Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) 2021 Cultural Diversity Report

Submitted by
the Frederick Community College Board of Trustees

INTRODUCTION TO FREDERICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Frederick Community College (FCC) is a public community college located in the second largest city and the largest agricultural producing county in the state of Maryland. Since 1957, as the Frederick County Schools began to racially integrate, FCC has prepared an increasingly diverse student body to complete their goals of workforce preparation, transfer, career development, and personal enrichment. FCC is a mid-sized institution with close to 9,000 credit students and 6,000 continuing education and workforce development students per year. FCC has a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) infrastructure that includes: the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with a senior diversity officer, the President's Diversity Advisory Council, Multicultural Student Services, Adult Services, Veteran and Military Services, Disability and Access Services, Adult Education and English as a Second Language Programs, as well as other student-centered and employee-centered programs. FCC's cultural diversity work is grounded in our College-wide 2019-2024 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

DEFINING DIVERSITY

In 2020-2021, as part of a Strategic Annual Priority around ensuring racial equity from the Board of Trustees, FCC defined (or redefined) multiple diversity, equity, and inclusion terms for the College. As requested, the current working definition of diversity at FCC is: "All the characteristics and ways in which individuals and groups differ from one another, including but not limited to dimensions of identity and background including age, dis/ability, education, ethnicity, gender, race, immigration status, national origin, citizenship, language, marital status, parental status, religion, sexuality, socioeconomic status, veteran/military status. To make a community a place where diverse individuals and groups can thrive, diversity needs to engage a set of active and conscious practices that go beyond acknowledging and/or tolerating difference. Diversity relies on equity and inclusion, among other practices, to achieve access and success for all individuals and groups."

This definition was the result of reviewing multiple formal and informal definitions of diversity, reviewing definitions used by other institutions and organizations, as well as the result of a group of faculty and staff discussions. This definition, among others, will be reviewed by the President's Diversity Advisory Council in Fall 2021 as well as by students as part of the process of adopting this definion. In defining all terms, we seek to have definitions that allow our students, faculty, and staff to strengthen their understandings of interactions across difference, both in terms of theory and practice.

MOST SUCCESSFUL NEW & ONGOING INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES AND HOW THEY ARE ASSESSED

Below we have focused on the newer initiatives at FCC and how they are being assessed. In addition to these newer initiatives listed below, we have ongoing initiatives that have been successful as well including: 1) Multicultural Student Services which offers culturally responsive advising, a first year comprehensive support program, and sociocultural communities, programming, and scholarships for marginalized student populations; 2) Adult Services, Veteran and Military Services, Disability and Access Services, and Parents Lead which offer culturally responsive advising and programming for specific, targeted student populations who may experience barriers in terms of access or success at FCC. We use institutional success data by racial/ethnic group to determine the success of any or all interventions for students.

FCC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2019-2024 and FCC Institutional Racial Equity Plan 2021-2027: These strategic institutional plans have accountability leaders, benchmarks, and assessment tools to determine if the College has met its goals around supporting access and success for specific student populations, faculty, and staff. The plans also focus on institutional climate/culture shifts to make FCC a place where diverse

populations are clear that they belong and can thrive. As an example as part of the Equity plan, during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years, all credit and non-credit programs are reviewing their access and/or success data by demographics and instituting interventions to address any equity gaps in access or success. There is extensive professional development to support the administrators and faculty leadership who are leading this charge as well as institutional funds to support these interventions to make sure there are no equity gaps at FCC.

Implicit Bias Training for Search Chairs and Search Committees and 19% Racial/Ethnic Minority Applicants: Improvements have been, and continue to be made, with respect to recruiting racially diverse faculty and staff. The following FCC interventions are supported by literature and reseach around diversifying hiring. These include an emphasis on: 1) recruiting a diverse applicant pool with a consistent process; 2) requiring annual Search Chair training on how to reduce implicit bias in searches and implicit bias training for all committee members; and 3) assigning diverse representation to search committees and, 4) writing interview questions which communicate our institutional commitment to diversity and how diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to all work at the College. Human Resources reviews racial diversity beginning with applicants from the initial pool through first round screening to ensure the minimum requirements do not adversely impact applicants. Before Search Committees do an initial screening of candidates, HR reviews the pool for a goal of 19% racial/ethnic minority representation. If the goal has not been met, the Senior Leader for the area needs to approve that the search can still move forward without further recruitment to diversify the applicant pool. In FY 21, the College conducted 90 searches and only five of those searches did not meet the 19% threshold for diverse applicant pool by the best consideration date. All five searches had their best consideration dates extended, at which point Human Resources continued recruitment. At the end of the new extended date, three of those remaining five searches met the 19% goal. The remaining two searches have not yet met their new best consideration date, so their outcome cannot yet be determined. In summary, 97% of the Colleges searches had an applicant pool that was racially diverse at 19% or higher. In FY22, we will continue to review the diversity of the applicant pool.

Developmental Reform in Math and English: The FCC developmental math and English programming has undergone considerable reform. This initiative directly affects minority and first-generation students, as FCC data and national trends indicate that these groups are often disproportionately impacted by developmental education. As of fall 2017, developmental English courses were condensed from a four (4)-course sequence to a single class of either four (4) or six (6) credits, enabling students to move into college level English in only one semester, and with fewer credits. This was accompanied by a review of College pre and co-requisites with the goal of expanding the number of courses students can take while completing developmental English. Developmental math as a series of stand-alone developmental courses has been almost entirely eliminated. The overwhelming majority of FCC students testing into developmental math now take one of three college level math courses, while simultaneously enrolled in a two (2) credit developmental supplement. Additionally, in 2020, FCC added a Student Outreach and Retention Coordinator in Math, and is adding Student Outreach and Retention Coordinators in English and Health programs in 2021. These faculty administrators support students in being successful in their math, English, and/or Health (nursing, surgical tech, respiratory therapy) courses. These are subject-matter experts who support students in getting the tutoring, additional advising/counseling they need to be successful in these courses.

Culturally Responsive Teaching Scholars: In 2021, we have identified 16 Culturally Responsive Teaching Scholars across every academic area of the College (including both credit and non-credit workforce development programs as well as online learning and the libraries) who are receiving a year of professional development and supporting the faculty/staff in their areas in being culturally conscious, responsive, and relevant. The Scholars will commit to a Summer Institute and ongoing development during fall 2021 and spring 2022. These Scholars will, in conjunction with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Center for Teaching and Learning, support their departments in strengthening equitable teaching practices as well as culturally conscious and responsive curriculum and teaching throughout the College.

August 25, 2021

Professional Development with a focus on Leadership Development: Over 800 faculty, staff, and students participated in professional and personal development sessions focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion over the past year. In addition, 120 faculty and administrators attended a three-day leadership conference in January to support the development of equity-minded leadership, titled "Leading for Racial Equity." Sessions were facilitated by faculty and staff as well as external experts Rev. Dr. Jamie Washington, Dr. Denise Rollins, and Dr. Carlton Green.

COVID-19 Impact on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

COVID-19 has impacted our enrollment numbers, especially of our African American/Black, Latino/a/x, and Native American student populations. In addition to impacting access for our Students of Color, COVID-19 has also impacted success rates of students. While offering online courses supported students' work-school-life balance in many unexpected ways, it was also difficult for students to juggle an all-online course load. COVID increased our racial equity gaps in both access and success -- and therefore retention and success rates for marginalized/minoritized students -- and had an impact on student learning, retention, and success. While the College did provide computer devices to students who needed them, our lower income students often did not have access to reliable internet service, were expected to work more or longer shifts (in frontline worker jobs), and/or had children who were also enrolled in online school. Anecdotally, non-traditionally aged students also named they wanted to delay enrollment until in-person classes started again.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we did have (as mentioned above) excellent attendance at diversity programming at the College and powerful programs about equity, justice, and inclusion. Students were able to view some of the programming afterwards, as technology allowed for asynchronous viewing. Unquestionably, this additional access to programming to strengthen inter- and cross-cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills is important for our students' short term and long term success in our community, in the workplace, and world.

Future Focus

FCC is proud of the work accomplished in 2020-2021, especially given the impact of COVID-19 in the community and the world, and will continue building and sustaining a diverse and engaged College community through multiple innovative initiatives. A few of the future priorities, all central to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan, include:
- Strengthening and implementing both the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2019-2024 as well as the College's plan to close racial equity gaps in access and success by 2027.
- Reviewing processes for recruitment and hiring to get to and exceed benchmarks for hiring and retaining faculty and staff who are People of Color.
- Reviewing and strengthening culturally responsive teaching across the College as well as in courses that explicitly seek to build student capacity to interact across difference.
- Developing professional development paths for faculty and staff around racial equity.
- Strengthening the campus climate to become even more welcoming and inclusive.

The College continues to make deliberate efforts to be intentional in its work of threading diversity, equity, and inclusion into the fabric of the culture of the College and all its activities, and making FCC a place where racial/ethnic minoritized students, faculty, and staff thrive.