

Strategic Plan on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (SP-DEIB)

Spring 2023 to Spring 2026

Civic Sustainability and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging—The Vision

The CSSH community is committed to practicing civic sustainability in everyday interactions among students, staff, faculty, and external partners across our Experiential Liberal Arts mission. Civic sustainability is a method used to frame everyday interactions with the highest regard for each other's dignity, habits of mind, ways of being, and means of expression. It is a method used to surface and analyze the roots of inequity and address the actions that perpetuate inequity. It is a method evidenced by good faith efforts to broaden personal networks, seek common ground for social action, demonstrate mutual respect, create the time and space for these efforts, and share with one another as a learning community. Civic sustainability needs to be part of all our research, teaching and learning, and partnership efforts. Over time, the everyday interactions of civic sustainability become commonly practiced, valued, and shared to create a culture of inclusion and belonging. As a CSSH community, we recognize that this is ongoing, changing, and often difficult work.

Operating Philosophy

We all share the responsibility of creating a culture of inclusion and belonging, of fostering fair and just systems, and of increasing the diversity of all our populations and across Northeastern's global campus system. To do this, all members of the college community work to inspire and motivate colleagues, students, and partners to:

1. Integrate this philosophy across all missions of the college
2. Encourage broad participation
3. Identify shared goals and coalesce efforts
4. Encourage and support the change we seek
5. Humanize each other by recognizing and valuing each other's qualities
6. Reflect on and celebrate intersecting identities
7. Broaden networks of support
8. Initiate and support dialogue about inequitable practices where that is needed
9. Make one another aware of resources available to support this work.

Summary of the Strategic Plan AY2023-2026

In the college-level strategic plan for 2023-2026, the emphasis continues to be on improving the recruitment and retention of excellent and diverse students, staff, and faculty, and on fostering a climate of inclusion and belonging. Over the next three-year period, the college will bring together students,

faculty, and staff to continue to strengthen the priorities of the last plan—recruitment practices, pedagogy, mentoring, and civic dialogues. We will also build new initiatives in the areas that need more work, especially creating a stronger sense of belonging at the university among the college's populations and improving accountability on DEIB. In addition, we will extend efforts of forming responsible partnerships with communities and institutions beyond our campuses and around the globe. Throughout, we always strive to link up with and shape university-wide efforts in DEIB, to support these, and to make the college's constituents aware of university-level resources.

Because attention to DEIB is central to all parts of our mission in the Experiential Liberal Arts, members of the college strive to foster DEIB in many practices that are not covered in this strategic plan explicitly. To give just two examples: one, the college's effort to maintain a webpage on social change initiatives is designed to highlight important initiatives in teaching, research, and partnerships that can move the needle on DEIB in a positive direction. Two, research center directors and the college's research working group foster conversations and practices about responsible community engagement and co-creation. In other words, the hope (and reality) is that the values of civic sustainability help shape much positive work in CSSH and beyond not captured in this plan yet central to fulfilling our ambitions in the Experiential Liberal Arts. Communicating these efforts effectively and learning from successes and challenges is an important opportunity for the CSSH community going forward.

Process for Arriving at this Strategic Plan

The College's inaugural Strategic Plan (2015-2018), the first college-level plan at Northeastern University, was developed in 2015/16 and then implemented under the leadership of Ellen Cushman, in her role as Director of Civic Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion and then Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Diversity and Inclusion. CSSH implemented a range of pedagogical, mentoring, and dialogue-based initiatives to create and grow a culture of inclusion across all missions of the college. From 2020 to 2022, the college took some new steps that went beyond the initial plan: for example, all academic programs revised their learning goals with attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and especially with attention to the significance of race, racism and anti-racism. Many units formed unit-level DEIB committees. The college also ran the university-wide series on Racial Literacy twice in collaboration with colleagues from Bouve and other colleges.

In June 2022, the college's chairs and directors agreed to initiate a number of action steps as well as a new strategic planning effort as they were reviewing the results of the university's March 2021 climate or Many Voices, One Northeastern survey with representatives from the college's Civic Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion Council. Uta Poiger, Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, also discussed the results of the climate survey, as well as the new action steps and the strategic planning process, with the college's faculty and staff in a town hall in September 2022. Student Affairs shared the results of the climate survey with students.

In Fall 2022, CSSH launched a new college-wide DEIB strategic planning process. Dean Poiger asked Mai'a Cross, Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs, Diversity and Inclusion, and Jim Rollins, Associate Dean of Administration and Finance, to chair a small task force of staff and faculty members that led the creation of the new strategic plan. The college retained Reverend Dr. Jamie Washington to facilitate key interactions during a new strategic planning process on DEIB. In December 2022, the task force received feedback on a draft document from the college's Council on Civic Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion, and, together with Dean Poiger, revised the draft document.

Sessions to receive feedback on the full draft plan and to share knowledge about existing practices in the college took place in January 2023, with the Chairs Council and staff supervisors, undergraduate, master's and doctoral students, as well as staff and faculty. Our external advisor, Reverend Dr. Washington, facilitated these sessions. The draft document was also shared via email with all the college's students, staff, and full-time faculty, and in addition to the in-person sessions, all members of the CSSH community had the opportunity to provide feedback via a webform in January 2023.

Based on this feedback, the taskforce and the college's leadership team then created this final draft of the 2023 to 2025 CSSH DEIB Strategic Plan (this document). The plan was released to the college community via its website and email in June 2023. All new faculty and staff will have a conversation about this plan with their supervisor as part of their onboarding processes.

It is important to note that the practices and metrics outlined below are designed to be dynamic, that is to be able to address new as well as ongoing challenges and opportunities for creating civic sustainability and cultures of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. College constituents are very interested in thinking about opportunities and challenges to retaining members of our community. The college will maintain its tradition of reporting yearly on the demographics of its core constituents--students, faculty and staff--with regard to race/ethnicity and gender, and improve these reports as needed. Reporting broadly via demographic numbers on challenges regarding retention is a complicated effort that is in many cases not possible at the college level because such reports can undermine important considerations of privacy. The college also recognizes that features of identity that are of great significance to the college community are not possible to report on via demographic data, for example, numbers of members of the community that identify as first-generation college students. Demographic reporting on gender identities is undergoing important changes. Issues related to sexual orientation or ability and disability demand ongoing attention but cannot be captured via college-level demographic data. At the same time, intersectional identities will continue to be important in defining practices and action steps to create cultures of inclusion and belonging.

It is vitally important to create a culture of civic sustainability and belonging *where all members of CSSH communities can and will raise concerns without fear of reprisal, where we work together to understand and address these concerns at the unit or the college level, and where we contribute to practices and discussion at the university level and well beyond the university.*

Practices and Metrics

We will continue and strengthen the following practices in the work of the college. Unless noted otherwise in the metrics below, we will report on these practices in the yearly DEIB reports of the college and its units that are published on the college's website each August for the previous academic year. See <https://cssh.northeastern.edu/about/diversity-and-inclusion/>

Pedagogy and Mentoring

1. Inclusive pedagogies

Metrics:

The College holds at least one Pedagogy in Progress Workshop on this topic each year.

All units devote at least one faculty meeting each year to the discussion of best practices. Units consider drawing on external facilitators for these discussions.

2. Inclusion through mentoring programs

Metrics:

All assistant professors have at least two faculty mentors.

All new staff members have two onboarding mentors outside their units.

All incoming majors have peer mentors who are paid stipends by the college.

In 2023/2024, the college will assess practices around mentoring of master's and doctoral students and will determine needed steps to further improve mentoring.

All faculty and staff have opportunities to practice mutual mentoring and reflect on mentoring.

3. Create a baseline and identify supports to increase the number of CSSH faculty from historically under-represented groups submitting grants/fellowships.

Metric:

The Associate Dean of Research reports each fall to chairs and directors.

4. Summer Bridge Scholars Program

Metric:

CSSH participates every year in the university-wide summer bridge scholars program and the advising team actively communicates with the program participants over their time at NU. CSSH also works with Enrollment Management to understand how to reach students who may not be able to be part of the summer bridge scholars program and who come from historically marginalized backgrounds.

5. Curriculum

Metrics:

Every five years all academic programs will revisit their program-level learning outcomes. Since 2021, all academic programs have articulated and published learning outcomes that directly foster practices and learning on Diversity, Difference, Equity and Inclusion with careful reflection on context. All units ensure the program requirements at the course level support the program-level outcomes and that interdisciplinary courses can be part of the required offerings to students. CSSH will undertake its next review of all program outcomes no later than 2026/27.

CSSH maintains its strong presence with over 80 courses fulfilling the NUpath Diversity and Difference attribute.

6. Model Discussions about Research, Policy and Action on Pressing Social Issues

Metric:

The College contributes to at least one session each year in the university-wide series on Conflict, Civility, Respect, Peace.

Hiring and Merit

7. Hiring practices and process

Metric:

All faculty and staff search committees receive guidance on how to actively build diverse pools of applicants. All search committees report on their efforts, their pools, and on finalists prior to offers being made.

8. College leadership ensures that all new hires in CSSH get to know this plan as part of their onboarding in CSSH.

Metric:

Plan is published on the CSSH website and shared with each new faculty and staff member by their supervisor as they join CSSH.

9. Make DEIB reflection part of all merit processes for faculty beginning in 2023

Metric:

All units have adjusted merit prompts for faculty.

10. Make DEIB reflection part of all merit processes for staff in 2024

Metric:

All supervisors and staff members have articulated a goal related to DEIB in recognition of these shared values. Supervisors and staff members will discuss and are encouraged to adjust these goals yearly.

Admission and Retention of Students

11. Retention of Undergraduate Students

Metric:

Yearly, the advising team compiles a report on undergraduate student retention and makes it available to chairs and program directors. Chairs, program directors, advising and the dean's office discuss and determine steps to address any concerns that a report raises.

12. Holistic admissions for master's and doctoral programs

Metric:

Continue holistic admissions in all master's and doctoral programs and continue to report yearly to the college community on the diversity of the student bodies with an emphasis on domestic diversity.

13. Retention of Master's and Doctoral Students

Metric:

Yearly, the graduate studies team compiles a report on master's and doctoral program retention and makes it available to chairs and program directors. Chairs, program directors, and the dean's office discuss and determine steps to address any concerns that a report raises.

14. Increase the pipeline of students from historically under-represented groups who apply to the college's master's and doctoral programs.

Metric:

In 2023/24, the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and the Director of DEIB will lead a small taskforce in assessing the effect of existing efforts and will make recommendations for additional steps. These may include, for example, articulation agreements with HBCUs or MSIs, attending specific fairs, and inviting McNair scholars to a college preview event.

College Goals, Personnel, Procurement, and Resources

15. Maintain the CSSH Council of Civic Sustainability, Diversity, and Inclusion, which has operated since 2016, as an advisory body to the dean with appointed members drawn from the faculty, staff, and students. The chair or co-chairs of the Council and its members are appointed by the dean.

16. Create a director-level staff position at the college level that acts as one liaison to all the efforts of the ODEI Office, helps generate resources for unit-level workshops, and can advise on resources within the college and the broader university as well as coordinate unit-level and college-level reporting on DEIB.

Metric:

Director hired by Fall 2023.

17. Report yearly on the demographics of CSSH's core constituents--students, faculty and staff--with regard to race/ethnicity and gender, and improve these reports as needed.

Metric:

Yearly report at the Fall College Assembly.

18. Formulate a yearly college-level DEIB award for four to five faculty and staff members and students beginning in 2023.

Metric:

Announce the call for nominations each January or February and announce and celebrate the awards each April.

19. Make college faculty and staff aware of university resources that support work in DEIB, from the ODEI to the Ombuds, the Disability Resource Center and others.

Metric:

In Fall 2023, the HR business partner and Director of DEIB will assess previous practices such as visits to the Chairs Council and devise a plan to increase CSSH community knowledge of such resources.

20. Create and maintain a list of women- and BIPOC-owned businesses available to all staff and unit leaders for procurement, including catering and consulting services

Metric:

By Summer 2023, identify a staff lead and a small advisory team, create the list in SharePoint, and give all point persons in all units editing access to grow it.

21. Beginning in 2022/23, make DEIB a specific focus of the college's development team.

Metric:

Inclusion of DEIB in yearly planning, goal setting, and reporting, and in work with the CSSH Dean's Strategy Council.

22. In Summer 2023 and once per year thereafter, assess inclusion of news on DEIB initiatives on college- and unit-level newsletters and communications to increase awareness among faculty, staff, students, and partners and assess if specific identities should be highlighted/celebrated in new ways in college communications.

Metric:

The CSSH marketing team devises a plan for assessment in Spring 2023, reports yearly thereafter, and revises the plan yearly as needed.

23. Make ASL interpreting a reality at all college-level gatherings and at all events attended by hearing impaired presenters or audience members.

Metric:

Event leads to report each summer on obstacles, including resources provided by the Disability Resource Center.

24. Assess college-level data from the Many Voices, One Northeastern Survey. A small taskforce chaired by the dean or the dean's delegates, and with membership from the associate deans, and the CSDI Council assesses the college-level data shared. The dean brings the results, together with the taskforce, to the Chairs Council, to CSDI, and to the college assembly. These discussions shape the yearly goal setting for the college and its units. CSDI and the Chairs Council also consult with the dean about the possible need to conduct additional efforts to understand the climate of the college and its units.

Metric:

Dean discusses assessment of Many Voices, One Northeastern Survey in an all-college assembly.

25. In addition to publishing the names of members who serve on college and university committees, the CSSH Dean's Office will collect the names of colleagues who serve in university DEIB efforts, for example as advisors of student groups, facilitators of faculty and staff affinity groups, as faculty or staff liaisons to student cultural centers, on the Presidential Council on Diversity and Inclusion.

Metric:

By Fall 2024, the Director of DEIB will develop a plan for how to coalesce this information and how to make it visible.

Unit (Department and School) Goals and Practices

26. Unit Goal Setting

Metrics:

Make DEIB part of the yearly goal setting and reporting for chairs to the dean. Chairs make this transparent to their colleagues.

Units submit yearly reports and publish these along with the yearly college-level report on the college's website.

The Dean sets yearly goals in consultation with chairs, program directors, and the CSDI council and reports yearly on the goals and results at the Fall College Assembly.

27. Hold unit level workshops of interest in the DEIB space, as possible with external facilitators

Metrics:

Workshop once a year for chairs and directors.

Workshops twice a year for all college staff.

Workshop once a year in each unit for faculty and staff.

By June 2023, the HR Business Partner and the associate deans make a list of external facilitators

available and update it twice a year, every May and every November.

All unit leaders commit to following up each workshop with discussion at the unit or smaller group level.

28. Each unit presents, beginning in Summer 2023, a yearly plan for student engagement around DEIB.

Metric:

Chairs report on these efforts as part of the yearly unit level reports that are published on the CSSH website.

The Next CSSH Strategic Plan on DEIB

29. In 2025/2026, CSSH will form a new taskforce to report on the execution of this plan and to create an updated plan with input from CSSH students, staff, and faculty.

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