

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

Effective October 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Diversity, equity, and inclusion call to action the importance of recognizing, appreciating, respecting, listening to and learning from the unique talents and contributions of all people. Even further, these words mean coming together to offer a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for our students, our colleagues, and our community members who have been left behind or pushed aside. A commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has never been more critical than now.

Howard Community College (HCC) places great value at all levels of the institution to encourage the respect of all ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, ethnic backgrounds, abilities, and the values of diversity, equity and inclusion. Within this institutional perspective – one that sees diversity, equity, and inclusion as key components within the college’s commitment to performance excellence – we are dedicated to ensuring that HCC’s students and employees grow both professionally and personally as they understand and encounter varying views and cultures.

Through the diversity, equity, and inclusion plan at HCC, we engage in courageous conversations, receive new professional knowledge, and enhance our collective understanding of relevant equity issues facing our campus community. To fully achieve the work laid out in the DEI plan, each of us must commit to showing respect to one another, calling out and fighting against injustice when we see or experience it.

HCC and higher education institutions across our nation need to keep critical conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront, and elevate these conversations to action in our policies, procedures, and processes. Howard Community College will only get stronger when we actively seek change so that every student, faculty, and staff member is respected, valued, safe, and supported in our learning environment.

Sincerely,

Lynn C. Coleman, CPA
Interim President

II. INTRODUCTION

The board of trustees of Howard Community College (HCC) has committed the college to an ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion program and to regularly review progress toward the objectives of the Diversity Plan. The college president has appointed the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee to lead, oversee, and manage this plan. HCC's diversity programs aspire to encourage respect of persons of all ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, religions, ethnic backgrounds, abilities, and disabilities, as well as the values of equal rights, equal access, and equal treatment through programs. In order to ensure success, all members of the college community must vigorously accept their responsibility of supporting the college's strategic priority to incorporate diversity into the fabric of the institution. Diversity and affirmative action (see Appendix A) commitment originates with the board of trustees and filters throughout every facet of the institution.

Minimally, the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee is composed of:

- one faculty member per academic division;
- two support group employees;
- two professional/technical group employees;
- one administrator group employee;
- two student senators appointed by the Student Government Association;
- two at-large employees;
- the associate vice president of human resources (ex officio);
- the coordinator of the institution's compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (see Appendix A; ex officio);
- the director of student life (ex officio);
- the director of public safety (ex officio);
- the associate director of student conduct and compliance or designate (ex officio); and
- other members as needed to carry out the duties of the committee.

The president will select the committee co-chairpersons from recommendations provided by the committee in April of each year. The committee shall make all efforts to recommend both a faculty and staff member to serve as co-chairpersons. Co-chairpersons are to serve for a minimum of two years.

Qualifications and Procedure for applying to become a co-chairperson:

- All current members of the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee can apply for a co-chairperson position through an application provided by the current co-chairpersons.
- All applicants share their vision for the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee and answer prepared questions from the committee at a regular or special meeting of the committee.
- The committee votes on the co-chairpersons and the names are sent to the president for affirmation of the committee's decision.

Any member of the college community wanting to serve on this committee should send a written request to the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee co-chairpersons. Upon the recommendation of the current co-chairpersons, membership is affirmed by the college president. The elements for membership will include consideration for representation sensitive to all ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, religions, ethnic backgrounds, abilities, socio-economic factors, and disabilities, whenever and wherever possible.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion committee members are expected to serve for at least a period of two years. The student representatives are recommended to serve one-year terms. The co-chairpersons will recommend members for reappointment prior to the last meeting of the fiscal year. If any member misses more than 50 percent of the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee meetings held in a fiscal year without having a legitimate and documented schedule conflict approved by the committee co-chairpersons, that member's term is automatically ended and a new member shall be appointed, if necessary. Replacements will fill the unexpired term of the original member. At the end of each academic year, the co-chairpersons will recruit new members to fill potential vacancies.

Additional details can be found in procedure 61.10.01, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (see Appendix B). Policies and procedures are made publicly available through the college's website.

III. DIVERSITY OBJECTIVES

A. The diversity, equity, and inclusion plan and all related policies and procedures will serve as guidelines for the achievement of equal employment opportunity at the college ensuring that each recruitment makes a reasonable effort to seek out applicants from underrepresented groups in order to provide a diverse applicant pool; avoiding discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, creed, religion, sex, color, ancestry or national origin, age, political opinion, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, genetic information, occupation, source of income, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, familial status, or physical and mental disability of otherwise qualified individuals, and ensuring vigilance in eliminating any such discrimination; and using an internal complaint resolution mechanism whereby any complainant can internally resolve grievances (see Appendix B procedure 63.01.01, Discrimination Complaint). The college community is committed to meeting educational needs that promote sensitivity and value diversity by proactively identifying areas in which programs may be needed (training shall be open to employees and students, as appropriate) and encouraging the development and continual improvement of a curriculum of inclusion. The diversity, equity, and inclusion committee is an entity in which the committee members can bring concerns and discussion topics and they can be collectively addressed to further the college's mission of inclusivity and educational growth of future global citizens.

- B. As a cross-functional team, the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee develops plans to define core work and set strategic priorities in line with the mission, vision, values, strategic goals, and core competencies of the college. Success in providing pathways to success is measured within the context of the Baldrige Excellence Framework to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. With defined adherence to ethics and integrity in its policies and processes, HCC is exceptionally intentional in meeting its obligations within its community of students, employees, customers, and stakeholders. Ethical attitudes and actions allow HCC to honor its internal and external commitments with integrity, openness, transparency, truthfulness, and compliancy. In meeting its goals and mission, HCC places great importance on ethics and integrity as a unifying and interweaving characteristic of its campus life and dealings within the community

IV. DISSEMINATION OF DIVERSITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INFORMATION

The college's diversity plan and related policies and procedures are publicly available via the college's website. In addition, communications are given to college employees via email, president's updates, employee orientations and training programs, constituency group meetings, and posted in various areas around the college campus. The equal opportunity clause is incorporated in all purchase orders, leases, contracts, etc., covered by Executive Order 11246, as amended by Executive Order 13672, when applicable (see Appendix A), and all implementing regulations.

V. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

All employees have an important role in the implementation of this diversity plan. While additional responsibilities may be outlined in annual strategic planning, core work, and individual job descriptions, several notable accountabilities include the following:

A. President

The president has ultimate authority for implementation of this plan and has chosen to delegate key implementation roles to the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee and the associate vice president of human resources. The president provides direction to these key units, the president's team, and others involved with supporting diversity plan goals to comply with the college's commitment.

B. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee aspires to promote and advocate diversity within the college in the following ways:

- review and update the diversity plan, and the college diversity policy and procedure annually;
- submit report on the diversity plan to the president for board of trustees' approval by May 1, in preparation for submission of the plan to the Maryland Higher Education Commission by September 1 each year in accordance with state law;
- provide reasonable and realistic recommendations for areas of the college where disparity exists in the workforce, academic affairs, and/or student services, when applicable;
- identify committee members who have completed the required training to serve on search committees in accordance with procedure 63.02.03, Selection of Faculty and Staff (see Appendix B) to monitor equitable recruitment and selection;
- plan and implement or co-sponsor diversity programming for the college community, maintaining the standards for designating a program as appropriate for dual diversity/professional development credit and voting on whether proposed diversity events meet those standards (the college will provide a budget for required trainings);
- provide financial support to student life and academic programs to help pay for diversity-related programs that are aimed at students, but also offer diversity credit for employees;
- review the college's annual employee and student survey data pertaining to the climate of diversity on campus;
- prepare an annual report on the diversity plan for the college president that is also available to the college community, on the operations, accomplishments, and future recommendations of the committee;
- request reports on the operations, accomplishments, and activities of programs that serve diverse student populations including, but not limited to, Ambiciones, Howard P.R.I.D.E., Student Support Services, Safe Zone with the Sexuality and Gender Alliance (SAGA), and Silas Craft Collegians, to assess opportunities for collaboration; and
- support compliance with all applicable laws mandating an accessible physical and virtual campus environment.

C. Office of Human Resources and Associate Vice President of Human Resources

The associate vice president of human resources, with the assistance of the office of human resources, will:

- serve as a resource on affirmative action to the college community;
- serve as an advisor in matters of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity to all college employees with supervisory and hiring responsibilities;
- develop reports on an annual basis that statistically analyze HCC's recruitments, job applicants, hiring, promotions, terminations, and progress toward the college's diversity priority and affirmative action goals (where

applicable), for the college president and the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee;

- keep the college administration and diversity, equity, and inclusion committee informed of the latest developments in the areas of affirmative action and equal opportunity and affirmative action;
- ensure that search committees for all budgeted full-time faculty and staff positions classified at grade 12 and above include a current or past member of the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee, and monitor all such selection committees to ensure diverse representation in accordance with procedure 63.02.03, Selection of Faculty and Staff (see Appendix B); and
- provide training to all search committee members, for budgeted positions at grade 12 and above and all full-time faculty positions, on employment laws and diversity sensitivity related to recruitments.

D. All employees with hiring involvement and/or supervisory responsibility have the responsibility to:

- create, through their work environments and contacts with the community, a campus that upholds the concepts outlined in this plan and provides equal opportunity for all;
- ensure that all employment practices are conducted in a lawful, nondiscriminatory manner;
- monitor the progress toward equal employment opportunity and affirmative action of all units under their supervision;
- conduct regular discussions with their faculty and staff to ensure the college's policies and procedures are implemented, with an emphasis on equal opportunity, inclusion, and appreciation for diversity. This responsibility should be seen as an integral part of their duties and evaluation;
- establish an atmosphere that is conducive to implementing the directives of the president and the board of trustees;
- familiarize themselves with and adhere to all diversity-related college policies and procedures, and refer any allegations of discrimination and bias to the associate vice president of human resources; and
- attend required training sessions prior to or concurrent with serving on a search committee.

E. Howard Community College Employees

1. Budgeted staff and full-time faculty members must participate in at least two diversity programs or trainings per year;
2. All college employees must treat other employees, students, vendors, visitors, and any other individuals on campus with respect and dignity at all times, in accordance with college policies and procedures on discrimination and diversity; and

3. familiarize themselves with and adhere to all diversity-related college policies and procedures, and refer any allegations of discrimination and bias by consulting with the associate vice president of human resources.

F. Students

HCC recognizes the critical role of an educational institution in preparing its students to become contributing members and leaders within a global community. In support of the college's mission, vision, values, strategic goals, and core competencies, and to support a diverse community, the college will encourage students through examples by faculty and staff and instruction and programming, to:

- be respectful of all people and become advocates for the respectful treatment of others;
- cultivate an appreciation for the differences of others;
- explore and seek out opportunities to learn about different points of view and human experiences;
- develop a set of communication competencies to help improve interactions with people of diverse backgrounds; and
- attend college-sponsored and community diversity programs.

APPENDIX A

Summary of Definitions and Applicable Laws

The following definitions, laws, regulations, and orders constitute some of the legal requirements for equal employment, educational opportunities, and affirmative action:

Howard Community College's Affirmative Action definition

HCC's affirmative action includes proactive steps to recruit and retain minorities. In recruiting, the college advertises with sources directed specifically at minority candidates in order to improve the diversity of the candidate pool. For the current workforce, the college has a comprehensive Diversity Plan that includes objectives to improve knowledge of and sensitivity to minority issues, and aids in the retention of minorities. HCC does not provide quotas or preferences for minorities in hiring or advancement; those decisions are based solely on the qualifications of the candidates under consideration.

Age Discrimination Act of 1975

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. While the Department of Health and Human Services is the lead agency for developing general regulations, any federal agency that extends federal financial assistance shall seek to achieve compliance with the agency's regulations.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act prohibits discrimination for persons age 40 and over except where age is a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ). It is very rare for age to ever be a BFOQ at Howard Community College; however, there may be a few exceptions, such as the hiring of an actor or actress for a college play where age may be allowed to factor into the selection criteria but will never be a sole factor in the selection process. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission enforces this law.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008

Howard Community College will ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of the disability, be subjected to discrimination in employment, recruitment, training, admissions, testing, program of study, student activities, etc.

As a part of the college's plan, it will implement an awareness program that will educate potential supervisors, faculty, and other HCC staff about the contributions, capabilities, and needs of persons with disabilities in the work force and in postsecondary education. Information regarding appropriate, reasonable accommodations is provided on a continuing basis. The associate vice president of human resources and the 504/ADA coordinator will be consulted on matters of reasonable accommodation, as necessary.

Identification is an important part of the college's plan. All HCC applicants are given the opportunity to voluntarily identify themselves as disabled at the time of application on the HCC voluntary self-disclosure form. Employees and applicants may also self-disclose to either the 504/ADA coordinator or associate vice president of human resources if a reasonable accommodation is to be requested. Students can volunteer this information through the Disability Support Services office.

The objective of HCC's recruitment program is to recruit qualified persons with a disability for both admission into the college, as well as for employment. The college ensures that all admission selection criteria and employment selection criteria are free from discrimination against persons with disabilities.

The Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009

The Equal Pay Act, amended by the Education Amendments of 1972, covers all employers who are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act of which it is a part. This act forbids pay differentials on the basis of sex; it is enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 changes the statute of limitations for filing a pay discrimination claim.

Executive Order 11246 (1965)

Executive Order 11246 covers all employers with government contracts or subcontracts of more than \$10,000, with some rare exceptions. It also applies to contractors and subcontractors of construction projects financed in whole or in part by federal funds. It requires that every contract contain a clause against discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. In addition, Revised Order No. 4, based on Executive Order 11246, requires contractors and subcontractors with 50 or more employees and contracts totaling \$50,000 or more to develop and carry out a written Affirmative Action Program. As of October 1, 1978, this executive order is enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance of the Department of Labor for all federal contracting agencies.

Executive Order 13672 (2014)

Executive Order 13672 amends section 202 and section 203 of Executive Order 11246. The phrase "sex or national origin" in Executive Order 11246 is replaced by the phrase "sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin."

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)

GINA prohibits employers, employment agencies, unions, and joint labor-management training committees from discriminating based on an individual's "genetic information." GINA also amends the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) to prohibit group health plans and group health insurance issuers from using genetic information to calculate premiums, determine eligibility, or make other underwriting decisions. In addition, use or disclosure of genetic information for underwriting purposes is a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Maryland Fair Employment Practices Act

The Maryland Fair Employment Practices Act (Article 49B, Annotated Code of Maryland) prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, or physical or mental disability. The Maryland Commission on Human Relations has enforcement authority.

Pregnancy Discrimination Act

Amends Title 7 to prohibit discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions; requires employers to treat pregnancy the same as any other temporary disability.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amended by the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1974, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment by federal contractors with contracts of \$10,000 and in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. This Act is administered by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. The law is enforced by the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education.

Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Civil Rights Act of 1991

Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin, and gender in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. The law is enforced by the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, with some very limited exceptions, applies to all employers with 15 or more employees. It bans all discrimination in employment because of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin. It covers all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, transfers, promotions, compensation, access to training. This law also prohibits sexual harassment and harassment based on other protected categories. Title VII is administered and enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972 (amended in 2002 by the Jobs For Veterans Act)

The Vietnam Era Veteran's Readjustment Assistance Act of 1972 (and subsequent amendments) requires government contractors with contracts of \$100,000 or more to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment disabled veterans of the Vietnam Era. Responsibility for administration and enforcement of the Act is delegated to the U.S. Department of Labor. Contractors with federal contracts of \$100,000 or more must file a supplemental report, titled VETS-100 by September 30 of each year.

Vocational Education Act of 1963

The Vocational Education Act of 1963, revised by Title II of the Education Amendments of 1976, provides direction for state and national vocational education programs. One of the purposes of the state programs is to develop and carry out programs of vocational education so as to overcome sex discrimination and sex stereotyping, and thereby furnish equal educational opportunities in vocational education to persons of both sexes. This law is administered by the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education.

APPENDIX B

Relevant Howard Community College Policies and Procedures

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Procedure – 61.10.01
 - <https://www.howardcc.edu/about-us/policies-procedures/chapter-61/61.10.01-Diversity-Committee.html>
- Discrimination Complaint Procedure – 63.01.01
 - <https://www.howardcc.edu/about-us/policies-procedures/chapter-63/63-01/63-01-01.html>
- Selection of Faculty and Staff Procedure – 63.02.03
 - <https://www.howardcc.edu/about-us/policies-procedures/chapter-63/63-02/63-02-03.html>