

This annual report for the Office of Institutional Equity was put together by Emilio Solano (Assistant Provost for Institutional Equity) and intends to highlight the work that the office has been engaged in across the university during the corresponding academic year. This report provides only a snapshot into the good work being done related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). There are students, staff, and faculty across the university that are also engaged in excellent programming and initiatives that contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive Willamette.

## **DEI Committee Reports**

### **University DEI Committee Report**

In the second year of operation, the [University DEI Committee](#) spent much of the year focused on the response to the 2023 Campus Climate Survey. This work included:

- Supported the analysis of data and gave feedback for the [2023 Campus Climate Report](#)
- Created a subcommittee to analyze larger themes regarding climate data in order to take actionable next steps. Notable themes and related conversations included:
  - Small sample sizes of Black and Latinx students that responded to the survey
  - Exploring how students define insensitive disparaging remarks vs. discrimination/harassment
  - The experiences of multiracial students on campus, particularly regarding reported rates of discrimination/harassment
  - The status of political views and expression on campus
  - The status of religious views and expression on campus
  - Recruitment and Retention of Staff - notable qualitative data pointing towards a lack of community connection amongst employees

The year also featured cross campus learning presentations that invited Willamette community members to present on topics that the committee was interested in learning more about. Presentations and conversations included:

- Human Resources presentation on the university's [Search Advocate Training](#)
- Presentation from Director of [Intercultural Engagement & Inclusion](#), Juliane Corpus, that focused on programming and the Renjen Student Center for Equity & Empowerment
- Athletics presentation on the [Return on Inclusion](#) program for coaches
- Admissions presentation on the Supreme Court ruling on Affirmative Action
- Presentation from Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Dan Valles, that addressed committee concerns related student accounts and course registration holds
- Human Resources presentation on the employee exit interview process

### **School-Level Committee Updates**

#### *College of Arts & Sciences (CAS)*

The CAS EDI Working Group academic highlights include:

- CAS and the Provost's Office hosted the NW5C's annual Faculty of Color Retreat and would like to shout out Emilio Solano, Teresa Hernández, Stacey Morgan, and Jia Evans for all their work in planning, facilitating, and hosting. We were also excited to be able to have three CAS students/alum facilitate sessions for the faculty.
- Continued work with the NW5C in developing workshops and peer-programs focusing on mid-career faculty, specifically in engagement and inclusion.
- Teresa Hernández accepted the position of EDI Fellow for the CAS. Teresa will be working with faculty and students on a variety of workshops and projects in support of DEIA goals including but not limited to pedagogy, curriculum, and co-curricular opportunities/activities.
- Finally, the CAS updated our faculty handbook and we've begun to implement undergraduate governance, starting with the Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee which now has representation from all of Salem's faculty with undergraduate programs.

#### *College of Law (WUCL)*

The Institutional Equity Committee (IEC Committee) held regular meetings that spent time watching CLEs/training and reading. Additionally, the IEC Committee continued their First Tuesday event series. These included:

- October: A conversation w/ Dean Mac Alpine: Wellbeing & Academic Resources
- November: A conversation w/ Judge Steven Powers
- February: A conversation w/ Dr. Nicholas Grier: What is Critical Race Theory?
- March: A conversation w/ Professors Robin Maril & Melissa Buis: Women's Rights, Reproductive Health, and Freedom
- April: A conversation w/ Stephanie Olvera Lugo, new WUCL SBA VP of D&I & EDI

#### *Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA)*

Before the merger, PNCA operated an Equity Social Justice Access Committee (ESJAC), which advanced excellent department-level work but needed adequate engagement with adjunct faculty, staff, and students to tackle broader institutional priorities. With the merger, the role and responsibilities of ESJAC evolved, and in taking consultant recommendations, this body has been restructured to form a committee that includes students (grad and undergrad), faculty (adjunct and full-time), and staff. The committee consists of three members who also serve on the University DEI committee to ensure cross-coordination and community of critical work. The fall focused on recruitment and the spring focused on group formation and priority setting. The committee mainly focuses on campus climate, hiring practices, inclusive pedagogy, and student assessment.

#### *Atkinson Graduate School of Management (AGSM)*

In the fall semester of 2023, the Atkinson School's faculty unanimously voted to create a school-specific committee to support diversity, equity, and inclusion with an additional focus on social impact. The committee resulted from a roughly 6-month deliberative process that included discussions among students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Widespread agreement about both the need for the committee and its structure--namely, a structure that provides substantial opportunities for representation among the school's stakeholders--resulted in a collaborative and rapid approval of the committee. As an Atkinson standing committee, the Dean of the Atkinson School will now work with staff members to populate the committee with its members and the first meetings of the committee are slated to begin in the fall semester of 2024.

## **Conferences and Grants**

### **NADOHE Conference**

In March, Assistant Provost Solano attended the [National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education](#) in Seattle, Washington. This year's conference theme was "How We Persist: Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Through Advocacy, Collaboration, and Transformative Liberation", which served as a clear message to all who are working against DEI efforts locally and globally. This conference centers on equipping professionals with the relationships, insights, mechanisms, and practices to make the most of these vital roles.

The Senior Inclusion Administrators in the Northwest Five Consortium (NW5C) collaborated to lead a session titled "Más Fuertes Juntos/Stronger Together: Building Persistence and Community Among Private College CDOs in the Pacific Northwest." Assistant Provost Solano was joined by Danielle Torres (Dean of Equity and Inclusion, Lewis & Clark College), John Johnson (VP for the Division of Inclusive Excellence, Whitman College), and Lorna Hernandez Jarvis (VP for Institutional Equity and Diversity, University of Puget Sound) to lead a conference presentation that described the intentional effort by these campus diversity officers to build a supportive professional network and community of practice. Rooted in principles of collective struggle, the senior inclusion administrators from the five institutions meet weekly to provide one another with emotional support, assistance with complex professional issues, access to resources, and an empathetic space to vent. The session detailed the way in which the group chose not to be isolated at separate (predominantly white) institutions, creating a space to work together, and how they are stronger for it.

### **AAC&U's Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Grant**

Over the last three academic years a working group of staff and faculty have been engaged in a grant provided by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Willamette was selected as one of a handful of institutions by the AAC&U to work on the development of a [Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation \(TRHT\) Campus Climate Assessment Toolkit](#). This toolkit aims to support a more in-depth and action-oriented process for examining institutional policies, programs, and practices that perpetuate racial inequities after an institution has received findings from a campus climate assessment. When this toolkit is complete the university plans to use it as a complement to already existing assessment processes.

This past year, Willamette was engaged in the beta-testing/feedback phase, attending focus groups and virtual meetings with evaluators, and completing online surveys to work through sections of the draft web-based toolkit. The core team, composed primarily of members of the University DEI Committee included:

- Olivia Muñoz, Dean of Students for Community Care & Inclusion (Salem Campus)
- Kelley Strawn, Associate Provost of Institutional Research
- Christopher Potts, Dean of Students for Community Care & Inclusion (PNCA)
- Lisa Logan, Director of the Gender Resource & Advocacy Center
- Calvin Deutschbein, Assistant Professor of Computer Science (SCIS)
- Enam Al Bustami, Student Services Coordinator (COL)
- Jay Ponteri, Associate Professor, Director, Low Res Creative Writing (PNCA)
- Susan Irwin, University Archivist (CAS)

- Tim Johnson, Associate Professor of Public Management and Policy Analysis; Director (AGSM)

### **Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Grant**

Additionally, Solano continued his collaboration with College of Arts and Science's STEM faculty engaged in a grant funded by the [Howard Hughes Medical Institute \(HHMI\)](#). These weekly meetings continue the work of the last year towards Inclusive Excellence with a specific focus on evaluating inclusive pedagogy. Willamette is one of 104 institutions across the country that received grant support to build capacity for inclusion of all students in science. Each institution is a part of a cluster in one of three projects: (1) pathways from 2-year to 4-year institutions; (2) reforming introductory STEM pathways; (3) and evaluating inclusive pedagogy (Willamette's team focus). This past year, the Willamette core team was able to use grant funding to invite proposals from individuals, collaborative teams, and/or departments who were interested in pursuing projects aimed at fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJA) in STEM teaching and faculty evaluation.

### **Programming & Events**

#### **First in Family Reception**

Assistant Provost Solano organized and facilitated the annual First in Family Reception during the College of Arts & Sciences 2023 Opening Days programming for incoming students. The program is designed to support first-generation college students (students whose parents did not complete a bachelor's degree or are not familiar with the U.S. higher education system) and their families in their transition to Willamette. The panel answered questions related to resources, advice, and how to identify mentors as well as the assets that first-generation students already possess as they enter college. Following the panel students and families had time to connect with each other as well as other university staff and faculty that were in attendance.

#### **Implicit Bias Training**

In October 2023, the Office of Institutional Equity offered an Implicit Bias Webinar for the University DEI Committee and Senior Leadership. Acknowledging that discriminatory behavior is usually clear but microaggressions and implicit bias are often harder to identify or realize that the behavior is harmful, the webinar was led by Rev. Dr. Jamie Washington who helped define and identify micro aggressions and implicit biases when they occur around and within the institution. Participants explored tools for engaging microaggressions and implicit bias, as well as strategies and best practices for responding to and recovering from perpetuating them to collectively build capacity and an empowered approach to disrupt these moments and foster an environment of equity and belonging.

#### **Return on Inclusion**

Throughout the academic year, athletic coaches participated in a program called [Return on Inclusion](#). The program offers a sport-specific diversity and inclusion education platform dedicated to developing inclusive leaders and fostering a culture of belonging across social and cultural differences to help every coach and athletic administrator develop the skills and competencies necessary to support student-athletes and achieve inclusive excellence in programs, policies, and practices. Coaches engaged in six modules including Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Foundations; Cultural Competence & Managing Relationships; Overcoming Bias and Decoding Microaggressions; Unpacking Racism, Anti-Racism & Privilege; LGBTQ+ Inclusion & Gender Stereotypes; and Inclusive Leadership & Strategic Plan Development. Each module had

two opportunities for discussion, first in small groups of 5-6 coaches that were facilitated by university staff and then in an additional all coaches meeting to dig in further to each topic. Facilitators included:

- Rob Passage, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics
- Leslie Shevlin, Associate Athletics Director
- Olivia Muñoz, Dean of Students for Community Care & Inclusion (Salem Campus)
- Quinn Nottage, Coordinator of Student Engagement
- Juliane Corpus, Director of Intercultural Engagement & Inclusion
- Emilio Solano, Assistant Provost for Institutional Equity

### **Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde College & Career Fair**

Willamette was invited to attend a college and career fair hosted on the reservation of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) that took place in November 2023. Utilizing connections made with the CTGR's Education Department at the May 2023 Higher Education Coordinating Commission's (HECC) Tribal Student Support Network Meeting, Assistant Provost Solano and an Admissions representative were present to talk with students from:

- Dallas School District
- McMinnville School District
- Willamina School District
- Sheridan School District
- Perrydale School District
- Central School District
- Taft High School
- Tillamook High School
- Chemawa Indian School
- Delphian School

There were over 200 attendees throughout the day. With the [Oregon Tribal Student Grant](#), students that are enrolled tribal members have new financial opportunities to attend higher education and CTGR is hopeful that this fair is the start of a lasting partnership between the tribe's education support work and Willamette.

### **Convocation: SCOTUS, Affirmative Action, and Admissions at Willamette**

On June 29, 2023, the Supreme Court of the United States struck down the student admission practice of affirmative action at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) and Harvard College in a pair of cases brought by Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA). Citing a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment this decision effectively ended race-conscious admissions in higher education.

Understanding that this decision raised questions from our community about the impact it would have at Willamette and in higher education more broadly, Assistant Provost Solano partnered with Chaplain Pearl Player and her convocation class to bring an important conversation about the SCOTUS ruling. The panel featured William Mullen (VP of Enrollment), Sue Corner (Dean of Undergraduate Admission), and Steven Green (Fred H. Paulus Professor of Law; Director of the Center for Religion, Law & Democracy) for a conversation about the SCOTUS ruling this past summer on race-conscious admissions. The session

included a brief history of affirmative action, the impact across the country and at Willamette, institutional goals around diversity of underrepresented students, and questions from attendees.

### **WU TechDay Conference**

Assistant Provost Solano sat on the WU TechDay Planning Committee that was chaired by Jeremy Lovato (Chief Information Officer of Integrated Technology Services). The WU TechDay Conference, held in February 2024, was a first of its kind on campus and provided a unique opportunity for our academic community to explore the dynamic intersection of technology and higher education. The theme was, "Empowering Learning Through Technology," reflecting our commitment to embracing the transformative power of digital tools and platforms. The sharing of knowledge and experiences aimed to foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, essential in the ever-evolving landscape of technology with focuses on topics such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and society, accessibility and crafting inclusive digital experiences, Workday, Google workspaces, and a closing keynote by Kristen Gore (Assistant Professor of Data Science) on the crucial role that women in technology play including strategies for fostering diversity and inclusion to empower more women to pursue and excel in technology careers.

### **Civic Commons**

Drawing upon the concept of the "public commons" as shared physical and/or intellectual spaces where communities come together to share knowledge and resources, Willamette's Civic Commons was held in March 2024, aimed at gathering members of the University community around the [strategic priority of Democratic Institutions](#). The day's events showcased the ways in which students, faculty, and staff are already studying and practicing engaged democracy, and fostered new conversations and collaborations around topics of mutual interest. The day included activities at both the Schnitzer Center in Portland and the University Center in Salem, featuring three events: big ideas sessions, lightning talks, and a projects showcase.

Assistant Provost Solano partnered with Tommy Van Cleave (Assistant Dean for Civic Engagement) to lead a Big Ideas Session titled "Breaking Through the Bubble: Pursuing a Mutually Transformative Relationship with the Local Community." During the session Solano and Van Cleave led attendees through a session that reflected on what Willamette's role and engagement with the Salem/Keizer community currently is and posed three questions as to what it could be:

1. What would it mean for Willamette to be more impactful in Salem?
2. What would it mean for Salem to be more engaged with Willamette?

### **Beyond the Bubble**

In April 2024 the Office of Institutional Equity partnered with Professor David Gutterman and the Associated Students of Willamette University (ASWU) to hold the first installment of an ongoing Beyond the Bubble series. Beyond the Bubble first developed as an idea to get our students and broader Willamette community more plugged into the Salem community. There exists an enormous opportunity for Willamette to participate in the city government happenings of Salem (as Oregon's second largest city), particularly in how issues of equity and inclusion inform city process and practice. City long range planners joined us on campus for dinner, a presentation, and discussion of the City of Salem's Comprehensive Plan. The plan addresses Salem's continual growth and the biggest areas of need that must be addressed to keep the city moving forward. These initiatives include affordable housing, walkability, reduced emissions, biking and roadways, parks, and healthy streams. The presentations were followed by breakout rooms with different

planners to narrow our focus into different initiatives that allowed community members to ask questions and give feedback, playing a role in the future of our Salem community with an eye towards equity that is central to the city planning process.

### **Faculty of Color Retreat**

It was Willamette's turn to host the 2024 NW5C Faculty of Color Retreat that took place May 21-23. The Northwest Five Consortium (NW5C) includes Willamette, Lewis & Clark College, Reed College, University of Puget Sound, and Whitman College. This year's theme and associated programming were rooted in building lasting cross-institutional connections so that faculty of color see themselves as a part of a larger network of support. There were over 40 faculty of color, across the five institutions, that were in attendance. The keynote address was from [Dr. Chandan Reddy](#), associate professor of gender, women and sexuality studies and of the comparative history of ideas at the University of Washington, who also led a concurrent workshop. Other retreat sessions included a writing group workshop, research flash talks, conversation circles, a "collaboratory," and community building opportunities.

### **Recruitment and Retention**

#### **Student Retention Team**

In September 2022, Provost Carol Long established a small working group to hold biweekly meetings to consistently engage in conversation around equity gaps in retention. Along with Provost Long this group consists of Assistant Provost Solano, Lisa Landreman (Vice President of Student Affairs), Kelley Strawn (Associate Provost for Institutional Research), William Mullen (Vice President for Enrollment Management), and Christine Shanaberger (Assistant Provost of Academic Planning and Accreditation). In 2023-24 the working group was joined by Ruth Feingold (Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences).

The group continued its work on improving data collection and analyzing current available data for trends in retention. Solano has been tasked with creating a new iteration of this working group for the 2024-25 academic year. This new group will continue the previous work with specific time focused on creating a communication plan for students that are on a Leave of Absence. The goal is to ensure consistent communication from university personnel to keep in touch while students are away from Willamette and proper support/advising for their transition back to the university following their leave. This group will consist of:

- Christopher Potts, Dean of Students for Community Care & Inclusion (PNCA)
- Jackson Seemayer, Director of Student Affairs (PNCA)
- Justin Leibowitz, Assistant Dean for Community Care and Inclusion
- Sally Schoolmaster, Assistant Dean of Academic Success (PNCA)
- Jessica Cardinal-Lanier, Director of the Advising Program
- William Mullen, VP for Enrollment Management
- Don Thomson, Associate Dean for Health and Well-being
- Laura Jacobs Anderson, Registrar
- Nicole Rodgers, Assistant Registrar

#### **Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)**

Three new ERGs have been established in the first year of the policy all aimed at fostering a more equitable, inclusive, and supportive workplace experience through intentional spaces for employees that

are generally organized around shared interests, identities, or backgrounds. ERGs are valuable as they enhance inclusive community engagement efforts, and assist in the recruitment and retention of a diverse community of employees. Those interested in establishing an ERG can review the [requirements, application, policy, and FAQs](#) on the Office of Institutional Equity Website. The currently established ERGs are listed below:

#### *POC Staff and Faculty*

This ERG brings together staff and faculty of color and offers a space for individuals to connect, share experiences, and collaborate on initiatives that foster a sense of belonging.

#### *LGBTQ+*

The purpose of the LGBTQ+ ERG is to foster connections among the Willamette faculty and staff community through community-building, mentorship, support, and visibility.

#### *Early and Mid-Career Professionals*

This ERG is to cultivate a community between early (0-3 years of experience) and mid-career (3-10 years of experience) professionals within higher education and within the WU community. Through transformational moments and opportunities for mentorship, we hope to bring in anyone who is new to the field or campus, and some lightly seasoned professionals, alum or not, to share knowledge and find community.

#### **HSI Consortium**

Assistant Provost Solano was invited by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to support the development of a new Oregon Hispanic Serving Institution (OR HSI) Consortium. This group has been established to foster collaboration among colleges and universities in Oregon dedicated to serving Hispanic/Latinx students that are currently designated or on the pathway to be considered an HSI. The mission of the OR HSI Consortium is to create a collaborative community of colleges and universities committed to enhancing organizational capacity to serve a diverse population of Hispanic/Latinx students. It aims to provide professional development opportunities, share resources and information, cultivate collaboration to seek federal and foundation funding, and engage in community partnerships to advance equity and student success.

#### **DACA/Undocumented Student Advocate**

This role was created as a part of Willamette's commitment to supporting our DACA/Undocumented students in a variety of ways. Previously held by a variety of staff and faculty in the past, the advocate position will now fall under the portfolio of the Assistant Provost for Institutional Equity who will be there to support and provide students with a number of internal and external resources that are available.

#### **Compliance**

##### **NAGPRA Coordinator**

The Assistant Provost for Institutional Equity will now serve as university NAGPRA Coordinator, acting as both the general point of contact for local tribes and facilitating work in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation (NAGPRA). A working group has been established with representatives from across the university to ensure that university policy and process are in alignment with federal regulations.



## Research and Assessment

### **Campus Climate Survey**

The [Spring 2023 Campus Climate Survey Report](#) was released in January 2024. After receiving the climate survey data from the The Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) in August 2023, Assistant Provost Solano and Associate Provost for Institutional Research, Kelley Strawn, began work on analyzing the data. Drafts of the report went through multiple feedback cycles with the University DEI Committee during the fall semester. In addition to quantitative feedback, qualitative feedback was coded for identifiable themes among students, staff, and faculty populations. The report shares tables and graphics that summarize key aspects of the survey result while stressing the importance of how to read and talk about the data. As a reminder, surveys are just one instrument of an ongoing process to better understand and improve our campus climate.

Throughout the second semester, Solano and Strawn gave climate report presentations to university leadership, schools, and departments. The University DEI Committee formed a subcommittee tasked with identifying key areas to continue the conversation with our community throughout the spring semester. A series of student listening sessions were created at the Salem and Portland campuses to further dig into climate trends, learning more from community members on how to take care of our climate. Listening sessions included spaces for students of color, multiracial students, the expression of political views on campus, and the state of spirituality and religious views on campus. The takeaways from these conversations have been presented to the University DEI Committee and related responses will be seen throughout the 2024-25 academic year. The next climate survey is scheduled for the spring semester of 2026 and while the 2024-25 academic year will be the end of this iteration of the direct work related to the 2023 Climate Report Cycle (pictured below), it is by no means the end of our collective daily work towards creating a stronger climate and sense of belonging for all community members.

