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Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
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Dear Directors:

The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DDEI) at the University of Iowa (UI) underwent a review in FY2019. This process included self-studies, an assessment performed by a team of external reviewers, and a response from the directors of the three units. The DDEI directors were asked to prepare self-studies that focused on the organization, function and current challenges of each unit.

The external reviewers were subsequently directed to evaluate the Division’s structure, operations, and programmatic alignment with the University’s strategic plan and the new DEI Action Plan. The review committee was also asked to conduct a SWOT analysis to: (a) assess the overall effectiveness of the Division’s structure, operations, and programmatic alignment; (b) identify challenges and opportunities to improve the unit; and (c) provide recommendations on the future direction and opportunities for DEI in support of the new DEI Action Plan.

The review team provided a written report in April 2019 to Dr. Melissa Shivers, Interim Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In October 2019, the DDEI directors submitted a response to the internal and external reviewers’ report.
The review team identified several strengths in their SWOT analysis, including the following:

- There is campus-wide engagement and an overall readiness to improve campus climate and equip administrators, faculty, staff, and students with the necessary skills to support DEI work.
- Administrative support is evident, given the recent paradigm shift that serves to make diversity, equity, and inclusion a core value and given the newly created AVP DEI position.
- The BUILD program is a valued program that faculty and staff view as critical to better equipping their areas to understand and advance DEI work.
- Climate survey data, synthesis, and reporting has shed light on how various groups experience UI and the areas/topics that need to be improved and/or restructured.

The items below were identified by the reviewers as areas of challenge for the Division. These challenges are addressed further in the recommendations.

- Across campus, there is a lack of consistent, structured accountability systems for administrators, faculty, and staff surrounding DEI.
- There might be a misalignment within the DDEI units' structure and resource allocation; resources and structure are not appropriately aligned with the campus’s paradigm shift and some units lack strategic mission and strong evaluative metrics and outcomes.
- The Advantage Iowa Scholarship appears to lack strong student success outcomes; fails to align with exemplary practices at peer institutions; lacks important partnerships and collaborations with other important campus units (e.g., honors, research, etc.); and does not include strong financial aid packages compared to peers.
- There is low staff morale and high turnover in some of the DDEI units.
- In DDEI units, there is a lack of support for use of information systems, data, and metrics that are necessary to inform daily work, create and grow partnerships, and improve outcomes.

After reviewing recommendations developed by the DDEI review team and the division directors’ response to the report, and based on conversations and evaluations I have conducted over the past several months, I would expect the alignment with and implementation of the DEI action plan as the top priority for the Division, and more specifically the following actions:

1. **Clearly define the AVP DEI position and provide the support needed for success.**

   It will be important for the DDEI directors and staff members to work closely with the Office of the Provost and other campus leadership groups to clearly articulate the responsibilities and expectations tied to the AVP DEI position. I encourage the directors to assess their current organizational structures and evaluate how they can best be positioned to assist a new AVP DEI and the entire campus around DEI work and DEI Action Plan implementation.
2. **Redesign the Advantage Iowa Scholarship with specific student success outcomes, as measured by retention and graduation rates and post-graduation outcomes; foster greater connections with the Honors Program and research units.**

I agree with the review committee's recommendation that the Advantage Iowa Scholarship program should be evaluated and redesigned to best support student advising/coaching for UI students from historically underrepresented groups. To this end, my office will form a review committee made up of key constituent groups on campus whose charge is to evaluate the Advantage Iowa Scholarship program and make recommendations on how to strengthen student advising/coaching, how to better integrate academic and non-academic support programming for the scholarship program, and how to better partner with other units on campus (e.g., Academic Advising, Office of Financial Aid, Honors Program, ICRU). I also encourage CDE to continue their efforts to evaluate the impact of the Advantage Iowa Scholarship program through the use of advanced metrics that track retention and graduation rates, scholarship outcomes, and satisfaction surveys (both for students and campus collaborators).

3. **Develop DEI-related metrics and utilize institutional systems for data collection and analysis.**

The external review committee recommends continued work with the Office of the Provost and University Human Resources to establish strong DEI metrics for job expectations for both faculty and staff. I agree with this recommendation, and my office, working with the directors of UHR, ITS and DDEI, will coordinate efforts in this area. It will be important for the DDEI directors to identify the types of data needed, the institutional sources available, and individuals and units on campus who can assist with data analysis and the creation of dashboards that can be utilized for the campus community.

An additional recommendation of the review committee was to consider conducting "campus climate research" biennially. To this end, the Office of the Provost, in collaboration with UHR, is preparing to conduct the next campus climate survey in September 2020. The results of this survey, combined with information gained in the initial campus survey conducted in the spring semester of 2018, will assist campus leadership and DDEI staff in evaluating the progress made in achieving the goals of the DEI Action Plan and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion across the university enterprise.

4. **Evaluate the structure of the units within DDEI to ascertain how those units can best function and make decisions about how those units should be structured and organized.**

The Office of the Provost, working closely with the DDEI directors and other campus leaders, will build on the recommendations from the external reviewers and the directors' feedback and assessment to perform a thorough evaluation of the units
within DDEI. This process will be informed by results obtained from the campus climate survey, the review team’s recommendations, and current efforts around the implementation of the DEI Action Plan and the updating of the University’s strategic plan.

Conclusion:

The Office of the Provost has completed its review of the DDEI. The report of the DDEI Review Committee highlighted a number of strengths and activities which will continue to thrive and move the Division forward. Funding and resource needs will be discussed more fully with the directors and other stakeholders following assessments of needs and benchmarking with peers institutions. I am confident that under the current leadership and in consultation with the DDEI leadership teams and stakeholders the recommendations above will be addressed through the DDEI strategic plan and the implementation of the DEI Action Plan. Progress on the actions taken will be reported on an annual basis to the Provost.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Montserrat Fuentes, PhD
Executive Vice President and Provost
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cc: Kevin Kregel, Executive Vice Provost and Senior Associate Provost for Faculty