

**IOWA**

2022 FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

**DIVERSITY  
EQUITY AND  
INCLUSION  
ACTION PLAN  
REVIEW**





## COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

University of Iowa Finance and Operations (F&O) is committed to fostering advancement and respect for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) for all staff. We strive to create a climate that celebrates differences and lets individuality thrive.

As part of this commitment, we actively value diversity in our workplace and learning environments as we seek to utilize the rich backgrounds and abilities of everyone within our organization.

The diverse voices of our staff represent an invaluable resource for Finance and Operations in an effort to fulfill its mission and strive to be an example of excellence in higher education.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Our division will continually seek ways to remove barriers that challenge us and stand in the way of our personal and professional growth.
- The contributions of all members of our workforce will be maximized and appreciated in a way that creates an even playing field for everyone to do their best work.
- We will be mindful of the potential impact of our actions and how it affects those around us to ensure consistency and patience as we learn.
- We will work hard to have real conversations about DEI with honesty, integrity, and courage.
- We understand that incidents will still occur, but we must improve our institutional position in support of our diversity efforts. We will use those incidents as teachable moments that influence and drive awareness, sensitivity, and cultural change.

## GOAL #1: INCREASE F&O CULTURAL VERSATILITY

*Strive toward becoming a high-functioning workplace that embraces many different backgrounds and traditions represented in our community. We will focus on ensuring consistency in our communication of shared challenges and responses to first impulse reactions. We want to identify and heighten our cultural awareness of DEI sensitivities in the workplace and establish a greater understanding of all forms of oppression and inequities (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, etc.) that inhibit full workplace participation in our F&O organization and business units.*

- **Strategy 1:** Establish methods of capturing the employee experience and create a more inclusive cultural workplace.
- **Strategy 2:** Increase our DEI aptitude, cultural versatility, and cultural awareness levels within the F&O organization.

## GOAL #2: ESTABLISH METRIC & GROWTH DRIVERS

*Create metrics that define the dimensions of DEI and offer F&O data that reflects progress toward our DEI mission and strategy. The goal is to uncover the disparity in our data and locate areas needing improvement. These targeted goals reflect actionable items to help establish accountability in the development of a more inclusive workplace experience and how we make informed decisions based on equity.*

- **Strategy 1:** Define internal data and highlight inequitable systemic inequalities in our organizational workforce, targeting pay, promotions, hiring practices, job opportunities etc.
- **Strategy 2:** Work with leadership and directors to define measures that uncover inequitable data by business unit.





## GOAL #4: STRUCTURAL ALIGNMENT

*Implement a structure that supports the mission, values, policies, and inclusive practices that allow for easy pivoting. Introduce resources that reinforce and align with the University of Iowa DEI Action Plan. Establish methods that infuse accountability in our performance evaluations and enhance the understanding and meaning of DEI stated in our universal competencies. We want to create overarching strategies that support Iowa as a destination university where all individuals feel appreciated and included.*

- **Strategy 1:** Operationalize the F&O DEI plan and the university's DEI integration efforts to ensure alignment and consistency in strategy.
- **Strategy 2:** Partner with DEI leadership to incorporate best practice values into our organizational framework.

## GOAL #3: SUSTAINMENT

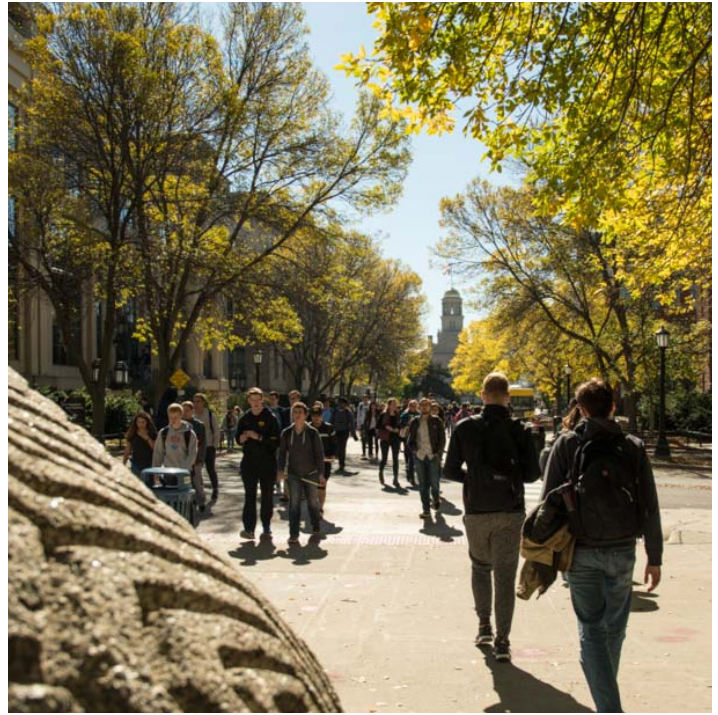
*Cultivate efforts that support a growth model and position F&O as an organizational leader in DEI awareness and sensitivity. We will focus on key efforts that promote the authentic employee experience where individuals feel seen, heard, and appreciated.*

- **Strategy 1:** Internalize/externalize our communications strategy to clearly reflect F&O's commitment to DEI.
- **Strategy 2:** Execute a comprehensive program designed to provide advanced DEI learning options and education that focus on learning, recognition, and listening.



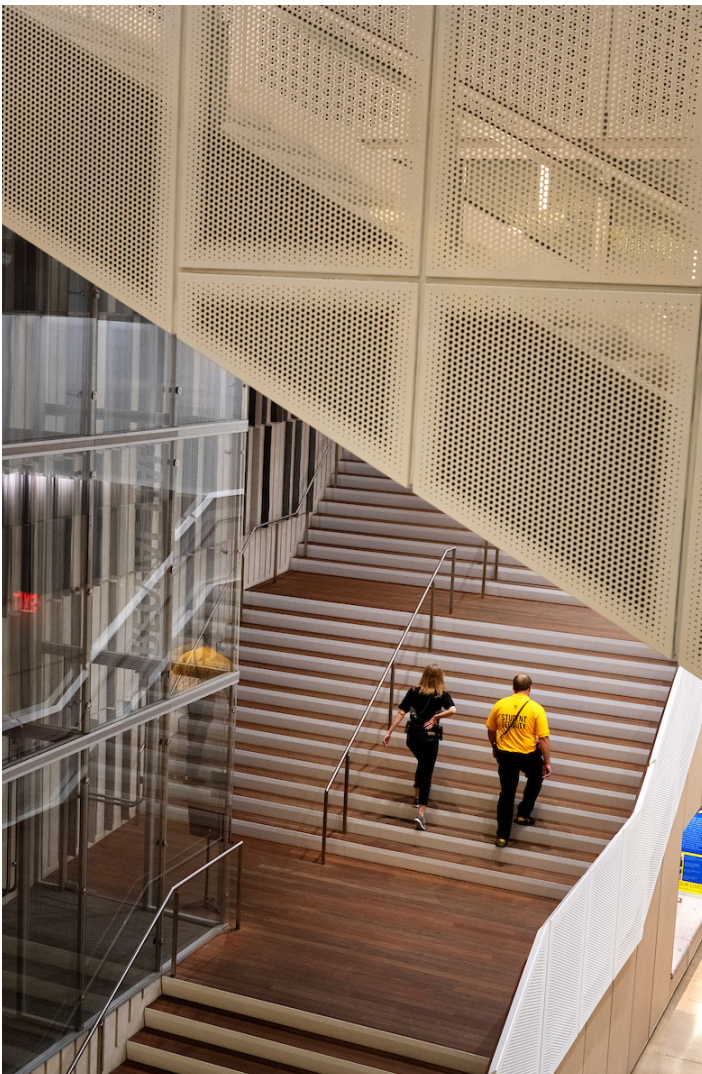
## 2022 IN REVIEW

Our F&O teams are proud of the work we outlined and accomplished in 2022. We defined several actionable steps at the beginning of 2022 and focused on operationalizing our DEI plan starting at the top of the F&O organization. Our leadership group took the CUPA-DEI Maturity Index, designed to help higher ed institutions take meaningful steps to develop their DEI efforts, in early January. The goal was to learn how to have simple conversations around DEI topics by using and referencing available resources. The roundtable discussion opened the door for us to focus on conversations sparked by the survey as opposed to being distracted by individual scores. Our leadership team asked insightful questions and formulated ideas on how we can further standardize DEI resources on our campus.



The second task was for our leaders to read a book called “Nice Racism” by Dr. Robin DeAngelo. The reading was designed to help establish a baseline of knowledge and challenge pre-existing beliefs. The book is written by a white author who wrote the book from a white lens about anti-racism practices. We followed up the reading with another roundtable discussion to learn more about our ability to discuss sensitive topics and to address any insecurities that surfaced from being presumed as racist by a white author.

Then, we asked that our leaders find ways to incorporate what they learned from the two projects and apply them within their F&O business units. In late August, we reconvened and examined the book in a combined discussion with the F&O Human Resources team. Participants were encouraged to talk freely in this supportive environment about challenges faced during the reading and how the partnership between leadership and HR was critical in our mutual understanding of how we approach DEI in our workplace. Our intentional discussions generated an opportunity for leadership to hear about real life DEI challenges in our workplace while providing a supportive environment for members to talk about their feelings and views about the reading.



## F&O UNIT DEI EFFORTS:

Across all F&O units our approach to the work started at the grass-roots level with a focus on inclusion. As an organization, we promoted an inclusive environment through small steps of awareness. We created Zoom backgrounds that highlight cultural celebrations and events monthly. We also shared a standard F&O DEI Zoom background that represents our commitment to celebrate DEI daily.

During Black History Month, Parking and Transportation staff explored music created or influenced by African Americans and Black Americans. Camibus drivers were encouraged to select from four different genres to play for riders. These included Jazz, Blues, R&B and the final week was their choice. Notably, we have some great local and global alumni musicians who were chosen during the month.

Facilities Management hosted leadership discussions where individuals separated into small groups to talk about the topic of DEI, where they saw opportunities for personal or organizational growth, and how to develop future conversations throughout FM.

The Treasury Operation and Budget office area elected to enroll in training courses to increase awareness and build confidence and openness in discussing difficult DEI topics.



Public Safety embraced community engagement and outreach efforts, such as creating a “front door” on the first floor of their home in the University Capitol Centre and assigning dedicated resources to engage with and learn from the community, while demonstrating the importance of unity in our relationship with the community and campus.

A Business Services group formulated their own small group listening sessions where they meet frequently to discuss cultural awareness matters in the workplace and share those ideas with leadership and their teams.

The F&O Human Resources team organically participated in monthly team building activities that have been rewarding. They completed both the CUPA- DEI Matrix and the DEI book reading project. Additionally, they explored ways to extend DEI learning outside of work and into their personal lives by providing children’s books to staff.





## PROGRESS TOWARD YEAR ONE GOALS:

### Goal 1: Increase our Cultural Versatility

- **Strategy 1:** Establish methods of capturing the employee experience and create a more inclusive cultural workplace.
  - **Outcome:** Conducted listening sessions and improved onboarding experiences across F&O.
- **Strategy 2:** Increase our DEI aptitude, cultural versatility, and cultural awareness levels within the F&O organization.
  - **Outcome:** Leadership participation in UI diversity training, BUILD, and online learning options for DEI development

### Goal 2: Establish Growth Drivers

- **Strategy 1:** Determine relevant internal data and highlight systemic inequalities in our organizational workforce targeting pay, promotions, hiring practices, job opportunities etc.
  - **Outcome:** Paused conducting an assessment in early 2023
- **Strategy 2:** Work with key leadership to define measures that uncover inequitable data by business unit.
  - **Outcome:** Work conducted to review consistency in applicable compensation practices in designated business units.

### Goal 3: Sustainment

- **Strategy 1:** Internalize/externalize our communications strategy that clearly reflects the F&O commitment to DEI.
  - **Outcome:** Focused on inclusion at a grassroots level and created Zoom backgrounds that highlight cultural celebrations and events.
- **Strategy 2:** Execute a comprehensive program designed to provide advanced DEI learning options and education that focus on learning, recognition, and listening.
  - **Outcome:** Established a thought-provoking book reading project and discussion for leadership.

### Goal 4: Structural Alignment

- **Strategy 1:** Operationalize the F&O DEI plan and Iowa's DEI integration efforts to ensure alignment and consistency in strategy.
  - **Outcome:** Established consistencies in the F&O plan that reflect cross-over and alignment to the larger university plan.
- **Strategy 2:** Partner with DEI leadership to incorporate best practices values into our organizational framework.
  - **Outcome:** Continued leadership participation in campus DEI activities and workgroups hosted by DEI leadership.



## A MESSAGE FROM LEW MONTGOMERY

When I began my role at the University of Iowa, I wanted to quickly introduce myself and ask F&O if they would join me in participating in a cultural change effort in how we approach DEI within our F&O organization and the greater university. I shared my perspective stating:

“We are not going to have a miraculous change with the snap of a finger. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is very difficult work and has several very delicate components that must be managed and addressed properly. My goal is to impact a person's first impulse and help them be mindful of their thoughts and the potential impact of their actions.

**“Let me be the first to say, that incidents will still occur,** but we must improve our institutional position in support of DEI and use those incidents as teachable moments that influence and drive awareness, sensitivity and cultural change.”

Our progress began with a year one plan of simplicity, where we hosted a series of discussions aimed at figuring out our cultural climate on matters of equity and diversity within our F&O organization. Our F&O leadership team and Human Resources teams combined to read a book that focused on racism from a white author perspective in support of an anti-racism lens, followed by group discussions on the reading. From those candid conversations, my work was inspired by the concerns and thoughts shared in those small group listening sessions. What I learned shaped where we needed to go in the development of our DEI work. From this information, leadership determined what actions were needed to create a plan, operationalize it, and encourage honest courageous conversations with respect to DEI.





Our first approach was to re-arrange our priorities, focusing on the critical work of creating inclusive safe environments for our students and employees to feel they can be their authentic self. We created the concept of I.D.E.A.; which rearranges the letters of DEI and starts with Inclusivity, then Diversity, ensuring Equity and finally recognizing and Appreciating each other. By starting with Inclusion, we can develop the right support systems to include people from all backgrounds and awareness levels so that when critical decisions need to be made, the right voices are at the table to reinforce our commitment to our DEI goals. This approach invites IDEAs to resonate and doesn't leave voices behind or unheard. Diversity will follow once people feel supported, and striving for Equity should drive all the decisions we make. Finally, Appreciation helps us recognize each other and rewards growth and courage.

This year we intend to build on our crucial work. We are asking our business units to lead impactful and thoughtful inclusion work,

helping our cultural transformation thrive. They have the freedom to create the projects, which ensures they are leaning in and leading the work. Some new initiatives involve aligning our policies, ensuring equity, and improving our retention and communications. More advanced work will align with activities developed by our UI Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

I've been fortunate to work with DEI leaders from across campus to gain insight into our Campus Climate and Working at Iowa assessment of DEI. F&O will work on developing a vision for 2023 and set action items on our roadmap to take place over the coming year. Preliminarily, I have identified three priority areas for the strategic plan: pay equity, climate improvement, and representation in hiring and retention. We are outlining action steps that will fall under each of these areas.

This year, we want to press employees and administration to think through questions of belonging, equitable futures, defining "Why IDEA" and how supporting our DEI plan within respective units is important.

These discussions will lead to assessable efforts such as developing practices to improve inclusion among the teams, improving the welcoming of new hires, and creating listening sessions to engage our communities. Then, we can work together to challenge and change our workplace in support of DEI.



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