# PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE COMPLETION

*Accelerating action to close the graduation gap*

# Illinois Equity in Attainment
# EQUITY PLAN

**Harper College**

**December 2020**

# Harper College

# Contents

# Executive Summary

Colleges and universities in Illinois and across the country have begun organizing around a set of equity principles to increase success rates for their students and eliminate institutional inequities between student groups. William Rainey Harper College has committed to eliminating racial and socioeconomic completion gaps by 2025, dedicating staff to this effort, developing a comprehensive college-specific equity plan with annual growth targets, and implementing and scaling effective evidence-based practices. The critical importance of a high performing and aligned leadership team stands out as a necessary condition for succeeding in this work.  To that end, Harper College joined the Partnership for College Completion in May 2020 to bolster its efforts.

Upon Dr. Avis Proctor's arrival in 2019 as the sixth president of Harper College, it became clear through listening sessions, conversations and other college events and activities that diversity, equity and inclusion were core areas that needed to be improved at the college. Within six months, Dr. Proctor made several substantial changes creating a new Cabinet-level position, the Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), renamed the department to the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and provided additional funds to support operations, programming, staffing, and funding for a cultural center, a physical space dedicated to DEI activities that had previously been a fundamental part of the campus.

It is important to note that the work of diversity, equity and inclusion has been ongoing at Harper College, especially in the past three years with continual assessment and review of various areas related to DEI. These efforts have produced several reports and task forces, which are useful in driving change. The Latinx Task Force completed its work in 2018 with 17 recommendations to improve campus culture and enrollment for Latinx employees and students. The Basic Needs Project, which began in 2019, completed a year-long report with findings and recommendations on how to improve basic needs supports for students. The college also completed a Cultural Values Assessment in 2019, which provided critical data on campus culture and led to multiple strategies that are being incorporated into the new strategic plan. In April 2020, consultants assessed the past five years of the former Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the various services provided to employees and how it could expand 'equity' in its framework and better support students, including recommendations for moving forward. Lastly, the Strategic Plan launched in fall 2020 with six areas that will help lead the college forward until 2024, including advancing student success and equitable outcomes.

Therefore, our institutional commitment to this Equity Plan is informed by this previous work, feedback from students, employees and external constituent groups and serves as substantial pledge to continue to assess our data, collect feedback and adapt to make appropriate changes to positively impact equity for the Harper College community.

## *William Rainey Harper College*

## *Equity Plan: 2020 - 2025*

This Equity Plan has been endorsed by the following members of our college/university community:

*Dr. Avis Proctor, President*                                        December 31, 2020_____

First Name, Last Name; Position

*Laura Brown, VP and Chief Advancement Officer*             December 31, 2020_____

First Name, Last Name; Position

*Maria Coons, VP of Strategic Alliances and Innovation/Board Liaison*   December 31, 2020____

First Name, Last Name; Position

*Rob Galick, Executive VP of Finance & Administrative Services*    December 31, 2020_____

First Name, Last Name; Position

*Dr. MaryAnn Janosik, Provost*                                    December 31, 2020_____

First Name, Last Name; Position

*Jeff Julian, Chief of Staff*                                        December 31, 2020_____

First Name, Last Name; Position

*Dr. Claudia Mercado, Interim VP of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*    December 31, 2020_____

First Name, Last Name; Position

*Darlene Schlenbecker, VP of Planning, Research & Institutional Effectiveness,* December 31, 2020

First Name, Last Name; Position

*Dr. Michele Smith, VP of Workforce Solutions*                December 31, 2020_____

First Name, Last Name; Position

# Introduction

Despite improvements in high school graduation and college matriculation rates for Illinois students, there are wide and persistent gaps in college completion rates especially for low-income, first-generation students, and students of color. The launch of the **Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA)** marks a major step forward for 29 two-year and four-year public and private non-profit colleges and universities from northeastern Illinois and across the state who are committing to eliminate racial and socio-economic achievement gaps by 2025, while aggressively increasing completion rates on their campuses.

ILEA is the signature initiative of the Partnership for College Completion (PCC), a non-profit organization founded in 2016 to catalyze and champion policies, systems, and practices that ensure all students can graduate from college and achieve their career aspirations.  With an initial focus on northeastern Illinois, PCC has set a goal to eliminate institutional achievement gaps in college degree completion for low-income, Latinx and African-American students in Illinois by 2025, establishing the region as a national leader in equity in attainment.

Beginning with this initial cohort, PCC will offer direct support and resources to the 25 colleges and universities who have volunteered to be members of ILEA. PCC will work alongside these partner colleges to jointly set commitments, identify appropriate evidence-based strategies to utilize on their campuses, and scale effective practices. PCC will support policy and practice change efforts that have the explicit goal of eliminating racial and socioeconomic degree completion gaps, while increasing institutional college completion rates overall.

By participating in ILEA, partners commit to a core set of principles:
- Colleges are responsible for graduating all of their degree-seeking students as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- All students can graduate with college degrees if they have the right information, tools, and supports.
- Achievement gaps between low-income, Black and Latinx students and their higher-income and White peers are unacceptable and should be eliminated.
- These efforts will be undertaken without sacrificing institutional quality or excellence or increasing admission standards.

The ILEA colleges will conduct a deep analysis of their institutional data, develop equity plans that contain annual growth targets, and report progress toward their goals, which will be shared publicly. The colleges will also work to identify obstacles students face and develop programs and policies that break down unnecessary barriers to college graduation.

The launch of ILEA follows a galvanizing 2017 PCC report, "**Unequal Opportunity in Illinois: A Look at Who Graduates College and Why It Matters**," which found that only 33.7 percent of African American students who start at four-year institutions earn bachelor's degrees within six

years – a rate 32.7 percentage points below that of their White peers. For Latinxs, 49.3 percent are earning degrees, a gap of 17.1 percentage points. The completion gap between low-income and wealthier students is also alarming: according to Advance Illinois, only 37 percent of low-income students graduate in six years while 75 percent of wealthier students do.

Increased and more equitable graduation outcomes across the diversity of our state's higher education institutions benefits students, their families and the state of Illinois. A 3% increase in graduation rates is projected to produce $1.7B increase in net earnings, $132M increase in tax revenue, and $35M in public system savings. The progress of the ILEA member colleges and universities will provide a set of learnings that the Partnership will document and share with practitioners and policymakers across Illinois, the region and the nation, establishing a path forward that will promote equity in college achievement.

For more information on ILEA, please visit: http://partnershipfcc.org/ilea.

## Institution Overview

Harper College was established by referendum in 1965 and opened September 1967. It is named for Dr. William Rainey Harper, a pioneer in the community college movement in the United States and the first president of the University of Chicago. The college is now one of the nation's premier community colleges and one of the largest, serving more than 35,000 students annually in Chicago's northwest suburbs.

The college's academic programs prepare students for rewarding careers and for transfer to four-year universities. Harper offers associate degree and certificate programs, workforce training, professional development, continuing education classes and developmental education.

The majority of Harper's activities take place on the 200-acre campus in Palatine, Illinois. The college also has two extension sites, the Learning and Career Center in Prospect Heights, Illinois, the Harper Professional Center in Schaumburg, Illinois; partners with Elgin Community College at the Education and Workforce Center in Hanover Park; and offers onsite classes at individual company locations on a contracted basis.

### Mission
Harper College enriches its diverse communities by providing quality, affordable, and accessible education. Harper College, in collaboration with its partners, inspires the transformation of individual lives, the workforce, and society.

### Vision
We will be an innovative and inclusive institution, the community's first choice, and a national leader for student success.

## Philosophy Statement

We, at Harper College, believe that our charge is to facilitate active learning and foster the knowledge, critical thinking and life/work skills required for participation in our global society. We work with our community partners to enrich the intellectual, cultural and economic fabric of our district. We believe that excellence in education must occur in an ethical climate of integrity and respect. We hold that the strength of our society is rooted in our diversity and that it is through synergy that we achieve excellence.

## Core Values

*We value **Respect, Integrity, Collaboration** and **Excellence**. We guide our work and support our philosophy, mission and vision by these core values.*

### RESPECT

We demonstrate Respect by interacting with and caring for others in a way that adds dignity to ourselves, our relationships and our organization by:
- valuing and celebrating the uniqueness of individuals and their strengths;
- expressing appreciation for our colleagues' time, efforts and contributions;
- encouraging multiple perspectives.

### INTEGRITY

We demonstrate Integrity by supporting an honest and ethical environment by:
- respecting confidentiality and acting in a trustworthy manner;
- being accountable for our actions and adhering to policies and procedures;
- making decisions that are fiscally and socially responsible.

### COLLABORATION

We demonstrate Collaboration by working internally and externally toward shared goals to create a more positive outcome by:
- actively listening, responding to others with empathy;
- practicing open and honest communication and sharing information that is essential for success;
- using positive humor to foster a healthy and enjoyable environment.

### EXCELLENCE

We demonstrate Excellence by setting and pursuing high standards of professionalism and competency by:
- providing exceptional service to all while demonstrating pride in our work;
- welcoming new challenges and seeking opportunities for growth and development;
- encouraging and empowering each of us to achieve our best.

**Harper College Student Profile**

•More than 520,000 students have attended Harper since 1967, when classes were first held, and many more residents have attended forums, concerts, and cultural and athletic events.

• The average age of students enrolled in credit courses is 25, and more than 63% are part-time.

• Almost 60% of district high school graduates enroll at Harper within one year of high school graduation. That includes approximately 28% of public high school students who take courses through Harper's dual credit program, which allows them to take college-level courses at their high school and earn both high school and college credit. Many students even graduate high school with a certificate or a full semester of college already completed.

• Nearly 71% of full-time, degree-seeking students graduate, transfer or continue to enroll at Harper after three years.

**Harper College Student Demographics**
• 55% Female
• 45% Male

• 14% Asian
• 4% Black Non-Hispanic
• 26% Hispanic
• 49% Caucasian
• 6% Other

• 17% are 18 and under
• 52% are 19-24
• 31% are 25 and older

**Harper College Employee Demographics**
• 1,495 employees
• 638 faculty (201 full-time, 437 part-time)
• 857 non-faculty (528 full-time, 329 part-time)

• 5.4% Asian
• 3.6% Black Non-Hispanic
• 8.8% Hispanic
• 68.2% Caucasian
• 13.5% Other

**ACHIEVING THE DREAM**
Since 2009, Harper has been active with Achieving the Dream (ATD), a network of more than 200 institutions. The organization honored the College with the 2016 Leah Meyer Austin Award, which each year recognizes one ATD institution that demonstrates outstanding achievement in

creating policies, practices and a culture of equity and excellence in support of student success. In 2013, Harper also earned the organization's Leader College distinction, a national designation awarded to community colleges that commit to improving student success and closing achievement gaps. In 2016, ATD awarded Harper with a two-year, $160,000 grant to help the College strengthen relationships with its adjunct faculty to encourage instructional reform and make all faculty members' skills and experiences fully available to students. In 2020, the college earned the Leader College of Distinction status for achieving new, higher student outcomes and narrowing equity gaps.

## DIVERSE FACULTY FELLOW PROGRAM

The Diverse Faculty Fellow Program at Harper College is a paid fellowship which provides a unique opportunity for individuals to gain valuable teaching experience at a community college. The fellowship program was designed specifically to assist the college and community college academia in general, by providing experiential opportunities for potential future faculty members.

The Diverse Faculty Fellow Program is an important part of the college's focus on diversity and inclusion, which seeks to better reflect the increasing diversity of its student body and surrounding community. The program offers those that are accepted an annual stipend, full benefits, and a professional development allotment. The Fellows also receive mentoring and coaching and are given the chance to teach several classes over the course of the fellowship. This program provides an opportunity to gain both valuable teaching experience and exposure to the community college as a viable career path.

## EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

Harper College has three Employee Resource Groups (ERG), which bring together employees from various employment groups to assist the college in creating an environment and culture that is welcoming and supportive of all employees, particularly those individuals who are members of historically underrepresented populations.

ERGs are supported by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Harper College as a means of improving the recruitment and retention of employees from underrepresented populations. Organizations in higher education and the private sector have a long history of partnering with ERGs as a way to build community and to improve recruitment and retention of diverse talent.

### *DREAM – Diverse Relationships Engaged in Affirming Multiculturalism*

The mission of DREAM is to enhance the quality of life and campus climate by promoting participation and inclusion of all people of color in the workforce at Harper College. To that end, we support recruiting and retaining efforts for faculty and staff; networking and mentoring among faculty, staff, and students; and lastly, establishing and maintaining positive community links. Our goal is to give faculty, staff, and students of color a "voice on campus."

### *LAND – Learning about Abilities, not Disabilities*

LAND serves as a support network for employees who have disabilities or use accommodations for access and provides campus awareness about the challenges and opportunities that employees with disabilities encounter on campus.

***SAFE @ Harper – Staff, Administrators, and Faculty for Equality***
SAFE @ Harper works to provide leadership on aspects of college life from an LGBTQIA+ employee perspective in order to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for full participation in teaching and service by all employees, regardless of employee group, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**
The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in collaboration with the Office of International Education coordinates a program for full-time faculty and staff called the Social Justice Leadership Certificate. Its objectives are to build skills and capacities in faculty and staff to lead and support initiatives related to diversity and inclusion; to orient the community towards an awareness of social justice in all areas of the college; to implement a social justice lens in supporting student success and employee engagement; and to build community and support for employees advancing diversity and inclusion at Harper.

**2009-2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OUTCOMES**
 • Recognized by the Illinois Community College Trustees Association with the Equity and Diversity Award for achieving diversity, equity and inclusion in the College's education programs.

• Awarded a five-year $805K Gates Foundation Aspen Frontier Set Grant designed to bring about dramatic improvements in student persistence, completion and equity.

• In 10 years, the Educational Foundation grew the net assets to more than $32,000,000 in support of Harper College students, programs and the Promise Program.

• Introduced One Million Degrees scholarship and mentoring program to Harper College.

• Recognized by the Association of Community College Trustees with the 2017 Central Region Equity Award for achieving equity in the college's education programs and services and in the administration and delivery of those programs and services.

• Recipient of Achieving the Dream's Leah Meyer Austin Award, which is the highest distinction a college in the ATD Network can earn, recognizing a college that employs a holistic approach to reducing equity gaps between student groups and increasing success for all.

• Received the 2017 and 2018 INSIGHT into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Awards.

• Received the inaugural 2020 INSIGHT into Diversity Inspiring Affinity Group Award for the Diverse Relationships Engaged in Affirming Multiculturalism (DREAM) employee resource group. In particular, DREAM's mentoring program for newly hired underrepresented employees was highlighted with more than 100 participants over the course of 10 years.

**DEI and Shared Governance**
The purpose of the Diversity and Inclusion Shared Governance Committee is to assist in coordinating, implementing, and further developing the college's Diversity Plan. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall:
- Analyze college policies and procedures to enhance diversity and inclusion
- Advise, assist and provide input in implementing the college Diversity Plan
- Review and make recommendations to the college's annual planning process related to diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Provide support and assistance in the implementation of faculty and staff development in the area of diversity and the development of cultural competence

Any policy recommendations resulting from the work of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall be submitted to the Institutional Resources Policy Council for review and approval. All non-policy recommendations emanating from the Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall be submitted to an Executive Council member designated by the college president for approval.

**Diversity and Equity Statements**
Equity-mindedness refers to the mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who are willing to assess their own racial assumptions, to acknowledge their lack of knowledge in the history of race and racism, to take responsibility for the success of historically underrepresented and minoritized student groups, and to critically assess racialization in their own practice as educators and/or administrators. Equity work requires an understanding of educational debt owed to descendants. In 2019, Harper College charged the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Shared Governance Committee with developing diversity and equity statements. The D&I Shared Governance Committee began reviewing literature, seeking opinions and surveying employees on key components needed for the statements, both of which are on track to be adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2021.

**Harper Equity Statement (Draft)**
The core values at Harper College include providing equity in learning, teaching, and working environments for all students, faculty, and staff. While equality involves treating everyone the same way regardless of their starting points and needs, equity is based upon the principles of fairness. Equity acknowledges that everyone has a different starting point and individual needs. It means meeting people where they are and providing them with support and opportunities essential to accomplishing their goals.

Our commitment to equity at Harper involves providing support and access to resources for all members of the college community and finding solutions to remedy academic equity gaps for

students. Our institution will identify inequities and remove structural barriers faced by underserved populations. We will adopt practices and support services that promote equitable participation in educational programs and the equal opportunity for everyone to achieve their full potential. We will promote a culture of inclusion, work to bring about social justice, and advance sustainable change to support the success of all members of the Harper College community.

**Harper Equity Statement (Draft)**
Our vision is to enrich our world by educating culturally literate students who recognize the opportunities of and make positive contributions to a global society.

- We create a culture of scholarship, integrity and innovation rooted in the diversity of our Harper community.
- We inspire our Harper community to believe that there is a transformative impact when people from different world views work together collaboratively.
- We partner with our community to demonstrate that it is possible for people of all viewpoints and persuasions to respect and learn from each other.

We are committed to fully engaging the wealth of thought, backgrounds, languages and life experiences of our students, colleagues and community to foster an environment of academic excellence and student success.

## Purpose of the Equity Plan

The ILEA Equity Plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for outlining how Harper College will work toward closing gaps in degree attainment for low-income, first generation, African American, and Latinx students. Due to the persistence and size of equity gaps across colleges and universities in Illinois, this initiative prioritizes urgent action on equitable degree completion outcomes for students across racial and socioeconomic groups. You will later find the degree completion disparities between the following target student groups:

- African-American and White students
- Latinx students and White students
- Students receiving Pell grants and those not receiving Pell grants

The ILEA Equity Plan is intended to complement other institutional efforts to increase equity and degree completion. While degree completion is recognized as a lagging indicator, there are many challenges that students face prior to, during and after college. The following page shows how equity manifests in different forms based on the impact on equality, bias and systemic racism, diversity and how we can work towards achieving equity for our community. This report will share various systemic approaches to addressing equity issues which are aimed at improving student outcomes such as completion.

**SUMMARY: THE RACIAL EQUITY IMPERATIVE**



Racial equity requires policies and practices directed where they're needed to fix barriers to achievement and provide the necessary support. When colleges focus solely on diversity, they bring more students into systems that put too many students on predictable paths toward failure.

*Image Credit: Center for Urban Education. (2020). Laying the groundwork: Concepts and activities for racial equity work. Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California.*

# Current State

## Graduation Rates

### Graduation Rates, Overall

Graduation %

| Year | Rate |
|------|------|
| 2015 | 26.3 |
| 2016 | 28.4 |
| 2017 | 28.8 |
| 2018 | 32.7 |
| 2019 | 33.7 |

Legend: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

### Graduation Rates, by Race

Graduation %

| Year | White | Black | Latinx |
|------|-------|-------|--------|
| 2015 | 30.3 | 9.4 | 24.5 |
| 2016 | 31.3 | 10 | 27.1 |
| 2017 | 32 | 11.7 | 25.3 |
| 2018 | 37.2 | 14.3 | 29.3 |
| 2019 | 39.2 | 11.3 | 29.5 |

Legend: White, Black, Latinx
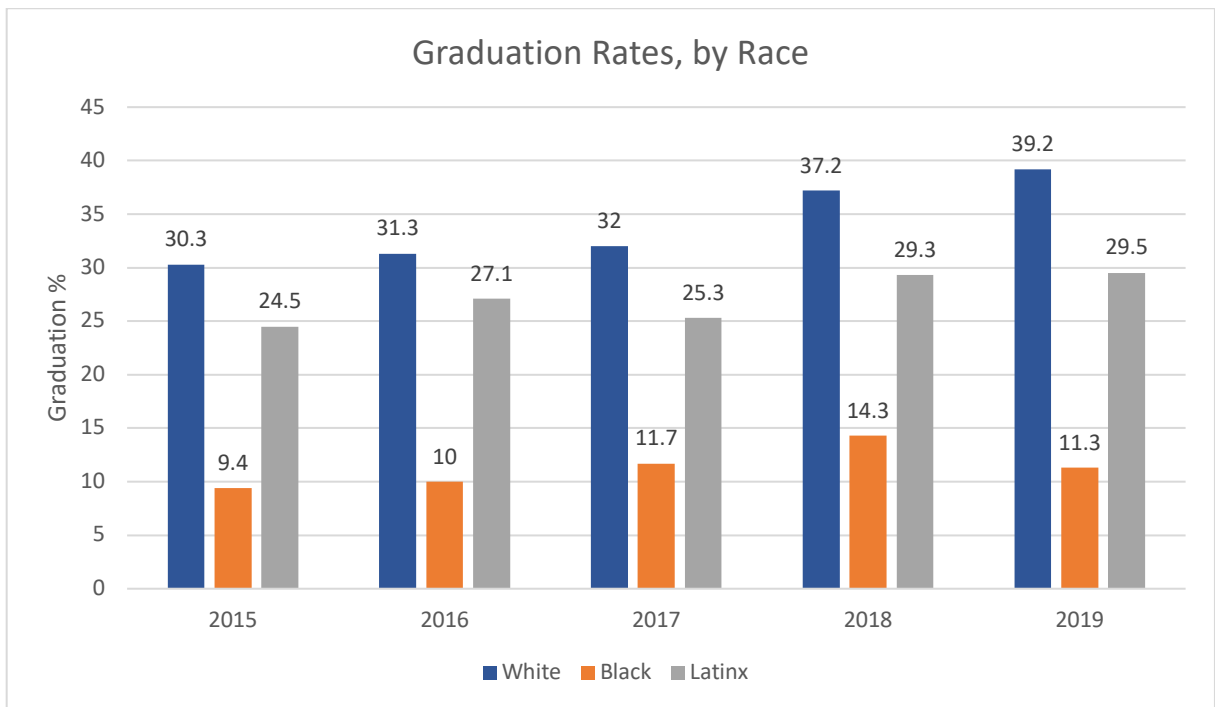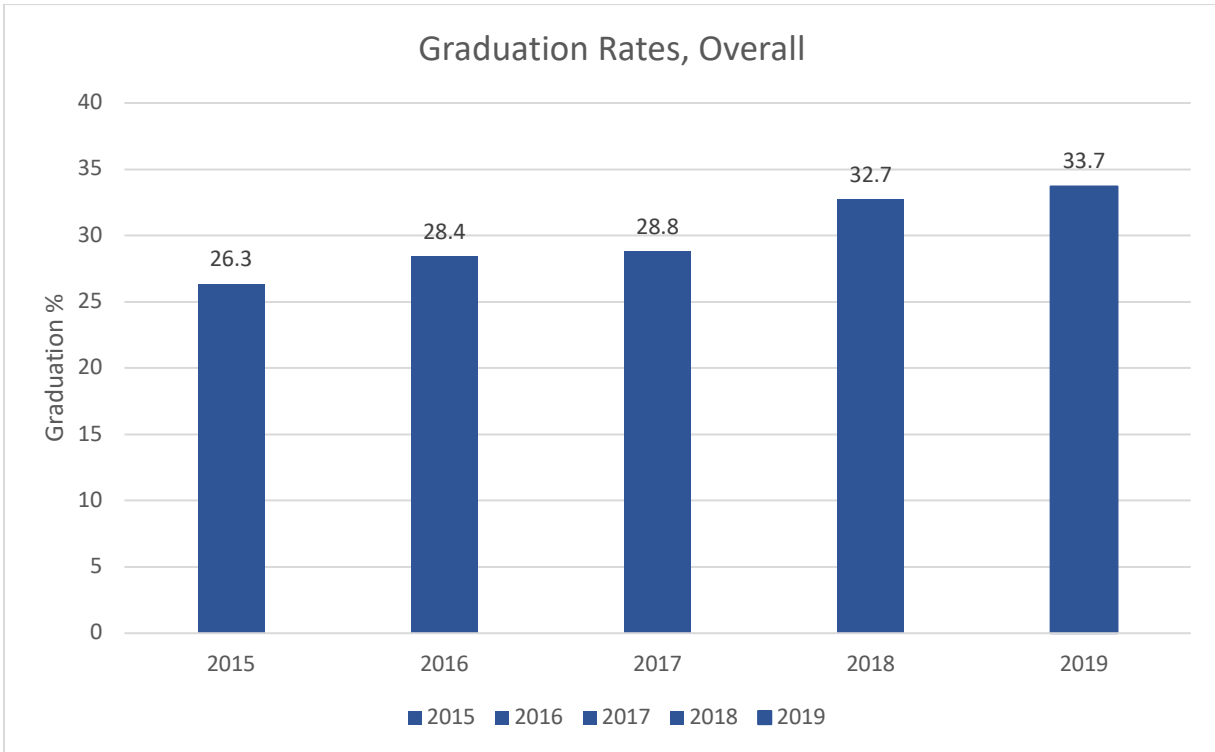
COMPARED TO THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS, BLACK STUDENTS LAG IN GRADUATION RATES BY 27.9 PERCENTAGE POINTS AND LATINX STUDENTS BY 9.7 PERCENTAGE POINTS IN 2019. THESE GAPS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENT FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

## Pell vs. Non Pell Graduation Rates

**Non Pell**
- 2015: 27
- 2016: 29
- 2017: 30.5
- 2018: 35.5
- 2019: 35.5

**Pell**
- 2015: 24.7
- 2016: 27.2
- 2017: 25.5
- 2018: 29.1
- 2019: 31.6

Y-axis: % Success

Legend: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
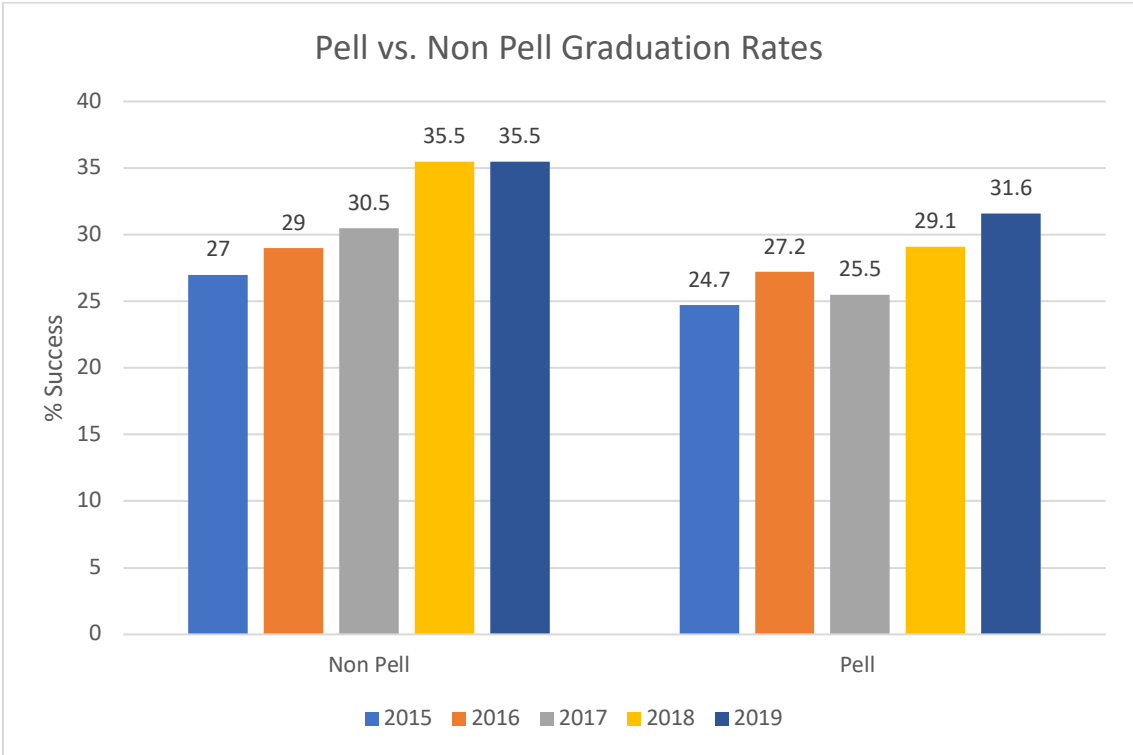
PELL STUDENTS, OFTEN KNOWN AS BEING THE MOST FINANCIALLY CHALLENGED, LAG IN GRADUATION RATE BY 3.9 PERCENTAGE POINTS AS COMPARED TO NON-PELL STUDENTS.

## Developmental Education

### Developmental Math Course Success, Overall

| Year | % Success |
|------|-----------|
| 2015 | 49.5 |
| 2016 | 53.4 |
| 2017 | 60.2 |
| 2018 | 55.5 |
| 2019 | 55 |

### Developmental Math Course Success, by Race

| Year | Black | Latinx | White |
|------|-------|--------|-------|
| 2016 | 46 | 47.8 | 60 |
| 2017 | 46 | 57.8 | 64.6 |
| 2018 | 47.5 | 53.2 | 58.3 |
| 2019 | 39.3 | 55.6 | 57.7 |

COMPARED TO THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS, BLACK STUDENTS LAG IN DEVELOPMENTAL MATH SUCCESS RATES BY 18.4 PERCENTAGE POINTS. LATINX STUDENT DEVELOPMENTAL MATH SUCCESS RATES ARE CLOSER TO THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS WITH ONLY A 2.1 PERCENTAGE POINT GAP IN 2019.
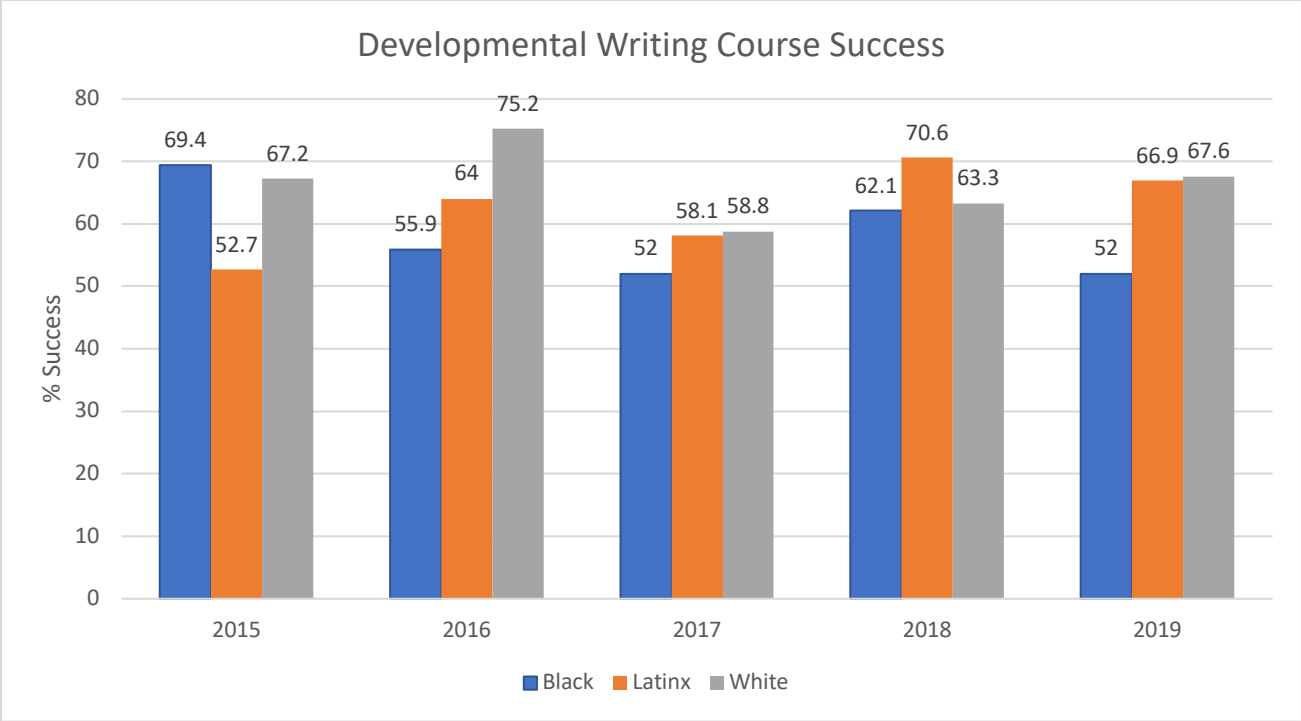
## Developmental Writing Success, Overall

| Year | % Success |
|------|-----------|
| 2015 | 60.6 |
| 2016 | 69.3 |
| 2017 | 56.6 |
| 2018 | 65.6 |
| 2019 | 64.6 |

## Developmental Writing Course Success



Chart showing % Success for Black, Latinx, and White students from 2015 to 2019:

| Year | Black | Latinx | White |
|------|-------|--------|-------|
| 2015 | 69.4 | 52.7 | 67.2 |
| 2016 | 55.9 | 64 | 75.2 |
| 2017 | 52 | 58.1 | 58.8 |
| 2018 | 62.1 | 70.6 | 63.3 |
| 2019 | 52 | 66.9 | 67.6 |

COMPARED TO THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS, BLACK STUDENTS LAG IN DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING SUCCESS RATES BY 15.6 PERCENTAGE POINTS IN 2019. FOR LATINX STUDENTS, THERE HAS BEEN NO GAP IN DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING SUCCESS RATES SINCE 2016.

## Gateway Math Course Completion Rates, Overall

% of Students

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
| 69.2 | 72.4 | 92.7 | 82.4 | 82.1 |

■ % Pass Rate
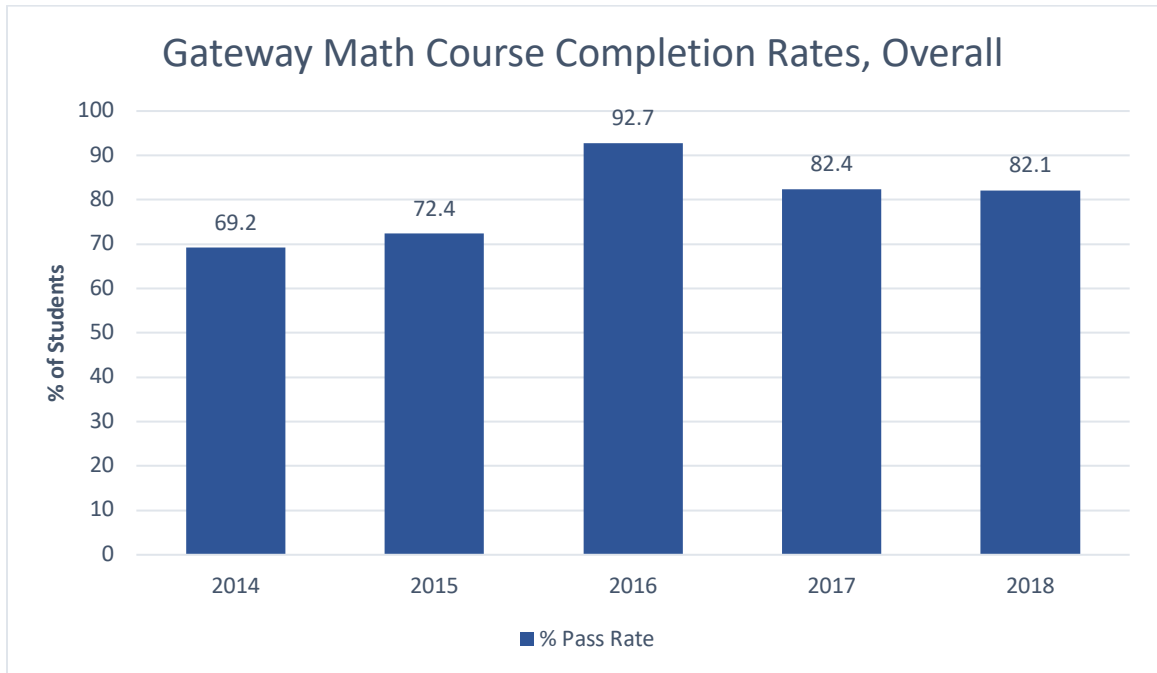
COMPARED TO THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS, BLACK STUDENTS LAG IN GATEWAY MATH COMPLETION RATES BY 3.7 PERCENTAGE POINTS AND LATINX STUDENTS BY 3.3 PERCENTAGE POINTS IN 2019.

## Gateway English Courses Completion Rates, Overall

Chart showing % of Students (y-axis, 0–90) by % Pass Rate across years:

- 2014: 79.1
- 2015: 69.7
- 2016: 77.7
- 2017: 64.5
- 2018: 75.4
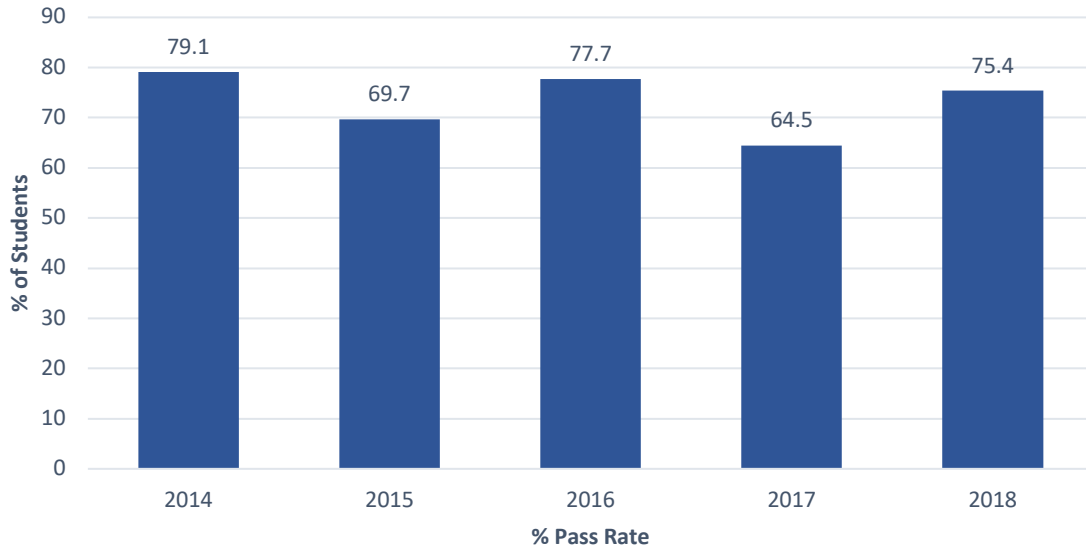
## Gateway English Course Completion Rates, by Race

Chart showing % of Students (y-axis, 0–100) for Black, Latinx, and White across years:

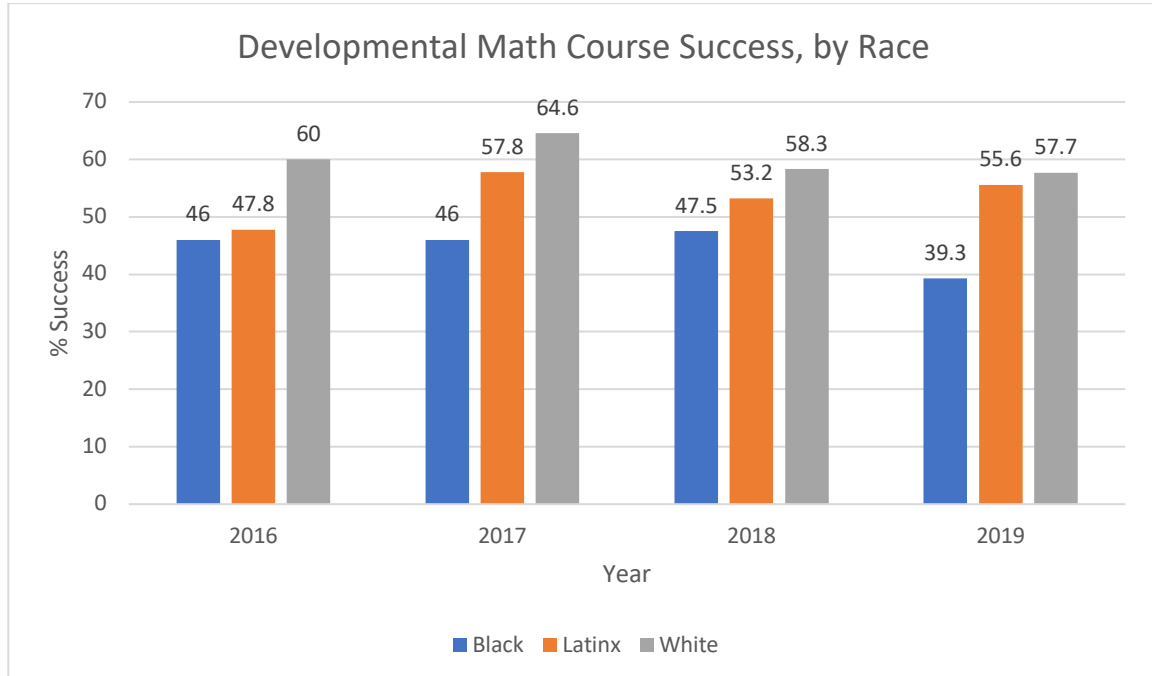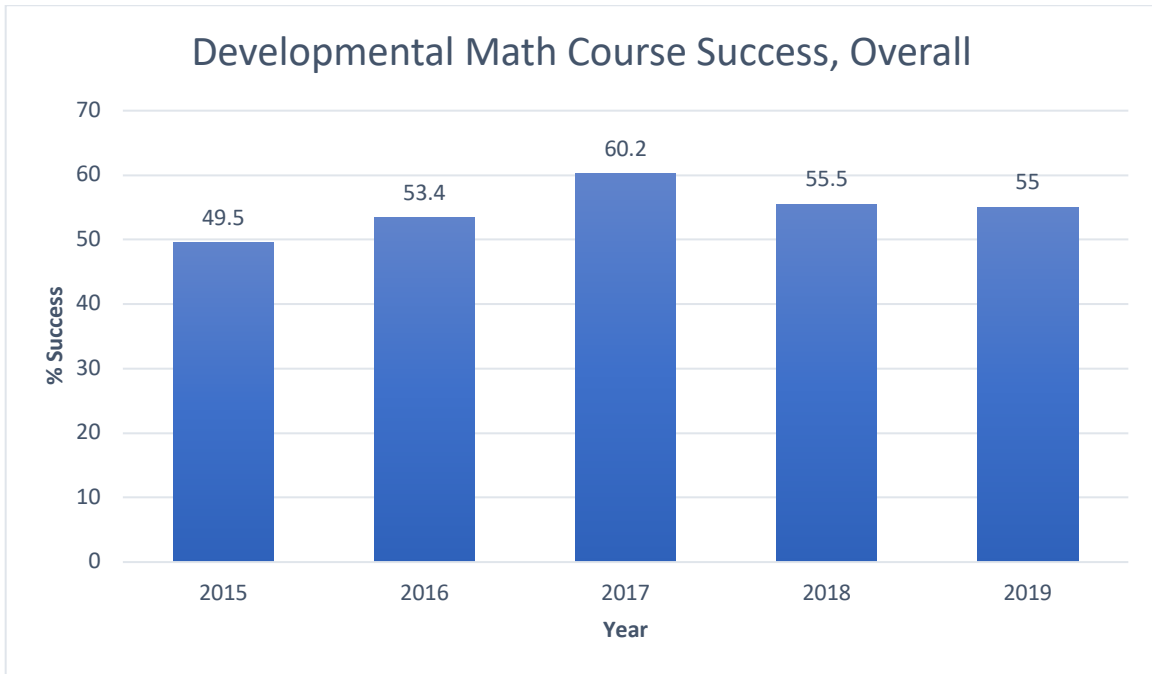| Year | Black | Latinx | White |
|------|-------|--------|-------|
| 2014 | 72.7 | 76.7 | 79.3 |
| 2015 | 57.1 | 71.4 | 65.6 |
| 2016 | 60 | 73.3 | 89.8 |
| 2017 | 87.5 | 57.4 | 79.3 |
| 2018 | 57.1 | 67.2 | 87 |

Legend: Black, Latinx, White
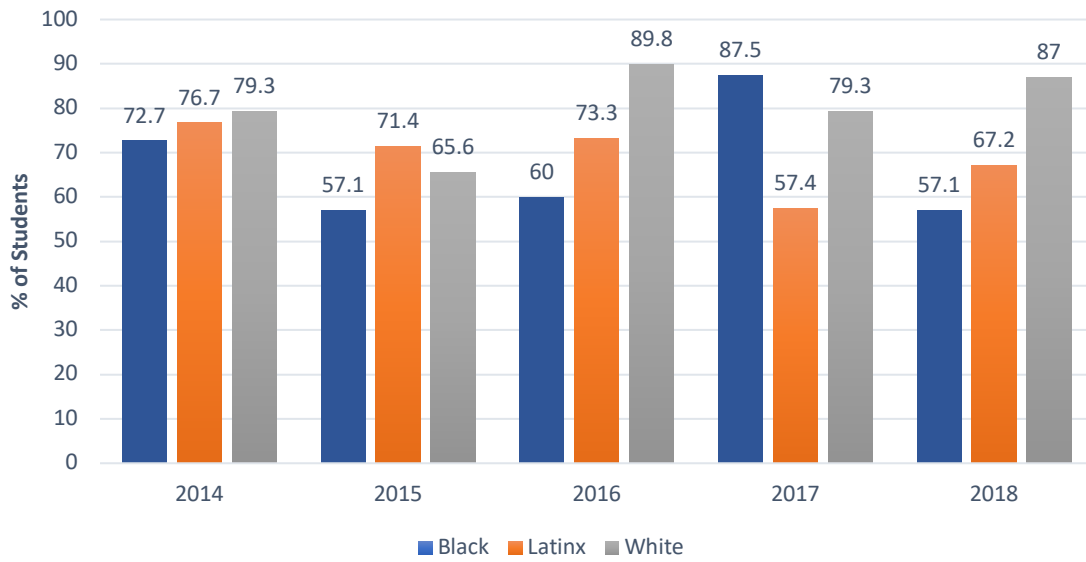
COMPARED TO THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS, BLACK STUDENTS LAG IN GATEWAY ENGLISH COMPLETION RATES BY 29.9 PERCENTAGE POINTS AND LATINX STUDENTS BY 19.8 PERCENTAGE POINTS IN 2019.

Institutional Success - Employee Diversity



**Employee Diversity**

| Year | Diverse New Hires | Community Diversity |
|------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 2015 | 25 | 32.7 |
| 2016 | 26.2 | 33.8 |
| 2017 | 30.8 | 34.8 |
| 2018 | 35.2 | 34.8 |
| 2019 | 25.9 | 35.2 |
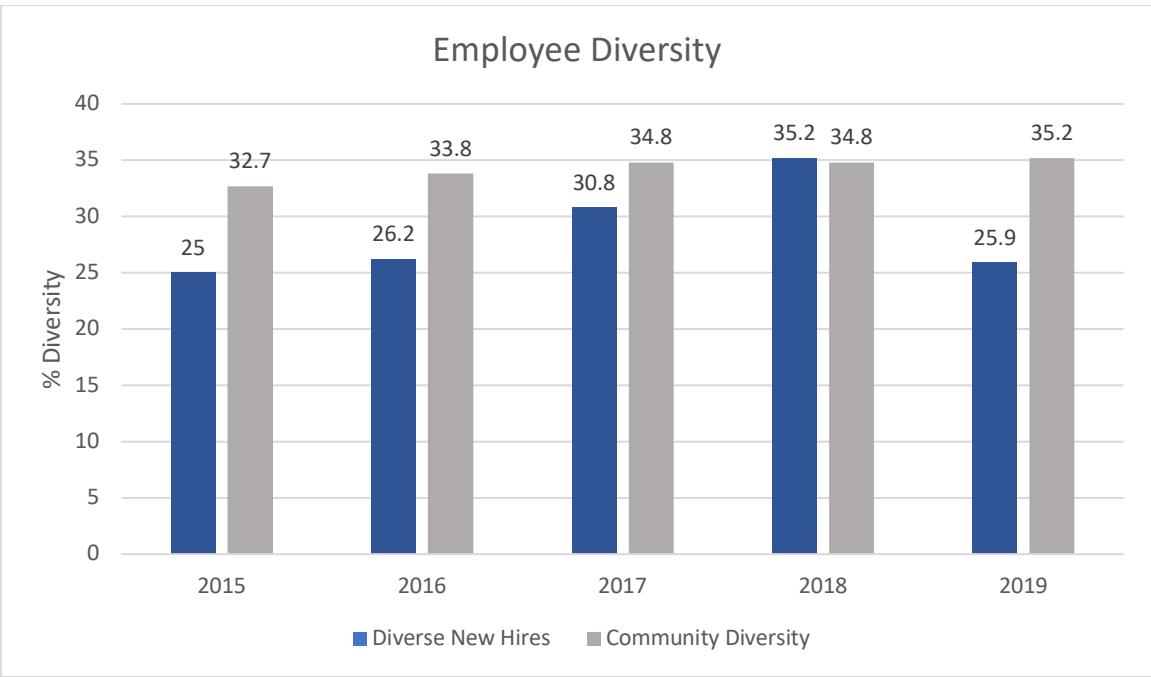
COMPARED TO THE RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF THE HARPER COLLEGE DISTRICT, THE DIVERSITY OF NEW HIRES LAGS BY 9.3 PERCENTAGE POINTS IN 2019.

## Future Vision

The goal of this equity plan and the Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative is to eliminate disparities in degree completion rates on our campus between African-American and White students, between Latinx and White students, and between low-income and higher income students (as indicated by Pell receipt). In order to make improvements for student outcomes, Harper College is also committed to developing a systemic understanding of core tenets needed to realize improvements in achievements which include campus culture, pedagogy, cultural competency, campus counter spaces and continuous review of data. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Core Tenets were developed in 2020 to help lead the efforts of the Office of DEI.

# DEI Core Tenets

**Increase**

Increase educational attainment of students from marginalized communities by evaluating/removing barriers, systems and policies thereby improving economic mobility

**Provide**

Provide culturally responsive pedagogical approaches to serving a diverse student body by embedding systematic supports to faculty

**Deliver**

Deliver diversity, equity and inclusion training to all employees to infuse cultural competency for all by developing institutional capacity

**Create**

Create physical, virtual and even emotional spaces with students and bridges with community members which helps to attract, retain and uplift diverse students and employees

**Improve**

Improve college DEI performance metrics surrounding employees and students by evaluating institutional and community data

In 2020, Harper College completed various plans that supported efforts to focus on equity gain throughout the college. Both strategic planning and the Basic Needs Project started in 2019 and completed in 2020. The Strategic Plan FY2021-2024 was officially adopted in fall 2020 and focuses on four themes and six strategic goals (shown in the following section). Equity has its own goal and is supported within several of the other goals helping ensure a more systematic approach to resolving equity issues in policy, pedagogy, supports and community relations.

The Basic Needs Project, which was completed in summer 2020, provided a year's worth of data related to the financial health of students, including food and housing insecurity. The project also provided various recommendations such as centralizing supports and shifting to a college-wide system of "a culture of kindness."

Lastly, Harper started a review of all diversity, equity and inclusion efforts for the last five years in spring 2020. The final report included feedback from students and employees and provided recommendations to improve DEI efforts across the institution including diversity frameworks, creating a cultural center and supporting a more robust Office of DEI. The recommendations of all three reports have provided a strong roadmap for the future. The following recommendations can be found in this section of the report.

# Strategic Plan FY2021-2024 Alignment with Equity Goals



Harper College launched its FY2021-2024 Strategic Plan in September 2020. The Strategic Plan is the foundation for planning at the college and serves as the overarching umbrella or guiding plan for the budget, operational plan and division plans. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to effect change. The Strategic Plan is focused on future success, and daily operational decisions are approached with the plan in mind. Additionally, resource allocation is aligned with the Strategic Plan. The work associated with all planning at the college is aligned with and supports achievement of the college's strategic goals.

The strategic goals were developed from four themes: college culture, equity, excellence in teaching and learning, and partnerships and outreach. In particular, the focus on equity includes education around equity, review of policies and procedures through an equity lens, and equity gaps. The six strategic goals and their targets are:

## STRATEGIC GOAL: CORE VALUES – Implement practices that promote Harper's core values of respect, integrity, collaboration, and excellence.

- Create a culture of professional development.
- Increase student satisfaction and sense of belonging.
- Increase employee satisfaction, recognition, and sense of belonging.
- Increase collaboration/cooperation/communication.
- Ensure accountability.

## STRATEGIC GOAL: EQUITY – Build capacity to support equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- Develop a common language around equity for Harper College.
- Assess academic and non-academic policies/practices (equity lens) and recommend adjustments.
- Develop and provide education and training on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Create a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Develop/enhance community relationships that support DEI efforts.

## STRATEGIC GOAL: STUDENT SUCCESS – Identify and remove barriers to student success.

- Close equity gaps.
- Increase completion rates for all students.
- Provide professional development around equitable practices (faculty/student support staff)
- Increase/enhance support services for basic needs/bandwidth demands.

## STRATEGIC GOAL: TEACHING AND LEARNING – Implement innovative and inclusive teaching and learning.

- Ensure students leave Harper with essential skills ("soft skills", general education outcomes).
- Develop new credit programs that are responsive to student, workforce, and community needs.
- Enhance alternative delivery methods/flexible scheduling.
- Implement culturally competent classroom practices.
- Improve paths to transfer and career (post-Harper outcomes).

## STRATEGIC GOAL: PARTNERSHIPS – Advance relationships among education, community, and workforce partners.

- Grow relationships across all sectors (education, community, and workforce).
- Leverage relationships that support student needs.
- Develop programming that responds to community and workforce needs, including existing skills gaps.
- Improve outcomes for all relationships.

- Develop and implement a holistic outreach plan w/targeted groups and outreach strategies.
- Educate internal constituents on Harper programs and services.
- Increase enrollment and participation in Harper College programming (credit and non-credit).
- Increase usage of College services and resources.

# DEI Consultant Report

The DEI Consultant Report offered the following conclusions as it relates to areas of success, growth and recommendations.

## Areas of Success

- The employees involved with the Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) had many positive acknowledgements and found value in the groups. The ERGs serve as a place of community, support, and a place to collectively discuss concerns and solutions
- One Million Degrees (OMD) serves as a vital support system for many students coming from disproportionately impacted groups. We were able to meet with many students, and they shared how the advisors and staff supported them from admissions, to onboarding, and towards successfully graduating. The OMD students found mentors, a community of scholars, and access to resources to help them succeed.
- The Diverse Faculty Fellows were very positive about their experience and training as new academics. The fellows were able to access an institution of higher education and receive the experience needed to prepare for a tenure-track position. The fellows had positive comments about their mentors, departments, and knowledge on how to access spaces to ensure they succeed.
- Establishing the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion role as a senior cabinet level position is demonstrative of Harper College's commitment to highlighting DEI as a priority for the entire campus community.

## Areas of Growth

Harper College stakeholders and past research brought a well-rounded and complex picture of the climate and operations for the institution. Although many outstanding and impactful efforts for DEI are being implemented now, there is still room to grow, improve, and refocus DEI efforts.

The consultants have organized the growth opportunities into several categories, which include limited DEI framework and organizational infrastructure; challenges with the

campus climate and communication; a need to foster a community of belonging; and challenges related to human Resources and employee professional development.

## Consultant Recommendations

- Create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework
- Address Campus Climate Challenges
- Create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Communication Plan
- Invest in Human Resources and Employee Professional Development
- Foster a Community of Belonging
- Create Organizational Infrastructures that Sustain Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

# Basic Needs Project

Student basic needs have driven national attention for the past several years as students continue to struggle to afford college while managing work and families. Student challenges have included food and housing insecurity, college affordability and trauma. In 2019, Harper colleagues collaborated to receive an internal college grant to conduct a year-long assessment to evaluate current student needs. The Basic Needs Project was formed with a large cross-functional team to launch several surveys and assessments, including the Trellis Student Financial Wellness (included below). In addition to data collection, the team launched various educational opportunities including a common book read of *Bandwidth Recovery: Helping Students Reclaim Cognitive Resources Lost to Poverty, Racism, and Social Marginalization*, written by Cia Verschelden.

## Findings

The most common findings from the research were focused on educating employees on resources and student needs to reduce negative stigma, to align resources in one single stop to ease the students' ability to locate resources, and to provide student financial planning to reduce anxiety and financial debt.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the work of the Basic Needs Committee.

- Create a Culture of Kindness: where compassion leads to action
- Develop a Single Stop- Advocacy and Resource Center (ARC) model
- Increase Communication of Services
- Develop a Financial Wellness Intake Model
- Create a Basic Needs Advisory Team

HARPER COLLEGE

# STUDENT FINANCIAL WELLNESS SURVEY RESULTS

FALL 2019

Understanding the connection between student finances and student success is essential to supporting the 21st century student.

**66**% of students **WORRY ABOUT HAVING ENOUGH MONEY** to pay for school

**46**% of students have **RUN OUT OF MONEY** 3 or more times in the past year **x3**

**39**% of students show **SIGNS OF HOUSING INSECURITY** (struggling to pay rent/utilities or the need to move frequently)

**47**% of students indicate that it is important to them to **SUPPORT THEIR FAMILY FINANCIALLY** while in school

**53**% of borrowers indicate that they **HAVE MORE STUDENT LOAN DEBT** than they expected to have at this point

**20**% of students show signs of **VERY LOW FOOD SECURITY** according to the USDA scale (skipping meals, eating less or less nutritious food)
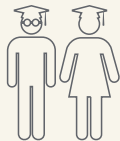
**69**% of **STUDENTS ARE LESS THAN CONFIDENT** they will be able to **pay off the debt** they acquired while in school

**64**% of students pay for college **using money from their current employment**

**38**% find their **TOTAL DEBT** amount to be **OVERWHELMING** (credit card, car loan, money owed to family/friends)

**40**% of students pay for college with **CREDIT CARDS**

**70**% of students say they **WOULD USE FINANCIAL SUPPORT** services if offered by their school

**55%** of students say they would have **TROUBLE GETTING $500 in cash or credit** to meet an unexpected need within the next month

**TRELLIS**®
COMPANY

# Institutional Priorities

### *1.* Eliminate **student equity gaps**

Develop a student equity plan to eliminate the equity gaps for African American, Latinx and Pell students in partnership with the Aspen Institute and Partnership for College Completion's Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA)**.**

Decrease equity gaps by 20% by June 2024.
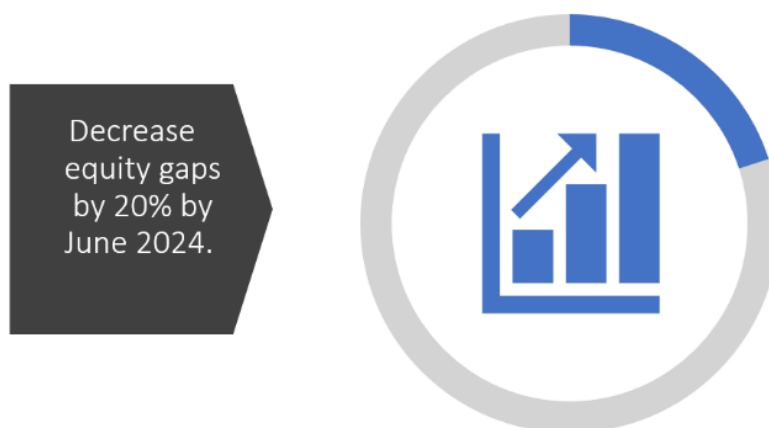
### 2. Expand Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The former Office of Diversity and Inclusion has recently expanded to the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Harper College has also created a cabinet-level Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion position to lead this office.

The Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) reports to the President and serves as the chief diversity officer at Harper College. In support of the college's mission, vision, strategic plan, and core values, the Vice President of DEI is responsible for leading the college's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion with oversight that encompasses several areas within the college that address student and employee academic engagement, climate, access, and equity. The Vice President of DEI is responsible for helping the President, the Provost and EVP with the administration, management and planning of the college's policies, programs, and services within the assigned area(s). In addition, the Vice President of DEI works closely with the Executive Cabinet to ensure a coordinated and cohesive institutional approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion organizational excellence. The Vice President will also have an executive assistant to support the day to day operations and overall management of the Office of DEI.

The Office of DEI will also hire a Manager of the Cultural Center (see #3), to support various educational programming and affinity groups such as the Employee Resource Groups and student clubs, as well as help improve campus climate. The manager will be hired in late summer of 2021. In addition to these two positions, the Office of DEI will hire student aides and partner with the Provost Office to select DEI Faculty Liaisons through the current network of faculty. Lastly, the Office of DEI has expanded its budget to support the new positions, programs and campus wide efforts.

## 3. Create a Cultural Center

The college will create a cultural center that will provide physical, virtual and even emotional space, which helps to attract, retain and uplift diverse students and employees.

By developing counter spaces on campus, the college can provide space to address issues related to employee and student equity. It provides a space to develop a sense of belonging by building images which share their story, which helps decrease stereotype threat and identity threat and provides academic and social counter spaces. Additionally, this space provides:

- Welcoming and identity-affirming space
- Supports an authentic sense of self
- Conducive to collaboration
- Encourages cultural awareness
- Improves social capital through effective communication
- Creates self-realization through culturally responsive imagery



Cultural Center
Opening late Spring 2021
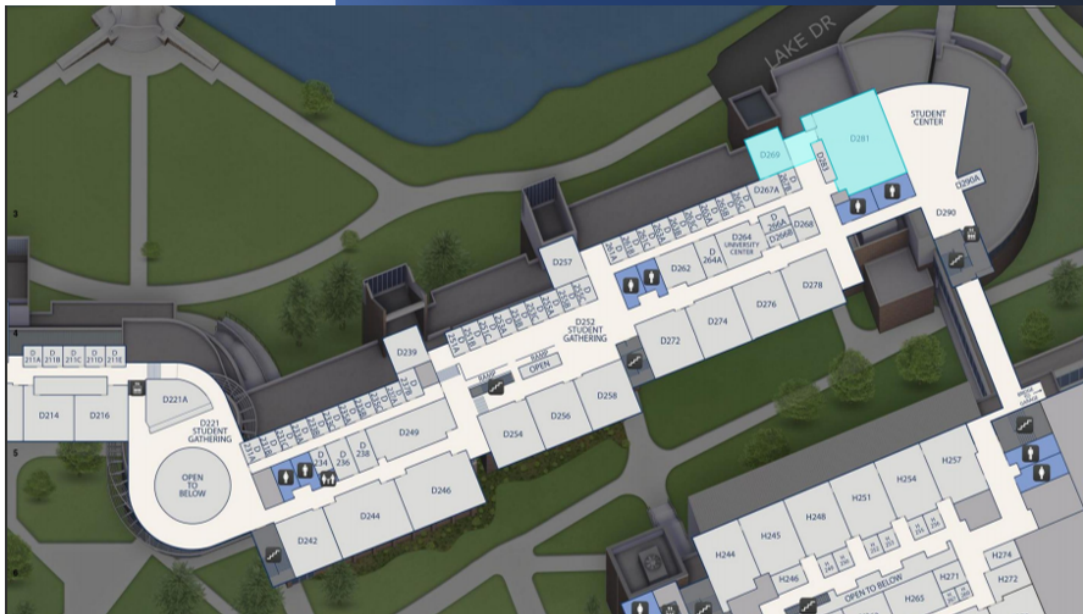
## 4. Increase Diverse Hires

One of the top priorities for the Board of Trustees, the President and Executive Cabinet is developing a strategy to increase diverse hires. Diverse is currently defined by race/ethnicity but should be expanded to include other populations such as people with disabilities, gender identity and sexual orientation. In order for the college's faculty to closely mirror the student and community population, a campus-wide strategy needs to be developed to increase diversity in all hiring in all groups in addition to reviewing the Diverse Faculty Fellows program. Disaggregated data should be used to ensure that racial hires occur across all levels of employment from entry-level positions to administrative and faculty ranks.



Increase diverse hires to 35.2% of total hires

Diverse Hires Goals

| Goal One | Recruitment of faculty and staff who are reflective of the diverse students and communities served by Harper College |
| --- | --- |
| Goal Two | Fostering an environment of inclusion for faculty and staff from underrepresented groups |
| Goal Three | Increase the cultural competency of employee hires |
| Goal Four | Enhancing the career pathways of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups |

## 5. Social Justice Studies Task Force

In the summer of 2020, faculty and other employee groups called for the formation of a Social Justice Studies Task Force. In the wake of continued racial unrest throughout the United States, the need for the task force became an institutional priority to ensure students were leaving with a better understanding of social justice through an aligned curriculum. Below are the goals of the task force.

Social Justice Studies Task Force Goals

| 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Meet with 2-year and 4-year Social Justice Studies Programs | Develop framework for Social Justice Studies (SJS) program based on comparisons between national, state and institutional models | Develop a Social Justice Studies degree distinction | Develop a Social Justice Studies transfer plan/concentration |
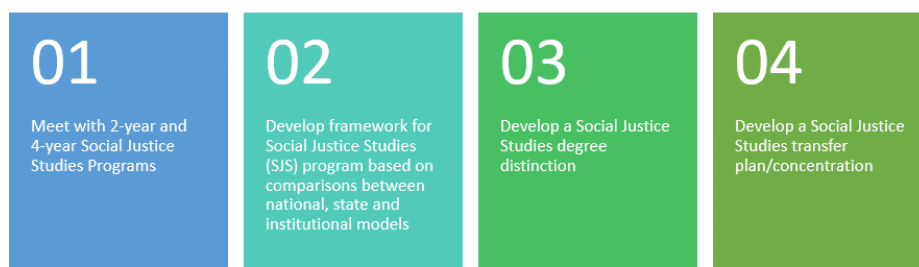
## 6. DEI Professional Development

The college will work to develop a clear professional development strategy that a) engages a broader set of campus employees, b) offers scaffolding approaches to meet people where they are in their development and c) consists of a series, rather than a one-off session, to truly embody these values and demonstrate investment in employee's professional and personal development. An enhanced sense of agency and belonging at all levels of the organization can be accomplished through inclusive practices and the creation of tracks and longitudinal strategies developed to meet the needs of all employees.



Increase DEI Professional Development attendance to 100%
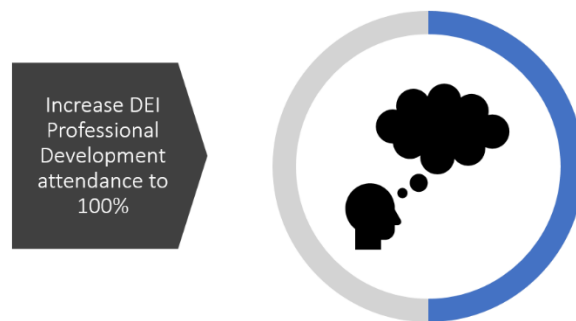
Current DEI professional development opportunities include various ongoing events for all employees such as the Diversity Symposium, book clubs, lunch and learns, etc. In addition to these more inclusive opportunities, Harper College is exploring a DEI 101 module that would be required for all employees as a baseline approach, plus additional specialized training needed for managers, hiring committees and faculty. Lastly, the newer professional development model will explore providing a DEI micro-credential offered through Community Education.

| | |
|---|---|
| DEI 101 Module | All Employees |

Specialized Training

- EC Equity Institute
- Hiring Committees
- Courageous Conversations
- Faculty Academy for Teaching Excellence

All Employees

- Social Justice Certificate
- CE Micro-credentials
- DEI Book Clubs
- Lunch and Learns
- Ally Trainings
- Diversity Symposium

Example of DEI Trainings at Harper College
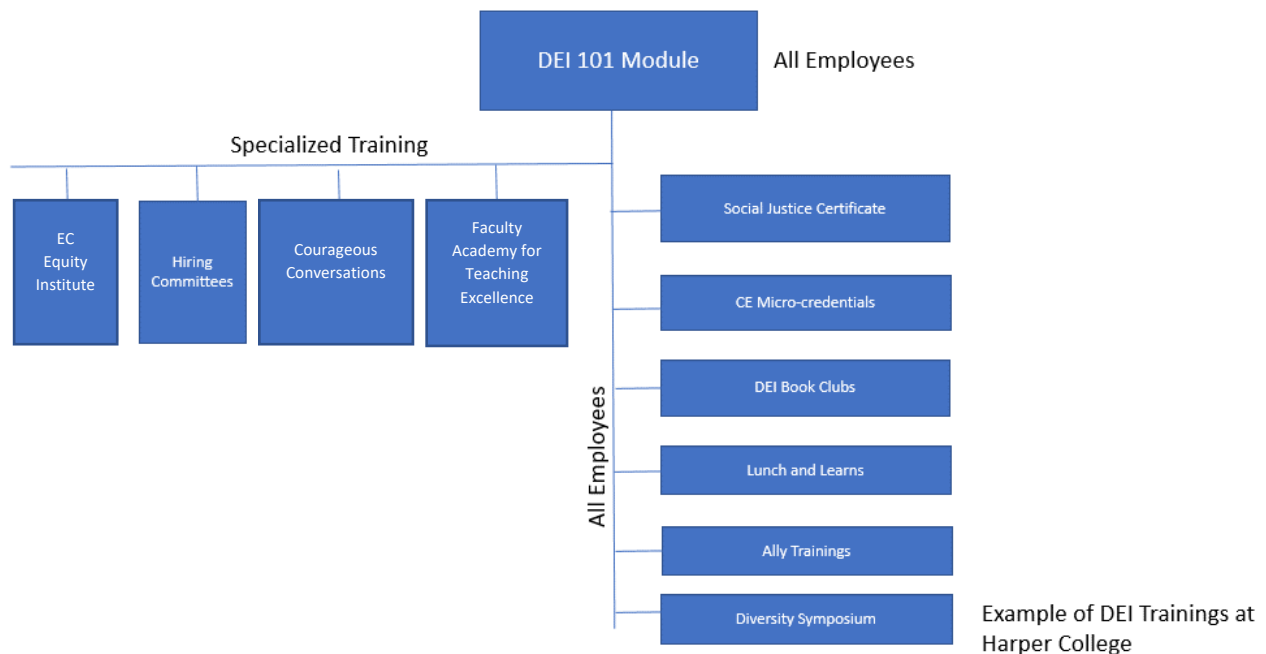
*"As a resident of the Harper district, I am proud that my community college is committed to meeting the needs of every resident. As a Harper employee, I see first-hand how Harper is working, at the institutional level, to close the equity gaps that exist among students. Through Professional Development at Harper, I am learning how to modify my own practices to produce more equitable outcomes for students. I feel very lucky to have access to dedicated colleagues who share their expertise in the field of anti-racism." Tracy*

## Evaluation Plan

Evaluation and campus-wide assessment practices are important to building capacity which will help the college understand the impact of DEI efforts over time. The evaluation of DEI capacity building allows leaders to assess the needs of key stakeholder groups on- and off-campus in order to meet the needs through data-informed practices. The below model is borrowed from a report from the University of Missouri to evaluate process for the campus to provide important

feedback regarding DEI efforts. The evaluation of data can be collected through student surveys, dashboards and other communications.

## Continuum of DEI Capacity Building

**LOW CAPACITY** → **MODERATE CAPACITY** → **HIGH CAPACITY**

| LOW CAPACITY | MODERATE CAPACITY | HIGH CAPACITY |
|---|---|---|
| No DEI plan, mission statement, and/or very basic document in place. | Strategic plan and mission exist but may not fully reflect values of the campus. | Strong diversity plan, mission, and guiding values for DEI. |
| Leadership lacks knowledge and understanding of DEI issues. | Leadership expertise on DEI issues are limited/developing and may reside in few key individuals. | Campus leaders exhibit knowledge of DEI practices and research. |
| Trust is lacking resulting in tense campus climate. | Campus still working on building trust with diverse communities. | Campus works to build trust and respect across stakeholder groups. |
| Few, if any, learning opportunities for the campus to expand knowledge of DEI work. | Cursory educational programs and continual learning. | Investment in continual learning, education, and training at all levels. |
| Evaluation processes may be non-existent or cursory. | Limited systematic evaluation of efforts to improve campus climate. | Regularly assess campus progress and provide feedback. |
| Limited time and resources are invested in DEI work. | Limited time and resources are invested in DEI work. | Disruption of oppressive practices and systems. |
| Few public discussion about DEI values and work. | Still developing opportunities/support for marginalized communities. | Establish opportunities/support for marginalized communities. |
| | | Value individuals/units that provide DEI leadership on the campus. |

Source: https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Leading-After-a-Racial-Crisis.pdf

# Budget Plan

| Institutional Strategy | Budget Implications | Revenue Source (New/Existing) | Sustainability Plan |
|---|---|---|---|
| *E.g. Strategy #2A Professional development for faculty to deploy classroom strategies for improving retention & course performance* | *E.g. Reallocate existing funding in Y1; leverage PCC faculty supports; additional funding required in Y2 and beyond* | *E.g. Redirect 50% of existing faculty PD funding to equity-based approaches.* | *E.g. Target portion of any new base operating funding to PD and solicit grant funding* |
| Eliminate Student Equity Gaps | Strategic Plan goal funds | Existing | Funded through Strategic Plan until 2024 and indirect funds through the Office of DEI, Institutional Advancement and the Provost Office |
| Expand Office of DEI | FY20 Carry-over funds | Existing | Added to base funding. Additional funding will be considered as the office continues to grow in function and staffing |
| Create Cultural Center | FY20 Carry-over funds | Existing | Added to base funding, with future support through the Campus Master Plan budget |
| Increase Diverse Hires | Strategic Plan goal funds | Existing | Funded through Strategic Plan until 2024 and indirect funds from Human Resources, the Provost Office and the Office of DEI |
| Social Justice Studies Task Force | FY20 Carry over funds | Existing | Funded through Strategic Plan until 2024 and indirect funds from the Provost Office |
| DEI Professional Development | Strategic Plan goal funds | Existing | Funded through Strategic Plan until 2024, the Office of DEI and Human Resources |
| | | | |

# Timeline

| Priority | Target Date |
|---|---|
| Complete Basic Needs Project Report | June 2020 |
| Complete DEI Consultant Report | July 2020 |
| Finalize Strategic Plan 2020-2024 | August 2020 |
| Develop Strategic Plan Teams goals developed | December 2020 |
| Identify existing equity gaps | February 2021 |
| Develop strategies to address student equity gaps | June 2021 |
| Implement strategies to address equity gaps | June 2023 |
| Develop definitions for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion | June 2021 |
| Identify and/or develop training for faculty and support staff to address equitable practices (addressing bandwidth and basic needs) | December 2021 |
| Develop faculty professional development on culturally competent classroom practices | December 2021 |
| Develop procedures and protocols to ensure use of common inclusive language in all College materials | June 2022 |
| Develop common institutional DEI training program for all employees | June 2022 |
| Connect with at least five existing community organizations to increase resources to help meet student basic needs | June 2022 |
| Increase on-campus presence of community organizations | June 2023 |
| Implement new services for basic needs/bandwidth demands | June 2023 |
| Increase employee satisfaction, recognition and sense of belonging | June 2023 |
| Improve DEI culture as measured by commitment to workplace diversity items on the PACE survey | June 2023 |
| Increase student awareness of community of community partners that provide basic needs support | June 2024 |
| Ensure 100% of employees participate in DEI training | June 2024 |
| Ensure 75% of faculty and student support staff participate in bandwidth/basic needs professional development | June 2024 |
| Assess student experience around culturally competent classroom practices | June 2024 |
| Increase student satisfaction and sense of belonging | June 2024 |
| Improve student DEI culture as measured by CCSSE Race/Ethnicity Survey items | June 2024 |
| Develop/enhance at least two community partnerships focused on DEI efforts | June 2024 |
| Decrease equity gaps | June 2024 |
| Increase overall graduation rates | June 2024 |
| Increase annual credentials conferred | June 2024 |

## ILEA Team

| ILEA Core Team | |
| --- | --- |
| Dr. Avis Proctor | President |
| Dr. MaryAnn Janosik | Provost |
| Darlene Schlenbecker | VP of Institutional Effectiveness |
| Dr. Claudia Mercado | Interim VP of DEI |
| | |
| **ILEA Leadership Team** | |
| Joseph Saucedo | Harper College Liaison |
| | |
| | |
| **Key Campus Leaders Consulted for Equity Plan Development** | |
| DEI Shared Governance Committee | |
| Faculty Senate | |
| Strategic Plan Equity Goal Team | |
| Strategic Plan Student Success Goal Team | |

# Glossary

**Cohort – A way of grouping students to compare across a number of access, performance, persistence, and completion indicators.** In the Excel file that accompanies these documents and is used to set disaggregated early momentum and degree completion targets in service of eliminating gaps among target student groups, cohort refers to when students entered the college/university (e.g. Fall 2019 cohort is the student group that entered the institution in the fall of 2019). Secondarily, we also refer to the ILEA cohort as the group of 29 member colleges and universities.

**Completion Gap – The difference in college completion rates between student groups at the same college or university.** ILEA is focused on the completion gap between African-American and White students, Latinx, and White students, and low-income and higher income students (as indicated by Pell receipt).

**Equity – A campus culture and environment in which every student receives the supports they need to complete their degree equitably and in a timely manner when compared to their peer in other racial or socioeconomic groups.** PCC is interested in supporting ILEA cohort members as they refine how they support African-American, Latinx, and low-income students on their campuses. This can include redesigning existing supports, creating new supports and eliminating seen and unseen barriers for student success.

**Equity Plan – A roadmap that outlines how each ILEA cohort member plans to close gaps in degree attainment for low-income, African American, and Latinx students.** The ILEA Equity Plan will describe how each cohort member plans to close gaps in degree attainment for the target student groups.

**Graduation Rate – The percentage of students that complete their degree.** For students enrolled in community college, completing their degree in 2 years is 100% time and completing their degree in 3 years is 150% time. For students enrolled in a four-year institution, completing their degree in 4 years is 100% time and completing their degree in 6 years is 150% time. There are specific time to degree periods for analysis, goal setting, and reporting within the Equity Plan for different target populations (e.g. entering freshmen, transfer students, part-time students).

**Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA) – A Partnership for College Completion (PCC) initiative that aims to close gaps in degree attainment among different racial and socioeconomic groups at 25 two-year and four-year public and private non-profit colleges and universities in the state of Illinois.** We aim to accomplish this goal by supporting, convening, and providing targeted resources, training, and support to the 25 ILEA cohort members, and facilitating the process of developing and executing on a campus-wide equity plan.

**Lagging Indicator – A metric that represents the measurement of a specific output over time.** For ILEA, an example of a lagging indicator is a graduation rate, by time to degree and particular student population. Graduation rates are our ultimate goal

**Leading Indicator – A metric that has evidence of being a predictor of a specific outcome.** A leading indicator is often referred to as an early momentum indicator. We are interested in tracking a set of metrics that have evidence of predicting degree completion and measuring progress toward that goal. For community colleges, these metrics include: credits accumulated first fall, credits accumulated first year, gateway course completion, and fall 1 to fall 2 persistence. For 4-year universities, these metrics include: credits accumulated first fall, credits accumulated first year, gateway course completion in year 1, fall 1 to fall 2 persistence, credits accumulated by end of second year, and fall 2 to fall 3 persistence.

**Institutional Strategy – A reform strategy that affects at least 50% of the total targeted student population that it aims to serve.** For ILEA, we are interested in implementing institutional strategies we believe they have the requisite scale to significantly impact equity in degree completion.

**150% Time – Refers to students' time to degree.** 150% time refers to the percentage of students that complete their degree within three years for associate degree seekers and within six years for bachelor's degree seekers.