



### **Building a Campus Culture of Diversity and Inclusion (2015- )**

In 1866, exactly 100 years before the first class entered Virginia Wesleyan, the land on which our University lies was used to help recently freed slaves make the transition to freedom. Throughout its history, our campus has placed a priority on being a dynamic and cohesive community where significant transitions occur in people's lives, and to be a place that embraces and celebrates diversity and inclusion. We are committed to continual efforts to build a community that is not only welcoming and supportive of all, but that also empowers all members of the Virginia Wesleyan family to have a voice and to be advocates for themselves and for each other.

#### **Our last five years:**

2015: We revised the student scholarship program to place a stronger emphasis on meeting the needs of first generation and historically underserved and disenfranchised populations.

2016: The roles of our University Title IX Coordinator and Deputy Title IX Coordinators were expanded to better support and educate the campus community.

2016: The President's Council for Inclusive Communities was reconstituted with an updated agenda and broader representation from campus and community stakeholders.

2016: We established, with generous support of private donors, a summer pilot student work program to assist students with financial challenges.

2016: The VWU website and marketing materials were reviewed and updated to more accurately reflect diversity on campus.

2016: We added women's golf as an intercollegiate sport.

2017: We increased the membership of underrepresented populations on the Alumni Council and Board of Trustees.

2017: We formalized the *Opus* program as a summer initiative to assist students with financial challenges.

2017: The VWU Black Alumni Association was established and is represented on the VWU Alumni Council and the President's Council for Inclusive Communities.

2017: We undertook, with the guidance of outside counsel, a comprehensive analysis of our degree completion rates, paying particular attention to first generation and historically underserved and disenfranchised populations, to determine how we could better support our students.

2017: Volunteer Hampton Roads established an office on the VWU campus, allowing for a stronger

partnership and more opportunities for our students.

2017: We strengthened our support of our LBGTQA+ community members with the development and implementation of new initiatives and practices.

2017: We were a partner in the development of Tidewater Collegiate Academy to serve underrepresented populations in the Coastal Virginia community, creating a unique national model.

2017: We created a 2 + 2 program for underrepresented men and women in partnership with Tidewater Community College in Virginia Beach.

2018: We added women's swimming as an intercollegiate sport.

2018: We created multiple student organizations to promote and nurture diversity and inclusiveness.

2018: To insure equity for LBGTQA+ community members, we added "Gender Identity and Expression" to the University's Equal Opportunity Employer statement and other University documents.

2018: We created a policy and process for community members to indicate their desired prefix (Mr., Ms., Miss, Mrs., or Dr.) for institutional mailing and internal correspondence.

2018: We identified gender neutral restrooms.

2018: Through the support of a generous donor, we secured funding to establish an Africana Studies program and to develop a mentorship program for African-American students.

2018: The Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities established a Hampton Roads regional office on our campus. 2018: We expanded recruitment of international students and focused greater efforts on underrepresented countries.

2018: We developed a speakers' bureau dedicated to bringing prominent African-American leaders to speak to the campus community.

2018: We developed a calendar of events that marks and recognizes religious and cultural holidays and offers diverse cross-cultural programs.

2018: We were ranked 23rd in Ethnic Diversity among liberal arts colleges by *U.S. News & World Report* and recognized as a top performer on social mobility.

2018: We became an active member of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities to support our commitment to the success of our diverse student body, our efforts within our community, and to collaborate with other socially conscious colleges and universities.

2018: We advocated strongly against the stated United Methodist Church policy on LGBTQ members and clergy.

2018: Safe Space workshop was reintroduced to faculty and staff.

2019: We developed and implemented a housing policy for individuals desiring gender inclusive options.

2019: Dr. Brian Kurisky was appointed the first Chief Diversity Officer for Virginia Wesleyan University.

2019: We hosted Dr. Janice Underwood, the Chief Diversity Officer for the Commonwealth of Virginia, to speak to the campus community and discuss the establishment of diversity priorities.

2019: We formalized a calendar and appropriately recognize days/holidays for diverse communities.

2019: We worked with our partners at Sentara Sports Medicine to provide a more gender balanced sports medicine staff that reflects the growth in women's intercollegiate athletics.

2019: A student version of the Safe Space workshop was introduced.

2020: VWU established the MLK Jr. Legacy Award, to be awarded each January to a student that represents the ideals set forth by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

2020: We charged the Robert Nusbaum Center with facilitating discussions of race on our campus, in our community, and in the nation.

2020: We joined the Consortium for Faculty Diversity to help diversify the faculty.

2020: We entered into a partnership with Lakeland University Japan, creating an international partnership and campus presence in Asia.

2020: We expanded paid internship opportunities for students from underrepresented populations.

2020: We developed bridge programs between VWU's Office of Diversity, the Robert Nusbaum Center, and the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, to offer programs and opportunities for meaningful dialogue.

2020: The Women's Resource Center redefined itself as Office of Gender and Sexuality Equity to better reflect its current mission and campus need.

2020: We reallocated staffing in some sports (cross country, indoor/outdoor track, golf, swimming) to create better gender balance in the Athletic Department coaching staff.

2020: Unconscious Bias workshop was introduced to the campus.

2020: VWU joined the Campus Pride Index, which measures the campus climate for LGBTQIA+ individuals. Our Year 1 score was 4 out of 5 stars.

2020: We launched the preferred name initiative so that students can have their preferred name shared with faculty members prior to the start of class to aid inclusion in the classroom.

2020: VWU received an NCAA Division III diversity funding grant for a diversity intern and committed to annual involvement in the NCAA Diversity and Inclusion campaign/program.

2020: We joined the Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance (LACRELA), coordinated by the University of Southern California Race and Equity Center. Membership in the Alliance includes three campus climate surveys – students (year 1), faculty (year 2) and staff (year 3) and a variety of professional learning opportunities for faculty and staff as well as quarterly meetings for presidents of the Alliance member colleges.

### **Our next steps:**

2021: The National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates (NACCC) student survey will be administered with membership in LACRELA.

2021: Eight members of the faculty and staff will participate in twelve, 3-hour, interactive sessions led by highly respected leaders with membership in LACRELA.

2021: The President will participate in quarterly meetings to share strategies, seek advice, and identify ways to leverage the Alliance for collective impact on racial equity in higher education with membership in LACRELA.

2021: We will establish an annual marquee event, bringing in a keynote speaker and other resources, that focuses on topics impacting underrepresented populations.

2021: We will establish an award recognizing an outstanding student of color for their academic achievement and contributions to the campus community to be given annually on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

2021: We will develop a plan to increase diversity in all campus hiring to mirror the profile of the campus community.

2021: We will continue to strengthen and market VWU's national ranking in social mobility and diversity among National Liberal Arts Colleges.

2021: We will separate the NCAA Senior Woman Administrator role from that of the Athletic Director to ensure another strong female voice in the Athletic Department.

2021: We will undertake an institutional review of all faculty, staff and student handbooks to ensure fairness and equity in University process and policies.

2021: We will establish faculty, staff and contract service development programs on diversity.

2021: We will expand our 2 + 2 program for underrepresented men and women to include the Virginia Community College System.

2021: We will plan for a post-pandemic approach to globalization.

2022: We will develop an orientation program for all new employees that offers education on how to best support our multicultural student body.

2022: Faculty (including full-time, adjunct, and part-time instructors) will participate in a workplace climate survey, administered by LACRELA.

2023: We will expand international recruitment and achieve an international student population of 100 students.

2023: Staff at all levels will participate in a workplace climate survey, administered by LACRELA.