



Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan
Five-Year Strategic Objectives, Measures and FY19 Actions

I. Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan: Overview

Selected text from President’s Diversity Charge:

Goals: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

Diversity: We commit to increasing diversity, which is expressed in myriad 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 on the basis of 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 where every individual 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.

Rationale:

The mission of Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum is: “Developing leaders and inspiring people to care about nature and enrich life.” We are a center for rich and diverse nature-based experiences for U-M students, U-M faculty, K-12 students and the public. We are a service unit to the University of Michigan, offering a place where students and faculty can conduct research, take classes or engage in formal and informal field-based learning. We are a place of respite for the University and the community in which it resides.

Diversity is one of several guiding principles identified by Matthaei-Nichols’s key stakeholders during our strategic planning in January of 2015, prior to the University’s DE&I initiative. We believe that diversity creates a richer, healthier and more resilient community, whether it is an ecological community or a community of people. Our current strategic plan includes three transformative goals; we are adding a fourth transformative goal as part of our effort to be clear that diversity, equity and inclusion are at the heart of our operation. Beginning with the next academic year, our four transformative goals will be:

- (1) We will be the center for environmental field-based learning at the University
(2) We will be a model for integrating landscapes and programs that inspire people to cherish the natural world and live sustainably and
(3) We will reflect and fully engage the diverse population of SE Michigan and the University of Michigan through our people, programs and landscapes
(4) We will develop and sustain the financial, human and infrastructure resources to meet our aspirations



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Within the transformative goal of engaging the diverse population of SE Michigan and U-M, we added these priorities: (1) strengthen our organization culture's emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion; (2) actively identify and remove barriers for participation and engagement; and (3) increase relevancy of our mission to U-M and its community through outreach and engagement. These priorities dovetail with the planning domains and key strategies put forward by President Schlissel, and at the same time speak to our mission as both a bridge to the broader community and a service unit to the University.

II. Implementation Highlights and Planning Process Used

Planning Leads Maricela Avalos, Data & GIS Specialist and Heather Hunter, HR Coordinator

Year Two Implementation Highlights:

We are very proud to share the following highlights from Year Two:

- We opened an accessible, multi-use recreational path that connects Matthaei Botanical Gardens to Central Campus, Ann Arbor and the surrounding communities. This opens up our programs and landscapes to many more people including low-income residents, students, pedestrians and cyclists. The trail is fully accessible and free to everyone.
- We collaborated with local native communities, University and regional stakeholders to preserve and rematriate corn seeds through the Heritage Seeds Project. This summer, we planted a collaborative garden as an early step in the successful rematriation process.
- We cohosted a Peony Blossoms and Pure Melodies concert with the Confucius Institute to share the cross-cultural significance of peonies and enjoy traditional Chinese music.
- We launched a new website that is much more user friendly, can be translated into many languages, is easily navigated by people with limited vision and celebrates our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in its content.
- Later this month, we are hosting the Wolverine Pathways program exposing underserved children from SE Michigan to nature education. Organizations with an environmentally focused mission tend to have low diversity and we feel that engaging children early on is key to increasing student, employee and visitor diversity in the future.
- We hosted 6 Unit-wide staff trainings focused on DEI including bystander intervention, confronting racism on campus, and a fun, cultural music workshop.
- We celebrated multiculturalism with a family heritage potluck for employees and interns.
- We held a Unit wide DEI brown bag lunch where employees learned about our Implementation Goals and were invited to give feedback and share ideas.

Key takeaways from Year Two implementation:

- Incorporating the DEI goals into our Strategic Plan continues to be a successful way to ensure that our Action Items are completed in a timely manner.
- Our organization is very engaged and full of ideas- getting our employees involved in planning and celebrating our successes when they occur generates great ideas and leads to more participation and success.

Planning Process Summary – Year Three

Our Year 3 planning process for updating the DEI Strategic Plan included:

- DEI Leads reviewed the FY18 goals with program administrators to understand the status of each objective and update as necessary to meet our previous goals and establish new objectives for the coming year.



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- We conducted a DEI focused group brown bag lunch that all of our Faculty, Staff and Students were invited to participate in. 20 people attended including our Director and Team Leads. We have about 30 FTE staff, so this was a great turnout! We celebrated our Year 2 successes, brainstormed and identified DEI objectives for FY19. Everyone who was not able to attend was invited to give feedback and we heard from 5 people with additional input and ideas.

III. Data and Analysis: Key Findings

Summary of Data

Key Findings, Themes and Recommendations

Strengths:

We are a place where diverse students and faculty, representing a range of nationalities, races, ethnicities, gender, orientation and ability are enriched by working together toward the common purpose of environmental sustainability, including:

- U-M student intern program recruitment practices targeted to increase diversity have succeeded in accomplishing diversity among our annual 35-45 student interns over the past several years
- Sustainable food systems programs – Campus Farm, Food Forest, UMBees and so on – attract broad U-M student participation, including but not limited to 100 M-STEM Academy participants
- Participation by around 35 student volunteer groups each year – comprising hundreds of individual students – representing a broad and inclusive cross-section of student interests ranging from the Greek System to the UM Scientista Foundation to the Filipino American Student Association
- 60 faculty associates, hailing from CoE, LSA, SNRE, Taubman, Penny Stamps, and more, draw faculty from across the University who represent not just ethnic, racial and gender diversity but also cross-disciplinary collaboration
- Our climate surveys of both staff and volunteers show extremely positive results in all areas except for resources (pay and staffing levels) – our organization is an inclusive learning environment
- Significant improvements that are making our buildings and sites more accessible to individuals with mobility challenges

We are a place where diverse members of the SE Michigan community can interact with the University and with each other around nature, sustainability and STEAM, including:

- Women and girls actively participate as student interns, staff, volunteers and visitors in science-based programming and paid positions where women and girls are often underrepresented
- Robust K-12 nature education, including reduced fees for Title I schools
- Interpretation in our Great Lakes Gardens about Native American view of plants and ecosystems, along with significant investment by our curatorial staff in building relationships with the tribes for many years



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- Elimination of entrance fees to the Conservatory and the introduction of exhibits, gardens and programs of interest to diverse communities, have significantly increased the diversity of our visitors
- Deep commitment and active engagement by staff, students, volunteers and visitors in diversity, equity and inclusion predict willingness to embrace DE&I priorities. Good gender, LGBT, age and socio-economic diversity among regular staff

Weaknesses:

Student focus groups, volunteer and staff surveys, and staff planning sessions uniformly identified lack of transportation options as a barrier to inclusion for Matthaei Botanical Gardens. Participation in programs at the Matthaei site, including the Campus Farm and other student programs, is exclusive rather than inclusive because access is limited to those who have a car or come with a class. Specifically, there is no public bus connecting the Gardens to Campus or the local community. In October 2017, we opened a hiking-biking trail that made it possible for students and the public to ride their bikes from campus,

Lack of diversity among regular staff was identified as a key weakness in year-one planning. Although normally we have very low turnover, we did have a few positions turn over in FY17 and we had some success in attracting and hiring minorities. We hope our more inclusive hiring practices will continue this trend. Similarly, we had more success hiring minority student interns thanks to our new hiring practices.

Opportunities:

- The Campus Farm and associated programs has become a model both of sustainable agriculture and outreach for diversity, equity and inclusion. Through a collaboration with the UM Summer Bridge Program and the M-STEM Academy, we have and will work with newly admitted diverse students, engaging them in sustainable food systems even before they start their first year in college. Specifically, Summer Bridge students spend one day per week of their four-week summer program at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, participating in a Campus Farm workday and lesson or activity. Through M-STEM, 125 students participate in a one-day immersion program, including an orientation to research and internship opportunities here and participation in a scavenger hunt.
- Collaboration with the Wolverine Pathways provides an opportunity for us to be a critical site to engage qualified, diverse high school students for possible future matriculation at UM; our existing relationships with Title I high schools may be of benefit to this initiative
- Our student sustainable food programs and our Nature Academy internships can be a touchstone and a community for diverse students as they progress through their education at U-M

Threats:

- Lack of safe public transportation options to Matthaei Botanical Gardens creates DEI barriers and reduces effectiveness of our contribution
- Continued accessibility challenges for our facilities and properties
- Dwindling General Fund resources make new initiatives challenging to implement



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IV. Strategic Objectives, Measures of Success and Action Plans*

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

IV. A. Recruitment, Retention and Development

Five-Year Strategic Objective 1

Make progress toward our long-term vision of Matthaei-Nichols staff, interns, volunteers and visitors mirroring the population of SE Michigan by putting DEI at the center of our recruitment, hiring and retention practices.

Measures of Success:

Our volunteer team will become more diverse and familiar with our DEI policies. Increase the number of student volunteers.

Constituency: Volunteers

FY19 Actions:

1. Explore different strategies to increase student participation in our volunteer program. 2. Explore the possibility of creating a student led volunteer group for Garden and Arboretum spaces modeled after the Friends of the Campus Farm.
2. Continue to include DEI messaging in volunteer orientation and ensure that these policies are understood by volunteers and set an expectation of compliance.
3. Begin advertising and outreach at student centers on campus, such as the multicultural and first generation student centers.
4. Set the expectation that Volunteer Captains will assist our employees in ensuring an inclusive and equitable environment at work days and other volunteer events.

Five-Year Strategic Objective 2

Be a key site to facilitate the pipeline DEI objectives of other University units

Constituency: Future Students

Measures of Success:

Matthaei-Nichols will continue to partner with Wolverine Pathways to bring middle/high schools students to our properties

FY19 Actions:

1. Continue working with Wolverine Pathways implementers to identify how we can best serve this key campus-wide priority (we have already begun working with WP personnel and are already on target to participate as a key learning site)
2. Identify and explore additional options for serving the DE&I goals of other units, beginning with providing information about the resources we offer to the DE&I planning leads

Primary DEI Goal: Diversity



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Other applicable domain: Recruitment (pipeline)
Education and Scholarship
Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community

IV. B. Education and Scholarship

Five-Year Strategic Objective 1

Increase diversity, equity and inclusion among participants in our U-M student programs

Constituency: Students

Measures of Success: (for Objective 1)

A more diverse population of students will become engaged at the Farm. People will learn about social justice issues through the lens of food and farming. For our student awards, raise the number of applicants for student awards and increase the diversity of the applicant pool.

FY19 Actions:

- Continue to spread the message of food justice and DE&I using the Farm as a stage.
- Extend invitations to apply for internships to the over 100 M-STEM and Bridge Program students who participate in our programs every summer.
- Provide low/no cost transportation options to Matthaei (see below)
- Increase availability of virtual tours to provide access to our programs for those with transportation challenges
- Advertise student awards to current or former interns and work study students.
- Increase marketing to reach all students who are eligible to apply. Efforts could include posting flyers, sending messages to recognized student groups, and reaching out to professors to share with the students in their network.
- Use the tools we have established to mitigate unconscious bias in new hires as we determine the winner of each award.

Primary DEI Goal: Inclusion

Other applicable domain: Inclusive Community

Five-Year Strategic Objective 2

Build DEI skills among our student interns.

Five-Year Strategic Objective 3

Use our Nature Academy to address DEI issues in environmental organizations in our society as a whole.

Constituency: Students

Measures of Success: (for Objectives 2 & 3)

Increased numbers of student interns coming to staff with questions and suggestions regarding their experiences and visitor experiences as women or minorities interacting with the Arb & Gardens.



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FY19 Actions:

- Include a DEI related training as one of the professional development workshops that Matthaei-Nichols offers to students as part of the Nature Academy internship program.
- Plan a multi-cultural day in summer 2019.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our DEI trainings, multi-cultural day and the overall Year 3 Plan as part of our annual student focus groups typically held in July.

Primary DEI Goal: Inclusion

Other applicable domain: Inclusive Community

IV. C. Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community

Constituency: Students, Faculty, Community

Five-Year Strategic Objective 1

Create a culture and environment of inclusivity and equity.

Measures of Success (for Objective 1): All Matthaei-Nichols Staff will earn a wage determined by the market value of their appointment and merit earned with no discrepancies across gender, age, educational level, etc. Our organization will be comprised of culturally aware, inclusive people who grow increasingly aware of DEI issues.

FY19 Actions:

1. Explore strategies to increase the diversity of our Vision Leaders Group.
2. To ensure pay equity, update our compensation policy to define the parameters of Market Value based wages.
3. Schedule at least two Unit hosted, DEI focused, required employee training sessions.
4. Ensure that all regular employees attend at least four annual DEI Training sessions for an FTE employee (part time or short-term employees will attend a proportional amount.)
5. Ensure all DEI Action Items are included in individual and teamwork plans.
6. Create a mechanism for Faculty, Staff and Student employees to report DEI improvement ideas anonymously and publicize University resources for reporting employment concerns, including with respect to discrimination/harassment.
7. Share website content that represents our diversity in photos, text, events and more.

Primary DEI Goal: Equity, Inclusion

IV. D. Service (as applicable)

Five-Year Strategic Objective 1

Remove a key barrier to participation in our landscapes and programs.

Constituency – All constituencies will benefit

Measures of Success: (for Objective 1) Increased accessibility and an inclusive environment for our staff, faculty, students, volunteers, and visitors of all genders, ages, and physical abilities. Our facilities will become a welcoming space for all who visit.



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FY19 Actions:

1. Integrate accessibility improvements into capital requests and planning.
2. Increase awareness of our multi-use recreational connector trail.
3. Research additional ways to access the Arboretum and Gardens such as ride sharing, on demand ride services, self-driving cars, buses, bike shares, etc.
4. Request funding from the Provost’s Office to pilot public transportation options to Matthaei for two years.
5. Improve signage for our restrooms so they are more inclusive and make clear that our single stall-family/non-gendered restroom is available to all.
6. Research ways to increase the use of our building spaces for hosting student groups, community meetings, study days, and more.
7. Make recommendations for trail modifications at the Arb & Gardens to allow better access for people with limited mobility.
8. Create and update maps for our properties that highlight accessible walking routes with clearly labeled surfaces, distances, and more.

Primary DEI Goal: Inclusion

Other applicable domains:

Recruitment, Retention and Development
 Education and Scholarship
 Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community

Five-Year Strategic Objective 2

Provide exhibits and outreach that invite participation and increase mutual understanding.

Constituency – Community

Measures of Success: Exhibits are scheduled and attendance continually increases.

FY19 Actions:

- Complete interpretation and labeling of plants in Great Lakes Gardens in Anishinaabek
- Invite greater participation by integrating exhibits and programs into overall U-M inclusion activities such as African-American History Month or the Diversity Summit.
- Extend our calls for art more broadly to invite more participation, such as extending calls to include minority arts organizations, as informed by our market study.
- Increase cultural input on collections such as the Bonsai Garden and Peony Garden to ensure authenticity of our interpretation and displays.
- Research how our plant collections can increase our connection with international students, staff, visitors, and more.
- Create wayfinding and interpretive signs at least partly in most frequently occurring languages.
- Offer brochures, newsletters and other public materials in at least two languages in addition to English (contingent on funding).
- Provide brochures and maps in large print.

Primary DEI Goal: Inclusion



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Other applicable domain:

Recruitment, Retention and Development

Education and Scholarship

Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community

V. Goal-related Metrics – School, college or unit measures tracked over time

Diversity

- Racial composition of staff increases in diversity (0% non-white at present)
- Recruit, retain, and support a diverse community of staff, students, and faculty
- Age of staff members (generation cohort)

Equity

- Staff salaries at or above SE Michigan median for all staff including protected groups
- Supervisor cohort is representative of staff

Inclusion

- Number of transportation options to Matthaei increases from one to greater than one
- 100% of staff and interns participate in skill and cultural training opportunities

Climate Survey Indicators

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



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VI. Action Planning Tables with Details and Accountabilities

VI. A. Recruitment, Retention and Development						
Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Measures of Success	Detailed Actions Planned (measurable, specific)	Group/ persons accountable	Resources needed (if applicable)	Person(s) Responsible
Volunteers	1 - Progress toward engaging SE Michigan	Volunteer team more diverse	DEI messages in recruitment	Volunteer Coordinator	None	Christine Chessler-Stull
Student Volunteers		Increase number and diversity of student volunteers	Create student-driven volunteer opportunities	Volunteer Coordinator with staff	None	Christine Chessler-Stull
Student Volunteers		Increase number and diversity of student volunteers	Advertise in student centers on campus	Marketing Coordinator, HR Coordinator, DEI Leads	None	Mooney, Joe and Heather Hunter, Maricela Avalos
Student Volunteers		Increase number and diversity of student volunteers	Explore strategies to increase student participation in volunteer program	Volunteer Coordinator	None	Christine Chessler-Stull
Volunteers		More inclusive environment	Volunteer Captains will enforce our DEI policies	Volunteer Coordinator and Volunteer Captains	None	Christine Chessler-Stull
Future students	2 - Key site for pipeline DEI objectives of U-M units	Continue hosting Wolverine Pathways	Work with Wolverine Pathways to ID how we can serve this priority	Visitor Engagement Lead, K-12 Ed Coordinator	None yet	Betz, David and Liz Glynn
Faculty and Staff			Explore options for serving DEI goals of other U-M units	Director, University Services Lead, Marketing Coordinator	None yet	Grese, Bob and Catriona Mortell-Windecker, Joe Mooney

IV. B. Education and Scholarship						
Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Measures of Success	Detailed Actions Planned (measurable, specific)	Group/ persons	Resources	Person(s) Responsible
Students	1 - Increase DEI in our U-M student programs	More diverse student engagement at Campus Farm	Continue to use Campus Farm as stage to spread food justice message	Campus Farm Manager	None	Moghtader, Jeremy
Students		More student visitors	Low cost transportation	Director	None	Grese, Bob
Students		More diverse student applicants for student prizes	Extend invitations to apply for internships to MSTEM and Summer Bridge students	Campus Farm Manager	None	Moghtader, Jeremy
Students		More former student employees will apply	Advertise with former student interns	HR Coordinator	None	Hunter, Heather
Students		More students apply	Increase marketing efforts to all students	Marketing Coordinator	Minimal	Mooney, Joe
Students		A more diverse and talented student workforce	Use bias eliminating tools in making student awards	HR Coordinator, curator	None	Hunter, Heather and David Michener
Students	2 - Build DEI skills among summer interns	Increased conversations about DEI experiences	DEI workshop as part of internship program	Associate Director, Intern Planning Team	None	Intern Planning Team
Students		Useful feedback from students	DEI focus group follow up	Director, Intern Planning Team	None	Bob Grese and Intern Planning Team
Students		Engaged, thoughtful participation from our students	Multi-cultural day for interns	Intern Planning Team	None	Intern Planning Team
Students		Engaged, thoughtful discussions, increased communication	Timely action on DEI questions and suggestions from students	Intern Planning Team	None	Intern Planning Team

IV. C. Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community						
Key Constituency	Strategic Objective	Measures of Success	Detailed Actions Planned (measurable, specific)	Group/ persons	Resources	Person(s) Responsible
Employees (including reg staff and student interns), Community	1 - Create a culture and environment of inclusivity and equity	Increased diversity in Vision Leaders Group	Explore ways to increase diversity and recruit new members for the Vision Leaders Group	Director, Director of Development	None	Grese, Bob and Meredith Olson
Staff and Faculty		Wage equity for MBGNA employees	Update compensation policy to ensure pay equity	Director, all staff	None	Grese, Bob and team
Staff, Faculty and Students		Culturally aware, inclusive employees	Schedule at least 2 Unit hosted, required DEI trainings	HR Coordinator	\$2,000	Heather Hunter
Staff and Faculty		Culturally aware, inclusive employees	Ensure all FTE employees attend a total of 4 DEI trainings per year (prorated, as needed)	DEI Leads		Hunter, Heather and Maricela Avalos
Staff, Faculty and Students		Completing annual DEI goals	Include DE&I goals in individual work plans	Director, all supervisors and staff	None	Grese, Bob and team leads
Staff, Faculty and Students		Reports if/when incidents occur	Explore opportunities to anonymously report DEI concerns and issues	DEI Leads	None	Hunter, Heather and Maricela Avalos
All		Inclusive website	Share website content that represents diversity in photos, text etc.	Marketing Coordinator, IT Project Manager	None	Mooney, Joe and IT Project Manager



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Table with 7 columns: Key Constituency, Strategic Objective, Measures of Success, Detailed Actions Planned (measurable), Group/ persons, Resources, Person(s) Responsible. Rows include various service objectives like '1 - Remove barriers to participation' and '2 - Provide exhibits and outreach to enhance mutual understanding'.

VII. Plans for Supporting, Tracking and Updating the Strategic Plan

Matthaei-Nichols developed a five-year strategic plan in June of 2018 for the period of September 1, 2018 through August 31, 2023. Included as part of that plan was an action step to update our strategic plan every January through April to extend it a year, removing completed action items, adding new ones and updating our mission, vision and priorities if necessary.

With regard to tracking our progress on the plan, we have a dashboard that is an agenda item every other week during our managers meetings. The dashboard lists each strategic planning objective with the target completion date and person responsible, and indicates whether the objective is green (on track), yellow (needs attention to be completed on time) or red (imminent serious failure to meet the objective).