

# ADVANCING INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE



INDIANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY





Dear members of the Indiana State University family:

It is my pleasure to announce the **Advancing Inclusive Excellence** action plan that is the result of many weeks of listening and constructive dialog with ISU students, faculty, staff, and alumni. This action plan is based on our University's renewed commitment to inclusion and the shared desire among Sycamores to provide a safe and welcoming environment that celebrates diversity and prioritizes meaningful inclusive action.

This is not something new to Indiana State University. Since our founding, Sycamores have been leaders in providing higher education opportunities to individuals without basis of race, socio-economic background, or national heritage/origin. ISU and our trailblazing alumni have often been at the forefront of the pivotal moments of our state and national social justice evolution. It is in our organization's cultural DNA to be inviting, to be welcoming, and to be encouraging to one another. We fulfill a bold and distinctive mission to "transform the lives of students through a high-quality education infused with experiential learning, community engagement, and career readiness." Undergirding the mission is our emphasis on inclusion because no single one of us can alone fulfill this mission. It takes all of us through affirming, respecting, and supporting one another.

We can always do more, and this action plan will serve as our guide to continuing our meaningful progress and make Indiana State University an even stronger and more vibrant higher education institution. I encourage all Sycamores to take ownership of the actions outlined in this plan and together we will continue to be Sycamore Strong!

*Deborah J. Curtis*

Deborah J. Curtis, Ph.D.  
President





# CULTIVATING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT ISU

Since its founding, Indiana State University has demonstrated a commitment toward equality, fairness, diversity, and inclusion. The university is proud to provide high-quality and distinctive education to its students. Students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of all backgrounds and experiences call our university home. In everything we do, we strive to live up to our core values of **learning, discovery, engagement, and inclusiveness**.

We demonstrate how we embrace inclusiveness in a variety of ways throughout the university's divisions and units. For us, inclusiveness means "we take action to honor the diversity of individuals, ideas and expressions, ensuring they are genuinely recognized, valued, and lived."

The university also has a number of units and groups which specifically advance diversity, inclusion, and equity including:

- **The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**, which was established in 2016 to support our goal of becoming an inclusive-excellent campus.



- **The President's Council on Inclusive Excellence**, which was established in 2016 and includes a cross-section of the university and Terre Haute community to comply with Indiana Statute 21-27-5-4 requirements for such committees at Indiana's public institutions of higher education.
- **The Office of Multicultural Services and Programs**, which was founded in 2015 to work toward making our community a model of multiculturalism and intercultural competency through workshops and events
- **The Charles E. Brown African American Cultural Center**, founded in 1972, one of a few such centers in the state.
- The Cabinet-level **Assistant to the President for Human Relations** position was created to advise the president and champion these issues

Indiana State University has numerous processes and initiatives in place to advance a diverse and inclusive campus where safety, belonging, and academic achievement are nurtured. The university delivers numerous courses on social justice and related topics. It also hosts a number of initiatives, events, programs related to social justice, many of which are spearheaded by faculty, students, and staff.

University policy clearly states:

*"Indiana State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of: age, disability, genetic information, national origin, pregnancy, race/color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other class protected by federal and state statutes. Discrimination based upon any protected class is strictly prohibited in ISU programs and activities or that interferes with the educational or workplace environment. ISU recognizes that discrimination and harassment may take many forms, and it is our collective commitment to respond promptly and vigorously to discriminatory or harassing behavior."*

The university requires investigation of all formal complaints. ISU employees are expected to report discrimination and harassment that violates Policy 923 Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment. In addition, Policy 905 Whistleblowers provides protection against retaliation for individuals who report violations of law or University policy.

ISU condemns racism in all its forms and has existing disciplinary measures in place to address discriminatory behavior of faculty, staff, and students, including revocation of tenure through the faculty discipline and dismissal process, termination of staff, and suspension or expulsion of students.

As a public institution, the university engages in non-discriminatory hiring practices according to applicable laws. As stated in university job postings, *"Indiana State University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and conducts its recruitment and hiring based solely upon job-related qualifications, without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status or citizenship status."*

Training on diversity and inclusion is part of the new employee onboarding process that every new hire must complete. In addition, a resource is available to current employees for further reading and learning on this topic.



Over 100 courses are available in the Skillsoft training platform related to diversity, sensitivity, and inclusion. The university is also considering courses recommended by the Office of Human Resources:

- Overcoming Unconscious Bias in the Workplace
- Overcoming Your Own Unconscious Biases
- Understanding Unconscious Bias
- Your Role in Workplace Diversity
- Global Diversity
- Workplace Harassment Prevention for Workers
- Ouch Training

Categories of training that employees may take for professional development or required training for orientation are also being considered. Examples of categories include Customer Service, Communication, Diversity/Inclusion, FERPA, and Sexual Harassment.

Our work continues through the next steps found in the following pages and organized by categories: Instruction and Learning, Campus Environment, Awareness, and Growth Initiatives.

For the purposes of this document, we will consistently refer to people as “Black” instead of alternating between Black and African American.

Throughout the document, one will clearly find a common thread of accountability and commitment to social justice as we work together to move Indiana State University forward. The responsibility of overseeing and reporting progress of this action plan will rest with the ISU Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. However, the university recognizes that our next steps toward progress are, in reality, a shared responsibility among all Sycamores.

*Advancing Inclusive Excellence* is a living document that will ultimately lead to fulfillment of important goals (with specific measurable objectives) that will be included in the university’s strategic plan. It gives each of us a greater purpose outside of ourselves to empower not only our students and employees, but also the individual self.

# Instruction and Learning

**Indiana State University will continue to provide a culture of inclusion to support its mission. The following actions will be taken by the university, through its various units and divisions, to advance inclusivity in teaching and learning.**

- Review cultural awareness and diversity training opportunities and materials for all employees to complete.
- Update the Foundational Studies curriculum to incorporate more social justice and cultural awareness topics.
- Develop programing to support faculty and staff development (e.g. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaisons).
- Through the work of the Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence, keep the channels of communication open with faculty/staff affinity groups as well as Student Government Association on social justice topics.
- Develop a recruitment and retention plan for faculty and staff of color.
- Develop structures needed to recruit and support LatinX students.
- Establish a leadership development program for faculty interested in new roles on campus.
- Launch discussions about improving departmental cultures for minority faculty. This includes improvements to hiring, retention strategies, and promotion/tenure, leading to professional development for chairs.
- Continue dialogue with Black faculty about curriculum and representation at governance units.
- Address faculty evaluation issues in Tri-Annual review and promotion and tenure processes.







# Campus Environment

Indiana State University offers a learning environment where everyone is welcome. The following actions will be taken by the university, through its various units and divisions, for a more inclusive campus climate.

- In cooperation with the Student Government Association, develop a display to express inclusive excellence in the Hulman Memorial Student Union Commons.
- Conceptualize a crosswalk at 5th and Chestnut Streets near the Hulman Memorial Student Union.
- Recommit to investigate and take employment action on employees who violate ISU's standards of conduct.
- Suggest that the Student Government Association consider a student campus climate study.
- Provide minority students with an inventory of programs to support student success on campus.
- Develop and recommend possible structures for an ISU Bias reporting mechanism with input from the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- Create an action plan to recruit, hire, and retain a more diverse workforce.
- Review and revise hiring procedures to include opportunities for all hires to identify and connect with affinity groups upon their arrival at ISU.
- Ensure that search committees include representatives from diverse backgrounds.
- Work with Staff Council leadership and affinity groups for representation of minority voices.
- Develop a Faculty/Staff Diversity Exchange Program.
- Examine attrition rates to determine why diverse employees leave and learn what can be done to better retain diverse employees. Solicit input from affinity groups in this process.
- Analyze employee and student exit data to determine if there are trends that can be addressed.
- Define pay disparity and conduct an internal review of salary disparities based on race.
- Establish the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusive Excellence Liaisons in each college. Liaisons will interact regularly with the set of affinity groups.



# Awareness

Indiana State University is proud to be among the most diverse campuses in Indiana. The following actions will be taken by the university, through its various units and divisions, to further promote diversity and inclusion.

- Work with the Terre Haute community to retain Black employees by creating listening or learning sessions with the Terre Haute community, ISU members, and former employees.
- In collaboration with the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce, create a small booklet to include annual community events, ISU Affinity Groups, and Black businesses, organizations, and events.
- Continue efforts to increase diversity in the Student Counseling Center staff.
- Be more intentional about efforts to recruit a diverse pool of applicants for every hire on campus by developing a diverse applicant recruitment plan.
- The Office of Admissions will stay in regular communication with the Charles E. Brown African American Cultural Center to ensure accuracy of programming information during campus tours.



- Make the ISU Public Safety mission statement more prominent on the ISU website.
- Public Safety will continue outreach to minority publications and groups for officer recruitment as positions become available.
- Make training and recruitment resources prominent on the ISU website.
- Review current language for “diversity” and “inclusive excellence” to align with university’s values.
- Promote and highlight existing programs and initiatives focused on social justice, equity, and diversity.
- Review decision-making process for the speaker series to ensure diverse voices are included.
- Clearly communicate the processes in place for individuals to report cases of discrimination, bias, or sexual harassment.
- Create an employee recruitment video to communicate ISU’s commitment to Inclusive Excellence.



# Growth Initiatives

**Indiana State University strives to be the university of choice for students seeking a distinctive, high-quality education in order to contribute to the economic vitality and civic and cultural development of their communities and the global society. The following actions will be taken by the university, through its various units and divisions, in order to grow as a more inclusive campus.**

- Expand upon existing successful initiatives to launch a holistic and innovative approach to addressing the persistent challenge of closing the graduation gaps for students of color and Pell grant recipients through funding from Lilly Endowment, Inc. (funding decision pending).
- Develop fundraising priorities for the Charles E. Brown African American Cultural Center to incorporate into the next campaign.
- Define the role of ombudsperson for students and make this service visible within the Division of Student Affairs.
- The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will review its charge and communicate its central mission to the governance units.

