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### Otterbein University Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2015\_2020

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#### Recommended Citation

Blackburn-Smith, Jefferson, "Otterbein University Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2015\_2020" (2015). *Diversity and Inclusion Committee Documents*. 1.  
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# Otterbein University Plan for Diversity and Inclusion 2015 – 2020

Commission on Diversity and Inclusion  
June 2015

## The Commission on Diversity and Inclusion 2014-15

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## Otterbein Plan for Diversity and Inclusion 2015 - 2020

*Otterbein has long placed value on inclusion, belonging, community, and opportunity. Our story begins before the abolition of slavery, before the women's rights movement, before equality and inclusion were rights. Founded by the United Church of the Brethren, these values are at the foundation of Otterbein. Any one person seeking a better future has been welcomed since Otterbein's doors opened in 1847.*

*Since then, talented men and women, students of color, and first generation college students have all found a place to belong at Otterbein. We admitted women at our founding, students of color before the Civil War, and welcomed Japanese-American students who had been sent to internment camps during World War II.*

Otterbein recognizes that in order to live up to the standards of inclusion and diversity that were present at our founding and throughout our history, we must be strategic, deliberate and diligent in our efforts to actualize a diverse and inclusive community. Simply hoping for the best will not suffice.

This multi-year Plan for Diversity and Inclusion is the framework to actualize a diverse and inclusive community. The Plan is a series of strategies and recommendations for the Otterbein community which, when fully implemented, will significantly enhance the sense of diversity and inclusion in our community. Chief among these strategies is to engage the Otterbein community in an ongoing, never ending dialogue about what it means to be citizens of a diverse and inclusive community.

Critical to the success of this plan is the need for it to be fully integrated with other institutional strategic plans. As Cabinet works to develop a sustainable model for Otterbein by integrating the Academic, Business, Enrollment, and Student Life strategic plans, it must also include the Otterbein Plan for Diversity and Inclusion. The Plan supports the four strategic priorities identified in the University Strategic Plan that was accepted by the Board of Trustees in May of 2014:

- Enhance Student Success
- Strengthen Academic Excellence
- Build a Model Community
- Improve Financial Strength

While the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion is responsible for creating this plan, the entire campus must be responsible for implementing the recommendations if the plan is to succeed. Leadership from the President and each of the Vice Presidents will be necessary to ensure this plan becomes an institutional priority.

## **Strategy One: Create Institutional Accountability for Diversity and Inclusion**

*Supports Strategic Priorities: Build a Model Community and Enhance Student Success*

The Otterbein community understands that creating a diverse and inclusive community is never the responsibility of one person or group, but rather the responsibility of the community as a whole. While this is an important commitment of the community, it also stands in conflict to the adage ‘When everyone is responsible for something, no one is responsible for it.’ The key question becomes how do we build an environment of accountability around issues of diversity and inclusion?

### **Recommendations:**

1. The Commission on Diversity and Inclusion will transition to a permanent standing committee in the University governance system. While Diversity & Inclusion wasn’t granted “super committee” status, it was made a permanent committee and will be one voice for accountability.
  - a. The Commission on Diversity & Inclusion will report to the Otterbein University Senate at the first Senate meeting of the spring semester annually on the State of Diversity and Inclusion at Otterbein beginning with the 2015-16 academic year.
    - i. The Commission will release the Diversity & Inclusion scorecard as part of the Senate report with recommendations for improving measures of concern.
2. Create a position of Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) by 2020. This is typically a senior leadership position reporting to the President with responsibility to engage the Cabinet, the Board of Trustees and the campus as a whole in the work of enhancing a diverse and inclusive environment. The CDO is responsible for creating a culture of accountability around diversity & inclusion in enrollment, academics, business practices, hiring and student life among others.
3. Ensure the Facilities committee and campus master plan address accessibility issues and create spaces for interaction and inclusion.
  - a. All new or remodeled Otterbein facilities should include at least one gender neutral restroom.
  - b. Conduct an annual accessibility audit of campus facilities.
  - c. All reasonable effort should be made to make sure that Otterbein facilities are accessible to community members with disabilities. Sidewalk snow removal efforts should include curb cuts; snow cleared from parking lots should never be dumped in accessible spaces or curb cuts.
4. Create institutional policies and processes that will enhance the diversity of Otterbein faculty, staff and students.
  - a. Use the CQI process to require units to examine the structural diversity of their unit and to reflect on how departments/divisions account for diversity in the hiring/promotion process beginning with the 2015-16 cohort.
  - b. Create a process to track diversity of applicant/interview pools for all hires.
  - c. Include the Otterbein Statement on Diversity in materials shared with candidates for employment.
  - d. Include participation in Diversity & Inclusion training/professional development as part of Otterbein’s annual evaluation process for administrators and staff.
5. Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management will jointly report to the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion annually on student success for underserved student populations (students of color, low socio-economic status, and first generation), including first year retention rates, persistence, and four and six year graduation rates compared to non-diverse students.

- a. Report should include recommendations based on nationally-recognized best practices to close achievement gaps.

## **Strategy Two: Enhance Diversity and Inclusion training for all Otterbein employees and volunteers.**

*Supports Strategic Priorities: All four*

### **Recommendations:**

1. Require all faculty and staff to participate in at least one diversity related professional development opportunity every year beyond federally mandated Title IX training. Currently, in addition to annual Title IX training, new staff receive diversity information during the Otterbein 101 orientation process and all new employees are required to take an online Sexual Harassment training, but no other training is required.
  - a. Allow professional development opportunities offered by any campus office to count rather than requiring everything to go through Human Resources.
2. Add diversity as a training component for Otterbein “Ambassadors” (i.e., Resident Assistants, Admission Host & Tour Guides, Orientation Leaders, FYS mentors, Board of Trustees, Athletes, Student Government Representatives, Advancement Student Ambassadors, etc.) by 2017.
  - a. Training to be developed by the Office of Diversity and may be delivered by the responsible University division, the Office of Diversity, or jointly.
3. The Center for Teaching and Learning should continue to implement diversity and inclusion training and workshops to enhance faculty-student interactions and provide tools and resources that encourage engaged and inclusive classrooms.

## **Strategy Three: Engage the Otterbein community in an ongoing dialogue about issues related to diversity and inclusion.**

*Supports Strategic Priorities: Build a Model Community and Strengthen Academic Excellence*

“Intergroup dialogue programs are based on the premise that *sustained* and *meaningful* intergroup contact, dialogue, and education are necessary to address issues of conflict and to promote the creation of just, multicultural campus communities. Intergroup dialogues engage students in an *educational* process which encourages *sustained* conversation, exploration of both conflict and common ground, and action to improve cross-group relations and address social injustices” (Retrieved May 31, 2012 from <http://www.diversityweb.org/digest/w98/fostering.html>). “Intergroup dialogue presents an important opportunity for students and others to practice the skills needed to cultivate diverse democratic culture in higher education and broader society”.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Flag events on the University calendar as diversity-related. Not only would this create more visibility around diversity-related events on campus, it would allow Otterbein to track the number and type of events being offered each year.

- a. The Office of Diversity could offer a “stamp of approval” for events to be considered diversity-related, allowing supervisors and faculty the opportunity to identify and direct staff and students to diversity-related opportunities.
  - b. Provide a list of approved diversity events to Media Relations to ensure appropriate visibility on the University website.
2. By 2019 identify a funding source for the MLK Convocation, Otterbein’s signature annual diversity event, to create a similar level of visibility and publicity as the Vernon Pack lecture.
3. Create a vibrant space on Otterbein’s website, beginning with the homepage, reflecting our institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion.
  - a. Each division is responsible for communicating with the Otterbein Marketing & Communications department about the diversity related speakers, events and opportunities the division sponsors.
  - b. Each division is responsible to ensure that materials and publications reflect diversity. (i.e. Otterbein must adopt a consistent “people-first” language standard that promotes inclusion and acceptance, i.e. use of “person with a disability” rather than “disabled person” or “accessible parking” rather than “handicapped parking.”)
  - c. Otterbein Marketing and Communications department will develop an annual plan for promoting diversity and inclusion across all University media.
4. Increase the percentage of students earning a Global and Intercultural Engagement card to 50% by 2020.
  - a. Create a travel course syllabus template that includes instructions on how to apply for the Global and Intercultural Engagement card.
  - b. Look for additional funding sources to help make Global experiences available to all students.
  - c. Identify local intercultural engagement opportunities and make available to students.
5. Require one required co-curricular activity in the general education curriculum to be diversity-related by 2016-17.
  - a. Create at least one diversity-related exercise in the Peer Mentor curriculum.
6. The Office of Institutional Research will share NSSE data on student engagement with diversity with academic departments, athletics, and other campus offices. Create an action plan to increase the number of students who engage with students who are not like themselves.
7. Commission on Diversity and Inclusion will continue to publish *Making the Invisible Visible*, a diversity newsletter, each semester.
  - a. Otterbein Marketing and Communications will design a digital template for the newsletter
8. Commission on Diversity and Inclusion will continue to host at least one common hour each semester on diversity related issues.
  - a. Create a summer series on diversity for staff and administrators by summer 2016, similar to the re-accreditation series offered in 2014.
9. Given the broad array of diversity and inclusion topics available for discussion, the Commission recommends that at least one discussion every year focus on issues of race and ethnicity.

## **Strategy Four: Support the creation of student organizations and affinity groups for faculty and staff that provide support/visibility for underrepresented populations.**

*Supports Strategic Priorities: Build a Model Community*

Affinity groups can enhance feeling of connectedness and provide opportunities for members of the community to seek and offer support to one another. Organizations, including those in higher education have used affinity groups to build community, improve recruitment and retain diverse talent (<http://www.queens.edu/About-Queens/Office-of-Diversity-and-Inclusion/Faculty-Programs.html>).

### **Recommendations:**

1. Create a “Faces of Otterbein” annual campaign, similar to the “This Is What a Feminist Looks Like” campaign, allowing faculty, staff and students to claim their diversity to create awareness and visibility.
2. Work with shared governance assemblies to promote opportunities for development of affinity groups.

## **Strategy Five: Enhance efforts to attract and retain diverse faculty, students and staff.**

*Supports Strategic Priorities: All four*

Increase diversity of faculty/staff/students by creating policies and procedures to better ensure diverse applicant pools.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Publicize all employment opportunities broadly in media that will reach a diverse audience of applicants.
  - a. Make the Otterbein Diversity and Inclusion Statement available to all applicants by 2015-16.
2. Hiring managers should be required to report back to Human Resources about the diversity of their interview pools.
  - a. HR will share data on the composition of interview pools for the Institutional Diversity scorecard annually for the University as a whole and by division by 2016-17.
3. Review the current Ammons Thomas scholarship guidelines to be sure they are inclusive of under-represented students who identify their race/ethnicity as “other.”
4. Consider a scholarship for LGBTQI students and their allies as a visible sign of our campus support.