



DEIB Inventory Final Report

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the DEIB Inventory was to understand efforts related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) across the College. This report outlines the processes undertaken, the key themes that emerged from that work; and in addition, it highlights the work of two departments with existing DEI subcommittees—Admissions and the Career Advancement Center (CAC). The objective of the Inventory was *not* to evaluate departments but rather to catalog departmental DEIB related activities, identify opportunities for intentional collaboration across offices and departments, as well as recognize the labor that faculty and staff are already undertaking. Ultimately, this report recommends establishing an IDO (Institutional Diversity Officer) role at the Vice President level overseeing a DEIB office at the College and provides insights into the campus community's needs that a person in this role would address.

Summary of the Process

The DEIB Inventory was thoughtfully planned and executed as follows by the DEIB Workstream committee:

1. **Preparation:** The workstream members established a clear set of goals (Fig. 1) to guide the inventory process, ensuring thorough evaluation. After some deliberation, workstream members identified that the best methodology to gather data was to conduct semi-structured interviews with academic department chairs and staff office leaders. Using information provided by the department of Human Resources and Dean of Faculty Office, the committee members created an organizational chart of the VPs, AVPs, or Directors that would be interviewed to ensure complete coverage of Campus operations.

From these goals, the committee developed a script and set of comprehensive questions to be used for the interviews. In some cases, department chairs or office leaders directed the committee member conducting the interview to another knowledgeable individual within the area who could provide additional information.

- 1 **Establish a Comprehensive Overview:** Gain a holistic view of current DEIB initiatives, programs, and practices within each department or office to understand the breadth and depth of existing DEIB efforts on campus.
- 2 **Identify Areas of Collaboration:** Identify potential areas for collaboration among departments undertaking similar work to enhance the effectiveness and reach of our DEIB initiatives.
- 3 **Examine Effectiveness:** Assess the impact and effectiveness of existing DEIB efforts to identify successful practices that can be replicated or scaled across the College.
- 4 **Identify Gaps and Opportunities:** Identify gaps and areas for improvement in our DEIB initiatives, programs, and practices, and develop strategies to address them.
- 5 **Enhance Communication:** Strengthen communication and coordination among offices and departments to foster a more cohesive and inclusive approach to DEIB across the College.

Figure 1 - DEIB Inventory Goals

2. **Data Collection:** Using the organizational chart, the workstream committee members then proceeded to conduct informal interviews with department/office heads and often other key stakeholders. The questions developed for the interviews were not intended to collect data regarding attitudes or culture around DEIB. Rather, the interview questions were developed to cover a broad range of current DEIB-related activities, from departmental activities to mission statements, staffing and leadership policies, and practices around collecting DEIB-specific data. The goal of the questions was to ensure a broader understanding of each department or office’s efforts and challenges.
3. **Data Analysis:** As workstream members conducted interviews, they shared preliminary observations and interview reports with the committee. The committee continued to meet regularly throughout the semester, identifying overarching patterns, successful practices, and areas needing additional institutional support. The committee used the interview answers to understand DEIB initiatives being undertaken and opportunities for growth in this area that department heads had identified.
4. **Reporting:** This report provides a summary of the DEIB Inventory process, shares key themes, and outlines opportunities for growth. In keeping with the goal of the Inventory process—to identify opportunities for growth and intentional collaboration across offices and departments, and to recognize the labor that faculty and staff are already undertaking—the key themes and findings sections is organized as a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis.
5. **Recommendations:** The DEIB Workstream Committee recommends hiring an IDO who oversees a DEIB office (see *Reorganizing and Job Responsibilities* document); increasing

institutional support regarding DEIB; and developing a coordinated, College-wide DEIB action plan.

Findings

Using the data collected during the DEIB Inventory interviews, the committee identified several key themes and findings, which are outlined below. Figure 2 further breaks down these themes by faculty and staff themes:

➤ **Strengths:**

- **Departmental Initiatives:** Some departments and offices have established DEIB committees, required training sessions, and regular policy reviews to ensure inclusivity. For example, the Admissions DEIB Committee conducts annual policy reviews and regular DEI training sessions for its team; Athletics has a Diversity and Inclusion designee (ADID, NCAA-mandated) and has implemented the student-facing Forester Impact Series, which focuses on Sexual Misconduct Prevention, Mental & Physical Health, Community Building, and Engagement and DEIB. Faculty in the Education Department have monthly departmental meetings to adopt anti-racist practices and teach culturally-responsive standards to their students, who then complete fieldwork in Waukegan to gain experience working with diverse students who have challenging economic needs
- **Individual Efforts:** Many faculty and staff members are personally committed to DEIB, engaging in activities such as examining department curricula to diversify syllabi and/or incorporate culturally-responsive teaching practices, participating in DEI trainings, and intentionally diversifying their programming. For example, the Director of Residence Life requires that RAs (Resident Assistants) have 5 hours of DEI training, attend the OIR BRDIGE (Building Relationships in Diversity, Generating Equity) series, and host one DEI related event; the Business Office has begun offering Tax Information sessions for F1 students to learn more about the process. While these are departmental efforts, they currently depend on the director support and capacity rather than being part of a written policy or official institutional strategy. Faculty across many departments offer classes that de-center whiteness and highlight BIPOC history, literature, and ways of being. Additionally, many faculty choose to attend OIR trainings and OFD sessions that address DEIB topics.

➤ **Weaknesses:**

- **Lack of Structural DEIB Activities:** While individual efforts are driving great work at the College, there is a general lack of structural DEIB initiatives. Many initiatives are driven by individual efforts rather than being institutionalized, leading to inconsistency and sustainability issues. The lack of structural support for DEIB Initiatives is reflected in a tenuous awareness of best practices regarding

DEIB in higher education (especially in the ways to implement such practices in a day-to-day setting).

- **Insufficient Coordination:** There is limited coordination and communication between departments regarding DEIB initiatives. This results in duplicated efforts and missed opportunities for a unified goal, mission, and collaboration around DEIB.

➤ **Opportunities:**

- **Enhanced Collaboration:** There is significant potential for enhanced collaboration across departments. Sharing best practices and working together on DEIB initiatives can lead to more impactful and sustainable outcomes. Given the existing issues with capacity (see below), intentional collaboration around DEIB would allow staff and faculty to develop College-wide practices. Offices and departments could then adjust these practices to their specific needs, rather than creating something from scratch. There would also be opportunities to learn from the experiences of other departments/offices that would allow for improved implementation of DEIB initiatives.

For example, there is an opportunity to develop centralized training and professional development for student workers or staff in support of DEIB, removing the burden on individual offices to develop new initiatives. The same can be said for faculty interested in incorporating culturally-responsive teaching practices, diversifying syllabi, etc. Enhanced collaboration could also support a transformative student experience by ensuring a coordinated and intentional approach to supporting students with historically and traditionally marginalized identities. For example, while offices and departments across campus currently offer support to our First-Generation students, a coordinated effort around this topic would ensure that campus partners feel knowledgeable on the topic and are using best practices when developing initiatives. A collaborative approach would ensure there is capacity to organize a robust initiative for students that feels cohesive across their campus experience (in the classroom and in co-curricular activities).

- **Increased Support for Existing Initiatives:** Providing more institutional support for existing DEIB initiatives can help scale successful practices and ensure their sustainability. This includes allocating more resources and providing formal recognition for DEIB efforts.
- **College-Wide DEIB Data Practices:** One of the biggest opportunities that both faculty and staff highlight is a desire and need to develop a coordinated process for data collection around demographic information. This includes defining the

metrics we are measuring and ensuring that departments/offices are able to compare and contrast student data.

➤ **Threats:**

- **Capacity Issues:** Many departments face capacity issues, with staff and faculty already stretched thin by their existing responsibilities. This limits their ability to engage in additional activities, including researching and adopting DEIB best practices.

- **Lack of Funding:** Insufficient funding for DEIB initiatives is a common barrier cited by both staff and faculty. Many departments and offices struggle to secure the resources needed to implement and sustain effective DEIB programs.

- **Institutional Support:** There is a perceived lack of strong institutional support for DEIB initiatives. Departments often feel that their efforts are not sufficiently recognized, supported, or valued (including not being recognized in job descriptions), leading to frustration and decreased motivation. This also leads to those engaging in DEIB initiatives to feel both like they are performing additional labor beyond their requirements (rather than seeing the way DEIB is part of their day-to-day duties at the College) and that this work is not being reciprocated by colleagues.

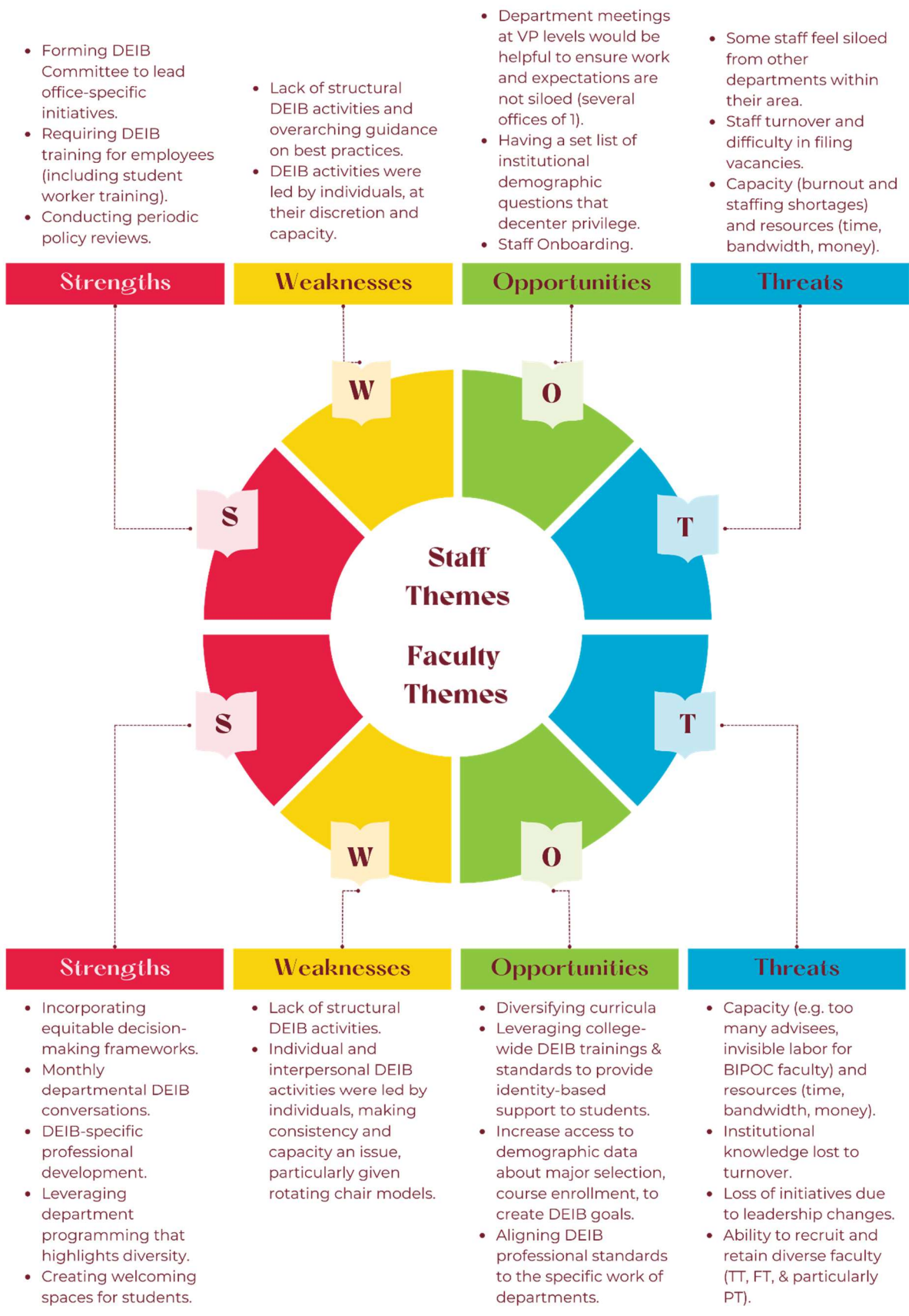


Figure 2 - Staff and Faculty Themes

Spotlight: Departments with Structural DEIB Initiatives

Admissions

The Admissions DEIB Committee has been proactive in incorporating DEIB into their operations. Led by Karina Henderson, Assistant Director of Admissions, key activities include:

- **Ongoing Training:** Regular DEI training sessions and programming (with specific resources allocated for guest speakers). Intentional planning around the specific needs related to the identities of Lake Forest College students (both current and potential), such as Latinx and First Generations students.
- **Policy Reviews:** Annual reviews of policies to ensure inclusivity, such as changes to application processes to include gender-inclusive options.
- **Diverse Recruitment:** Efforts to diversify staff and create inclusive onboarding processes.
- **Community Engagement:** Partnerships with campus partners for programming and events, emphasizing outreach to diverse student populations.

Career Advancement Center (CAC)

The Career Advancement Center (CAC) has made significant commitments to DEIB, with a strong focus on collaboration:

- **Inclusive Career Services:** Offering tailored career counseling and resources for students from diverse backgrounds, diversifying staff, and incorporating staff training.
- **Employer Engagement:** Working with employers to identify welcoming employees for students and promoting opportunities that value diversity.
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** Partnering with OIR (Office of Intercultural Relations) on initiatives such as career fairs, information sessions for International Students, and support for Undocumented students that highlight belonging and equity for students from historically and traditionally marginalized identities.
- **Centering DEIB in the “PODs”:** Developing DEIB goals and action plans. Each member of the CAC is part of one of three “PODs” (Point of Discussion): Industry/Employer Relations, Data, and Student Voice. In addition to departmental goals across various areas, each POD has specific goals, which are used to streamline DEIB efforts and initiatives in the office. The PODs also engage in their own collaborative initiatives, increasing the reach and impact of their work.

Spotlight: Sample Centralized Collaboration Approach

Sample Institutional Collaboration: Centralized Support for First Gen Students

Phase 1

- Request demographic data from Office of Institutional Research.
- Research best practices for supporting First Gen students.
- Develop a data collection tool to evaluate experiences of First Gen students at Lake Forest College.
- Organize meet and greet with the newly formed student organization, First Gen Foresters.

- Collect data on the experience of First Gen students in partnership with student org leaders.
- OFD Session for faculty and staff.
- Create organizational chart outlining how campus offices interact and serve First Gen students.

Phase 2

Phase 4

- Collect post-event data to assess experience of First Gen students.
- Develop a sustainable programming calendar for continuing support for First Gen students.
- Provide as-needed capacity-building for departments and offices that want additional training around this topic.

Develop coordinated programming for First Gen students that includes:

- Info session and tabling on available support.
- Social events to introduce students to First Gen faculty and staff.
- Targeted Academic Services and CAC sessions for First Gen students.
- Celebratory event organized by First Gen Foresters.
- Intersectional support for Empowerment Groups.
- Updated and unified landing page for First Gen students on the website.
- OCM-designed flyers with info on being First Gen and where to find support.

Phase 3

A coordinated effort in support of First-Generation students is only one of many opportunities for ongoing collaboration identified by the DEIB Workstream Committee. Similar blueprints could be developed for support for Latinx students, with particular attention to developing a plan for Lake Forest College to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI); for F1 International Students, with recognition of ongoing services and collaborations already in place and increased support for UWC Davis Scholars; for domestic Black students with attention to recruitment of potential students and belongingness for current students; etc.

Conclusions

Both faculty and staff departments lack structural, departmental, DEIB activities. Some faculty and staff departments have embedded DEIB activities into the structure of their departments by creating a DEI Committee, having monthly DEIB discussion meetings, employing strategies to have diverse applicant pools, and utilizing equitable decision-making practices. Still, these structural activities are few and far between. However, many department leaders and their faculty and staff are engaging in individual and interpersonal activities related to DEIB, including diversifying curricula and encouraging attendance to DEIB trainings and OFD sessions related to DEIB. Yet, individual and interpersonal actions were often person-dependent, making the sustainability of such DEIB activities vulnerable. Many respondents felt that institutional support around DEIB was lacking and believed that they could benefit from College-level support and guidance. Both faculty and staff discussed wanting to do more around DEIB activities and initiatives but shared that they lacked capacity, knowledge of best practices, funding, and time.

Overall, the DEIB workstream committee found that the College can develop a more cohesive and effective approach to DEIB, ensuring that efforts are sustainable, well-supported, and impactful—necessitating an IDO. Enhanced collaboration, communication, and resource allocation are critical for achieving these goals. A centralized College-wide DEIB action plan could support employee and student training, resources for programming, coordinated data collection and sharing, and collaborative equity-based efforts.

Appendix A

List of Staff and Faculty Departments Interviewed

Staff Departments Interviewed

Advancement
Athletics
Business Office
Career Advancement Center
Center for Academic Support
Center for Chicago Programs
Communications and Marketing
Dean of the Faculty
Donnelley and Lee Library
Enrollment
Global Engagement Office
Human Resources
Information Technology Services
Institutional Research Office
Krebs Center
Office of the Registrar
Student Affairs and Dean of Students Office

Faculty Departments Interviewed

African American Studies
Art
Biology
Chemistry
Communication
Economics, Business, and Finance
Education
English
Environmental Studies
History
Mathematics and Computer Science
Modern Languages and Literatures
Music
Neuroscience
Philosophy
Physics
Politics, International Relations
Psychology
Religion
Sociology and Anthropology
Theatre