



THE DIVISION OF INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Communication Plan & Development Guide



ELON
UNIVERSITY

DIVISION OF
Inclusive Excellence





Contents

PREAMBLE	1
WHY INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE	2
INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AT ELON	2
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	6
THE FRAMEWORK OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY	12
CONNECTING OUR WORK	14
CASE STUDY	16

PREAMBLE

Boldly Elon, Elon University’s strategic plan for 2030, aspires to build a healthier, more diverse and inclusive community where all students, faculty and staff experience belonging and well-being. This plan builds upon the work achieved in the unprecedented university commitment to diversity and global engagement from the previous strategic plan, The Elon Commitment. Now, Boldly Elon supports the development of intercultural and multifaith competencies, relying on a total community effort to achieve optimal results. Students, faculty and staff can contribute to accomplishing the following Boldly Elon initiatives:

- Create structures and learning opportunities that engage all students, faculty and staff in advancing their intercultural and multifaith learning and competencies.
- Increased representation and retention of students, faculty and staff.
- Strengthen support networks and increase staffing dedicated to the success of historically marginalized groups.
- Accelerate efforts to foster a dynamic and healthy work environment characterized by respect, inclusion, well-being and supported with current technologies and opportunities for flexibility.
- Further increase quantity, quality and diversity of full-time teaching faculty and achieve and continue investment in relationships that advance student success.
- Advance inclusive classrooms and pedagogies through research and faculty development.
- Advance understanding of town and university history through the acknowledgment of untold stories, toward a deeper understanding of who we were, who we are and who we aspire to be.

The range of focus offers multiple opportunities for individuals to enhance the Elon experience for all members of our community. To that end, the Division of Inclusive Excellence developed **a communication plan articulating the roles and responsibilities for providing diversity and inclusion services and providing guidance for schools and departments in their creation of unit-level diversity, equity and inclusion plans in line with best practice and accreditation standards, and with support of the shared governance process** (Institutional Priority 2021-22).

This plan aims to communicate how the Division of Inclusive Excellence will empower colleagues with content, strategies and consulting to improve the culture at Elon University. The plan’s success relies on effective communication, ensuring Elon is a university for the world. Collaborative leadership, fierce determination and unwavering kindness are foundational attributes for achieving campus-wide Inclusive Excellence.

Why Inclusive Excellence

Inclusive Excellence is the shared responsibility of Elon University members to act deliberately toward equitable outcomes through:

- collective strength derived from people of all identities, abilities and perspectives;
- pluralistic orientation reflected in pedagogies, programs and policies; and
- positive cross-cultural engagement at all times and in all places.

Inclusive Excellence frames diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and other constructs that support belonging and well-being.

VISION

Institutional: The creation of a community where people strive to dismantle oppression and where individuals flourish.

Divisional: A team of equity-centered practitioners developing equity-centered partners

MISSION

Institutional: Transform mind, body and spirit and encourage freedom of thought and liberty of conscience, in part by fostering respect for human differences.

Divisional: Expand perspectives of Elon University members leading to inclusive and equitable experiences and practices

Inclusive Excellence is foundational to Elon. The founders aspired to build “a college for the world.” All who have elected to be a part of this academic community have, in effect, committed to its mission, and thus are called to pursue and enact Inclusive Excellence.

Inclusive Excellence at Elon

The Division of Inclusion Excellence

In 2020, President Connie Ledoux Book promoted Dr. Randy Williams to Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence and launched the Division of Inclusive Excellence to provide vision, leadership and strategic coordination of university resources in accomplishing its goals.

President Book and Vice President Williams identified the following action steps to make Elon a more equitable and welcoming community:

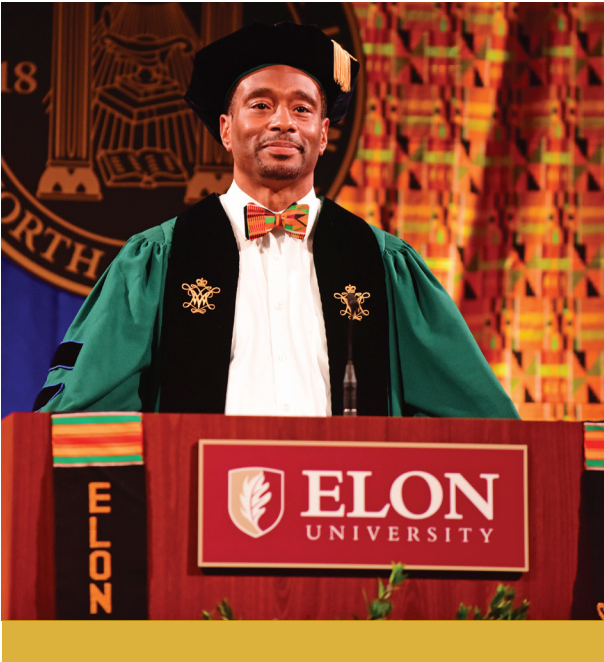
- Commit to university-wide growth and change in the areas of diversity, equity and Inclusive Excellence.
- Commit to new learning through curricular change and program development.
- Commit to achieving greater levels of faculty and staff diversity.
- Commit to inspired engagement with alumni, parents and friends to recruit and support students.

THE TEAM AND OUR ROLES

The division's leadership team comprises four members led by the Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence, who is the university's chief diversity officer and member of the president's senior leadership team. The remaining three members focus on faculty and staff development, undergraduate education and graduate and professional education. Some of their duties include:

Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence

- Advancing diversity, equity and inclusion goals across divisions and providing positional leadership and support to each of the vice presidents.
- Developing and advancing initiatives, in consultation with the president, that provide an equitable university experience for students, faculty, and staff.
- Supporting a lifelong approach to diversity, equity and inclusion that continues after students leave the university through our alumni affairs efforts.
- Supervising staff and faculty directors of programs within the division and co-supervising colleagues with DEI responsibilities in Admissions, Athletics, Human Resources, Student Life, and University Communications.
- Overseeing the President's Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence and the Committee on History and Memory.



Director of Inclusive Excellence Education and Development

- Providing personal and professional development opportunities primarily for faculty and staff while collaborating with campus partners that provide educational opportunities for students and alumni.
- Providing educational resources and programming for Elon and the broader community about issues of inclusivity, equity, intersections of identities, and use of inclusive language/strategies in the classroom and workplace settings.
- Overseeing systems responsive to bias-related incidents and collaborating with campus offices that provide resources, support, and resolution for bias-related incidents.
- Establishing, organizing, and maintaining a network of campus resources that have a focus on DEI development for faculty and staff.
- Collecting, analyzing, and interpreting campus climate and bias incidents data, and providing periodic reports of findings.

Director of Inclusive Excellence
for Graduate and Professional Education

- Leading anti-oppressive efforts and supporting students, faculty, staff, alumni and other community members who participate in the graduate and professional programs.
- Advising graduate and professional students from a variety of backgrounds, with a special focus on advising and providing avenues for addressing the concerns of students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds and identities.
- Developing programs for students, faculty, staff and other community members that promote intercultural competence and civil discourse and explore the intersections of antiracism, social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Partnering with faculty and deans to promote equity-centered hiring processes that ensure diversity among faculty and staff and to enhance classroom climate and pedagogy.
- Advocating for the interests of individual students and student groups by advising staff, faculty and administration on courses of action for dismantling oppressive practices and supporting an inclusive community.

Dean of Student Inclusive Excellence

- Leading student-centered initiatives to achieve the Boldly Elon goals to advance a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community.
- Serving as a member of both the Student Life and Inclusive Excellence leadership teams, sharing responsibility for leading long-range plans and annual priorities of the divisions and the university.
- Leading the implementation of equity audits across the Division of Student Life, coordinating the establishment of a process for staff to create individualized intercultural learning plans, working collaboratively to coordinate dialogue experiences for staff and students, and advising or leading other key initiatives.
- Providing guidance and support for two Student Life departments – the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education (CREDE) and the Gender and LGBTQIA Center (GLC).
- Establishing effective relationships with all identity center directors leading to enhanced outcomes for students.

Several campus members have responsibilities for advancing constructs that support belonging and well-being, resulting in a community where people strive to dismantle oppression and individuals flourish. These practitioners, listed below, include divisional members, campus partners and key groups working with the Inclusive Excellence leadership team to coordinate resources and enhance outcomes.

Leadership Team

Vice President & Associate Provost
for Inclusive Excellence

Director of Inclusive Excellence Education
& Development

Director of Inclusive Excellence for Graduate
& Professional Education

Dean of Student Inclusive Excellence

Divisional Members

Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement

Director of Project Pericles

Associate Director of Project Pericles

Director of Black Lumen Project

Associate Athletic Director and
Senior Women’s Administrator

Director of HR Compliance, Equal Opportunity & Title IX

Director of Admissions for Diversity and Access

Communications Specialist for Inclusive Excellence

Program Coordinator for Inclusive Excellence



Key Groups

Committee on Elon History and Memory

Elon Community Accessibility Team

President’s Advisory Council
on Inclusive Excellence

Latinx/Hispanic Advisory Council

Campus Partners

Alumni Affinity Networks

Center for Access and Success

Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education

Disabilities Resources

Elon College’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Gender and LGBTQIA Center

Isabella Cannon Global Education Center

Law School Antiracism Workgroup and
Community Inclusion Committee

Love School of Business Initiatives

President’s Student Leadership Advisory Council

School of Communications
Diversity Committee

School of Education’s
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

School of Health Sciences Diversity Committee

SGA Student Inclusive Campus Committee

Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: The Hub-and-Spoke Model

Elon's shared responsibility approach aligns with the hub-and-spoke model of the American Council on Education's *Organizing Shared Equity Leadership*. The hub-and-spoke model honors and strengthens existing programs while building campus-wide capacity toward a shared goal of Inclusive Excellence. The Division of Inclusive Excellence leadership team serves as the hub. Other campus members and groups with DEI-specific roles serve as spokes. These formal divisional connections are displayed on page 8.



DIVISIONAL MEMBERS are a network of individuals whose primary role is in other divisions with DEI-specific responsibilities in their units, and report directly to the Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence. This model enables these individuals to execute programming and priorities related to Inclusive Excellence within the unit's daily operations. Also, the hub monitors programming and unit-level priorities and then identifies and coordinates collaborative opportunities.



KEY GROUPS are included as a spoke as they are overseen by the hub, the Division of Inclusive Excellence. Key Groups consist of bodies charged with DEI-specific tasks and partner with the division as advisors. These are long-standing groups of faculty, staff and students that provide recommendations to enhance the sense of belonging for the Elon University community. These groups include collections of university community members who explore the lived experiences of specific populations and implement recommendations to improve those experiences.



President's Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence

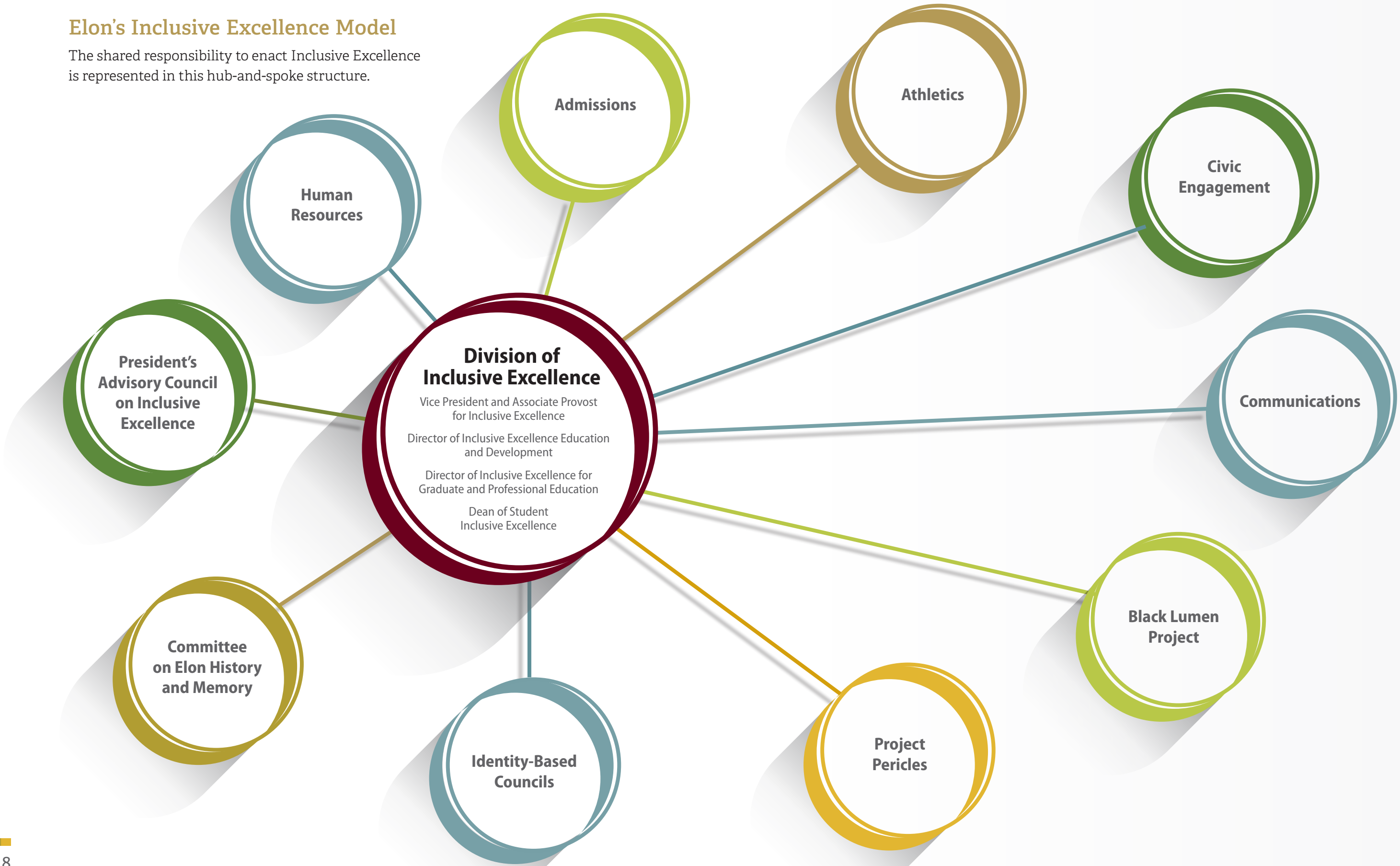
The President's Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence (PACIE) serves as an on-campus advisory body for the President and is comprised of action-oriented subcommittees of faculty and staff, who serve as institutional champions for inclusive excellence. Led by the Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence, this council has three responsibilities:

- champion the implementation of goals listed in Elon's 10-year Strategic Plan related to inclusive excellence;
- identify, gather, and disseminate information to communicate inclusive excellence efforts across faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, and community stakeholders; and
- develop measures to assess and foster inclusive excellence efforts including overall assessment, diffusion of innovation, continuous quality improvement, and sustainability plans.

CAMPUS PARTNERS are an integral part of the shared responsibility approach. These entities do not report directly to the division. However, in collaboration with the division, these groups support inclusive policies and practices. Campus partners include alumni affinity groups, identity centers and academic program DEI-related committees.

Elon's Inclusive Excellence Model

The shared responsibility to enact Inclusive Excellence is represented in this hub-and-spoke structure.



OUR SERVICES

Staff in the division work in partnership with stakeholders interested in creating a more just campus where expanded perspectives will inspire equity-centered behavior. Services include but are not limited to:

- Consulting on policy and practice development and the creation of unit-level Inclusive Excellence plans.
- Organizing expertise, programs and services, coordinating efforts, and working in solidarity toward inclusion and equity for all members.
- Offering guidance in response to instances not aligned with Inclusive Excellence.
- Providing resources and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.
- Communicating news, opportunities and advancements that relate to Inclusive Excellence.

**To request services, visit the [Division of Inclusive Excellence resources page](#) and complete a [Request for Services form](#).*

COMMUNICATING ABOUT INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

The Division of Inclusive Excellence is committed to promoting and celebrating the work of Elon University community members, leading the institution toward achieving Inclusive Excellence. Using various communication channels, the staff will provide multiple audiences with information about the university's efforts to create an equitable and inclusive community. The key audiences to reach are:

Students. Elon University has built a national reputation as the premier student-centered environment for experiential learning. Communicating with students about Inclusive Excellence enhances the collaborative culture at Elon and cultivates a more diverse, equity-centered, and inclusive student body.

Faculty and Staff. Boldy Elon, Elon's strategic plan for 2030, lists objectives to champion exceptional faculty and staff as one component of creating an inclusive and healthy community for success. Updating faculty and staff on the progress of initiatives and news regarding Inclusive Excellence encourages engagement in activities that elevate the environment for learning.

Volunteer Leadership and Elon Affiliates. Elon's Board of Trustees, advisory boards and councils, alumni, partners, parents and supporters contribute to the commitment to foster deep learning and better prepare students to lead in communities around the globe. The division finds it critical to communicate with institutional stakeholders about improving diversity, inclusion, and equity on campus.

Higher Education Community. To position Elon University as a leader in DEI, the division must uplift the Inclusive Excellence brand with other institutions and media outlets. The Division of Inclusive Excellence will use different communication channels to publicize Elon's approach to achieving Inclusive Excellence.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

News and Information Sharing. The Division of Inclusive Excellence partners with the Office of University Communications to produce news articles about student, faculty and staff DEI-related events and updates. The articles are published on the Today at Elon news site, The Magazine of Elon, and Elon social media platforms. Faculty and staff are encouraged to submit stories and story ideas to the communications specialist for Inclusive Excellence for news content coverage.

Huemanity of People Project. The **Huemanity** of people project is an integrated storytelling strategy for celebrating the foundation of Inclusive Excellence: the people of Elon University. Elon's students, faculty, staff, and alumni are the core of a relationship-rich campus. In addition to the Huemanity of People webpage, the stories are featured in The Magazine of Elon and Today at Elon. The associated photographs will be arranged on a wall in the Division of Inclusive Excellence suite, Powell 208.

Program Offerings. The Division of Inclusive Excellence presents to internal units by request. Additionally, divisional members and partners present to external groups. These opportunities allow the staff to share relevant information with participants, increasing their awareness of campus resources and advancements. The Office of Inclusive Excellence Education and Development supports faculty and staff with Inclusive Excellence-focused workshops.

Future Communication Methods. It is important to communicate effectively with our key audiences. Moving forward, the division will explore new communications channels to reach each key audience group. Potential projects include a podcast, newsletter and infographics, periodic videos and emails from the Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence, and communication tools for heritage and identity calendar events.



Morgan Ashmore L'23 participated in the **Huemanity of People** project to highlight the "Power of Representation" through her life experiences. View her story and more by scanning the qr-code or visiting elon.edu/huemanity.



The Framework of Shared Responsibility

Elon University strengthened its commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable campus in the Boldly Elon strategic plan for 2030. The Division of Inclusive Excellence firmly posits that becoming more inclusive and equitable will require a campus community effort of shared responsibility¹. Inclusive Excellence at Elon is upheld by three pillars: people, paradigm and praxis.

The Framework

PEOPLE	collective strength derived from people of diverse identities, abilities and perspectives	To continually expand the diversity of our community, we reach out to people of all backgrounds to join the Elon family and contribute their unique gifts.
PARADIGM	pluralistic orientation reflected in pedagogies, programs and policies	Through a fierce commitment to learning and serving, we give students, faculty and staff the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly diverse and complex world.
PRAXIS	positive cross-cultural engagement at all times and in all places	We hold each other accountable for setting goals, defining strategies and taking actions that continually move our community forward to becoming more pluralistic and just.

¹ The American Council on Education released “Shared Equity Leadership: Making Equity Everyone’s Work” (2021), in which researchers determined equity becomes everyone’s responsibility and multiple campus stakeholders collectively share leadership for advancing equity in higher education. (<https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Shared-Equity-Leadership-Work.pdf>)



SHARED LANGUAGE

Operational definitions of language precede a common understanding of our shared responsibility to dismantle oppression. Without censoring diverse perspectives, shared language is foundational for effective dialogue within the institution of community members working toward the same vision. The Division of Inclusive Excellence, in solidarity with campus partners, offers a glossary of terms associated with Inclusive Excellence, like the following core constructs.

Inclusive Excellence /// Inclusive Excellence is the shared responsibility of Elon University members to act deliberately toward equitable outcomes through:

- collective strength derived from people of all identities, abilities and perspectives;
- pluralistic orientation reflected in pedagogies, programs and policies;
- and positive cross-cultural engagement at all times and in all places.

Central to Elon’s mission of transforming mind, body and spirit, Inclusive Excellence requires addressing systems in ways that achieve equity and help individuals thrive.

Diversity /// Diversity is a multifaceted phenomenon of human differences related to identity, experiences, thoughts and perspectives. Elon believes that this wide range of differences is an essential component of the educational experience, academic excellence and an inclusive community.

Equity /// Equity is the practice of understanding and satisfying human needs, particularly those created by historical and social forces that have generated disparate outcomes for groups of people based on their identities. Elon conceptualizes equity also as a goal of eliminating oppressive practices and systems that prevent some groups from achieving their fullest potential.

Inclusion /// Inclusion is the outcome of creating environments in which any member of an organization feels welcomed, respected, supported and valued in the full range of experiences at Elon.

Well-being /// Well-being is a sense of engagement and connection one has with where they live and a feeling of both safety and pride in one’s community.

Belonging /// Elon’s wellness framework defines belonging as feeling a sense of community.

For more definitions, visit the definitions resource at elon.edu/inclusiveterms. This glossary is an evolving one that will provide users guidance and help ensure campus-wide consistency in language as the Elon University community strives for Inclusive Excellence. In this work, both terms and their meanings can shift over time as marginalized groups are increasingly heard and valued.

Connecting Our Work

We Are All Inclusive Excellence

The Division of Inclusive Excellence will guide schools and departments in developing unit-level DEI plans emphasizing shared governance and alignment with the operating framework. The Division is a consultant to all units creating DEI plans and supports each unit with recommendations specific to the unit's desired outcomes, assists with implementation as necessary, and assesses the unit's growth after the execution of the plan.

The campus entity seeking to create its DEI-related plan must lead the effort, while the Division of Inclusive Excellence leadership staff serves in support roles as needed. The following steps describe the process² for delivering customized services for requestors.

Creating Unit-Level DEI Plans

Unit-level DEI plans ultimately advance the institution's vision of Inclusive Excellence. A unit's goals should align with intuitional priorities that uplift an inclusive community. Rather than a lockstep approach, the process allows for customization based on the unit, and the steps are cyclical and reflect ongoing improvement.

Begin by completing a Request for Services form. All requests are subject to a preliminary consultation meeting to gather further information.

Step 1: Awareness

- Clarify Motivations. Why is it important for the unit to develop a DEI plan? Why now?
- Understanding the Situation. What is the current capacity for organizational learning? What type of change is the unit seeking: adjustments, transformation, or other? What are assets and potential barriers to executing a unit-level plan?
- Focus Population. Which stakeholders are the unit of focus for change?

Step 2: Information Gathering

- Retrieve Existing Information. Gather previous reports and findings related to your unit's current performance in creating an inclusive environment.
- Benchmark. Explore internal units and peer institutions seeking guidance for the unit's path forward.
- Generate New Data. Identify gaps in knowledge and collect data to complement current understanding.

Step 3: Analysis

- Process the Data. Use effective techniques to identify themes and make sense of the gathered data.
- Determine Feasibility. Determine the current developmental level and readiness for cultural change in the unit based on what is known and what is available to cultivate progress.

Step 4: Visioning/Planning

- Set a Vision. Declare how the unit will develop because of a well-informed and executed plan.
- Establish Goals. Identify measurable goals that support the unit's vision for achieving Inclusive Excellence.
- Resources, Partnerships and Strategies. Identify available resources and potential partnerships and implementation strategies.
- Action Plan. Develop a comprehensive plan of strategies to accomplish unit goals, including a unit-level communications plan.

Step 5: Action

- Act. Assign tasks and implement the plan.
- Prioritize and Communicate. Keep the plan live and visible. Update target audiences on progress.
- Monitor Advancement. Create a timeline and maintain and analyze progression.
- Unexpected Challenges. Address unexpected barriers immediately. Seek assistance as needed.
- Adjust and Progress. Adjust while retaining the vision.

Step 6: Evaluation & Reflection

- Evaluation. Assess outcomes and execution.
- Reflect. Discuss Internally with the unit and others.
- Continue. Return to step one or appropriate step for continual positive change.

The process of developing a unit-level DEI plan may vary depending on the department/school's development and readiness for change toward an equity-minded organization, reflecting a daily practice of Inclusive Excellence. Through effective communication with requesting entities and expert discernment, colleagues will customize a process that fits their unit.

² This process is informed by the Cycle of Action and Paradigm Shift Toward a Social Movement attributed to Dismantling Racism Works (www.dismantlingracism.org).

CASE STUDY

The Process in Action: Division of Finance and Administration DEI Plan

Step 1: Awareness

Members of the Division of Inclusive Excellence leadership team met with the Vice President for Financial and Administration to discuss engaging the Finance and Administration (F&A) leadership team in identifying three targets to promote inclusion within the division. This initial consultation meeting to develop awareness helped clarify goals and informed engagement activities for the F&A leadership team at a summer 2021 retreat.

Step 2: Information Gathering

In summer 2021, F&A hosted a leadership team retreat that included a workshop to begin the process of identifying the top three priorities that will support Finance and Administration in becoming a more inclusive division. Inclusive Excellence staff led the team in generating ideas and discussions for creating a DEI plan. F&A colleagues worked in groups, generated initial data, and completed a worksheet with specific actions for personal and professional improvements. After the retreat, the Division of Inclusive excellence staff met with several departments within F&A to lead workshops and better understand DEI interests, strengths, fears and opportunities.

In fall 2021, the Vice President for F&A invited colleagues in the F&A Division to complete a survey that collected data on the top three targets that departments should focus on to become more inclusive and suggestions for improvement.

Step 3: Analysis

From the survey responses, F&A leaders identified the top priorities: transparency in process, communication and data; inclusive community engagement; and recruitment, retention, and promotion. Additionally, the Inclusive Excellence staff coded the open-ended responses and identified themes to direct the division's work.

Step 4: Planning

F&A staff responded to the leadership's invitation to serve on three DEI teams defined by the top priorities from the survey responses. Twenty-five members from nine F&A departments accepted the invitation. Each DEI team will meet with Inclusive Excellence staff who helps orient the team to the charge of the group, make meaning of the data and devise a plan for creating measurable goals that respond to survey respondents.

F&A leadership will review and approve the plan. While the DEI teams will be led by F&A staff, Inclusive Excellence staff remain available as support and accountability partners, providing consultation and development services throughout the process.

(August 2022: Step 5 and Step 6 are forthcoming after Step 4 is complete.)



Summary

Elon University advanced its commitment to becoming a better institution by creating the Division of Inclusive Excellence. The dedication to more resources is aligned with the university's mission statement and the aspiration to make Elon an equitable and welcoming community for all its members.

This communication plan and development guide supports the initiatives in the Boldy Elon strategic plan. The division's operating framework is designed to include all individuals of the Elon University community. Shared governance informs the plan and how the Division of Inclusive Excellence staff will work in solidarity with others to accomplish strategic plan initiatives, communicate relevant information and assist the development of unit-level DEI plans.

Elon is motivated to create a community where people strive to dismantle oppression and where individuals flourish. The communication plan and development guide builds on the essential campus-wide effort to achieve the vision.

That is Inclusive Excellence.



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