

## Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Competency

### **Data, History and Comparisons:**

Creating community requires building a common understanding of diverse backgrounds and perspectives as well as actively engaging in inclusive practices both in and outside of the classroom and laboratories. Vermont Tech is obligated to provide opportunities and training that develop respect for diversity, inclusion, civic engagement and cultural competency. Ultimately a strong understanding and respect for diversity and inclusion improves community climate, strengthens retention and improves degree completion rates.

Utilizing a part-time international student coordinator on the Randolph campus, Vermont Tech has supported diversity and inclusion efforts through a variety of programming efforts. These have included:

- *Our Stories* presentations where international student describe the story behind their history, culture and journey to enrolling at Vermont Tech
- Organizing events and speakers to honor Black History Month. These events were broadcasted to the Williston campus.
- Collaborating with the athletic department to provide academic and social supports and referrals to student athletes in order to maintain athletic eligibility and create a positive experience for diverse student athletes
- Guest speaking in courses about diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism
- Advising the multicultural club and helping to structure events, programming and conversations around diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism
- Providing internationally themed dinners in collaboration with SODEXO in the Morey dining hall
- Advising and supporting international students in all areas including academics, cultural adjustment and providing a well-rounded positive experience while on campus
- Supporting, advising and providing technical expertise to faculty led courses that offer International travel

On the Williston campus there is also a part-time international student coordinator who has focused efforts primarily on the international student population to ensure a well-rounded positive experience. Diversity and Inclusion efforts on the Williston campus were done by both the Events Coordinator and the part-time international student coordinator and have included Halal based snacks and mapping and celebrating where students were born. Intentional diversity and inclusion programming on the remainder of Vermont Tech campuses has gone unaddressed.

Vermont Tech has seen a 58% increase in self-identified non-white enrollment that has grown from 8.5% in 2012 to 14% in 2017. The following offers comparative data to help put Vermont Tech's statistics in context \*:

<b>Institution/State/National Data</b>	<b>% minority enrollment/population (2017)</b>
Vermont Technical College	14%
NHTI	10.5%
Southern Maine Community College	17%

Cobleskill SUNY	29%
Johnson State College	12.8%
Lyndon State College	14.3%
Castleton University	11.7%
Community College of Vermont	17.2%
State of Vermont	5.4%
National	23.1%

\*Data retrieved from National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau

National data from Gallup Polls in diversity in gender and sexual identity, indicates that “Vermont leads states in LGBT identification” with the percentage of Vermont adult residents who identify as LGBT as 5.3% of our population. Consistent with state and national data trends that Vermont Tech also has a substantial portion of our community who identify in some way as being part of the LGBTQ community. The results of the 2016 VTC Health Survey indicates that over **10%** of our student population identified in some way as being part of the LGBTQ community.

We are also educating our students in a way that spans from the traditionally aged, full-time, residential student, to online, second career or part-time working adults with families and any amalgamation between. Despite this demographically, racially and socially diverse range of students and needs, we remain obligated to fulfil our **Mission Statement** and **Educated Person Statement of Philosophy**:

National and regional examples of best practices for diversity, inclusion and cultural competency planning and programming within Institutions of Higher Education include the following:

- Statement of diversity, inclusion and cultural competencies both in the institution’s mission statement as well as part of the strategic plan
- Diversity, inclusion and cultural competency training (CTT) and programming integrated into:
  - New faculty and staff orientation
  - New student orientation
  - First year experiences/ mandatory freshman coursework
- Establishing a central office such as an Office of Diversity and Inclusion where faculty, staff and students can access resources, learn about and engage in college wide diversity initiatives, committees and models of inclusiveness
- Cultural competency teams/committees that act as a resource to implement programming and support pertinent components of the mission statement and strategic plan
- Guest teaching and presentations for academic classes in the areas of cultural competency, diversity and inclusion
- Training sessions and workshops tailor designed for specific needs (RA training, different majors, athletic groups, clubs, departments meetings, individual faculty looking for support in how to integrate cultural competencies into content area curriculum).

**Goals:**

Given our demographically diverse, geographically far reaching campuses, diverse students as well as wide range programmatic offerings; how does Vermont Tech ensure that ALL students are provided the opportunity to think critically, become globally and civically aware and understand what it is to be culturally competent? How do we honor and respect our differences yet develop a common cultural

identity that can articulate what it means to be a “Vermont Techer” both as a student and as Alumni? How do we ensure that we systematically provide support and education about diversity, culture and inclusion across our students’ educational experience while at Vermont Tech?

- **Year 1: Fully implement** the *Athletics, diversity, Inclusion and Collaboration Program*. This collaboration between Student Affairs and Athletics includes coach and athlete training on diversity, inclusion, team building, sportsmanship and access to academic and social resources and supports. A dedicated student-athlete advisor is part of a mandated system for student-athletes that provides on-going advising and support for social-emotional needs, cultural adjustment to college life and academic supports.
- **Year 1: Continue to offer** at least one faculty led course per year that includes international travel. Currently there is an architecture based *European Classroom*. Collaborate with faculty to provide technical travel and cultural information and support. Serve as second chaperone during travel.
- **Year 1: Provide an Alternative Break experience** for students. Create and advise an Alternative Break Community Service Club. Provide on-going club advising and supervision during community service alternative break. Options may include collaborating with organizations such as Habit for Humanity
- **Year 1: Explore coordinating curriculum objectives of the course: *Self, Career and Culture (SCC)* and the New “Schools” within our college (Engineering, Allied Health, Agriculture and Professional Studies) with campus cultural programming and diversity initiative priorities.**
  - Coordinate, collaborate and align “cultural of community speaker series” events with goals and objectives of the SCC course and the “schools” within the college. Working with faculty and department chairs, schedule speakers who can engage students in how they must understand and reflect upon topics of culture, diversity and inclusion within the context of their chosen professional field. Ensure that all students, regardless of the campus they access or their FTE would have a way to access these events in some way.
    - Incentivize student participation by integrating attendance into course syllabi. Students receive “credit” (faculty determined) by attending.
    - Utilizing the concept of “Dorm Wars” student affairs provide students with “points” for attendance that could be turned in for prizes.
  - Coordinate the goals and objectives of Self, Career and Culture with events and opportunities offered through Student Activities. Course participants could get “credit” for attending events that align with the goals and objectives of the course.
  - Support Gender Equity concepts and work that has started using “Change the Story” resources and content
  - Collaborate with local groups who offer cultural, artistic or social justice programming. i.e., Chandler Center for the Arts, Barre Opera House, Peace and Justice Center of Vermont, Change the Story Vermont, The Flynn Center, Shelburne Museum, Vermont Historical Society etc.
- **Year 1: Engage** Vermont Tech Clubs to formally identify how they will enhance their global awareness, be civically engaged, think critically and improve their understanding of cultural competency through the context of their club.
- **Year 2: Develop Faculty training and New Faculty Orientation** to ensure diversity within and across the curriculum: ensure that curriculum across disciplines accesses resources, publications,

perspectives and populations that engage in cultural competencies, are diverse, inclusive and culturally appropriate. Support empathy training and implicit bias training that gives faculty information to support diverse students and understand how intersectionality impacts a student's ability to access their education. This training can be built into new faculty orientation and offered on an "as requested" basis to veteran faculty.

- **Year 2: New Student Orientation and Welcome Weekend:** Include exercises and interactions that begin the discussion of diversity, cultural competency and inclusion.

#### **Evaluation and Measurement:**

1. Data will be collected regarding attendance of events that would fulfill goals and objectives set for within the Self, Career and Culture course and the speaker series events.
2. All students take the course Self Career and Culture.
3. Athletic team roster retention rates
4. Overall program/degree retention and graduation rates
5. Survey on college and campus climate, sense of inclusive college community and pride
6. Alumni response and engagement rates

#### **Data Sources:**

National Center for Education Statistics: <https://nces.ed.gov/>

U.S. Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/>

Gallup Polls: <http://news.gallup.com/poll/203513/vermont-leads-states-lgbt-identification.aspx>

Vermont Technical College Institutional Statistics

#### **Resources:**

<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf> Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education: Key Data Highlights Focusing on Race and Ethnicity and Promising Practices November 2016 Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. Office of the Under Secretary U.S. Department of Education

<https://www.nhti.edu/community-visitors/about-nhti/educated-person-statement-philosophy>

[https://www.nhti.edu/sites/default/files/content/documents/strategic\\_direction.pdf](https://www.nhti.edu/sites/default/files/content/documents/strategic_direction.pdf)

<http://www.cobleskill.edu/strategicplanning/index.asp>

<https://www.smccme.edu/about/strategic-plan/>

Ramsey, Jay. Technical Assistance Report: Gender Equity at Vermont Tech. August 21, 2017. Vermont Agency of Education