



METROPOLITAN
STATE UNIVERSITYSM
OF DENVER

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a paintbrush, applying red paint to a large abstract shape on a canvas. The shape is filled with red and yellow, and outlined with blue lines. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color.

2020-2021
E Q U I T Y
D I V E R S I T Y
& I N C L U S I O N
R E P O R T

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a multi-story brick building, likely a university structure, captured during the "golden hour" of sunset. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, red, and purple, with soft clouds. The building's windows are lit from within, and some architectural details like cornices and arched windows are visible. A sign that reads "HOP STORAGE" is partially visible on one of the lower levels of the building.

EQUITY

Historically and politically, equity refers to the process of creating equivalent outcomes for members of historically underrepresented and oppressed groups. Equity is about moving toward ending systemic discrimination against people based on their identity and background, and it focuses on filling areas where gaps exist based on institutional needs to achieve diversity and inclusion.

DIVERSITY

Conceptualizing diversity through an equity-and-inclusion understanding provides focus on the social representations and institutional processes that could cause groups or individuals to be systematically excluded from full participation in higher education. It also relates to the understanding that benefits for some groups are embedded in the organizational aspects of the University. This includes not only social identities and characteristics but processes such as design of curriculum, admissions policies and practices, hiring practices, budgeting, tenure decisions and any other day-to-day business decisions made within the institution.

INCLUSION

Inclusion exists when traditionally marginalized individuals and groups feel a sense of belonging and are empowered to participate in majority culture as full and valued members of the community, shaping and redefining that culture in different ways.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Dear Roadrunners,

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is pleased to publish Metropolitan State University of Denver's inaugural annual Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Report. The report, which will be released annually, highlights a variety of equity, diversity and inclusion efforts and initiatives from within the office and across the University.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion's goal is to support and promote equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of campus life, through the development of initiatives that advance MSU Denver's stated goal of becoming an anti-racist institution. At MSU Denver, equity, diversity and inclusion are central tenets of our institutional mission and identity, woven into the very fabric of MSU Denver's policies and practices.



MSU Denver is the most diverse four-year institution of higher education in Colorado, with close to 50% of enrolled undergraduate students identifying as people of color and 56% in the first generation in their family to go to college. We are a go-to university for veterans, LGBTQIA+ students and people who come from socioeconomically modest backgrounds. It is who we are.

MSU Denver seeks to promote an inclusive community of learners, an awareness and appreciation of diverse perspectives and identities, and the establishment of policies, practices, programs and resources designed to embrace and enhance equity, diversity and inclusion at the University. Equity, diversity and inclusion are core values of the University and represent one of the five pillars of the University's new 2030 Strategic Plan. MSU Denver embodies diversity in all of its rich representations and expressions. We commit ourselves to justice that provides a foundation for equity and inclusion, and we work to mend internal and external inequities through the cultivation of a vibrant, healthy community.

We courageously and boldly step into the national call and moment. Through the hardships and challenges of this pandemic and the ongoing call for racial equity and justice, we take concrete actions by continuing to reexamine our policies and practices to advance this important work. And we embody the type of inclusive engagement and learning among faculty, staff and students that is necessary to contribute to and continue to advance and strengthen our American democracy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Benitez Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Benitez Jr., Ph.D., Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The staff in the office is small but mighty. Together, they work with units across the University to embed equity, diversity and inclusion throughout MSU Denver.



MICHAEL BENITEZ JR., PH.D.
VICE PRESIDENT FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



JULIE SHARER-PRICE
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



MANUEL DEL REAL, PH.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR HSI INITIATIVES AND INCLUSION



CHALANE LECHUGA, PH.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF CHICANA/O STUDIES
DIRECTOR OF FACULTY DIVERSITY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



JEREMY VANHOOSER
DIVERSITY COORDINATOR

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COUNCIL

MSU Denver has been committed to equity, diversity and inclusion since the University's founding. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion brings together faculty and staff members and students from across the University to advance this commitment.

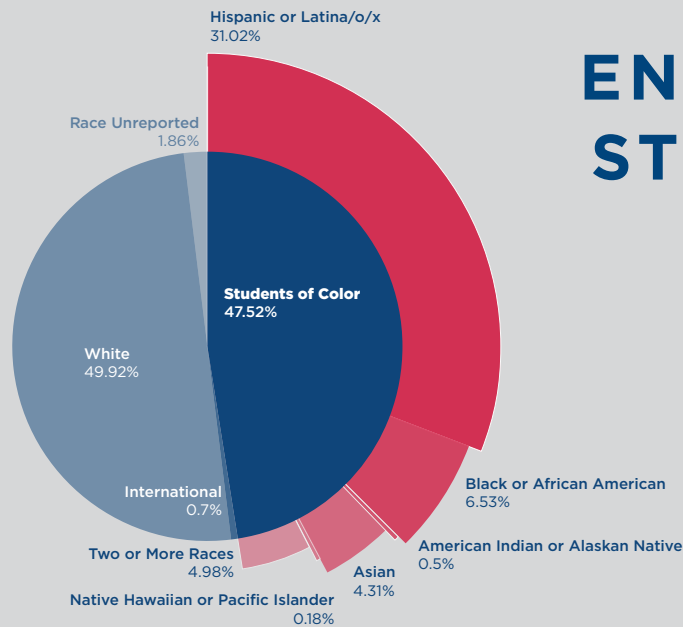
This council is charged with examining equity, diversity and inclusion issues at MSU Denver with respect to policy and practice from multiple perspectives and across different functional areas. These include recruitment and retention for student, faculty and staff members, community-mending, outreach to diverse constituents internally and externally, and campus climate and institutional culture.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council is a consistent structure-focused council representing, leading and coordinating equity, diversity and inclusion work at MSU Denver. The council consists of five committees, each addressing structural themes and goals developed through a combination of campuswide listening sessions, existing and new data, and campus-forum conversations.

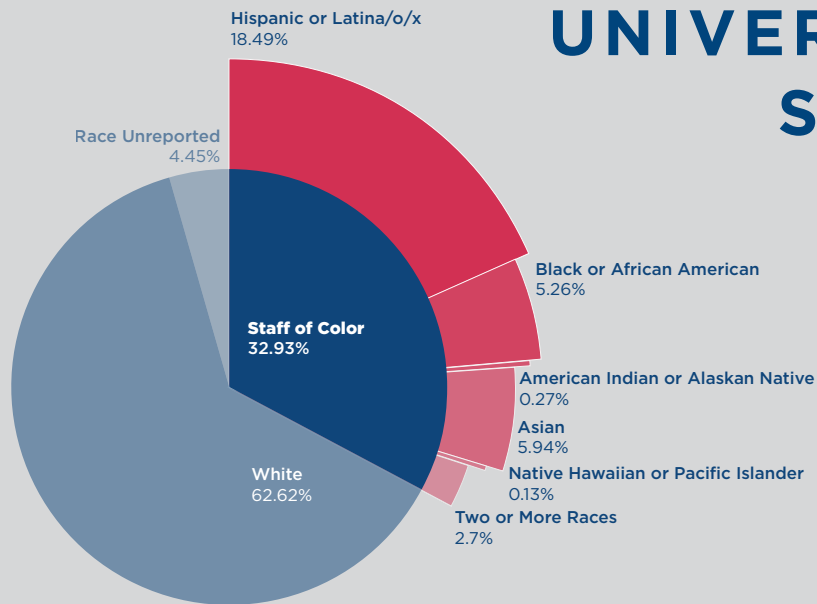


REPRESENTATION MATTERS

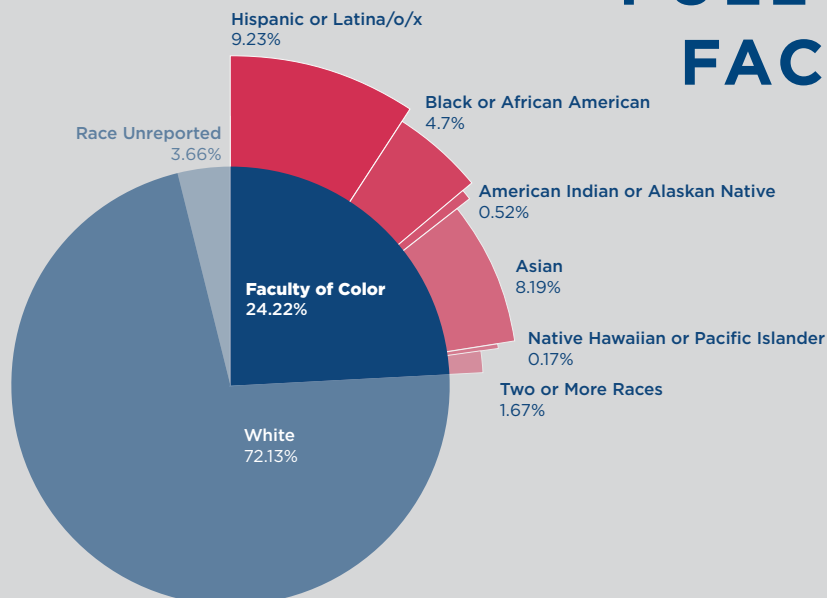
ENROLLED STUDENTS



UNIVERSITY STAFF



FULL-TIME FACULTY



HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION



IN 2007, MSU DENVER EMBARKED ON A 12-YEAR INITIATIVE TO EARN HSI STATUS, A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DESIGNATION THAT THE UNIVERSITY ACHIEVED IN SPRING 2019.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions are colleges and universities where Hispanic/Latina/o/x students compose at least 25% of the undergraduate, full-time equivalent (FTE) student body.

The average educational and general expenditures of the institution are low per FTE undergraduate student compared with the average educational and general expenditures per FTE undergraduate student of institutions that offer similar instruction.

HSI institutions must meet eligibility requirements and submit documentation annually to the U.S. Department of Education.

This federal designation allows MSU Denver to competitively apply for federal grants aimed at supporting HSIs.

HSI GRANTS AND FUNDING

2019 POHA Grant

MSU Denver's Department of Nutrition was awarded a \$2 million Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (POHA) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant focuses on encouraging students from diverse backgrounds and those with interest in serving diverse populations to pursue post-baccalaureate study at MSU Denver. The MSU Denver Department of Nutrition has conducted outreach to high school students, provided financial support to students, hired diverse support staff, offered regular seminars and hosted an annual conference focused on diversity in dietetics and health care.

2020 HSI/MSI CARES Act

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF)

MSU Denver received \$2,765,922 from the HSI/MSI CARES Act – funding that helps support people negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. This grant supported a number of programs and projects such as:

- Teaching and Learning Assistants Programs
- Faculty Cohort through the Association of College and University Educators
- Laptop-rental program for students, faculty and staff members



SIGNATURE EVENTS

MSU Denver holds a number of signature events. Some of the longest-running programs and University traditions focus on equity, diversity and inclusion. These include the Richard T. Castro and Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorships, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast and Higher Education Diversity Summit.



RICHARD T. CASTRO DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSORSHIP

The Richard T. Castro Distinguished Visiting Professorship was initiated in 1997 by the Department of Chicana/o Studies to foster multiculturalism, diversity and academic excellence at MSU Denver. The professorship brings renowned Latinx scholars, artists and leaders of distinction to MSU Denver to conduct classes, seminars, performances and lectures for students, faculty, staff members and the larger Denver community.

MSU Denver hosted a number of virtual events and conversations with 2020 Castro Professor Angela Valenzuela, Ph.D., who discussed the theme “Reclaiming Schooling/ Recuperando la Enseñanza: radically reimagining the work of education.”



msudenver.edu/castro



RACHEL B. NOEL DISTINGUISHED VISITING PROFESSORSHIP

The Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorship was initiated in 1981 to foster multiculturalism, diversity and academic excellence at MSU Denver. The professorship brings renowned scholars and artists of distinction to MSU Denver to conduct classes, seminars, performances and lectures for students, faculty and the larger Denver community.

This year, the committee hosted a virtual professorship, bringing Chancellor Emerita Phoebe A. Haddon as the 2021 Professor. To commemorate the 40th year of the Professorship, several past Noel Professors participated in a Panel of Equals, sharing thoughts on the theme of Hope and Healing.



msudenver.edu/noel



REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PEACE BREAKFAST

The first Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Breakfast at MSU Denver was held January 15, 1992, when about 50 attendees from campus and the Denver community gathered to celebrate King's life and legacy. The annual event also celebrates and recognizes MLK Peace Award winners – campus and community members who keep King's spirit and dream alive through their actions.

This year's theme, "Know Justice, Know Peace," was brought to life by emcee Amber Mozet and keynote speaker Melina Abdullah, Ph.D. A panel discussion followed the breakfast to explore the theme further.

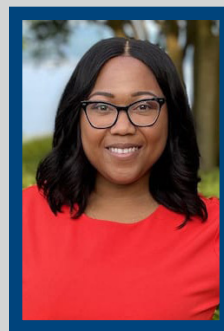


msudenver.edu/mlk



HIGHER EDUCATION DIVERSITY SUMMIT

The Higher Education Diversity Summit is a major conference that is leading the conversation about diversity, social justice and inclusive excellence in Colorado. The Higher Education Diversity Summit (HEDS) continues to expand and improve to become a leading conference on diversity issues and inclusive excellence in the nation and beyond. HEDS keynote speakers in 2020 were Laura Rendón, Ph.D., and Natasha Croom, Ph.D. Attendees include students and members of the MSU Denver faculty, staff and community, all of whom bring important and varying perspectives to the inclusive excellence conversation.



heds365.org

MSU DENVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In June 2020, following the worldwide protests sparked by the murder of George Floyd by police in Minnesota, the Board of Trustees issued a resolution expressing the University's commitment to engage in the anti-racism work necessary to create systemic change. This resolution outlined the trustees' commitment to leading, organizing and establishing an anti-racist institution. These commitments included:

- Reviewing University policies to dismantle institutionalized racism.
- Ensuring that the University is equipped with the tools and support to dismantle structural racism.
- Leading conversations centered on racial justice in Colorado.
- Engaging in ongoing training on racial bias and institutionalized racism.

In addition, the Board of Trustees created a new subcommittee to understand and engage in the work of racial justice, the Committee on Sustainable, Racial Justice.



MSU DENVER FOUNDATION

During the past year, the MSU Denver Foundation board developed goals and action steps intended to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in its work. These goals included:

- Intentionally shaping the Foundation Board of Directors so that it can employ a diversity, equity and inclusion lens for its work.
- Building on MSU Denver's 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan; diversity, equity and inclusion goals; Hispanic-Serving Institution status; and student diversity as key components of the comprehensive fundraising campaign.
- Exploring the alignment of the Foundation's investment strategy with its core values.

After adopting these goals, the Foundation selected a new investment-management group, Syntrinsic, to direct the University's assets. The MSU Denver Foundation is engaged in a yearlong effort to transition its portfolio to one that reflects the University's values, including equity, diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the board has thoughtfully recruited new members to improve its representational diversity and align with its goals.

DIVERSITY INITIATIVES AND SPONSORSHIPS

Black World Conference

The 38th Annual Black World Conference examined the confluence of Covid-19 and the movement for racial justice. The conference featured renowned author and academic Michael Eric Dyson and Academy Award-nominated trumpet player Terence Blanchard as speakers.

Building Navigational Capital and Community Among Future Teachers of Color

This initiative is to foster community among future teachers of color at MSU Denver so that they feel supported and empowered as they navigate a predominantly white field. Faculty members from multiple departments attended to answer questions that students of color had about navigating higher education and thriving in their future profession. The event also served as a listening session, inviting students to share what they would like from faculty members and advisors to thrive at MSU Denver.

Dark Lioness Exhibition

Zanele Muholi: Somnyama Ngonyama, Hail the Dark Lioness, was an international photography exhibition with 100 self-portraits. Celebrated visual activist Muholi uses their body as a canvas to confront the deeply personal politics of race and representation in the visual archive. Each black-and-white self-portrait asks critical questions about social injustice, human rights and contested representations of the Black body.



CIRCLE/STAMP Conferences

This resource for local middle school students covered a wide array of topics, including digital allyship, environmental justice, anti-racism, and healthy relationships and wellness. This experience offers inclusive, brave spaces where students can authentically share, discuss and explore important topics that directly impact them. At the lunch hour, MSU Denver's Admissions and Immigrant Services representatives spoke with students as part of our outreach and recruitment efforts.

Colorado Association of Bilingual Education Gala

Sponsorship of the gala was a great opportunity to continue to be a presence in the community and to support the students we serve. It was also a chance to highlight the good work that MSU Denver does in supporting Latinx and bilingual communities in the broader Denver community.

Colorado Mentors Program

This program helped students living outside of Denver to feel connected to MSU Denver. Faculty and staff members volunteered their time to attend training and meet with students. The program has aided in building connections, answering questions and advising students so they feel a stronger sense of belonging and are more likely to be retained for semesters to come.

Displaced Aurarians: Honoring the Past to Plan for the Future

This event engaged the campus community in conversations about the history of the Chicana/o community displaced by the construction of the Auraria Campus. Panelists included Councilwoman Jamie Torres, alumnus Ean Thomas Tafoya, alumna Virginia Castro and displaced Aurarian Frances Torres.



JTOH Summer Leadership Program

Every summer for eight years, the JTOH program has hosted a free multicultural summer leadership program called the La Alma Jaguar Club. MSU Denver students gain firsthand knowledge of community organizations involved with diversity and community service. The Jaguar Club provides summer programming to families and kids in the Barnum neighborhood while also exposing these families to MSU Denver.

5th Latinx Philosophy Conference

The conference was well-attended and reinforced the goals of past meetings: to foster the development of a network and community of Latinx philosophers in the U.S. and to create a forum for the discussion of philosophical issues of particular relevance to Latin American people of various nationalities and racial backgrounds.

The Ph.D. Project

The Ph.D. Project has helped hundreds of business schools increase their faculty diversity since 1994. This year, it launched a webinar series to stimulate discussion race and equity issues at the intersection of business and academia.

Roadrunner Diversity Scholars Program

This cohort-based program connects students with scholarships, book-loan programs, praxis-exam practice and prep, scholarship writing seminars, and cultural and community-building activities.

Womyn of Color Collective

As a newer affinity group, the Womyn of Color Collective has continued to meet and hold space, virtually, for women people of color working on campus. The collective sponsored seventeen women to attend the Faculty Women of Color in the Academy National Conference. They have also hosted social gatherings, brunch and learns and facilitated self-care networking and resource sharing activities and events.

MUSIC, RACE, & SOCIAL JUSTICE VISITING ARTIST SERIES

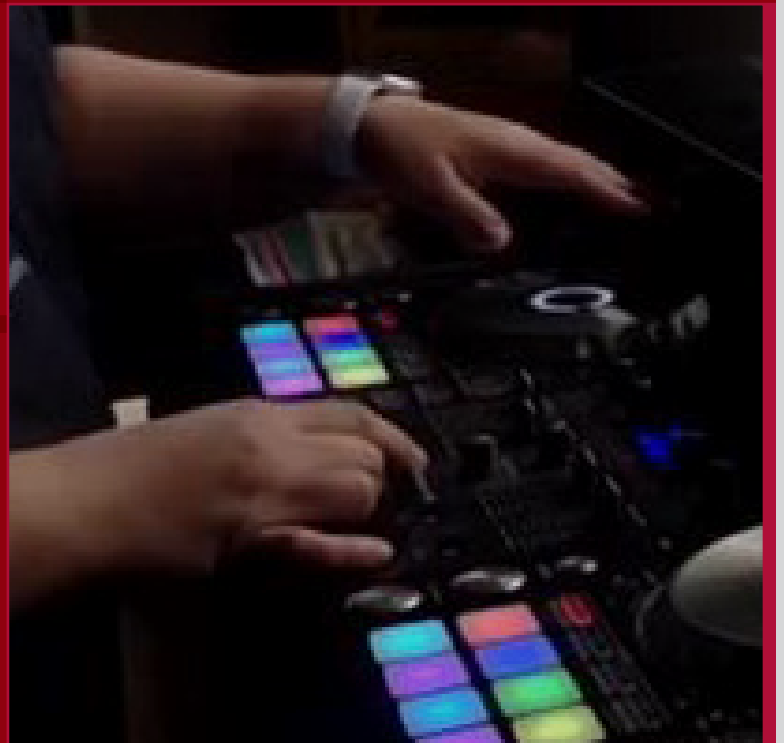
The MSU Denver Department of Music, with support from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, presented the 2020-21 Virtual Visiting Artist Series on Music, Race and Social Justice. Organized by Elizabeth McLean Macy, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology, this yearlong series highlights the work of BIPOC musicians, performers and scholars.

Fall 2020

Taina Asili
The Dream Unfinished
iAparato!
Bruce Sunpie Barnes
Aisha Fukushima

Spring 2021

Olmeca
Terence Blanchard
Resistance Revival Chorus
DJ Kuttin Kandi
Joyce McCall, Ph.D.



DIVERSE PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS

Equity, diversity and inclusion have been integrated into departments and offices across MSU Denver. The University is engaging in EDI work to provide resources and support for students in several ways.

Before students arrive at MSU Denver, the Admissions Office assesses the admission-review process and removes any potential bias and racist or discriminatory processes, practices or language to ensure fair and equitable pathways for all students. MSU Denver has been a leader in supporting undocumented students' access to higher education. Many undocumented students don't think they can attend college. Representatives from the University's Immigrant Services Program and undocumented MSU Denver students visit high schools to share their experiences and challenges they faced on their paths to higher education. They also share their sources of strength and practical tips about financial aid and advice on access, which help high school students understand that college is possible for them. Additionally, Immigrant Services, in collaboration with the Denver Children's Advocacy Center and the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, offers UndocuHub, a web and phone portal that aims to connect undocumented individuals and their families to important resources, including health care, legal services, and financial and educational assistance.

Once students enter MSU Denver, the University has several resources and services to support them on their paths to complete their degrees and beyond. The School of Hospitality has launched a three-year initiative to use open educational resources in courses. This transition will provide equal access for all students and ensure that the department offers timely and relevant course content. The School of Education has several programs and initiatives to diversify the teaching field and graduate future teachers. These efforts have led to the creation of the Roadrunner Diversity Scholars Program, which provides scholarships and enhances support for students of color preparing to become teachers. The school offers Praxis Review Workshops to include most subjects for free to all teacher-licensure students. The Center for Advanced STEM Education provides scholarships and peer mentoring for future STEM Ed teachers to prepare them for working in diverse, high-need schools. Additionally, the center provides professional development for pre-service and in-service teachers to support inclusive STEM learning, including four summer institutes, four Discover STEM Expo events, monthly professional-development opportunities and the development of online resources. The Department of Nutrition was awarded a \$3.25 million Health Resources and Services Administration grant, which provides undergraduates studying dietetics with the opportunity to apply for up to \$40,000 per year for school and living expenses. Students participate in program activities, including working with diverse mentors in the field.

MSU Denver also provides access to several services to support the physical and mental health of our students. The Health Center at Auraria has created a Transgender Care Services Program that includes access to hormone-replacement therapy, resources and referrals to campus and community support, personal pronouns on name placards, and gender-neutral bathrooms. The Counseling Center held several workshops and forums for students from intersecting identities as a place to share their experiences, needs and recommendations, and to enhance their sense of belonging on campus. The Counseling Center implemented virtual groups and workshops specifically tailored to the restrictions and frustrations around the pandemic. They provided a safe virtual space to process individual reactions to current events in the past academic year. Workshop topics included Experiences of African American Students, LGBTQ experiences, a DACA support workshop and mental-health workshops for African American and Asian/Pacific Islander students.

The Classroom to Career Hub (C2 Hub) offers a wide array of programming that supports students entering the workforce. These programs include Diversity Networking events, a DACA/Dreamers Career Panel and Out in Public

Service. These programs focus on supporting minoritized students looking for careers while holding various identities. In addition, the C2 Hub held a weeklong career-readiness program over spring break. Students learned their strengths and career interests and received tips on assessing whether a company is diverse and inclusive and how to ask about those topics in an interview.

As students look to graduation, MSU Denver hosts special ceremonies for graduating students. These ceremonies highlight the achievements of students in their unique way. The identity-based graduation programs include Asian Pacific Islander Desi American; Black African and African American; Dreamer; Latina/o/x; Lavender (LGBTQIA); Native American; and Veterans. Many of these ceremonies present graduates with stoles or other items that students can wear with their graduation regalia.



DIVERSIFYING THE UNIVERSITY

MSU Denver has a long history of centering the experiences and identities of underrepresented students. When asked why they choose to work at the University, staff and faculty members cite the diversity of campus. The staff and faculty of MSU Denver continue to support students and their colleagues, and they work to advance equity, diversity and inclusion in departments and offices across the University.



There are various initiatives aimed at diversifying the University. Colleges and schools are looking at how they can recruit and retain faculty members of color. In addition, some departments are looking closely at the demographics of their fields and seeking to diversify them, while others are examining their courses to ensure that there is better representation in their curricula. Throughout these reviews, policies and procedures are being revised to reflect our values and stay current.

Employee affinity groups are active at MSU Denver. For example, the African American Affairs Council, the Asian Pacific Islander

Desi Faculty Staff Alliance, the Latino/a Faculty Staff Association, the LGBTQIA Employee Group and the Womyn of Color Collective organize meetings and social events to engage staff members at MSU Denver.

They also adapted to deliver programming virtually when most campus employees were working remotely. For example, the Tenure Track Supper Club was able to provide four sessions for pretenured faculty members to help them with the process of earning tenure. The sessions focused on the experiences of marginalized faculty members, allowing for participants to build community with one another and engage in dialogue with experts. In addition, due to the funding provided to the University through the CARES Act, a cohort of faculty members participated in the Association of College and University Educators' Effective Teaching Practices.

Although the work is not done, MSU Denver has made progress toward becoming more diverse in its makeup and creating a more welcoming and inclusive University for all.



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INSIGHT

Into Diversity

Higher Education
**Excellence
in Diversity**
Award

2014
2015
2016
2017
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METROPOLITAN
STATE UNIVERSITYSM
OF DENVER
Office of Diversity and Inclusion