

# Life University Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, 2020-2025

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*A Campus-wide guide for promoting  
diversity and inclusive excellence*

**LIFE**<sup>®</sup>  
University

Office of  
Diversity, Equity  
and Inclusion

# Definition of Terms

**Diversity:** Refers to the representation of difference. Some human differences include race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, social class, physical ability, religious affiliation, national origin and political beliefs.

**Equity:** the access and opportunity for all individuals to achieve their full potential. It reflects processes and practices that both acknowledge that we live in a world where everyone has not been afforded the same resources and treatment while also working to remedy this fact.

**Inclusion:** the involvement and empowerment of individuals and groups across differences. It suggests that all members of the community should experience a sense of belonging, feeling valued and respected as they learn, work and engage within the community.

**Inclusive Excellence:** the recognition that a community or institution's success is dependent on how well it values, engages and affirms the rich diversity of students, faculty, staff, administrators and alumni stakeholders. It requires a campus-wide implementation of social justice practices, which shape student learning, social development, service and work.

# Strategic Plan Development

During the summer and fall quarters of 2019, members of the Life University community participated in a robust campus climate study for diversity, equity and inclusion. The process included more than 44 individual interviews with staff, faculty and administrators and several focus groups with diverse groups of students.

These qualitative interviews and focus groups informed the design of two quantitative survey instruments. The first was distributed to staff, faculty and administrators, and the second was distributed to students. The findings from both studies were used to inform and develop this *Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*.

# Rationale for the Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

This inaugural Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will serve as a resource and guide that places Life University on the path to achieving inclusive excellence. The plan aims to achieve the following:

- ✓ **Provide a more intentional, integrated, university-wide approach to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts;**
- ✓ **Develop a common focus and language for all stakeholders;**
- ✓ **Advance a culture of priority and accountability for issues of diversity, equity and inclusion; and**
- ✓ **Invite individual and collective responsibility for diversity, equity and inclusion**

# Goals, Strategies, Timelines and Responsible Parties

The goals, strategies, timeline and responsible parties outlined in this strategic plan will focus on the following four areas: Institutional Transformation for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Student Retention, Education, Training and Awareness and Community Engagement.

The goal timelines will be assigned as follows:

- ✓ **Immediate: 1 to 5 months;**
- ✓ **Short-term: 6 to 12 months;**
- ✓ **Mid-term: 13 to 24 months,**
- ✓ **Long-term: 25 to 36 months**



## **Goal 1:**

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**Transform  
Institutional Culture  
to Align with Life's  
D, E and I Mission,  
Vision and Values.**

# Goal 1: Transform Institutional Culture to Align with Life's D, E and I Mission, Vision and Values.

## Strategy 1

Establish an institutional vision and mission and set of values related to diversity, equity and inclusion. (Immediate, Office of the President, CDO)

## Strategy 2

Establish an Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. (Immediate, Office of the President)

## Strategy 3

Establish an executive level leadership position to serve as Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) and oversee The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. (Short, Office of the President and Human Resources)

## Strategy 4

Articulate Life University's messaging through marketing and other forms of print, internet and video communications that reflects the diversity of the campus community. Also, move to have Life's statement of diversity, equity and inclusion added to printed materials. (Long, Marketing and the CDO)

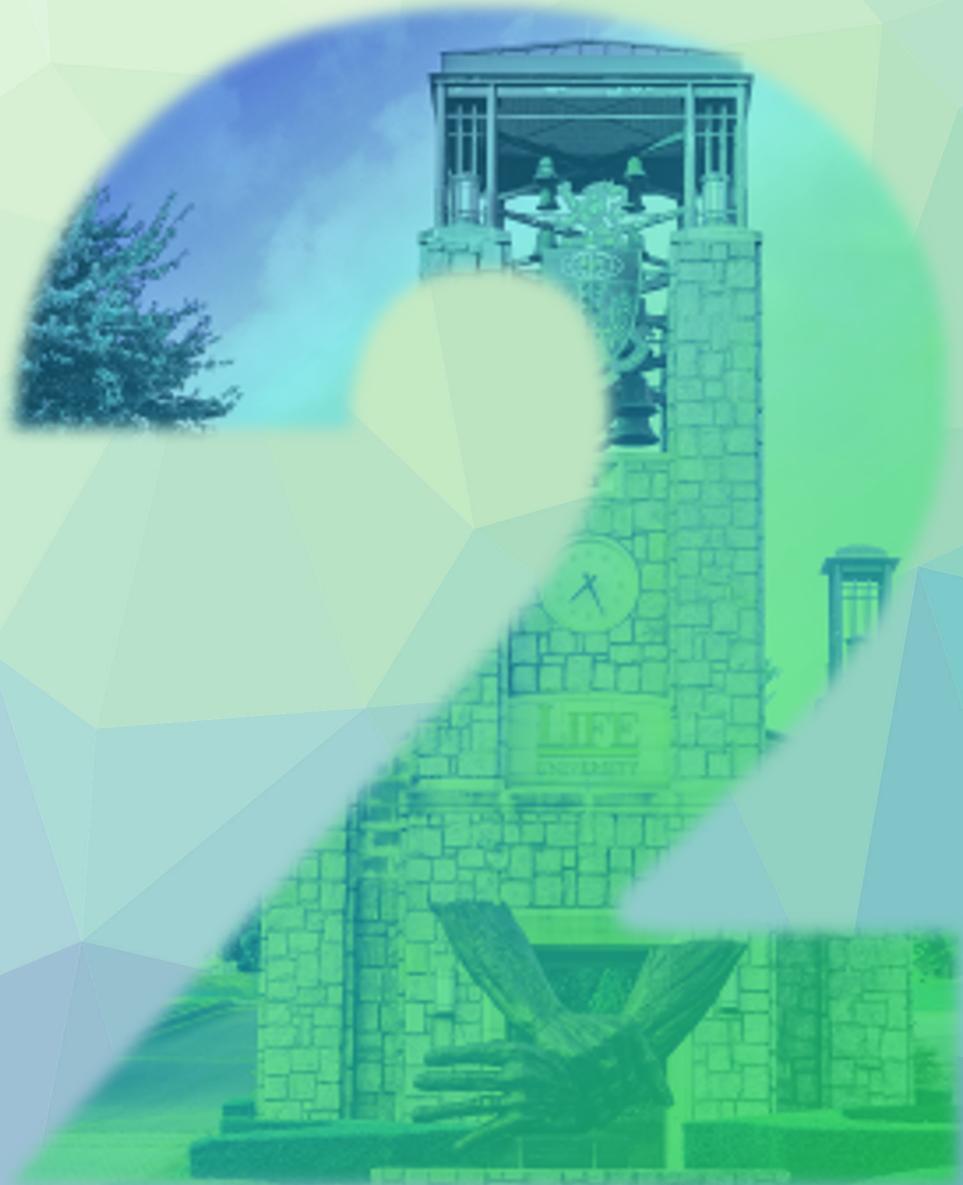
# Goal 1: Transform Institutional Culture to Align with Life's D, E and I Mission, Vision and Values.

## Strategy 5

Survey and update campus signage and artwork and images to ensure the representation of multiple identities, abilities and cultural backgrounds. (Short, Marketing, CDO)

## Strategy 6

Conduct annual review of campus facilities, policies and procedures with campus stakeholders to ensure they are accessible, safe and accommodating to the full community. (Medium-term; Disability Services, Gender and Sexual Diversity Committee, CDO)



## Goal 2:

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**Support the retention, persistence and graduation of students from marginalized groups**

## Goal 2: Support the retention, persistence and graduation of students from marginalized groups.

### Strategy 1

Promote established bias incident reporting procedures in an effort to monitor, and report to leadership, discriminatory/bias behaviors that may negatively impact the student experience and retention. (Immediate; BIRT & CDO).

### Strategy 2

Collect annual campus climate data related to DE&I to understand the experiences of underrepresented students and the factors contributing to rates of persistence and completion. (Short, CDO, Office of Institutional Research)

### Strategy 3

Establish a committee of staff, faculty and administrators to regularly examine promising practices and retention strategies for students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. (Short, CDO, VPAA)

### Strategy 4

Establish an intercultural student center designed to facilitate cross-cultural engagement and identity-sharing for the advancement of student success by promoting, academic, social and service-learning opportunities. (Long, Office of the President, Development Office, CDO, Equity and Inclusion)



## Goal 3:

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**Develop and promote DE&I  
education,  
training and  
awareness strategies**

## Goal 3: Develop and promote DE&I education, training and awareness strategies

### Strategy 1

Develop and implement a cultural competence education and training program for faculty and staff. (**Cultural Competence:** the capacity to (a) value diversity, (b) conduct self-assessment, (c) manage the dynamics of difference, (d) acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and (e) adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities one serves. [Cross et al. 1989]). (Short-Immediate, CDO and HR)

### Strategy 2

Collaborate with Housing and Residential Life staff to develop a cultural competence education and training program for all Residence Life professional and student staff. (Short, Asst. Dean for Housing and Residential Life, CDO)

### Strategy 3

Develop and implement training session for faculty search committees, which focuses on recruitment strategies for identifying and attracting faculty of color, people with disabilities and those from other underrepresented groups. (Short, CDO, Human Resources)

## Goal 3: Develop and promote DE&I education, training and awareness strategies

### Strategy 4

Partner with the Marketing Office to design and develop the webpage and social media presence for the Office of DEI to serve as a source of information, resources and promotions of DEI related events and activities. (Short, CDO, University Marketing)

### Strategy 5

Develop and implement strategies for each program of study to include a course that highlights the rich diversity within the discipline. (Medium-term; Academic Deans, Vice President for Academic Affairs)



## Goal 4:

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**Establish and support community engagement opportunities that advance the University's DE&I objectives**

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## Strategy 1

Collaborate with campus partners to organize and promote *regularly scheduled* courageous conversations, guest lectures, and brown bag lunch conversations that encourage the campus community to proactively engage in dialogue around topics related to diversity, equity and social justice. (Short-term; CDO, Affinity Committees)

## Strategy 2

Develop and distribute University planning standards to ensure that all campus, presentations, programs, events and services have diverse representation and are accessible for all members of the community. (Medium, Office of the President, CDO)

## Strategy 3

Establish and promote a campus-wide event calendar of DE&I-related trainings, celebrations, historic dates and holidays. (Medium, VP DE&I)

## Goal 4: Establish and support community engagement opportunities that advance the University's DE&I objectives

### Strategy 4

Establish annual diversity, equity and inclusion award program to recognize and celebrate campus community members and groups that are modeling Inclusive Excellence. (Short, CDO)

### Strategy 5

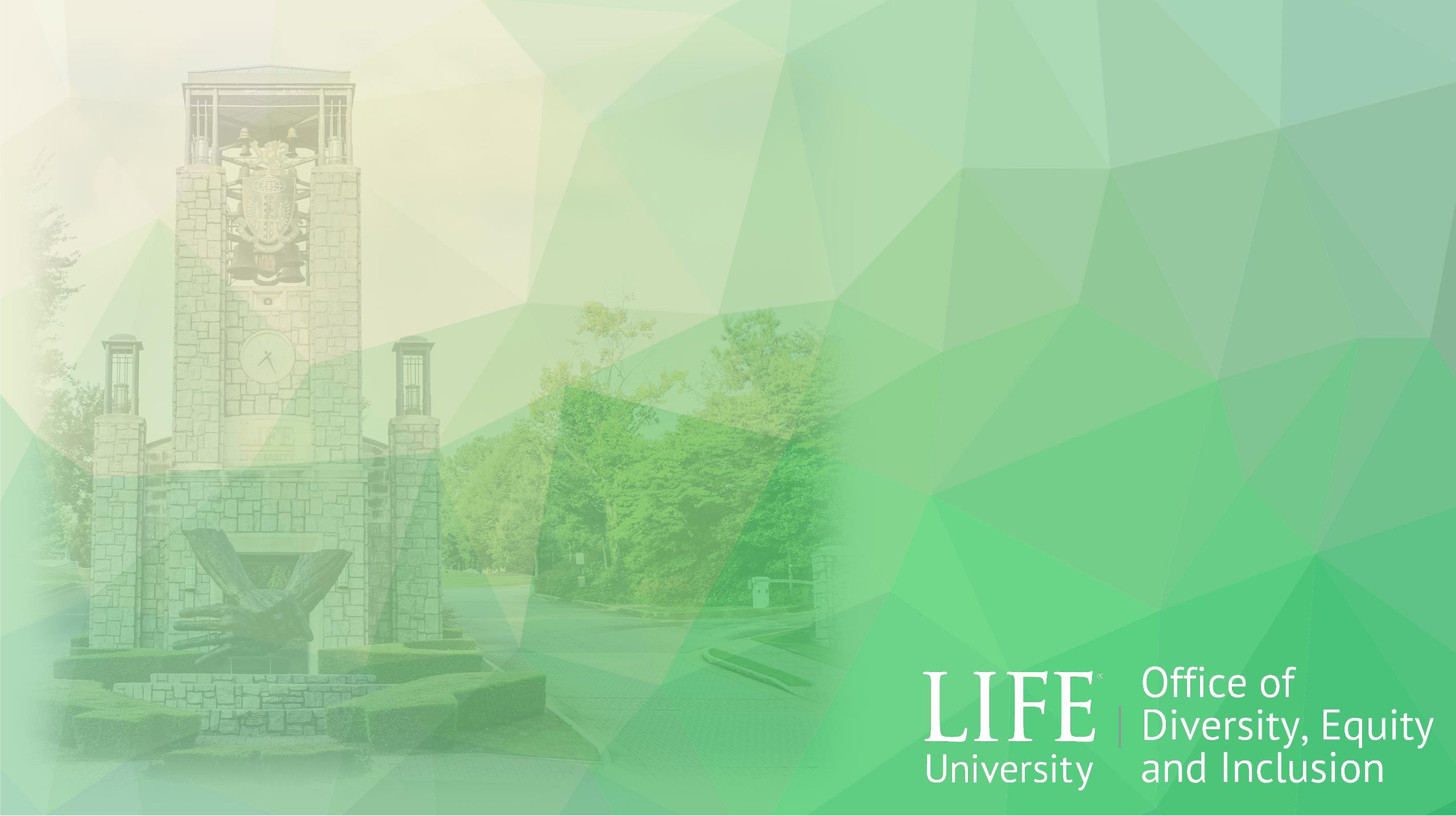
Build partnerships with development office and external community to identify potential funding sources for future DE&I initiatives. (Immediate CDO)

# Implementation and Evaluation

In order to ensure transparency and accountability for this 5-year Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, it is necessary to establish a process for assessing and reporting progress toward its outlined goals.

Life University's Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion will assume primary responsibility for the implementation and evaluation of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Progress reports and status updates will be prepared semi-annually and shared with the campus community. Opportunities for discussion and future planning will be also scheduled regularly.



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