



## Matthaei Botanical Garden and Nichols Arboretum DEI 1.0 Highlights

### Introduction

Matthaei Botanical Garden and Nichols Arboretum’s (MBGNA) DEI 1.0 journey encompassed rich nature-based experiences for students, faculty, staff, and the public. The DEI 1.0 Strategic Plan included four transformative goals within MBGNA:

1. Be the center for environmental field-based learning at the UM
2. Be a model for integrating landscapes and programs that inspire people to cherish the natural world and live sustainably
3. Reflect and fully engage the diverse population of SE Michigan and UM through our people, programs, and landscapes
4. Develop and sustain the financial, human, and infrastructure resources to meet our aspirations

Since the five-year DEI Strategic Plan launch in 2016, MBGNA included efforts for internal learning, reflection, and action; increased outreach across UM and SE Michigan; and strengthening relationships with external partnerships to advance community-centered projects. While most efforts resulted in positive impacts, MBGNA continues learning to center DEI in all facets of the organization while striving for mutually-beneficial relationships.

### 2021 MBGNA Climate

#### Staff Demographics

**96.4%** of invited and eligible staff members completed the 2017 and 2021 Climate Survey. Invited and eligible staff includes permanently employed staff at MBGNA.

<b>88.9%</b> of staff identified as White	<b>55.6%</b> of staff identified as Women
<b>66.7%</b> of staff identified as Heterosexual	<b>72.0%</b> of staff identified as Liberal

While more than half of MBGNA staff feel satisfied or very satisfied with the campus climate and perceive the organization to be non-racist and non-homophobic, they also find the climate to be individualistic and competitive, homogenous, sexist, and ageist. The climate survey results indicated that men have a better experience of the general climate and DEI climate elements than women at MBGNA.

### 5-Year Highlights

<b>Year 1</b> 2016 - 2017	<p>Goal mapping and planning for years 2 - 5 of the DEI 1.0 initiative for MBGNA. Held focus groups for student interns and staff to assess climate and plan for Year Two.</p> <p>Commitment to DEI professional training opportunities for staff members, starting with the Unconscious Bias training and Diversity Basics video at All Staff meetings. Embed DEI workshop in the Nature Academy program, a student summer experience.</p> <p>Installed an accessible ramp to connect the West Lobby, Staff Hallway, and Front Lobby to address barriers to using the inside of the building.</p>
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<p><b>Year 2</b> 2017 - 2018</p>	<p>Hosted six (6) professional development opportunities for staff to engage in DEI training such as confronting racism, cross-cultural difference, and bystander intervention. Incorporated DEI information to New Volunteer Orientation.</p> <p>Completed the B2B recreation trail with seven sponsors to connect the botanical gardens to call campuses. Several features such as accessible bridges and benches along the trails.</p> <p>Launched a new website with multiple changes such as, screened for color blindness and text size adjustments, and options to translate pages to multiple languages</p> <p>Implemented a new transportation assistance rideshare program to address transportation support for student engagement.</p> <p>Supported Campus Farm in efforts to advance food justice within UM courses and collaborations with UM and external partners.</p> <p>Established a collaboration with Native communities, UM, and regional stakeholders to preserve and rematriate corn seeds through the Heritage Seeds Project. Planted a collaborative garden as an early step for a guided rematriation process.</p>
<p><b>Year 3</b> 2018 - 2019</p>	<p>Established a Staff DEI Committee with input from all MBGNA staff. Hosted four (4) Unit-wide staff DEI experiences including unconscious bias, intergenerational workplaces, and live-streamed UM DEI events.</p> <p>Continued collaboration with local Native communities, UM, and regional stakeholders through the Heritage Seeds Project, and celebrated the second year of a collaborative garden.</p>
<p><b>Year 4</b> 2019 - 2020</p>	<p>Hosted virtual engagement and reflection sessions for the Washtenaw County United Way Equity Challenge, MLK Symposium, and Campus Involvement.</p> <p>Collaborated with Organizational Learning to develop climate surveys and provide insight into workplace climate and permissive environments, and identify group values.</p> <p>Reviewed hiring practices with UM Human Resources to implement best practices to increase diversity in hiring and retention.</p>
<p><b>Year 5</b> 2020- 2021</p>	<p>Held monthly Staff Brown Bags for DEI Professional Development Opportunities. Rebranded to Staff Community Conversations in November 2021.</p> <p>Distributed Organizational Learning Climate Survey results with action items to improve the overall climate.</p> <p>Hired full-time Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager.</p>

## **DEI 1.0 Efforts**

### **Creating inclusive and safe spaces**

Within the last year, MBGNA has expanded the restroom available to shared private spaces in the horticulture hall to assure that more than one person could go to the restroom. The MBGNA Facilities Manager led the creation of a personal room and multiple private gender-inclusive restroom facilities for MBGNA users. The personal room was created as a space for nursing mothers, prayer, and other private purposes for all staff and visitors.

Room 23 now has 4 private rooms (23T1, 23T2, 23T3, and 23T4) with locks, a shared hand washing station, and 2 showers available for staff and volunteers. We have developed language to share with staff and volunteers to make them aware of these spaces. Access to free showers, hygiene products, soaps, and other personal care items has been made available to all who use this space.

### **Anishinabek led partnerships: Mnomen Restoration and Seed Rematriation**

Sustainable food production is integral to Indigenous cultural heritage around the Great Lakes. Some varieties of corn held in the U-M collection have unique and culturally significant preparation processes and associated tools and meals; gaining access to these varieties are important for reviving and sustaining native foodways.

Reconnecting the Anishinaabe people with native seeds initially involved Sydney Martin and representatives from the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians (the Gun Lake Tribe), the Bkejwanong Walpole Island First Nation, the Pokégnek Bodéwadmik (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi), the UM MBGNA, UMMAA, Ferris State University, the Intertribal Agriculture Council, and the United States Department of Agriculture. A collaborative effort between MBGNA and the Museum of Anthropological Archaeology (UMMAA).

Mnomen is another culturally important seed intertwined with past and current Anishinaabek lives. The framework developed by the group can be used not only by communities here in the Great Lakes but by Native communities and museums around the world. The Collaborative Framework will be the umbrella for specific projects sparked by the seed collection.

### **Food Justice through Campus Farm Collaborations**

Over the last five years, Campus Farm has developed and grown to center collaborations across Southeast Michigan and the University of Michigan. The farm has helped catalyze, co-develop, and put on several food justice-related programs and events with partners that include SFSI, MANNRS, UMSPF, LSA Play, the Food Recovery Network, Student Advocates for Nutrition, and Maize and Blue Cupboard.

### **The Urban Agriculture Internship Program**

The Urban Agriculture Internship program operated in partnership with SFSI has been successful and has continued to grow. Campus Farm has connected with food-justice-centered community organizations to foster meaningful partnerships in order to leverage resources to further the mission and vision of the respective organizations while providing UM students with hands-on experiences in urban agriculture and food justice.

### **The Farm Stand**

The Farm Stand is a leading force that models for other institutions how students can engage more deeply with a university food system from field to fork. Entering its third year after two (2) years as a pilot. The current vision of the Farm Stand by UM Campus Farm and UMSPF leadership is to foster the development of a food system at the University of Michigan that provides all students with consistent access to healthy, local, and affordable food and high-impact experiential learning opportunities.