Executive Memorandum No. 34

University of Nebraska Policy on Diversity, Access, Inclusion, and Equity

1. Policy Purpose

To promote the benefits of a diverse and inclusive system through the integration of diversity, access, inclusion, and equity strategies, activities, and procedures in the University’s core operations. All supporting policy strategies, activities, and procedures are:

- In accordance with federal and state law and policies adopted by the Board of Regents;
- To guide the institution in the successful adoption of a shared policy to drive organizational success and outcomes;
- Intended to support the University’s basic values of diversity, inclusion, access, and equity;
- In alignment with academic leadership’s identified key characteristic of a great university: “Diversity is promoted and encouraged”; and
- Intended to provide a baseline and are not intended to replace comprehensive Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) strategic plans on the University of Nebraska campuses.

2. Definitions

All definitions for diversity, inclusion, access and equity, and equity-mindedness are modeled after the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) inclusive excellence core principles and definitions.

Diversity/Diverse – individual differences (e.g. personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g. race/ethnicity, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, intersectionality, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political religious, or other affiliations).

Inclusion – the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diverse staff, administrators, and candidates in recruitment, hiring, professional development, and all
additional ways that the organization would engage with these individuals—in ways that increase awareness, visibility, content knowledge, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Access and Equity – the creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participation in employment, professional development, advancement, and succession opportunities that are capable of closing any attainment gap in professional success.

Equity-Mindedness – a demonstrated awareness of and willingness to address equity issues among institutional leaders, administrators, faculty, and staff.

3. Policy Goals

The goals of this policy are to:
- Foster innovation and creativity through a greater variety of problem-solving approaches, perspectives, and ideas brought about by a diverse and inclusive campus environment;
- Competitively position the University as an employer of choice;
- Foster access to support the University’s statutory mission to be fully representative of all segments of the population of Nebraska;
- Foster an environment of inclusiveness;
- Employ best practices to attract diverse students, faculty, staff, and administrative leaders;
- Ensure that services are in place to support the retention of a diverse campus;
- Create a workforce reflective of the community and student population served; and
- Improve the retention of diverse staff and administrators.

4. Policy Scope

The following individuals share primary responsibility for implementing this policy:
- All campus and system leadership (e.g. President, Executive Vice President and Provost, Chancellors, Chief Academic Officers, Student Affairs Officers, D&I Officers, and Enrollment Managers).
5. Policy Implementation

Leadership

- System Administration and each campus will appoint a D&I Officer. This does not preclude campuses from sharing the services of a D&I Officer.

  - The Campus D&I Officer will:
    - Be a senior member of the campus administration, reporting directly to the chancellor or chief academic officer;
    - Work collaboratively with offices across campus including, but not limited to, the offices of academic affairs, human resources, enrollment management, and admissions, to evaluate inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in such areas as the recruitment and retention of students and senior administrators, faculty, and staff hires; and
    - Serve as part of a University-wide network of D&I Officers to support the University’s overall diversity priorities: (1) Student Recruitment and Retention; (2) Non-Faculty Recruitment and Retention; (3) Faculty Recruitment and Retention/Promotion and Tenure; (4) Campus Climate; and (5) Supplier Diversity.

  - The System D&I Officer will:
    - Be a senior member of System Administration;
    - Work collaboratively with stakeholders across System Administration, including but not limited to, chief academic officers, human resource directors, and student affairs officers, to evaluate inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and
    - Support the University-wide network of campus D&I Officers in collaboration with the President and Executive Vice President and Provost to address System Administration D&I priorities.

Strategic Planning

- System Administration and each campus will develop and implement strategic diversity and inclusion plans that include strategies which run parallel to University-wide D&I priorities (e.g. campus strategic enrollment management plans should include strategies to address diverse student recruitment and retention).
• Campus plans will build on existing efforts and include:
  o Campus commitments for diversity and inclusion;
  o Campus principles guiding the development and implementation of the D&I plan;
  o Student Recruitment Strategy – a student recruitment strategy that includes programs and activities that will enable the campus to enroll a student population that is increasingly representative of the diversity of its primary service region and the state as a whole;
  o Student Retention and Completion Strategy – a student retention and completion strategy that strives to increase the rate of completion for all students and close any gaps in the completion rates of students from any group when compared with the average campus completion rate and to address the challenges of students in transition (such as transfer, stop-out, international student acclimation); placement of recruitment and retention efforts is at the discretion of the campuses and may take place at the department or unit level;
  o Administrative, Faculty, and Staff Recruitment and Retention Strategy – an administrative, faculty, and staff recruitment and retention strategy that continuously improves campus efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in the following areas:
    ▪ Recruitment, development of the prospect pool, and hiring decision-making for campus leadership, faculty, and staff. Plans should address the unique challenges of dual career couples/trailing spouse or partner relocation and ensure that selected candidates can articulate a commitment to diversity and inclusion;
    ▪ Implementation of best-practice mentoring plans and strategies tailored to the needs of diverse campus groups of faculty and staff; and
    ▪ With support from System Administration, the introduction or expansion of cultural competency programming as a central aspect of the orientation program for new employees and as a regular program for all continuing employees.

Campus Evaluation
• Plans will include an evaluation component to ensure that the campus is meeting its diversity and inclusion commitments and that activities designed within the overall plan are achieving their intended outcomes. The evaluation system should be aligned to the campus planning and resource allocation processes to
ensure that required improvements in the diversity and inclusion plan are incorporated in the revision of the academic and financial plans.

- The System Administration plan will build on existing efforts and include:
  - System Administration priorities and commitments for D&I;
  - The use of Inclusive Excellence guiding principles for the development and implementation of the D&I plan;
  - A recruitment and retention strategy that includes efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in recruitment, hiring prospect pool development, and hiring decision-making; attention to the unique challenges of dual career couples/training partner or spouse relocation; and the implementation of best-practice mentoring plans and strategies tailored to the needs of diverse groups; and
  - Cultural competency programming as a central aspect of orientation for new employees and as a regular program for all continuing employees.

**System Evaluation**

- An evaluation component that ensures that System Administration is meeting its diversity and inclusion commitments and that activities designed within the plan are achieving their intended outcomes and that System Administration is providing appropriate support and guidance to campuses to assist them in advancing University-wide D&I goals. The evaluation system should be aligned to System Administration planning and resource allocation processes to ensure that required improvements in the diversity and inclusion plan are incorporated in the revision of the academic and financial plans.

**Recruitment**

- Campus and System Administration will inquire about a search firm’s success in assuring diverse candidate pools and require the search firm to provide information about the diversity of the firm’s staff and its success rate in placing diverse candidates prior to entering into a contract with such firm.

**D&I Professional Development**

- System Administration will provide resources and tools for cultural competency training across System Administration. Supplemental resources and support for D&I development will be provided to campus senior leadership teams, faculty, and staff, as needed.
Campus Climate Report

- System Administration will administer a Campus Climate Study to evaluate System Administration and campus efforts to address the priorities and advance the goals and intent of its respective diversity and inclusion plans.

- Questions on surveys administered or procured by the System Administration Office of Institutional Research and University Affairs will be reviewed by the President, Executive Vice President and Provost, or their designee to ensure that questions are free from bias and provide necessary information to support diversity priorities and goals.

- The Executive Vice President and Provost and the Assistant Vice President Diversity, Access, and Inclusion will convene faculty researchers in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as program evaluation to work with the System Administration Office of Institutional Research to support the University of Nebraska D&I Officers and develop an evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy for the purposes of ongoing improvement.

6. Policy Adherence

Adoption of this policy will prompt a review of University policies and practices throughout the University. To the extent that such other policies and practices conflict with this policy, this policy shall take precedence, and such other policies and practices shall be interpreted in a manner to resolve the conflict in favor of this policy.

The President, Executive Vice President and Provost, and Chancellors—in collaboration with the Assistant Vice President for Diversity, Access, and Inclusion and in consultation with the campus D&I Officers—will determine the phased implementation efforts and University-wide rollout and identify human and financial resources devoted to the policy’s implementation.

Dated this 16th day of August, 2019.

Susan M. Fritz, Interim President

Reference: August 16, 2019
AAC&U's vision, practice, and guiding principles are designed to help colleges and universities integrate diversity, equity, and educational quality efforts into their missions and institutional operations.

The policy is composed following a review of works of AAC&U, institutional colleagues, University of Nebraska system and campus peers, and related professional organizations, along with ideas and approaches wholly original to the University of Nebraska.