<u>**2018-19 Diversity Plan**</u>

The Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) Diversity Council has a broad mission that seeks to accomplish its goals by establishing detailed objectives. The council strives to ensure that the diverse population of our community is fully recognized on our campus and, as much as is possible, is reflected in our students, staff, and faculty (diversity). We seek and support ways to 'level the playing fields' and maintain open doors of opportunity for the unique needs of all students (equity). As we consider, analyze, and reflect on our campus population, we see the potential and value in all of our students and employees. If a particular campus population is being overlooked, we endeavor to recognize their presence, see their value, and ascribe them dignity by giving them a voice and platform of expression on our campus (inclusion). The council understands that this mission brings to the forefront the fact that change is needed and ever-evolving. This will continue to involve a steady flow of modifications and adjustments on the part of the entire college. To that end, we seek to create an environment of social interchange, social interaction, and social mobility.

While MVCC's diversity and inclusion efforts have evolved over time, the College's initial Diversity Plan was completed an submitted to SUNY in November 2016 in response to their 2015 Policy and call to action to *increase the capacity of campuses to advance diversity and inclusion for all 64 of their institutions*. Spring 2017 was spent identifying Council members to carry out the plan objectives and their work as a Council kicked off in September of 2017. The following section reviews progress on the first plan.

<u>**2016-2017 Diversity Plan Goals – Status Update**</u>

1. **Advance student recruitment, offerings and services to support and increase the number of adult students (25 years or older) enrolled at the College.**

The Adult Degree Program (ADP) was designed to allow students to attend MVCC one night a week, one class at a time, for just over 2 years, and earn an Associate's Degree. This format provides adult learners with the flexibility necessary to earn a degree while balancing life commitments and responsibilities. Fall 2016 launched the first cohort in Business Management (AAS) which enrolled 30 and anticipates 20 graduates by summer 2018. Since 2016, there have been two additional (fall start) cohorts in Business Management. In progress are Adult Degree Program offerings in Human Services and Criminal Justice – Law Enforcement.

The College Community Connection (C3) connects adult students to stabilizing, wrap-around services that address barriers to education and alleviate the impacts of poverty. Wrap-around services provided include: child & elder care, transportation, health care, family & employment assistance, legal aid, food assistance, housing assistance, and other support services.

2. **Advance the understanding of universal design by integrating UDL standards into 18 gateway course toolkits.**

The gateway courses for the UDL toolkits are courses with high enrollment and low completion. The following courses were developed and implemented on the following timeline:

Fall 2017:
- o EN101, MA110, PY101, EN
- o 099, MA091, HI101, DS090, BI141

Spring 2018:
- o SO101, AC115

Fall 2018:
- o MA115, IS101, HS101, CJ101, DS051
- o ·TBD: MA089, MA090 (or MA096), MA108

3. **Advance faculty and staff recruitment to reflect the diversity evident in the MVCC student population.**

The Department of Human Resources has established the following:
- o Expanded advertising sources and recruiting outreach for all vacancies by utilizing social media platforms, and by establishing relationships with local and national diverse organizations to share job postings.
- o Implemented a new applicant tracking system that has the ability to track the end-to-end recruitment process including sourcing types, race/gender demographics, and time to fill positions.
- o Reduced screening committees from five to three members which helped to improve the amount of time to fill positions from 126 days on average to 84 days.

4. **Increase organizational capacity for diversity, equity, and inclusiveness.**
- Review and update Board policies and administrative procedures as necessary.
  - o With an increased awareness of equity and inclusion, policies and procedures are continuously reviewed and revised as necessary.

- Establish a Diversity Council with a clear and useful charter and purpose.
  - o The Diversity Council was established in September 2017. The purpose of the Diversity Council is to develop and coordinate organizational efforts designed to increase diversity, inclusiveness, and equity at the College.

- Hire a Chief Diversity Officer.
  - o The Diversity Council recommends (to Cabinet) consideration be given to hiring a Chief Diversity Officer in the next budget cycle.

- Conduct campus-wide core workshops on diversity, equity and inclusiveness.
  - o Core workshops focusing on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion were provided in the spring of 2017. There were 20 sessions provided for all faculty and staff.

- Administer SUNY Campus Climate Survey in spring 2017.
  - o MVCC Employee Climate Survey was administered in spring 2017 with a 20.7% (overall) return rate. The initial findings led to a climate follow up survey that further explored areas in which the institution was not performing at optimal level.

2017-18 Diversity Council – Year One

The College's first-ever Diversity Plan established a number of goals that aligned with and supported the College's strategic Plan, Catalyst 2020. Perhaps the most significant action-related goal was to establish a Diversity Council in order to better understand the organizational climate with regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The Council consists of 12 members representing all areas of the College. Its purpose is to develop and coordinate organizational efforts designed to increase diversity, inclusiveness, and equity at the college. Areas the Council focused on during the first year included: Creating definitions for diversity, equity, and inclusion; synthesizing Core Workshop qualitative data; conducting a survey to full-time employees; and increased visibility at Institutes focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Definitions
One of the first issues the Council was asked to consider was the creation of institutional definitions for *diversity, equity,* and *inclusion*. Achieving the Dream's (ATD) focus on equity, along with recommendations made by our ATD coaches led to the Student Success Council transitioning that work to the Diversity Council. With that said, much of our time during the fall semester was spent researching and creating (institutional) definitions. Draft definitions were shared with Cabinet for their consideration and feedback, resulting in the following:

> ***Diversity:*** *The diversity of MVCC is built on individual, group, and social differences that are expressed in a myriad of forms.*
> ***Equity:*** *MVCC is committed to ensuring that underserved students receive what they need to be successful, through the intentional design of the college experience, in order to close existing achievement gaps.*
> ***Inclusion:*** *By embracing the diversity of its members, the college promotes and sustains deliberate efforts that ensure it is a place where every individual feels a sense of worth, dignity, and belonging.*

As the Council worked through the definitions, it became clear that as an institution, it is important to understand "who" defines our diversity, especially for the student population. Consequently, until we are able to do this, meaningful progress will be difficult to target and measure. In meeting with the Director of Institutional Research and Analysis, we quickly learned that data collected for our employees and students is limited and inconsistent, making this even more difficult to accomplish. There is also the risk of omitting a group or population by relying only on those collected through baseline intake processes like employment and/or admissions applications. As such, the council decided to focus most of its energy on equity and inclusion during its first year, with a goal to investigate what other flagship institutions do with regard to identifying student and employee diversity.

2017 Core Workshop on Diversity
The 2017 Core Workshop on diversity provided an opportunity for full-time employees to engage in conversation about inclusion efforts at the College. Participants provided written feedback in response to four questions regarding institutional capacity around diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Diversity Council coordinated efforts to review and identify themes from the

over 300 feedback forms that were collected through the Core workshops. These themes along with those identified through the employee survey conducted during spring 2018, shaped the Council's recommendations and goals which are provided later in the document.

Employee Survey
As the Council struggled with understanding which populations define the College's diversity, conversation led to organizational culture and the level of inclusion for employees and students at the College. With the help of the Director of Institutional Research and Analysis, the Council investigated ways of exploring employee perspective around inclusion. The Council developed a one-question survey to begin to understand inclusivity issues at the College. Beginning with a random sample of 150 full-time employees, over 68 interviews were completed during March and April. Participants were asked the following question: "What could MVCC do better to respect the various forms of diversity at the College?" During May, the data collected was synthesized into themes and compared to those identified through the 2017 Core workshops, which as mentioned earlier, directly affected the goals and recommendations made by the Council.

Professional Development
The Diversity Council made a commitment to regular participation in professional development activities at the College that highlight diversity, equity, and inclusion. In particular, the Council committed to making sure that at least one DEI related workshop is offered at every Institute. As such, various Council members presented workshops at the August, January, and May Institutes.

Council members were provided with additional opportunities to expand their network and to learn best practices within SUNY, and in the national arena. Various Council members attended the following professional development opportunities:
- SUNY Diversity Conference – two members of the Council attended this two-day conference in Albany in November.
- Achieving the Dream DREAM conference – three members of the Council joined colleagues and attended this four-day conference in Nashville in February.
- Strategic Horizons Network Colloquium on Equity - six members of the Council attended this colloquium in San Diego in June.

Diversity/Equity work around the College

The College continues to explore ways to incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion throughout various processes and programs, with a major focus on an equity mindset. In turn, the following work is ongoing and/or has been completed since the original Diversity Plan was written.

Human Resources Processes
The Human Resources Office set department goals of increasing diversity within the College's workforce, which aligns with the College's strategic goal. To achieve these goals, the Human Resources Office:
- Implemented an Affirmative Action Plan to identify diversity goals when hiring.

- Surveyed employees on common bias in the hiring process. 104 full-time employees responded to this survey. The top three themes identified were inequities in gender, race, and experience.
- Created a training focused on unconscious bias in the hiring process for employees wishing to serve on screening committees. The responses from the bias survey were used to inform this training.
- Increased recruiting outreach to multiple diverse organizations to share job postings.

To ensure diversity, inclusion and equity goals are being met, the Human Resources Office plans to measure the effectiveness of outreach and personnel processes.

Title III/Pathways to Graduation Project
As a result of the inequities evident in our Achieving the Dream data baseline, the College aggressively sought and received a Title III grant. The grant funds have been used to finance the Pathways to Graduation Project (PGP). This effort builds MVCC's capacity to meet the needs of low-income students by providing comprehensive, integrated academic support services on campus and online, and in courses that currently exhibit large gaps in successful completion. The funding for the College's Pathway to Graduation project have been used for:
- Developing customized toolkits for 18 gateway courses that have the highest enrollment with the lowest success rate.
- Creating a newly located and significantly larger and more inviting Utica Campus Learning Commons to parallel the enlarged and newly built Learning Commons on the Rome Campus.
- Hiring Completion Coaches who represent a multiplicity of diversity to staff the Learning Commons on both campuses for timely intervention in helping students with their needs. Three completion coaches were hired in 2016, and two more were hired in 2017.
- Purchasing Early Alert and Analytics Software (Starfish) to allow faculty to raise flags for students demonstrating barriers to academic progress. Flags are addressed by Completion Coaches who reach out to students to overcome these barriers. Flags are also used to recognize and celebrate individual student achievements.
- Hiring a Librarian/Instructional Designer who helps students with research projects and assist faculty with redesigning courses and creating digital toolkits.

Guided Pathways
Guided Pathways is a redesign of the student experience that will help close achievement gaps through early decision making about educational and career goals to help students get on a path, stay on that path, and ensure that they are learning what they need in order to succeed. The College participates in two Guided Pathways initiatives. One at the National level and the other at the State Level in which the College is a co-leader of a ten (10) college program. Guided Pathways addresses equity issues by:
- Accelerating developmental coursework through a Quantway (math) program, mandatory supplemental instruction, tutoring and completion coaching.
- Employing techniques of positive persistence and the use of StrengthsQuest inventory to build and support student confidence in their ability to be successful.

- Increasing English as a Second Language (ESL) staff from four (4) to six (6) to be better equipped to address diversity and assist with the many challenges of immigrants and refugees.

Through the Guided Pathways work, the College is evaluating developmental education. The College is moving towards using multiple measures for placement testing by considering other factors such as high school G.P.A, life experiences, prior coursework, and SAT scores when placing students. Research has shown, multiple measures is far more equitable as non-multiple measures have an adverse effect on minority students. Through these efforts, the College seeks to provide extra support and intentional intervention for students who have less than ideal K-12 schooling, who are first generation college students, and those who face a myriad of other challenges and educational barriers often related to socio-economic disparities.

LGBTQIA Committee
Fall 2017 brought the official launch of the Preferred Name Policy. This policy, allowing students to designate an alternative, preferred name to internal documents such as Student ID Cards, Class Rosters, and the Graduation Program, was put in place after months of collaboration between the committee, cabinet, the student helpdesk, IT, public safety, and the registrar's office. This policy work was later awarded the first Diversity and Inclusion Award at MVCC (spring 2018).

Additional programs and initiatives included:
- Annual "Coming Out Day" - with the theme "Embrace the Rainbow". Over 200 attendees received DGV credit. Participants read coming out stories submitted by many across the campus community all while enjoying rainbow-themed refreshments, décor, and empowering music.
- Safe Space Training - bringing the number of faculty and staff trained to 169. The committee also offered a refresher training to those who had previously taken the Safe Space training in addition to specialized training for Resident Advisors on providing safe spaces.
- World AIDS Day - showcasing three panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt. A panel was also displayed on the Rome campus for the first time. Community members were invited to request specific panels representing loved ones, making the event even more meaningful to the community. The event also kicked off the fundraising campaign for the AIDS Hike for Life, ultimately raising $555 for this community event.
- Lavender Graduation (in partnership with the student club, the Gender and Sexuality Alliance)
- Pride Prom – held in the spring in collaboration with several student clubs and the Q-Center, which is a community non-profit serving LGBTQIA youth.
- Participation in the AIDS Hike for Life and Boilermaker Unity Mile.

Committee members continue to be key participants in the Central NY Alliance of LGBTQIA+ College & Organizational Representatives (CNY ALCOR), working to increase visibility and support for LGBTQIA+ individuals across the community. This group participates in community events, professional development, and general networking amongst LGBTQIA+ support agencies in the Mohawk Valley.

Grants

There has been a continued strategic focus in researching and pursuing grants specifically to address barriers and achievement gaps for underserved students. Major diversity-focused initiatives funded by grants include:

- Achieving equitable success rates by developing supports for at-risk and underserved students attending MVCC. Grant-funded programs include Title III - Pathways to Graduation Project, College-Community Connection (C3), the Rome Campus Cupboard/food pantry, Open Educational Resources (online textbooks) to lower book costs, and more.
- Social and academic enrichment programs for pre-college youth, focusing on low-income, minority, and other underserved populations. Grant programs include Upward Bound, STEP, Math Corps, and scholarships to attend MVCC's summer College for Kids and Teens (CCED).
- Innovative alternative programs for individuals unable to attend traditional college offerings. Grant-funded programs include the College in Prison Program, CCED-operated workforce development programs for unemployed individuals, YouthBuild TASC and job training for high school dropout youth (primarily minority populations), and basic skills classes for refugee and low income populations, among others.

The College is committed to sustaining these programs with strategic budget planning to gradually assume financial responsibility on the College budget.

Jumpstart

The Jumpstart Program is a grant program that specifically addresses inequities that exist for traditionally high-risk students. Funded through a SUNY Performance Innovation Fund (PIF) grant, the program involves a cohort-based approach to student success that immerses highest-risk students in a residential summer bridge experience. The curriculum orients participants to the College and its support services while acclimating students to the academic rigors of college to ensure successful transition to their first semester. The 5-week academic session involves both credit-bearing coursework, co-curricular college success programming, and community building activities. Ten students participated in the Jumpstart program during summer 2018 with a 100% completion rate.

This program is positioned to advance both the College's and SUNY system's diversity goals by:
- Recruiting only from underrepresented populations.
- Integrating a revised statistics curriculum that incorporates mandatory supplemental instruction to enable students to bypass a remedial mathematics experience.

While this curriculum reform shows promise for advancing the success of all students, it likely will have a greater impact promoting the success of underrepresented populations given the over-representation of these populations in remedial coursework. This program provides the College with an additional tool that both increases college access and retention rates of students from

underrepresented populations through its intentionally supportive programming that places student success at the forefront.

<u>Establishment of Diversity Award</u>
To recognize and celebrate the work surrounding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, in 2018, the College established a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Award which recognizes an outstanding employee, college organization, or program that has made exceptional efforts and contributions in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The 2017-2018 recipient of this award was the LGBTQIA+ committee for their work on the Preferred Name Project.

<u>Organizational Development</u>
Organizational development efforts have included a more intentional focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in general through:
- DEI-focused Professional Development/Institute Offerings:
  - "Preferred Names - What's It All About?" - This session focused on helping faculty and staff define Preferred Names, how to provide a supportive environment, as well as, explained why it is important to transgender students.
  - "What Stands Between Us? The Issue of Race in America and Our Community" - This session took a deeper dive into the issues of race in America and more importantly, in our community.
  - "Exploring the Recruiting Process and Unconscious Bias" - This session explored the recruiting process for both full and part-time positions, and provided a deep dive on unconscious biases in the hiring process.
  - "Women in Higher Education: Evaluation and Implications for Promotion" - This session focused on research findings that reveal inequities in student evaluations of female faculty versus male faculty and implications for tenure and promotion.
- 2017 Diversity Core Workshops
- Attendance at National Conferences such as the:
  - 2018 Achieving the Dream conference in New Orleans which focused on best practices and innovations that addressed improving results for all students, especially low-income students and students of color.
  - Strategic Horizon Network Conference in San Diego which was attended by many members of the Diversity Council. This conference's theme was on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and included presentations on Bandwidth Recovery, Driving Change for Equity and the Roles of Equity and Design in Educational Leadership.
- Plenary Speakers
  - In May 2017, Damon Williams presented on "Strategic Diversity Leadership: Preparing the Centennial Generation for Leadership in Changing Times". This session discussed the Centennial Generation and the need for higher education institutions to future proof themselves by embracing the new realities of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the academy.
  - In May 2018, Samuel Sommers presented on "The Science of Stereotyping and Implicit Bias". This session explored cognitive and behavioral science research on the nature of implicit bias. While the modern era is one in which most professionals believe themselves to be fair-minded individuals-perhaps even genuinely prioritizing

egalitarian values-social categories including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation continue to have profound effects on how we see and interact with the world around us in legal domains, in the classroom, and more generally throughout the course of daily life.

2018-19 annual goals

Goals:
1. Increase diversity, equity, and inclusion awareness through marketing and advertising.
   a. Review of marketing materials for diverse population representation over the past two years.
   b. Find ways to share more student stories that highlight the diversity of our students by increasing student story video bank.
   c. Create a "catalogue" of all student services available that promote students success - this may be happening through Guided Pathways work.
2. Improve the culture of discussing diversity, equity, and inclusion.
   a. Training by Interfaith Works (Syracuse) for facilitation of campus diversity conversations.
   b. Investigate best practices for measuring diversity and equity in order to define what diversity looks like at MVCC.
3. Diversity Council conduct a (similar to employee) survey with students to understand perspective of inclusion at the College.

Recommendations:
1. Hire a Chief Diversity Officer in next budget cycle.
2. *Recommend* DGV graduation requirement include a facilitated dialogue component to offerings (to improve learning outcomes).
3. Create a workgroup to begin comprehensive review of job descriptions for accuracy, gender neutrality, physical and cognitive abilities, and to consider best practices regarding degree vs. experience in hiring practices (teaching/job requirements).
4. Require unconscious bias training for all screening committee members.
5. Create a Board Policy that supports Equity work at the College.

Long-term goals (Identified through survey results and Core workshop themes)
- Increase employee diversity, including at administrative leadership level.
- Enhance campus culture through increased DEI conversations.