The background features a vibrant, multi-colored geometric pattern on the left side, transitioning into a dark green and black area on the right. Decorative elements include faint, light-colored swirls in the upper left and lower right, and a series of horizontal white lines on the far right edge.

Brooklyn College

*Diversity and  
Inclusion Plan*

2008–2013



## Preface

Periodically, the Brooklyn College community comes together to write a Diversity Plan, which informs and directs our diversity efforts. The last plan was written in 2000, and since then most of the plan's recommendations have been successfully implemented.

In order to build on the successes, President Kimmich appointed an Advisory Committee on Diversity to develop a new plan that provides a structure in which to create and sustain an environment that allows people of different backgrounds, economic levels, values, and beliefs to flourish and contribute, both in the classroom and in the workplace.

The result is the Brooklyn College Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2008-2013.



## Introduction

The Brooklyn College community is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment in which our students, faculty, and staff learn and work. The College's priorities as evidenced by the Strategic Action Plan and Mission Statement are to recruit more faculty and staff by developing better and more attractive recruiting strategies and to retain them by creating a hospitable campus setting; to nurture an atmosphere of welcome, civility, and respect for differences that is inclusive rather than exclusive; and to take advantage of the College's quality as a microcosm of the larger world to instill in everyone, but especially students, both an understanding of and a humane interest in the world beyond the College. These priorities inform the Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

This Diversity and Inclusion Plan contemplates transformational change at the College, and its overarching goals are manifold:

1. To engage the entire campus community in meaningful dialogues and actions that lead to introspection and change.
2. To weave the principles of diversity and inclusion into all aspects of College life.
3. To identify impediments to creating a diverse and inclusive environment, propose solutions to overcome those impediments, and measure our progress at all levels of the College infrastructure.
4. To support the goals outlined in the College's Strategic Plan.

This last goal is of particular importance because we, as an institution, believe diversity and inclusion are central to achieving the strategic goals of maintaining and enhancing academic quality, ensuring a student-oriented campus, and being a model citizen in the borough of Brooklyn.

The four goals delineated above will be achieved by implementing the cultural, environmental, and structural changes recommended in this plan. The recommendations cover three categories: increasing faculty diversity, creating an inclusive environment, and incorporating



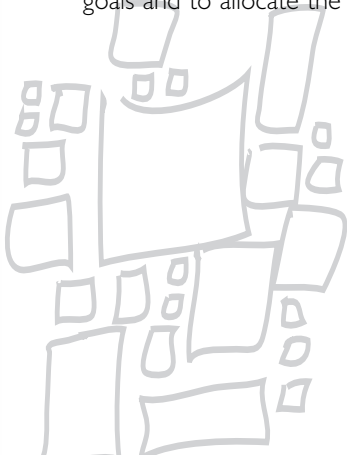
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the principles of diversity and inclusion into the classroom and curriculum. It is these broad categories that will be targeted over the next five years.

It is important to note that this plan is for the entire College community. It should not be viewed as limited to any particular group. Many of the recommendations will benefit all and are not tailored to traditional “diversity” considerations. Transforming the College is a shared responsibility, and this plan reflects that belief.

Lastly, accountability measures will be developed by the committee charged with overseeing the plan’s implementation. However, it is the responsibility of the president and provost to hold vice-presidents and deans accountable for helping to achieve these goals and to allocate the resources necessary.



## Definitions of Diversity and Inclusion

**Diversity**—which celebrates similarities as well as differences—is the combined strength of the abilities, cultures/ethnicities, experiences, genders, religions, and talents each of us brings to Brooklyn College and our supporting policies, such as affirmative action and equal opportunity, which are the cornerstones of any diversity plan.

Brooklyn College's diversity is the hallmark of its community. Diversity, however, is broader than the traditional categories of age, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. It also encompasses socioeconomic status, family background, language, the level of academic preparedness, learning style, and even the different communities from which our students, faculty, and staff hail. This richly divergent environment distinguishes us from most colleges across the country.

**Inclusion** is appreciating and respecting those distinctive characteristics each member of the campus community adds to our institution. Inclusion goes beyond numerical diversity. Real inclusion is the creation of a climate where all feel valued and appreciated, where there is substantive interaction between and among groups, where diverse groups participate in academic and administrative decision making, and barriers to inclusion, whether policy, practice, or systemic, are identified and addressed. This inclusive environment best allows students, faculty, and staff to thrive.

## Increase Faculty Diversity

Racial and ethnic identities and experiences are important contributors to exposing our students to a wide range of ideas, perspectives, and approaches to understanding the world, which is an important part of a liberal arts education. Therefore, by lacking racial and ethnic diversity among our faculty, we make it difficult to present our students a quality liberal arts education. A largely monoracial faculty misrepresents the world in which they live and the world of ideas and experiences, which are at the heart of liberal arts education. A liberal arts education should be liberating and not restricting.

To promote faculty diversity we must confront the belief that increasing diversity decreases academic standards. Research has proven this claim false. A diverse faculty offers a rich and dynamic perspective to the College's intellectual environment.


According to Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner, in *Diversifying the Faculty: A Guidebook for Search Committees* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2002):

*The arguments for faculty diversity are as compelling as the arguments for student diversity, which also extend beyond the obvious reasons of equity. Faculty diversification contributes directly to educational quality. A diverse faculty means better educational outcomes for all students. To serve current and future student populations, multiple and diverse perspectives are needed at every level of college teaching and governance. The more diverse college and university faculty are, the more likely it is that all students will be exposed to a wider range of scholarly perspectives and to ideas drawn from a variety of life experiences. The emergence within the last thirty years of new bodies of knowledge can be attributed to the diverse backgrounds and interests of faculty of color. By bringing new research questions and fresh perspectives to the academic enterprise, these scholars create intellectual stimulation for both students and faculty alike.*

*To better serve new students and to prepare all students for an increasingly diverse world, it is important that colleges and universities transform not only what they teach but also how they teach. Evidence suggests that exposure in college to a diverse faculty along with diversified curricula and teaching methods produces students who are more complex thinkers, more confident in traversing cultural differences, and more likely to seek to remedy inequities after graduation (Hurtado et al., 1999; Smith and Associates, 1997). ...Furthermore, faculty of color provide students with diverse role models and help provide more effective mentoring to minority students.*







Recruiting and retaining members of underrepresented groups to fill faculty positions have proven difficult. Many of Brooklyn College's challenges emerge out of larger social pressures, but others reside in the practices of the College itself. Brooklyn College may meet these challenges by revising and implementing practices in the recruitment and retention of faculty.

To proactively identify and recruit members of underrepresented racial groups, the following steps will be taken:

- Convening forums to discuss and establish the importance of faculty diversity for the Brooklyn College community, and especially its students; to challenge prevailing myths about faculty diversity; and to facilitate changing the culture of Brooklyn College's campus.
- Providing faculty with current research on the importance and benefits of a diverse faculty.
- Including faculty diversity prominently in the next strategic plan.
- Including diversity goals in departmental requests for new lines.
- Developing and refining standard practices in the recruitment of new faculty, including:
  - increasing advertising funds to encourage broad outreach and to bring candidates to campus.
  - providing funds for search committees to send representatives to conferences to recruit potential candidates and increase the College's name recognition.
  - increasing activities to educate search and appointments committees throughout all phases of the recruitment and hiring process (for example, develop a handbook for the search process, hold regular meetings with full search committees, conduct seminars for appointments committees and search committees on the best practices for the recruitment of candidates from underrepresented groups).
- Examining the recruiting practices of peer institutions to learn proven strategies.





- Providing funds to create recruitment materials to be distributed at conferences.
- Hiring a professional recruiter to identify prospective faculty at national conferences.
- Working with faculty and administrators in such feeder programs as MARC, Mellon Mays, and the Leadership Alliance to track graduates who may consider faculty positions at Brooklyn College.
- Working with the Graduate Center to place more teaching fellows on campus.
- Seeking donors to establish pre- or post-doctoral fellowships to enhance diversity.
- Focusing on retention strategies, which include:
  - reexamining the relative value assigned to faculty work in the tenure process (for example, teaching vs. research);
  - cluster hiring of faculty from underrepresented groups; and
  - limiting the service obligations of newly hired faculty from underrepresented groups who, because of their small numbers, are called upon more frequently to serve on collegewide committees or sought out by students to serve as mentors.



## *Create an Inclusive Environment*

To fully realize the potential of every student and member of the faculty and staff, as well as to increase faculty diversity, the College must be a welcoming and supportive place for all. Students must learn in an environment that empowers them to reach their full academic potential and enables them to become global citizens. Faculty must teach in an environment that supports their ability to conduct research and be effective instructors. Staff must work in an environment that utilizes their skills and abilities and allows them to develop new ones. An inclusive environment is also conducive to increasing faculty diversity. Efforts to recruit a diverse faculty must not be hindered by a less than inviting environment that affects decisions to come to or to leave the College.



The College's efforts to create an inclusive environment are considered by group—students, full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, staff—and general recommendations applicable to most groups.

## *Students*

### **Department-Student Interaction**

Although our student body is diverse, not all groups believe they have equal access to information about academic programs, support services, or mentoring. Among the many ways academic departments can facilitate the flow of information and create an inclusive environment for students are:

- Holding welcoming events/orientations for new students, including transfer, part-time, evening, and weekend students.
- Making department resources, such as computer labs and office hours, more accessible to evening and weekend students.
- Creating department webpages that are attractive and showcase diversity.
- Promoting academic student organizations to students.



## **Student Activities**

Many students are unaware of the diversity of cocurricular offerings, which can enrich the college experience. To increase interest in and raise awareness of cocurricular activities, the following steps will be taken:

- Establishing an annual Multicultural Day on which all diversity-related clubs can come together to share culture.
- Encouraging representatives of different religious and spiritual student organizations to hold regular panel discussions.
- Promoting peer-to-peer dialogues around hot-button issues like race, religion, and sexual orientation.

## **Physical Environment**

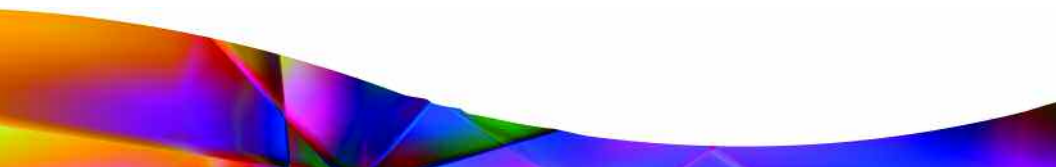
To fulfill Brooklyn College's commitment to ensuring an inclusive environment whereby its students can engage in substantive interaction, the College will seek to:

- Create space throughout the campus where individuals or groups can meet informally.
- Design department lounges where students of similar major may informally connect with each other and faculty.

## **Supplemental Services**

Efforts to institutionalize diversity for students will also include:

- Continuing to recruit students from all ethnic groups and areas of Brooklyn, paying close attention to areas of underrepresentation.
- Expanding access to the course Psycho-Social Development of a College Student and including it as part of a Freshman 101 series designed to provide freshmen and new students with the tools to excel.
- Identifying a donor to establish a fund so that socioeconomically disadvantaged students may participate in study abroad programs.







- Convening a focus group to identify obstacles faced by first-generation college students and to recommend ways to remove those barriers.
- Ensuring that diversity-related resources like MentorNet are made available to as many students as possible.
- Increasing awareness among the student body about diverse opportunities available in the Honors Academy.
- Increasing services for international students to facilitate their participation in academic and campus life.
- Having more symposiums for students who want to attend graduate school, with particular attention to underrepresented groups and first-generation students who may be unfamiliar with the preparation needed for graduate school and the application process.
- Developing relationships with recruiters at top graduate programs seeking to increase student diversity in their applicant pools.

### *Full-time Faculty*

In creating an inclusive environment for faculty to work in, Brooklyn College should plan to invest in quality-of-life issues that would not only help to draw potential faculty from diverse groups to campus, but also to retain them once here. The quality-of-life areas to be developed include:

- Assisting all new faculty in finding housing, schools, and daycare, particularly for those coming from outside of New York City.
- Ensuring that newly hired faculty members from underrepresented racial groups are aware of campus support organizations like the Asian/Asian American Faculty and Staff Association, the Black Faculty and Staff Association, and the Latino Faculty and Staff Association.

*(See the section on Diversity and Inclusion in the Classroom and Curriculum for more information on faculty.)*



## *Adjunct Faculty*

Adjunct faculty are an integral part of the College community, but because of the group's transitory nature their environmental concerns are often overlooked. Thus, the following steps will be taken to enhance the environment for all adjuncts:

- Conducting seminars specifically tailored for adjuncts on effective teaching and diversity issues.
- Creating an adjunct listserv as a forum for the exchange of information on classroom diversity issues and teaching techniques.
- Working with the Graduate Center to ensure the pool of Graduate Center Teaching Fellows is diverse.






## Staff

A key to improving the climate for staff is to provide ongoing staff development and training through the following actions:


- Ensuring diversity is present at all levels of administration and not concentrated at the entry and mid levels.
- Offering "Respectful Workplace" training to all staff.
- Providing opportunities for all managers to develop skills and knowledge regarding diversity and inclusion issues to better supervise our diverse workforce.
- Ensuring that any provision of enrichment, sponsorship, and support programs includes women, people of color, individuals with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups to assist them in developing their leadership capabilities.

## General

Some actions are applicable to more than one constituency. Such recommendations include:

- Conducting a campus climate survey on diversity issues to identify specific areas that require more attention.
  - Instituting a civility campaign.
  - Creating an annual diversity campaign around a theme to focus, support, and leverage the diversity activities and initiatives of faculty, staff, and students.
  - Exploring how the on-campus Early Childhood Center could be expanded to include more places for the infants and toddlers of faculty and staff who need quality childcare.
  - Creating space throughout the campus where faculty and staff can interact informally.
  - Establishing an online forum to enable members of the College community to suggest novel ways to foster an inclusive environment.
  - Holding exit interviews to solicit information on why employees leave the College.
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## *Incorporate Principles of Diversity and Inclusion into the Classroom and Curriculum*

A welcoming classroom climate and the infusion of diversity and inclusion principles into the curriculum are crucial to the success of the institutional commitment to transform itself. Faculty should see diversity and inclusion as a means to enrich and ensure equity in the learning experience for all students.

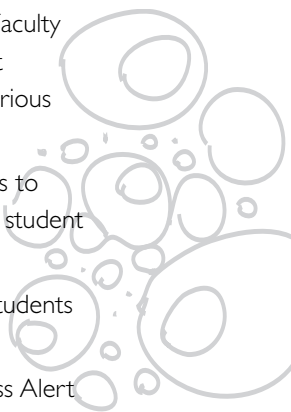
The foundation of an inclusive classroom is respect for all students and the commitment to develop the full academic potential of every student by supporting the individual capabilities of each one. To that end, the College must provide opportunities for the faculty to develop the skills to create an inclusive classroom. Efforts to create an inclusive classroom environment will include:

- Establishing a subcommittee of the Center for Teaching to bring together students and faculty to discuss diversity and inclusion issues that arise in the classroom as well as curricular diversity.
- Offering faculty seminars through the Center for Teaching, the Provost's Seminar, and the Core Seminar to discuss ways to interact, mentor, and support students and to focus on enhancing skills across the diversity spectrum.
- Providing faculty with opportunities to develop an inclusive curriculum. This may include: faculty and departments examining the curriculum, course content and methods, classroom climate, and teaching styles to ensure that the literary, artistic, scholarly, and scientific contributions of underrepresented racial groups and women are well represented and discussed; making available a wide range of services and curricular materials (aimed at positively incorporating women and minority students into the classroom dynamic) to assist faculty in creating conditions in which all students have the opportunity to succeed.

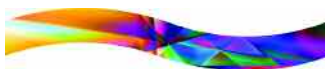


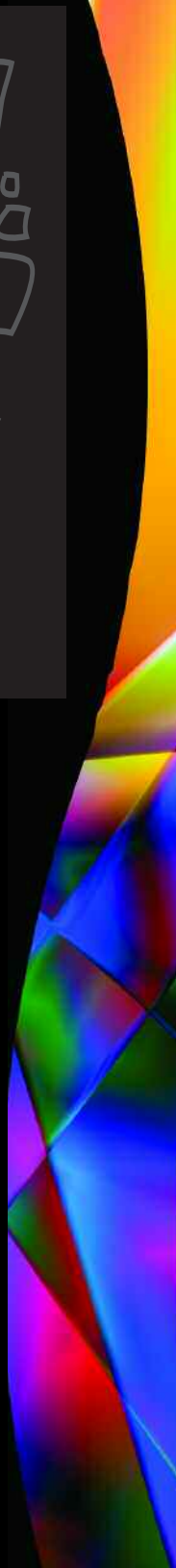


- Including a session on different learning styles in the New Faculty Orientation curriculum and increasing the number of smart classrooms so faculty may use different media to engage various learning styles.
- Encouraging faculty to work collaboratively to develop ways to address skill-set issues and ideas for working with a diverse student body.
- Creating a reference booklet for faculty on ways to assist students who are struggling academically.
- Encouraging faculty to utilize the Student Academic Progress Alert so the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies may reach out to students who are not performing well academically.
- Revising the faculty evaluation form to make it more qualitative and focused on teaching excellence and the classroom environment.
- Asking faculty members during annual evaluations how they have used the students' critiques/evaluations to improve their teaching.
- Providing appropriate incentives and rewards for faculty who are successful in creating an inclusive classroom climate or who develop curricular initiatives and interdisciplinary programs that address diversity and promote inclusiveness.



- Ensuring all syllabi include the disability statement recommended by the dean of undergraduate studies in the Syllabus Preparation and Vital Information for Students memorandum.
- Offering sensitivity workshops on disabilities and classroom accommodations to faculty to ensure that approved reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments are honored.
- Creating an Asian/Asian American Studies Program to promote an enhanced understanding of the nations of East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands through academic programs and interdisciplinary faculty research.
- Studying ways to internationalize curricula and promote international partnerships for faculty and students.
- Expanding financial and administrative support for the Center for Diversity and Multicultural Studies so it can lead the College's efforts to infuse the principles of diversity and inclusion in the curriculum. The center should have a full-time staff person to build the center's presence on campus and in the community. The center should also have an endowed visiting professorship to make it possible to bring to campus experts in the field of diversity studies and inclusion.
- Encouraging search committees to ask interviewees about the methods they use to create inclusiveness and foster diversity in their classroom as well as how they infuse diversity into their teaching.





BROOKLYN



COLLEGE

**Brooklyn College**

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