

University College Council for Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Change

Bylaws

Article I: Mission, Charge, and Purpose

Section 1: Mission

We, University College, confront our tolerance for inequality.

We hold in our attention this truth: Our community is deeply bruised by the legacies of oppression, explicit and implicit. These legacies are embedded within the foundation, ethos, policies, and practices of higher education.

To heal: We must sound the silences; approach the injustices; tend to the injuries; seek accountability and forgiveness; imagine and create a more equitable community for teaching, learning, and working.

Our mission, our collective will, demands that we make education a just and respectful process in which every beautifully unique, multifaceted individual will sing and be sung, will shine, and will flourish.

Section 2: Charge

Our charge from the Dean of University College is to develop action items, including programming, to help the University College in all its facets. We must close equity gaps. We must make University College a place where people from all backgrounds want to work. We must think about ways in which UC can become a more welcoming place so that all people who work here are willing and able to bring their whole selves. As a college, our primary goal always is to promote student success, and that begins with creating an environment of belonging.

Section 3: Operationalized Mission & Purpose

The CDEIC advocates for diverse, equitable, and inclusive change within University College for all students, staff, and faculty. Specifically, we advocate for inclusive hiring practices designed to craft a diverse faculty and staff for the benefit of all VCU students and that reflects the diversity of our student body. The CDEIC analyzes diversity, equity, and inclusion in University College, including policies and procedures. The CDEIC conducts and promotes programming that advances diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Article II: Membership (Leadership)

Section 1: Founding Chair and Membership

The University College Associate Dean is the Founding Chair of the University College Council for Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive Change (CDEIC) and will serve an initial three-year term as chair. The Founding Chair, with consent of the University College Dean, appointed 14 members to serve as the founding Council in 2020-2021. The founding members of the CDEIC included one student, two University College staff members, one Interdisciplinary Studies staff member, and ten Focused Inquiry faculty members.

Section 2: Membership After First Two Years

Following the CDEIC's first two years, the University College Leadership Team will reappoint a diverse selection made of five of the existing founding members to a final year on the Council (excluding the Associate Dean, who will continue to serve *ex officio*). The Leadership Team will also appoint a diverse selection of four new members to serve three-year terms on the CDEIC. This combination of one-year reappointments and new three-year appointments will create staggered terms. Appointments will be made based on a pool of candidates who may nominate themselves or be nominated (with agreement) by colleagues in University College in the spring of the preceding year.

The council will be comprised of the following members:

- A minimum of one student
- One University College staff member
- A minimum of two Interdisciplinary Studies faculty or staff members
- Six Focused Inquiry faculty members
- University College Associate Dean as *ex officio*, non-voting member
- Additional members may be appointed on an annual basis according to need; additional members could include alumni, graduate students, members of other university units.

This distribution of Council members will ensure representation from all units and stakeholders and should be maintained.

Except for the Associate Dean, who will serve *ex officio*, faculty and staff with direct reports sitting on the council, including work-study students, will be ineligible for Council membership. This eligibility criterion is intended to maintain an open and honest environment on the Council. In other words, members will be able to serve without their supervisors also being on the Council.

Section III: Officers

In the last semester of the Founding Chair's three-year term, voting members of the Council will elect a new chair. The Council will also elect an Associate Chair and a Recording Secretary. The voting members of the Council will be eligible for these officer positions. Officers will be elected by a member majority vote after an anonymous nomination process and may not be elected for consecutive terms. The UC Associate Dean, a non-voting member, will oversee the election process, which will take place in spring semesters as officer positions come open. Candidates may run for one position in a single election.

i. Chair

The Chair will call and conduct all meetings and oversee the Council and its functions. The Chair will serve a three-year term. In the last semester of the chair's term, a new chair will be elected following the procedures described above.

ii. Associate Chair

Starting in the second year of the council, the council members will elect an associate chair to serve as back up to support the chair, especially with respect to meetings. The associate chair will also support subcommittees as needed, helping members stay in communication and access resources. The associate chair will serve a three-year term. In the last semester of the associate chair's term, a new associate chair will be elected following the procedures described above.

iii. Recording Secretary

The recording secretary will schedule, attend, and keep a record of all meetings. The secretary will prepare summaries of the meeting records, including agenda items and actions taken, in order to make them available to all members of University College. The recording secretary will serve a one-year term. At the end of the term, a new Recording Secretary will be elected following the procedures described above.

Section IV: Expectations of Conduct

CDEIC members will cultivate an empathetic and respectful climate to foster relationships of integrity between all members by deeply listening to one another and collaborating to advance our mission through various strategies. To this end, members will:

- i. Respect all members. Hate speech is not tolerated. Hate speech is a direct attack on people based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, caste, sex, gender, gender identity, serious disease or disability, and immigration status. An attack is violent or dehumanizing speech, statements of inferiority, or calls for exclusion or segregation.
- ii. Work through consensus. If members cannot unanimously agree, we will recognize the right of the majority to determine the group's position on an issue.
- iii. Be transparent, accountable, cooperative, and responsible for duties delegated or taken on.
- iv. By virtue of the nature of our work and its close connection to identity and to emotions, members agree to keep sensitive and personal meeting information confidential, so that our respectful, open climate can be maintained.
- v. Disagreements between members and violations of the conduct expectations will follow organizational conflict resolution procedures.
- vi. Knowing that our work is sensitive, we acknowledge that mistakes may happen, disagreements may arise, and we agree to do our best to resolve them while recognizing all members' dignity and right to their own perspective.

Article IV: Powers and Limits

Section 1: The CDEIC shall work to craft an environment in which legacies of oppression shall be confronted, with the aim that all voices—including those of all racial, ethnic, national origin; religious preference; sexual orientation; gender identity; physical ability; or any other historically underrepresented or oppressed identities—will be valued. The CDEIC shall strive to maintain a community that is aware, appreciative, and respectful of people's commonalities as well as differences.

Section 2: This crafting of this environment will necessitate thoughtful and deliberative attention to recruitment and hiring procedures, and will continue through the retention and development of a diverse membership. The CDEIC shall act proactively in its evaluation and promotion of diversity and inclusivity within University College, prioritizing the creation of a critical mass of talented University College faculty and staff that will fully represent the excellence and diversity of our students, especially with respect to Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and LGBTQ+ identities. Our goal is to support all of our students by supporting all of our faculty.

Section 3: The crafting of the desired environment also requires that the CDEIC shall advocate to administration issues of diversity and equity on behalf of University College members to promote a sense of welcoming and belonging in University College.

Section 4: To support the CDEIC's purpose, we will engage in a myriad of activities, including but not limited to the following:

1. In consultation with the Dean and influenced by annual budgetary conditions and constraints, the CDEIC will utilize part of the annual budget to actively recruit diverse faculty and staff, especially Black, Indigenous, and Latinx faculty and staff.
2. Marketing, in collaboration with the College's communication team, the College's diversity and inclusivity programming, including the content development of the diversity program events that are going on.
3. Providing content development of the College's website focusing on diversity and inclusivity.
4. Collecting on an annual basis the views of University College faculty, staff and students on the status of diversity and inclusion priorities and initiatives in the college.
5. Analyzing policies, procedures, and initiatives with regard to diversity and inclusivity, including best practices for hiring and retaining faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.
6. Collaborating with Recruitment Inclusive Champions and other search committee members to ensure best practices for hiring and retaining faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.
7. Hosting the College's diversity programming and serving as an advocate voice for faculty, staff and students in defense of the value of diversity and inclusion.
8. Producing an annual report that specifies the College's diversity and inclusion goals and activities of the previous fiscal year and the budget and projected goals for the upcoming year. The annual report will be filed with University College and with IES, for the purpose of external review/accountability.

Article V: Bylaw Amendment

Any or all of the provisions of these bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed. The Amendment Process shall begin with notice of a proposal to amend in the CDEIC agenda and be considered at no fewer than two meetings of the Council prior to voting. A copy of the proposed amendment must be distributed with the agenda for each of the meetings in which amendments are discussed. A quorum of more than 50% of Council members must be present in order to vote on amendments, which must pass by a minimum of a two-thirds present affirmative vote. The Dean will ultimately affirm the bylaws and changes to them, based upon their consistency with the VCU Handbook and UC Bylaws.