Colgate
UNIVERSITY

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Review

Presented by IBIS Consulting Group and Creative Diversity Solutions

I. Introduction and Executive Summary

Colgate University's nearly two-hundred-year-long history of educating students has often been marked by change. The institution was initially called the Baptist Education Society of the State of New York. The year 1839 brought the first admitted students who didn't aspire to a religious career, and the school became known as the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution. In 1846, it was re-named again as Madison College and authorized to confer collegiate degrees, and over the years a well-known soap maker and his family's contributions prompted its final, crowning name change in 1890.

In 1900, W.E.B. Du Bois named Colgate one of the top ten integrated institutions in the United States. Du Bois, himself a black Harvard graduate, knew about integration and also the isolation of being in the extreme minority: he said of his time at Harvard that he felt "in it, but not of it." In 1968, one of the nation's first sit-ins for black equality took place at Colgate, following the firing of a starter pistol by a campus fraternity member near a group of black students in the wake of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In 1970, women were first admitted. Today, Colgate seeks to deepen its long-lived commitment to integration and develop a broader level of inclusion as part of the University's overall strategy for fulfilling its education mission and establishing its position as a leader among American institutions of higher education.

As a competitive, established, respected liberal arts institution, Colgate University is well-positioned to forge a path to inclusive excellence. The choice to walk this path is both brave and wise, for without a thoughtful strategy for managing cultural change, painful touch points will likely continue to disrupt the Colgate community and to distract leaders from pursuing the worthy mission of the institution, "to provide a demanding, expansive, educational experience to a select group of diverse, talented, intellectually sophisticated students who are capable of challenging themselves, their peers, and their teachers in a setting that brings together living and learning (*see https://www.colgate.edu/about/university-mission-statement*)."

It is evident to the leaders at Colgate that a commitment to diversity and the creation of an inclusive environment are necessary to their ultimate end, which is to establish Colgate as one of the finest undergraduate academic institutions in the world, and to produce students who can make the world a better place. As Colgate continues to attract diverse students, including students of color and those from lower socioeconomic brackets, it must ensure that it has a culture in which all students are supported enough to learn, grow, connect and contribute to this academic community.

As part of that effort, Colgate engaged the team of IBIS Consulting Group and Creative Diversity Solutions to gather qualitative data that could help inform a long-term strategic plan for promoting inclusion and equity in service of institutional excellence. This is just one of many indications that the University is preparing for a positive and exciting transformation.

Many strides have been taken in the right direction. This past April, the name of former President Cutten, a eugenics proponent, was removed from a residential complex after 51 years. Cutten sought to actively limit the diversity of Colgate, and arranged the curriculum to suit the purpose of exclusion. The historical influence of people like Cutten has been reflected throughout the structure of Colgate, and yet today the culture of Colgate has adapted to be more inclusive of some marginalized groups. For example, while data from a 2009 student survey indicates an unwelcoming climate for LGBTQ community members, today's interviews reflect fundamental improvements in support and leadership for that group. Clear measures have also been taken to support survivors of sexual violence, and the fact that the University is committed to taking steps to support survivors and to make reporting safer and easier suggests that the organization is doing a better job of gaining the trust of survivors than in the past (a program such as Haven is Exhibit A), though it is also clear that continuing efforts on this front will need to be made.

Some of the findings from this review highlighted the need for significant institutional commitments that can enable people of color to thrive at Colgate; this is a group that often experiences Colgate as an exclusive culture, one that generates feelings of vulnerability and invisibility. Other marginalized groups also require renewed institutional focus, including some groups for whom great strides have already been made. In interviews and focus groups, community members repeatedly warned against complacency. Ongoing diversity and inclusion work helps Colgate avoid complacency, a crucial task for the University as it strives to be one of the finest undergraduate academic institutions in the world, producing students who can make the world a better place.

As the collective voices in this report make clear, the solutions to the cultural challenges faced by the University are within reach. There are many concrete actions that can be taken to build upon the effective work that has been done to elevate Colgate University to a stronger position of excellence. Building capacity and empowering a leadership coalition across the organization will broaden ownership of the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion beyond designated multicultural spaces, resulting in a culture that is a manifestation of an institutional commitment to a wide range of voices, experiences and ideas in a context of academic excellence.

Executive Summary

There have been multiple efforts to improve the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) issues on campus and these have led to substantive change for the better.

The institution has proactively asked the community for input on many occasions. Whether through the form of surveys or direct dialogue, this input has resulted in some progress. For instance, new DEI goals have on occasion been set for the organization, and awareness and education have been increased in areas of the University, especially through the student orientation experience. Some marginalized communities have seen a marked improvement in

their ability to feel a sense of belonging at Colgate, including the LGBTQ community, and to a lesser extent, survivors of sexual violence (the organizational response to persistent sexual violence on campus was found to need improvement).

Despite this progress, however, we found that Colgate would benefit from a more integrated, sustained, proactive and centralized approach to DEI, strategically initiated by leadership. Many review participants argued for a range of organizational, structural adjustments, ranging from better leadership and coordination of campus-wide inclusion and equity efforts, to reworking the current approach to recruiting and retaining faculty and staff members of color. There were also concerns voiced about whether all the leaders in place are ready to institute needed changes and whether the distribution of power is functional enough to lead to a significantly more inclusive Colgate. Specifically, one specific recommendation we would make considering the data we have gathered was that more people of color should be empowered to make broad and lasting changes. Leadership must be tasked with both defining diversity and taking accountability for culture change, including breaking down silos and opening the culture to be far more transparent than it has been.

On a positive note, campus community members suggest that initiatives that effectively expand the candidate pool during the recruiting and hiring process are steering faculty hires in a more inclusive direction. Recently Colgate implemented staff evaluations that are based on competency models, which is a useful tool to mitigate the biases that can interfere with a fair assessment process.

Nonetheless, there is a perception that there is a lack of accountability among leaders for action on DEI initiatives.

Without measures in place to ensure the effectiveness of leadership on campus, attempts to make changes to the culture will fail. The development of goals, timelines, and defined responsibilities that are well-communicated is crucial to the shifting of outcomes and expectations related to DEI efforts.

A perception exists that overall search and hiring practices can and should be more inclusive.

There is concern that bias appears in the hiring process across a range of contexts. The organizational structure that manages staff and faculty searches is not always perceived as effectively managed. Training and guidance in the process have been viewed as helpful in the past, but concerns have been voiced that it is not consistently available. There is also a perception that the candidate pool is impacted by a lack of affordable, welcoming housing for both staff and faculty.

One significant area of impact on retention for staff and faculty of color is a lack of recognition and support.

Additional support is perceived to be needed for several reasons: first, these community members currently are called upon to provide the bulk of the support system for students of color, which at times can be burdensome and isolating. Second, they receive cultural signals that they are not seen or accepted at the same level as their white counterparts. Third, wages are sometimes perceived as low, indicating an apparent lack of value of those staff members. And fourth, the tenure process is considered by some to carry inequitable barriers for faculty of color, including the expectation of an overinvestment of service from marginalized faculty and student evaluations that are given significant weight despite bias—and, at times, overt racism.

There is a perception that the majority of students recruited by Colgate tend to come from a fairly narrow cultural and geographical source.

The Admissions team and process is not seen by all in the community as consistently diverse and consciously inclusive. Resources for marginalized students are not always perceived to be proudly featured in the recruitment effort, setting an initial tone for what kind of university Colgate seeks to be. Some of the students of color recruited by the University have had to reconcile the historical lack of diverse leadership as an indicator of a lack of commitment to inclusion. In terms of retention, while the graduation rate is high, the level of satisfaction with the Colgate experience has historically differed markedly along racial lines. Students of color sometimes experience intense social isolation. Additionally, students on financial aid can experience feelings of isolation and of being negatively judged by wealthy peers. They can also struggle to find sufficient work-study opportunities. The financial aid program can be perceived as inadequate by some on campus, who find it falls short of providing a necessary foundation for equity and inclusion.

Concerns were voiced about the exclusion of curricular diversity.

Although the topic of curricular diversity was excluded at Colgate's request from the scope of this assessment, some participants still raised concerns about the Eurocentric nature of classroom learning at Colgate. At an open faculty forum conducted as part of this review, several faculty members expressed disappointment and frustration with the decision not to include this topic in the review. They agreed with one another that a review would not necessarily result in forced changes to the curriculum. "There is concern that not doing a curriculum review sends the message that DEI is not a primary focus for Colgate," said one. Another noted that "without doing that assessment, it is impossible to know how Colgate compares to similar institutions and best practices—it might be in alignment, but it might not." Curricular review is a matter for consideration for faculty members and their governing committees, but this feedback may be useful for those faculty bodies who may engage with these issues in the future.

The culture at Colgate can seem normative and intolerant of new ideas or unusual modes of self-expression, right down to what people wear.

Some voiced concern that students, staff and faculty are expected to navigate the organization by networking. This element of the culture can result in the obscuring of resources and information for those who are not "in the know." Entitlement is seen by some as a common part of the Colgate culture, perceived most often in students who appear to consider themselves superior to staff, faculty and peer students. The perceived tendency to see others as different or inferior can be a divisive element in the culture of the University.

The student social experience is not considered by many to be inclusive.

The Greek system is seen as a dominant cultural force for students which can exclude marginalized community members. There is a perception that the physical spaces on campus are not effectively encouraging interaction between groups, nor are they sufficiently supporting interest groups. Given the rural, isolated and less diverse nature of the region, a sense of connection—both to people who are similar and to those who are different—is crucial.

Additionally, there is a perception that more mental health professionals from marginalized groups are required to sufficiently support students of color.

While diversity education and awareness are just one element of cultural change, training opportunities on topics such as diversity, equity and inclusion are not seen as sufficiently integrated or available to those who need them at Colgate.

Conversations about inclusion and related topics are considered episodic and sporadic, rather than effectively integrated into an ongoing organizational process. Programs for facilitating dialogue between groups could be better adapted to the community as part of a broader strategic initiative. There is a perception that some faculty need clear training and expectation-setting on DEI topics. Some voices in the review argued for student and staff training, as well, including training specifically for the campus safety department. Repeatedly, students, staff and faculty from marginalized groups expressed their desire for better preparation for living and working in a community representative of the levels of wealth common at Colgate University.

The University's organizational structure means that well-intentioned leaders at the student, staff or faculty level can't necessarily make substantive change for the better when it comes to inclusion.

There is a concern that performance reviews for managers and supervisors could benefit from more robust feedback mechanisms. Alumni of color are not seen as sufficiently listened to or engaged by the institution. Finally, the Equity Grievance Process is well-structured in comparison to peer institutions and has the potential to be a fair, equitable and trustworthy resource, but it's not perceived as trustworthy by many across the organization, leading to the conclusion that the application of the EGP is ineffective.

Key Recommendations

Each section of the report contains a robust set of recommendations which go into more detail than the summary offered here; those listed below are a small, representative set of crucial adjustments necessary to support culture change. While Colgate University may need to adjust the suggested calendar, pulling some goals further up and pushing some further down, to make it congruent with the availability of funding and the transition of key administrative leaders, the order offered here is designed to move as quickly as possible on key initiatives which will lay the foundation for future efforts.

Year One

- Create a Colgate Presidential Task Force on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Hire a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) or otherwise provide staffing leadership and coordination with the institutional power and resourcing necessary for effective change.
- Enhance recruiting guidelines for staff to minimize bias in the hiring process, including training for all members of search committees, and invest resources in concrete programs to develop the careers of marginalized staff members.
- Offer education and training for the admission team, hire a diverse staff of recruiters, and identify positions most in need of skills, training, and/or experience in connecting with diverse populations.
- Performance reviews for supervisors and managers should consistently invite feedback from all direct reports and peers and ensure that annual assessments are competency-based. These reviews should also include "inclusion efforts" as a category.
- Commit to regular assessment of key elements of diversity, equity and inclusion (like those considered in the 2009 campus climate study) to measure success in comparison to a set benchmark.
- The Equity Grievance Process has strengths, but the process is not trusted on campus, indicating that the application of the EGP needs to be improved. Assess the process immediately and on an ongoing basis. Ensure that final decision-making power in the process does not reside with one single person.
- Develop a sustainable, integrated, ongoing approach to DEI training. Create an overall DEI Learning Strategy and Plan and include ongoing diversity education for staff, faculty and students as one of many elements of the strategic plan under a CDO or alternative leadership. Emphasize that it is only effective when coupled with a range of structural and policy-based changes which are meant to generate significant, intentional shifts in Colgate's culture.

Year Two	● Support fraternities and sororities in becoming much more inclusive and diverse by leveraging Dean of the College staff to help these organizations to establish diversity programs and to create an annual Greek Life strategic plan that addresses both diversity and inclusion efforts and improved practices for preventing and reporting on sexual violence.
	● Focus on continuing to make consistent use of new guidelines and support for faculty searches and faculty governance efforts to ensure that the tenure and promotion processes are equitable.
	● Create mentoring programs for female and junior faculty.
	● Include key diversity, equity and inclusion metrics such as data from exit interviews and student transfers in the regularly tracked indicators of institutional success.
	● Support faculty governance efforts to assess and review curricular diversity in a process that results in a fully inclusive curriculum that prepares students for a global economy and diverse set of experiences.
Year Three	● Further develop the Mosaic program efforts to expand University engagement with alumni of color and improve its quality.
	● Invest in continuing efforts to augment the considerable material culture and visual artifacts at Colgate that nod to European heritage with global artifacts from Asia, Africa, South America and the indigenous peoples of North America.
	● Conduct a faculty and staff housing market study to better understand a factor that can weigh heavily in the retention of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups.

II. Project Overview

A. Review Objectives

Colgate University arrived at an inflection point after several years of collaborative work with the campus community to further develop diversity and inclusion initiatives; a new president joined in June 2016, bringing with him experience in incorporating DEI work in strategic planning for the University, and catalyzing a desire for a strategic roadmap that makes diversity and inclusion work both comprehensive and effective.

In 2017, Colgate sought a partner to help lay the foundation for an ambitious DEI plan by evaluating the potential strengths and existing weaknesses of the University in the context of best practices. Ideally the work would be completed without conducting new surveys; survey data was already in existence, and survey fatigue was cited as a concern. Input from the campus community (namely, students, staff and faculty) was to be evaluated and placed in the context of relevant work already underway, such as items listed in an existing 21-point action plan. Through holistic analysis and effective guidance from an experienced partner, Colgate University expects to use this report to develop an ongoing plan for concrete improvement and a framework for a sustainable long-term approach to maintaining an inclusive community, thus establishing Colgate as one of the finest undergraduate academic institutions in the world, that produces students who can make the world a better place.

B. Methodologies

To arrive at the findings presented in this report, IBIS Consulting Group and Creative Diversity Partners:

- Conducted in-depth interviews with 25 members of the Colgate community.
- Facilitated focus groups that included approximately 200 participants, evenly divided among students, staff and faculty.
- Assessed 55 documents, including survey data from previous review efforts and some policies.

C. Data Analysis

We assessed current data, examining it against best practices and developing current practices in a rapidly evolving field. Based on our experience developing solutions in similar contexts in higher educational settings, and the numerous creative and enthusiastic solutions voiced by inclusion review participants, we arrived at a set of recommendations that Colgate can adopt and integrate into a strategic plan that will initiate substantive culture change. When quotes are used in this report, they are representative of similar perspectives voiced by other participants.

D. Attributions and Naming Conventions

The abbreviation "DEI" is used to represent the term 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.' We also use the phrase "Inclusion Review" to refer to the process of gathering the data presented in this report and "participants" to refer to the people who voiced their opinions and concerns during the on-site data gathering portion of this review, which took place on April 11, 12, 13, 25 and 26 of 2017.

E. Demographic Data

We heard from community members in the following demographic categories (at times grouped by that category):

- Male faculty of color
- Female faculty of color
- Faculty in groups that included mixed genders
- Students of color
- White students, including some affiliated with the Greek system
- Female staff of color
- Male staff of color
- Female staff and faculty
- Cabinet members (administrative staff currently reporting to the President)
- Staff members holding a managerial position
- Staff members holding a non-managerial position

Quotes in this report are attributed to community members in these categories. We have worked to retain anonymity for all individuals, and in some cases, were significantly challenged to do so. In certain quotes, we have redacted identifying details. In some cases, we incorporated input from these individuals into recommendations and context rather than quoting them directly. Attributions may not always seem consistent at times given the grouping of certain focus groups and interview opportunities that arose, but we sought to provide as much of a touchpoint as possible for the reader on the voices in the review while preserving anonymity at all times.

The use of verbatim quotations from interviews and focus groups in this report is meant to give a sense of the climate, and of the perceptions of some community members. The limited nature of this engagement with Colgate University did not allow for fact-checking of each statement, and the purpose of this material here is not to authoritatively define the current state of Colgate's DEI efforts but rather to shed light on strongly-held concerns and experiences expressed by key stakeholders across campus.

III. Inclusive Excellence Overview

Researchers have learned that having diverse populations simply represented on campus is not enough to manage the accompanying challenges regarding communication, respect, identification and vulnerability; there must be an active engagement with diversity to reap the benefits for student, staff and faculty development.

The Inclusive Excellence Change Model is a tool that serves both as a framework to assess diversity in educational settings, and as a scorecard to drive change.

"Diversity, as a component of academic excellence, is essential to ensure higher education's continuing relevance in the twenty-first century" (Williams, Berger, McClendon, the authors of the Inclusive Excellence Change Model). By assessing powerful environmental factors, key elements of organizational culture and dimensions of organizational behavior, the authors honed in on a unique and applicable model specifically designed for higher-education settings.

The Inclusive Excellence Change Model has four main anchors:[1]

- **Access and Equity:** The compositional number and success levels of historically underrepresented students, faculty and staff in higher education.
- **Diversity in the Formal and Informal Curriculum:** Diversity content in the courses, programs, and experiences across the various academic programs and in the social dimensions of the campus environment.
- **Campus Climate:** The development of a psychological and behavioral climate supportive of all students.
- **Student Learning and Development:** The acquisition of content knowledge about diverse groups and cultures and the development of cognitive complexity.

In addition to these areas of focus, the Inclusive Excellence Change Model delineates four key elements that can be leveraged to strategically impact the main focus areas:

- Leadership & Accountability
- Building Capacity
- Leveraging Resources
- Vision & Buy-in

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[1] https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/mei/williams_et_al.pdf

It is along these strategic pathways that skills and competencies can be developed and deployed, and careful planning can ensure that resources are positioned to maximally support the four main areas of focus.

The Inclusive Excellence Change Model can also serve as a valuable tool for actualizing the integration of systemic goals with external events.

"External forces can both hinder and facilitate organizational change, and how an organization 'reads' and reacts to external forces is critical to efforts to advance inclusive excellence," write the authors of the Inclusive Excellence Change Model. "Leaders must also evaluate and use formal structures as a means for coordinating Inclusive Excellence practices and making them routine throughout campus. Educational leaders at all levels must find ways for all constituents, particularly faculty, to engage in consensus decision-making processes and collaborative activities designed to advance inclusive excellence."

Not only can this model assist in defining diversity, equity and inclusion goals for Colgate University, it can help place those goals at the center of institutional planning and community building. In institutionalizing the goals, the organization will embody the success of long-term inclusion, success that is not subject to specific individuals or events but is embedded in the fabric of the University and all that it sustains.

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