More than 2,000 people—greater than 30 percent of the campus community—participated in the Drake University Campus Climate Survey in February 2015. Faculty, staff, and students answered a range of questions about their experiences at Drake. Results of the survey were presented to the campus community in September 2015.

From October through December 2015, members of the Strategic Diversity Action Team (SDAT) conducted forums with 22 groups of faculty, staff, and students, to elaborate on the data gathered in the survey and generate creative solutions to the challenges we face. More than 300 members of the community took part; the forums helped to elaborate on the themes identified in the survey results, and a clear set of needs emerged.

Through these processes, members of the Drake community identified a clear need for:

- Drake to adopt a definition of diversity and a policy of inclusive excellence
- Safe and welcoming spaces on campus
- Drake to communicate a clear commitment to diversity and inclusion
- A sense of belonging among Drake faculty and staff, beginning with their orientation to the University
- Effective and accessible opportunities for dispute resolution
- Broad-based community involvement in the work of equity and inclusion
- Ongoing education around issues of diversity, inclusion, and belonging
- Recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty, staff, and student body

Significantly, forum participants also identified a need to develop sustainable ways to coordinate and communicate these actions.

From the needs identified above, SDAT considered and prioritized a wide range of action steps based on an extensive analysis of the forum data (the analysis and initial set of action steps can be found on the campus climate assessment website). SDAT members operated under some constraints. First, we understand that all areas identified in the forums and through the survey are important. Second, we understand that resources of time, energy, and money are not infinite. And, SDAT understands that many of the challenges to inclusivity facing Drake are interconnected, tied to larger cultural contexts, and require long-term vision. Solutions cannot take place in isolation from each other or in isolation from institutional contexts.

As such, SDAT prioritized action steps that would have broad reach, align with the University’s mission, and coalesce in a holistic approach to sustainable change on campus.

For example, the Equity Advocates Program will provide needed capacity to support the work of the senior-level administrator leading diversity and inclusion efforts, and both will be vital to ongoing education around issues of inclusive excellence. The improvement to our multicultural spaces on campus is a visible commitment to the students who use these spaces, and serve as a symbolic invitation to those students we hope will enroll at Drake. Such improvements, accompanied by initiatives to enhance faculty, staff, and students’ skills in working across difference, help to create a sense of belonging and welcome for all members of the community.

**ACTION STEPS**

Team members established the following action steps as top priorities that meet needs identified by the findings of the survey and analysis of the forum data.

These recommended action steps will be completed by March 2017.

1. Appoint a senior level administrator who will be responsible for leading and coordinating a holistic institutional commitment to equity and inclusion. Ensure appropriate support (personnel and resources) and institutional decision-making authority. The administrator’s portfolio will be dedicated to data-driven planning guided by the rich data set from the climate assessment survey and coordinating the many projects outlined in this document and the Next Steps Forum Analysis, including, crucially, a commitment to ongoing education for the entire campus community.

2. Invest in diversity and inclusion spaces. The University will prioritize funding improvements to the multicultural houses (Black Cultural Center, CAYA, La Casa Cultural). These improvements will include furniture, card access,
and deferred maintenance. Second, the University will create a plan to provide faculty/staff gathering space, multi-use prayer space, and a commuter and international student lounge.

3. Develop a program similar to the Equity Advocates Program at Montana State University, with the addition of student advocates. The Equity Advocates Program develops and supports leaders across the institution, to enable them to be grassroots agents of positive institutional change on issues of equity and inclusion. At Drake, Equity Partners will formalize and coordinate many of the activities that faculty, staff, and students are already undertaking. Equity Partners at Drake will:
   a. Be accessible to people who need to talk about their equity concerns and experiences
   b. Serve as a resource for search committees
   c. Aid members of the community in being informed on equity related policies, procedures, and resources
   d. Help departments/units put together diverse search and promotion and tenure committees to recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff
   e. Promote the values of diversity and inclusion demonstrated by the institution.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Drake has several initiatives currently underway that were identified as priorities through the next steps forums:

1. Adapt and adopt a statement on diversity and inclusion. SDAT will lead a community conversation for faculty, staff, and students to discuss a proposed statement of diversity and inclusion in April 2016. The proposed statement will also be posted for one week of online commentary. The final statement will be adopted by Drake in May 2016.

2. In keeping with efforts to define an inclusive community, Drake will expand its stated commitment to strengthen the student profile across a number of measures. A critical mass of faculty, students, and staff of color will be adopted as a measure in the current institutional continuous improvement plan. Drake currently has 12.4 percent domestic students of color across undergraduate, graduate, and law; the faculty is currently 14.1 percent domestic faculty of color. Drake will dramatically improve these percentages, and will achieve critical mass of 22 percent domestic students of color, across all units, by 2025, and critical mass of 20 percent domestic faculty and staff of color by 2030. Unit scorecards will reflect measures and targets to support the institutional measures.

3. Guided by the University’s chief administration officer, Drake will adopt a policy that all new buildings and all buildings undergoing significant renovation, will provide gender inclusive restrooms and spaces for lactation and nursing.

4. Per presidential leadership, all senior level administrative positions have responsibility related to inclusion and diversity as part of their essential job functions.

5. The Learning Symposium will be dedicated, annually, to themes central to inclusive excellence.

6. New Student Programs will expand opportunities within the cocurriculum to engage students with issues of diversity and inclusion, such as expanded coverage during Welcome Weekend.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

A set of prioritized action steps are submitted for further exploration and development:

1. Form, facilitate, and support faculty and staff affinity groups.

2. Develop a website that is easy to navigate and highlights resources and events for a diverse community.

3. Develop a comprehensive “Welcome to Drake” program for new faculty and staff that will supplement and extend the current orientation program offered by Human Resources. This program will include orientation to the entire University—not just those parts of the University considered germane to job function. It will include an introduction to all aspects of Drake’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

4. Conduct an exhaustive analysis of the current process for addressing disputes among and between students, faculty, staff, and contracted employees. This analysis will include the evaluation of potential for an ombudsman position or similar resource. In addition, a comprehensive dispute resolution and grievance policy will be developed with the goal of creating a clear and accessible process for all constituents.