

# Matthaei Botanical Garden and Nichols Arboretum

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan | FY 2025

## Strategic Plan Overview

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At the University of Michigan, our dedication to academic excellence for the public good is inseparable from our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is central to our mission as an educational institution to ensure that each community member has the full opportunity to thrive in our environment, for we believe that diversity is critical to individual flourishing, academic excellence, and the advancement of knowledge.

### **U-M Diversity Equity & Inclusion Goals:**

Diversity – We commit to increasing diversity, which is expressed in a myriad of forms, including race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status, and political perspective.

Equity – We commit to working actively to challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status.

Inclusion – We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our campus is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and everyone feels a sense of belonging and inclusion. We know that by building a critical mass of diverse groups on campus and creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities.

### **MBGNA's Mission**

The Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum (MBGNA) is a transformative force for social and ecological resilience through the waters and lands we steward. We turn this commitment into action by:

- Positioning humans as active participants within the natural world and compelling the university community and our publics to negotiate the full complexity that entails
- Advancing partnerships, programs, user experience, and all that we steward to catalyze equity and justice in a radically changing world

- Emerging as the University of Michigan’s premier partner for research, teaching, and public impact in sustainability, climate-forward practices, and biocultural diversity
- Promoting healthier communities, cultures, and ecosystems through active care and cultivating the gardens, fields, natural habitats, and dynamic systems that sustain our world

### **MBGNA Pillars**

MBGNA’s [Strategic Plan](#) activates this mission in three thematic areas across six pillars, each a commitment and a container for scaffolded strategic goals.

#### **Equity, Justice + Biocultural Diversity:**

1. Catalyzing Equity and Justice through Biocultural Diversity and Polycentrism
2. Pursuing Social and Ecological Resilience for a Planet Under Threat

#### **Research, Teaching + Experience Making:**

3. Amplifying Knowledge-Making and Learner-Centered Experience
4. Instituting a New Communications, Engagement, and User Experience Paradigm

#### **Organizational Evolution:**

5. Propelling Organizational Culture toward Equity, Efficiency, and Impact
6. Energizing Resources for Strategic Impact

### **Key Strategies & Constituencies:**

MBGNA staff are the primary constituency of this plan. As a UM museum, our constituencies expand to users, including: students, volunteers, partners, and visitors. Except where specified, the strategic plan pertains to all MBGNA staff. Our DEI team, supported by leadership, has identified objectives to further university-wide goals for DEI that align with MBGNA’s mission and strategic plan. Strategic objectives are aggregated into the three distal objectives determined by the university. Each of these objectives is accompanied by metrics that will be tracked over time and descriptions of single- and multiple-year actions MBGNA will take to accomplish the goals.

*All strategic objectives and related actions will be pursued in accordance with the law and University policy.*

## **Implementation Highlights and Planning Process Used**

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### **Planning Lead(s):**

#### **Planning Lead:**

*Anthony Kolenic, Director*

## Planning Team:

*Anthony Kolenic, Director*

*Xochi Sánchez, Visitor Experience Associate*

## Implementation Highlights and Planning Process Summary:

At the very top of the implementation highlights is the visible new power relationships that are able to emerge in institutional spaces when community and Tribal knowledge is taken seriously and its power is invited, creating the conditions for some kind of future together. When our work is co-created, it's impact is tangible, multi-sensory, immersive, and often multi-generational; a third space between community and university is opened that transcends the borders of both. That happened again and again this year with a variety of partners: Wolverine Pathways and our Environmental Education team, through Food Justice community organizations and the Campus Farm, through rematriation efforts with Tribal partners, or through La Neustra Lengua and co-developing culturally-responsible programming.

Multiple constituencies informed the MBGNA DEI 2.0 Strategic Plan through the development of the MBGNA Strategic Plan. Feedback and suggestions remained consistent through a DEI-centered organizational retreat in September 2022, institutional data collection, Collaborative Work Flow meetings, and individual staff feedback. The Planning Team pulled together strategic objectives and action items from the MBGNA Strategic Plan, developed metrics, and invited staff to review as needed to ensure efficacy of the objectives set forth in this plan.

## Data and Analysis: Key Findings

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### Key Findings, Themes, and Recommendations:

MBGNA has made a concerted effort to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization since 2016. Data, including feedback and experiences of MBGNA staff, remained consistent throughout the 2021 Climate survey, the development of the MBGNA Strategic Plan, and the planning process for the DEI 2.0 Strategic Plan. Recommendations include but are not limited to:

#### People

- Ensure career advancement strategies and resources are intentional, aligned with MBGNAs mission, and readily available for all staff
- In keeping with UMHR best practices, review recruiting, hiring, and selection processes to increase staff, student, and volunteer diversity throughout all MBGNA teams

#### Process

- Create evaluation and feedback opportunities for ongoing engagement opportunities.
- Revise and update policies, practices, processes, and spaces to enhance the organizational climate

#### Product

- Assess existing MBGNA programming and events to expand programming to include broadly diverse perspectives and improve the sense of belonging

## Strategic Objectives, Measures of Success, and Action Plans\*

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### **Introduction:**

The unit plan covers MBGNA staff, programs, partnerships, and initiatives. The strategic objectives needed to further the university-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion goals are aggregated into three distal objectives determined by the University. Each objective is accompanied by metrics and descriptions of single and multiple-year actions we will take to accomplish those objectives (see the Action Planning Table).

*\*All strategic objectives and related actions will be pursued in accordance with the law and University policy.*

## PEOPLE (Recruit, Retain & Develop a Diverse Community)

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Strategies and action items for **People** are designed to bolster and extend the work of all units by introducing effective programs and procedures aimed at recruiting, retaining, and supporting a diverse campus community. DEI-related recruitment and retention efforts across campus reflect specific units and groups' varied needs and goals.

### **Strategic Objective 1:**

Ensure strategies and resources for career advancement are intentional, aligned with MBGNAs mission, and readily available for all staff

**Primary DEI Goal:** Equity

**Metric:** Annual analysis of stated-and-completed DEI-related objectives in quarterly evaluation process

#### **Actions:**

1. Implement and socialize DEI objectives requirement in quarterly evaluation and review process

### **Strategic Objective 2:**

Position MBGNA Staff as learner-centered practitioner-educators prioritizing biocultural diversity

**Primary DEI Goal:** Inclusion

**Metric:** Track the number of professional development requests and approved funding that prioritizes expanding knowledge in biocultural diversity-related content or educator-practitioner skills

#### **Actions:**

1. Evaluate professional development requests from the last three (3) years
2. Update tracking system for Professional Development funds used specifically for DEI and/or biocultural diversity-related professional development opportunities

### **Strategic Objective 3:**

Adhere to UM best practices to increase applicant diversity in search processes for open positions

**Primary DEI Goal:** Diversity

**Metric:** Track federally-allowable race, ethnicity, gender, and other applicant demographic data

**Actions:**

1. Ensure UMHR best practices are utilized throughout all MBGNA search processes
2. Update onboarding processes and team materials to distribute to new staff

### **Strategic Objective 4:**

Prepare to broadly diversify volunteer engagement

**Primary DEI Goal:** Diversity

**Metric:** Track number of planned shifts to MBGNA volunteer times, structures, and availability

**Actions:**

1. Review existing volunteer demographics and develop a plan to capture episodic (eco-workday) volunteer demographics alongside application-based volunteers
2. Conduct resource analysis (FTE, fiscal) and develop plans to support family-friendly, weekend, and evening volunteer opportunities, thus opening opportunity to more individual and family volunteer formats

## **PROCESS (Create an Equitable and Inclusive Campus Climate)**

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Strategies and action items for **Process** are designed to support and strengthen the development of policies, procedures, and practices that create an inclusive and equitable campus climate and encourage a culture of belonging in which every member of our community can grow and thrive.

### **Strategic Objective 1:**

Sustain existing – and develop new – co-creation and shared vision mechanisms with relevant organizations and communities to build futures with communities on their terms

**Primary DEI Goal:** Equity

**Metric:** Track number and length/durability of relationships with key organizations and communities

**Actions:**

1. Collect organization/community feedback on existing projects and partnerships
2. Create summaries of existing and ongoing partnerships to distribute across the organization and – on an ongoing and iterative basis – build better ones with community/organization partners

### **Strategic Objective 2:**

Sustain existing – and develop new – K-12 partnerships with less-resourced schools throughout Washtenaw County and Southeast Michigan

**Primary DEI Goal:** Equity

**Metric:** Track year-over-year number of Title I and other schools with which MBGNA engages annually

**Actions:**

1. Review reach of existing school visits and use of offset funds for less-resources schools

2. Review local and regional non-school partnerships (AADL, Ypsi Public Libraries, and others)

### **Strategic Objective 3:**

Audit organizational events and programs; evaluate against commitments to DEI in Strategic Plan

**Primary DEI Goal:** Inclusion

**Metric:** Track number of MBGNA annual events and programs that actively encourage inclusion

**Actions:**

1. Provide a summary of events and programs and suggestions for growth, improvements, and new opportunities to MBGNA Staff
2. Grow capacity for multilingual interpretation and program offerings

### **Strategic Objective 4:**

Make progress toward an organizational climate resistant to sexual and gender harassment and discrimination

**Primary DEI Goal:** Equity

**Metrics:** Track frequency of reported instances of sexual and gender harassment and discrimination

**Actions:**

1. Make progress toward a MBGNA-specific Sexual and Gender Harassment Toolkit with ERCT/PEAR
2. Trains all MBGNA staff in the department and UM standards, policies, and practices

### **Strategic Objective 5:**

Re-establish MBGNA DEI Committee

**Primary DEI Goal:** Equity

**Metric:** Track number of MBGNA staff engaged in meetings and planning toward this objective

**Actions:**

1. Hire People + Culture Lead with limited DEI responsibilities, including Chairing MBGNA DEI Committee
2. Re-establish monthly DEI Committee meetings

### **Strategic Objective 6:**

In concert with university best practices, ensure the MBGNA community is informed of UM resources for conflict resolution and de-escalation

**Primary DEI Goal:** Equity

**Metric:** Track number of MBGNA staff engaged in meetings and planning toward this objective

**Actions:**

3. Surface university resources (offices, trainings, policies, etc.)
4. All Staff in at least one (1) available training
5. Reflect approach in MBGNA governing documentation, policies, practices

## PRODUCTS (Support Innovative and Inclusive Teaching, Research, and Service)

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Strategies and action items for **Products** are designed to integrate DEI solutions into our educational program offerings and teaching methodology and to ensure scholarly research on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the scholars who produce it, are valued and supported.

### Strategic Objective 1:

Support the development and maintenance of a food-secure Michigan

**Primary DEI Goal:** Equity

**Metrics:** Track number of Urban Ag Interns contributing to collaborating regional food justice and sovereignty farms/organizations

**Actions:**

1. Continue to build, improve, and solidify the Urban Ag Internship Program structure
2. Begin to surface shared barriers, needs, and goals with partner farms/organizations

### Strategic Objective 2:

Develop strategy and polycentric approach toward physical and digital signage/interpretation

**Primary DEI Goal:** Inclusion

**Metric:** Track annual expenditures on consultation/partnerships toward co-created signage and interpretation with communities and organizations

**Actions:**

1. Review the condition and placement of all interpretive and wayfinding signage
2. Update and unify physical signage and wayfinding materials (unify style and replace, improve accuracy and placement)
3. Commence digital interpretation planning to create online interpretive content co-created with relevant communities and organizations

### Strategic Objective 3:

Sustain existing – and develop new – philanthropic and other external support for DEI efforts

**Primary DEI Goal:** Diversity

**Metric:** Track fund balances and expenditures supporting MBGNA's DEI efforts

**Actions:**

1. Work in partnership with the Director of Development to identify DEI fundraising priorities
2. Review revenue resources to align with the mission and fiscal ROI to ensure DEI efforts are fiscally core to MBGNA's identity and impact

### Strategic Objective 4:

Support UM student education and engagement in food sovereignty, access, and justice

**Primary DEI Goal:** Diversity

**Metric:** Track MBGNA expenditures allocated to DEI and food justice through Campus Farm's programs and impacts

**Actions:**

1. Promote the Campus Farm Club across multiple departments, units, and student organizations
2. Integrate Native American Student Association and other student affinity group partnerships

## Goal-related Metrics – Measures Tracked Over Time

### Staff Metrics

MBGNA tracks the following metrics over time, demonstrating the impact of unit strategies and actions for our distal objectives.

#### Demographic Composition:

- Headcount
- Race/ethnicity
- Sex
- Age (Generation cohort)

#### Climate Survey Indicators (sample indicators listed below):

- Satisfaction with unit climate/environment in the work unit
- Assessment of semantic aspects of work unit general climate
- Assessment of semantic aspects of the work unit DEI climate
- Feeling valued in the work unit
- The feeling of belonging in the work unit
- Assessment of work unit commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Perceptions of equal opportunity for success in the work unit
- Feeling able to perform up to full potential in the work unit
- Feelings of professional growth in the work unit
- Feelings of discrimination in the work unit

## Action Planning Tables with Details and Accountabilities

### PEOPLE (*Recruitment, Retention & Development*)

Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Associated Metrics	Detailed Actions Plan (measurable, specific)	Team accountable
Staff	Ensure strategies and resources for career advancement are intentional, aligned with MBGNAs mission, and readily available for all staff	Annual analysis of stated-and-completed DEI-related objectives in quarterly evaluation process	1. Implement and socialize DEI objectives requirement in quarterly evaluation and review process	HR, DEI



Staff	Position MBGNA Staff as learner-centered practitioner-educators prioritizing biocultural diversity	Track the number of professional development requests and approved funding that prioritizes expanding knowledge in biocultural diversity-related content or educator-practitioner skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate professional development requests from the last three (3) years</li> <li>2. Update tracking system for Professional Development funds used specifically for DEI and/or biocultural diversity-related professional development opportunities</li> </ol>	HR, DEI
Staff	Adhere to UM best practices to increase applicant diversity in search processes for open positions	Track federally-allowable race, ethnicity, gender, and other applicant demographic data	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure UMHR best practices are utilized throughout all MBGNA search processes</li> <li>2. Update onboarding processes and team materials to distribute to new staff</li> </ol>	HR
Staff	Prepare to diversify volunteer engagement	Track number of planned shifts to MBGNA volunteer times, structures, and availability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review existing volunteer demographics and develop a plan to capture episodic (eco-workday) volunteer demographics alongside application-based volunteers</li> <li>2. Conduct resource analysis (FTE, fiscal) and develop plans to support family-friendly, weekend, and evening volunteer opportunities, thus opening opportunity to more individual and family volunteer formats</li> </ol>	Development, DEI

### **PROCESS (Promoting & Equitable & Inclusive Community)**

Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Associated Metrics	Detailed Actions Plan (measurable, specific)	Team accountable
Staff	Sustain existing – and develop new – co-creation and shared vision mechanisms with relevant organizations and communities; to build futures with communities on their terms	Track number and length/durability of relationships with key organizations and communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collect organization/community feedback on existing projects and partnerships</li> <li>2. Create summaries of existing and ongoing partnerships to distribute across the organization and – on an ongoing and iterative basis – build better ones with community/organization partners</li> </ol>	DEI, Education, Visitor Experience

Staff	Sustain existing – and develop new – K-12 partnerships with less-resourced schools throughout Washtenaw County and Southeast Michigan	Track year-over-year number of Title I and other schools with which MBGNA engages annually	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review reach of existing school visits and use of offset funds for less-resources schools</li> <li>2. Review local and regional non-school partnerships (AADL, Ypsi Public Libraries, and others)</li> </ol>	Education, Development
Staff, Users	Audit organizational events and programs; evaluate against commitments to DEI in Strategic Plan	Track number of MBGNA annual events and programs that actively encourage inclusion within themes/content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide a summary of events and programs and suggestions for growth, improvements, and new opportunities to MBGNA Staff</li> <li>2. Grow capacity for multilingual interpretation and program offerings</li> </ol>	DEI, Campus Farm, Education, Visitor Experience
Staff, Users	Make progress toward an organizational climate resistant to sexual and gender harassment and discrimination	Track frequency of reported instances of sexual and gender harassment and discrimination	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make progress toward a MBGNA-specific Sexual and Gender Harassment Toolkit with ERCT/PEAR</li> <li>2. Trains all MBGNA staff in the department and UM standards, policies, and practices</li> </ol>	DEI, HR
Staff	Re-establish MBGNA DEI Committee	Track number of MBGNA staff engaged in meetings and planning toward this objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hire People + Culture Lead with limited DEI responsibilities, including Chairing MBGNA DEI Committee</li> <li>2. Re-establish monthly DEI Committee meetings</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	HR, DEI
Staff, Users	In concert with university best practices, ensure the MBGNA community is informed of UM resources for conflict resolution and de-escalation	Track number of MBGNA staff engaged in meetings and planning toward this objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Surface university resources (offices, trainings, policies, etc.)</li> <li>2. All Staff in at least one (1) available training</li> <li>3. Reflect approach in MBGNA governing documentation, policies, practices</li> </ol>	HR, DEI

## PRODUCTS (Education, Scholarship & Service)

Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Associated Metrics	Detailed Actions Plan (measurable, specific)	Team accountable
Staff, Users	Support the development and maintenance of a food-secure Michigan	Track number of Urban Ag Interns contributing to collaborating regional food justice and sovereignty farms/organizations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to build, improve, and solidify the Urban Ag Internship Program structure</li> <li>2. Begin to surface shared barriers, needs, and goals with partner farms/organizations</li> </ol>	Campus Farm, DEI

Staff, Users	Develop strategy and polycentric approach toward physical and digital signage + interpretation	Track annual expenditures on consultation/partnerships toward co-created signage and interpretation with communities and organizations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review the condition and placement of all interpretive and wayfinding signage</li> <li>2. Update and unify physical signage and wayfinding materials (unify style and replace, improve accuracy and placement)</li> <li>3. Commence digital interpretation planning to create online interpretive content co-created with relevant communities and organizations</li> </ol>	MarComm, DEI, Visitor Experience
Staff	Sustain existing – and develop new – philanthropic and other external support for DEI efforts	Track fund balances and expenditures supporting MBGNA’s DEI efforts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work in partnership with the Director of Development to identify DEI fundraising priorities</li> <li>2. Review revenue resources to align with the mission and fiscal ROI to ensure DEI efforts are fiscally core to MBGNA’s identity and impact</li> </ol>	Development, DEI, Visitor Experience
Staff, Students	Support UM student education and engagement in food sovereignty, access, and justice	Track MBGNA expenditures allocated to DEI and food justice through Campus Farm’s programs and impacts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote the Campus Farm Club across multiple departments, units, and student organizations</li> <li>2. Integrate Native American Student Association and other student affinity group partnerships</li> </ol>	Campus Farm, DEI

## Plans for Supporting, Tracking, and Updating the Strategic Plan

The MBGNA Director and incoming People + Culture Lead are the key contacts for stewardship of this plan. They will be assisted by the MBGNA DEI Committee, Decolonization Committee, and the Collaborative Workflow Management group in tracking and supporting the plan implementation.