

Statement on Inclusive Excellence

Inclusive Excellence derives from our Catholic Benedictine tradition.

Inclusive Excellence—the idea that academic excellence is best realized in a community that is diverse and inclusive — is central to our mission as a Catholic Benedictine learning community.

The Catholic tradition reaches out to all peoples; this is its universal imperative. As a Benedictine institution, The College of St. Scholastica demonstrates hospitality to all, respects all persons as children of God, and creates community that values the uniqueness of the individual and honors diverse opinions and experiences. In short, because we are Catholic and Benedictine, we are compelled to be diverse and inclusive.

Inclusive Excellence provides a focusing lens for all that we do.

Thinking about academic excellence in terms of diversity, equity and inclusion requires that we ask why there is an achievement gap between historically disadvantaged students and other students. Does the gap reflect differences in effort and ability, or does it run along ethnic, racial and socioeconomic fault lines? The action of making excellence inclusive requires that we uncover inequities in student and employee success, identify effective educational and workforce practices, and build such practices organically for sustained institutional change. Inclusive Excellence abides by the principle that the College cannot consider itself to have achieved excellence unless all students and employees feel empowered to succeed, and there is equity in access, opportunity, and success.

Realizing Inclusive Excellence thus requires a transformation of our College.

This means we need to examine our college's policies and systems for evidence of in-group favoritism and inequitable treatment of some students and employees. We need to find our blind spots and correct them.

This entails establishing a comprehensive, coherent and well-coordinated set of systemic strategies and actions that focus specifically on *excellence, fostering greater diversity, equity and inclusion, and accountability throughout the organization.

Every core aspect of our College, including academic and institutional priorities, student and employee successes, high-quality learning and work environments, leadership, quality improvement initiatives, decision making, day-to-day operations, and organizational culture, will be affected.

Inclusive Excellence is not a free-standing initiative to be treated as separate or distinct from other College planning and operational efforts. It is not additional work; it is the work. It needs to be embedded into all aspects of College operations. It must be a coordinated effort; systemic, deliberate and intentional.

*Underlined words are defined at the end of the document.



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Inclusive Excellence 2025

By 2025, it will be evident that Inclusive Excellence is a core value of the institution. We envision a community that goes beyond tolerance of difference to become one that is guided by the principles of equity, social justice, cultural fluency, and engaged citizenship. Here are some tangible markers of success:

Access, Equity and Success

- Policies and practices are developed and revised to allow equitable access, progress, success, safety, and recognition for all members of our community.
- Achievement of greater compositional diversity among students, faculty, staff and Board of Trustees.
- Policies, procedures, decisions and practices promote a sense of equity mindedness rather than deficit mindedness.
- Improved retention rates and upward mobility for faculty and staff who are members of underrepresented populations.
- Increased proportion of students of color in good academic standing.
- Increased proportion of students of color in good financial standing.
- Increased retention and graduation rates for all St. Scholastica students with a decrease in achievement gaps.

Student Learning and Development

- Measurable evidence of the commitment to systemically embed principles of Inclusive Excellence into all core academic activities.
- Demonstrated improvement in faculty cultural fluency as reflected in pedagogical practices that create a more inclusive classroom environment and effectively address issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Increased cultural fluency of students as assessed through established, measurable indicators tied to student learning outcomes.

Campus Climate

- Improved campus climate that provides a strong sense of belonging and community where all students, staff, and faculty feel valued and respected regardless of their background. They report feeling welcome and included across the St. Scholastica community.

Employee and Trustee Development

- Increased participation by staff, faculty and trustees in professional development around topics of Inclusive Excellence.
- Increased cultural fluency of staff, faculty and students as assessed through established, measurable indicators tied to faculty and staff performance analysis and student learning outcomes.

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Organizational Excellence

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion are institutionalized as core values of the College and used to inform decision making, educational and work practices, and policy making.
- Intentions and actions of the inclusive community align with its impact. Interactions are void of microaggressions and defensiveness and are indicative of an environment where learning is honored.
- Marketing materials reflect an authentically diverse and inclusive representation of people associated with the College. Cultural fluency is clearly represented in our narrative and our “because.”
- Allocated resources will reflect a commitment to Inclusive Excellence throughout the College.
- The College of St. Scholastica is seen as a model nationally making Inclusive Excellence operational; this will lead to positive recruitment efforts and will position the College to apply for larger grants.

The College of St. Scholastica community will engage in ongoing dialogue and education. In order to accomplish this, every member of the College community commits to increasing individual capacities and fluency in addition to incorporating strategies and actions that create and maintain an institutional infrastructure that centers diversity, equity and inclusion in its quest for holistic excellence. The community recognizes that ongoing dialogue and education requires the sharing and analyzing of information.

Communicating vital information about Inclusive Excellence and institutional vibrancy at The College of St. Scholastica is the responsibility of all campus constituents including students, faculty and staff. The entire community – not simply one office or individual – is responsible for creating institutional transformation.

Inclusive Excellence articulates our unique identity

At The College of St. Scholastica, we recognize and emphasize our responsibility and commitment – grounded in mission – to support both students and employees in succeeding in a diverse and global world. Inclusive Excellence will increasingly become a distinguishing element of The College of St. Scholastica experience. It will come to reflect who we are and how we are experienced by students, employees and the broader community.

