

Hagerstown Community College (HCC)

Cultural Diversity Report for 2023 – 2024

Section I:

A summary of the institution's plan to improve cultural diversity. Include all major goals, areas of emphasis, and strategy for implementation. Provide an explanation of how progress is being evaluated. Indicate where progress has been achieved, and areas where continued improvement is needed. If there is no formal plan approved by the governing board, describe how the institution intends to come into compliance.

Overview of Cultural Diversity at HCC:

For the purpose of this document, “diversity” is defined as the recognition, appreciation and understanding of individual, group, and cultural similarities and differences that include, but are not limited to age, abilities and disabilities, ethnicity, language, gender, race, nationality, religion, socio-economic status, veteran status, and sexual orientation.

Issues of diversity permeate many aspects of a campus environment and each is connected with the others. Unless incorporated into core structures of the College through strategic planning efforts, little will change substantively. HCC’s strategic goals and action plans help guide achievement and changes in policies and procedures, with the overarching values of equal access and treatment as the foundations. Simply recruiting a more diverse student body without attending to other aspects of campus life, such as intergroup relations, curricular change, faculty and staff professional development, and diversifying faculty and staff, can result in difficulties for traditionally underrepresented students. Comprehensive institutional change and integrated efforts are critical to provide positive educational outcomes within a climate of acceptance and respect for cultural diversity and equal opportunities for education, training and employment.

Hagerstown Community College’s strategic plans have always incorporated goals and action plans for a diverse student body and workforce. HCC provides updates annually through its unit planning process, revising and adding objectives and action plans as institutional priorities change or are added. In doing so, HCC continues to improve its planning/evaluation model and bring about positive change related to improving cultural diversity among students, faculty, and staff.

Consistent with previous plans, initiatives to improve cultural diversity are an essential part of the strategic commitments in HCC’s 2026 Strategic Plan approved by the Board of Trustees on December 21, 2021. When HCC engaged in a new strategic planning process in 2021, diversity, equity, and inclusion discussions served as a foundation for the steering committee’s work. The process involved gathering substantial input from faculty, staff, administrators, and students. An important step in developing the strategic plan was a review and complete revision of the mission, vision, and values of the College. The newly adopted mission and values incorporate the importance of equity and diversity, and inclusion.

The College believes in and teaches the ideals and values of culture and diversity. HCC also seeks to cultivate in its students critical and independent thought, openness to new ideas, a sense of self-

direction, moral sensitivity, strength through diversity, and the value of continuing education and life-long learning.

The College's Mission, Vision, Values, and Institutional Learning Outcomes

Cultural diversity, equality in education and equal employment opportunities are viewed as integral parts of the mission and purpose of HCC. The mission, vision, values, and institutional learning outcomes encourage and support diversity in the personal, professional, and scholastic development and enrichment of all in the College community.

Mission

HCC ensures equitable access to affordable, high-quality educational programs, while fostering workforce development and cultural vitality in the region.

Vision

HCC will be the college of choice through demonstration of inclusive educational excellence, transformative growth, and community enrichment.

Values

- Excellence
- Integrity
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Stewardship
- Civic Engagement
- Student-Centered

Institutional Learning Outcomes

The following attributes are goals of the full HCC experience, designed to impart students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that go beyond the classroom and equip them with tools for lifelong success.

- Personal and Social Responsibility
- Globalization and Diversity
- Critical Thinking and Communication
- Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning
- Information Literacy and Technology
- Professionalism

Strategic Commitments

- Enrollment
- Assessment
- Retention
- Integration
- Partnerships
- Community

At HCC, cultural vitality and ensuring continued access and equity is a fundamental aspect of the mission. Several strategies are employed to maintain accessibility and promote equity for all individuals:

Affordable Education: HCC is committed to providing affordable education by offering competitive tuition, financial aid, scholarships, and grants. HCC is committed to reducing financial barriers to students.

Support Services: A range of support services are provided to ensure that all students have the resources they need to succeed academically and personally. These services include tutoring, academic advising, and disability support.

Diverse Course Offerings: HCC offers a wide range of courses and programs to accommodate diverse interests and career goals. Whether students are pursuing transfer degrees, workforce training, or personal enrichment, HCC strives to offer options that meet their needs.

Flexible Learning Options: Recognizing that students have different schedules and commitments, HCC provides flexible learning options such as online courses, classes at different times, and hybrid programs. This flexibility enables students to access education in a way that fits their individual circumstances.

Equity Initiatives: HCC actively promotes equity through various initiatives aimed at addressing disparities and fostering inclusivity. Policies, practices, and curriculum are regularly reviewed to identify and eliminate barriers to access and success for underrepresented groups.

Community Outreach: HCC engages with the community to raise awareness about the importance of education and to connect individuals with resources and opportunities. HCC collaborates with local schools, organizations, and businesses to expand access to education and support community development.

Through these efforts, HCC remains dedicated to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background or circumstances, have equitable access to education and the opportunity to achieve their academic and career goals.

The Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness regularly reports data that supports the achievement of the mission, ILOs, and elements of the strategic commitments. A portion of this information is provided to campus leadership in the annual Fact Book. Review of this data by campus leaders informs discussions around success in achieving institutional goals and identifying potential barriers, particularly for students of color. In order to address the State Plan for Postsecondary Education, performance indicators from the Performance Accountability Report (PAR) are used to measure progress on retention and completion metrics.

HCC's credit minority enrollment consistently exceeds that of the county's underrepresented population. Though Washington County has become more racially and ethnically diverse over the last decade, it is still predominantly white and non-Hispanic. Black or African American residents comprise

the largest minority group. Hispanic residents comprise the fastest-growing ethnic group in Washington County. HCC continues to monitor the retention and persistence of diverse students.

Data collection and analysis of general education diversity courses and the ILOs tied to globalization and diversity is an important aspect of assessing HCC's student learning outcomes. The results are used to improve student learning and the quality of the courses offered at HCC. Assessment data is regularly reviewed and discussed by faculty and administrators as part of the assessment process at HCC.

In the fall 2021 semester, HCC participated in the PACE survey, a campus climate instrument designed to help community college leaders understand the institutional culture and how employees perceive and experience their work. Several questions were embedded in the survey to examine DEI data. This DEI climate data provided a measure of the real or perceived quality of interactions on campus as well as the level of respect for others. The results of the PACE survey are used to design programs and initiatives for the campus community intended to nurture a positive, healthy campus climate for all. A climate survey is planned to collect similar data on the experiences of HCC students.

Section II:

A summary of how the 2023 Supreme Court's decision to strike down race-conscious admissions practices has affected your campus policies and practices.

HCC, as an open-access institution, was not directly impacted by the Supreme Court's decision to strike down race-conscious admissions practices. Open-access institutions such as HCC, do not utilize selective admission criteria that could include race as a factor. HCC's mission is to provide educational opportunities to all individuals, regardless of their background or academic history, ensuring that higher education remains accessible to everyone. This inclusive approach inherently aligns with the goal of expanding educational access and opportunity, making the Supreme Court's ruling on race-conscious admissions largely irrelevant to the admissions processes. Moreover, HCC stands ready to welcome and support students who might be adversely affected by the Supreme Court's decision at other institutions, offering them a robust and inclusive environment where they can pursue their educational journeys without barriers imposed by selective admissions policies.

Outreach and Support Programs (new initiatives or programs being implemented to support URM groups or enhance access to higher education for historically marginalized communities)

HCC can showcase numerous outreach and support programs but has chosen just a few to include in this report. The college began implementing the Title III grant this year. While not specific to historically marginalized communities, this grant's focus on retention will directly impact those students through improved orientation, quality online courses, and a new first-year experience course.

The Office of Student Activities continues to offer exciting cultural diversity programming as well as culturally-based clubs. Events in FY24 that highlighted cultural diversity included: Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration, Transgender Day of Remembrance Vigil, Lunar New Year Celebration, Mardi Gras Celebration, Conversations for the Soul Black History Month Celebration, Women's History Month

Trivia Event, Irish American Heritage Month Tour of Antietam Battlefield highlighting the impact of the Irish Brigade, Holi Celebration, Anime Trivia Contest and a monthly series of Transgender Discussions that were student-led.

Cultural-based clubs that were active for the 2023-24 school year included: African Dance Club, Anime Club, Asian Student Association, Black Student Union, K-Pop Club, and Muslim Student Association. Though we didn't have an active LGBT+ club this year, students in HCC's Psychology Club organized the Transgender Discussion monthly series.

HCC's library is committed to a number of relevant outreach initiatives including monthly Cultural awareness newsletters, regular book displays highlighting cultural heritages, identities and student resources, and resource guides about cultural heritage recognitions. Annually the library staff extend invitations to the campus community to participate in the Douglass Day event.

Community Engagement (ways the institution engages stakeholders, including students, faculty, alumni, and community partners to ensure ongoing commitment to diversity and equity)

HCC is committed to fostering diversity and equity throughout the campus and beyond. Stakeholders are engaged through various initiatives aimed at promoting inclusivity and ensuring ongoing commitment to diversity. The HCC Diversity and Inclusion Committee serves as a coordinating body for many of these efforts.

Student involvement- HCC actively involves students in diversity and equity efforts through student-led organizations, diversity-focused events, and inclusive programming. The Student Government Association (SGA) works with the administration to advocate for diversity initiatives that reflect the needs and voices of the diverse student body.

HCC offers diversity in the curriculum through its Diversity General Education category, thereby requiring that all degree-seeking students take at least one three-credit course pertaining to multiculturalism and diversity.

Examples of relevant course titles include: Cultural Anthropology, Latin American History, World Regional Geography, World Religions, Understanding Diversity in the Helping Profession, Diversity in Sports and Athletics, Diversity in a Tech Society, and Race and Ethnic Relations

Diversity in academic offerings is found outside of the general education requirement as well. Enrollments in both credit and non-credit courses designed for English Language Learners, have increased over time. The Workforce Solutions and Continuing Education division of the College offers a number of courses that appeal to this population.

Faculty engagement- HCC values the perspectives and expertise of the faculty in advancing diversity and equity. Faculty are involved in curriculum development that integrates diverse perspectives, as well as workshops and training sessions on inclusive teaching practices. The Fletcher Faculty

Development Center offered a number of diversity-focused programs for faculty members during FY24.

Alumni participation- HCC maintains connections with alumni through various channels, including the alumni association and networking events. Alumni are invited to participate in discussions and initiatives related to diversity and equity, providing valuable insights and support for ongoing efforts.

Community partnerships- HCC collaborates with community organizations, businesses, and leaders to promote diversity and equity both on campus and in the broader community. Through partnerships with local nonprofits, government agencies, and advocacy groups, campus leaders engage stakeholders across the board – from students and faculty to alumni and community partners. This year the annual Martin Luther King Celebration provided weeklong campus events (lunch & learns, community walk).

Equity and Access (ways the institution ensures continued access and equity)

Efforts to increase representation of traditionally underrepresented students

A position in the Admissions office is dedicated to outreach and recruitment of underrepresented populations. This recruiter visits all local high schools, including English Language Learner (ELL) classes, and hosts information sessions targeting prospective underrepresented students at local venues.

The Financial Aid department offers workshops for low-income, at-risk students to encourage participation in higher education by covering information regarding federal and state financial aid programs, borrowing, and important deadlines. Additionally, HCC has sources of aid for those who do not qualify for Pell grants or who require financial assistance beyond what is already provided.

HCC has other programs that work closely with at-risk students to help them persist, complete their courses, and graduate. These programs serve high-risk populations, of which over 30 percent fall into an underrepresented group.

Efforts to increase representation of traditionally underrepresented staff and faculty

The HR Recruiting Specialist is committed to practices that encourage the hiring and retention of traditionally underrepresented faculty, staff, and administrators. Each year this person utilizes a number of recruiting resources and initiatives with the goal of attracting a diverse applicant pool that will convert to quality employees who are retained at the institution.

Examples of these recruiting initiatives include: attending relevant job fairs, utilizing new recruiting sources, and working with Public Relations to post regarding positions available on HCC's Facebook page. Examples of relevant retention initiatives include: streamlining HR processes by utilizing Kronos, updating the employee handbook, coordinating a Staff Professional Development Workshop week, and engaging in Wellness Challenges with health & wellness resources, lunch & learns, and group activities. HR also hosts a number of employee appreciation events and fun events to encourage employee participation.

Monitoring and Evaluation (mechanisms to monitor impact of policy changes on student demographics, campus climate, and educational outcomes. Evaluate the effectiveness over time)

HCC regularly monitors the impact of policy changes on student demographics, campus climate, and educational outcomes to ensure continuous improvement and equity. Highlighted below are several mechanisms and evaluation processes that have been implemented:

Data Collection and Analysis: HCC collects comprehensive data on student demographics, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, and academic performance. This data is regularly reviewed to identify trends, patterns, and disparities across different student populations.

Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms: Surveys and feedback mechanisms are utilized to gather input from students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders on their experiences, perceptions, and needs related to campus climate and educational outcomes. These surveys include questions designed to assess the impact of policy changes on various aspects of campus life.

Assessment of Educational Outcomes: HCC conducts ongoing assessments of educational outcomes, including retention rates, graduation rates, transfer rates, and academic achievement. These outcomes are compared across different demographic groups to identify any disparities and assess the effectiveness of policy and procedure changes in promoting equitable outcomes for all students.

Engagement with Stakeholders: Stakeholders, including student organizations, faculty committees, administrative departments, and community partners, are engaged to gather qualitative insights and perspectives on the impact of policy changes. This engagement fosters collaboration, transparency, and accountability in the evaluation process.

Longitudinal Studies: HCC conducts longitudinal studies to track the impact of policy changes over time. By examining data trends and outcomes longitudinally, HCC can assess the sustained effectiveness of policies and interventions in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus.

Continuous Improvement Process: Based on the findings from data analysis, surveys, feedback, and assessments, HCC implements targeted interventions and adjustments to policies and practices as needed. This iterative process of continuous improvement ensures that responses to emerging issues are proactive and the college is striving to achieve the equity goals effectively over time.

In evaluating the effectiveness of policy changes, HCC considers both quantitative metrics and qualitative feedback to provide a comprehensive understanding of their impact on student demographics, campus climate, and educational outcomes. Through these mechanisms, HCC is committed to fostering a campus environment that is inclusive, equitable, and conducive to student success.