknowledge there are university-wide cultural issues. Changes that have been made are largely performative in nature and the re-administering of surveys often leads to survey fatigue. The current strategic plan proposes a [survey on workplace satisfaction](#) and [user experience](#). Furthermore, the strategic plan mentions "assess" 47 times, while "implement" is mentioned just eight times. Some of the lack of action on the part of the administration also demonstrates how the burden of implementation falls on faculty as there is no distinct line of communication between committee recommendations to the responsible department or office. For many of the above mentioned, specific departments and offices would be responsible for the design, implementation, and management of meeting these goals. However, there is no 'paper trail' to document what actions, if any, have been taken and if they were discussed, what outcomes there were. It is very likely that some suggestions were taken up as a point of discussion in a variety of committees, but again, there is no clear mechanism to track progress and therefore, a lack of transparency and accountability at all levels.

A Comprehensive University Strategic Action Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is included as a part of the ongoing strategic planning. In late fall 2022/early winter 2023, this and other strategic planning groups had completed the initial work and submitted their suggestions to the Provost's Office. There is no plan moving forward and because 79% of faculty ([All Faculty Survey](#)) have been on committees where recommendations were ignored in the past, there is little faith in the process. Additionally, per the final recommendations by the President's Commission, this comprehensive plan was to be developed through a process coordinated by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, but was instead driven by the Provost's Office. Additionally, it was to be informed by data secured from the Biennial Campus Climate Assessment, which was only conducted one time and the data from that survey was lost and the Institutional Diversity Audit, which has not been conducted to the knowledge of this committee.

Additionally, the current enrollment trends have been predicted for many years, but were exacerbated by COVID. There seems to be little forward-thinking planning at a university or structural level despite recommendations to "anticipate potential changes to staffing needs, particularly as it relates to FTE instructional staff" ([Hanover Report](#)) and "incorporate current and prospective student needs into strategic decision making to create growth opportunities with predicted demographic shifts" ([Environmental Scan on Age-Friendliness](#)). The strategic plan does reference a continuing effort to [modify academic program offerings](#) to match market demand and that "programs are regularly launched, modified, and eliminated through existing processes" with no concrete measure of what this actually looks like in the colleges or the roles of administration and faculty.

While the CDO's office has provided DEI training for faculty in the area of hiring, the training currently does not provide an in depth understanding of how to recruit minority faculty. Current policy requires that just the chair of the committee receives this training, which includes essential areas such as job ad creation and recruitment strategies, along with bias self-assessments. Moreover, there also is no sense of how departments will be held accountable for the results of their recruitment efforts.

**Leverages its historical legacy, its geographic positioning in southeastern Michigan, and its institutional strengths to position itself for 21st Century leadership in transforming the region and the nation.**

The President's Commission recommended improved community engagement and transformation. Per the recommendations, the group should use reports such as the Climate Study (incomplete) and the Diversity Audit (not completed) to work with the surrounding community. As of Winter, 2023, we are not aware of any additional administration-driven initiatives or efforts have been taken to engage the surrounding community.

## **Plan of action**

Current system perpetuates an us against them culture omnipresent at EMU. It is the belief of this committee that there are administrators who support DEIJ efforts put forth in this document. But there are many who do not. It is imperative there be movement forward in meaningful ways, and acting on some of the suggestions made by the numerous reports detailed here is one path. Culture change happens when action is taken that impacts all of the campus community. This occurs through policy change and embedded expectations that center diversity in all things. Some suggestions to start this process include:

1. Identify stakeholders and involve them in problem solving areas that are relevant to their area of expertise. This includes staff, faculty, and students.
2. Ensure stakeholders are made aware of recommendations and provide support to follow-through with recommendations.
3. Fund a working group that does more than generate recommendations or collect data.
4. Organization of offices and initiatives that impact policy and provide line-item funding.
5. Create clear accountability mechanisms.

In short, EMU needs to make support a part of the university culture through systemic policy change.

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## Addendum

November 9, 2023

While final revisions and edits were being made to this Environmental Scan, three more important reports were brought to Faculty Senate. At the request of Faculty Senate, they are being included here, but have not been integrated into any of the analysis or review found in this report. There will always be additional work to do when striving for a truly equitable environment and these documents, while not integrated into the narrative, are still important data points to consider.

The information provided here, particularly the Title IX and Police Oversight Committee reports, reinforce the findings of the Environmental scan that 1) faculty have invested considerable time and expertise in DEI initiatives directed at creating systemic change so that EMU might live up to its ideals; 2) the recommendations generated by faculty experts are nevertheless frequently ignored; and 3) that faculty experts and stakeholders are often not included in the actual decision-making processes that impact the university, despite a track record of service that demonstrates their commitment to the institution, as well diversity, equity and inclusion.

### **I. Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on “Banning the Box” at EMU**

In the 2022/23, the Faculty Senate worked to address the needs of system-impacted students by advocating that EMU “Ban the Box” in its Admissions process. Senators who had served on the university’s Disciplinary Admissions Review Committee raised concerns that questions regarding criminal and/or conduct issues on the EMU application were inappropriate given that we are an institution of opportunity that actively serves currently and formerly incarcerated individuals. Faculty experts made the case that such disclosure requirements do not have a record of improving campus safety, but do create access barriers, especially for individuals from historically marginalized groups. The committee presented the Faculty Senate’s resolution to remove two criminal/conduct related questions from the EMU application to the Board of Regents, which revoked the policy on February 16, 2023.

- [Faculty Senate Proposal/Resolution to Ban the Box](#)
- [Ban the Box Presentation to the Board of Regents](#)
- [Board of Regents Policy Change](#)

## **II. Report from Title IX Research committee and Faculty Senate Title IX Research Implementation Committee**

In 2018 - 2019, the Eastern Michigan University Title IX Research Committee, after extensive work in collaboration with students, faculty, and administrators, designed a survey to gather student experiences with and opinions about sexual misconduct culture and safety on campus. The objective was to move beyond compliance to also focus on prevention and contribute to improve campus response and intervention efforts of the campus community. To provide an additional layer of confidentiality, the Committee chose to partner with the Wayne State University Center for Urban Studies (Center) for sampling, contacts with students, and data collection. In the Winter of 2021, after the Committee conducted preliminary descriptive data analysis, the Committee held student focus groups to assist with contextualizing the survey data and to provide recommendations for prevention and education measures. The focus groups consisted of a total of 15 groups of students from various demographic categories and campus communities in order to gather recommendations that are applicable to the diverse student population at EMU. The Committee included 18 pages of recommendations for both compliance and prevention in the 75-page [Final Report](#).

The Committee presented three times to the Senate and also co-hosted a Town hall organized by the Student Government and SARA in order to discuss the recommendations included in the survey Final report. Subsequently, in 2021, the Faculty Senate unanimously supported the creation of a FS Title IX Research Implementation committee to work on prioritizing recommendations and focus on their implementation. Faculty across campus were invited to join the committee and members were affirmed by the senate. The Implementation committee committed significant time assessing the various recommendations identified in the Final Report, met with faculty and staff at Title IX offices beyond EMU to gain more insight into effective structures and operations, and collectively attended conferences on sexual violence prevention. Ultimately, the following three areas were determined to be a priority for EMU: The creation of a Sexual Violence Prevention and Survivor Support Center that would focus on education and prevention efforts and advocate for survivors in multiple arenas; 2. Improve/revise the Title IX training for students, and the creation of Title IX training for faculty and staff; and 3. The creation of a new General Education category on Gender Violence.

To date, despite the time invested in the collection of data, formation of recommendations, as well as the creation of an Implementation committee that has prioritized three key areas from the Final Report, there has not been any institutional support for realizing meaningful change. The Title IX coordinator has recently informed

the Implementation committee that a new vendor for Title IX training has been identified and that new training will be implemented for students beginning in 2024, however, the Implementation committee has not been consulted about the new vendor, nor asked to review the new materials.

- [Title IX Campus Survey, recommendations and implementation](#)
- [Final Report EMU Campus Survey on Sexual Misconduct Culture](#)

### **III. Report from the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Police Oversight**

In September 2020, the report from the Faculty Senate ad hoc committee on police oversight found the current state of civilian oversight at Eastern Michigan University to be out of step with national trends in best practice for an inclusive and racially just community. To address these findings, the Faculty Senate recommended that immediate steps be taken to align the PSOC with its own bylaws and resolve outstanding legal questions about its composition and operations. The Faculty Senate further recommended a series of actions aimed at expanding the scope and proactive vision of the PSOC—particularly in its efforts at transparency, community outreach and inclusion—so as to be better aligned with national best practices for civilian oversight of law enforcement.

Since the Faculty Senate report (2020), few of the recommendations to improve the PSOC were approved by the administration. For example, the PSOC is now included on both the university's Legal Affairs and Department of Public Safety webpages along with the committee members' names and contact information. Also, an online complaint form has been approved and added to the university website. But, the PSOC is committed to the long-term goals and recommendations outlined in the FS report, and to create a sustainable action plan along which to assess, make decisions about, and potentially implement them. Some of the areas identified include the following:

- *Officer Accountability* - PSOC is to function as a mechanism of checks and balances to be able to identify problematic police performance and hold officers accountable for misconduct.
  - *Re-Imagining Public Safety*. In addition to its function as a board for reviewing complaints, how can PSOC be re-conceptualized in how safety is practiced and how police respond to the goals and priorities of the broader community.
  - *Use of Force*. Key to both these functions is providing PSOC with the necessary tools to access data, and evaluate and make recommendations on appropriate use of force.
  - *Disparate Enforcement and Treatment*. To collect better data on officer conduct and to offer guidance and training for Committee members to better assess potential disparities.
- [Final Report on Police Oversight](#)