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Brief Summary: Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) DEI external review completed in 2021 by Dr. Damon A. Williams and the Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation (CSDLSI) of Atlanta, Georgia. Goal of review was to develop a high-level understanding of the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion capabilities on campus. Data collection for this overview took place in the fall of 2021, in the midst of the ongoing COVID- 19 pandemic, and a preliminary insights presentation was delivered in December of 2021.

Location: report attached

Associated Criterion: 1C 3

DEI EXTERNAL REVIEW
SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) selected Dr. Damon A. Williams and the Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation (CSDLSI) of Atlanta, Georgia, as its external partner to develop a high-level understanding of the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) capabilities on campus. We engaged with SVSU with four primary research strategies:

(1) *DEI Discovery Interviews* with key campus leaders.
(2) *SVSU Strategic DEI Analysis:* Research/analysis of DEI programs and initiatives at SVSU.
(3) *Strategic DEI Benchmarking:* A comparison of DEI structures and strategy gathered from publicly available resources for sets of both Michigan and national peer institutions (Exhibit E.1). We also utilized proprietary data gathered through primary personal interviews conducted with other institutions' chief diversity officers and others.
(4) *Demographic DEI Benchmarking:* A study of SVSU and both state and national peer institutions for student, faculty, and leadership demographics, using US Department of Education Integrated Post-Secondary Data Systems (IPEDS) data.

Data collection took place in the fall of 2021, in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary insights were presented to SVSU in December 2021. The executive briefing document summarized here outlines the key findings and recommendations that emerged from our review. It is accompanied by a PowerPoint deck offering a series of data insights and summary graphics, to support the university's efforts moving forward. These recommendations are grounded in both our research and review of SVSU, and, just as importantly, in our experience studying thousands of institutions looking to build DEI capacity.

The SVSU Methodology and Assessment Framework

The model used to review DEI capabilities at SVSU and its peer institutions emerges from the belief that Strategic Diversity Leadership (SDL) and its foundational concept, Inclusive Excellence (IE),[1] are about defining DEI as fundamentally necessary and beneficial to the organizational bottom line of mission fulfillment and institutional excellence.[2] With that in mind, the goal of strategic diversity leadership is to evolve an institution's culture to become truly inclusive, not to merely make tactical moves that lead to symbolic change and "better numbers" with poorly integrated efforts.

At the core of this approach is the belief that DEI efforts can't thrive without four elements being consistently deployed and optimized over time: accountability, infrastructure, integration (into policies, budgets, and priorities), and resources. (We say DEI efforts can't "breathe" without "AIIR.") These are the elements we looked for in SVSU and its peers.

We believe the goal of DEI activities is ultimately about leading organizational change that can be measured in terms of demographics, academic achievement, campus climate, research productivity, and more.

Exhibit E.1. SVSU peer institutions

National Peer Institutions (n=7)	State of Michigan Peer Institutions (n=5)
• University of Wisconsin Whitewater • Bridgewater State University • Winona State University • Western Washington University • Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania • Western Illinois University • Slippery Rock University	• Grand Valley State University • Northern Michigan University • Ferris State University • University of Michigan Dearborn • Michigan Technological University

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1 Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education builds from Dr. Williams' earlier work on Inclusive Excellence.
2 Williams, D. (2013). Strategic diversity leadership: Activating change and transformation in higher education. *Stylus Publishing Press.*

SVSU Strategic DEI Benchmarking Insights

In terms of positives, our review shows that SVSU has integrated DEI into the campus strategic plan and has established a dedicated DEI framework and specific focus on DEI in the form of a dedicated plan. SVSU has also built a cabinet-level CDO role, a campus-wide DEI committee, and is engaging in public DEI accountability efforts. While these efforts do not reach the level of areas of emerging strength, we found SVSU's activities to be moving positively in the right direction. Our findings are summarized in Exhibit E.2.

Exhibit E.2. Strategic DEI leadership peer benchmarking scorecard

Dimension	SVSU	Michigan Peers	National Peers	All Peers
DEI Integrated into Strategic Plan	Yes	100%	85%	92%
DEI Framework	Yes	100%	85%	92%
DEI Dedicated Plan	Yes	50%	43%	46%
Institutional CDO (Any Rank)	Yes	100%	85%	92%
VP Level CDO	No	50%	14%	31%
Campus-Wide DEI Committee	Yes	100%	100%	100%
DEI Website	Yes	100%	100%	100%
Public DEI Accountability	Yes	67%	71%	69%

Source: CSDLSI Analysis of Strategic DEI Capability at SVSU.

In his book *How to Be an Antiracist*,[3] Dr. Ibram Kendi argues that being antiracist does not mean merely the absence of racism but that you are action-oriented in working to change systems, policies, and individual behaviors that lead to racial inequality (and, by extension, to sexism, relational violence, homophobia, classism, unconscious bias, and other forms of inequity). Antiracism is consistent with the guiding principles of Inclusive Excellence and the concept of equity. We were surprised to not see a more demonstrative focus on antiracism in your DEI strategy documents and approach. Our recent experience with DEI plans and strategies nationally suggests that many campuses are currently grappling with how to put in place an antiracism methodology, focusing on: (1) Building a new and demonstrably antiracist narrative on campus, (2) Developing a shared commitment to allyship, (3) Eliminating racial inequity in key areas of performance, and (4) Developing new antiracism programs.

SVSU Strategic Scorecard Results

The complexity of leading DEI issues today requires that school leaders, like pilots, be able to view performance in several complementary areas simultaneously to achieve a complete understanding of their condition. You can think of the Strategic DEI Leadership Scorecard as the dials and indicators in an airplane cockpit. We evaluated six subdimensions of the Strategic DEI Leadership framework in two major categories: (1) *Strategic DEI Strategy and Infrastructure,* including General DEI Leadership; DEI Change Management; and DEI Campus-wide Infrastructure. And (2) *A Multicultural and Inclusive Campus Environment* encompassing DEI Training and Professional Development; Climate and Inclusion Bias Review, Systems, and Policy; and Campus Climate Research.

We scored each of the areas of analysis at one of three values. (1) A **blue** score represented an area of emerging strength, (2) **Orange** pointed to a mid-level or average performance, and (3) A **yellow** valuation indicated an area of strategic opportunity. Across the six SVSU categories, three were scored at an orange or standard level of performance, and three at the yellow level as areas of concern (Exhibit E.3).

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3 Kendi, Ibram X. (2019). How to be an antiracist. *One World.*

Exhibit E.3. SVSU Strategic DEI Scorecard Results

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	ASSESSMENT
General DEI Leadership	Leadership has provided to advance DEI issues in ways that illustrate empathy, authenticity, commitment, financial investments, and character.	🔴
DEI Change Management	Presence of a clear DEI plan and approach to engaging the community and for developing, communicating, and rolling out new DEI initiatives.	🟡
DEI Infrastructure	Presence of a high-functioning DEI infrastructure to guide, engage, and steward DEI change work campus-wide.	🟡
DEI Training & Professional Development	Presence of training and professional development systems to enhance DEI awareness and cultural competence of all staff, faculty, and leadership.	🔴
Climate and Inclusion Bias Review Policy, Procedures, & Systems	The presence of systems that enhance an everyday culture of inclusion by establishing clear policy and reporting systems that eliminate discrimination, bias, sexual harassment, and other challenging dynamics.	🔴
Campus Climate & Inclusion Data Systems	A regular and credible social science assessment of the lived experience of inclusion and exclusion, allowing for quality improvement efforts to be put into place for students, faculty, and staff with a special focus on BIPOC, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, and economically diverse groups.	🟡

SVSU has made a clear commitment to DEI and is moving well towards this goal. In each area evaluated, we identified positives and areas of growth for the university, offering several potential ways SVSU could evolve towards the blue or emerging strength performance level. Especially in terms of commitment to DEI, SVSU is very close to shifting into the blue zone. It is clear that SVSU is leaning into its work to make DEI a top strategic priority. We encourage you to keep going with this momentum.

Recommendations for Strategic Change

We identified six primary areas of potential improvement from our data analysis (Exhibit E.4). Based on proven DEI best practices, these recommendations are a way for SVSU to selectively strengthen its efforts, considering both the findings included in this report and the commitments already made by leadership.

Exhibit E.4. Summary: Six strategic recommendations for SVSU

Recommendation	Description	Key Concepts
(1) Make Strategic DEI Leadership a major priority of the new presidential search	Integrate Strategic DEI leadership into all aspects of the search, screen, and selection process for the new president.	• SDL integrated into the job description • SDL experience required as a critical competency of the job • Hire a search firm with competence assessing SDL • Ensure that all candidates speak to SDL in written materials, interviews, and public remarks • Ensure that the CDO and DEI council have audience with all candidates and a chance to offer feedback in the process
(2) Strengthen implementation of your current DEI approach	Develop a comprehensive and aligned DEI and antiracism strategy, accountability, infrastructure, and implementation framework to guide DEI activation.	• Develop and activate a DEI statement across units to bring DEI prioritization to life institutionally • Build a comprehensive strategic DEI scorecard to track progress • Require every unit create a DEI plan • Establish annual DEI strategic update reports developed and published by every unit • Deans and divisional leaders will be held accountable to implementing the DEI plans in their respective units • Hold an annual Inclusive Excellence Symposium

Recommendation	Description	Key Concepts
(3) Require DEI activation leaders in every major unit	Build out the lateral DEI infrastructure to ensure greater alignment, accountability, and high level DEI implementation	• Require every unit to appoint a DEI activation leader if they are implementing a DEI plan. • Partially fund these roles centrally with dotted lines to the CDO. • Units activating DEI plans should have a local DEI committee
(4) Strengthen the capacity and resources of the CDO unit	Strategies for setting up the role, the office and the staff, and an effective budget and discretionary funds, building a division.	• Shift the CDO's responsibilities from its current three roles • Add 1-3 new FTE roles to strengthen the unit • Establish an operational budget with an Inclusive Excellence Innovation fund to drive capacity campus-wide • Elevate the CDO to a formal rank at VP or AVP level
(5) Institutionalize a DEI training and certification program	Build a culture of DEI training and capacity building for all.	• Build a DEI certificate program for all faculty, staff, leadership • Scale-up the program across all faculty, staff, leadership • Strategic DEI Leadership training for senior leadership
(6) Implement a campus-wide climate and inclusion survey to gather strong insights into the lived experience by schools and colleges	Implement a campus-wide climate and inclusion survey allowing for school/college, divisional analyses of climate and culture.	• Implement a regular campus climate and inclusion pulse survey tapping into key DEI areas of measurement. • Given decentralization of the campus, this survey should be established to measure the lived experience by school/college. • Use a population-based campaign approach to achieve a high response rate and create a personal challenge for individual participation. • Leverage bivariate and multivariate analyses to develop an enhanced institutional understanding of the lived experience of inclusion and exclusion. • Analyze data by factors relating to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, & disability, for faculty/staff and students.

We recognize Saginaw Valley's particularly powerful opportunity—some would say obligation—to make DEI not just a strategic priority but a strategic *foundation* at the university. Indeed, such efforts would create a point of difference in how SVSU defines its excellence equation and exercises a positive influence locally, regionally, nationally, and even globally.

SVSU Is Stepping into a Brighter Future

Even as we offer this brief for consideration with its recommendations for effective forward progress, positive changes are already in process at Saginaw Valley State University. In this moment of profound national change, SVSU is further developing and enhancing its proactive and rigorous approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This forward effort demands a continued rigorous, disciplined, and committed approach to change from all. We envision a future wherein each member of the SVSU community becomes a DEI ally and embodies the values and actions of Inclusive Excellence in their everyday lives.

From all of us at the Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation, we thank you for the opportunity to serve your intentions and efforts to strengthen your diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism work and to further the mission of this field. We look forward to your next steps and are proud to be a friend to your work.

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) selected Dr. Damon A. Williams and the Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation (CSDLSI) of Atlanta, Georgia, as its partner to develop a high-level understanding of the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion capabilities on campus. Data collection for this overview took place in the fall of 2021, in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and a preliminary insights presentation was delivered in December of 2021.

The model used to review DEI capabilities at SVSU emerges from the belief that strategic diversity leadership and its foundational concept, Inclusive Excellence, [4] are about defining issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as fundamentally necessary and beneficial to the organizational bottom line of mission fulfillment and institutional excellence (Williams, 2013). With that in mind, the goal of strategic diversity leadership is to evolve an institution's culture to become truly inclusive, not to merely make tactical moves that lead to symbolic change and "better numbers" with poorly integrated efforts.

Two SVSU Data Products

Two products resulted from this project. First, we provide this executive briefing document, outlining the key findings as well as recommendations that emerged from our review. This document is meant to provide a high-level summary of what we learned and what we recommend at this point. This document is accompanied by a PowerPoint deck, wherein we provide a more detailed slide presentation sharing a series of data insights and other summary graphics, to support the university's efforts moving forward.

SVSU Strategic Guidance

The highlight of this brief is the presentation of six key recommendations for the university to consider moving forward. These recommendations are grounded in both our research and review of SVSU, and, just as importantly, in our experience studying thousands of institutions looking to build DEI capacity. While regional, legal, and political dynamics always play a key role in determining DEI success, also at play is the way leadership sets clear goals and demonstratively moves the institution forward with rigor, discipline, and accountability.

We are particularly keen to offer these insights to senior leadership as a way of supporting their commitment to move the needle on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a shared institutional priority of the overall campus, not just of the CDO and the community of vocal DEI champions. As President Bachand retires, it will be even more incumbent upon leadership and faculty to take the reins of his commitment as an institutional priority that thrives in this important moment of leadership transition for the University. Momentum is accelerated or suppressed in moments of leadership change. In terms of DEI commitments, this is doubly true; we have seen many DEI efforts crumble when a sponsoring president moves on to new opportunities. If SVSU is truly invested in making DEI an institutional value that enhances excellence this cannot be true, and leadership at all levels must be challenged and supported in making DEI a top priority.

SVSU Brief: Overview

This report is organized into three main sections. Section 1 offers a quick overview of the methodology and assessment framework used in this review; Section 2 provides highlights of our benchmarking research; and Section 3 sketches our final SVSU Strategic DEI Leadership Scorecard findings across six subdimensions. Finally, in Section 4 we present six main strategic recommendations along with implementation tips to help SVSU take some key steps forward. We conclude with some final thoughts to support what we believe is a very good direction for the University.

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4 Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education builds from Dr. Williams' earlier work on Inclusive Excellence.

SECTION 1. THE SVSU METHODOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

We believe that the goal of DEI activities, whether they focus on launching a new recruitment program, developing an identity-affirming employee affinity group, studying the campus climate, or establishing a new DEI officer or committee, is ultimately about leading DEI-themed organizational change. That is, it's about helping your institution move from one state into a more evolved and advanced future state that can be measured in terms of demographic change, academic achievement, campus climate, research productivity, and more.

Strategic DEI Leadership is defined as the artful science of creating an evidenced-based approach to leading and guiding DEI-themed change over time (Williams, 2013). At the core of this approach is the belief that DEI efforts can't thrive without four elements being consistently deployed and optimized over time: accountability, infrastructure, integration (into policies, budgets, and priorities), and resources. (We say DEI efforts can't "breathe" without "AIIR.")

SVSU Data Collection

In order to assess where SVSU stands on DEI, we implemented a *Strategic DEI Leadership* methodology across a balance of DEI dimensions. (In the Appendix we detail the complementary set of approaches used.) Specifically, we engaged with four primary research strategies:

- *DEI Discovery Interviews:* A series of interviews with key campus leaders.

- *SVSU Strategic DEI Analysis:* A desktop analysis of DEI programs and initiatives at SVSU.

- *Demographic DEI Benchmarking:* A benchmarking of SVSU and peer institutions (both state and national peer groups) for student, faculty, and leadership demographics, using US Department of Education Integrated Post-Secondary Data Systems (IPEDS) data.

- *Strategic DEI Benchmarking:* A benchmarking comparison of DEI structures and strategy gathered form publicly available resources from those same peer institutions.

The Strategic DEI Leadership (SDL) Framework

Exhibit 1 presents the six-element Strategic DEI Leadership framework that powered our SVSU review (Williams, 2013). Specifically, this six-part framework champions the importance of defining DEI organizational capabilities in terms of:

(1) Efforts to achieve *access and equity* (for instance in recruitment, retention, outreach) for historically underrepresented groups.

(2) Efforts to create a *multicultural and inclusive campus climate* for the entire institutional community.

(3) Efforts to enhance *domestic and international research and scholarship* around issues of diversity.

(4) Efforts to *prepare all students* for a national and global society that is diverse and interconnected.

(5) Efforts to create *strategic diversity leadership infrastructure* in the forms of DEI plans, committees, officers, scorecard metrics, and other efforts designed to create the kind of accountability that can make the other four elements of this model be more than the sum of their parts.

(6) Efforts to engage the external community of alumni, parents, and donors around SDL matters.

This review is centered on the Strategic Diversity Leadership Infrastructure dimension of review, based upon methodological choices for this project.

Exhibit 1.1. SDL model of strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion leadership in higher education
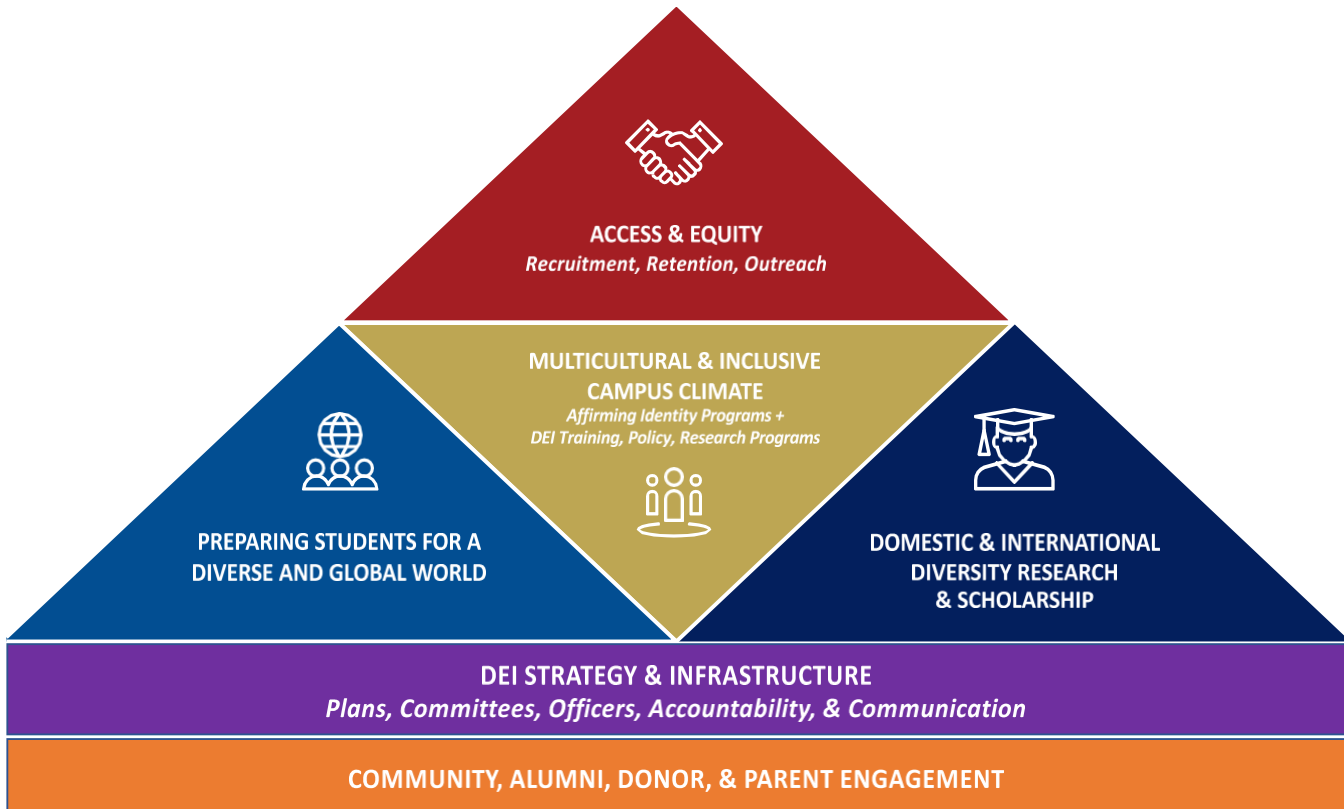
Source: Adapted from Williams, D.(2013). Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education.

Benchmarking: DEI Demographics and Capabilities in Comparative Context

Our benchmarking review examined 12 institutions total (Exhibit 1.2). For each institution, we examined its faculty/staff and student demographic profiles, as well as its strategic diversity leadership capabilities and its DEI infrastructure (Exhibit 1.3). Three main data sources powered our benchmarking review: (1) Information publicly available through websites, social media, and public documents. (2) Data gathered from the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS). (3) Data gathered through primary personal interviews conducted with an institution's chief diversity officer and others. All data findings are provided in the accompanying PowerPoint report.

An important foundation for creating an inclusive campus climate is the presence of a diverse community of students, faculty members, staff, and leadership. Indeed, the presence of diverse communities regarding race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic status, religious background and more is one of the key dimensions for establishing a context of everyday inclusion—a context wherein diverse individuals find spaces of intragroup identity affirmation, collegiality, and support.

Methodology choices by SVSU narrowed the areas that we examined in our review down from the maximum of 15 categories of inventory and scoring. As a result of this more tapered set of dimensions, we translated this framework into a 6-dimension scorecard, across the two areas of (1) General DEI Strategy and Infrastructure and (2) Climate and Inclusion Systems. We also comment to the demographic diversity of the campus within the context of our overall discussion of strategic benchmarking SVSU's Michigan and national peer institutions. We present the result of our assessments in these categories in Sections 2 and 3 of this brief, foreshadowing the recommendations that we offer Section 4

Exhibit 1.2. SVSU peer institutions

National Institutions

State of Michigan Institutions

National Peer Institutions (n=7)	State of Michigan Peer Institutions (n=5)
• University of Wisconsin Whitewater • Bridgewater State University • Winona State University • Western Washington University • Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania • Western Illinois University • Slippery Rock University	• Grand Valley State University • Northern Michigan University • Ferris State University • University of Michigan Dearborn • Michigan Technological University

Exhibit 1.3. Benchmarking research components

Dimensions	Description	Areas of Interest
(1) Demographic Analysis of Institution	Key demographic variables indicating general DEI progress along dimensions of race, ethnicity and gender among faculty, students, and management.	• URM graduate student representation • Gender graduate student representation • URM tenure-track faculty diversity representation • Women tenure-track faculty diversity representation • URM Management Representation • Women Management Representation
(2) Strategic Diversity Leadership Capabilities	Essential elements associated with implementing a campus-wide DEI commitment in both word and deed.	• DEI strategic plans • DEI public accountability • DEI officer • DEI infrastructure

SECTION 2. SVSU DEI BENCHMARKING RESULTS

Strategic DEI Benchmarking Insights

In terms of positives, our review shows that the university has integrated DEI into the campus strategic plan and has established a dedicated DEI framework and specific focus on DEI in the form of a dedicated plan. SVSU has also built a cabinet-level CDO role, a campus-wide DEI committee, and is engaging in public DEI accountability efforts.

While these efforts to date did not stand out for us as areas of emerging strength, we found all these activities to be moving positively in the right direction. Some opportunity areas within DEI infrastructure development and DEI change management are detailed more explicitly in our discussion in Section 3 of this brief.

Exhibit 2.1. Strategic DEI leadership peer benchmarking scorecard

Dimension	SVSU	Michigan Peers	National Peers	All Peers
DEI Integrated into Strategic Plan	Yes	100%	85%	92%
DEI Framework	Yes	100%	85%	92%
DEI Dedicated Plan	Yes	50%	43%	46%
Institutional CDO (Any Rank)	Yes	100%	85%	92%
VP Level CDO	No	50%	14%	31%
Campus-Wide DEI Committee	Yes	100%	100%	100%
DEI Website	Yes	100%	100%	100%
Public DEI Accountability	Yes	67%	71%	69%

Source: CSDLSI Analysis of Strategic DEI Capability at SVSU.

Demographic DEI Benchmarking Insights

Using the US Department of Education data (IPEDS), we were able to review SVSU demographics along the dimensions of race and sex, comparing this demographic profile to that of your institutional peers.

Overall, some key insights include:

- Examined over the last three years (2018-2020), no increase was evident in the demographic diversity of underrepresented minority (URM) tenure-track faculty at SVSU, which we defined as the presence of faculty identifying as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native. SVSU's data held relatively steady at 6.8%.

- In 2020, the most recent year for which data were available, there were only 8 URM tenure-track faculty for every 100 White tenure-track faculty at SVSU. By comparison U of M Dearborn had 19 URM faculty/100 White faculty, and Northern Michigan University (5) and Ferris State University had 4 URM faculty per 100, placing SVSU firmly in the middle on this indicator.

- SVSU trailed the majority of its peers in graduation rates. That said, the trend over 2018-2020 has been positive as a result of your institutional efforts, as noted in your strategic plan. Over this same time period, your positive growth pattern is consistent with outcomes found at Ferris State University, GVSU, and Michigan Tech University, which all showed positive growth between 1% and 5%, although each institution has a different baseline of performance.

The next segment of our assessment focused primarily on SVSU's level of performance in the area of student, faculty and leadership demographics across a number of dimensions, including race/ethnicity, gender, and more, using our IPEDS benchmarking review of both Michigan and national peers. We did not offer a formal performance score in this area, but we do offer our commentary and insights on the data.

Student Demographic Diversity

Exhibit 2.2 presents our review of SVSU's performance on select student demographic diversity dimensions, viewed here in light of the outcomes of your DEI work. Put simply, SVSU is at a roughly similar level of student demographic diversity as its peers, with no wide gaps between your overall levels of diversity and theirs, although performance is not exactly the same. We will go deep here, offering several insights and results from our review:

- The data illustrate that SVSU is ahead of its Michigan peers in terms of DEI demographic performance in four of the 12 categories and ahead in six of 12 categories when compared to the average performance of national peers (Exhibit 2.2).

- While the numbers are small (7.8%), SVSU ranked fourth and third in terms of Black student demographics compared to Michigan and national peer institutions. SVSU is in the middle of the pack in terms of Hispanic/Latinx students (4.8%) ranking 5th among Michigan peers, and 6th among national peers.

- The representation of American Indian (0.28%), Asian (0.84%), and Native Hawaiian (0.01%) students are very small, each less than 1% of the total undergraduate student population, often lagging peers.

- SVSU ranked fifth (36.0%) in terms of Pell-Grant-eligible students among its five Michigan peers and third among its seven national peers.

Exhibit 2.2. SVSU undergraduate student diversity vs. Michigan and national peers, by select DEI categories, 2020

Michigan Peers: Students

Institution Name	American Indian	Asian	Black/AA	Hispanic/ Latinx	White	Native Hawaiian	Non-resident	Women	URM	Women STEM	Graduation Rate (200%)	Pell Grant
Saginaw Valley State University	6 (0.28%)	6 (0.84%)	4 (7.79%)	5 (4.81%)	5 (76.11%)	7 (0.01%)	1 (4.66%)	2 (61.51%)	4 (12.90%)	6 (5.79%)	6 (44.00%)	5 (36.00%)
Peer Average	0.51%	2.80%	6.08%	4.92%	77.44%	0.08%	1.79%	50.93%	11.58%	8.99%	56.50%	37.17%

National Peers: Students

Institution Name	American Indian	Asian	Black/AA	Hispanic/ Latinx	White	Native Hawaiian	Non-resident	Women	URM	Women STEM	Graduation Rate (200%)	Pell Grant
Saginaw Valley State University	3 (0.28%)	8 (0.84%)	3 (7.79%)	6 (4.81%)	5 (76.11%)	8 (0.01%)	1 (4.66%)	2 (61.51%)	4 (12.90%)	3 (5.79%)	8 (44.00%)	3 (36.00%)
Peer Average	0.21%	2.28%	7.27%	7.57%	75.42%	0.08%	1.13%	56.76%	15.14%	4.89%	61.14%	35.29%

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database.

- SVSU ranked second in percent of total women undergraduates (61.5%) compared to both Michigan and national peers. Yet with only 5.8% of undergraduates studying in the STEM fields being women, it ranked sixth and third, respectively, compared to Michigan and national peers. Given that women make up a majority of the students on campus, this number (5.8%) was surprising, but unfortunately consistent with both Michigan (9.0% average) and national peers (4.9% average), where women continue to be speciously underrepresented in these areas of study.

- SVSU ranked number one (4.7%) for the percent of international students compared to both Michigan and national institutional peers.

- One area of concern that stood out in our review was that SVSU's six-year graduation rates stand at only 44%, ranking last in both groups—6th for Michigan peers and 8th among national peers. The average graduation rate of Michigan peers was 56.5% and it was 61.1% among national peers, standards that are above SVSU's performance.

Faculty Demographic Diversity

Exhibit 2.3 summarizes our review of SVSU's performance on select tenured or tenure-track faculty demographic diversity dimensions, viewed here as an outcome of your faculty DEI recruitment and retention work. SVSU is generally performing better than its peers in diversifying its faculty demographics, although those words of affirmation are offered in a cautionary manner, given that the number of Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian faculty are very low. A few notable details of what we found include:

- The data illustrate that SVSU is ahead of the average in terms of DEI demographic performance in three of the eight DEI categories we analyzed compared to the average performance of Michigan peers, and in three of eight categories relative to the average performance of national peers.

- While the numbers are small (4.3%), SVSU ranked second in terms of Black faculty demographics compared to both Michigan and national peer institutions.

- SVSU is in the back of the pack in terms of Hispanic/Latinx faculty (1.6%), ranking fifth among eight Michigan peers, and sixth among seven national peers. Notably, this standard of performance is similarly low for Michigan (2.7% average) and national peers (3.6% average).

Exhibit 2.3. SVSU tenure-track faculty diversity vs. Michigan and national peers, by select DEI categories, 2020

Michigan Peers: Faculty

Institution Name	American Indian	Asian	Black/AA	Hispanic/ Latinx	White	Non-resident	Women	URM
Saginaw Valley State University	5 (0%)	3 (12.06%)	2 (4.28%)	5 (1.55%)	4 (77.82%)	7 (0.77%)	3 (46.69%)	4 (5.83%)
Peer Average	0.45%	13.29%	3.83%	2.71%	71.80%	4.67%	40.36%	6.99%

National Peers: Faculty

Institution Name	American Indian	Asian	Black/AA	Hispanic/ Latinx	White	Non-resident	Women	URM
Saginaw Valley State University	5 (0%)	3 (12.06%)	2 (4.28%)	8 (1.55%)	2 (77.82%)	7 (0.77%)	5 (46.69%)	6 (5.83%)
Peer Average	0.23%	10.01%	3.08%	3.46%	74.61%	4.00%	46.93%	6.76%

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database

- SVSU ranked third (12.1%) in the number of Asian/Asian American faculty compared to both Michigan (13.3% average) and national institutional peers (10.0% average).

- The representation of American Indian tenure-track faculty at SVSU was zero, a figure unfortunately matched by a number of your peers.

- SVSU ranked third and eighth, respectively, in the percentage of women tenure-track faculty (46.7%) compared to Michigan (40.4% average) and national (46.9% average) peers.

Leadership Demographic Diversity

Exhibit 2.4 presents our overview of SVSU's performance on select management demographic diversity dimensions, viewed here as an outcome of your DEI recruitment and retention work. SVSU is generally performing better than its peers in diversifying its leadership demographics, and in some ways is clearly outperforming peers. Selected details of what we found include:

- The data illustrate that SVSU is ahead of its Michigan peer average in terms of DEI demographic performance in three of the eight categories evaluated, and in four of the eight categories compared to the average performance of national peers.

- SVSU ranked first and second terms of Black management demographics (8.2%), respectively, compared to Michigan (4.0% average) and national peer institutions (5.0% average).

- The number of Hispanic/Latinx leaders is low at SVSU (2.0%) not to mention on average among both Michigan (2.3% average) and national peer institutions (2.3% average).

- The number of Asian/Asian American leaders is low at SVSU (3.1%) as well as among Michigan (4.1% average) and national peer institutions (3.2% average).

- The representation of American Indian leaders at SVSU leads peers in Michigan and nationally, but remains very low, at roughly 1% of management on campus. Notably, the average percent of American Indian leaders is zero among national peer institutions.

Exhibit 2.4. SVSU management diversity vs. Michigan and national peers, by select DEI categories, 2020

Michigan Peers: Leadership

Institution Name	American Indian	Asian	Black/AA	Hispanic/ Latinx	White	Non-resident	Women	URM
Saginaw Valley State University	2 (1.02%)	5 (3.06%)	1 (8.16%)	4 (2.04%)	5 (82.65%)	2 (0%)	4 (46.93%)	1 (11.22%)
Peer Average	0.34%	4.14%	4.04%	2.32%	85.70%	0.15%	49.73%	6.70%

National Peers: Leadership

Institution Name	American Indian	Asian	Black/AA	Hispanic/ Latinx	White	Non-resident	Women	URM
Saginaw Valley State University	1 (1.02%)	4 (3.06%)	2 (8.16%)	4 (2.04%)	7 (82.65%)	2 (0%)	4 (46.93%)	1 (11.22%)
Peer Average	0.00%	3.23%	4.99%	2.26%	86.75%	0.58%	47.14%	7.24%

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) database

- SVSU ranked fourth in the percentage of women managers (46.9%) compared to Michigan (49.7% average) and national (47.1% average) peers.

Summary: SVSU Benchmarking Findings

This research project shone the light of inquiry into SVSU's demographic standings for students, tenure-track faculty, and leadership compared to peers over the most recent 2018-2020 year data available in the IPEDS database. These data offer a detailed starting line for tracking the evolution of diversity among the SVSU campus community going forward, when judged against your peers.

While SVSU stood out among peers in a few areas, the university has numerous opportunities to continue to develop the demographic diversity of the campus community.

- *Undergraduate student diversity:* SVSU led both Michigan and national peer averages in terms of the percentage of women students and nonresident students. It also led the national peer average for students who are Black/African American, American Indian, Pell-grant-eligible, and women undergraduates in STEM fields.

- *Tenured/tenure-track faculty:* SVSU outshone the Michigan peer average in terms of the percentage of Black/African American faculty and women faculty members. It came out ahead of the national peer averages for Black/African American faculty and Asian/Asian American faculty as well.

- *Leadership and management diversity:* SVSU stood head and shoulders above both Michigan and national peer averages for the percent of management leaders who identify as an underrepresented minority (URM). It also led both peer groups in terms of leaders who identify as American Indian and as Black/African American.

In areas where SVSU did lag its peers, the university's results were rarely unreasonably far from the average, leaving upside and improvement well within reach. This is particularly true given the very clear focus on demographic diversity that appears in your 2016-2020 strategic plan and the university's intention to continue in this direction moving forward, a point that we return to in the next section of this report.

SECTION 3. SVSU STRATEGIC DEI SCORECARD RESULTS

For the complex task of navigating for and flying an airplane, pilots need detailed information, or readouts, about many aspects of the airplane and its flight. They need information on fuel, air speed, altitude, bearing, destination, and other indicators that capture the current and projected environment. Much like flying a plane, what we have found in our DEI work is that reliance on a single instrument can be fatal, and this insight has motivated our multi-method approach. You can think of the Strategic DEI Leadership Scorecard as the dials and indicators in an airplane cockpit. The complexity of leading DEI issues today requires that school leaders, like pilots, be able to view performance in several complementary areas simultaneously to achieve a complete understanding of their condition. This insight is exactly what the scorecards provide.

SVSU chose several methodologies for this review: discovery interviews, desktop review, and demographic and strategic benchmarking. These data collection activities allowed us to develop for SVSU a number of high-level insights against six subdimensions of the Strategic DEI Leadership framework. These scorecard dimensions are organized into two major categories:

- *Strategic DEI Strategy and Infrastructure:* This segment includes (1) General DEI Leadership, (2) DEI Change Management, and (3) DEI Campus-wide Infrastructure.

- *A Multicultural and Inclusive Campus Environment:* This segment encompasses (4) DEI Training and Professional Development, (5) Climate and Inclusion Bias Review, Systems, and Policy, and (6) Campus Climate Research.

A Three-Part Review Framework

Each of these six subdimensions is scored using our proprietary analysis tool (Exhibit 3.1). Given the level of methodological power in this review (Appendix), and taking into account that our data were limited to the results of interviews, document analysis, and benchmarking, we used a more efficient three-part review framework (Exhibit 3.1), rather than our standard five-part review framework.

Using this simplified assessment guideline, we scored each of the eight areas of analysis at one of three values. (1) A **blue** score represented an area of emerging strength, (2) **Orange** pointed to a mid-level or average standard of performance, and (3) A **yellow** valuation indicated an area of strategic opportunity.

Across each of these dimensions, performance was assessed holistically, based upon our review of data, triangulation, analysis, and cross-rater performance scoring by two members of our research and strategy team. The goal of this combination of approaches was to fully support the SVSU journey in developing an effective plan that takes into account all voices.

Exhibit 3.1 Strategic DEI leadership scorecard tool key

ASSESSMENT		DESCRIPTION OF DIMENSION
	Blue Zone: **Emerging Strength**	Emerging strength that is strategically moving in the right direction, evidencing strengths, with few areas for improvement.
	Orange Zone: **Average Standard of Performance**	An area of performance that is neither a strength, nor weakness, representing an average or mid-level standard of performance.
	Yellow Zone: **Area of Concern**	Clear challenge, requiring significant attention and the development of long-term solutions for improvement.

Source: Williams and Wade-Golden (2019). Using scorecards to drive DEI innovation.

Data limitations did not allow for us to conduct a deep dive into recruitment and retention challenges and opportunities at the student or employee level. As a result, we did not score performance in these areas on our scorecard. At the same time, we conclude this assessment chapter with a commentary on our top-level insights based upon our benchmarking into these areas and our review of your efforts to advance student and employee diversity.

SVSU Overall Scorecard Findings

Exhibit 3.2 presents the complete color-coded scorecard assessment of SVSU DEI performance. Across the six categories, we scored three at an orange or standard level of performance, with three items scored at the yellow level as areas of concern. Regardless of whether they were scored at the yellow or orange level, we worked to identify areas for improvement and enhancement, which we discuss below.

Exhibit 3.2. SVSU Strategic DEI Scorecard Results

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	ASSESSMENT
General DEI Leadership	Leadership has provided to advance DEI issues in ways that illustrate empathy, authenticity, commitment, financial investments, and character.	🟧
DEI Change Management	Presence of a clear DEI plan and approach to engaging the community and for developing, communicating, and rolling out new DEI initiatives.	🟨
DEI Infrastructure	Presence of a high-functioning DEI infrastructure to guide, engage, and steward DEI change work campus-wide.	🟨
DEI Training & Professional Development	Presence of training and professional development systems to enhance DEI awareness and cultural competence of all staff, faculty, and leadership.	🟧
Climate and Inclusion Bias Review Policy, Procedures, & Systems	The presence of systems that enhance an everyday culture of inclusion by establishing clear policy and reporting systems that eliminate discrimination, bias, sexual harassment, and other challenging dynamics.	🟧
Campus Climate & Inclusion Data Systems	A regular and credible social science assessment of the lived experience of inclusion and exclusion, allowing for quality improvement efforts to be put into place for students, faculty, and staff with a special focus on BIPOC, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, and economically diverse groups.	🟨

Scorecard Results:
General DEI Leadership, Change Management, and Campus-wide Infrastructure

This first segment of our review focused on General DEI Leadership, DEI Change Management, and DEI Campus-wide Infrastructure. Our benchmarking of SVSU's Michigan and national peers weighed heavily in our assessment here (Exhibit 2.1). SVSU is at parity or leading its peers in terms of your general commitment to activating DEI as an institutional priority, a point that we highlighted in Section 2 of this brief.

(1) General DEI Leadership

General DEI leadership commitment is defined by two factors that allow institutions to build capacity. One factor involves enhancing your strategic intent to advance DEI through a clear plan, goals, and commitment to new, expanded, and aligned DEI initiatives. The other factor is the allocation of human, financial, and technical resources into making DEI a top institutional priority. As the institution's strategic focus and

investment grow and become increasingly aligned over time, the institution develops greater strategic capacity to advance DEI goals as a shared priority of more and more people, not just the chief diversity officer and a handful of campus DEI champions.

Due in large part to your parity with your peers nationally as well as across the great state of Michigan, we generally assessed SVSU's DEI leadership at the **orange** standard of performance, approaching the Blue in some important areas that we highlight below (Exhibit 3.2).

Some specific insights from our review of general DEI leadership include:

- Every member of senior leadership spoke coherently to their personal and institutional commitment to DEI leadership in a way that felt authentic. Often we are able to triangulate this positive insight with our DEI campus listening sessions, climate studies, and inventory methodologies. Unfortunately, these approaches are not included in this final review.

- We take your leadership's espoused commitment on face value, triangulating their perspective of commitment with other action steps that we noted in our interviews, benchmarking, and desktop review, all of which suggested an average standard of organizational performance for the dimension of General DEI Leadership.

- Leadership's authorization of a SVSU DEI strategic plan, framework, campus-wide inclusion council, and establishing a focus on public DEI accountability to campus stakeholders are all action steps that are at parity with your Michigan and national peers. They reflect a solid and growing commitment to DEI as a change priority of the campus.

- Our orange level assessment is backed by recent SVSU investments into DEI engagement. Some of these investments include enhancing the multicultural student center on campus, hiring faculty fellows and a part-time consultant, and authorizing DEI training funds.

- These financial investments, in addition to being highly responsive to the need for a greater level of strategic conversation around DEI-related matters after the national engagement with topics of DEI and antiracism following the summer of 2020. All these important action steps illustrate DEI leadership over the last 18 months and are positively acknowledged in this review.

- We were impressed by the approach to DEI integration in your campus 2016-2020 strategic plan. The transparent discussion of goals, the elevation of the diversity dashboard as a priority, the integration of inclusion into your discussion of success, and setting a strategic baseline based upon your local demographics are strong practices that were at the level of an emerging strength (**blue**) in our estimation.

- As we look to the future, the key for SVSU leadership is to build from this foundation and continue strengthening the university's operationalization of DEI as a top priority. This means strengthening campus-wide DEI accountability, infrastructure development, and integration into all campus policy, committing additional permanent resources to the change journey and scaling impact.

- If SVSU does not continue to make targeted investments in elevating DEI as a top priority, the efforts you have achieved thus far will be viewed as performative and your progress as slow to nonexistent.

- Now is a critical time for university leadership. We offer several areas of recommendation that will appear in other parts of this review, and they are highlighted in our outline of key action steps and recommendations moving forward as well.

(2) DEI Change Management

We assessed DEI Change Management at SVSU at the **yellow** level of performance, with many places to build from moving forward. In fact, with some decisive choices to align your work campus-wide, we believe this area could be elevated from a yellow assessment to a **blue** level of review given that you are clearly moving in the right direction. Let us start with some of the positives before discussing one critical opportunity area.

- We greatly appreciated the development of your DEI web environment and the public presentation of a DEI scorecard as well as what seem to be milestone DEI accomplishments. This type of effort helps to signal that DEI is a top priority, through your commitment to transparency and story-telling about your DEI change journey.

- Being transparent about levels of demographic diversity, academic achievement, historical timeline, and campus climate results are all important steps illustrating campus commitment and public accountability to the campus DEI change journey. Nice action steps to build from!

- We also found your SVSU strategic framework doing a good job of visualizing your strategic DEI priorities. We are especially excited by the alignment of your framework to a 21st-century Inclusive Excellence agenda that places a premium on accountability, infrastructure development, demographic change, multicultural curriculum enhancement, establishing an inclusive culture of DEI learning, and incenting DEI performance through a combination of campus and national (HEED) leadership awards. Fantastic.

- In terms of opportunity areas, we would love to see more transparency in the presentation of your DEI plan, including the explicit articulation of your rationales, timeline, tactics aligned to your framework, and assignment of leadership responsibility for campus-wide implementation.

- We would also love to see your current DEI scorecard evolve to speak into your organizational DEI performance metrics more holistically. The current scorecard outlines where you are on demographics, and this is a great foundation.

  - A revised Strategic DEI Leadership Scorecard might include dimensions in the areas of: (1) DEI Commitment, defined as overall DEI plan alignment and implementation progress, *(2)* Campus Climate and Inclusion, (3) Student Demographics and Achievement, (4) Faculty and Staff Demographics and Achievement, and (5) Learning and Diversity, defined as an assessment of your efforts to improve cultural competence among students, faculty, and staff. For full guidance on scorecard construction please see Williams, D. (2013). *Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating Change and Transformation in Higher Education.*

- By far the greatest challenge that we saw in your approach to DEI change management is a lack of a transparent and aligned plan for campus DEI planning, implementation, and accountability at the college/school and major administrative unit level. Every one of these units should have their own independent DEI plan that is in lockstep with the overall SVSU framework.

- Our review to date found that the majority of areas on campus do not appear to have dedicated plans. These aligned plans should be updated annually through a regular progress report, using a central SVSU DEI reporting tool that brings to life your DEI goals framework.

- These progress reports should be reviewed and commented to annually, providing key guidance and assessment of each unit's implementation activities. This review should take place under the authority of the president and offer each unit clear guidance on whether their implementation plan is at a standard of emerging strength, general success, or evidencing strategic opportunity areas for improvement—much like what we are doing in this campus-wide scorecard process.

- In our experience, the lack of rigorous adherence to process and reporting leads to a performative and limited campus-wide DEI activation cadence.

- It is important to recognize that your performance at the orange level is actually much better than what we generally see at many campuses that have not established any credible approach to implementation at all.

- With some intentional work, we truly believe that you could right-size your implementation efforts towards an implementation program of strength, coded at the blue level of performance.

(2) Campus-wide DEI Infrastructure

We found Dr. Thorns' efforts as campus-wide chief diversity officer to be a real positive for SVSU. Our assessment of SVSU's DEI Infrastructure at the **yellow** level of performance (area of concern) has nothing to do with her leadership and everything to do with these issues: (1) The need to address the complexity of her job role, (2) The lack of resources in the SVSU CDO office, and (3) The aforementioned lack of aligned campus-wide DEI infrastructure in the school/colleges and units, which is required to bring a powerful DEI implementation strategy to life.

Yet even as we felt affirmed in scoring this part of your scorecard yellow, we found your campus-wide DEI Council and DEI Advocates program to be important steps in the right direction. Some specific insights uncovered in our review include the following:

- The SVSU CDO leadership portfolio is overly complex. In a best-case scenario, it would benefit from an infusion of targeted resources to enhance capacity, to allow for an increased ability to fulfill the growing priorities of strategic DEI leadership across campus.

- The fact that Dr. Thorns leads as the campus CDO, Affirmative Action/EEO Officer, *and* Title IX Officer means that she effectively performs between 1.5 and 3.0 job roles, if every aspect of each job is being activated at a high level.

- The institutional commitment to create a high-level DEI activation plan necessitates having the type of leadership horsepower that can provide a higher gear of DEI planning, coordination, education, advocacy, and assessment work than has ever been done at SVSU.

- The integration of so many roles into one DEI position is common at institutions that have evolved their legacy Affirmative Action/EEO role to take on increasingly more prominent work in the areas of Strategic DEI Leadership and Title IX enforcement over the last 5-7 years. This opportunity area is one that we recommend you address moving forward.

- The number of people that Dr. Thorns has involved in SVSU's DEI strategy work is admirable. It seems that more than 100 people are consistently engaged in shaping the strategic DEI priorities of the university through the DEI Strategic Planning Committee and their work to engage the community. This is spot-on in our assessment.

- The campus-wide DEI council is a boon for campus engagement and seems to be effective in its role shaping campus DEI priorities. These groups are wonderful for strategic thinking, assessing progress, and creating a powerful forum for different perspectives to be elevated and engaged with. They are not as good at implementing campus programming. As you continue to move into the execution of a campus DEI impact strategy, we encourage you to continue refining how this group contributes strategic DEI thinking and perspective to your journey moving forward.

- One area that most campuses lack is the presence of a strategic DEI leadership coordinating community to implement change locally in the schools/colleges and units of the campus. Not only

does SVSU need to develop local DEI plans, you also need to identify local DEI point leaders to form a campus-wide lateral DEI infrastructure that is aligned to the DEI plan's implementation in each school, college, and administrative unit. This directive does not necessarily mean that every school/college needs to have a full-time DEI officer, although they may. It does mean that every unit should have a dedicated DEI point leader guiding activation locally and working in alignment with the office of the chief diversity officer, campus-wide DEI advisory council, DEI officers in the units, and the DEI advocates program.

- We see great potential in your campus-wide DEI Advocates program. This innovation is exactly what can help make DEI a top priority across campus. We would love to see this community emboldened as a part of an aligned and coordinated lateral DEI infrastructure, just like the point activation leaders that we have recommended to provide leadership locally around the campus DEI plan implementation.

- Your campus-wide DEI Infrastructure has opportunity areas, but we see a number of important places upon which you can build. Your yellow-rated level of performance is consistent with our reviews at numerous other institutions, yet it is also an area that you can quickly enhance with some targeted financial investments and strategic decisions to create a powerful local DEI leadership community campus-wide.

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SVSU Scorecard Results:
Multicultural and Inclusive Campus Environment Dimensions

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The multicultural and inclusive campus environment capability review focused on the second triad of factors: DEI Training and Professional Development; Climate and Inclusion Bias Review, Systems, and Policy; and Campus Climate Research and Assessment.

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(4) DEI Training and Professional Development

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The overall SVSU approach to helping faculty, staff, and leadership build strategic DEI leadership competencies is rated at an **orange** or average level of performance, although we do see some areas for improvement in terms of scaling your program campus-wide. That your programs have featured more than 470 participants in 2020 and 2021 is fantastic and a great foundation to build from moving forward.

- One element in our orange level assessment was driven by the presence of the SVSU leadership development program, with its focus on DEI leadership and building the mindset of inclusion, along with the work being done around courageous conversations, and implicit bias training for the campus community.

- We love when we can see DEI leadership development priorities being activated in multiple programs that span not only the CDO unit's efforts but, just as importantly, are working in partnership with Human Resources and other areas on campus.

- That the SVSU leadership development program focuses on employees newly appointed to leadership and supervisory positions is a step in the right direction.

- The reason that we like your focus on leadership and supervisors is that leaders of people are so critical in establishing the culture of our institutions and therefore in building an everyday culture of inclusion. Recent research on employee departure found that as many as 19 million people quit their job since April of 2021, a massive voluntary shift not seen in recent memory.[5] The major

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5   https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/great-attrition-or-great-attraction-the-choice-is-yours

drivers of these departures was estimated to center on three factors that all echo within DEI work: (1) Feeling like you do not belong in your organization (54%), (2) Feeling that your supervisor does not value your efforts (53%), and (3) A general lack of the feeling of belonging (39%).

- The Cultural Competency Dialogues program seems to be off to a good start. The foundational offering, *How to Improve Your Campus Culture: An Overview of Microaggressions in the Academic Workplace*, is the right answer and clearly a great place for you to build from moving forward. It was particularly exciting to see Drs. Myron Anderson and Katherine S. Young involved in your work. Both Anderson and Young are universally respected for their contributions. Their involvement is another great foundation for SVSU to build on moving forward—and particularly if their presentation was recorded and could be scaled into an on-demand foundational DEI training module that could be used institutionally.

- Preliminary research at the school and college level implies that these areas are building and/or tapping into central campus DEI training efforts, but we are sure that more work could be done to create a stronger gear of classroom and workplace inclusion in these areas.

- The greatest opportunity we see in this area of your work is to: (1) Baseline how many people have participated institutionally by school, college, unit and campus identity, (2) Establish a competency development framework to guide your work, and, most importantly, (3) Establish a plan to scale DEI learning across the entire SVSU community.

- You have so many fantastic offerings, linking them together into a certificate that is expected of all employees over time would be transformative and vault SVSU into the blue zone of performance definitively. We will return to these points in our strategic recommendations, offered in Section 4.

(5) Bias Review Systems and Policy

The SVSU Bias Review Systems and Policy are collectively rated at the **orange** or average level of performance. In a nutshell, your DEI policies and bias reporting processes are solid.

- The SVSU Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Policy 2.5-2 is *pro forma* and has the appropriate information and language.

- The *Campus Climate Incident Report Form* gathers appropriate information and the SVSU Campus Climate Incident Response Team (CCIRT) process is consistent with industry standards. One point that our team noticed is that the language describing who can submit an incident could more clearly reflect that this form is available for students, faculty, and staff. While your current form makes this point, more explicit language would make the statement even stronger.

- The decision to create a response team to ensure a more coordinated campus-wide response to incidents of bias and hate is important. At the same time, do remain vigilant for any criticism of your program itself subverting free speech and expression on campus. No change is recommended at this time.

- The Bias-Related Incidents (student reporting), Harassment Bullying (student reporting), and Title IX (student reporting) are all solid, again operating in a *pro forma* manner. We have no recommendations at this point in these areas.

(6) Campus Climate Research and Assessment

The campus climate research and assessment processes are rated as **yellow**, an area of concern. The SVSU data collection and engagement with campus climate data is flawed. We recommend a complete rethinking of your work in this critical area of DEI assessment and change management. At the same time,

your institutional commitment to gathering climate and inclusion data in 2014 and 2019 represents a strong place to build from as a community.

- The SVSU overall campus climate survey assessment methodology, analysis plan, and strategic write-up are flawed on multiple levels and do not provide clear insights into the lived experience of members of vulnerable BIPOC, women, disability, and economically vulnerable communities.

- Climate studies should help us to understand the lived experience of students, faculty, and staff so that we can use these data to improve the quality of our environment.

  When response levels are low and when data are not analyzed by social identity group, then within the unique and parallel contexts of students, faculty, and staff, the data are nearly meaningless. For example, that only 77 Black respondents were gathered in the SVSU study and then analyzed as one group, not differentiated by their identity as faculty, staff, and students is a flawed approach. For a population study, more responses need to be garnered, a possibility for SVSU—but only if you use aggressive, campaign-based strategies to create a powerful call to action for the campus community to participate in the study as an act of their commitment to DEI action.

- The presentation of data in these reports as primarily raw data with little to no interpretation does not optimally support the campus community in using these data to help drive new actions, although we note your efforts to do so in your SVSU February 2019 Strategic Plan Update Report. More is possible, however, and we recommend that leadership consider ways to amplify your climate and inclusion assessment work moving forward, moving forward from a strong start.

- We were excited to see such a strong and transparent commitment to understanding and improving the campus climate, and a strong tradition of collecting campus climate social science data. Your collection of data on a five-year time interval (2014 and 2019) is a strategic best practice, although the data itself is far from adequate to support DEI strategic improvement at SVSU.

- Currently, your campus climate data are not powerfully connecting to your strategic DEI change management process because the data are flawed. At the same time, we acknowledge your efforts in this regard and encourage you to keep going.

- We recommend gathering data again in 2023, as the global pandemic hopefully evolves closer to an endemic or closing stage, in order to establish a strategic baseline for the university. These baseline data can then be used as part of an SVSU Strategic DEI Leadership Scorecard, a point that we highlighted previously and will return to in our discussion of recommendations, next.

Summary: SVSU Scorecard Findings

SVSU has made a clear commitment to DEI and is moving well towards this goal. Overall, across the six categories analyzed for SVSU, three dimensions were scored at an orange or standard level of performance, with the remaining three items scored at the yellow level as areas of opportunity. In each area, we found positives as well as areas of growth for the university, even offering potential ways SVSU could evolve towards the blue emerging strength performance level. Especially in terms of commitment to DEI, SVSU could easily shift into the blue zone.

While many of our findings were in line with our evaluations of other universities, it is clear that SVSU is leaning into its work to make DEI a top strategic priority. We encourage you to keep going because it is obvious that you have built momentum. Regardless of the score in each area, we have identified helpful steps for improvement and enhancement, some of which are discussed further in the recommendations in the next section.

SECTION 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRATEGIC CHANGE

Based on this engagement and in our previous DEI work at Saginaw State University, we recognize the university's particularly powerful opportunity—some would say obligation—to make DEI not only a strategic priority but a strategic *foundation* at the university. Indeed, such efforts would create a point of difference in how SVSU defines its excellence equation and exercises a positive influence locally, regionally, nationally, and even globally.

Inclusive Excellence and Antiracism

In his book *How to Be an Antiracist*, Dr. Ibram Kendi argues that being antiracist does not mean merely the absence of racism but that you are action-oriented in working to change systems, policies, and individual behaviors that lead to racial inequality (Kendi, 2019). This means that you are proactively striving to end individual and systemic ways that BIPOC community members continue to experience racism in their daily lives. To be antiracist is to actively dismantle racial inequity, wherever it may exist, and by extension to dismantle sexism, relational violence, homophobia, classism, unconscious bias, and other forms of inequity that often serve to silence and marginalize diverse groups and community members when attending and working at a great institution like SVSU.

We were surprised to not see a more demonstrative focus on antiracism in your DEI strategy documents and approach. While this is clearly your choice, our recent experience with DEI plans and strategies nationally suggest that many campuses are grappling with how to put in place an antiracism methodology. Such a methodology focuses on: (1) Building a new and demonstrably antiracist narrative on campus, (2) Developing a shared commitment to allyship, (3) Eliminating racial inequity in key areas of performance, and (4) Developing new antiracism, pro-BIPOC programs.

Some tactics that we have seen nationally in the area of antiracism methodology include a focus on racial healing repair, story-telling, learning, transparency, and accountability. Some highlights include: (1) regular opportunities for Black and BIPOC students, employees, and alumni to share their stories at the board level; (2) Historical projects that unpack racial histories and policies (and historical highlights) of the institution; (3) Reviews of campus policies and procedures to determine if they unintentionally have a harmful effect on BIPOC communities, (4) Reviews of campus police units to ensure they have a culturally relevant community policing overlay to their work; (5) Intensive learning efforts focused around allyship, (6) Seven-figure antiracism fundraising initiatives, (7) Commitments to hiring more faculty who can teach around issues of race, racism, and related areas, and more.

While your work is in no way inconsistent with these antiracism priorities, we thought it important to highlight some of these areas, since we know that Black and allied leaders elevated their voices to help spark SVSU to develop a stronger commitment to DEI change.

Our work in this area suggests that the organizational desire to create a sustainable DEI approach that embraces antiracism is consistent with the guiding principles that have underpinned our longstanding vision of Inclusive Excellence in education. Developed with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), the Inclusive Excellence Model asserts three main points (Williams, Berger, McClendon, 2004). First, that diversity, inclusion, and equity must be, and are, intimately connected. Second, that we can only become our best institutional selves when we value, engage, and include the rich diversity of *all* constituents (among students, staff, faculty, administrators, board members, and alumni) as full participants in the process. And third, that diversity, inclusion, and belonging *in fact drive* excellence.

Indeed, the conversation around antiracism is also echoed in the DEI conversation around the concept of equity. Equity focuses on achieving equal access and equity of outcome by raising all boats on a higher tide. In this way, a school can better prepare all students to succeed in a diverse and global world while at the same time creating an inclusive environment for every member of the institutional community. In today's environment of ongoing, high-profile racial incidents around the country, we are reminded of the

need to not only talk about DEI generally but to advance more proactively the incomplete work of racial equity as well. In this context, we offer the following recommendations to SVSU.

Six Recommendations to Enhance DEI Efforts at SVSU

We identified six primary areas of potential improvement that emerged from our data analysis for this project. Based on proven DEI best practices, these recommendations are offered as a way for SVSU to selectively strengthen its efforts, considering both the findings included in this report and the commitments that have already been made by leadership. We offer here another set of resources and insights to spark your continuing efforts to elevate DEI as a campus-wide priority at SVSU.

We believe that change can be most effectively driven by making "big bets"—a few carefully curated actions or plan components with which the school can generate community enthusiasm, create tremendous value, and visibly drive outcomes. This strategy is especially helpful when an institution is rolling out its first strategic diversity plan or taking it up a notch. Too often, diversity plans are long wish lists that don't hang together with purpose; as a result, they don't make the most effective impact. The key to being effective in implementing change is to make clear choices, that is, to point the ship in a direction that everyone can see and understand.

Even more importantly, change strategy requires not necessarily doing everything all at once, even though the community will often want everything at once. Instead, the key to success is to move forward visibly to activate your plan step by step, making a big splash with each phase and its core step, while communicating broadly (and often) your direction and that you are implementing change immediately.

Recommendation 1. Hire a Strategic DEI-Skilled President

It is common for leadership to say that DEI will be a priority regardless of their next president because DEI commitment is part of our institutional values. In some ways this is true; in 2022, most institutions do have an espoused commitment to DEI. At the same time, this commitment must be operationalized by leadership. Power and attention is both lost and acquired in moments of leadership transition generally, and during presidential transitions definitively. If SVSU desires to make DEI a top strategic priority, the university must prioritize Strategic DEI Leadership as part of the criteria of search, screen, and selection.

We recommend that SVSU make every effort to hire a president who has demonstrated strategic DEI leadership skills and holds DEI as a top priority in their responsibilities set. This goal should be as much a part of their hiring matrix as executive leadership acumen, scholarly values and experience, fundraising skills, financial stewardship, and other dimensions that one might reasonably consider. Further, DEI leadership should be built into any financial performance review and metrics that exist as part of their overall compensation program.

Whatever search firm you hire should be able to assess strategic DEI leadership as part of the factors used to identify leading candidates. Often, too much power is given to such search firms to pre-vet candidates, particularly for presidents and chancellors. We recommend instead that every firm be asked to specifically speak to their ability to: (1) Source diverse candidates, and (2) Present only those candidates that have strategic DEI leadership acumen.

We also recommend that the board review at least one or two minority- or women-owned agencies (with said small business certifications) as part of the review process for selecting an executive recruitment firm. Commonly, executive search firms develop a longstanding relationship with an institution that, while good because they become familiar with the institutional culture, can also create unconscious bias in the types of candidates they elevate for leadership opportunities. Such firms may exhibit a "cloning bias" to replicate past examples of leadership, or they may simply troop across candidates with the same qualities of leadership that they offered previously.

Some additional recommendations include: (1) Ensure that every candidate speak to their Strategic DEI leadership in all written application materials and (2) as part of any public job talk or interviews; and (3) That the CDO and Inclusive Leadership Council have an opportunity to vet all final candidates, as a priority group whose voice is included in the process.

Recommendation 2. Strengthen Implementation of Your Current DEI Approach

Senior leadership's commitment defines the values of the institution, its vision for DEI, and the activation cadence of achieving change. In our work, we say that DEI efforts "can't breathe without AIIR," which stands for *Accountability,* or parameters that shape behavior; a dedicated and general DEI *Infrastructure* to guide and support change; *Integration* of DEI across the various dimensions of budget, policy, and priorities institutionally; and *Resources* to ensure that change happens in both word and deed as more than an unfunded mandate.

We recommend that SVSU develop a more aligned DEI strategy, accountability, infrastructure, and implementation framework to guide DEI activation that builds from your current start in this area. Specifically:

- *Develop a DEI statement and embed this statement into key points of the SVSU experience, including:* (1) Job postings, (2) Student applications, (3) Leadership programs, (4) Orientation programs, and (5) Other key interface spaces. We recommend developing a DEI statement outlining your definitions of key concepts, values, and general commitments in this area. After developing this statement, it should then be activated as a key part of events, including student orientations, school applications, professional development and training, curriculum changes, school calendars, holiday observations, and more. The goal here is to do more than simply develop the statement but rather to incorporate it into everyday activities in ways that will bring your intentions to life for community members

- *Establish a multidimensional DEI university-wide scorecard to set goals and track progress as part of that strategic plan.* Every dimension of the DEI plan will require (and eventually supply) data to complete the scorecard (Williams, 2013). Regular survey and interview data may be required to supplement institutional data in terms of issues of recruitment, retention, and success, campus climate, and student engagement. A regular commitment to gathering these data can be helpful for building a robust set of quantitative and qualitative data across every dimension of the scorecard. This scorecard would build from your current demographic diversity scorecard.

- *Hold deans and divisional leaders accountable* to implementing DEI efforts in their unit that align to the campus's big-picture strategic DEI framework. This area of performance should be part of annual reviews, appointments, hiring, and contracts.

- *Require every school/college and administrative unit to create a DEI plan:* Your campus-wide DEI framework should be reflected within each unit's own DEI strategic plan. These plans would be spearheaded by DEI committees and activation leaders (detailed in Recommendation 4).

- *Establish annual DEI strategic update reports developed and published by every unit.* Often made public, these reports provide a regular means of creating accountability, tracking progress, and establishing transparency in the DEI effort while ensuring an elevated level of engagement with the DEI implementation journey. These reports should all use a common reporting template to ensure alignment and fidelity in implementation approach.

- *Establish shared accountability systems to help achieve meaningful and measurable progress:* These systems might include a shared public DEI dashboard (building from what you have) and annual DEI reporting from every divisional DEI leader. Make DEI leadership a top requirement in all supervisor appointments and contracts. Require DEI contributions in all annual and merit reviews or faculty activity reports.

- We would love to see SVSU *establish an annual campus-wide Inclusive Excellence Conference event.* This event would be designed to provide for a one- or two-day-long commitment of training and professional development. It would showcase what is going on across campus and create a space for public accountability and meaning-making where the president, provost, deans, and senior leadership share what is going on across campus. Here is also a place where Inclusive Excellence leadership awards for deans, faculty, and staff may be given out as a way of creating public recognition for those individuals who are making a special difference on campus. This event also offers an opportunity for the university to honor community leaders doing the work of DEI or even alumni in the local community or beyond. If designed well, this event could become a sponsorship property of the university and an opportunity to partner with local and regional businesses.

Recommendation 3. Require DEI Activation Leaders in Every Major Unit

SVSU has taken some strides in building its campus-wide DEI infrastructure. We recommend further pointed strengthening of this infrastructure. Some recommendations include:

- Every unit/divisional area should have a DEI activation leader in their school/college unit as well as a local DEI committee. This local committee should have strong representation, a clear set of goals that are aligned campus-wide, and effective leaders who can make a difference. This committee should not be comprised only of persons of color, nor diversity and inclusion champions. To achieve success, it must have balance and leadership voices from many places.

- Each school, college, or divisional DEI point leader should have DEI leadership formally built into their job responsibilities. This DEI activation leader must be someone who is known as a great citizen, knows how to get work done, and preferably has academic credentials and is engaged in the process of teaching, learning, and research.

- If a DEI officer role already exists in the unit, we recommend having a DEI Officer and DEI Activation leader who partner to provide leadership to their unit's DEI committee and activation of their unit's DEI plan.

- These roles should be positioned as part of the senior leader's cabinet and should be provided both budget and portfolio to lead alignment efforts to the university's big-picture DEI plan (see Recommendation 1).

- One best practice is for these roles to be partially funded centrally and have a dotted line to the CDO. As a result, the CDO should be involved in the hiring, annual review, dismissal, and goal-setting for these roles.

- The national best-practice example of establishing this type of infrastructure and DEI reporting process can be found at your sister institution in the state, the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor.

Recommendation 4. Strengthen the Capacity and Resources of the CDO Unit

The CDO *cannot be the only person responsible for leading campus diversity.* Indeed, the president, provost, and other senior leaders must also champion the campus's diversity efforts and clear the way for the chief diversity officer to provide collaborative leadership in advancing the campus's strategic diversity leadership agenda.

To be more than crisis response units and symbolic figureheads for diversity, the SVSU CDO requires resources, as do the school/college DEI officers and point leaders. With these roles launching campus-wide and within some units of the university, now is the time to implement it properly from the beginning.

Exhibit 4.1. Summary: Strategic recommendations for SVSU

Recommendation	Description	Key Concepts
(1) Make Strategic DEI Leadership a major priority of the new presidential search	Integrate Strategic DEI leadership into all aspects of the search, screen, and selection process for the new president.	• SDL integrated into the job description • SDL experience required as a critical competency of the job • Hire a search firm with competence assessing SDL • Ensure that all candidates speak to SDL in written materials, interviews, and public remarks • Ensure that the CDO and DEI council have audience with all candidates and a chance to offer feedback in the process
(2) Strengthen implementation of your current DEI approach	Develop a comprehensive and aligned DEI and antiracism strategy, accountability, inf rastructure, and implementation f ramework to guide DEI activation.	• Develop and activate a DEI statement across units to bring DEI prioritization to lif e institutionally • Build a comprehensive strategic DEI scorecard to track progress • Require every unit create a DEI plan • Establish annual DEI strategic update reports developed and published by every unit • Deans and divisional leaders will be held accountable to implementing the DEI plans in their respective units • Hold an annual Inclusive Excellence Symposium
(3) Require DEI activation leaders in every major unit	Build out the lateral DEI inf rastructure to ensure greater alignment, accountability, and high level DEI implementation	• Require every unit to appoint a DEI activation leader if they are implementing a DEI plan. • Partially f und these roles centrally with dotted lines to the CDO. • Units activating DEI plans should have a local DEI committee
(4) Strengthen the capacity and resources of the CDO unit	Strategies for setting up the role, the office and the staff, and an effective budget and discretionary f unds, building a division.	• Shif t the CDO's responsibilities f rom its current three roles • Add 1-3 new FTE roles to strengthen the unit • Establish an operational budget with an Inclusive Excellence Innovation f und to drive capacity campus-wide • Elevate the CDO to a formal rank at VP or AVP level
(5) Institutionalize a DEI training and certif ication program	Build a culture of DEI training and capacity building for all.	• Build a DEI certif icate program for all f aculty, staff, and leadership • Scale-up the program across all f aculty, staff, and leadership • Strategic DEI Leadership training for senior leadership
(6) Implement a campus-wide climate and inclusion survey to gather strong insights into the lived experience by schools and colleges	Implement a campus-wide climate and inclusion survey allowing for school/college, divisional analyses of climate and culture.	• Implement a regular campus climate and inclusion pulse survey tapping into key DEI areas of measurement. • Given decentralization of the campus, this survey should be established to measure the lived experience by school/college. • Use a population-based campaign approach to achieve a high response rate and create a personal challenge for individual participation. • Leverage bivariate and multivariate analyses to develop an enhanced institutional understanding of the lived experience of inclusion and exclusion. • Analyze data by f actors relating to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, & disability, for f aculty/staff and students.

The CDO Unit Should Focus on Strategic Diversity Leadership

Because your CDO role is a legacy position that has evolved several times, it is designed in ways that feature too many responsibilities for any one person to perform optimally. We recommend a few steps to alleviate that burden:

- As SVSU continues to develop a more strategic focus to your work, we recommend elevating the CDO position to a formal rank at the Vice or Associate Vice President level. This move is consistent with national trends. The Special Assistant title can be a part of the role, and CDO is a description of function, but the role would be strengthened by having a formal rank at the VP or AVP level, bringing it in line with fast emerging national standards of practice.

- As we detail below, we recommend that one to three new staff be hired to serve in the CDO unit that can ensure that the CDO is not mired down by such activities as actually reviewing complaints of discrimination or leading student, faculty, or staff diversity trainings. Of course, the CDO may provide leadership to this work though policy, supervision, and priority-setting. Nevertheless, the key theme of developing enhanced CDO capacity is for this role to be a big-picture leader who partners with other senior leaders and the campus community to tighten the many pieces of SVSU's diversity agenda into a cohesive whole. At times this will involve investigation and training, but more than not it will require the CDO to lead, coordinate, partner, and catalyze the work.

A role empowered in this way will devote energy to creating a sustained diversity change and capacity-building effort—one that is built upon a coordinated set of tactics that ladder up the campus's big-picture strategic agenda as an institution (Recommendation 1). In addition to its focus on campus policy and activities, the office also needs to give the university a presence locally, regionally, and even nationally on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We recommend six areas of focus for this role and their team:

(1) Strategic planning and implementation of a campus-wide diversity plan and innovation system, complete with accountability processes and change management systems.

(2) Ongoing diversity-themed leadership skill development for all campus leadership, improving the campus climate of inclusion for students, faculty, and staff and preparing all to better live and lead in a world that is diverse, global, and interconnected.

(3) Collaborating to strengthen the campus climate for inclusion of all students through pre-existing units, collaborative initiatives, campus bias responsiveness, and internal community building.

(4) Strengthening the university's external, community-facing efforts by engaging with diverse constituents and communities and partnering with development and others to find external financial resources and partnerships to drive change internally.

(5) Collaborating with relevant leadership to ensure the university's diversity efforts are highly complementary, evidence-based, successful, and similarly focused on a shared vision for the campus community's diversity interests, broadly defined.

(6) Implementing EEO/Title IX compliance, investigation, and review systems.

Continue to Build the CDO Unit

While we are not able to offer a fully developed recommendation on the staffing plan for your new CDO role, our research suggests the following action steps for consideration:

- The CDO should have two to three new, full-time staff members to bring the mission of the office to life. Some common roles are in the area of (1) Deputy CDO, (2) DEI learning/training, (3) EEO/Title IX investigation, and (4) DEI campus programming.

- These roles would join with the current team that includes the CDO, administrative support, and the campus DEI consultant.

- The CDO should have a deputy CDO who carries the appropriate credentials to be viewed as another credible leader and voice across campus. This would be a mid-senior-level leadership role that would ideally be occupied by someone who is strong on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and is superior in the areas of operational excellence, execution, and getting things done.

- Establish a two-part budget framework for the office that includes support for: (a) Unit Operations and (b) An Inclusive Excellence Innovation Fund. This fund is critical to drive capacity campus-wide.

- The current non-staff operational budget level of the office is not sufficient to drive DEI innovation efforts institutionally. The Inclusive Excellence Innovation Fund should be at a minimum at the level of 100-150K in recurring funds that can be used to drive partnership and new initiatives on campus. In these austere times this may become an important area for strategic fundraising to advance DEI institutionally.

Recommendation 5. Institutionalize a DEI Training Certification Initiative

Our fifth recommendation is to strengthen the university's growing commitment to DEI training and professional development with an expected DEI certification initiative. Your current efforts are clearly moving in the right direction. This recommendation calls for scaling of impact and creating a more integrated and learning centered approach.

- *Develop a comprehensive DEI certificate programs for students, faculty, and staff:* Building from your current DEI training efforts, this is an important next step. The university has some DEI training and professional development programs running currently, but the approach would benefit from a strong integration of the various threads of your program in to a cohesive model.

  This effort should be guided by a university-wide set of DEI learning goals and appropriately organized to allow for tracking of DEI skill development. We recommend establishing a DEI learning goals framework and building an adaptable certificate model that has a baseline of required programs, in combination with the flexibility to validate other DEI learning programs that exist across campus.

- We also recommend establishing participation and growth goals for scaling the program across all faculty, staff, and administrative leadership. It is not enough to build the certificate, you must drive participation, setting year-over-year goals, holding senior leaders responsible for both their participation and for the participation of their faculty members and staff. For example, leadership, faculty, and staff might participate in a focused DEI learning and skill-development program that might meaningfully involve 12-15 hours of dedicated engagement to complete the work across 12-18 months, with additional time for reflection, reading, and case-study application.

- *Topics:* To truly institutionalize your DEI commitment will require a focus on foundational DEI topics that may include yet are not limited to:

  - Foundational concepts such as microaggression, unconscious bias, and antiracism
  - Understanding, educating, empowering, and valuing diverse generation Z students
  - Equitable instructional techniques, discipline, and cultural relevance in the classroom
  - Fundamentals of allyship and engaging across difference

- Leading DEI and antiracism initiatives in the 21st century
- Diverse student identities: A focus on race/ethnicity, gender, and LGBTQIA+ dynamics

This certification program is key to truly moving the culture your institution forward on the pathway of Inclusive Excellence. An important recommendation is to make the guidance in these programs as behavioral as possible, helping participants to develop concrete techniques that they can apply in their roles across campus.

Beyond the certificate program, we felt strongly that members of your senior leadership team would benefit greatly from a targeted Strategic DEI Leadership professional development experience to accelerate their ability to provide high-caliber leadership on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Recommendation 6. Implement an Enhanced Campus-wide Climate and Inclusion Survey

We recommend that the university continue to invest in a third-party, full assessment of the climate of inclusion and exclusion at SVSU in 2023. You need better quality data that can be used to both create a true baseline and help inform your DEI strategy moving forward. The current reports do not seem to accomplish that goal, from our vantage point. At a minimum, this work could be enhanced dramatically with a stronger data product.

- *We recommend that the university then follow this up with another in 2028.* The survey should utilize credible, evidence-based, social science techniques to gather, analyze, and report data findings that can then be used as part of your strategic DEI leadership scorecard and campus-wide updating process. .

- *Leverage a third-party service for the study.* Given the sensitivity of this data and the need to create an elevated level of trust in the process, we recommend that you continue to leverage a third-party vendor to engage in this work. We recognize you may want to consider new strategic partners in the process, given our review.

- *Implement this as a population survey that allows everyone to participate.* Given the competing priorities that your faculty, staff, students, and leadership juggle, we recommend a campaign-based approach to driving response rates to this survey, including creating a campus-wide call to action, where participation in the survey is viewed as a way that each individual can commit to the work. Your response rates have been too low in the past, and you need to develop an approach that can drive much higher response rates.

- *Use a brief "pulse" survey instrument for key scales.* Surveys should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete, with additional time for individuals who desire to offer open-ended feedback. Your instrument seems too lengthy. We recommend a briefer survey.

- *Analyze the data in ways that elicit clear insights or the data "story."* We recommend data modeling techniques to strengthen the validity of findings. We also recommend analyses using both bivariate and multivariate techniques to drive the greatest insights and to present findings in ways that will be deemed credible by your faculty.

- *Engage with the data across campus as a part of your strategy and change process.* When you collect your next wave of data, we recommend creating discussion toolkits to leverage your DEI advocates, council, and potentially the proposed DEI activation leaders to have conversations locally about the data results. We have found that this strategy is key to democratizing the conversation and using the data as an input to drive conversation and change efforts institutionally.

SECTION 5. FINAL THOUGHTS: STEPPING INTO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Even as we offer this brief today for consideration along with its recommendations for effective forward progress, positive changes are already in process at Saginaw Valley State University. These positives began with the university's commitment to the DEI assessment herein, as well as its seeking to expand its DEI expertise, the historical creation and initial staffing of the CDO office, and the beginnings of aligning that office's work campus-wide.

In short, the research assessments presented in this report identified opportunities that require a thoughtful response in order to reach the initiative's ideals of equity for all. Forward effort will now demand a continued rigorous, disciplined, and committed approach to change.

And indeed, in this moment of profound national change, SVSU is taking the opportunity to further develop and enhance a definitively proactive and rigorous approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion, one that will exclude no community member and will demand greater awareness from all. To support this initiative, each member of the community must become DEI allies. They must embody inclusive excellence in their everyday lives.

Towards this end, this document and the accompanying PowerPoint report offer the data, research findings, analyses, and recommendations to help move SVSU intelligently and confidently toward that goal.

From all of us at the Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation, thank you for the opportunity to serve your intentions and efforts to strengthen your diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism work and to further the mission of this field. We look forward to your next steps and are proud to be a friend to your work.

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APPENDIX

Exhibit A. CSDLSI strategic methodologies framework and the SVSU research approach

Data Collection	Description	Scorecard Dimension	Saginaw Valley	Assessment Power[6]
DEI Discovery Interviews	Interviews with key leadership regarding DEI strengths, challenges, and areas of opportunity.	• General DEI Leadership • DEI Infrastructure • DEI Change Management	Yes	Level 1
Strategic DEI Benchmarking	Benchmarking of institutional peers and a couple high-level indicators of DEI strategy and perf ormance.	• General DEI Leadership • DEI Infrastructure • DEI Change Management	Yes	Level 2
Strategic DEI Inventory Survey	Survey administered to senior leadership to catalog and analyze strategic DEI inf rastructure and programming on campus.	• General DEI Leadership • Preparing Student for Diverse and Global World • Multicultural and International Research • Affirming Diverse Identity and Community Building • Campus Climate Policy, Training & Prof essional Development	No	Level 3
Demographic DEI Benchmarking	Benchmarking of institutional peers along a set of key f aculty, student, and leadership indicators using most current IPEDS institutional data.	• Employee Demographics • Student Demographics	Yes	Level 1
Racial Equity Scorecard Analysis	Analyses of institutional databases to identif y racial inequity in DEI perf ormance measures.	• Student Educational Outcomes • Student Demographics • Employee Demographics	No	Level 3
DEI Listening Tour	Listening sessions with campus constituents organized by social identity group. Faculty, staf f , students, leadership. Race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, economic status. Learn DEI strengths, challenges, and opportunity areas.	• DEI Leadership • DEI Change Management • Affirming Diverse Identity and Community Building • Campus Climate Policy, Training & Prof essional	No	Level 2
DEI Insight-to-Action Strength Identif ication Survey	Open-ended survey administered to all campus to learn DEI strengths, challenges, and opportunity areas.	• DEI Leadership • DEI Change Management • Affirming Diverse Identity and Community Building • Campus Climate Policy, Training & Prof essional	No	Level 2
Climate and Inclusion Inclusive Excellence Survey	Population-level survey administered to assess the lived experience, then using bivariate and multivariate analysis, data modeling, and scorecard techniques to understand the lived experience of inclusion or exclusion.	• Leadership DEI Commitment • Satisf action • Discrimination • Context of Discrimination • Belonging Index • Thrive & Grow Index • Equitable Opportunity f or Success Index	No	Level 3

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6 Review key: 1=Limited assessment power; 2=Medium level assessment power, 3=Strong level of assessment power.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation: Research Team

Damon A. Williams, PhD, is a scholar, leader, and educator passionate about making organizations inclusive and excellent for all, creating equitable educational outcomes, and activating learning and leadership in ways that are transformative and inspiring of new possibilities. Dr. Williams is one of the nation's recognized experts in strategic diversity leadership, youth development, corporate responsibility , and organizational change. He is currently Chief Catalyst for the Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation (CSDLSI) and a Senior Scholar and Innovation Fellow at University of Wisconsin-Madison's Wisconsin Equity and Inclusion (Wei) Laboratory.

From 2013-2017, Dr. Williams led a $250 million social impact portfolio for the world's largest youth development company, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, representing the interests of nearly four million diverse youth globally, as the Senior Vice President for Programs and Chief Education Officer. In this role, he led the national program strategy for BGCA's strategic outcome areas—academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles—with a focus on strengthening the daily Club experience and creating a new generation of leaders to expand the pipeline into higher education.

Prior to joining BGCA, he served for five years as Associate Vice Chancellor, Vice Provost, Chief Diversity Officer and member of the educational leadership and policy analysis faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has authored or co-authored dozens of books, monographs and articles that have influenced thousands worldwide. `

Katie Schwartz, PhD, Director of Operations and Outreach and Senior Research Associate, CSDLSI
Dr. Schwartz is a risk-based decision-making researcher who worked in professional academic research for almost a decade before branching into data analysis and business operations consulting. Dr. Schwartz has managed a 15-million-dollar research portfolio as well as consulted with small businesses. She earned her PhD in Aerospace Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2015.

Mr. Akshay Agrawal, MS, Research and Strategy Associate, CSDLSI
Mr. Agrawal is an expert in quantitative methodologies and brings more than 10 years' experience in the area of complex data analysis. He received his Master of Science degree in complex data analytics from the University of Arizona.

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Ms. Deiadra Gardner is writer, researcher, and editor with over ten years' experience in project management, program design and implementation, and survey instrument design and implementation. Ms. Gardner has previously served as chief of staff to various university administrators and corporate executives. Deiadra earned her BA in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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Throughout her 40-year career, Dr. McKee has led as Chief of Student Affairs, in enrollment management and as Chief Diversity Officer at multiple institutions. Her responsibilities have included supervisory oversight of multi-million-dollar program budgets and unit portfolios, affirmative action processes, admissions, financial aid, student life, and more. On five occasions, she has launched campus diversity offices and partnered with leaders to create new campus-wide DEI plans and initiatives. Dr. McKee received her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Minnesota.

**Ms. Daria Astara, Director of Narrative, CSDLSI**
Ms. Astara is a communications consultant with over 25 years' experience. She directed marketing communications departments at two private asset management firms in New York City, and today focuses on message frameworks for financial institutions, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders. She specializes in startups and in thinking outside the box. Daria holds a BA in Economics from Cornell University.

About the Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation (CSDLSI)

The Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership and Social Innovation (CSDLSI) was founded in 2017 by Dr. Damon A. Williams. Serving as the center's Chief Catalyst, Dr. Williams is an award-winning scholar, educator, speaker, strategist, consultant, and social-impact leader with over 22 years of experience working with more than 1,000 colleges and universities, corporations, nonprofit and government agencies. By leveraging evidence-based resources and best practices, validated research instruments and scales, and cutting-edge technology, the center has positioned itself to be a catalyst for change across all sectors.

CSDLSI's mission is to empower leaders, produce results, and help corporations, organizations, and institutions to create a more inclusive environment and community. CSDLSI's work is guided by the principle of *Strategic Diversity Leadership*—the evidence-based approach to leading diversity, equity and inclusion centered strategy, leadership development, change management and research. The center works to strengthen organizational infrastructure and develop strategic planning capabilities by adhering to the center's principles: always begin with "why"—using questions to guide its approach when developing project methodology; apply culturally relevant approaches; and search for and curate excellence, always working to reapply the best solutions. The center achieves its goal by bringing academic credibility and a pragmatic focus to all its projects. Dr. Williams and the CSDSLI team uses design thinking to create new possibilities that can accomplish real and meaningful change in organizations and communities. CSDLSI specializes in and offers the following services:

- **University and Organizational Research and Evaluation,** such as organizational climate and culture research, campus climate and field studies with formal written evaluations and mass survey instrument development and administration.

- **Organizational Change Management and Strategic Planning Consultation,** including leading organizational redesign and change management efforts; designing vertical and lateral diversity structures; diversity planning in higher education; chief diversity officer (CDO) role design; developing diversity accountability strategies; establishing strategic faculty and staff hiring and retention programs; and developing general education diversity distribution requirements.

- **Professional Development and Training Programs (both in-person and online)** designed to focus on capability building, strategic diversity leadership development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) research and best practices. Each summer, the CSDLSI offers the National Inclusive Excellence Leadership Academy (NIXLA), a five-week, online, team-based training and professional coaching and development program. Some of the topics featured during NIXLA are:

  - Strategic Diversity Leadership
  - The Inclusive Excellence Model
  - Higher Education and Shared Governance
  - Expanding Access to Higher Education
  - Faculty and Staff Diversity, Recruitment and Retention Strategies and Best Practices
  - Increasing Women and Underrepresented/ Minority Student participation in STEM
  - Diversity Planning and Implementation
  - Understanding the Centennial Generation
  - Youth and Leadership Development
  - Accountability and Incentives
  - Diversity Crisis Response
  - Assessing and Improving Campus Climates
  - Managing Your Organizational/ Institutional Diversity Brand
  - Fundraising for Diversity and Inclusion
  - Executive and Corporate Consultation and Coaching
  - Thought Leadership Strategy and Development
  - Leadership Development and Executive Coaching Training Program Design
  - Executive Education and Coaching
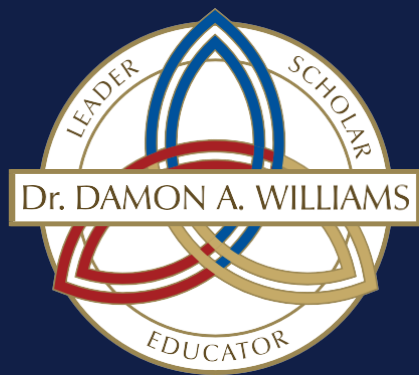
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