

## Statement of Values and Commitment to Action

Texas Wesleyan University was founded through the early Wesleyan/Methodist emphasis on works of mercy: to seek justice, end oppression and discrimination by establishing education, health care, and housing organizations. Through the generations, the University has embraced the values brought to life by that tradition including wisdom, knowledge, learning, community and justice. The University's new Engage 2025 Strategic Plan places an emphasis on community, engagement and inclusion.

The call to action to more fully embrace diversity, equity and inclusion on our campus is grounded in the shared values upon which our University was founded.

For several months, numerous members of our community have been working on significant and meaningful ways to affect change consistent with the call to action. The call to action confirms our need to affect change and provides welcome suggestions for continuous improvement.

The University is happy to confirm the incorporation of the call to action's ideas and concepts in our action plans.

- **ASE Classes** – The first-year student seminar class, ASE, is an important avenue in which we may affect the classroom experiences of our students. During the 2021-22 academic year, all ASE classes included a diversity component. The University will expand the diversity modules for academic year 2022-23 to include topics of microaggressions, implicit bias, and prejudice. The Dean of Freshmen Success supervises the ASE program and will lead this effort as the University prepares for the fall 2022 semester. This planning will include input from leaders of various multicultural student groups on campus.
- **Social Science Curriculum** – Senior academic leadership has been making strides to affect the curricular experiences of our students as it relates to multiculturalism, inclusion and anti-intolerance.
  - Multicultural Curriculum – During the 2021-22 academic year, the General Education Curriculum (GEC) Revisioning Committee has identified multicultural competence and democratic citizenship in a diverse society as key elements to a Texas Wesleyan University education. The Associate Provost coordinates with the faculty on this work to revision the GEC and will work with the faculty to implement the GEC revisioning project. This work will continue through the spring semester of 2022 into the 2022-23 academic year. It will include input from leaders of various multicultural student groups on campus.

- Culturally Relevant Teaching – The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) provides professional growth and training opportunities for our faculty. During the 2021-22 academic year, CETL offered workshops on culturally relevant teachings to engage and connect students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to course content and learning outcomes. The Director of CETL will lead the effort to amplify these workshops during the summer of 2022 so that every faculty member has the opportunity to participate and incorporate effective strategies in their courses for the 2022-23 academic year.
- Cultural Studies Courses – Research has shown that cultural studies promote respect and understanding among races, supports student success, and teaches critical thinking skills. The Provost and VP of Academic Affairs, working with a dean and faculty members, will conduct a benchmarking study to evaluate the feasibility of developing a cultural studies course(s), certificate program, minor, or major. The estimated completion date of this project is December 2022.
- **Cultural Competency that Empowers Students** – Multicultural competencies are not only important to the student experience, but for life after Texas Wesleyan as a member of a global and diverse society. The ASE class modules, strengthening of the social science curriculum and the GEC, and culturally relevant teaching workshops mentioned previously will improve overall cultural competency on campus. In addition to these actions, the university has committed funding of a full-time staff member in the Office of Student Affairs to implement diversity and inclusion programming to empower students to engage and get the most out of their college experience. This Coordinator for Student Diversity and Inclusion Programs position was filled in summer 2021 and increased student diversity and inclusion programming is being developed. Planning for this programming will include input from leaders of various multicultural student groups on campus. A full year of student diversity and inclusion programming will be offered in the 2022-23 academic year.
- **Culturally Diverse Faculty** – The University is committed to building a culturally diverse faculty committed to teaching and working in a multicultural environment. Each member of the University community contributes to the development and maintenance of a healthy and equitable working environment in which diversity is valued. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will lead a working group of faculty members to review and identify barriers to fulfilling our commitment as well as to develop strategies to overcome those challenges. The working group will begin meeting in the spring semester of 2022 and will present their report to the President by the end of the fall semester of 2022.

- **Reporting and Accountability** – Currently, a bias incident report form exists through the TXWES website. However, in order to fully address instances of bias in and outside of the classroom, a Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) will be created by the start of fall 2022. The Vice President for Student Affairs will draft, propose and administer a bias incident response protocol, including the composition and responsibilities of the BIRT, by the start of fall 2022. This protocol will outline specific reporting structures, protections afforded individuals who file reports, and processes by which reported incidents will be addressed.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Structure** – The Diversity and Inclusion Council was created in 2017 to increase multicultural awareness and cross-cultural competencies through exploration of our collective experiences. The Council has been able to sponsor numerous opportunities for competency training, discussions and events to facilitate these explorations. While funding has been provided for the Council’s programming upon request, the University recognizes that the Council could be more effective with a budget devoted to its purpose. As a result, the University leadership will include funds for the Council for academic year 2022-23 in the University budget presented to the Board of Trustees in April. Those funds have already been requested by the Chair of the Council and approved by the Vice President for Finance and Administration and the President for inclusion in next year’s budget submission.
- **Athletics** – The University recognizes the tremendous responsibility that comes with the status of student-athlete. Much is asked of these students and corresponding support is critical to balance the challenge that comes with the role. To best address some of the concerns that have been shared, the Athletics Department, led by the Athletic Director, will benchmark their policies with other institutions in the NAIA and the NCAA divisions. A policy will be drafted and proposed to specifically regulate the number of hours and days per week student-athletes may engage in sport-related activities (practices, meetings, etc.) not including study halls or supplemental instruction. Additionally, many of the University fundraising and community engagement efforts are currently geared at supporting the student-athlete through new and/or improved facilities. These capital projects will decrease travel times while improving the overall student-athlete experience.
- **Multicultural Space** – The importance of belonging is paramount to our students’ success. For students who are traditionally underrepresented, physical space intentionally designed for their use and purpose can have a major impact to their sense of belonging and significance. The Vice President for Student Affairs has been evaluating University spaces that will serve this purpose. The University will work to identify an appropriate space on campus by the end of the spring 2022 semester. Identification of this space will include input from leaders of various multicultural student groups on campus.

The planning and implementation for our steps to tackle these issues is ongoing and will include written reports to the President on the barriers to change, how we can overcome them and an estimated timeline for implementation. The reports will be submitted to the President by the end of the spring 2022 semester from the following senior university leaders:

- ASE Class Modules – Dean of Freshmen Success/Associate Provost /Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Strengthening Social Science Curriculum – Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences /Associate Provost/Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Culturally Diverse Faculty – Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Reporting and Accountability – Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
- Diversity and Inclusion Council – Chair of Diversity & Inclusion Council/Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Athletics – Athletic Director
- Cultural Competency that Empowers Students – Coordinator for Student Diversity and Inclusion Programs/Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
- Multicultural space – Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

The call to action to more fully embrace diversity, equity and inclusion is a priority for the University. It is committed to working collectively with all stakeholders to achieve our mutual goals.

**Frederick G. Slabach**

President | Texas Wesleyan University