

# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Status Report

(Adapted from the Saint Anselm College framework of the DEI Action Plan and the Belonging initiatives)

Saint Anselm College’s commitment to the respect of the universal dignity of all persons is grounded in our Catholic and Benedictine mission and identity. Thus, our DEIB efforts are an expression of this mission and identity and is committed to welcoming each individual as a sacred and integral part of our community.

This status report is a compilation of the many institutional efforts on diversity, equity, and inclusion. It includes updates on the DEI Action Plan AND highlights efforts beyond this plan. The collection of this work has made evident to us that beyond diversity, equity, and inclusion; belonging is a key factor in building a more culturally engaging hilltop.



Education	Develop culturally responsive pedagogy and Transformative learning for the common good.
Access and Success	Identify/remove barriers to student success.
Culture of Belonging	Strengthen intergroup relations and inclusiveness.
Investing in Our People	Provide continuous life-long learning for all community members.
Student-Ready Workforce	Expand our Anselmian student-focused approach to be "student ready" for an evolving student body.

## Listening to Student Voice

*"I came to realize [that] the school is sort of built for [a particular student identity]...if you're from Massachusetts and you're white, and then you're fine."*

– student focus group participant

Student feedback emphasized an experience that at SAC ‘one size fits all’, our students are telling us that in fact one size does not fit all - Experiences are different, systems don’t meet need. The College should consider addressing student feedback about a “one-size-fits-all” approach and further emphasize transparent communication with students as it strives to create a culturally engaged campus.

## PROGRESS THROUGH SPRING 2023

- ✓ **Curricular enhancements:** New courses have been introduced and a new faculty committee is preparing recommendations for increased to DEI in the Core.
- ✓ The **Anselmian Network for Racial Justice** Inventory - curricular offerings.
- ✓ Enhancement of existing student leadership learning experiences (e.g. **Serve, Engage, Empower and Knowledge (SEEK)** program).
- ◆
- ✓ Continue **fundraising for scholarships** for underrepresented groups.
- ✓ College launched launch new **TRIO Program** – Program staff hired, 2023.
- ✓ **Intercultural Center** Assistant Director to meet student needs – Hired 2023.
- ✓ **Disability Services Director** to meet student needs – Hired 2022.
- ◆
- ✓ Launched the **“Voices of Change”** speaker series to voices not frequently heard on campus. Four guest speakers were hosted in spring 2023.
- ✓ Launched the **Community Cinema**.
- ✓ Completed a **Physical Plant Accessibility Status Report** presented to SGA.
- ◆
- ✓ **Provide training on unconscious bias** to search committees.
- ✓ Provide faculty/staff with development of **intercultural knowledge/skills (IDI)**.
- ✓ Provide **peer “bystander intervention”** training to students.
- ◆
- ✓ **Inclusion Advocates** initiative to broaden candidate pools. Pilot completed

## President's Committee on Diversity and Inclusiveness

- ◆ Standing committee of the college
- ◆ Comprised of students, faculty, and staff from across campus
- ◆ Track Campus Climate, identify needs, and advocate for changes to administration
- ◆ Collaborated with Retention Committee to gather qualitative data (student focus group results) to understand equity gaps. Prepared a report detailing their desire for less of a “one-size-fits-all” approach and more responsive structures, opportunities, and environments relevant to their identities.
- ◆ Divided into four (4) working groups: Campus Climate, Professional Development and Training, Community Awareness and Education, and Diversity & Inclusion Innovation Fund Committee.
- ◆ Charged with monitoring the DEI Action Plan and reporting status to the president for ultimate accountability

### **CURRENT STATUS & NEXT STEPS:**

#### **EDUCATION:**

■ **The Anselmian Journeys (AJ) Initiative**, part of the strategic plan will integrate our students' curricular, co-curricular, and career-readiness experiences, maintains a series of equity goals. Progress: Launching four (4) distinct pilots: Enhanced holistic Advising, Conversatio, Sophomore Explorations Course, and Enhanced Learning Experiences. ➤ **Next steps:** Hire an AJ director. In Fall 2024 we will launch Anselmian Journeys for our first-year students. Full implementation for all SAC students will be complete in fall of 2028

■ **DEI in the Core**, The VPAA formed and charged a faculty committee to review DEI in the Core and recommend pedagogical and curricular steps to promote DEI. The committee divided into two subcommittees, one to focus on Conversatio and the other on the rest of the core curriculum. The VPAA received the recommendations in Oct. 2023. ➤ **Next Steps:** VPAA will meet with Faculty Senate leadership and others to discuss possible implementation steps and discuss ways to engage student feedback.

**The Anselmian Network for Racial Justice (ANRJ)** was founded in 2020 as campus effort to respond to national crises of racial disparities in health and law enforcement (e.g. Covid and the murder of George Floyd in particular). While initially led by a small group of dedicated faculty and staff, racial equity and justice work is not the purview of small groups of students and employees, but increasingly infused in day-to-day practices across the campus. Since that time more than 40 individuals /departments have focused on elevating racial justice in curricular and co-curricular practices: Examples include:

- Unconscious bias training for employees and peer intervention training for student leaders
- Equity Academy BIOC Retention Plan
- Faculty-led examinations and recommendations regarding DEI in the Core.
- Conversatio instructors adapting their signature first-year course to draw from Civil Rights lessons to teach how history shapes present day current events.
- Geisel Library's elevation of banned books on racial justice

The recent ANRJ inventory of racial justice campus initiatives between 2020 and 2022 revealed a significant number of college initiatives dedicated to creating awareness on issues of injustice and inequities. Co-curricular: there were 36 initiatives or educational programs engaging over 3,200

participants (with some repeat attendees.) Curricular: 20 efforts made, over 130 faculty participants (with some repeat attendees), and at least 32-courses involved. The majority of campus efforts were focused on raising awareness. However, since educating our students for the common good means more than just creating awareness. For this reason, the inventory findings also compel our next steps

➤ **Next steps:** Regardless of major, teaching and learning practices have the potential to equip all students with knowledge and application of structural analyses and systems thinking allowing them to engage in community action and policy change. Saint As has pledged to continue this focus on racial equity and justice, not just when there is a galvanizing incident, but through on-going sustained engagement.

## **COMMUNITY: Culture of Belonging strengthened by intergroup relations**

■ **Campus Climate Survey.** In studying the college’s climate survey from 2020 the college learned that compared with our peer institutions, SAC students were significantly more positive than those in other schools.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, when results are disaggregated for students who identified as BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and/or students from various or no faith tradition reported a significantly lower sense of belonging, noting their experiences of harassment or discrimination, disparaging or insensitive remarks, and a general lack of welcome and acceptance than their counterparts.<sup>2</sup> ➤ **Next steps:** Conduct Climate Survey in January of 2024 and engage campus community participation.

■ **Listening Sessions** (i.e. focus groups) In Spring 2022 the Retention Committee and PCDI partnership conducted qualitative research (e.g. focus groups) with students with these social identities (i.e. BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and/or students from various or no faith traditions) and presented the findings during 2023 (Climate and Retention Report: Creating a Culturally Engaging Hilltop). Moving forward, through the PCDI and campus collaborations, the college will conduct periodic listening session, which along with other assessments will guide the college’s focused interventions for specific demographic groups— BIPOC, first-generation, Pell-eligible, and non-Catholic students. Findings will be regularly shared with senior leaders and will play a role in shaping goals for more faculty and staff training, more equity-minded BIPOC faculty and staff, some policy changes, and more transparent communication structures.

**Next steps:** Implement in person and on-line trainings for faculty and staff (AY 2023-24)

■ **Bias Response Team** is an initiative for educating about the impacts of and responding to bias incidents that affect the community. It is a system of centralized receipt and review of reports, targeted responses, and broader community education, leading to healing and renewal. A team of member-representatives from student and academic affairs, human resources, and a cross section of faculty, staff, and students have been trained. ➤ **Next steps:** The VPSA oversees the November launch and communication to the community. The process will be evaluated by June 2024.

■ **Active Bystander Program:** An educational program is under design with the goal to promote the methods of diversion and intervention to abort situations where intimidating, harassing, or discriminating behaviors occur. **Next steps:** Program launches second semester.

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<sup>1</sup> HEDS survey of small schools with fewer than 4,500 students. Total sample size = 20,096. Climate indicator components included “all community members’ sense of belonging” (other schools: 45%; SAC: 67%); “your sense of belonging” (other schools: 65%; SAC: 81%); and “overall campus climate” (other schools: 69%; SAC: 80%).

<sup>2</sup> For example, only 53% of “non-white students” (104) say that they are “generally satisfied or very satisfied” compared with an 85% of “white” students (717).

■ **Diversity & Inclusion Innovation Fund.** Since 2018, the college has received 67 proposals and awarded over \$73,000 dollars to Anselmians creating a culture of belonging and inclusion. ➤**Next steps:** Currently reviewing proposals for Spring 2024.

## **PEOPLE: The access and success of students, faculty, and staff**

■ **Increasing Financial Aid & Scholarships: Status:** The college has 16 distinct scholarship funds targeted at diversity initiatives. This total includes both annual scholarships and endowed funds. The endowed funds at the college total over \$6.5 million in assets that are directed to underrepresented and first-generation student groups. Collectively these funds have made available \$410,259 in financial aid support for this year's student aid packages. ➤**Next steps:** Two recent fundraising initiatives are continuing this year, as Advancement works to raise funds and continue the growth of the Ernie Thorne '34 Scholarship for Racial Equity and for the Rummel Scholarship for Intercultural Leadership. Building the resources available in these funds is being prioritized over the next 3 years.

■ **TRIO Scholars:** A U.S. Department of Education grant to institutionalize holistic student support. Groups include first-generation college students; students from a low-to-modest income background; and students with a registered disability. Hired program staff and launched first cohort of scholars in 2023, reaching the target number of 120 student participants. ➤**Next steps:** TRIO staff provide individualized guidance to help students transition to college, create an academic action plan; navigate higher ed systems and financial aid, and develop life skills like managing personal finances; applying for internships and jobs, and financial assistance to pursue graduate school. Ongoing assessment through 4 cohorts. Intention to apply for another TRIO grant so that when current grant expires, support can be sustained.

■ **Student Success Equity Pilot Project:** The VPAA implemented the DEI Action Plan recommendation for using data to identify and eliminate equity gaps. Seventeen (17) academic departments were provided four full years' worth of departmental grade and GPA data disaggregated at several levels in the late summer of 2023. ➤**Next steps:** Departments will submit reports by December 2023 to the VPAA with reactions and responses to the data, which will include possible steps to address gaps. In addition, feedback will be sought in Spring 2024 about the process and the type of data provided, to determine how to sustain this project in the future.

■ **Gardner Institute's Equity in Retention Academy.** A team of 39 colleagues, from a wide range of departments across campus, led by Academic and Student Affairs, participated in an academy to address BIPOC students and retention. Qualitative data indicated that students are feeling financial and academic barriers, athletic pressure, and familial expectations. Focusing on the root causes of inequities in student outcomes and practices that promote equitable student success the team is developing a retention plan with a particular focus on BIPOC students. ➤**Next steps:** A plan with recommendations will go to the President's Leadership Team this fall for planning efforts. One key element of the plan is a proposed equity statement for student success that institutionalizes a framework for equitable practices which removes barriers and increases opportunities for all students. Other elements of the plan include an equity rubric tool to evaluate institutional policies and practices, designing a systematic approach to embed students voice and data into decision-making, and proposed training topics to equip faculty and staff to be culturally responsive and relevant in their practice.

■ **The Center for Teaching Excellence** has an increased focus – not just for student learning but also for faculty professional development beyond disciplinary training. *Best Practices for Creating an Inclusive Campus Environment* (Nov. 2023) ➤**Next steps:** "Faculty panel on Inclusive Teaching" – co-hosted with the OD&I (Nov. 2023) Spring 2024 inclusive practices to foster student success programming focus: TBD.

■ **Council of Independent Colleges BELONG program** - provides resources including ACUE credentialing, readings, and webinars to faculty, administrators, and staff to support students' success. To date this initiative has also hosted webinars and discussions and developed a campus distribution list of approximately 50 faculty and staff from virtually every area of the College who receive monthly resources sent from the Belong library. These resources are also housed at a Geisel Library site for future access: <https://geiselguides.anselm.edu/belong>—Faculty Notes also contain a reminder each week of opportunities through Belong. ➤**Next Steps:** Continue to communicate available resources to campus community and anticipate 6 Anselmians completing ACUE “Fostering a Culture of Belonging” course by early 2024 and then serving as a campus resource. Timeline: TBD.

■ **Inclusion Advocates:** Training and assigning Inclusion Advocates to search committees to ensure inclusive search processes are in use for all full-time faculty searches. ➤**Next steps:** Identify and add a formal training module on Unconscious Bias to the preparation of every search committee member. AY 2023-24.

■ **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)** Training tool to increase cultural competency has been provided to 90 faculty and staff members from different departments as well as a workshop to Meelia Center student leaders. ➤**Next steps:** Campus team providing IDI to Athletic Coaches by spring 2023