



MSUSM
DENVER

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2024

“Unidos” mural
designed by Mexican
artist Spaik on the east
side of the Auraria
Event Center Building



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Land and Labor Acknowledgment



We honor and acknowledge that we are on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Nations. We acknowledge the land and history of this space we are fortunate to gather in today. This area was also the site of trade, hunting, gathering, and healing for many other Native Nations: the Lakota, Ute, Kiowa, Comanche, Apache, Shoshone, and others. Forty-eight tribes have called this land home. We recognize the Indigenous peoples as the original stewards of the land, water, plants, and animals who called this place home.

Let us also acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We recognize that U.S. public policy has been used to displace Indigenous communities, erode Tribal Nation sovereignty, and forcibly assimilate Native individuals into U.S. society. We respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land on which we gather. We pay our respect to them and give thanks to all Tribal Nations and the ancestors of this place.

We also acknowledge the labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants who worked this stolen land for the colonists, and who continue to disproportionately face economic oppression, racism, violence and exploitation.

Lastly, we want to recognize the community and families of Auraria displaced by the creation of this campus for Metropolitan State University of Denver to have a place that we now call a learning community. We share this acknowledgment to encourage all of us here on the Auraria Campus to consider how our work in this space and in our daily lives can address these historic and contemporary atrocities perpetuated against Native people and other marginalized communities.

Important Terms

Equity

Historically and politically, equity refers to the process of creating equivalent outcomes for members of historically underrepresented and oppressed groups. Equity is about ending systemic discrimination against people based on their identity and background, and it focuses on building areas where gaps exist on institutional needs to achieve diversity and inclusion.

Inclusion

Inclusion exists when traditionally marginalized individuals and groups feel a sense of belonging and are empowered to participate in majority culture as full and valued members of the community, shaping and redefining that culture in different ways.

Diversity

Conceptualizing diversity through an equity and inclusion understanding provides focus on the social representations and institutional processes that cause groups or individuals to be systematically excluded from full participation in higher education.

It also relates to the understanding that benefits for some groups are embedded in the organizational aspects of the University.

This includes not only social identities and characteristics but processes such as design of curriculum, admissions policies and practices, hiring practices, budgeting, tenure decisions and any other day-to-day business decisions made within the institution.

HSI Servingness

Using the Multidimensional Framework of Servingness at HSIs by Garcia, Núñez and Sansone (2019), MSU Denver defines servingness as being conceptualized by indicators of serving as well as structures for serving. Indicators of serving include academic and non-academic outcomes that may be measured by HSIs, including but not limited to persistence, graduation, course completion, leadership identity, critical consciousness and civic engagement (Garcia et al., 2019). Students' overlapping experiences tied to each of these outcomes contribute to their overall sense of belonging and support (Garcia et al., 2019). As a result, servingness at an HSI is partially identified through actively fostering a culturally affirming environment for students through the creation and implementation of mentoring and support programs as well as cultural celebrations on campus.

Structures for serving then come into place as the additional definition of servingness. Structures for serving include organizational transformations to better serve Latina/o/x students.

Such transformations include HSI grant activities, decision-making processes, equity-minded leadership practices and policies, engagement with the community. etc. (Garcia et al., 2019). In practice, MSU Denver identifies servingness as an intentional transition of organizational structures through use of resources and programming. MSU Denver will learn with and from existing model HSIs to implement promising practices of servingness. Race and ethnicity must also be considered to fully identify the HSI mission for servingness. While it is inherent that there is no singular approach to serve the needs of students, servingness must therefore be multidimensional and race-conscious in application to serve diverse populations intentionally and adequately.

Message from the President



Metropolitan State University of Denver is a leader in social mobility that is committed to fostering equity. More than 55% of our undergraduate students identify themselves as people of color, and they find belonging, support, and a path to their dreams at MSU Denver. We connect our students — 96% from Colorado and 59.7% first-generation college students — directly to world-class faculty and high-quality job opportunities.

At MSU Denver, this work is about more than the numbers. Serving our students well, sharing diverse voices, and preparing all Coloradans for the modern workforce are critical. But don't just take our word for it. MSU Denver was honored with the Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy and Research Organization's Alianza Award for enhancing the well-being of the Latinx community; Denver Business Journal's 2024 Leaders in Diversity Award; and for the 10th year running, the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award by Insight into Diversity. The University has also proudly received

the Seal of Excelencia, a three-year certification recognizing its evidence-based commitment to serving Latino students — the first and only Colorado institution of higher education to receive the distinction.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are part of the University's values. MSU Denver established the state's first campus Immigrant Services Program in 1990. The University became a leading public advocate for undocumented students when we were one of the first in the nation to offer in-state tuition for this group of students in 2012, leading the state in passage of the ASSET bill.

From Accounting Services and the Writing Center to the classroom and the greater Colorado community, this work is everyone's responsibility. We invite you to take a look inside that work in this report.

Janine Davidson, Ph.D.

President

Metropolitan State University of Denver



Message from the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion



The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is excited to publish MSU Denver's 2024 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report. This report highlights a wide variety of efforts and initiatives from within the Office and across the University aimed at advancing the University's 2030 Strategic Plan and Diversity Strategic Plan.

At MSU Denver, equity, diversity and inclusion are integral threads woven into the institutional fabric. Part of the role of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is to support and promote equity, diversity and inclusion as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and Minority Serving Institution (HSI/MSI). This includes supporting our faculty, staff and students and assuring that all faculty and staff members understand that we all play a role in, and contribute to, advancing this work. Anyone interested can play a significant role in leading and shaping an institutional culture of belonging and inclusivity. "Diversity" is not a word we throw around casually. Diversity is who MSU Denver is in all its richness dating to the University's foundation.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are core values of MSU Denver and serve as one of the five pillars of the University's 2030 Strategic Plan. These core values are also intentionally integrated into each of the four other pillars. At MSU Denver, we lean into our institutional mission, with access and cultivation at the forefront of our conversations. We understand well whom we serve and how we need to serve to assure inclusive excellence.

MSU Denver continues to demonstrate through our actions our commitment to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion. This includes our aim to become a national model Hispanic-Serving Institution; continued effort to integrate culturally responsive methods and processes into the institution's teaching and practice; and review of policies to assure that they are aligned with our mission to serve students first. The University is two years into the Diversity Strategic Plan, which outlines our goals and objectives and operationalizes Pillar IV of the 2030 Strategic Plan. The progress we have made, as you will read in this report, is obvious. From supporting faculty diversity success and offering

robust opportunities for staff and faculty development to aligning these efforts to student servingness and eventual student success, MSU Denver continues to elevate and further permeate our core values. **We believe everyone is deserving of support and the opportunity to grow and thrive.**

Through institutional avenues such as our Faculty Fellows initiative, Pathways to Possible, the Teaching Assistants program, HSI Week, Roadrunner First-Year Faculty Academy, department-led conferences, distinguished visiting professorships and many other efforts across the University highlighted in this report, MSU Denver continues to lead the way in innovative thinking and engagement toward positive impact and promising outcomes. Our signature programs bring renowned scholars and leaders from a variety of disciplinary and scholarly backgrounds, connecting to our Denver and campus communities by collaborating with school districts and community organizations. Our office takes pride in celebrating this incredible work by continuing to support and collaborate with the University's affinity groups, programs and conferences, cultural performances, graduation ceremonies and growth opportunities for our campus community.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion takes pride in our ongoing and demonstrated commitment to supporting, funding and elevating campus and community initiatives through sponsorships, grants and cross-functional collaboration to advance equity, diversity and inclusion. It is through these actions and the initiatives detailed in this report that we demonstrate student servingness and our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. At MSU Denver, we don't just talk the talk; we model what we expect from our campus community through transparency and accountability to our mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Benitez Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Michael Benitez Jr., Ph.D.,
Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion
Metropolitan State University of Denver

Diversity Strategic Plan



Metropolitan State University of Denver's Diversity Strategic Plan serves as a road map to continue to address, strengthen and advance equity, diversity and inclusion within the campus community. The Diversity Strategic Plan was crafted by the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council, a University-wide group established in spring 2020, comprising close to 80 staff, faculty members, students, alumni and community leaders.

The Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council is charged with examining equity, diversity and inclusion issues at MSU Denver cross-functionally, with respect to policy and practice from multiple perspectives. The council works collaboratively with MSU Denver campus constituents, broader community members and additional stakeholders, as appropriate, to engage in strategic and action-oriented conversations.

This summary provides an overview of the efforts that the council and its subcommittees have undertaken. The Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council is committed to embodying diversity and mending internal and external inequities through community mending and engagement. The council prioritizes diversifying the faculty, staff and student body, using data-driven strategies for recruitment, retention and success. The council values professional development and campus climate cultivation and leans on our anchor mission and modified-open-access institutional identity, cultivating partnerships and relationships with surrounding communities that the University serves.

Part of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council's charge includes the development and implementation of the institution's Diversity Strategic Plan. That means reviewing existing efforts aimed at enhancing equity, diversity and inclusion in representation and practice; developing goals and objectives under the auspices of the University's 2030 Strategic Plan Pillar IV; and working closely with Strategy and Business Intelligence to develop a set of metrics to measure and assure accountability and transparency.

During spring 2020, the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council established a steering committee and created four subcommittees each charged with examining different parts of the University within the context of equity, diversity

and inclusion. That included access, recruitment and retention; community-mending and outreach; HSI servingness; and institutional culture and climate.

The Campus Climate Cultivation Committee strives for an inclusive institutional culture aligned with the University's mission, promoting positive change by aligning institutional goals with equity, diversity and inclusion, addressing policy gaps and using data for evidence-based practices. This committee is also charged with the implementation of our campus-climate survey.

The HSI Servingness Committee examines HSI servingness practices to help improve and strengthen grant processes; implement and benchmark effective, promising strategies; involve and inform stakeholders; advocate for funding and initiatives; and stay knowledgeable about HSI-related matters.

The Recruitment, Retention and Success Committee reviews student, staff and faculty data and aims to see how we can continue to strengthen efforts focused on assuring employee and student access through an equity lens.

The Community Mending Committee focuses on mending and engagement with a focus on addressing harm caused by the University and society while building partnerships and relationships with specific communities.

The collaborative work of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council has led to the development of goals, strategies and actionable steps. Challenges include navigating legislation and ensuring scope boundaries. Continued collaboration, data-driven decisions and a focus on equity and inclusion are vital for implementing and achieving the plan's goals. MSU Denver aims to become a national model for diversity and inclusion in higher education.

Between 2020 and spring 2022, the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council hosted numerous campus student, faculty and staff forums for campus members to offer voice and input in the process; met with all division and academic-branch leadership teams; and engaged deeply with institutional and campus-climate survey data. The Diversity Strategic Plan was presented to the Board of Trustees in March 2022, and the plan was endorsed and formalized.

*Andrew Salter,
Gina and Frank Day Health Institute
Gift Announcement Reception*

Diversity Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

1

Inclusivity and Campus Climate Cultivation

We intentionally foster and sustain a welcoming and diverse University community that strives for structural diversity and belongingness and cultivates, nurtures and sustains a culture of inclusive teaching, learning and practice, based on the principles of equity, inclusion, access and anti-racism.

Objectives

- Collaborate with administrative and academic units to ensure that equity, diversity, inclusion and access practices are integrated into the unit's goals and align with University priorities.
- Acknowledge and address equity and accountability gaps in policy and practice.
- Actively engage in the ongoing assessment of campus climate and culture to identify and address areas for improvement and disseminate and communicate findings with the campus community.
- Analyze data-driven and evidence-based recommendations to develop and implement appropriate actions with campus stakeholders.

2

Community Connections and Engagement

We deliberately develop new relationships, strengthen existing relationships and heal broken relationships. We build mutually beneficial collaborations that promote just transformation and further the educational and civic aims of the University and broader communities.

Objectives

- Engage in reflection to uncover and actively reconcile past and present injustices perpetuated by structural racism and systemic inequities impacting marginalized communities.
- Identify and evaluate the inequities and barriers within our social and operational structures by engaging with metro Denver and broader communities.
- Invest resources in and create a sustainable infrastructure for the implementation of strategies to mend past/current harm and create a positive impact, such as community wealth-building, investing in and supporting local communities and recognizing and responding to local issues and inequities.
- Identify areas for ongoing cultivation and strengthening of community relations and mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations.
- Ensure that aspects of marketing and communication, such as web presence to external relations, create a more inclusive, accessible and welcoming digital environment for MSU Denver and broader communities.

3

HSI Servingness

As a recently designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, we strive to become a national-model HSI, serving as a preferred choice for students and meeting the needs of a growing Latina/o/x student population in Colorado. We provide the resources necessary to develop academic and support services to address issues of access, persistence and success.

Objectives

- Inform policymakers and other stakeholders about HSI issues and advocate for enhanced funding and new initiatives, programs and services.
- Maintain expertise about laws, regulations, policies, issues and trends pertaining to HSI funding, programs and designation.
- Strengthen the process and criteria for the identification, review and prioritization of HSI/MSI grants and provide support for the implementation of grants awarded.
- Research and benchmark promising practices at HSI/MSI institutions for consideration.

4

Recruitment, Retention and Success

Diversify our faculty, staff and student body to better reflect the diverse communities we serve and commit to retaining and sustaining diversity among our students, faculty and staff. MSU Denver commits to the recruitment and retention of a diverse and inclusive workforce. We greatly value the diverse and intersectional identities of our faculty, staff and students. We recognize that to achieve equity, diversity must include but also go beyond representation.

Objectives

- Develop comprehensive recruitment and retention strategies to diversify MSU Denver's faculty and staff.
- Utilize data tracking with respect to diversity and understand data across employee categories, especially including administrative, classified and professional staff and faculty at all ranks.
- Provide institutional resources and support for the retention and success of diverse faculty and staff members.
- Provide opportunities for professional development and growth to faculty, staff members and students centered on Access, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Ensure recruitment and retention of students through collaboration with campus partners, sharing of strategies, vetting ideas and building of resources.
- Provide the resources necessary to develop academic and support services to address issues of access, persistence and success among students of color.

Leading the Way in Latinx Servingness



32nd Annual Bridge Speaker,
Dr. Lorgia García-Peña

MSU Denver has always been committed to educational opportunity and inclusion.

In fall 2023, the University was honored for its commitment to serving Latinx students by earning the prestigious Seal of Excelencia. The seal is a national certification awarded to colleges and universities that demonstrate a robust and intentional approach to supporting Latinx student success.

This achievement is not just a badge of honor but is a testament to MSU Denver's dedication to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all students. The recognition was earned by MSU Denver through a rigorous application process highlighting the University's strategies and programs for fostering success for all students, with a focus on our Latinx population.

Earning the *Seal of Excelencia* is a significant milestone for MSU Denver; we are the first university in the state to earn the seal. It places MSU Denver among the top HSIs in the nation, setting a benchmark for other institutions to follow.

One of the foundational pillars of MSU Denver's strategy is ensuring access to higher education. The University has implemented several innovative programs to enhance enrollment rates despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, the Pathways to Possible program creates deep partnerships with local high schools, providing wrap-around support that includes career readiness and financial assistance. In fall 2022, MSU Denver admitted 4,986 Latinx students, the highest number to date, reflecting a 29.8% increase from fall 2018.

Another key initiative is the Concurrent Enrollment program, which allows high school students to take college courses at no tuition cost to students or families, thus building their confidence and giving a head start to their college careers. The Displaced Aurarian Scholarship, covering tuition and fees for families and descendants displaced from

the Auraria neighborhood to build the MSU Denver campus.

Retention of Latinx students is another critical area where MSU Denver has made significant strides. The University's Immigrant Services Program provides academic and social support to undocumented, DACA, immigrant and refugee students. The impact is evident: the retention rate from fall to spring for ISP participants was 89% in the 2021-2022 academic year, with an 85.7% retention rate for Latinx students from fall 2021 to fall 2022.

The Classroom to Career Hub (C2Hub) integrates career planning and professional development into students' academic experiences. Serving over 57% students of color, the C2Hub helps students develop career readiness skills, thereby enhancing their academic and professional trajectories. Similarly, the Teaching Assistants Program has shown that leveraging student mentors increases retention rates of students of color. From fall 2020 to spring 2022, 45.6% of teaching assistants were students of color, reflecting MSU Denver's commitment to peer support and mentorship.

Financial support is crucial for student success, and MSU Denver has excelled in providing targeted financial assistance to Latinx students. The Earn and Learn program, for example, offers supplemental funding for students participating in unpaid internships, with over 60% of participants reporting first-generation status. This initiative saw a remarkable 127% increase in the number of interns from spring 2018 to spring 2019.

Emergency funds are also a critical component of MSU Denver's support system. The Student Emergency Retention Fund and the Dreamer Emergency Fund provide vital financial assistance to students facing unforeseen challenges. In the 2021-22 academic year, 194 students were awarded \$187,930, with the majority of funds supporting housing stability.

MSU Denver's efforts to support Latinx students extend through to graduation. The TRiO Student Services program offers academic coaching, financial aid assistance and career development



opportunities. Over four years, the program has served varying numbers of students, with the highest persistence rate reaching 98%.

The Department of Chicana/o Studies plays a pivotal role in supporting Latinx students, boasting a 95% Latinx enrollment rate. The department's retention rate from fall to fall is 88%, with a 100% graduation rate for Chicana/o Studies majors, demonstrating the effectiveness of culturally relevant academic support.

MSU Denver recognizes the importance of representation among faculty and staff. As of December 2021, the University has seen a slight increase in faculty members of color, with 7% of faculty who are Latinx. The Faculty Fellows program and Association of College and University Educators Cohorts are part of the University's strategy to enhance faculty diversity and support inclusive teaching practices.

The Diversity Strategic Plan aims to diversify faculty and staff further to reflect the diverse student body MSU Denver serves. The institution also focuses on leadership representation, with 34.9% of leadership positions held by people of color, including 23.3% by Latinx leaders.

MSU Denver's journey to earning the *Seal of Excelexia* reflects a deep institutional commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for Latinx students. Through strategic initiatives in enrollment, retention, financial support and completion, the University not only supports Latinx students but enriches the entire campus community. As MSU Denver continues to implement and expand these initiatives, it serves as a model for other institutions aiming to achieve equity and excellence in higher education.



Eloté Recipe

Eloté, which is essentially Mexican street corn, has a rich history that traces back to Indigenous cultures in the Americas, particularly in the regions that are now Mexico and Central America. The term “eloté” itself comes from the Nahuatl language, which was spoken by the Aztecs, and it means “tender ear” or “corn cob.” Eloté is a versatile dish that you can adjust to suit your taste preferences. Don't be afraid to get creative and try different variations to discover your favorite way to enjoy this delicious Mexican street food.

Ingredients:

- 4 ears of fresh corn, husked
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup crumbled cotija cheese
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- 4 wooden skewers or corn holders (optional)
- 6. Use a brush or a spoon to generously coat each ear of corn with the mayonnaise-chili mixture.
- 7. Sprinkle crumbled cotija cheese over the mayo-coated corn. You can use as much or as little cheese as you like.

Instructions:

1. Preheat your grill to medium-high heat or use a stove top grill pan.
2. Skewer each corn cob with a wooden skewer or corn holder if desired; this makes it easier to handle and grill.
3. Grill the corn on all sides, turning occasionally, until it's lightly charred and cooked through. This should take about 8-10 minutes.
4. While the corn is grilling, mix the mayonnaise and chili powder in a small bowl. You can adjust the amount of chili powder to your preferred level of spiciness.
5. Once the corn is done, remove it from the grill and allow it to cool slightly.
8. Squeeze fresh lime juice over the eloté.
9. Serve your eloté hot, garnished with extra chili powder and lime wedges on the side.

Instead of serving corn on the cob, you can cut the grilled corn kernels off the cob and serve them in a cup or bowl. Mix in the mayonnaise, cheese, chili powder and lime juice then top with chopped cilantro and diced onions.

Optional Additions:

- Add some heat: Add hot sauce or crushed red pepper flakes.
- Freshen up the dish with herbs such as fresh cilantro or parsley.
- For vegan eloté substitute in vegan mayonnaise and dairy-free cheese.
- Reduce the heat by replacing the chili powder with smoked paprika.
- For a healthier option, use low-fat mayonnaise or Greek yogurt for mayonnaise.

Cultivating Community:

The Impact of Employee Affinity Groups

In addressing employee concerns from the engagement survey, MSU Denver is working to grow and develop its employee affinity groups.

These groups, which focus on diverse aspects of the University community, are becoming integral to fostering a sense of belonging, enhancing job satisfaction and improving retention among faculty and staff.

Affinity group leaders collaborated with leaders from the Provost's Office, Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Human Resources to integrate and institutionalize these groups across campus, leading to securing annual base funding — two exciting and needed steps.

The need for belonging is addressed in part through affinity groups that connect faculty and staff members over shared identities and experiences. These groups offer a vital space for members to seek support and celebrate cultural heritage.

The African American Affairs Council (AAAC) and the Latina/o/x Faculty and Staff Association (LFSA), both long-standing groups, provide platforms for Black and Latina/o/x faculty and staff to discuss their unique experiences, share strategies for overcoming barriers and celebrate their cultural identities. These groups help to mitigate feelings of isolation, particularly for those who may find themselves in the minority within their departments.

The African American Affairs Council facilitates unity, continuity and cohesiveness, addressing the intellectual, educational and social needs of the African and African American community at MSU Denver. By organizing events such as the Black, African and African American Graduation ceremonies, the council honors cultural backgrounds and celebrates academic achievements. This group fosters a communication network between the University and surrounding communities that support diversity, equity and inclusion. Additionally, they provide outreach and support for Black students, alumni and community members. Their efforts help mitigate feelings of isolation and foster a supportive environment

for African American faculty and staff members.

Beyond individual support, affinity groups are about building a community. The Asian, Pacific Islander and Desi American (APIDA) Faculty and Staff Alliance provides a sense of belonging through cultural celebrations, professional-development workshops and social gatherings. They have successfully hosted events such as Mile High Asian Food Week and the inaugural student, faculty and staff social during Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Membership remains active and continues to grow, reflecting the alliance's effectiveness in fostering community. Plans include engaging with the APIDA community across the Auraria Campus and establishing a mentoring program. Their efforts strengthen the community and support new and current APIDA faculty and staff members.

Research underscores the positive impact of affinity groups on retention and job satisfaction. A study by the American Council on Education found that employees involved in affinity groups were significantly more likely to remain at their institutions long-term. At MSU Denver, this trend is evident. The Latino/a Faculty and Staff Association has been instrumental in retaining Latino/a faculty and staff members by providing a strong support system and advocating for policies that promote inclusivity.

The Women of Color Collective aims to provide space to intentionally support and facilitate connections for faculty and staff members who identify as women of color. The collective provides a supportive and empowering community that addresses the unique experiences, challenges, and needs of women of color in the academic environment, promoting inclusivity, equity, and professional success. The Women of Color Collective plays a crucial role in promoting and supporting faculty and staff members through representation and visibility, networking and mentorship, advocacy awareness and leadership development.

The Native Nations Council is an inclusive affinity group actively promoting the traditional customs, practices, beliefs and



Faculty and Staff Barbecue
May 2024

way of life of Native people on campus. The council actively works toward creating a positive impact within the Indigenous community at MSU Denver. The council stands out for its unique culture that is deeply rooted in a strong connection to the land, recognizing that Native people are the original inhabitants of this land and supporting an environment where members feel valued, respected and empowered. The Native Nations Council fosters a sense of belonging, emphasizing sustainability with harmonious coexistence with the natural world, providing opportunities for personal and professional development.

Affinity groups also play a crucial role in professional development. The Employee Alumni Network, part of the MSU Denver Alumni Association, leverages its members' shared history to provide mentorship and career advancement opportunities. This network connects alumni who are University employees, facilitating a flow of knowledge and experience that benefits the entire institution.

One of the new groups this year is the Queer Faculty and Staff Collective. This group has created a safe and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ employees. During the 2023-24 academic year, the collective formalized the affinity group by enrolling 58 members, establishing a name and creating bylaws. The collective has three working committees and hosted four events for faculty and staff, including representing MSU Denver at Denver's Pride Parade in June. Planning for the next year is starting, and the collective looks forward to growing its membership and hosting additional events.

MSU Denver's commitment to diversity and inclusion is further demonstrated by the emergence of new affinity groups. The disabled-faculty-and-staff group, the veterans-and-women-veterans group address the unique needs of employees with disabilities and military and veteran employees respectively. The young-professional group supports those new to academia and their careers, providing support and fostering a sense of belonging from the outset of their careers.

The evolution of employee affinity groups at MSU Denver represents a significant step toward building a more inclusive and supportive environment for all faculty and staff members. These groups are not just a response to the need for diversity and inclusion; they are proactive agents of change. By fostering a sense of belonging, enhancing job satisfaction and improving retention, affinity groups help to create a more cohesive and supportive academic community.

As MSU Denver continues to support and expand these groups, the institution sets a powerful example for others in higher education. In doing so, it enriches the lives of its employees and strengthens the fabric of the entire academic community.

A Decade Committed to Excellence in Diversity



For the past 10 years, MSU Denver has been recognized as a beacon of diversity and inclusion in higher education, earning the prestigious Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award. This accolade, granted by Insight Into Diversity magazine, **celebrates colleges and universities that demonstrate an unwavering commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive campus environment.** MSU Denver's sustained recognition underscores its robust and multifaceted approach to diversity, equity and inclusion.

MSU Denver's journey with the HEED Award began a decade ago, when the University first applied, showcasing its efforts in promoting diversity and inclusion. From those early days, the University has made remarkable strides, transforming itself into a model of inclusivity.

In the early 2010s, MSU Denver's student body was predominantly white, with 21% of students identifying as Hispanic/Latinx. Today, nearly 37% of the student body identifies as Hispanic/Latinx, making MSU Denver one of the most diverse universities in Colorado. This transformation did not happen overnight but was the result of deliberate, sustained efforts to recruit and retain students from historically underrepresented groups.

One of the key drivers of this change has been the Pathways to Possible program, which creates partnerships with local high schools to provide career readiness and financial assistance. This initiative has significantly enhanced access to higher education for diverse student populations. Similarly, the Concurrent Enrollment program allows high school students to take college courses with no tuition or fee costs to the students or their families, fostering early college readiness and increasing enrollment among diverse groups.



Denver PrideFest and Parade
June 2024

Supporting students once they are on campus is equally important. The Immigrant Services Program provides academic and social support to undocumented, DACA, immigrant, and refugee students, maintaining retention from fall to spring. The Classroom to Career Hub (C2 Hub) integrates career planning and professional development into students' academic experiences, supporting our over 50% students of color and enhancing their academic and professional trajectories.

Financial assistance has also played a crucial role in MSU Denver's success. The Earn and Learn program offers supplemental funding for students participating in unpaid internships. This initiative has seen an increase in the number of interns. Emergency funds, such as the Student Emergency Retention Fund and the Dreamer Emergency Fund, provide vital financial assistance, supporting housing stability and other critical needs.

Cultural celebrations and community engagement are integral to fostering an inclusive environment.

Signature events such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast and two visiting professorships bring together the campus community to honor and learn from diverse cultural perspectives. These events, along with numerous others, have become cornerstones of MSU Denver's

commitment to diversity.

Over the years, the University has also made significant strides in diversifying its faculty and staff. The Faculty Recruitment Incentive Program and the Wilton Flemon Postdoctoral Fellowship have been instrumental in increasing the representation of underrepresented faculty members and supporting their professional development. Today, women constitute 48.8% of tenured and tenure-track faculty members and 61.3% of non-tenure-track full-time faculty members.

Institutional support and accountability have been critical to these successes. The Diversity Strategic Plan, developed by the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council, outlines ambitious goals for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion across the university. The DEIC collaborates with various campus and community stakeholders to implement and monitor these goals, ensuring that diversity efforts are data-driven and evidence-based.

Regular assessments of campus climate help identify areas for improvement. For example, MSU Denver's campus climate surveys have led to initiatives aimed at recognizing faculty and staff members for their work, thereby improving morale and fostering a more inclusive environment.

Looking ahead, MSU Denver remains committed to advancing its diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The University's Diversity Strategic Plan

outlines goals, including enhancing community partnerships, further diversifying faculty and staff, and continuously improving support services for students. By building on its past successes and remaining adaptable to new challenges, MSU Denver aims to continue being a leader in higher education diversity, equity and inclusion.

Being a 10-time recipient of the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award is a testament to MSU Denver's unwavering commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This recognition not only celebrates the University's achievements but also inspires continued efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment. As MSU Denver looks to the future, it remains dedicated to fostering a campus where diversity thrives and all students, faculty members and staff members can achieve their fullest potential.

MSU Denver's decade-long journey with the HEED Award exemplifies what it means to make diversity and inclusion a top priority. Through innovative programs, dedicated support services, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the University sets a standard for others to follow in the pursuit of equity and excellence in higher education.

Faculty Fellows Transforming MSU Denver



In the 2023-24 academic year, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion made significant strides in advancing the University's diversity, equity and inclusion goals.

Central to this progress were the efforts of six dedicated faculty fellows from various schools and colleges, whose contributions have been instrumental in enhancing faculty recruitment, retention and overall success.

The Fellows have made substantial contributions through a series of impactful projects. A notable initiative was the improvement of faculty recruitment and retention processes. Comprehensive literature reviews and diversity, equity and inclusion recruitment briefs were developed, focusing on job advertisements, strategic recruiting, committee training and hiring processes. These briefs, shared with MSU Denver leadership, provided actionable strategies that have already begun to refine the University's hiring practices. The Inclusive Faculty Hiring Working Group, co-chaired by a Fellow, played a crucial role in these enhancements.

Another significant project was the multi-year effort in the development of the Campus Climate Survey. This survey, designed to gather feedback from the University community, was developed, piloted and promoted. Its successful launch in March marked a pivotal step

in understanding and improving MSU Denver's campus climate. The preliminary data analysis is in the works but is already informing future initiatives aimed at enhancing the University environment.

The Tenure Track Supper Club was reengaged, offering crucial support to tenure-track faculty members. By developing a sustainable model and connecting it to the Roadrunner Faculty Academy, the Supper Club has seen increased participation of pre-tenure faculty members. The promotion of faculty engagement with the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity further underscores the Fellows' commitment to professional development.

The enhancement of EDI scholarship was another area where the EDI Faculty Fellows made a significant impact. By synthesizing articles into the EDI framework and developing briefs and surveys to support faculty retention and recruitment, the Fellows provided valuable insights that are shaping the University's strategic initiatives. Their leadership in DEIC subcommittees and organization of BIPOC gatherings have fostered a supportive community for diverse faculty and reinforced diverse hiring practices.

Affinity groups across campus received renewed support and attention, thanks to the efforts of the EDI Faculty Fellows. By assessing their needs and advocating for dedicated support, these groups have been strengthened, ensuring

their continued impact on campus. The development of a BIPOC Affinity Mentoring program, including identifying potential mentors and facilitating preliminary work, is set to provide even greater support to faculty and staff members.

Throughout the year, the EDI Faculty Fellows have significantly advanced MSU Denver's strategic goals by facilitating inclusive practices, conducting research and analysis, engaging with stakeholders and supporting affinity groups. Their efforts have created a more supportive and inclusive environment for faculty and staff across campus.

The efforts of the EDI Faculty Fellows have laid a strong foundation for continued progress in equity, diversity, and inclusion at MSU Denver. Their work underscores the importance of collaboration, research and community engagement in advancing these critical goals. The contributions of the EDI Faculty Fellows at the University will continue to inspire and inform efforts to create a more inclusive and equitable campus environment.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion remains committed to supporting these efforts and ensuring that EDI principles are integrated into all aspects of University life. The continued dedication and expertise of the EDI Faculty Fellows will be instrumental in achieving these goals and fostering a culture of inclusivity at MSU Denver.



The Departments of Africana Studies and Art at MSU Denver host RAPTivisit, Aisha Fukushima, for an evening performance during the Black World Conference as part of the Music, Race and Social Justice Visiting Artist Series.

Advancing Justice and Cultivating Solidarity



Left to Right:
Marie Mora, Ph.D. Interim Provost
Chalane Lechuga, Ph.D. Professor of Chicana/o Studies
Nancy Lopez, Ph.D., 2023 Richard T. and Virginia M. Castro Distinguished Visiting Professor

“Don’t let anyone rob you of your rights or your joy. Don’t wait for the money to take action. Ask who’s afraid of keeping the data.”

Nancy Lopez, Ph.D.

Metropolitan State University of Denver’s Department of Chicana/o Studies and Office of Diversity and Inclusion welcomed Nancy López, Ph.D., professor of Sociology at the University of New Mexico, as the 2023 Richard T. and Virginia M. Castro Distinguished Visiting Professor. López’s visit was a significant event, challenging attendees to rethink their perspectives on race and intersectionality and to take actionable steps toward advancing justice.

López began her keynote address by highlighting her three guiding cultural truths: “Don’t let anyone rob you of your rights or your joy. Don’t wait for the money to take action. Ask who’s afraid of keeping the data.” These principles framed her discussion, setting a critical and engaging tone for the evening.

As the co-founder of the Institute for the Study of “Race” and Social Justice

and the New Mexico Statewide Race, Gender, Class Data Policy Consortium, López shared insights from her research, including her 2003 book “Hopeful Girls, Troubled Boys: Race and Gender Disparity in Urban Education.” Her work illustrates the significant variations in graduation rates when considering race, socioeconomic status and gender together. “We have to talk about place, space and history. That includes race, class, and gender — we have to look at it all together,” she emphasized.

López critiqued the limitations of traditional statistical analyses that often fail to capture the complexities of intersectional identities. She argued for an ethical commitment to addressing equity gaps and making the invisible visible. “There’s a visceral opposition to looking at the simultaneity of all elements together,” she noted. “What are you afraid you’ll learn?”

In her discussion of “street race” — a person’s perceived racial status — López examined how the U.S. census conflates race with ethnicity and country of origin, thus obscuring intersectionality. She referenced localized survey results indicating that one in every five participants identified simply as “brown,” highlighting the need for more nuanced questions about race and identity. “Why has there been such a push to test questions that don’t use the word ‘race’?” she asked. “What does that mean when assuming Latinidad can only look one way?”

López concluded by urging attendees to identify personal action items for advancing justice, reflecting on their domains of influence. She encouraged the cultivation of flexible solidarity, the navigation of resistance to change, and the advancement of intersectionality in inquiry and practice. “It’s not just curriculum; it’s pedagogy,” she asserted. “It’s ‘both and.’ The difference is centering cultural wealth and creating community, love, and compassion.”

López’s visit to MSU Denver provided the audience with valuable insights and actionable steps to foster equity and inclusion, reinforcing the University’s commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion.

Energizing MSU Denver With Dance and Social Justice

MSU Denver experienced an extraordinary week as Cleo Parker Robinson, a luminary in dance and social justice, took center stage as the 2024 Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professor.

Robinson's presence transformed the campus into a hub of cultural celebration and profound dialogue, underscoring the University's dedication to diversity and community engagement.

Robinson, renowned for her role as the founder and artistic director of the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble, has built a career intertwining the art of dance with social activism. Her visit to MSU Denver was a testament to her life's mission of using movement to inspire and unify people across all walks of life. The theme for this year's professorship, "Uplifting Community Through Movement," perfectly encapsulated her philosophy and the spirit she brought to the University.

The series of events kicked off with a vibrant keynote address in which Robinson shared her journey and the pivotal moments that shaped her as an artist and activist. Growing up during the Jim Crow era, Robinson learned to channel her experiences into a powerful form of expression. She spoke passionately about the significance of dance as a tool for social change, emphasizing that "movement is a right that everyone deserves." Her words resonated deeply with the audience, igniting a collective resolve to continue the fight for equality and justice.

A standout moment of Robinson's visit was the masterclass she conducted with MSU Denver's Dance Program. This wasn't just a dance lesson; it was an immersion into the philosophy that has guided her work for decades. Students were not only taught dance techniques but were encouraged to explore the emotional and spiritual dimensions of movement. Robinson's mantra, "One Spirit, Many Voices," came alive as students of diverse backgrounds found common ground through the art of dance. The energy in the room was palpable as Robinson seamlessly blended instruction with inspiration, leaving a lasting impact on every participant.



Robinson's influence extends far beyond the dance studio. She has been a relentless advocate for bringing the arts to underprivileged and marginalized communities. Her numerous accolades, including the Kennedy Center Master of African American Choreography honor and the National Medal of Arts, are a testament to her tireless work and the transformative power of her artistry. Her visit to MSU Denver was a celebration of Rachel Noel's legacy and an opportunity for the University community to engage with a living legend.

The Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorship, established in 1981 to honor the legacy of civil-rights leader Rachel B. Noel, continues to bring remarkable individuals such as Robinson to MSU Denver. This year's events were a vibrant blend of performances, workshops and lectures that highlighted the intersection of art and activism. Robinson's tenure as the Distinguished Visiting Professor not only honored Noel's legacy but reinforced MSU Denver's commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment.

The collaboration between Cleo Parker Robinson Dance and the University's Dance Program is a unique partnership that bridges professional dance with academic excellence. Students benefit from this synergy, gaining hands-on

experience with seasoned professionals while earning academic credit. This partnership exemplifies MSU Denver's innovative approach to education, where the arts are integral to the broader mission of social justice and community-building.

Robinson's visit culminated in a community performance that brought together people from all over Denver. The performance was a powerful demonstration of how dance can transcend cultural and social barriers, creating a shared experience that unites everyone in the audience. As the final notes of the music faded, the sense of solidarity and hope was unmistakable, a fitting conclusion to a series of events that left an indelible mark on all who attended.

Cleo Parker Robinson's time at MSU Denver was more than a visit; it was a vibrant celebration of the arts, a profound engagement with social justice issues, and a powerful reminder of the University's role in fostering a diverse and inclusive community. Her influence will be felt long after the applause has died down, inspiring future generations to dance, advocate, and create with the same passion and dedication she has shown throughout her illustrious career.

Celebration of Legacy and Activism at MSU Denver



Each year, MSU Denver celebrates the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with the highly anticipated Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast. This event, which has become a powerful convergence of voices calling for justice and equality, exemplifies MSU Denver's commitment to diversity and social change.

The breakfast took place at the Tivoli Turnhalle, drawing a full house of attendees eager to engage in meaningful dialogue and reflection. This year's theme, "Fight the Power," resonated deeply with the attendees, reflecting the enduring relevance of Dr. King's message in today's social and political climate.



A highlight of the event was the Black History 101 Mobile Museum, founded by Khalid el-Hakim, Ph.D (pictured at left). This mobile museum captivated attendees with its dynamic displays on black history and the evolution of music into hip-hop. El-Hakim’s insights on societal progress added depth to the museum’s visual impact, engaging the audience in a profound exploration of Black heritage and its continuing influence.

Adding to the event’s resonance, Maryum “May May” Ali, daughter of legendary boxer and activist Muhammad Ali, shared inspiring stories about her father’s legacy and her own impactful work in social justice. Her narratives of resilience and activism served as a poignant reminder of the personal and communal power inherent in the fight for equality.

The highlight of the event was the powerful words of Professor Griff, co-founder of seminal hip-hop group Public Enemy. His perspectives on systemic challenges and historical racial inequities energized the crowd, sparking a renewed commitment to advocacy. Professor Griff’s presence brought a direct connection to the event’s theme, “Fight the Power,” a phrase that has become an indelible part of American culture through Public Enemy’s iconic song of the same name. His discourse on the music industry and social responsibility within hip-hop culture was enlightening and motivating.

The event also recognized three outstanding community leaders with the MLK Peace Award, honoring their contributions to promoting peace, justice, diversity, equality, and social change. This year’s awardees were John Bailey, a community leader; Amber Mozet, an MSU Denver graduate and advocate; and Alfonzo Porter, a posthumous honoree who significantly impacted the MSU Denver community and beyond.

The MLK Peace Breakfast not only commemorates the life and philosophy of Dr. King but serves as a call to action for all attendees. It unites the MSU Denver community in the collective pursuit of equality and justice, reinforcing the University’s dedication to fostering an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion leads, collaborates with and engages with many of the efforts outlined in this report. We know this is a team effort with all the partners across MSU Denver: the staff, faculty and students who have made this work possible.

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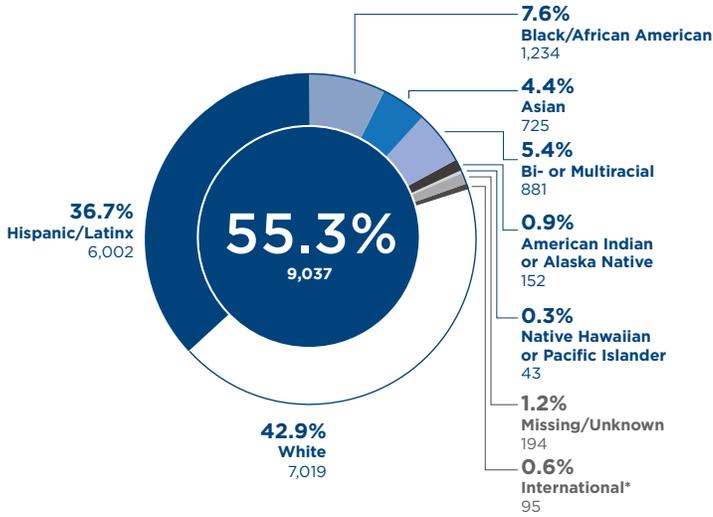
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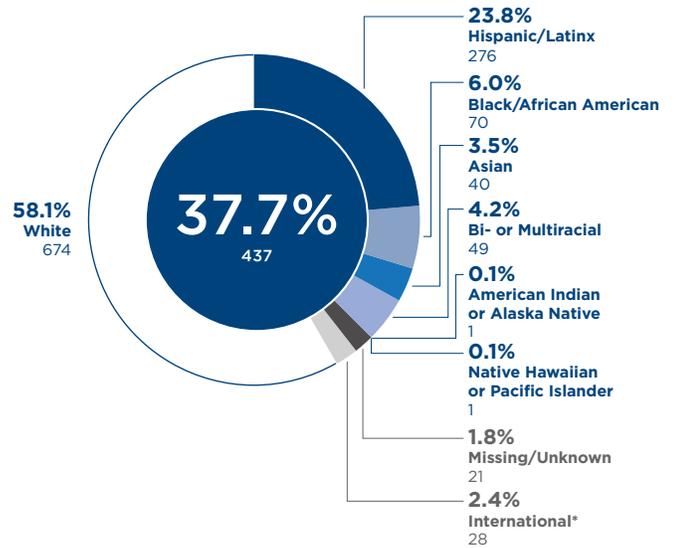
¹Graduated 2024

Demographic Profile

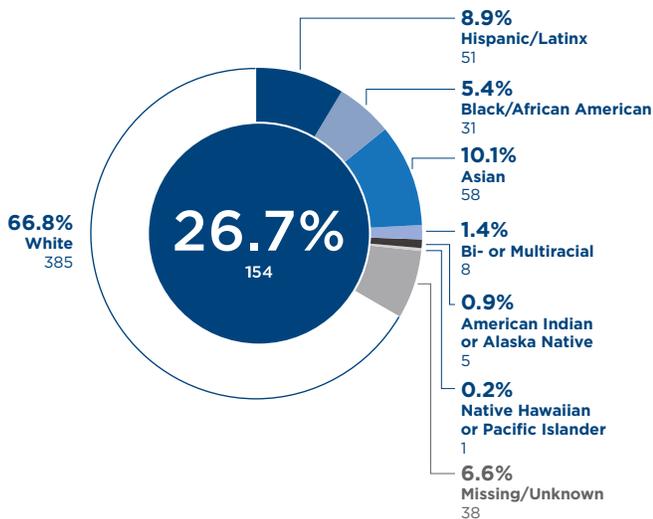
Undergraduate Students of Color



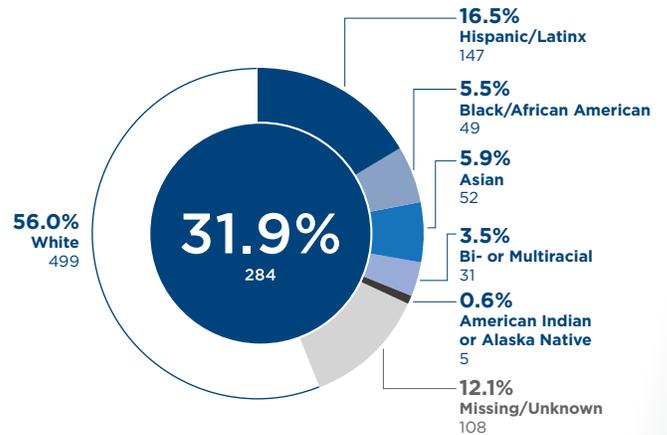
Graduate Students of Color



Full-time Faculty of Color



Full-time Staff of Color



* "International" and "Missing/Unknown" statistics are not included in total people of color count.
 No Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander full-time staff members recorded.
 All Statistics accurate as of Fall 2023.



2024-25 Equity Events

2024

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September

Latinx Heritage Month: Sept. 15 - Oct. 15

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October

LGBTQIA+ History Month

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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November

Native and Indigenous People's Heritage Month

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Dream.US Open House	August 2
Orientación Familiar	August 3
Native-Indigenous Student Orientation	August 14
Convocation	August 15
First day of Fall Semester	August 19
Welcome Week	August 19-22
LGBTQ Student Resource Center Kickoff	August 21
Community Collab Summit	August 23
First-Generation Campus Welcome	August 27
Welcome Back Paleta Party	August 28
Sister Circles: Coffee and Chat	September 9
Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC)	September 10
Sister Circles: Coffee and Chat	September 11
HSI Week	September 16-20
Latinx Heritage Month Celebration of Culture	September 16
Constitution Day/ National Voter Registration Day	September 17
Movie Night - A Million Miles Away	September 18
Cocina de los Correcaminos - Tamales	September 18
HSI Servingness Reception	September 19
Colorado HSI Summit	September 20
Viva Southwest Mariachi Festival	September 20
ChicanXs and Palestine: History and Solidarity	October 2
Castro Professorship	October 8
Native-Indigenous Community Author Event	October 8-9
Annual Critical Discussion on Race	October 8-9
"Stand with Immigrants" Day of Action	October 9
Coming Out Day Brunch	October 10
UndocuResource Day for Educators	October 11
Latinx Heritage Month Food Demo: Gorditas	October 15
Sister Circles: Engaging with Politics	October 23
3rd Annual Women and Gender in Leadership Summit	October 25
Día De Los Muertos	October 30
Native Indigenous Heritage Month Kickoff	November 4
Election Day: Watch Party	November 5
Veterans Day Resource Fair and Ceremony	November 11
Honoring our Native American Veterans	November 12
Sister Circles: Stay-A-Float	November 18
Native Identity and the Three Facets to It	November 19
Transgender Day of Remembrance	November 20
First-Generation Graduation	December 2
Lavender Graduation Ceremony	December 3
Latinx Graduation	December 4
Native Indigenous Graduation Celebration	December 6
Black, African and African American Graduation	December 10
Veteran Graduation Ceremony	December 12
University Commencement	December 13



University Events



Holidays and Observances

- 2 Equity Event
- 3 Multiple Equity Events
- 4 University Event

2025

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February						
Black History Month						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March						
Women's History Month						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April						
Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

(MSU Denver Observes AAPI Heritage Month in April)

May						
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- 2 Equity Event
- 3 Multiple Equity Events
- 4 University Event



MLK Peace Breakfast	January 17
MLK Parade	January 20
Welcome Week	January 21-23
LGBTQ SRC Open House	January 28
Black History Month Kickoff	February 4
Sister Circles: Yoga and Henna	February 10
Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC)	February 12
42nd Annual Black World Conference	February 18-19
33rd Bridge Speaker	February 27
Black History Month - Culture Night	February 28
Women's History Month Kickoff	March 4
LGBTQ Event	March 5
Ramadan: Classroom Inclusivity and Cultural Understanding	March 6
AAHHE Conference	March 7-8
Greek Week	March 10-14
Sister Circles: Tea Time	March 12
Transgender Day of Visibility	March 31
AAPI Heritage Month Kickoff	April 1
1Book/1Project/2Transform Keynote	April 2
AAPI Heritage Month Networking Event	April 8
Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC)	April 10
Men of Color Leadership Summit	April 11
Sister Circles: End of Year Celebration	April 18
OSILA Gala	April 22
AAPI Graduation Celebration	April 29
Lavender Graduation Ceremony	April 30
Native Indigenous Graduation Celebration	May 2
4th Annual Auraria Powwow	May 3
Latinx Graduation	May 7
Veteran Graduation Ceremony	May 15
University Commencement	May 16
Dreamer Graduation	TBD



MSU
DENVER
Office of
Diversity
and Inclusion

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**Equity,
Diversity
and
Inclusion
Report**
2023



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Land and Labor Acknowledgment



We honor and acknowledge that we are on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Nations. We acknowledge the land and history of this space we are fortunate to gather in today. This area was also the site of trade, hunting, gathering and healing for many other Native Nations: the Lakota, Ute, Kiowa, Comanche, Apache, Shoshone and others. Forty-eight tribes have called this land home. We recognize the Indigenous peoples as the original stewards of the land, water, plants and animals who called this place home.

Let us also acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory. We recognize that U.S. public policy has been used to displace Indigenous communities, erode Tribal Nation sovereignty and forcibly assimilate Native individuals into U.S. society. We respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land on which we gather. We pay our respects and give thanks to all Tribal Nations and the ancestors of this place.

We also acknowledge the labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants who worked this stolen land for the colonists and who continue to disproportionately face economic oppression, racism, violence and exploitation.

Lastly, we want to recognize the communities and families of Auraria displaced by the creation of this campus for Metropolitan State University of Denver to have a place that we now call home. We share this acknowledgment to encourage all of us here on the Auraria Campus to consider how our work in this space and in our daily lives can address these historic and contemporary atrocities perpetuated against Native people and other marginalized communities.

President's Message

At Metropolitan State University of Denver, equity, diversity and inclusion are not tasks we assign to specific departments or employees but are elements of our University's DNA. We define ourselves by whom we include, not whom we exclude. Some 54% of the undergraduate students educated by MSU Denver are people of color, making us one of the most culturally rich and diverse communities in the state.

Just enrolling a diverse student population is not enough, however. The true measure of our success is how we serve our students, helping them meet their personal goals, get good jobs and improve their lives. EDI is a pillar of our 2030 Strategic Plan and is woven into everything we do.

Thus, I am thrilled to share that MSU Denver has just earned the Seal of Excelencia, a national certification that recognizes universities for intentionally serving Latino students and for demonstrating positive student outcomes. MSU Denver is one of fewer than 40 institutions nationally to ever earn the seal from public-policy nonprofit Excelencia in Education, which awards universities that strive to go beyond enrollment and more intentionally serve Latina/o/x students to become institutions where they thrive. It is the culmination of a rigorous verification process, and I recently had the opportunity to interview with Excelencia in Education alongside other campus leaders to discuss the important work we do to serve our students, many examples of which you will find in this report.



It serves as validation that what we are doing at MSU Denver matters, for students and their families and for Colorado, and that we are headed in the right direction as a university. And it serves as motivation for all of us to build on this work so that we can serve students even better. Thank you to everyone who works to make MSU Denver an equitable, diverse and inclusive university for all of our students!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janine Davidson".

Janine Davidson, Ph.D.

President

Metropolitan State University of Denver



Message from the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion



The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is excited to publish MSU Denver's 2023 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report. This report highlights the array of equity, diversity and inclusion efforts and initiatives from within the office and across the University.

At MSU Denver, equity, diversity and inclusion are truly integral threads weaved into the institutional fabric. Part of the role of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is to support and promote equity, diversity and inclusion as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and Minority Serving Institution (HSI/MSI). This includes supporting our faculty, staff and students and assuring that all faculty and staff members understand that we all play a role in, and contribute to, advancing this work. Anyone interested can play a significant role in leading and shaping an institutional culture of belonging and inclusivity. "Diversity" is not a word we throw around casually. Diversity is who MSU Denver is in all its richness dating to its foundation.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are core values of MSU Denver and serve as one of the five pillars of the University's 2030 Strategic Plan. These core values are also intentionally integrated into each of the four other pillars. At MSU Denver, we lean into our institutional mission, with access and cultivation at the forefront of our conversations. We understand well whom we serve and how we need to serve to assure inclusive excellence and student success.

MSU Denver continues to demonstrate through our actions our commitment to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion. This includes our aim to become a national model Hispanic-Serving Institution; continued effort to integrate culturally responsive methods and processes into the institution's teaching and practice; and review of policies to assure that they are aligned with our mission to serve students first. The University is one year into the development of the Diversity Strategic Plan, which outlines our goals and objectives and operationalizes Pillar IV of the 2030 Strategic Plan. The progress we have made, as you will read in this report, is obvious. From supporting faculty diversity success and offering robust opportunities for staff and faculty development to aligning these efforts to student servingness and eventual student success, MSU Denver continues to elevate



and further permeate our core values. We believe everyone is deserving of support and the opportunity to grow and thrive.

Through avenues such as our Faculty Fellows initiative, Equip Inclusive, the Teaching Assistants program, ESCALA courses, two distinguished visiting professorships and many other efforts across the University highlighted in this report, MSU Denver continues to lead the way in innovative thinking and engagement toward positive impact and promising outcomes. Our signature programs bring renowned scholars and leaders from a variety of disciplinary and scholarly backgrounds, connecting to our Denver and campus communities by collaborating with school districts and community organizations. Our office takes pride in celebrating this incredible work by continuing to support the University's affinity groups, programs and conferences, cultural performances, graduation ceremonies and growth opportunities for our campus community.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion takes pride in our ongoing and demonstrated commitment to supporting, funding and elevating campus and community initiatives through sponsorships, grants and cross-functional collaboration to advance equity, diversity and inclusion. It is through these actions and the initiatives detailed in this report that we demonstrate student servingness and our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. At MSU Denver, we don't just talk the talk; we model what we expect from our campus community through transparency and accountability to our mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Benitez Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Benitez Jr., Ph.D.,
Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion
Metropolitan State University of Denver

Important Terms

Equity

Historically and politically, equity refers to the process of creating equivalent outcomes for members of historically underrepresented and oppressed groups. Equity is about ending systemic discrimination against people based on their identity and background, and it focuses on building areas where gaps exist on institutional needs to achieve diversity and inclusion.

Diversity

Conceptualizing diversity through an equity and inclusion understanding provides focus on the social representations and institutional processes that cause groups or individuals to be systematically excluded from full participation in higher education. It also relates to the understanding that benefits for some groups are embedded in the organizational aspects of the University. This includes not only social identities and characteristics but processes such as design of curriculum, admissions policies and practices, hiring practices, budgeting, tenure decisions and any other day-to-day business decisions made within the institution.

Inclusion

Inclusion exists when traditionally marginalized individuals and groups feel a sense of belonging and are empowered to participate in majority culture as full and valued members of the community, shaping and redefining that culture in different ways.

HSI Servingness

Using the Multidimensional Framework of Servingness at HSIs by Garcia, Núñez and Sansone (2019), MSU Denver defines servingness as being conceptualized by indicators of serving as well as structures for serving. Indicators of serving include academic and non-academic outcomes that may be measured by HSIs, including but not limited to persistence, graduation, course completion, leadership identity, critical consciousness and civic engagement (Garcia et al., 2019). Students' overlapping experiences tied to each of these outcomes contribute to their overall sense of belonging and support (Garcia et al., 2019). As a result, servingness at an HSI is partially identified through actively fostering a culturally affirming environment for students through the creation and implementation of mentoring and support programs as well as cultural celebrations on campus.

Structures for serving then come into place as the additional definition of servingness. Structures for serving include organizational transformations to better serve Latina/o/x students. Such transformations include HSI grant activities, decision-making processes, equity-minded leadership practices and policies, engagement with the community, etc. (Garcia et al., 2019). In practice, MSU Denver identifies servingness as an intentional transition of organizational structures through use of resources and programming. MSU Denver will learn with and from existing model HSIs to implement promising practices of servingness. Race and ethnicity must also be considered to fully identify the HSI mission for servingness. While it is inherent that there is no singular approach to serve the needs of students, servingness must therefore be multidimensional and race-conscious in application to serve diverse populations intentionally and adequately.

Diversity Strategic Plan



Metropolitan State University of Denver's Diversity Strategic Plan (DSP) serves as a road map to continue to address, strengthen and advance equity, diversity and inclusion within the campus community. The DSP was crafted by the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council (DEIC), a University-wide group established in spring 2020, comprising close to 80 staff members, faculty members, students, alumni and community leaders.

The DEIC is charged with examining equity, diversity and inclusion issues at MSU Denver cross-functionally, with respect to policy and practice from multiple perspectives. The DEIC works collaboratively with MSU Denver campus constituents, broader community members and additional stakeholders, as appropriate, to engage strategic and action-oriented conversations.

This summary provides an overview of the efforts that the council and its subcommittees have undertaken. The DEIC is committed to embodying diversity and mending internal and external inequities through community mending and engagement. The DEIC prioritizes diversifying the faculty, staff and student body, using data-driven strategies for recruitment, retention and success. The DEIC values professional development and campus climate cultivation and leans on our anchor mission and modified-open-access institutional identity, cultivating partnerships and relationships with surrounding communities that the University serves.

Part of the DEIC's charge includes the development and implementation of the institution's Diversity Strategic Plan. That means reviewing existing efforts aimed at enhancing equity, diversity and inclusion in representation and practice; developing goals and objectives under the auspices of the University's 2030 Strategic Plan Pillar IV; and working closely with Strategy and Business Intelligence to develop a set of metrics to measure and assure accountability and transparency.

During spring 2020, the DEIC established a steering committee and created four subcommittees each charged with examining different parts of the University within the context of equity, diversity and

inclusion. That included access, recruitment and retention; community-mending and outreach; HSI servingness; and institutional culture and climate.

The Campus Climate Cultivation Committee strives for an inclusive institutional culture aligned with the University's mission, promoting positive change by aligning institutional goals with equity, diversity and inclusion, addressing policy gaps and using data for evidence-based practices. This committee is also charged with the implementation of our campus-climate survey. The HSI Servingness Committee examines HSI servingness practices to help improve and strengthen grant processes; the implementation of effective practices and benchmark promising strategies; involving and informing stakeholders; advocating for funding and initiatives; and staying knowledgeable about HSI-related matters. The Recruitment, Retention and Success Committee reviews student, staff and faculty data and aims to see how we can continue to strengthen efforts focused on assuring employee and student access through an equity lens. The Community Mending Committee focuses on mending and engagement with a focus on addressing harm caused by the University and society while building partnerships and relationships with specific communities.

The collaborative work of the DEIC has led to the development of goals, strategies and actionable steps. Challenges include navigating legislation and ensuring scope boundaries. Continued collaboration, data-driven decisions and a focus on equity and inclusion are vital for implementing and achieving the plan's goals. MSU Denver aims to become a national model for diversity and inclusion in higher education.

Between 2020 and spring 2022, the DEIC hosted numerous campus student, faculty and staff forums for campus members to offer voice and input in the process; met with all division and academic-branch leadership teams; and engaged deeply with institutional and campus-climate survey data. The Diversity Strategic Plan was presented to the Board of Trustees in March 2022, and the plan was endorsed and formalized.

Diversity Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

1

Inclusivity and Campus Climate Cultivation

We intentionally foster and sustain a welcoming and diverse University community that strives for structural diversity and belongingness and cultivates, nurtures and sustains a culture of inclusive teaching, learning and practice, based on the principles of equity, inclusion, access and anti-racism.

Objectives

- Collaborate with administrative and academic units to ensure that equity, diversity, inclusion and access practices are integrated into the unit's goals and align with University priorities.
- Acknowledge and address equity and accountability gaps in policy and practice.
- Actively engage in the ongoing assessment of campus climate and culture to identify and address areas for improvement and disseminate and communicate findings with the campus community.
- Analyze data-driven and evidence-based recommendations to develop and implement appropriate actions with campus stakeholders.

2

Community Connections and Engagement

We deliberately develop new relationships, strengthen existing relationships and heal broken relationships. We build mutually beneficial collaborations that promote just transformation and further the educational and civic aims of the University and broader communities.

Objectives

- Engage in reflection to uncover and actively reconcile past and present injustices perpetuated by structural racism and systemic inequities impacting marginalized communities.
- Identify and evaluate the inequities and barriers within our social and operational structures by engaging with metro Denver and broader communities.
- Invest resources in and create a sustainable infrastructure for the implementation of strategies to mend past/current harm and create a positive impact, such as community wealth-building, investing in and supporting local communities and recognizing and responding to local issues and inequities.
- Identify areas for ongoing cultivation and strengthening of community relations and mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations.
- Ensure that aspects of marketing and communication, such as web presence to external relations, create a more inclusive, accessible and welcoming digital environment for MSU Denver and broader communities.



3

HSI Servingness

As a recently designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, we strive to become a national-model HSI, serving as a preferred choice for students and meeting the needs of a growing Latina/o/x student population in Colorado. We provide the resources necessary to develop academic and support services to address issues of access, persistence and success.

Objectives

- Inform policymakers and other stakeholders about HSI issues and advocate for enhanced funding and new initiatives, programs and services.
- Maintain expertise about laws, regulations, policies, issues and trends pertaining to HSI funding, programs and designation.
- Strengthen the process and criteria for the identification, review and prioritization of HSI/MSI grants and provide support for the implementation of grants awarded.
- Research and benchmark promising practices at HSI/MSI institutions for consideration.

4

Recruitment, Retention and Success

Diversify our faculty, staff and student body to better reflect the diverse communities we serve and commit to retaining and sustaining diversity among our students, faculty and staff. MSU Denver commits to the recruitment and retention of a diverse and inclusive workforce. We greatly value the diverse and intersectional identities of our faculty, staff and students. We recognize that to achieve equity, diversity must include but also go beyond representation.

Objectives

- Develop comprehensive recruitment and retention strategies to diversify MSU Denver's faculty and staff.
- Utilize data tracking with respect to diversity and understand data across employee categories, especially including administrative, classified and professional staff and faculty at all ranks.
- Utilize data tracking with respect to diversity and understand data across employee categories, especially including administrative, classified and professional staff and faculty at all ranks.
- Provide institutional resources and support for the retention and success of diverse faculty and staff members.
- Provide opportunities for professional development and growth to faculty, staff members and students centered on Access, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Ensure recruitment and retention of students through collaboration with campus partners, sharing of strategies, vetting ideas and building of resources.
- Provide the resources necessary to develop academic and support services to address issues of access, persistence and success among students of color.

Building Bridges of Inclusivity



In the heart of MSU Denver lies an unwavering commitment to fostering a University community that embraces diversity and inclusivity. Guided by the principles of equity, access and anti-racism, the institution is forging ahead with a multifaceted approach to create an environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging. As we delve into the remarkable initiatives and programs that exemplify MSU Denver's dedication to equity and inclusion, it becomes evident that this institution is setting new standards for cultivating a thriving campus climate of inclusive excellence.

Breaking Barriers and Enabling Accessibility

The Philosophy Department and the Health Center at Auraria have set an inspiring example by taking proactive steps to enhance accessibility on campus. Using summer revenues, the Philosophy Department installed an Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)-compatible entrance, allowing students, faculty members and staff members with mobility challenges to navigate the department offices with ease. Simultaneously, the Health Center at Auraria introduced door-assist mechanisms in restrooms, ensuring that these spaces are welcoming and accessible to all.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the Forefront of Learning

MSU Denver's Department of Psychological Sciences has shown commendable dedication to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion. Establishing a dedicated EDI committee comprising faculty members and a student advisory group, the department demonstrated its recognition of the importance of student input. By conducting a comprehensive EDI survey among Psychology and Human Development majors, the department obtained invaluable insights. Using this data-driven approach, the faculty received recommendations to increase teaching- and research-assistant opportunities for diverse and online students. Additionally, the department introduced an EDI faculty-development program to address concerns raised by students, effectively fostering an inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, the formation of the Psychology EDI student club allows student voices to be actively represented.

MSU Denver provides a culturally responsive and student-centered educational experience.

Disrupting Inequality

The School of Education's "Disrupting Inequality" initiative is an ambitious endeavor aimed at supporting traditionally underrepresented students. By implementing integrated supports and recognizing the need for a multifaceted approach, the program seeks to address historical inequalities. Similarly, the Department of Nursing is taking steps to become more equitable, diverse and inclusive by examining hiring practices, faculty development, admissions procedures and policies from an equity perspective. These concerted efforts ensure that MSU Denver provides a culturally responsive and student-centered educational experience. The School of Hospitality promotes equity, diversity and inclusion through fostering open dialogue and understanding among faculty and staff. By actively participating in EDI discussions as part of team-building events and celebrating diverse holidays, the school honors colleagues from various cultures and backgrounds.

Inclusivity in the Workplace

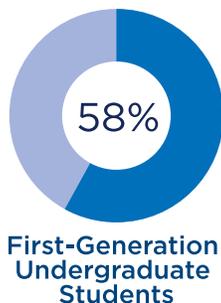
MSU Denver is embracing inclusivity within its workforce through a collaboration between the Human Resources Office and the LGBTQ Student Resource Center. By introducing the "x" marker as an option in the legal-sex field in Workday, the University takes a significant stride in respecting and acknowledging the diverse identities of its population.

Cultivating a Community of Inclusion

At the heart of promoting student equity and inclusion on campus is the Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion. Through co-curricular activities, leadership programs and community development, the CMEI fosters a student-centered, accessible and intersectional experience. Emphasizing scholarly research, culturally responsive programming and student-based activities, the CMEI prioritizes practical application to ensure that inclusivity remains at the forefront.

MSU Denver's Equity Training Series, led by equity-minded students, offers a yearlong initiative engaging students in conversations surrounding social justice and racial equity. The Equity Peer Leaders group further addresses equity and social-justice issues on campus, promoting a common language and vocabulary related to equity-minded student leadership.

MSU Denver's First-Generation Initiatives program serves as a beacon of support and resources for current first-generation students. By raising awareness, increasing retention rates and promoting graduation, this initiative empowers first-generation students throughout their academic journey.



Met Media, a student-led multimedia outlet, plays a crucial role in preparing MSU Denver students for successful careers in communications. Through partnerships with the Auraria Campus and Front Range communities, Met Media elevates student voices, journalistic integrity, cultural diversity and community engagement, providing protected forums for students to share their experiences and perspectives.

MSU Denver's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion shines through its impressive array of programs and initiatives. By integrating these practices into departmental goals, actively assessing campus climate and utilizing data-driven recommendations, the University is building a culture of inclusivity. With collaborative efforts driving progress, MSU Denver is shaping a future where every student, faculty member and staff member can flourish. As the institution continues its journey toward equity and anti-racism, these changemaking initiatives will serve as cornerstones for a more inclusive and unified community.

Immigrant Services Program

In a corner of the Jordan Student Success Building, a remarkable program is quietly making changes in the lives of immigrant and undocumented students. Meet the Immigrant Services Program, an extraordinary force that provides unwavering support and guidance, ensuring that dreams have no borders.

The Immigrant Services Program serves as a lifeline, bridging the gap between academic and social needs. With its dedicated team of three full-time staff members and three peer mentors, the Immigrant Services Program offers a personalized touch to every student who walks through its doors. The program excels in cultivating an environment that embraces inclusivity and propels students toward success by offering support in areas such as financial-aid applications, the admissions process and academic-writing guidance.

Beyond the routine, ISP champions the hopes and aspirations of those who often face unique challenges. Twice a month, the program hosts information sessions that connect students, staff members and community members with experienced immigration attorneys. In these confidential one-on-one sessions, fears are eased, questions are answered and the path toward legal security becomes clearer. These sessions, held virtually, become the steppingstones to a brighter future.

ISP's impact resonates far beyond the borders of the campus. With a fierce determination to uplift the next generation, the program collaborates with Colorado high schools to create workshops for immigrant-background students and their parents. These workshops unlock the door to higher education, empowering families with knowledge and hope. Through these powerful engagements, ISP fuels the dreams of young minds, sparking the belief that college is not a distant fantasy but is an achievable reality.

One of ISP's crowning achievements is the annual Dreamer Graduation, a celebration that recognizes the remarkable resilience and accomplishments of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and undocumented students. With joyous laughter and proud tears, the ceremony honors these trailblazers as they cross the stage, their

families by their side. The event radiates a spirit of unity and triumph, weaving unforgettable memories and forging lifelong connections.

Recognizing the entrepreneurial spirit within its students, the program organizes workshops that open doors to career opportunities for students without work authorization. As employers, students and community members gather, a collective energy fills the room, birthing dreams of self-sufficiency and financial independence. With every workshop, ISP propels these budding entrepreneurs toward a future where dreams and livelihoods intertwine.

The program extends their reach, connecting undocumented individuals and families across the state with vital services through innovative web and phone platforms. By collaborating with service providers, ISP ensures that the underserved have access to the support they need, empowering them to navigate a challenging system with confidence and dignity.

As the threat of uncertainty looms, DACA renewal grants provide a lifeline, ensuring that dreams are not shattered by administrative obstacles. With financial burdens eased, students can focus on their studies, nourishing their aspirations and embracing a future filled with promise.

ISP's impact is not just in the numbers, though — it's in the stories that unfold within events such as film panels that evoke deep emotions, postcard events that foster empathy and gatherings that strengthen bonds within the immigrant community. Through every speaker, every shared experience and every amplified voice, the program sparks a fire within students that fuels their determination to transcend boundaries and make their mark on the world.

The program's story is one of resilience, compassion and empowerment. It breaks barriers, demolishes stereotypes and builds bridges toward a brighter tomorrow. At MSU Denver, dreams have no boundaries, and with the Immigrant Services Program leading the way, a new generation of leaders is rising, ready to shape a world that embraces diversity and champions the power of dreams.

From Refugee to Changemaker



On the bustling campus of MSU Denver, amid the thousands of students moving between classes, is a remarkable young woman whose journey embodies the true spirit of resilience and determination. Meet Rosha Adhikari, a senior with a major in Biology and a minor in Chemistry. Her inspiring tale is a testament to the power of education and the unwavering resolve to create a better life for herself and her community.

Rosha's story begins in Nepal, where she was raised before embarking on a life-changing journey to the United States in search of a brighter future. Arriving as refugees in 2012, Rosha and her family faced numerous challenges, including adapting to a new culture and language. Initially, the language barrier proved to be a significant hurdle, isolating Rosha from her peers. Nevertheless, she faced these obstacles head-on, determined to carve a path for herself.

Rosha attended the Community College of Aurora, where she received a scholarship. Her relentless pursuit of higher education led her to transfer to MSU Denver, a university she resonated with profoundly due to its strong commitment to serving immigrant populations. Having worked with various immigrant communities before, Rosha was drawn to MSU Denver's Immigrant Services Program, recognizing its potential to create a sense of belonging for students such as herself.

Joining the Immigrant Services Program was a pivotal moment in Rosha's college experience. Through her involvement as a Peer Mentor, Rosha found a sense of belonging and the resources she needed to succeed. As she connected with other students and shared her experiences as a peer, she discovered a passion for helping others. This revelation sparked a desire to give back to her community, not only in the United States but in Nepal.

With her sights set on becoming a neurologist, Rosha aims to delve into the intricate workings of the human brain. Her interest in medicine sprouted from witnessing the inadequate health care available to her in Nepal. The experience inspired her to envision a future where she can return to Nepal and improve the health care system while teaching the importance of health to the local population.

For other students facing similar challenges on their educational journeys, Rosha offers heartfelt advice: Never hesitate to seek help and resources. Whether it's reaching out to campus support services or applying for scholarships, Rosha encourages students to take advantage of available opportunities. Her own experience, graduating debt-free this December with the help of scholarships, serves as a testament to the power of resourcefulness.

It's evident that Rosha is not only a beacon of strength but a symbol of hope for countless individuals pursuing their dreams. Her journey from Bhutanese refugee to driven and empowered student at MSU Denver exemplifies the indomitable spirit of those who dare to dream big and strive for a better future. Rosha's dedication to empowering others and making a positive impact on her community serves as an inspiration for us all. With the support of the Immigrant Services Program, she stands tall, ready to embrace the next chapter of her life — one that promises to shape a brighter future for herself and those she will touch along the way.

Commitment to the Community

MSU Denver is at the forefront of fostering equity, diversity and inclusion through its remarkable commitment to the community. Through a range of impactful programs and partnerships, MSU Denver is actively addressing historical injustices, creating inclusive spaces and promoting positive change. This report delves into the University's transformative work and highlights key initiatives that showcase MSU Denver's dedication to community enrichment.

Enriching Lives through Community Outreach and Support

MSU Denver's UndocuHub Project serves as a vital resource for undocumented Coloradans. Through a comprehensive web- and phone-based resource catalog, the project connects individuals with crucial support and services. By diligently screening and training listed organizations, MSU Denver ensures equitable access to resources for marginalized populations.

The Speech-Language Clinic at MSU Denver provides essential services in English and Spanish, meeting the needs of our diverse community. Under the guidance of licensed speech-language pathologists, graduate students deliver comprehensive support, fostering inclusivity and ensuring that language barriers do not hinder individuals' progress.

The Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion's Community and Civic Engagement Center plays a pivotal role in promoting community service, political involvement and leadership development among students. By engaging in volunteering, internships and community organizing, students become active participants in creating positive change. The CMEI facilitates connections with resources, events and networks that enable students to contribute meaningfully on and off campus.

Embracing the Power of Music: MSU Denver's Vibrant Artistic Community

MSU Denver's Music Department, in collaboration with esteemed arts organizations, offers free music classes that nurture artistic passions and provide access to music education for people of all ages. These inclusive classes, ranging from KinderBop to Mariachi Masterclasses, encourage creativity and foster a love for music.

Rainbow Sign, a special celebration of the life and music of the late Ron Miles, exemplifies MSU Denver's commitment to honoring artistic legacies. This event, featuring renowned musicians Brian Blade, Bill Frisell, Jason Moran and Thomas Morgan, pays tribute to Miles' impactful teaching career and inspires students to embrace the joy of learning and artistic development.





MSU Denver, in collaboration with the Latino Cultural Arts Center and the Department of Music, hosts the annual Viva Southwest Mariachi Festival. This vibrant celebration showcases captivating mariachi performances, including a headliner and a special performance by *Mariachi Estelares de Colorado*, Colorado's all-state youth mariachi ensemble. The festival celebrates the rich cultural heritage of mariachi music and provides aspiring musicians with opportunities to audition, learn from master mariachi maestros and showcase their talents.

Opening Doors: Engagement with Spanish-Speaking Communities

"Cafecitos y Consejos," a popular podcast hosted by Latina/o/x professionals at MSU Denver, provides invaluable support, encouragement and mentorship to Latina/o/x and first-generation students and their families. With a growing following of dedicated listeners and numerous downloads, this program inspires and guides students on their higher-education journeys.

Creando Tu Camino, a bilingual admissions event, exemplifies MSU Denver's commitment to inclusivity and support for Spanish-speaking families. By collaborating with partners such as Financial Aid, Campus Recreation and the Immigrant Services Program, MSU Denver equips families with the resources needed to navigate the college admissions process successfully. This initiative solidifies MSU Denver's dedication to empowering bilingual students and their families, reflected by its high attendance and heartfelt engagement.

MSU Denver works hard to maintain its commitment to diversity in the ways that it celebrates cultural heritage, serves the community and provides essential support to Spanish-speaking communities. Through programs such as these, MSU Denver is empowering individuals, fostering inclusivity, promoting community-mending and enriching the lives of our diverse community. The University's dedication to equity and access underscores its mission to create a vibrant community.

Empowering Change Through Music



In the heart of Denver, a powerful movement is taking shape, one that seeks to give voice to the marginalized and shed light on the profound impact of music in the pursuit of social justice. The Music, Race and Social Justice Visiting Artist Series at MSU Denver, curated by Elizabeth McLean Macy Ph.D., is a transformative initiative that celebrates the artistic brilliance and scholarly contributions of BIPOC musicians, performers and thinkers. This remarkable series, presented by the MSU Denver Department of Music and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, has become a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change.

Throughout the 2022-23 academic year, the Music, Race and Social Justice Visiting Artist Series played host to a diverse range of events, weaving together various art forms and disciplines to explore the intersections of music, race and social justice.

Collaboration and Empowerment

In October, the Music, Race and Social Justice Visiting Artist series joined forces with the Departments of Africana Studies and English, along with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, to host the enlightening third Umoja Conversations Conference, titled “Black Women in/and/of Hip Hop.” This powerful event featured thought-provoking discussions that included MSU Denver students as well as other members of the Denver population during the day and closed out the evening with an incredible performance curated by talented Denver poet and singer/songwriter Kerrie Joy. By fostering collaboration across disciplines, the series created an inclusive platform for dialogue and artistic expression that highlighted the importance of diversity in music and social activism.

Pioneering Classical Guitarists

The Music, Race and Social Justice Visiting Artist Series continued to push boundaries by welcoming Duo Noire, an innovative duo comprising American classical guitarists Thomas Flippin and Christopher Mallett. The residency of Duo Noire included a captivating concert where they showcased their virtuosity followed by a master-class performance. Additionally, they facilitated a virtual outreach workshop with students from Denver Public Schools, inspiring the next generation of musicians.

By collaborating with the classical-guitar area of the Music Department, the series brought a fresh perspective to the classical-music world.

Empowering Minds Through Art

Under the series’ umbrella, The Space Program presented “Curriculum of the Mind,” a remarkable residency in partnership with the Brother to Brother program. The members of The Space Program engaged with students, fostering critical dialogue on race and culture through Brother to Brother’s platform. Their thought-provoking concert and fireside chat challenged societal norms and ignited a collective quest for social change. By integrating music and dialogue, the series aimed to reshape perspectives and dismantle systemic barriers.

Bridging Movement and Melody

In a remarkable collaboration between music and dance, the Music, Race and Social Justice Visiting Artist Series welcomed Justice Miles, a multifaceted artist known for her prowess in choreography, dance and scholarship. Justice’s residency culminated in an unforgettable performance in which she showcased her original choreography alongside Denver-based cello-and-guitar duo Solazur. The fusion of movement and melody resulted in a breathtaking exploration of the power of artistic collaboration and the prospect of using dance to convey powerful narratives of social justice.

The Music, Race and Social Justice Visiting Artist Series at MSU Denver has undoubtedly become a platform of significance, offering transformative experiences that inspire understanding, empathy and change. By highlighting the work of BIPOC artists and scholars, the series nurtures an environment where creativity flourishes and voices are amplified. Through these initiatives, the series not only enriches the cultural fabric of Denver but contributes to the global discourse on music, race and social justice.



MSU Denver's HSI Servingness



MSU Denver stands as a beacon of diversity and inclusivity in higher education.

Designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution in spring 2019, MSU Denver has set its sights on becoming a national model, serving as the preferred choice for students and meeting the needs of the growing Latina/o/x student population in Colorado. Through a comprehensive Diversity Strategic Plan, MSU Denver has established its HSI Servingness goal, outlining key objectives to inform policymakers, advocate for enhanced funding and create new initiatives and programs to foster academic success and support services for all students.

Empowering Undocumented Dreamers

The journey toward HSI designation was driven by a deep commitment to inclusivity and equitable access to education. In 2012, the HSI Task Force at MSU Denver responded to the inequitable tuition structure faced by undocumented students, who were required to pay out-of-state fees despite living and having attended high school in Colorado. In a groundbreaking move, MSU Denver's Board of Trustees approved the Colorado High School/GED Tuition Rate, only slightly above regular in-state tuition, making higher education more affordable and accessible to undocumented students. Subsequently, Colorado lawmakers passed the ASSET Bill, providing qualified undocumented students with in-state tuition at all public universities in the state. This pivotal decision reflected the University's unwavering belief that every student, regardless of their background, deserves the opportunity to pursue higher education.

Championing Diversity and Inclusion

MSU Denver's commitment to diversity goes beyond its designation as an HSI. With a student population that boasts over 50% students of color, the University has intentionally stepped into the role of serving the largest number of Latina/o/x students in Colorado. The University also acknowledges its history, having displaced residents of the Auraria neighborhood during its establishment. In a meaningful act of reconciliation, MSU Denver funds tuition and fees for those who were displaced and their descendants, acknowledging and mending the past's injustices.

Empowering the Future of Nutrition and Dietetics

The Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans-Denver grant at MSU Denver focuses on diversifying the field of nutrition and dietetics, creating opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to pursue post-baccalaureate education. With financial support, mentoring and cultural-intelligence training, the program nurtures future nutrition experts. To date, the POHA program has provided stipends to 22 Nutrition students, 16 of whom identify as students of color and 13 as Latina/o/x. The program has also forged partnerships with community colleges, ensuring a seamless transfer pathway for students interested in nutrition.

Leading the Charge in Cybersecurity Education

MSU Denver is at the forefront of cybersecurity education, joining the National Security Administration's Cybersecurity Education Diversity Initiative Coalition (CEDI). Alongside other Minority Serving Institutions, MSU Denver aims to diversify the cybersecurity industry by equipping the next generation of experts with necessary skills. The University's participation in CEDI ensures that Colorado and the nation benefit from a diverse and inclusive cadre of cybersecurity professionals.

Shaping the Future of Aerospace and Engineering

Through the Space Tech Scholars program, MSU Denver addresses the need for aerospace and engineering technicians in Colorado while also promoting diversity in this industry. By reducing barriers to enrollment and providing comprehensive support, the program aims to increase the number of underrepresented students in aerospace and engineering fields. The project also offers dual-enrollment opportunities for high school students, exposing them to a world of possibilities in aerospace and engineering that may not have otherwise been available to them.

Building STEM Identity through Diversity

The BUILD project at MSU Denver focuses on increasing the number of underrepresented-minority students enrolled in STEM majors. Collaborating with other organizations on the Auraria Campus, the project aims to create a strong foundation for STEM education through wide-ranging partnerships with the community and industry to create and encourage opportunities for minority students in STEM-related fields.

Strengthening Humanities Teaching with Games

To enrich humanities teaching, MSU Denver has embarked on a project to explore the effective use of games in the classroom. By offering workshops and opportunities for professors to reflect on their pedagogy, the University aims to create a stronger and more engaging educational environment for students.

As MSU Denver continues to lead the way in higher education, its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion remains unwavering. By fostering a national-model HSI, the University is breaking barriers, creating opportunities and empowering the next generation of leaders. Through its innovative programs, outreach efforts and holistic approach to education, MSU Denver is sending engaged changemakers into the workforce, ready to make an impact on the world.



HSI Week at MSU Denver

MSU Denver recently held its highly anticipated **HSI Week**. During this week, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion put on a series of events dedicated to celebrating and supporting Latina/o/x students. The week showcased the University's commitment to Latina/o/x student success and the vibrant cultures of the Latina/o/x community.

The events included informative discussions, advocacy training, community receptions and a collaboration with other Denver campuses to launch Latina/o/x Heritage Month. Attendees enjoyed engaging activities such as coloring

sessions, loteria games, savory food, captivating performances and the guidance of Chalane Lechuga, Ph.D., in crafting traditional habañoero salsa.

The week aimed to empower attendees with essential skills for advocacy, recognize leaders in HSI initiatives, provide support for Latina/o/x families transitioning to college and celebrate the rich diversity of the Latina/o/x community. Overall, HSI Week at MSU Denver left a lasting impact, fostering unity, empowerment and appreciation for Latina/o/x students and their contributions.



Green Chile and Habañoero Salsa

Recipe provided by Chalane Lechuga, Ph.D.

1. Start by preparing the ingredients. Peel, core and dice **12 cups of tomatoes**. Blanching the tomatoes will help you peel them and remove any excess juice.
2. You will need **6 cups of green chile peppers** roasted, seeded and chopped. Roast the green chile peppers, remove the seeds and chop them into small pieces. Finely chop **1 to 7 habañoero peppers** according to your desired spice level. You can adjust the amount to your preference.
3. Finely chop **1 ½ cups of onions**, choosing either white or yellow onions and **¼ cup garlic**.
4. In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes, roasted green chile peppers, finely chopped habañoero peppers, finely chopped onions, finely chopped garlic, **1 tablespoon of salt** and **½ teaspoon of pepper**.

5. Stir the ingredients together until well combined.
6. Your salsa is now ready to be enjoyed fresh. Transfer it to a clean, airtight container and store it in the refrigerator. It can last for up to one week.

While homegrown produce is always best, you can purchase fresh or canned produce from the store. However, you decide to enjoy your salsa this recipe is sure to bring some amazing flavor.



Chalane Lechuga, Ph.D.



American Exile:
Heroes Betrayed,
Community United

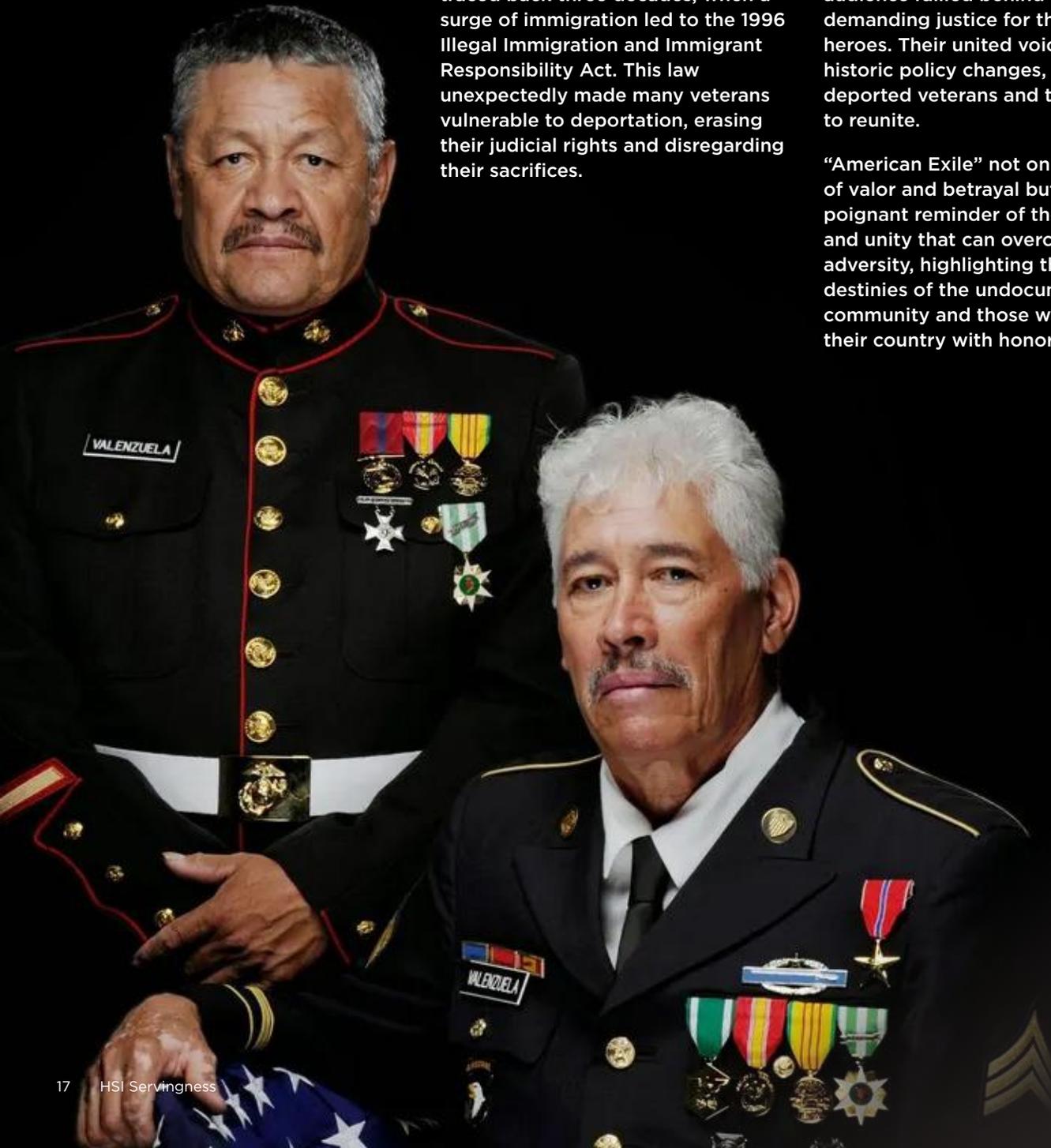
At MSU Denver, a remarkable event unfolded during Veterans Day week: a screening and discussion of the documentary “American Exile.” This Peabody Award-winning film shed light on the heartbreaking fate of U.S. military veterans facing deportation, including brothers Valente and Manuel Valenzuela.

The roots of their ordeal can be traced back three decades, when a surge of immigration led to the 1996 Illegal Immigration and Immigrant Responsibility Act. This law unexpectedly made many veterans vulnerable to deportation, erasing their judicial rights and disregarding their sacrifices.

The screening, attended by students and members of the faculty, staff and MSU Denver community, sparked a powerful connection to the uncertainty faced by the undocumented community. The Valenzuela brothers’ poignant journey touched hearts and ignited a quest to bring deported veterans home.

Driven by the film’s impact, the audience rallied behind this cause, demanding justice for these forgotten heroes. Their united voices led to historic policy changes, allowing deported veterans and their families to reunite.

“American Exile” not only told a tale of valor and betrayal but served as a poignant reminder of the resilience and unity that can overcome adversity, highlighting the intertwined destinies of the undocumented community and those who served their country with honor.



Recruitment, Retention and Success

Creating Pathways to Higher Education

Taking to heart the value of representing the diverse communities it serves, MSU Denver is on a mission to diversify its student body, faculty and staff. Through comprehensive recruitment strategies, MSU Denver has embarked on a journey to open its doors wider to underrepresented populations, ensuring that everyone is afforded the opportunity to thrive.

One such initiative is University Admissions' College Access Team, which has extended its outreach beyond the city's boundaries. Originally established to support Latina/o/x students from underserved high schools in Denver, the program now serves students throughout the entire state. By providing guidance in English and Spanish on financial aid and other crucial aspects of the college-application process, MSU Denver has created pathways to higher education for students who might have otherwise faced barriers.

Nurturing a Sense of Belonging

MSU Denver recognizes that true diversity goes beyond representation—it entails fostering a sense of belonging and support for students, faculty and staff members. To this end, the University has implemented a range of programs to ensure the retention and success of its diverse community members.

The Next Steps Events organized by the Admissions Office are a testament to the institution's commitment to its students' well-being. Designed to assist admitted students in navigating the enrollment process, these events offer one-on-one support, access to technology resources and bilingual guidance to minimize the stress of enrollment and make the transition seamless. By providing such a supportive environment, MSU Denver ensures that all students, including transfer and first-time college-goers, are set up for success.



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Supporting Students' Success to Graduation and Beyond

Beyond recruitment and retention, MSU Denver goes the extra mile to support students' academic and professional growth. The Dream.US Internship Program provides paid internships to Dream.US scholars, including those from undocumented backgrounds, offering invaluable experiences that prepare them for their careers.

Moreover, the Cybersecurity Analyst Training for Teaching the Autism Community Trades (TACT) Learners exemplifies MSU Denver's dedication to empowering diverse communities. By collaborating with TACT and Comcast, the University has opened doors for individuals with autism to excel in cybersecurity roles, further diversifying the industry while providing crucial training resources to the community.

Charting the Path to Success

In the pursuit of enhancing retention rates, MSU Denver has embraced data-driven solutions. Leveraging predictive analytics, the University's Business Intelligence and Admissions teams have developed a model to identify students at risk of not being retained. Armed with this insight, faculty and staff members can provide timely support and interventions, creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students to help them succeed.

Fostering an Inclusive Learning Environment

In the spirit of peer-to-peer learning, MSU Denver's Learning Assistant Program brings together students and faculty to create a unique and inclusive learning community. By offering training, support



and resources, this program promotes active learning and inclusive practices, with a focus on diverse representation among Learning Assistants, to best meet our diverse students where they are.

Embracing Equity and Social Responsibility

MSU Denver's commitment to the community extends beyond its campus borders. Through the Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans program (POHA), the University strives to diversify the field of nutrition and dietetics. By offering scholarships, cultural humility training and support to students of all backgrounds, POHA empowers the next generation of nutrition professionals.

In addition, the Earn and Learn Program addresses equity barriers within experiential learning, providing funding support to students for unpaid internships. By leveling the playing field, MSU Denver ensures that all students have access to career-shaping opportunities.

MSU Denver stands as an example of an institution committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. Through its comprehensive recruitment and retention strategies, as well as its unwavering support for student success, MSU Denver is breaking down barriers and empowering its diverse community to thrive. With its data-driven approach and inclusive initiatives, the University is paving the way for a future where every person is afforded the opportunity to fulfill their potential and contribute to a more equitable and just society.

Nurturing Excellence and Diversity: MSU Denver's Path to Faculty Recruitment and Retention



MSU Denver stands as a testament to the power of inclusivity in academia. With unwavering commitment, the institution has embarked on an intricate journey to embrace equity, diversity and inclusion across its academic landscape. At the heart of this transformative voyage lies a series of innovative strategies orchestrated by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and its collaborative partnerships.

A Symphony of Collaborative Efforts

At the heart of MSU Denver's initiative is the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, orchestrating a symphony of programs and initiatives that breathe life into the institution's vision of equity and diversity. At the helm of this symphony stands the Director for Faculty Diversity Research and Development, a visionary catalyst driving research-based strategies aimed at shattering barriers to diversification within the faculty and staff. Collaborating seamlessly with the Office of the Provost and the Human Resources Office, this role has become a beacon of progress, guiding the institution toward increased representation and inclusivity.

Educators of Change: EDI Faculty Fellows

Six EDI Faculty Fellows have emerged as the front-line ambassadors for transformation. Tricia Hudson Matthew, Ed.D., spearheads the Tenure Track Supper Club, creating a haven for a burgeoning faculty to share experiences and learn inclusive pedagogy. The dynamic duo of Bill D. Herman, Ph.D., and Daphne Simmonds, Ph.D., pioneer a database of resources for diverse faculty recruitment and success, carving a pathway for equity in academia. Jovan Hernandez, Ph.D., and K Scherrer, Ph.D., fearlessly explore the campus climate, sifting through qualitative comments to disseminate revelations that shape the academic experience. The collaboration of Chereka Dickerson, Ph.D., with Human Resources unearths culturally responsive practices, fostering an inclusive environment for the staff. These fellows, enmeshed within the fabric of diversity subcommittees, serve as conduits of equity to every corner of the campus.

A Tapestry of Programs and Initiatives

In the pursuit of excellence, MSU Denver embraces myriad initiatives. The Wilton Flemon Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellows Program and the Faculty Recruitment Incentive Program create pipelines, incubating diverse talents to thrive within the institution's fertile grounds. The Tenure

Track Supper Club, echoing inclusivity, imparts critical pedagogical insights to faculty members, nurturing them toward tenured success.

Cultivating Bonds: BIPOC Faculty Gatherings

BIPOC Faculty Gatherings, held once a semester, form the bedrock of community and collaboration. By offering a sanctuary for BIPOC faculty members to connect, network and share invaluable resources, MSU Denver strengthens the bonds that unite academia's diverse voices.

Empowering through Knowledge: National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity

The National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD) emerges as an intellectual refuge, fostering growth for faculty and staff members. Armed with a plethora of resources such as webinars and discussion forums, NCFDD propels MSU Denver's talented people toward their highest potential.

Steppingstones to Success: ESCALA and ACUE Programs

The equity-based professional-development program by ESCALA equips faculty members with tools to enrich Latina/o/x student engagement. The Association of College and University Educators' Effective Online Teaching Practices fortify faculty members, nurturing inclusive and anti-racist pedagogy, amplifying the institution's impact on virtual education.

Evolving Paradigms: Alternative Work Arrangements and Leadership Training

MSU Denver sets new standards with Alternative Work Arrangements, cultivating work-life balance and empowering its diverse staff. In tandem, leadership training embedded with diversity and inclusion principles enriches leaders' capacity to create equitable environments, dismantling systemic biases.

An Ongoing Journey: Nurturing Excellence and Diversity

As the sun-kissed campus of MSU Denver continues to evolve, the University's commitment to excellence and diversity remains unwavering. By nurturing a faculty of diverse backgrounds, the institution transcends representation, painting a canvas of inclusivity. MSU Denver's efforts serve as a beacon, reminding the academic world that diversity is not merely an aspiration but is an ongoing journey that enriches the institution and the lives it touches.

Voices of Change: Shining a Light on Diversity and Justice



The Office of Diversity and Inclusion organizes annual signature events that transcend mere gatherings — they are transformative moments that amplify the voices of those who have battled against oppression and inequality. These events, rich in history and wisdom, bring together trailblazing keynote speakers who share their stories of resilience and empowerment.

Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast: A Legacy of Courage

Amid the crisp January air, the echoes of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s resolute calls for justice and equality reverberated once more as MSU Denver's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast commenced. This year, the University had the honor of welcoming a truly remarkable voice: that of Carlotta Walls LaNier, the youngest member of the Little Rock Nine. In September 1957, amid a tumultuous landscape and a backdrop of fierce resistance, LaNier stood alongside fellow Black students to integrate Little Rock Central High School, defying prejudice and hate. Her presence at the Peace Breakfast infused the room with a palpable sense of history and hope, as she shared personal anecdotes and reflections that resonated deeply, reminding all attendees of the unyielding power of education and the pursuit of justice.

Deconstructing Gentrification: A Call for Change

For this year's Richard T. and Virginia M. Castro Distinguished Visiting Professorship, the topic of gentrification, an insidious force that erases histories and displaces communities, took center stage. To confront this issue head-on, giving it the urgent attention it deserves, MSU Denver facilitated an illuminating discussion and keynote address by Ernesto Quiñonez in support of this year's theme of "De-Gentrification: Recuperando Nuestra Comunidad, Historias de Resiliencia". Civic leaders and scholars, including Denver City Council President Jamie Torres, engaged in a thoughtful exploration of the systemic forces behind gentrification. With a critical lens, they dissected how historical injustices perpetuate cycles of displacement and discussed the strategies required to reclaim and preserve vibrant neighborhoods.



The dialogue resonated deeply, offering insight into the complex challenges faced by the surrounding community of MSU Denver and beyond as well as the collective determination needed to pave the way for equitable change.

Dr. Shakti Butler: Radical Transformative Learning

In a world where film serves as a powerful medium for change, the MSU Denver stage welcomed Shakti Butler, Ph.D., a visionary filmmaker and educator whose work resonates with the pulse of societal transformation, as the Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professor. Through her poignant documentaries — "The Way Home," "Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible," "Light in the Shadows," "Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity" and "Healing Justice" — Butler has ignited nationwide conversations about racial equity and justice. Her films challenge viewers to confront their privilege, question biases and participate in the vital process of healing and restorative practices. Butler's presence on campus served as a powerful reminder that change begins with heightened awareness, courageous dialogue and committed action. As she stood before the audience, the room became a crucible for reflection and transformation, echoing her belief that education, dialogue and understanding are the cornerstones of progress.

A Tapestry of Wisdom and Empowerment

The events organized by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion form a rich tapestry of wisdom, empowerment and action. Through these gatherings, the University community becomes intertwined with powerful narratives that span generations and transcend boundaries. The stories shared by keynote speakers such as Carlotta Walls LaNier and Shakti Butler remind us that history, when acknowledged and understood, becomes a powerful catalyst for change. As each resonating voice reverberates through the campus, MSU Denver solidifies its role as a beacon of education and transformation, nurturing a new generation of changemakers who are poised to shape a more just, equitable and compassionate world.



Office of Diversity and Inclusion

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion leads, collaborates with and engages with many of the efforts outlined in this report. We know this is a team effort with all the partners across MSU Denver: the staff, faculty and students who have made this work possible.

Office Leadership and Staff

- Michael Benitez, Ph.D.**
Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion and Associate Professor
- Julie Sharer-Price**
Executive Assistant to Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion
- Manuel Del Real, Ph.D.**
Executive Director of HSI Initiatives and Inclusion
- Chalane Lechuga, Ph.D.**
Director of Faculty Diversity Research and Development and Professor
- Jeremy VanHooser**
Associate Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Faculty Fellows

- Chereka C. Dickerson, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor
- Bill D. Herman, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor
- Jovan Hernandez, Ph.D.**
Professor
- Tricia Hudson-Matthew, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor and Chair¹
- Elizabeth Macy, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor²
- K Scherrer, Ph.D.**
Professor
- Daphne Simmonds, Ph.D.**
Associate Professor

Student Staff

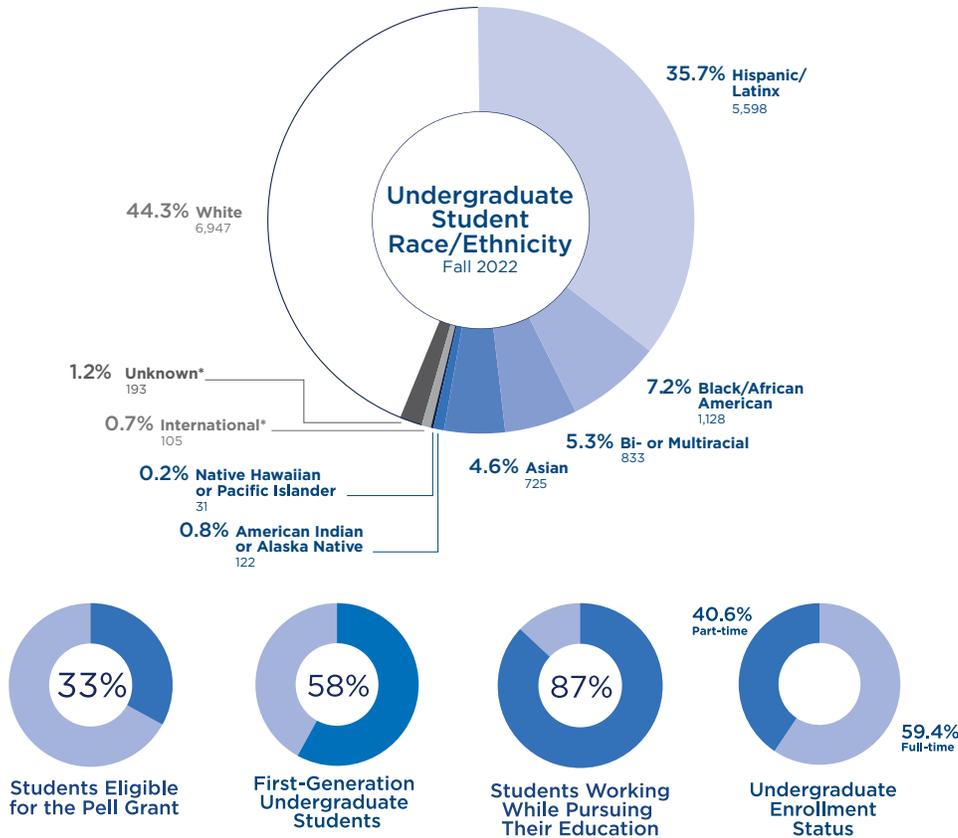
- Samara Alvarado**
Diversity Projects Assistant²
- Nico Gomez-Lucero**
Graphic Designer²
- Amelia Federico**
Diversity Projects Assistant
- Bee Gonzalez**
Diversity Projects Assistant
- Lizbeth Guerra, BA**
Diversity Projects Assistant³
- Itzel Martinez Bernal**
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Graduate Assistant
- Miranda Reed**
Graphic Designer²
- Emma Rowinski**
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Graduate Assistant
- Reydesel Salvidrez Rodriguez, MA**
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Graduate Assistant³
- Jaytee Savage**
Diversity Projects Assistant²
- Rachael Smallwood**
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Graduate Assistant²
- Jocelyn Vangundy, MSW**
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Graduate Assistant³
- Sam Young**
Diversity Projects Assistant²

¹Service ended 2022-23. ²Joining the team 2023-24 ³Graduated in Spring 2023

Demographic Profile

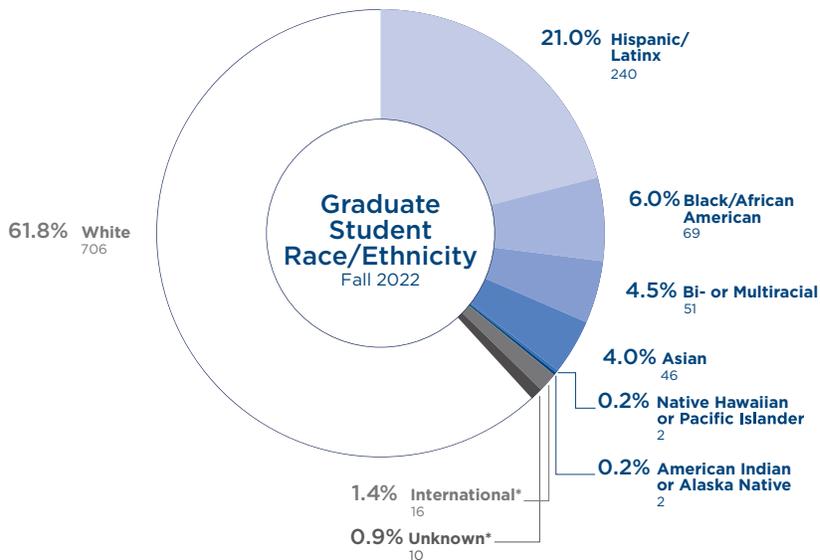
53.8%

Undergraduate Students of Color



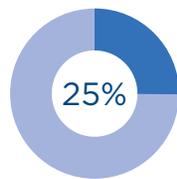
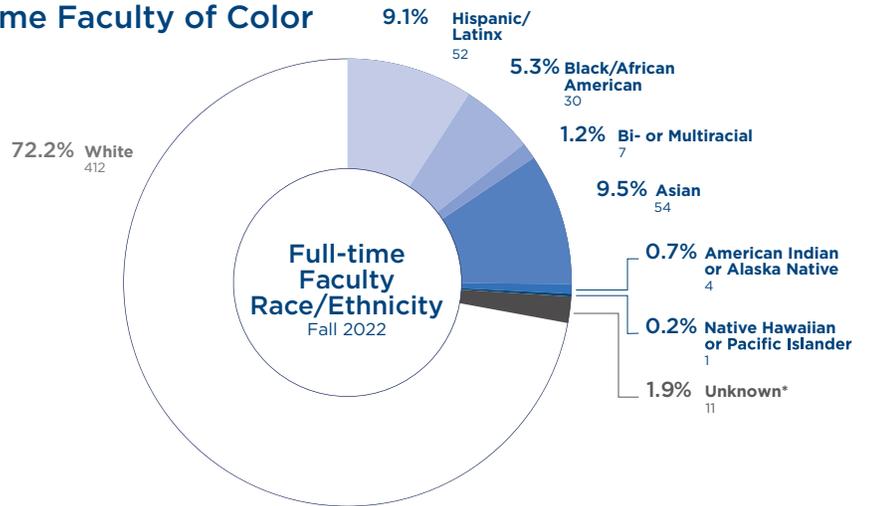
35.9%

Graduate Students of Color

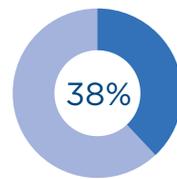




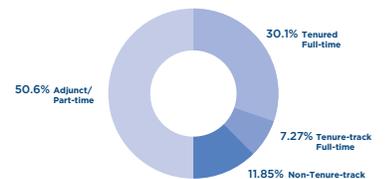
26% Full-time Faculty of Color



Tenured Full-time Faculty of Color

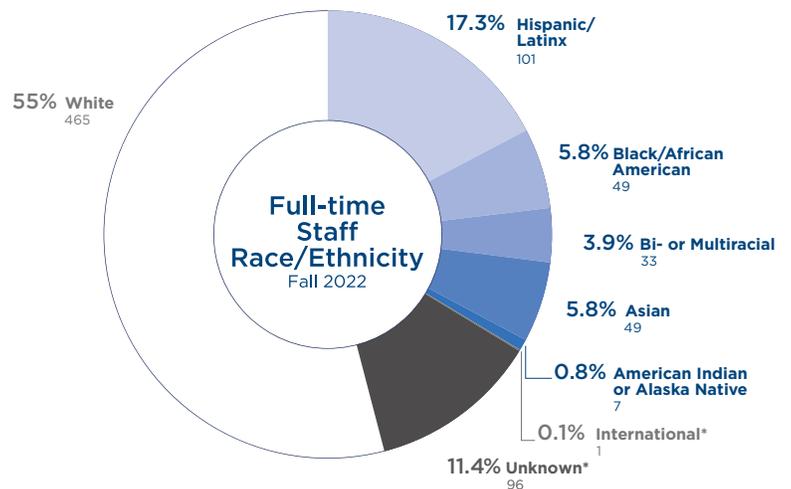


Tenure-track Full-time Faculty of Color



Faculty Member Employment Status

33.6% Full-time Staff of Color



* "International" and "Unknown" statistics are not included in total people of color count.
 No International full-time faculty members recorded.
 No Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander full-time staff recorded.
 All Statistics accurate as of Fall 2022.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Events

Fall 2023

Convocation	August 17
Fall Semester Classes Start	August 21
HSI Week	September 11-16
Cafecito con HSI	September 11
Cocina de los Correcaminos	September 13
Oaxacan Youth Philharmonic	September 14
Viva Southwest Mariachi Fest	September 16, Levitt Pavilion
Latinx Heritage Month Kickoff	September 18
Fall Fest	September 20
Latinx Heritage Month Event	October 3
Music, Race, & Social Justice Visiting Artist Series	October 4-5
Latinx Heritage Month Closing	October 11
Castro Professorship	October 16-17
Dia de los Muertos	November 1
Native Indigenous Heritage Month Kickoff	November 2
Music, Race, & Social Justice Visiting Artist Series	November 7-8
National First-Generation Day	November 8
Native Indigenous Heritage Month Event	November 15
Native Indigenous Heritage Month Closing	November 30
First Generation Graduation	December 4
Latina/o/x Graduation	December 6
Native Indigenous Graduation	December 9
University Commencement	December 15

Spring 2024

MLK Peace Breakfast	January 12
MLK Parade	January 15, Denver City Park
Spring Semester Classes Start	January 16
Black History Month Kickoff	February 1
Lunar New Year	February 13
Black History Month Event	February 14
Black World Conference	February 21-22
Black History Month Closing	February 29
Women's History Month Kickoff	March 6
Noel Professorship	March 10-12
Women's History Month Event	March 13
Women's History Month Closing	March 28
Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi American (APIDA) Heritage Month Kickoff	April 3
Higher Education Diversity Summit	April 4-5
APIDA Heritage Month Event	April 10
Spring Fling	April 17
Viva Southwest Mariachi Fest	April 19-20
APIDA Heritage Month Closing	April 23
APIDA Graduation	April 24
First-Generation Graduation	April 29
Latina/o/x Graduation	May 1
Native Indigenous Graduation and Powwow	May 4
University Commencement	May 10

July

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August

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September

Latinx Heritage Month
Sept. 15 - Oct. 15

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October

LGBTQIA+ History Month

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November

Native and Indigenous People's
Heritage Month

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January

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February

Black History Month

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March

Women's History Month

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April

Asian Pacific Islander Desi American
(APIDA) Heritage Month

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(MSU Denver Observes APIDA Heritage Month in April)

May

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June

LGBTQIA+ Pride Month

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

2 Equity Event

3 Multiple Equity Events

4 University Event



University
Events



Holidays and
Observances



MSU[™]
DENVER

**Office of
Diversity
and Inclusion**

Jordan Student Success Building
890 Auraria Parkway, Suite 440
Denver, CO 80204

EQUITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022

DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

MSU Denver sets goals and objectives to advance equity, diversity and inclusion efforts. [Page 4](#)

UNIVERSITY DEMOGRAPHICS

A detailed look at the University profile. [Page 24](#)

2022-23 EQUITY EVENTS CALENDAR

Save the dates for upcoming events. [Page 26](#)

NANA OWUSU (pictured)
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN
CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY
CLASS OF FALL 2021



MSUSM
DENVER



St. Cecilia's
1140 9th St.

Janine Davidson, Ph.D.

MSU Denver President

Russell Noles

MSU Denver Board of Trustees Chair

As the president and chair of the Board of Trustees at Metropolitan State University of Denver, we are proud to lead together an institution with such a rich history and culture of valuing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) so highly. Those aren't just boxes we want to make sure we've checked at the end of every year, but rather the framework for everything we do at the University as we strive to provide the best-value education in Colorado in a welcoming environment to students of all backgrounds.



Beyond just our campus goals, the State of Colorado master plan for higher education seeks to increase statewide credential attainment by erasing attainment gaps between students of color and white Coloradans. As MSU Denver educates large populations of students of color, low-income students and first-generation students, the EDI work we do to support students historically underserved by higher education is critical in building a more equitable Colorado.

In this report, you will read about numerous equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives; and it is important to note that these efforts are carried out all over the University. Our Student Affairs Branch leads programs such as Brother-to-Brother, Sister Circles and the Immigrant Services Program, while the EDI ethos and pedagogy are built into our classroom experiences and curriculum. Our Office of Diversity and Inclusion leads many university-wide initiatives, including the development of MSU Denver's Diversity Strategic Plan, the EDI Faculty Fellows program and the Campus Climate Survey. They do truly amazing work and support many initiatives across campus.

Our Board of Trustees is fully engaged and supportive of our EDI efforts. The board established a Sustainable Racial Justice Committee in 2020 that continued its work last year, listening, learning and working alongside students, faculty and staff to ensure Roadrunners are equipped with the tools needed to dismantle structural racism.

Equity, diversity and inclusion are mission-critical at MSU Denver, from our classrooms to our offices and all of our shared spaces. As our 2030 Strategic Plan says, "MSU Denver embodies diversity in all its rich representations and expressions. It is who we are. We commit ourselves to justice that provides a foundation for equity and inclusion." It is not a feature or an add-on, but our very foundation as a University.

We hope you will learn something exciting and new in these pages and find something you can be a part of as well. We would also love to hear your ideas for how MSU Denver can better support equity, diversity and inclusion—you can submit ideas through the Idea Catcher on the President's Office webpage, msudendenver.edu/president, or attend a Board of Trustees meeting to provide public comment.

Thank you for your interest in our EDI work at MSU Denver!



Michael Benitez Jr., Ph.D.

Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is pleased to publish Metropolitan State University of Denver's 2nd annual Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report for academic year 2021-22. As MSU Denver continued to feel the impacts of Covid-19, our campus community's dedication to equity, diversity and inclusion has been unwavering, and we continued to support and advance this work through programs and initiatives that directly and positively impacted our students, faculty and staff. This report highlights a variety of equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts and initiatives from within the office and across the University.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion supports and promotes equity, diversity and inclusion and assures that MSU Denver centers our Hispanic-Serving and Minority-Serving Institution (HSI/MSI) identity. These tenets are core values of MSU Denver and serve as one of the five pillars of the University's 2030 Strategic Plan. With over 50% of our undergraduate students identifying as people of color, the University continues to develop and implement initiatives that advance our stated goal

of becoming an anti-racist institution. MSU Denver fosters a campus community that promotes inclusive learning and engagement, cultivating awareness and appreciation for diverse perspectives and identities, and the establishment of policies, practices, programs and resources designed to embrace and enhance equity, diversity and inclusion.

Over the past academic year, MSU Denver has continued to demonstrate our commitment towards becoming a model Hispanic-Serving Institution in Colorado and across the nation. The Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council hosted a series of campus open forums and meetings with various offices and departments across the University to gather diverse voices and input in an effort to operationalize Pillar IV of the University Strategic Plan, and develop a diversity strategic plan (DSP) that serves as the roadmap to advance equity, diversity and inclusion at MSU Denver. More than a year in the making, the DSP is comprised of four goals and outlines a series of objectives for each goal that encapsulate MSU Denver's values.

Our signature programs brought in renowned leaders in education, STEM, and community organizations, intentionally leveraging our resources to connect with and benefit Denver communities, including collaborating with Denver Public Schools.

The Office of Diversity and

Inclusion provided funding to campus and community initiatives in the form of sponsorships and grants to support MSU Denver's EDI efforts and initiatives benefiting staff and faculty affinity groups and their programs, faculty classroom support, student leadership and academic conferences, academic and social student support, cultural performances, professional development opportunities, events addressing critical EDI issues and graduation ceremonies.

Initiatives such as the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Faculty Fellows supported faculty members across various departments to advance EDI efforts and resources to support faculty development, the completion of the Campus Climate Survey report and data analysis, research on faculty diversity promising practices, faculty mentoring and peer-to-peer support through the Tenure-Track Supper Club to name a few.

It is through these actions and the initiatives detailed in this report that MSU Denver demonstrates its commitment to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion and modeling HSI/MSI servingness.

Strategic Plan 2030

Pillar IV: Diversity Equity and Inclusion

MSU Denver embodies diversity in all its rich representations and expressions. It is who we are. We commit ourselves to justice that provides a foundation for equity and inclusion. We mend internal and external inequities through the cultivation of a vibrant, healthy community.

GOALS

Cultivate and sustain a culture of inclusive and intersectional teaching, learning and practice.

MSU Denver will be a model for shared leadership that fosters an anti-racism environment and systemic transformation through a more representative workplace w attracts and retains diverse faculty and staff, while investing in DEI service, scholarship and practice.

Be an agent of healing by helping to convene and celebrate Denver's diverse communities.

MSU Denver will be known in Colorado as a connection point for people from diverse backgrounds and experiences that supports the respectful exchange of ideas and holds space for the collaborative work of advancing equity and inclusion in the state.

Become a model Hispanic-Serving Institution for higher education.

MSU Denver will be a national leader for serving Latinx students by creating and sustaining initiatives that support students as they achieve their academic goals and prepare for their careers.

“MSU Denver has a welcoming nature for those who may have been disenfranchised traditionally in these spaces. There’s a welcome mat that is sort of rolled out for folks and there’s a language that the University is comfortable speaking that engages with people. When I was a student, I’d be sitting next to someone who just got out of high school or a person who was on their third career choice in their 50s.”

Bobby LeFebre
Colorado Poet Laureate
2004 MSU Denver Alumnus



Diversity Strategic Plan

1 INCLUSIVITY AND CAMPUS CLIMATE CULTIVATION

Goal

We intentionally foster and sustain a welcoming and diverse University community that strives for structural diversity and belongingness, and cultivates, nurtures and sustains a culture of inclusive teaching, learning and practice, based on the principles of equity, inclusion, access and anti-racism.

Objectives

Collaborate with administrative and academic units to ensure that diversity, equity, inclusion and access practices are integrated into the unit's goals and align with University priorities.

Actively engage in the ongoing assessment of campus climate and culture to identify and address areas for improvement and disseminate and communicate findings with the campus community.

Acknowledge and address equity and accountability gaps in policy and practice.

Analyze data-driven and evidence-based recommendations to develop and implement appropriate actions with campus stakeholders.

2 COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Goal

We deliberately develop new relationships, strengthen existing relationships and heal broken relationships. We build mutually beneficial collaborations that promote just transformation and further the educational and civic aims of the University and broader communities.

Objectives

Engage in reflection to uncover and actively reconcile past and present injustices perpetuated by structural racism and systemic inequities impacting marginalized communities.

Identify and evaluate the inequities and barriers within our social and operational structures by engaging with the Denver metro area and broader communities.

Invest resources in and create a sustainable infrastructure for the implementation of strategies to mend past/current harm and create a positive impact, such as community wealth-building, investing in and supporting local communities, and recognizing and responding to local issues and inequities.

Identify areas for ongoing cultivation and strengthening of community relations and mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborations.

Ensure that aspects of marketing and communication, such as web presence to external relations, create a more inclusive, accessible and welcoming digital environment for MSU Denver and broader communities.

3 HSI SERVINGNESS

Goal

As a recently designated Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), we strive to become a national-model HSI, serving as a preferred choice for students and meeting the needs of a growing Latina/o/x student population in Colorado. We provide the resources necessary to develop academic and support services to address issues of access, persistence and success.

Objectives

Inform policymakers and other stakeholders about HSI issues and advocate for enhanced funding and new initiatives, programs and services.

Maintain expertise about laws, regulations, policies, issues and trends pertaining to HSI funding, programs and designation.

Strengthen the process and criteria for the identification, review and prioritization of HSI/MSI grants and provide support for the implementation of grants awarded.

Research and benchmark promising practices at HSI/MSI for consideration.

4 RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND SUCCESS

Goal

Diversify faculty, staff and student body to better reflect the diverse communities we serve and commit to retaining and sustaining diversity among our students, faculty and staff. MSU Denver commits to the recruitment and retention of a diverse and inclusive workforce. We greatly value the diverse and intersectional identities of our faculty, staff and students. We recognize that to achieve equity, diversity must include but also go beyond representation.

Objectives

Develop comprehensive recruitment and retention strategies to diversify MSU Denver faculty and staff.

Utilize data tracking with respect to diversity and understand data across employee categories, especially including administrative, classified and professional staff and faculty at all ranks.

Provide institutional resources and support for the retention and success of diverse faculty and staff.

Provide opportunities for professional development and growth to faculty, staff and students centered on Access, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Ensure recruitment and retention of students through collaboration with campus partners, sharing of strategies, vetting ideas and building of resources.

Provide the resources necessary to develop academic and support services to address issues of access, persistence and success among students of color.

Hispanic - Serving Institution

MSU Denver is a Hispanic-Serving Institution, federally designated by the U.S. Department of Education. This designation is for colleges and universities that have at least 25% total undergraduate Hispanic/Latina/o/x student enrollment. MSU Denver has met HSI eligibility requirements annually since being designated as an HSI in February 2019. As a result of such federal designation, HSIs are eligible to competitively apply for federal grants aimed at supporting HSIs and other Minority-Serving Institutions.

HSI Servingness

Using the Multidimensional Framework of Servingness defined by Garcia, Núñez, and Sansone (2019), Indicators and Structures for serving and Servingness in Practice are the tenets that guide MSU Denver in its goal to become a model HSI. In practice, MSU Denver identifies servingness as an intentional transition of organizational structures through use of resources and programming. MSU Denver will learn with and from existing model HSIs to implement promising practices of servingness.

HSI Grants

In collaboration with the Office of Sponsored Research Programs and University Advancement, MSU Denver's HSI Committee has been able to strengthen the process and criteria for the identification, review and prioritization of HSI/MSI grants.

MSU Denver currently has six HSI grants. Two funded by the National Science Foundation focusing on our Learning Assistant experience in collaboration with Community College of Denver, and the Building Identity Leading to Diversity

(BUILD) at MSU Denver grant. Both serve to increase the number of underrepresented minority students enrolled in STEM majors. The University also has two Title V grants: the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program (DHSI) for our Space Tech Scholars program and the Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (POHA) grant. MSU Denver also received a cybersecurity grant through the National Security Agency's Cybersecurity Education Diversity Initiative to diversify the cybersecurity field, as well as a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities focusing on German Romantic philosophy and poetry.

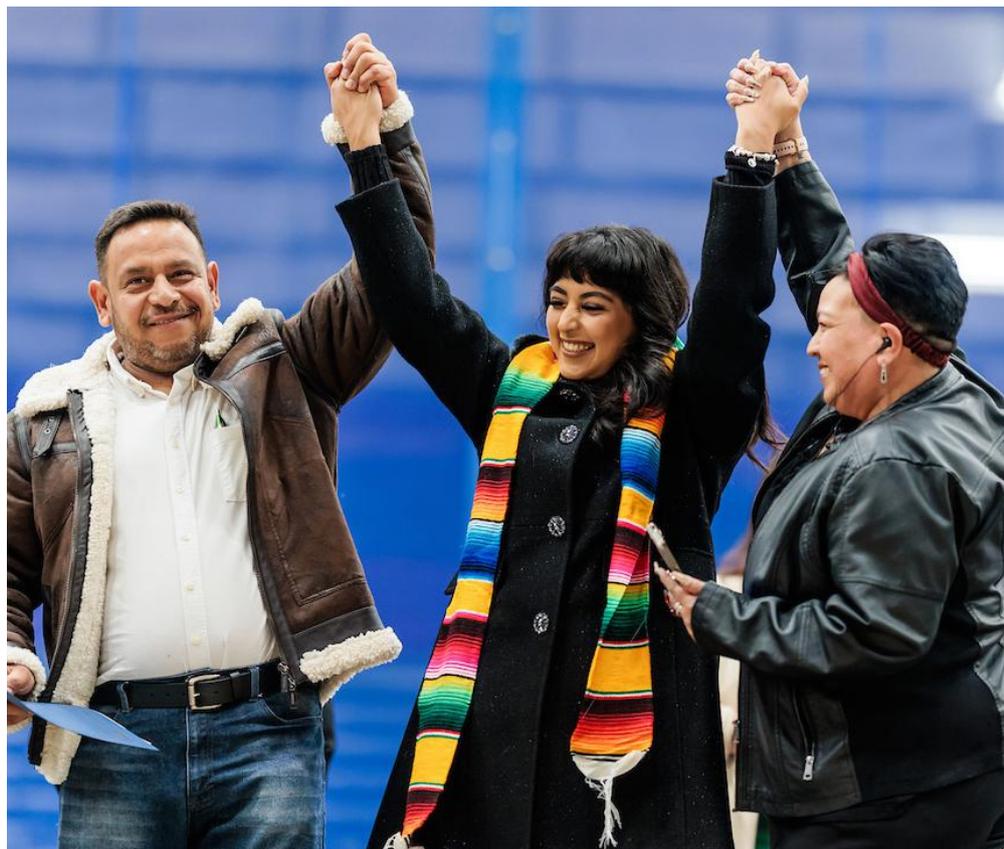
HSI Research

We successfully submitted the Seal of Excelencia application, which is a national certification by Excelencia in Education for institutions that strive to go beyond enrollment to

intentionally serve Latina/o/x students. Selected schools will be announced this fall.

A cohort of five faculty and staff members recently participated in Excelencia in Education's 2022 Data Institute and is incorporating the tools and resources learned to improve our data collection and HSI servingness.

Three faculty members participated in ESCALA's Certificate in College Teaching and Learning for HSI faculty members to increase student success at HSIs through faculty implementation of culturally responsive classroom instruction. Faculty members successfully designed a small teaching-research project to study the impact of evidence-based practices on student pass rates. MSU Denver also had two faculty members participating this summer in ESCALA's Culturally Responsive Teaching in STEM, a nine-hour minicourse.



MSU Denver's Journey to HSI Designation

1970 The Chicana/o Studies program was started at MSU Denver.

1996 The first Latino Graduation was held for seven graduating students.

1997 The Richard T. Castro Distinguished Visiting Professorship was initiated.

2006 An ad-hoc committee studied the feasibility of the University becoming a Hispanic-Serving Institution. President Stephen Jordan initiated a goal for MSU Denver to become an HSI.

2007 The HSI Task Force was established in the Summer 2007 and began meeting in Fall 2007. An HSI Task Force proposal template was created for recommendations to move the initiative forward.

2008 A report was presented in early 2008 with 55 recommendations, 16 being prioritized recommendations and one of which being the support of what would become the ASSET Bill.

2012 In June, the MSU Denver Board of Trustees initiated a special tuition rate for Colorado's undocumented students to earn their degree. This was prior to the passage of the ASSET Bill in 2013.

2016 MSU Denver's HSI Task Force released the report *Connecting the Dots: Report and Recommendations*.

2019 On Feb. 19, MSU Denver met the requirements and became a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution.

MSU Denver's Department of Nutrition received \$2 million as the first HSI grant, Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans

2020 MSU Denver received a Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program grant of \$2.9 million.

2021 The University was awarded a \$1 million National Science Foundation grant for Building Identity Leading to Diversity (BUILD) at MSU Denver.



Initiatives supported with CARES Act Funding for Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, various Minority-Serving Institutions and Hispanic-Serving Institutions received CARES Act Federal Funding as part of a Covid-19 grant in spring/summer 2020. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion reached out to various departments, faculty members and staff members for recommendations on programs and activities that met the funding guidelines for the grant. Of the 22 ideas proposed, 11 that met the guidelines of focusing on students, technology, pedagogy, accessibility, operations and programs were awarded.

We wanted to make sure students received as much as they could from the grant by supporting them in their roles as **Learning Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Transfer Peer Mentors**. Through these opportunities, students in these roles also contributed to supporting faculty in classrooms to improve the student experience as faculty members switched their curricula to online/hybrid formats. Faculty members also had the opportunity to participate in the **Association of College and University Educators** full academic-year course. The course assisted faculty members with inclusive online teaching tools that also helped with the transition online. We saw an increase in student retention of 3.37% among those who participated as Teaching Assistants. Additionally, the Transfer Peer Mentor program had a caseload of 2,760 during the 2020-21 academic year. From fall 2020 through fall 2021, the



BIOLOGY STUDENTS BRYCE VON PHUL-CHEWNING AND ELENA AGUIRRE PRACTICE THE MICROPIPETTE TECHNIQUE BEFORE LOADING DNA INTO GELS.



THE CENTER FOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND DESIGN RECOGNIZED AN ACUE FACULTY COHORT FOR ITS COMPLETION OF CERTIFICATES.

Learning Assistants program saw 122 Learning Assistants support 81 faculty members in 149 courses. Finally, through CARES Act funding, we also provided books and supplies for students who participated in Admissions and the Center for Equity and Student Achievement’s mentoring program as well as the **School of Education’s Roadrunner Diversity Scholars** program.

Since the pandemic required faculty, staff and students to transition from in-person to online and hybrid formats, we used CARES funding to support students using online tutoring programs such as **TutorMe**. Based on the fall student-impact survey, some students reported having outdated hardware and/or no laptops to complete their course assignments. Fifty-two students, including student employees, benefited from laptops purchased using Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund funding for spring 2021. We were also able to provide additional Zoom services for affinity-group graduations for

students, faculty members, staff members and families to be able to celebrate the accomplishments of their students.

Since June 2020, MSU Denver has received \$5,620,634 from HSI/MSI CARES Act funding as a Covid-19 grant. HSI/MSI CARES Fund guidelines specifically outline the following:

1. Students

Institutions are not required to use at least 50% of these funds for grants to students, unlike previous relief funds, but are encouraged to use as much as possible to give grants to eligible students.

2. Technology, Pedagogy, Accessibility

We can use funds to expand remote-learning programs and build information-technology capacity: “Institutions may use this funding to cover the cost of technology associated with a transition to distance education.” This includes grants to cover the costs of faculty and staff training.

3. Operations and Programs

Funds may be used to cover operational costs such as lost revenue, reimbursements for prior expenses and payroll.

Outreach was made to various departments to submit proposals based on the funding guidelines.

Lastly, we are a Hispanic-Serving Institution that is intentionally finding ways to serve our students. Thus, we believe **translating website content and University documents to Spanish** illustrates our continued dedication to our Hispanic/Latina/o/x students and families from Spanish-speaking homes and values the knowledge and skills of our staff and faculty. Remaining HEERF funding was allocated to **lost revenue** to continue to fund programs such as **Teaching Assistants, ACUE Cohort, Spanish translation and Transfer Peer Mentors** for the remainder of the spring 2022 semester.

New to the nest and on the road to graduation

Metropolitan State University of Denver is committed to ensuring that every student has the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. In addition to the enrollment and financial resources that students need on their academic journey, we support student organizations; leadership opportunities; innovative career-readiness programming and industry connections; recreation and club sports; and health and wellness offerings to fit all interests.

This commitment to students starts before they are admitted to the University. **The Office of Admissions** has created a more holistic application-review process, including test-optional admission, to align with the University's equity, diversity and inclusion effort to become an anti-racist institution, and these changes have opened the door for more students to be admitted to MSU Denver.

Most students rely on scholarships and other financial aid to afford their



education. The **Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships** focus for the year was improving processes and financial aid delivery for all students while applying an equity lens. Automating time-consuming manual processes allowed advisors more time to serve students. MSU Denver's financial aid programs to support first-generation, lower-income students and help them achieve their goals include:

The **Corky and Geraldine Gonzales Spirit of Tlatelolco Endowed Scholarship** fund, established to honor the legacy of Escuela Tlatelolco, a dual-language K-12 alternative school founded by Chicano

activist Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales in 1971.

The **Displaced Aurarian Scholarship** program, designed to provide funds for tuition and fees for all direct descendants of those who were residents of the Auraria neighborhood at the time the campus was built, between 1955 and 1973.

The **Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund**, which delivered impact grants to all enrolled students and collaborated with a variety of departments to deliver payment of Balance Due Grants and Emergency Grants.



The **Indigenous and Native Peoples' Grant**, designed to provide funds for tuition and fees for undergraduate students who are Colorado residents and are enrolled in one of 574 federally recognized Native nations.

The **Latin American Educational Foundation**, established to provide Hispanic and Latino students access to higher education. Scholarship recipients are enabled to mitigate financial barriers during their quest for a college education and receive ongoing support throughout their college experience.

The **Roadrunner Promise**, a program that pays tuition and fees for undergraduate students whose family incomes are less than \$60,000 per year and whose costs aren't covered by other federal, state and institutional aid and scholarship programs.

The **Work Study Program**, which is an altered financial aid packaging policy to award Federal and Colorado Work Study to all new students and continuing students who indicate interest in Work Study.

The **Classroom to Career Hub** (C2 Hub) is committed to upholding the values of equity, diversity and inclusion. Its leaders recognize that not every student has equal access to career or professional development opportunities, due to a variety of systemic inequities. The C2 Hub works to support students with the knowledge, skills and resources to effectively navigate the professional world and ensure that students accomplish their career goals regardless of their background or identity. The resources provided by the C2 Hub are intended to assist students with career and professional development needs on their career journeys.

MSU Denver hosted 10 identity affirming career-readiness programs supporting first-generation, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ students and students with disabilities over the past year. Additionally, the C2 Hub launched the **Community of Mentoring Professionals and Student Scholars** (COMPASS), which was created in response to student demand for more professional connections and hands-on experience. Utilizing the New Skills Readiness Initiative Grant, a small pilot was initiated by the C2 Hub to better develop a replicable and accessible framework for the University, with plans to expand. The COMPASS pilot centered individual and communal learning with the opportunity of job shadowing. Participating mentees self-identified as 71% female, 26% male and 3% undisclosed. Female-student representation outpaced the 54% of the overall undergraduate population who identify as female. In addition, mentors were also reflective of the mentee population, with 61% female and 39% male. With this being the first pilot of the COMPASS

program, the scope was narrowed to include three career pathways: business, information technology and health. This was inclusive of all majors, minors and degree paths related to these career objectives.

MSU Denver is participating in the **Grow With Google HSI Career Readiness Program**. The initiative will help students at 35 Hispanic-Serving Institutions prepare for the workforce through digital-skills training and career workshops. Through a \$2 million investment in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, the program will train 200,000 Latino students by 2025. MSU Denver was awarded \$25,000 in partnership funding in the efforts to meet the overall goals.

Students are encouraged to connect with the Career Development and Readiness Team, which offers in-person and virtual drop-in hours, individual career counseling, advising appointments and a range of other resources to support students in their career or job search.





Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Faculty Fellows

In 2021-22, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion engaged six faculty members from various school and colleges across campus to serve as Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Faculty Fellows to work with the office to advance the University's Strategic Plan and the Diversity Strategic Plan with attention to faculty recruitment and retention.

EDI Fellows were identified and selected because of their deep commitment to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion at MSU Denver and their grounding in the scholarship of EDI in higher education. Moreover, their experiences can inform MSU Denver's efforts to recruit, retain and support faculty success. Throughout the year, Faculty Fellows contributed their expertise in the scholarship of equity, diversity and inclusion across campus and in their respective spheres of influence, in addition to serving as diversity liaisons and conduits of information about EDI. They also conducted research and analysis rooted in EDI, designed to inform the efforts and further embed EDI throughout campus. Toward this goal, Faculty Fellows also produced resources to

support this work, including comprehensive literature reviews, white papers, syllabi, surveys and reports. One Fellow developed curriculum and facilitated programmatic efforts in support of diverse-faculty retention and success.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Expertise and Liaisons

All Fellows participated in, advised and led subcommittees of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council (DEIC). Jovan Hernandez, Ph.D., and K Scherrer, Ph.D., led the Campus Climate subcommittee with Jeremy VanHooser. The chairs of this subcommittee facilitated regular meetings, consulted with the subcommittee to inform the Campus Climate Survey (CCS) analysis and dissemination and identified opportunities for survey findings to inform the enhancement of campus climate and planning for the next survey administration in spring 2024. They created the executive summary, coordinating its public release to the MSU Denver community. In addition, they held numerous stakeholder meetings to share CCS results across campus.

Fellows served as diversity liaisons and conduits of information on EDI to their respective colleges and schools and across campus. They advised on EDI promising practices, shared information on University wide EDI programs and efforts and served as ambassadors for the infusion of EDI across campus and in our classrooms. For example, Bill Herman, Ph.D., met regularly with MSU Denver's College of Business Faculty Development Committee to advance inclusive pedagogy, faculty inclusion of EDI content in coursework and faculty research that is attendant to EDI issues, in addition to providing regular updates to the dean and seeking feedback and opportunities for collaboration. In liaising with the School of Education, Ofelia Schepers, Ph.D., ensured that the school was informed of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion's efforts and offered support for faculty searches, including developing a faculty diversity group to ensure that faculty members with expertise in equity, diversity and inclusion were included on hiring committees. Eric Olson, Ph.D., served similarly in the context of the School of

Hospitality, as did Scherrer with the College of Health and Applied Sciences' Diversity and Inclusion Committee. In addition, EDI Faculty Fellow Sandra Leu Bonanno, Ph.D., served as the faculty expert to the Pathways to Possible Program at MSU Denver, working with it to develop culturally responsive programming and curriculum.

Research and Analysis

Faculty Fellows conducted research and analysis on numerous projects, including conducting comprehensive literature reviews, benchmarking, coding and analyzing survey data, in addition to collaborating with constituencies across campus to conduct their own surveys. For example, Herman benchmarked data on Business-faculty diversity. Herman and Olson also completed a preliminary literature review of relevant scholarship focusing on EDI issues in higher education generally and, where available, business and hospitality/tourism specifically. Leu Bonanno reviewed the literature on Culturally Responsive & Sustaining Education in Higher Education and synthesized the literature into three themes. From this, she worked with the Pathways to Possible Program to create shared goals for collaboration and the LAS 190 course.

As part of the Campus Climate Survey, Hernandez led the cleaning and coding of quantitative data for future analysis and to provide customized summaries to campus constituencies. Scherrer focused on the qualitative analysis of data contributing to the overall analysis plan and completed a draft of student findings. Hernandez and Scherrer also gathered feedback from constituents across campus regarding the survey's strengths and limitations and will use that information to

develop and administer the next iteration of the survey in spring 2024.

Olson also worked with campus partners to send out an ad-hoc survey to faculty and staff gauging the level of interest in creating an LGBTQIA+ Faculty and Staff Resource Group. Finally, Schepers conducted a comparative analysis identifying faculty-development resources across campus in an effort to ensure that a membership in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD) would complement existing efforts and fill a need for culturally relevant faculty-development resources rooted in equity and inclusion.

Resources

Faculty Fellows created, organized and provided resources for MSU Denver's constituents. For example, Herman provided a preliminary database of resources for diverse faculty recruitment and retention with particular attention to business fields. Hernandez, Scherrer and VanHooser drafted and disseminated the Campus Climate Executive Summary while also coordinating its public release. Bonanno provided resources such as a modified syllabus based on principles of active learning and preparation for students in LAS 190. She also provided links to resources and tools to promote active learning as well as meaningful engagement with the MSU Denver campus. This included a list of alternative locations across MSU Denver to hold classes, a bank of strategies for collaboration and active learning, and a list of community-building activities to begin classes with and solidify meaningful relationships among peers.

Programmatic Administration

Schepers developed curriculum and facilitated the Tenure Track Supper Club twice a semester. This critical resource provided tenure-track faculty members with practical knowledge for successfully navigating the tenure track and a space to engage in community and networking with one another. In addition, Schepers facilitated the rollout of and engagement with the NCFDD membership while informing faculty members across the campus of this resource and touting its benefits. In fact, all Fellows helped spread the word.

The EDI Faculty Fellows initiative allows for innovation and collaboration with faculty members across campus with expertise in and commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

**2021-2022
EDI FACULTY FELLOWS**

Bill D. Herman, Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor,
Department of Marketing,
College of Business

Jovan Hernandez, Ph.D.,
Associate Professor,
Department of Psychological
Sciences,
College of Letters, Arts and
Sciences

Sandra Leu Bonanno, Ph.D.,
Assistant Professor
Elementary Education,
School of Education

Eric D. Olson, Ph.D.,
Department Chair and
Associate Professor,
Rita and Navin Dimond
Department of Hotel
Management,
School of Hospitality

Ofelia Schepers, Ph.D.,
Associate Professor,
Elementary Education,
School of Education

K Scherrer, Ph.D., LCSW, MA,
Professor and
BSSW Program Director,
Department of Social Work,
College of Health and Applied
Sciences



Student Engagement and Belonging

To provide a student-centered, accessible, intersectional, anti-racist and equitable experience that prioritizes community engagement, servingness and cultural appreciation, the **Center for Multicultural Engagement and Inclusion (CMEI)** provides co-curricular activities, leadership and community development. The process combines the practical application of scholarly research, culturally responsive programming, experiential and student-based activities and learning.

The CMEI provides support to over 70 student organizations at MSU Denver. The center is dedicated to helping new organizations get started and connected with various resources across campus. Additionally, **Fraternity and Sorority Life** is home to eight culturally based Greek organizations, including our historically Black Greek organizations and two growing Panhellenic sororities. Every year, MSU Denver students take part in this journey in finding their home and sense of belonging through one of our fraternities and sororities. These organizations offer

opportunities to cultivate bonds with students who have similar values, serve the community and develop leadership skills inside and outside of the chapter experience through our two governing councils.

Brother to Brother is an urban-male initiative program in the CMEI that applies four programmatic pillars: leadership development, social integration, academic support and career preparation. The program increases the recruitment, retention and graduation rates of men of color at MSU Denver. **Sister Circles** is a group for women of color who gather as a collective community. Sister Circles has a goal of bringing together women of color to create a space for healing, encouragement, understanding, learning, strength, growth and empowerment along with engaging in inclusivity.

Community and Civic Engagement is about bringing students and organizations together to make a positive, significant and lasting change in the world. Through volunteering, voting, internships and

community organizing, students can learn beyond the classroom and campus. Community engagement offers a way for students to participate in programs and organizations on and off campus as members of their community. Civic engagement occurs when individuals work to make a change on a local, state, national and international level through political and nonpolitical actions. The goal of community and civic engagement is to address public concerns and uplift communities. MSU Denver provides a connection for students, faculty members, staff members and community partners to access resources, events and networks to participate in communities on and off campus. In collaboration with Undergraduate Studies, the CMEI aids students in voter registration, informational voter support and post-election reflection and provides support spaces for MSU Denver's student body.

The **Equity Peer Leaders** group was created to address equity- and social justice-related issues on our campus. Equity-minded students lead

workshops, trainings or discussions to name these issues and craft ways to dismantle them at MSU Denver. This is a space to imagine and practice a future where everyone can thrive and will unapologetically center the truths of marginalized voices and identities.

The **Equity Training Series** is a yearlong collection of workshops, trainings and events designed to promote conversation among students at MSU Denver surrounding social justice and racial equity. The speakers, presenters and facilitators aim to create a common language and vocabulary among MSU Denver students related to equity-minded student leadership. In keeping with the Student Affairs Division's commitment to anti-racism, the Equity Training Series aims to serve as a safer space and launching pad for dialogue and discourse among students with marginalized identities, their allies and others. Equity Training Series speakers have included Joy DeGruy, Ph.D.; Ibram X. Kendi, Ph.D.; Anahi Russo Garrido, Ph.D.; Major General Angela Salinas; Travis C. Smith, Ph.D.; and Terrell Strayhorn, Ph.D.

Met Media prepares MSU Denver students for successful careers as communications professionals through the support of student-led multimedia outlets and the cultivation of a real-world learning environment. It promotes the student voice, journalistic integrity, cultural diversity and community engagement through partnerships with members of the Auraria Campus and Front Range communities. The purpose of Met Media is to elevate MSU Denver's student voices and experiences through protected forums. Its Workplace Integrity Training initiative improves workplace culture and anti-racism with

collaborations among Met Media, Journalism Media Production, the C2 Hub and the Dialogues Program. Over the past academic year, four workshops were conducted: two in the Media Leadership courses, the Met Media team and another session open to all on campus.

The **Immigrant Services Program** provides two legal-information sessions per month. Sessions connect immigrant and undocumented students, staff members and community members with experienced and trusted immigration attorneys via confidential, free one-on-one meetings. The program works directly with Colorado high schools and MSU Denver's immigrant and undocumented students to create bilingual workshops for immigrant and undocumented high school students and parents on college access, ways to prepare for college and how they begin to think of themselves as college students. Since fall 2020, the Immigrant Services Program has coordinated 27 visits with 381 total attendees. Many trainings result in one-on-one meetings among students, parents, educators and staff members from the Immigrant Services Program. Using donor funds, the program provides DACA-renewal grants to qualified, enrolled students who are eligible to renew their DACA

status. Eleven DACA-renewal grants were provided during the 2021-22 academic year, and 118 renewal grants have been provided since fall 2017. UndocuPeers is a five-hour training developed by United We Dream that has been adopted and adjusted to MSU Denver and the Colorado context.

TRIO Student Support Services is committed to creating a campus community where students' goals are nurtured through individualized support and the development of an inclusive culture. The project is required to meet three expectations yearly, and MSU Denver continues to meet and exceed these expectations:

97.5% of all participants in the TRIO Student Support Services project persisted from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or earned a bachelor's degree, exceeding the goal of 70% set by the grant.

92% of all enrolled participants served met the performance level required to stay in good academic standing exceeding the goal of 75% set by the grant.

60.3% of new participants served graduated from MSU Denver within 6 years exceeding the goal of 33% set by the grant.



Campus Climate Survey Results

Climate surveys are commonly used tools in higher education to assess how university culture, particularly with regard to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), is experienced by faculty members, staff members and students. This data can be used to inform interventions to improve the retention of faculty members, staff members and students and to support institutions of higher education in achieving their EDI goals. In previous years, MSU Denver has relied on Campus Climate Surveys created by external organizations. But in the 2020-21 academic year, the Campus Climate Cultivation Committee of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council examined questions from a variety of surveys, including ModernThink, for reliability over time and adapted previous questions to create our own tool to assess MSU Denver's climate using Insight Viewfinder. In this executive summary, we present preliminary findings from initial analyses of these data.

Links to online surveys were sent out to 19,956 MSU Denver stakeholders in spring 2021s using professional/student email addresses to four constituent groups at MSU Denver. Reminders were sent on multiple occasions. Administrators consisted of the President, Vice Presidents, the Director of Athletics, and Academic Deans and Associate Deans. Faculty included all categories, such as full-time tenured and tenure-track,



full-time non-tenure track and affiliate faculty. Staff included all professional and classified staff members. Students consisted of all students who were enrolled in at least one credit hour during the spring 2021 semester. Of note, students were also asked to complete the National Survey of Student Engagement during approximately the same period as this survey, which may have influenced the response rate, and campuswide staff and faculty members were asked to complete an employee-engagement survey one week prior to this survey going out.

Initial analysis of quantitative and qualitative data indicates several key findings about how members of different identity groups experience belonging and inclusivity at MSU Denver. Central to these early analyses are the experiences of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, LGBTQIA+ people, those with disabilities and veterans.

Highlighted Findings

When asked about a sense of belonging on campus based on their identities:

Asian and White faculty members indicated the highest rates of positive belonging on campus (61% and 58% respectively), while Hispanic and Black faculty members indicated the lowest levels of belonging at 40% and 44% respectively. Cisgender women and men on the faculty responded similarly positively to this question at 56% and 53% respectively.

White staff members indicated the highest rates of positive belonging on campus (58%), followed by Black staff members (56%), Asian staff members (53%) and Hispanic staff members (49%). Cisgender men on staff were more likely to indicate a sense of belonging (64% compared with 53% for cisgender women).



51% of Black students, 49% of Hispanic students, 46% of Asian students and 43% of White students provided favorable responses. Only 40% of cisgender men (compared with 49% positive responses from cisgender women) responded positively to this question.

Other student groups were generally positive about their feelings of belonging on campus, with 80% of BIPOC students, 77% of LGBTQIA+ students, 71% of students with disabilities and 64% of veteran students responding favorably to this question.

Faculty and staff members were asked if they agreed with statements such as “Our Board of Trustees is supportive of campus diversity efforts.”

About half of faculty and staff members strongly agreed or agreed with this statement (49% and 54% respectively), many had neutral responses

(40% and 41%, respectively), and some disagreed with this statement (11% and 5%, respectively).

Faculty and staff members were also asked if they agreed with the statement that “Senior leadership shows a visible commitment to campus diversity.”

Seventy-six percent of faculty members and 79% of staff members responded favorably to this statement, while 10% of faculty members and 8% of staff members disagreed with this statement.

When asked if there was “adequate financial support to drive campus diversity efforts,” 43% of faculty members and 41% of staff members disagreed, while 23% of faculty and staff members agreed with this statement.

Findings of additional analyses of faculty and staff members’ satisfaction with their jobs indicate that faculty and staff members value and appreciate the diversity of our student body and employee representation, the University’s commitment to diversity, working close to home, the surrounding community and the potential for a healthy work-life balance.

When asked to agree/disagree with the statement “I love my job” 76% of faculty members and 64% of staff members agreed.

In contrast, when faculty and staff members were asked about reasons why they may have considered leaving the institution, inadequate salary and benefits was the number one response from both. That was followed by “workload too heavy” and “work not appreciated” for faculty and “no career advancement opportunities” and “workload too heavy” for staff.

When asked about the statement “I want to quit my job,” 14% of faculty members and 13% of staff members agreed.

When asked specifically about workload and pay equity, 55% of faculty members and 56% of staff members responded that their workload is “too heavy,” and 78% of faculty members and 68% of staff members agreed that they are “underpaid for the work that I do.”

Further, when asked whether “there are pay disparities here,” 66% of faculty members and 70% of staff members agreed.

There will be more comprehensive analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data. Participants shared written comments on their surveys that contained rich details about their experiences at MSU Denver. This qualitative data shines some light on questions such as why a participant may have had an unwelcoming or problematic experience, as well as how MSU Denver can continue to improve our climate. The Campus Climate Cultivation Committee of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council will inform subsequent analyses of this data, although multiple stakeholders in the MSU Denver community will be consulted to ensure that the analyses are relevant to our stakeholders. During this academic year, we also plan to assess the strengths and limitations of this Campus Climate Survey, with an eye toward revising it for the next iteration of the Campus Climate Survey for the 2023-24 academic year.



University Signature Diversity Programs



The **Richard T. and Virginia M. Castro Distinguished Visiting Professorship** program has long honored Richard T. Castro, an influential community organizer, social worker and Colorado state representative. The professorship was developed to foster multiculturalism, diversity and academic excellence at MSU Denver.

This year, the professorship was renamed to recognize the critical contributions and longtime leadership of Richard’s wife, Virginia. Virginia M. Castro was one of the first instructors of Social Work at MSU Denver. She also worked in the Denver Public Schools Department of Social Work for 27 years before her retirement in 2001, 11 of those years as the district’s first Chicana administrator. She also was a partner and supporter of her late husband’s political career and remains active in various community-service endeavors.

This year’s theme of **“RePRESSente: Broadcasting, Nuestras Historias”** highlighted Latina journalists

who tell the stories of Latina/o/x and other marginalized communities and featured a virtual keynote address by **Maria Hinojosa**. Hinojosa is an award-winning multimedia journalist who explores and gives a critical voice to the diverse American experience. Her 30-year career includes reporting for PBS, CBS, WNBC, CNN and NPR. In addition, she is the anchor and executive producer of the Peabody Award-winning radio program “Latino USA” and founded Futuro Media.

The **Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorship** was initiated in 1981 to foster multiculturalism, diversity and academic excellence at MSU Denver. The professorship brings renowned scholars and artists of distinction to MSU Denver to conduct classes, seminars, performances and lectures for students, faculty and the larger Denver community.

Calvin Mackie, Ph.D., was the 2022 Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professor. Mackie is an award-

winning mentor, inventor, author, former engineering professor, internationally renowned speaker and successful entrepreneur. In 2013, Mackie founded STEM NOLA, a nonprofit organization created to expose, inspire and engage communities about the opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

The **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast** was started in 1992. The breakfast was created to celebrate the life and philosophy of Dr. King and includes a cultural program and awards ceremony recognizing individuals from the local community, faculty, staff and students who have demonstrated a commitment to the values expressed by Dr. King.

During this pandemic, we have witnessed the convergence of two public-health crises: Covid-19 and the continuing impacts of institutionalized racism. Structural inequities are intertwined with our nation's history and show up in various ways.

People of color have long had to endure the legacy of housing discrimination, disinvestment in their communities, exposure to environmental toxins and a lack of economic opportunities. These structural inequities have led to poorer health outcomes, including a higher incidence of chronic diseases, for people of color. Racist structural inequities are an ongoing public-health crisis that demands immediate attention.

Keynote speaker **Jeff S. Fard**, known as brother jeff, is a multimedia journalist, historian and community



organizer who lectures nationally, speaking to youth, students, social organizations and professionals. His subjects have included cultural identity and history, diversity, self-empowerment, community-building, economic development, health disparities and the uniting power of art.

The **Higher Education Diversity Summit** originated in 2010 and involved support from the University of Colorado Denver, Community College of Denver and MSU Denver. The Summit typically draws approximately 700 participants, features expert speakers, delivers a series of workshops and discussion forums, and generates opportunities for networking and debate designed to increase understanding of and appreciation for multiple worldviews related to diversity and inclusive excellence.

The Higher Education Diversity Summit focused on strengthening the Auraria Campus as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. **Darrel Wanzer-Serrano, Ph.D., and Marla Franco, Ph.D.,** were selected as the keynote speakers.

The two-day event was themed "**Leaning Critically Into HSI/MSI Servingness.**" It provided educators and faculty, staff and community members with an opportunity to learn from practitioners and scholars who are strengthening servingness and sustainability-building at HSIs. Various sessions showcased the commitment of HSI practitioners to the development and sustainability of HSI grants, legislative efforts and policy, accessibility, student experience and decolonizing professionalism.





Diversity Initiatives Grants, Sponsorships and Funding

In 2021-22, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion funded ten Diversity Initiative Grants totaling \$23,650. The pandemic has had quite an impact on the total programs funded, as prior to the pandemic the average had been 26.6 programs per year.

Diversity Initiatives Grants

Music Concert, Master Class/Workshop
Music Department
September 14-16, 2021

I Love My Undocuqueer People
Immigrant Services Program
October 14, 2021

Environmental Justice Guest Speakers
Earth and Atmospheric Sciences
Department
October 19-November 19, 2021

Community Amongst Future Teachers of Color
Elementary Education Department
October 20, 2021-May 1, 2022

Design for the Common Good International Exhibition
Center for Visual Arts
January 14-March 19, 2022

Building Navigational Capital and Residency with Violinist Monique Brooks Roberts
Music Department
February 1-May 1, 2022

Viva Southwest Mariachi Festival
Music Department
February 17-19, 2022

Artist Residency With Dewa Ayu Eka Putri
Music and Theatre and Dance Departments
March 29-May 1, 2022

DREAMer Graduation
Immigrant Services Program
May 7, 2022

La Alma Jaguar Summer Leadership Program
Journey Through Our Heritage
June 6-July 27, 2022

Internal Sponsorships

Music, Race and Social Justice Series
Music Department

Facilitating Equity Intergroup Dialog
Art Department

Black World Conference
Africana Studies Department

Bridge Speaker
Gender Institute for Teaching and Advocacy

Summer Science Scholar Program
Center for Advanced STEM Education

Staff Training Registrations
Gender Institute for Teaching and Advocacy

**Black, African and African American
Graduation Ceremony**

**Latina/o/x Graduation Ceremony and
Celebration**

**Native and Indigenous Graduation and
Powwow**

External Sponsorships

Fiesta on the Plaza
Clinica Tepeyac

Fall and Spring Performances
Su Teatro

Diversity Conference
Colorado Nursing Center

Healthcare Interest Program
Denver Health

LAEF Gala
Latin American Educational Foundation

Equity Reception and Recognition Event
Black Economic Opportunities Council

Tortillas for Tepeyac
Clinica Tepeyac

**Diversity Equity Inclusion Awards and
Reception**
Denver Business Journal



Employee Affinity Groups

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion supports Employee Affinity Groups with funding for various activities and meetings across the University. The office also sponsored 30 women of color to attend the Faculty Women of Color in the Academy conference and held two BIPOC faculty gatherings this year in an effort to build community among faculty of color.

African American Affairs Council (AAAC)
Asian, Pacific Islander and Desi American Faculty and Staff Alliance (APIDA)
Latina/o/x Faculty and Staff Association (LFSA)
LGBTQIA+ Faculty and Staff Resource Group (LGBTQIA+)
Womyn of Color Collective (WOCC)



Governing Boards Commitment to Equity

In June 2020, following the worldwide protests sparked by the murder of George Floyd, the Board of Trustees issued a resolution to express the University's commitment to engaging in the anti-racism work necessary to create systemic change. This resolution outlined the Trustees' commitment to leading, organizing and establishing an antiracist institution. These commitments included:

- Review university policies to dismantle institutionalized racism,
- Ensure the university is equipped with the tools and support to dismantle structural racism,
- Lead conversations centered around racial justice in Colorado
- Engage in ongoing training on racial bias and institutionalized racism

In addition, the Board of Trustees created a new committee to understand and engage in the work of racial justice.

In January 2022, trustees elected Russell Noles as the first alum and first African American to chair the MSU Denver Board of Trustees.

During this past year, the MSU Denver Foundation Board developed goals and action steps intended to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in their work. These goals included:

- Intentionally shape the Foundation Board of Directors to one that is able to use a diversity, equity and inclusion lens for its work
- Build on MSU Denver's 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan, diversity, equity and inclusion goals, Hispanic-Serving Institution status, and student diversity as key components of the comprehensive fundraising campaign
- Explore aligning the Foundation's investment strategy with its core values

Upon the adoption of these goals and the subsequent action steps, the Foundation has selected a new investment management group, Syntrinsic, to manage its assets. The MSU Denver Foundation is engaged in a yearlong effort to transition its portfolio over to one that reflects the University's values, including equity, diversity, and inclusion. Additionally, the Board has thoughtfully recruited new members to improve the Board's representational diversity and align with its goals.



As Defined by MSU Denver

Equity

Historically and politically, equity refers to the process of creating equivalent outcomes for members of historically underrepresented and oppressed groups. Equity is about ending systemic discrimination against people based on their identity and background, and it focuses on building areas where gaps exist on institutional needs to achieve diversity and inclusion.

Diversity

Conceptualizing diversity through an equity and inclusion understanding provides focus on the social representations and institutional processes that cause groups or individuals to be systematically excluded from full participation in higher education. It also relates to the understanding that benefits for some groups are embedded in the organizational aspects of the University. This includes not only social identities and characteristics but processes such as design of curriculum, admissions policies and practices, hiring practices, budgeting, tenure decisions and any other day-to-day business decisions made within the institution.

Inclusion

Inclusion exists when traditionally marginalized individuals and groups feel a sense of belonging and are empowered to participate in majority culture as full and valued members of the community, shaping and redefining that culture in different ways.

HSI Servingness

Using the Multidimensional Framework of Servingness at HSIs by Garcia, Núñez, and Sansone (2019), MSU Denver defines servingness as being conceptualized by indicators of serving as well as structures for serving. Indicators of serving include academic and non-academic outcomes that may be measured by HSIs, including but not limited to persistence, graduation, course completion, leadership identity, critical consciousness and civic engagement (Garcia et al., 2019). Students' overlapping experiences tied to each of these outcomes contribute to their overall sense of belonging and support (Garcia et al., 2019). As a result, servingness at an HSI is partially identified through actively fostering a culturally affirming environment for students through the creation and implementation of mentoring and support programs as well as cultural celebrations on campus.

Structures for serving then come into place as the additional definition of servingness. Structures for serving include organizational transformations to better serve Hispanic/Latina/o/x students such as HSI grant activities, decision-making processes, equity-minded leadership practices and policies, engagement with the community, etc. (Garcia et al., 2019). In practice, MSU Denver identifies servingness as an intentional transition of organizational structures through use of resources and programming. MSU Denver will learn with, and from existing model HSIs to implement promising practices of servingness. Race and ethnicity must also be considered to fully identify the HSI mission for servingness. While it is inherent that there is no singular approach to serve the needs of students, servingness must therefore be multidimensional and race-conscious in application to serve diverse populations intentionally and adequately.

Typology of Hispanic-Serving Institution Organizational Identities

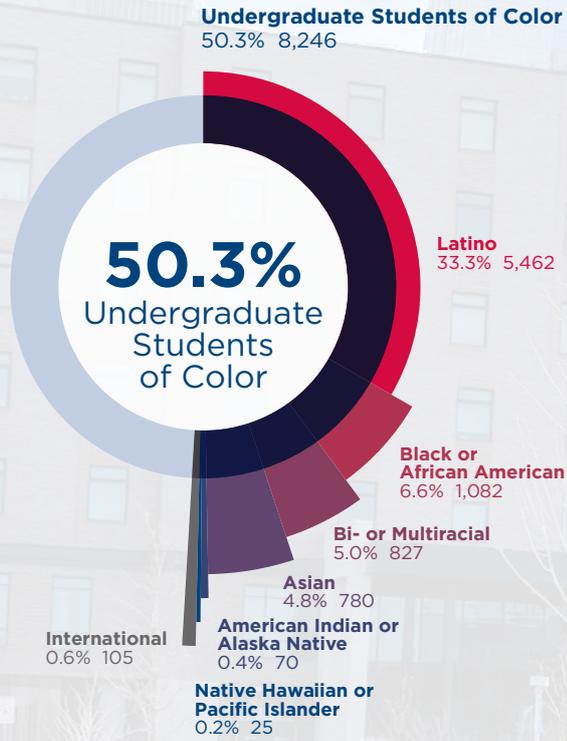
Organizational Outcome for Latinxs	High	Latinx-Producing	Latinx-Serving
	Low	Latinx Enrolling	Latinx-Enhancing
		Low	High
		Organizational Culture Reflects Latinxs	

(Garcia, 2017)

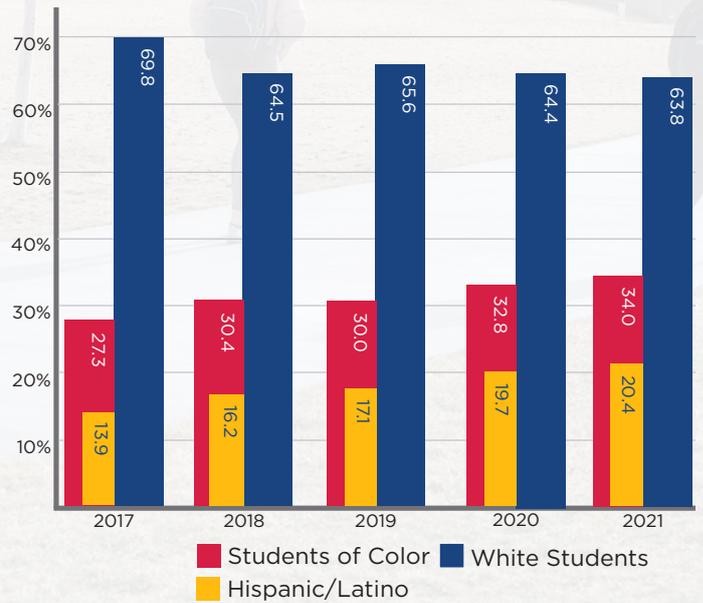
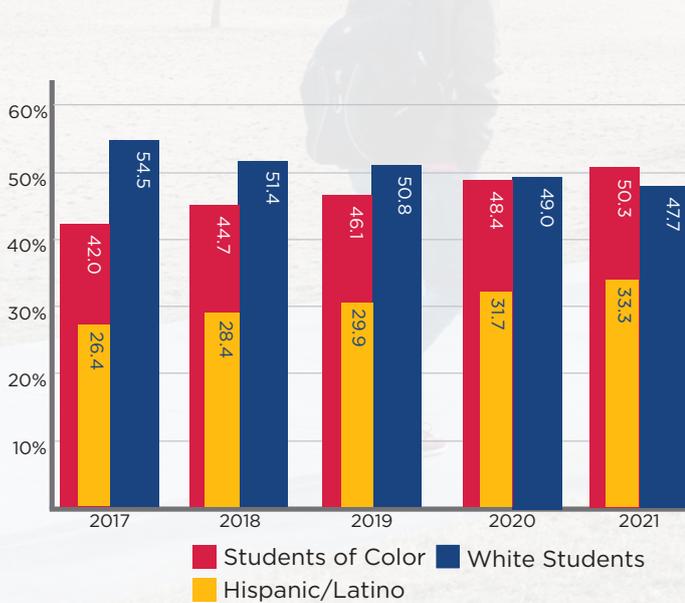
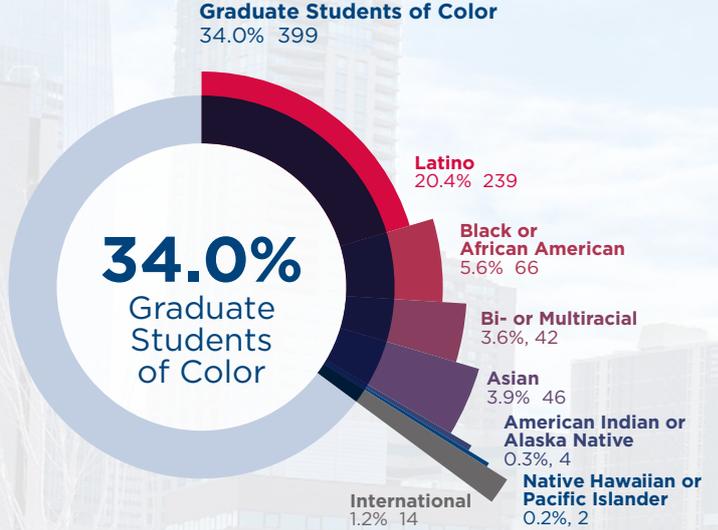


University Demographics

Undergraduate Students



Graduate Students



Student data source:

Student Profile, Fall 2021, Institutional Research, Oct. 2021

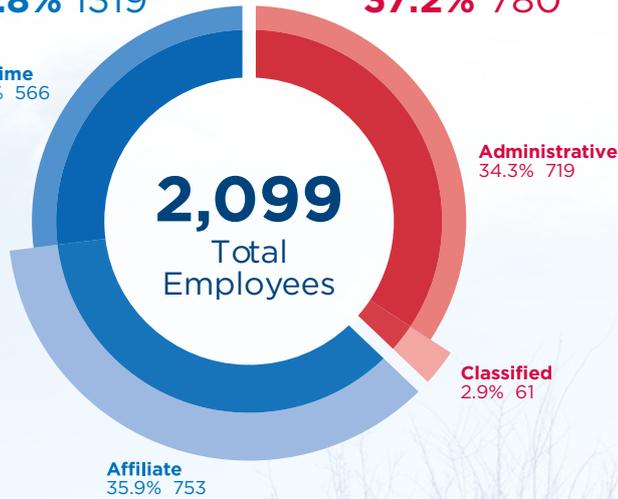
Employee data source:

IPEDS Data Fall 2021, Institutional Research, Oct. 2021

Faculty
62.8% 1319

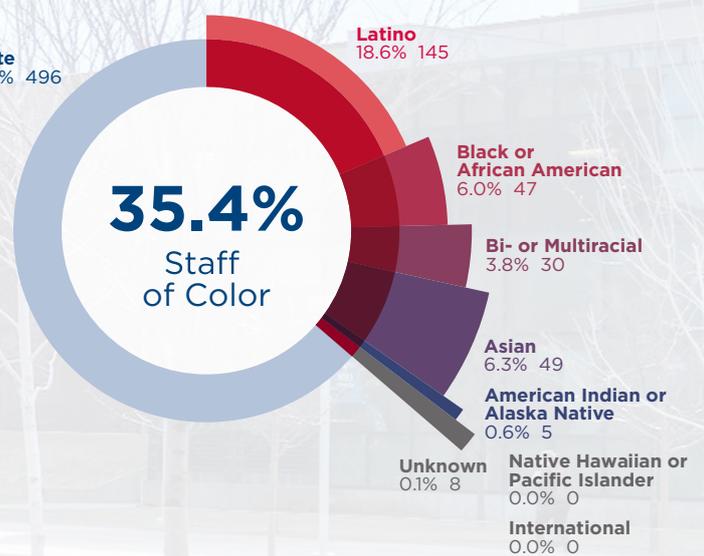
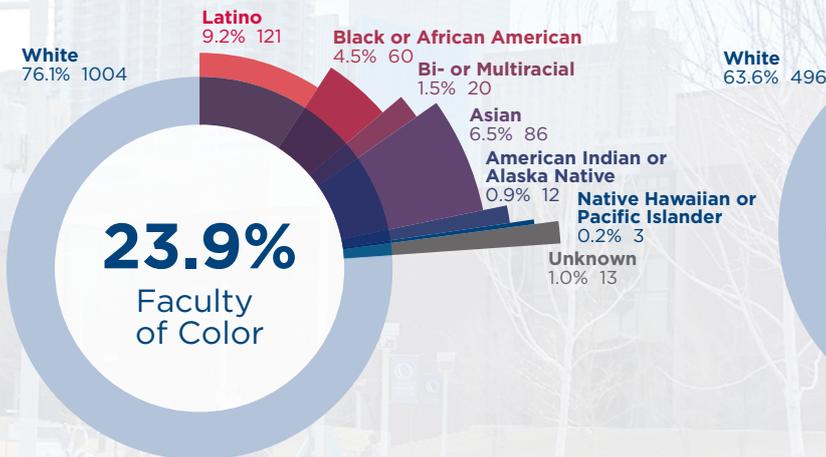
Staff
37.2% 780

Full-time
26.9% 566

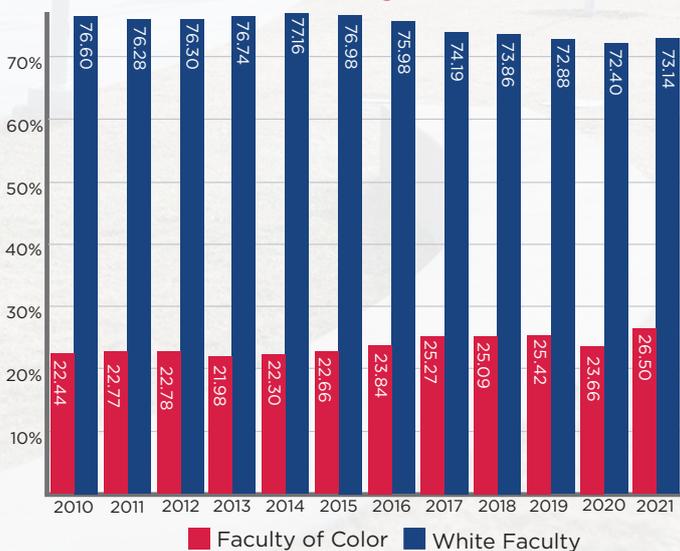


Faculty of Color
315 1319 Total Faculty

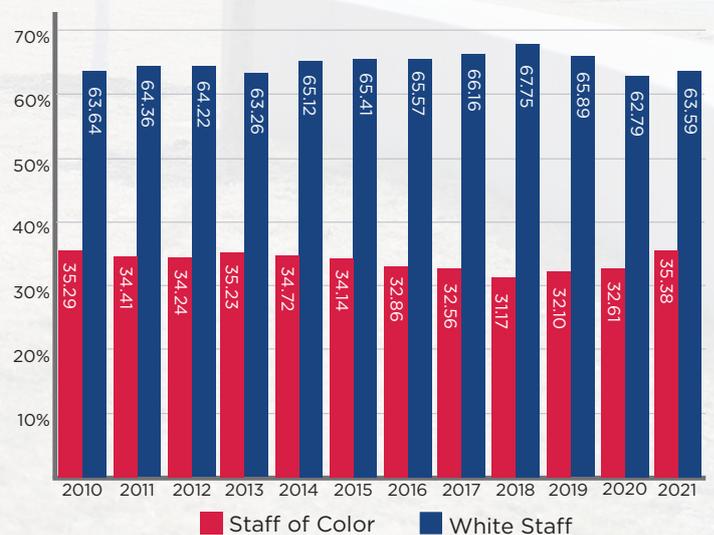
Staff of Color
276 780 Total Staff



Full-Time Faculty



University Staff



2022-2023

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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31						

August

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September

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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Latinx Heritage Month
Sept. 15- Oct. 15

October

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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LGBTQIA+ History Month

November

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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Native and Indigenous People's
Heritage Month

December

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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Multicultural Welcome

Sept. 1, 2022

HSI Week

HSI-What is it?

Sept. 12, 2022

Effective Advocacy

Sept. 13, 2022

¡Adios! Imposter Syndrome

Grow with Google

Sept. 14, 2022

Equity in Supervision

Sept. 14, 2022

Cocina de los Correcaminos

Sept. 15, 2022

Latinx Heritage Month Kickoff

Sept. 15, 2022

Centering Identities in the Classroom

Sept. 16, 2022

Black Latina Play

Sept. 27, 2022

Critical Discussion on Race

Oct. 5, 2023

Indigenous People's Day

Oct. 10, 2022

Undocuhub Training

Oct. 10, 2022

Castro Professorship

Ernesto Quiñonez

Oct. 11, 2022

52nd Anniversary of Chicana/o Studies

Oct. 12, 2022

The Shakers and Movers Leadership Conference

Oct. 14, 2022

Latinx Civic Engagement

Oct. 14, 2022

Umoja Conference

Oct. 20, 2022

Queeraoke Plant Party

Oct. 20, 2022

Return of the Corn Mothers Reception

Oct. 21, 2023

GITA's Spooky Open House

Oct. 27, 2022

Women In STEM Conference

Oct. 28, 2022

Día de los Muertos

Nov. 1, 2022

Native and Indigenous People's Heritage Month Opening Event

Nov. 2, 2022

Women and Gender in Equity Summit

Nov. 4, 2022

"American Exile" Film Screening and Discussion

Nov. 7, 2022

Veteran's Day Celebration

Nov. 10, 2022

Native and Indigenous People's Heritage Month Event

Nov. 16, 2022

Transgender Day of Remembrance

Nov. 17, 2022

"Plant Parenthood" Exploring Nourishment and Growth via Plants

Nov. 29, 2022

Native and Indigenous People's Heritage Month Closing Event

Nov. 30, 2022

1st Generation Graduation

Dec. 3, 2022

Latina/o/x Graduation

Dec. 7, 2022

Veteran's Graduation

Dec. 15, 2022

Equity Events

January

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February

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26	27	28				

Black History Month

March

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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Women's History Month

April

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May

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28	29	30	31			

Asian Pacific Islander Desi
American Heritage Month
(MSU Denver Observes in April)

June

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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

LGBTQIA+ Pride Month

MLK Peace Breakfast

Jan. 13, 2023

MLK Parade

Jan. 16, 2023

Black History Month Opening Event

Feb. 1, 2023

Black History Month Event

Feb. 9, 2023

Black World Conference

Feb. 15-16, 2023

Critical Discussion on Race

Feb. 22, 2023

Bridge Speaker

Feb. 23, 2023

Black History Month Event

Feb. 28, 2023

Women's History Month Event

Mar. 1, 2023

Noel Professorship

Mar. 7-9, 2023

Women's History Month Event

Mar. 14, 2023

Women's History Month Event

Mar. 16, 2023

Women's History Month Event

Mar. 30, 2023

1st Generation Summit

Mar. 31, 2023

Asian Pacific Islander Desi

American Heritage Month Opening Event

Apr. 4, 2023

Higher Education Diversity Summit

Apr. 10-12, 2023

Asian Pacific Islander Desi

American Heritage Month Event

Apr. 11, 2023

Asian Pacific Islander Desi

American Heritage Month Event

Apr. 18, 2023

Asian Pacific Islander Desi

American Closing and Graduation

Apr. 27, 2023

1st Generation Halfway Celebration

May 2, 2022

Latina/o/x Graduation

May 3, 2023

1st Generation Graduation

May 5, 2022

Native and Indigenous People's

Graduation and Powwow

May 6, 2023

Veteran's Graduation

May 11, 2023

Additional details, dates and updates on these events are online.



msudenver.edu/diversity/calendar

Office of Diversity and Inclusion



Michael Benitez Jr., Ph.D.
Vice President for
Diversity and Inclusion
and Associate Professor



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Executive Director
for HSI Initiatives and
Inclusion



Chalane Lechuga, Ph.D.
Professor and
Director of Faculty
Diversity Research and
Development



Julie Sharer-Price.
Executive Assistant



Jeremy VanHooser, MS
Diversity Coordinator



Amanda Corso, MA
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Master of Arts in
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Bachelor of Arts in
Political Science



Michael Wickham
Diversity Projects
Assistant
Academic Program
MSU Denver,
Bachelor of Science in
Psychology

JORDAN STUDENT SUCCESS





MSUSM
DENVER

INSIGHT

Into Diversity

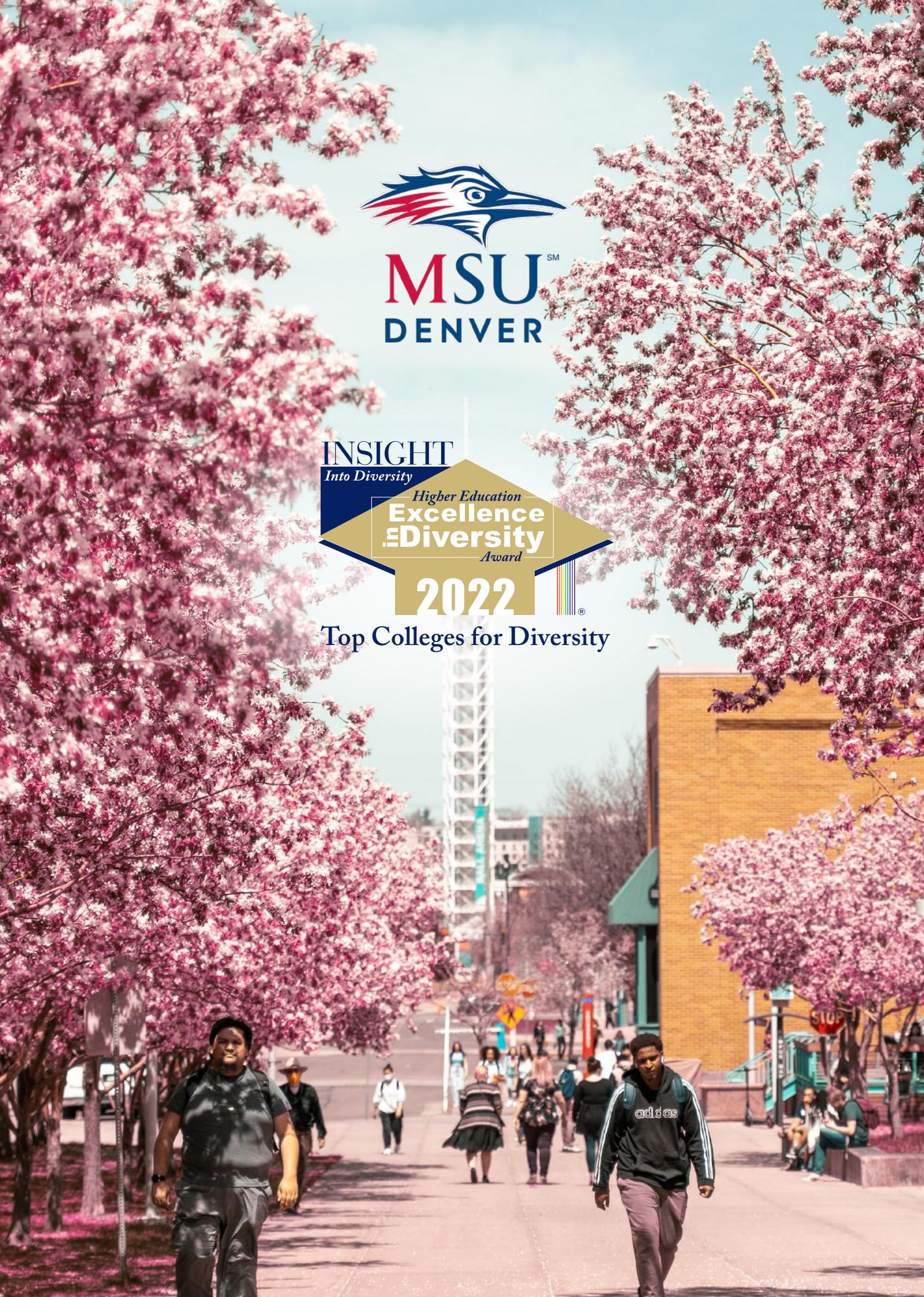
Higher Education

**Excellence
in Diversity**

Award

2022

Top Colleges for Diversity





METROPOLITAN
STATE UNIVERSITYSM
OF DENVER

2020-2021
E Q U I T Y
D I V E R S I T Y
& I N C L U S I O N
R E P O R T

EQUITY

Historically and politically, equity refers to the process of creating equivalent outcomes for members of historically underrepresented and oppressed groups. Equity is about moving toward ending systemic discrimination against people based on their identity and background, and focuses on filling areas where gaps exist based on institutional needs to achieve diversity and inclusion.

DIVERSITY

Conceptualizing Diversity through an equity and inclusion understanding provides focus on the social representations and institutional processes that could cause groups or individuals to be systematically excluded from full participation in higher education, and relates to the understanding that benefits for some groups are embedded in the organizational aspects of the university. This includes not only social identities and characteristics, but also processes such as design of the curriculum, admissions policies and practices, hiring practices, budgeting, tenure decisions and any other day-to-day business decisions made within the institution.

INCLUSION

Exists when traditionally marginalized individuals and groups feel a sense of belonging and are empowered to participate in majority culture as full and valued members of the community, shaping, and redefining that culture in different ways.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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OFFICE OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The staff in the office is small but mighty. Together they work with units across the university to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout MSU Denver.



DR. MICHAEL BENITEZ
VICE PRESIDENT FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



JULIE SHARER-PRICE
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



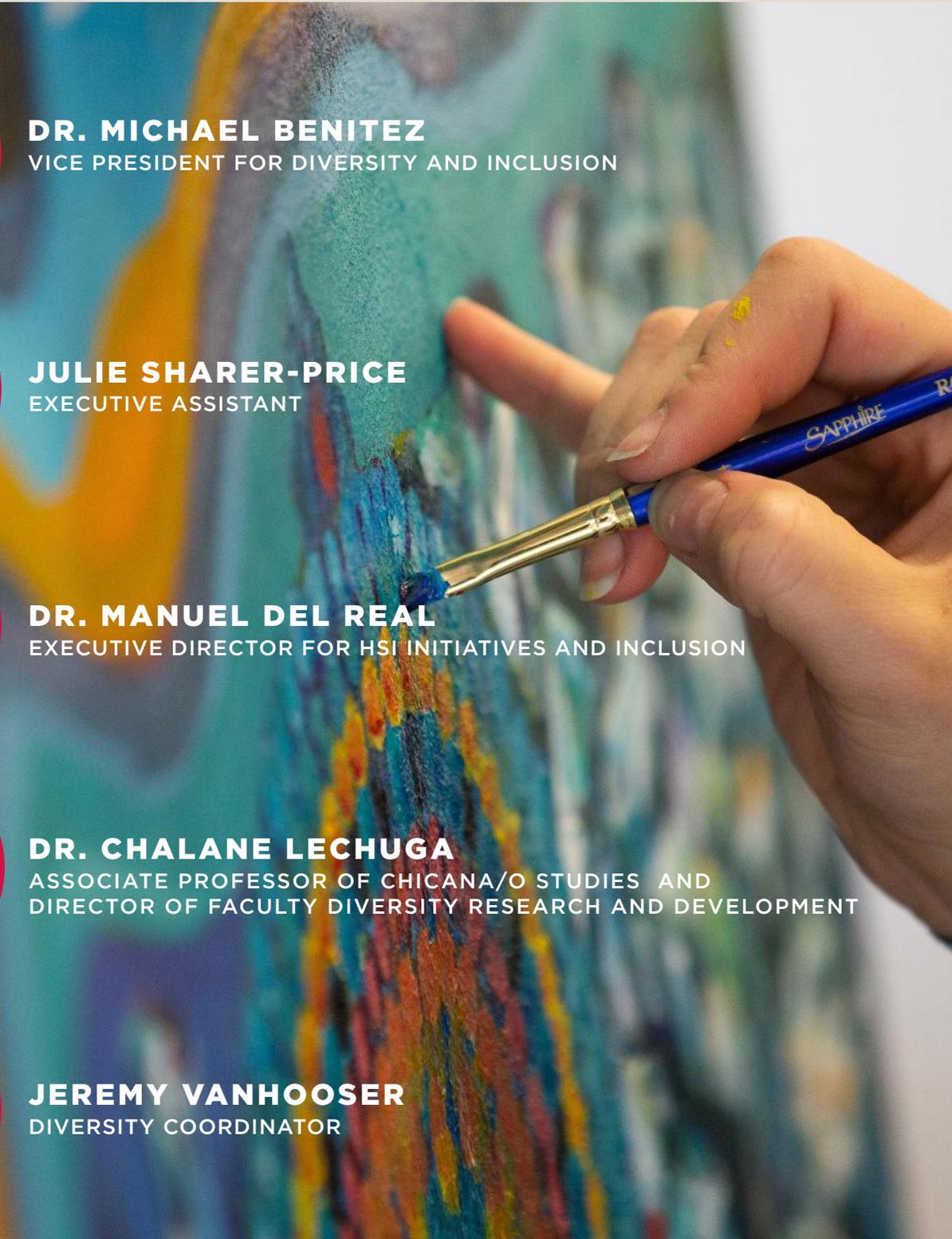
DR. MANUEL DEL REAL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR HSI INITIATIVES AND INCLUSION



DR. CHALANE LECHUGA
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CHICANA/O STUDIES AND
DIRECTOR OF FACULTY DIVERSITY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



JEREMY VANHOOSER
DIVERSITY COORDINATOR



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COUNCIL

MSU Denver has been committed to diversity since our beginning. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion brings together faculty, staff, and students from across the university to advance our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

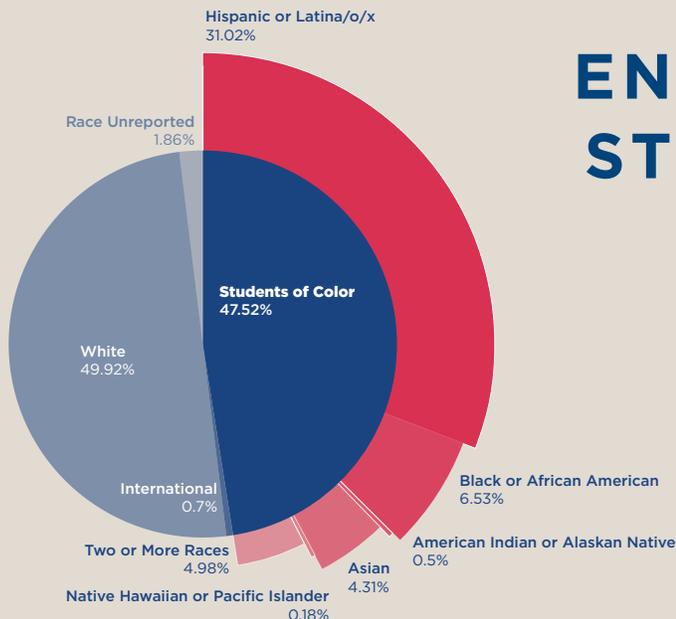
Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council is charged with examining diversity, inclusion, and equity issues at MSU Denver with respect to policy and practice from multiple perspectives and across different functional areas; including access, recruitment and retention, community mending, and outreach to diverse constituents internally and externally, and campus climate and institutional culture.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council is a consistent structure-focused council representing, leading, and coordinating equity, diversity, and inclusion work at MSU Denver. Diversity Equity and Inclusion Council is made up of five committees; each addressing structural themes and goals developed through a combination of campus-wide listening sessions, existing and new data, and campus forum conversations.

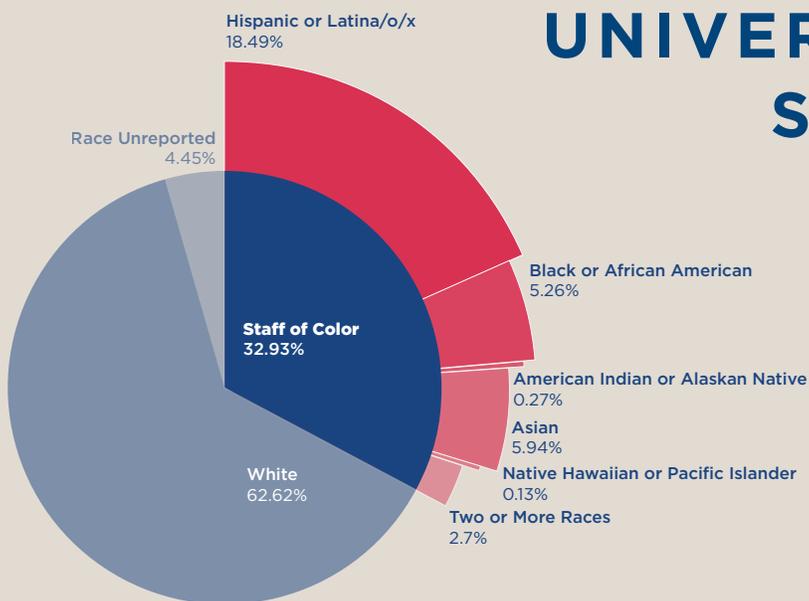


REPRESENTATION MATTERS

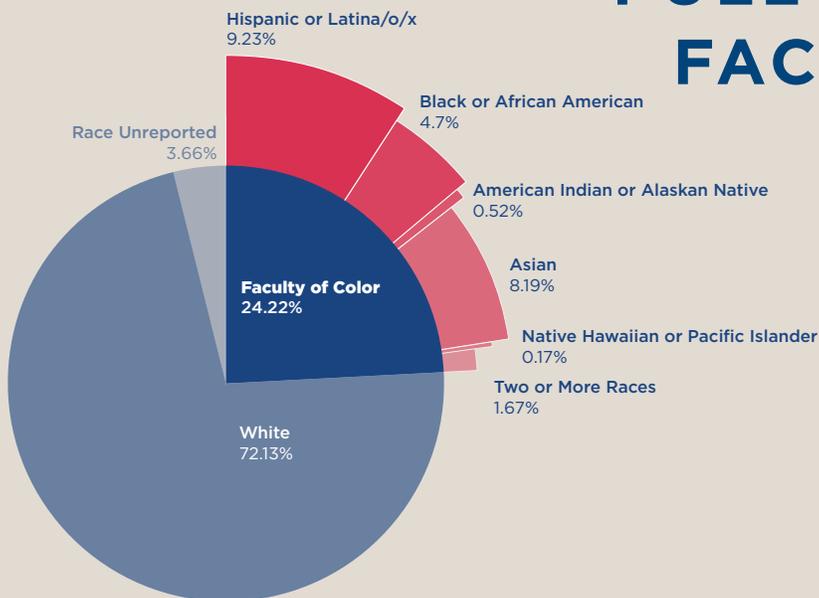
ENROLLED STUDENTS



UNIVERSITY STAFF



FULL-TIME FACULTY



HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION



BECOMING AN HSI WAS A 12-YEAR INITIATIVE THAT STARTED IN 2007 LEADING TO MSU DENVER RECEIVING HSI DESIGNATION DURING THE SPRING OF 2019.

A Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) is a federal designation by the U.S. Department of Education that acknowledges colleges and universities with 25% or more total undergraduate Hispanic/Latina/o/x full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment.

The average educational and general expenditures of the institution are low, per FTE undergraduate student, in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per FTE undergraduate student of institutions that offer similar instruction.

HSI Eligibility must be met annually and materials submitted to the U.S. Department of Education.

As a result of federal designation, HSIs are eligible to competitively apply for federal grants aimed at supporting HSIs.

HSI GRANTS AND FUNDING

2019 POHA Grant

The Department of Nutrition was awarded a \$2 million Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (POHA) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant focuses on encouraging students from diverse backgrounds and those with interest in serving diverse populations, to pursue post-baccalaureate study at MSU Denver. Nutrition has conducted outreach to high school students, provided financial support to students, hired diverse support staff, offered regular seminars and an annual conference focused on diversity in dietetics and health care.

2020 HSI/MSI CARES Act

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)

MSU Denver received \$2,765,922 from the HSI/MSI CARES Act as a COVID-19 funding. This funding supported a number of programs and projects like:

- Teaching and Learning Assistants Programs
- Faculty Cohort Association of College and University Educators
- Laptop rental program for students, faculty, and staff



SIGNATURE EVENTS

MSU Denver holds a number of signature events. Some of the longest-running programs and University traditions focus on equity, diversity and inclusion. These include the Richard T. Castro and Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorships, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast and Higher Education Diversity Summit.



RICHARD T. CASTRO DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSORSHIP

The Richard T. Castro Distinguished Visiting Professorship was initiated in 1997 by the Department of Chicana/o Studies to foster multiculturalism, diversity and academic excellence at MSU Denver. The professorship brings renowned Latinx scholars, artists and leaders of distinction to MSU Denver to conduct classes, seminars, performances and lectures for students, faculty, staff members and the larger Denver community.

MSU Denver hosted a number of virtual events and conversations with 2020 Castro Professor Angela Valenzuela, Ph.D., who discussed the theme “Reclaiming Schooling/ Recuperando la Enseñanza: radically reimagining the work of education.”



msudenver.edu/castro



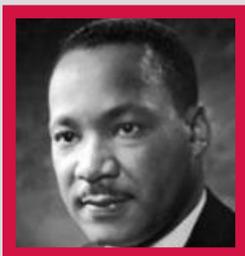
RACHEL B. NOEL DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSORSHIP

The Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorship was initiated in 1981 to foster multiculturalism, diversity and academic excellence at MSU Denver. The professorship brings renowned scholars and artists of distinction to MSU Denver to conduct classes, seminars, performances and lectures for students, faculty and the larger Denver community.

This year, the committee hosted a virtual professorship, bringing Chancellor Emerita Phoebe A. Haddon as the 2021 Professor. To commemorate the 40th year of the Professorship, several past Noel Professors participated in a Panel of Equals, sharing thoughts on the theme of Hope and Healing.



msudenver.edu/noel



REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PEACE BREAKFAST

The first Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast at MSU Denver was held January 15, 1992, when about 50 attendees from campus and the Denver community gathered to celebrate King’s life and legacy. The annual event also celebrates and recognizes MLK Peace Award winners - campus and community members who keep King’s spirit and dream alive through their actions.

This year’s theme, “Know Justice, Know Peace,” was brought to life by emcee Amber Mozet and keynote speaker Melina Abdullah, Ph.D. A panel discussion followed the breakfast to explore the theme further.



msudenver.edu/mlk



HIGHER EDUCATION DIVERSITY SUMMIT

The Higher Education Diversity Summit is a major conference that is leading the conversation about diversity, social justice and inclusive excellence in Colorado. The Higher Education Diversity Summit (HEDS) continues to expand and improve to become a leading conference on diversity issues and inclusive excellence in the nation and beyond. HEDS keynote speakers in 2020 were Laura Rendón, Ph.D., and Natasha Croom, Ph.D. Attendees include students and members of the MSU Denver faculty, staff and community, all of whom bring important and varying perspectives to the inclusive excellence conversation.



heds365.org

MSU DENVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In June 2020, following the worldwide protests sparked by the murder of George Floyd, the Board of Trustees issued a resolution to express the University's commitment to engaging in the anti-racism work necessary to create systemic change. This resolution outlined the Trustees' commitment to leading, organizing and establishing an anti-racist institution. These commitments included:

- Review university policies to dismantle institutionalized racism,
- Ensure the university is equipped with the tools and support to dismantle structural racism,
- Lead conversations centered around racial justice in Colorado
- Engage in ongoing training on racial bias and institutionalized racism

In addition, the Board of Trustees created a new sub-committee to understand and engage in the work of racial justice.



MSU DENVER FOUNDATION

During this past year MSU Denver Foundation board developed goals and action steps intended to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in their work. These goals included:

- Intentionally shape the Foundation Board of Directors to one that is able to use a diversity, equity and inclusion lens for its work.
- Build on MSU Denver's 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan, diversity, equity and inclusion goals, Hispanic-Serving Institution status, and student diversity as key components of the comprehensive fundraising campaign.
- Explore aligning the Foundation's investment strategy with its core values.

Upon the adoption of these goals and the subsequent action steps, the foundation has selected a new investment management group, Syntinsic, to manage our assets. The MSU Denver Foundation is engaged in a yearlong effort to transition their portfolio over to one that reflects the university's values, including equity, diversity, and inclusion. Additionally, the board has thoughtfully recruited new members to improve the board's representational diversity and align with their goals.

DIVERSITY INITIATIVES AND SPONSORSHIPS

Black World Conference

The 38th Annual Black World Conference examined the confluence of COVID-19 and the movement for racial justice. Featuring Michael Eric Dyson and Academy Award nominee, Terrence Blanchard.

Building Navigational Capital & Community among Future Teachers of Color

This initiative is to foster community amongst future Teachers of Color at MSU Denver so that they feel supported and empowered as they navigate a predominately white field. Faculty from multiple departments attended to answer questions that students of color might have about navigating higher education and thriving in their future profession. The event also served as a listening session, inviting students to share what they would like from faculty and advisors to thrive at MSU Denver.

Dark Lioness Exhibition

Zanele Muholi: Somnyama Ngonyama, Hail the Dark Lioness, was an international photography exhibition with 100 self-portraits. Celebrated visual activist Zanele Muholi uses their body as a canvas to confront the deeply personal politics of race and representation in the visual archive. Each black and white self-portrait asks critical questions about social injustice, human rights, and contested representations of the Black body. Colorado Mentors Fall Celebration Event.



CIRCLE/STAMP Conferences

An event for local Middle School students that covers a wide array of topics including: digital allyship, environmental justice, anti-racism, and healthy relationships and wellness. This experience offers inclusive, brave spaces where students can authentically share, discuss, and explore important topics that directly impact them. At the lunch hour, MSU Denver's Admissions and Immigrant Services representatives spoke with students as part of our outreach and recruitment efforts.

Colorado Association of Bilingual Education Gala

Sponsorship of the Gala was a great opportunity to continue to be a presence in the community and to support the very students we serve. It is also a fantastic opportunity to highlight the good work MSU Denver does in supporting Latinx and bilingual communities in broader Denver community.

Colorado Mentors Program

The program helped students living outside of Denver to feel connected to MSU Denver. Faculty and staff volunteered their time to attend training and meet with students. The program has aided in building connections, answering questions, and advising students so they feel a stronger sense of belonging and will be retained for semesters to come.

Displaced Aurarians: Honoring the Past to Plan for the Future

This event engaged the campus community in conversations about the history of the Chicana/o community displaced by the construction of Auraria Campus. Panelists included Councilwoman Jamie Torres, alumni Ean Thomas Tafoya, Virginia Castro, and displaced Aurarian Frances Torres.



JTOH Summer Leadership Program

Every summer, for 8 years, the JTOH program has hosted a free multicultural summer leadership program called the La Alma Jaguar Club. MSU Denver students gain first and knowledge of community organizations involved with diversity and community service. The Jaguar Club provides summer programming to families and kids in Barnum neighborhood while also exposing these families to MSU Denver.

5th Latinx Philosophy Conference

The Conference was well attended and reinforced the goals of past meetings: to foster the development of a network and community of Latinx philosophers in the U.S., and to create a forum for the discussion of philosophical issues of particular relevance to Latin American people of various nationalities and racial backgrounds.

The Ph.D. Project

The PhD Project has assisted hundreds of business schools increase their faculty diversity since 1994. This year they launched a webinar series to stimulate discussion around issues involving race and equity at the intersection of business and academia.

Roadrunner Diversity Scholars Program

A cohort-based program that connects students with scholarships, book loan program, praxis exam practice and prep, scholarship writing seminars and cultural and community building activities.

Womyn of Color Collective

As a newer affinity group the Womyn of Color Collective have continued to meet and hold space, virtual, for women of color working on campus. The office of Diversity and Inclusion sponsored nine attendees to the Faculty Women of Color in the Academy Conference at Virginia Tech.

MUSIC, RACE, & SOCIAL JUSTICE VISITING ARTIST SERIES

The MSU Denver Department of Music, with support from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, presented the 2020-21 Virtual Visiting Artist Series on Music, Race and Social Justice. Organized by Elizabeth McLean Macy, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology, this yearlong series highlights the work of BIPOC musicians, performers and scholars.

Fall 2020

Taina Asili
The Dream Unfinished
iAparato!
Bruce Sunpie Barnes
Aisha Fukushima

Spring 2021

Olmecca
Terence Blanchard
Resistance Revival Chorus
DJ Kuttin Kandi
Joyce McCall, Ph.D.



DIVERSE PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS

Equity, diversity, and inclusion have been integrated into departments and offices across MSU Denver. The university is engaging in EDI work to provide resources and support students in several ways.

Before students even arrive at MSU Denver, the Admissions Office assesses the admission review process to remove any potential bias, racist or discriminatory processes, practices, or language to ensure fair and equitable processes for all students. MSU Denver has been a leader in supporting undocumented students accessing higher education. Many undocumented students don't think they can attend college. Immigrant Services Program visits high schools where undocumented college students present their paths, challenges, sources of strength, and practical tips about financial aid and other access issues, which allow the high school students to understand that college is possible for them. Additionally, Immigrant Services offers UndocuHub in collaboration with Denver Children's Advocacy Center and Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, using both web and phone resources to help Colorado's undocumented community with access to health care, legal services, and financial and educational assistance. UndocuHub is creating better collaboration with non-profits on these issues of importance to the immigrant community.

Once students enter MSU Denver, the university has several resources and services that students can utilize on their path to complete their degrees and beyond. The School of Hospitality has launched a 3-year initiative to transition hospitality courses to use open educational resources to ensure equal access for all students and to ensure the department is offering timely and relevant course content. The School of Education has several programs and initiatives to diversify the teaching field and graduate future teachers. These efforts have led to the creation of the RoadRunner Diversity Scholars Program, which provides scholarships and enhances support for students of color preparing to become teachers. The school offers Praxis Review Workshops to include most subjects for free to all teacher licensure students. The Center for Advanced STEM Education provides scholarships and peer mentoring for future STEM Ed teachers to prepare them for working in diverse, high-needs schools. Additionally, the center provides professional development for pre-service and in-service teachers to support inclusive STEM learning, including four summer institutes, four Discover STEM Expo events, monthly professional development opportunities, and the development of online resources. The Department of Nutrition was awarded a \$3.25 million Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant, which provides undergraduates studying dietetics the opportunity to apply for up to \$40K per year to school and living expenses. Students participate in program activities, including mentorship with diverse mentors in the field.

MSU Denver also provides access to several services to support the physical and mental health of our students. The Health Center at Auraria has created a Transgender Care Services Program that includes access to hormone replacement therapy, resources, and referrals to campus and community support, personal pronouns on name placards, and gender-neutral bathrooms. The Counseling Center held several workshops and forums for students from intersecting identities as a place to share their experiences, hear their needs and recommendations, and enhance their sense of belonging on campus. The Counseling Center implemented Virtual Groups and Workshops specifically tailored to the restrictions and frustrations around the pandemic. They provided a safe virtual space to process individual reactions to current events in the past academic year. Workshop topics included Experiences of African American students, LGBTQ experiences, a DACA support workshop, and mental health workshops for African American and Asian/Pacific Islander students.

The Classroom to Career Hub (C2Hub) offers a wide array of programming that supports students entering the workforce. These programs include Diversity Networking events, DACA/Dreamers Career Panel, and Out in Public

Service; these programs focus on supporting minoritized students looking for careers while holding various identities. In addition, C2Hub held a week-long career readiness program over spring break. Students learned their strengths, career interests and how to research if a company is diverse and inclusive and how to ask about those topics in an interview.

As students look to graduation, MSU Denver hosts special ceremonies for graduating students. These ceremonies highlight the achievements of students in their unique way. The identity-based graduation programs include Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA); Black African & African American; Dreamer; Latina/o/x; Lavender (LGBTQIA); Native American; and Veterans. Many of these ceremonies present graduates with stoles or other items that students can wear with their graduation regalia.



DIVERSIFYING THE UNIVERSITY

MSU Denver has a long history of centering the experiences and identities of underrepresented students. When asked why they choose to work at the university, staff and faculty cite the diversity of campus as one of the many reasons. The staff and faculty of MSU Denver continue to support students, each other and work to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in departments and offices across the university.

There are various initiatives aimed at diversifying the university. Colleges and Schools are looking at how they can recruit and retain faculty of color. In addition, some departments are looking closely at the demographics of their field seeking to diversify it, while others are examining their courses to ensure that there is better representation in their curriculum. Throughout these reviews, policies and procedures are being revised to reflect our values and stay current.



MSU Denver has seen a number of employee affinity groups start and others continue to be more active. For example, African American Affairs Council, Asian Pacific Islander Desi Faculty Staff Alliance, Latino/a Faculty Staff Association, LGBTQIA Employee Group, and Womyn of Color Collective have held several meetings, events, and happy hours to engage staff at MSU Denver.



Programs at the university such as the Tenure Track Supper Club have adapted their program delivery while the campus was working remotely. The Tenure Track Supper Club was able to provide four sessions for pre-tenured faculty to help them in the process of earning tenure. The sessions focus on marginalized faculty's experiences, allowing for participants to build community with each other and engage in dialogue with experts. In addition, due to the funding provided to the university from the CARES Act, a cohort of faculty participated in the Association of College and University Educators' Effective Teaching Practices.

Although the work is not done, MSU Denver has made progress toward becoming more diverse in its makeup, and a more welcoming and inclusive university for all.

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INSIGHT

Into Diversity

Higher Education
**Excellence
in Diversity**
Award

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2016
2017
2018
2019
2020



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