1. EDI IMPLEMENTATION DRAFT: OVERVIEW AND GUIDEPOST GOALS

On Oct. 8, 2015, an EDI Implementation Team convened to pursue an initiative, led by Chancellor James Schmidt, to achieve the following “guidepost goal” at UW-Eau Claire:

- develop a focused action plan for achieving an enrollment of 20 percent students of color while eliminating the opportunity gap

Achieving this goal requires the campus to support the educational success of more than 2,000 students of color. This means that during the next decade, the number of students of color served at UWEC will increase by more than 1,000, and the campus will provide a welcoming climate and relevant curricular and co-curricular experiences. The guidepost goal also targets the opportunity gap, a measurable pattern on college campuses where students of color are not served equitably and do not benefit proportionately from high-value experiences. A campus wide focus on the guidepost goal will create exciting possibilities for extending the full educational value of a Blugold degree to all students, but it also entails challenges that must be addressed with bold and timely action. This report recommends 14 actions steps that are needed to make concrete and measurable progress toward the guidepost goal and its vision of campus equity.

Our campus is one among many that are currently addressing issues of EDI (equity, diversity and inclusivity) with a renewed urgency. EDI initiatives are underway at the University of Missouri, Brown University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and at other campus across the country in response to multiple imperatives: student activism, changing national demographics and the enduring need for educational equity. As a distinctive blueprint for change amid national and statewide efforts, UWEC’s EDI Implementation Plan will engage the whole campus community in collaborative work toward an ethical and practical outcome: equal educational opportunity for all.

The guidepost goal itself is bold and challenging for a predominantly white institution (PWI) in northwestern Wisconsin. Institutional changes of this significance will not happen overnight, but it is our ethical responsibility as educators to offer equitable learning opportunities on campus. Students of color and majority students alike are invited to enroll at UWEC and benefit from the quality of its programs. To honor the commitment that students have made to this campus, UWEC must deliver a globally competitive education in areas of EDI, just as transformative experiences are offered in a student’s major field. As an asset to an equity-minded process of change, recent campus initiatives related to EDI have identified challenges and patterns of inequity and have piloted interventions which make a positive difference. Now is the time for UWEC to step up its support for educational equity in ways that resonate across the campus and beyond.

II. Definitions and Rationale

The EDI Implementation Plan is grounded in a commitment to the following values:
• **Equity**: all students require access to high-value educational experiences, enabling every person to achieve their academic potential.

• **Diversity**: individual differences and social group differences have educational value and must be regarded with respect and interest across campus.

• **Inclusivity**: diverse perspectives and contributions must be sought, valued and incorporated equitably into the design and implementation of campus programs.

The EDI Implementation Plan is strategically focused on recruitment, retention and educational equity among students of color, a diverse demography of students with one key characteristic in common: such students shoulder the impact of racial discrimination, past and present. Compared to their majority (white) peers, students of color have not benefited equitably from their participation and investment in U.S. institutions. In fact, persistent social inequality is the one characteristic that distinguishes people of color from majority people. No other ethnic, biological, cultural or “racial” characteristic can be cited that links student communities with ancestral origins as disparate as Indochina, pre-Columbian North America and the African continent. The consequences of privilege and oppression in U.S. social systems are reflected in day-to-day experiences of students of color at UWEC, who continue to feel the impact of assumptions that they are racially inferior to majority peers.

The broad assertions we make here about the impact of discrimination are supported in national and local data, some of which can be accessed in recent campus-wide reports that provide evidence-based discussions of why a focus on students of color is timely. Please review the *Equity Scorecard Report* (2013) and the *Report of the Enrollment Management Task Force* (2014) for detailed discussion of why it is critical that UWEC improve its service to students of color. For added perspective, we also urge members of our campus to seek and find mutually accountable ways to connect with current students of color on the UWEC campus for respectful dialogue. Such discussions carry more relevance for establishing the need for change than the words of this report.

Research and campus conversations conducted by the EDI Implementation Team in recent months have confirmed the need for meaningful, equitable, anti-racist change on campus. While UWEC advertises a commitment to diversity as a university-wide value, for students of color, the ongoing impact of systematic racism includes micro-aggressions: discriminatory statements and actions that are common in classrooms, dormitories and other locations. There is a high need on our campus to improve access to culturally relevant curricula and professional staff who willingly and equitably serve nearly 900 currently enrolled students of color; these needs will intensify if we are to serve more than 1,000 additional students of color. National data also shows that compared with their white peers, opportunities to engage in high-impact practices (undergraduate research, internships and immersions/study abroad) are likely to be fewer. While some units on the UWEC campus have proactively developed high-impact practices that are accessible to students of color (including Blugold Beginnings, University Honors, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and several individual academic departments), further action is needed to strengthen the move toward equity and to create a shared commitment to an anti-racist campus.

As this initiative unfolds, we are mindful that campus and public audiences come to these topics from many different starting points, and we understand that continued dialogue is needed. The task before us is difficult, but we are confident that our work begins with a solid blueprint. We respectfully invite all members of the campus community to join us in conducting this important work successfully.
EDI Implementation Team: Process and Contributors

Conversations among many members of our campus community contributed to the preparation of this report, including the individuals and groups listed below.

Listening Sessions, 10/8/15 – 12/28/15

- University Staff Council
- International Center for Education
- Open Staff/Faculty Sessions (2)
- Open Student Sessions (2)
- Student Organization of Latinos
- Black Student Union
- Student Senate
- Hmong Studies Steering Committee (2)
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Residence Life Director
- Implementation Teams: Open Session

- University Senate
- Dean of Students
- Integrated Marketing and Communications
- Student Support Services
- Institutional Research
- Chairs and Directors for the Colleges
  - College of Arts and Sciences
  - College of Business
  - College of Education and Human Sciences
  - College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- Chancellor’s Leadership Team

A 23-member lead team appointed by the chancellor has contributed to this action plan. Best educational practices, independent thinking, resources and constraints, and the urgent need for equity-minded change have all been considered in our deliberations. We extend our gratitude to all members of the EDI Implementation Team:

EDI Implementation Team

Core Team:
- Dennis Beale
- Linda Carlson
- Manny Fernandez
- Jeff Goodman
- Caitlin Lee
- Kia Lee
- Carmen Manning
- Michael Penkava
- Ashley Sukhu
- Co-Leaders: David Jones, Ann Rupnow

Additional Contributors:
- Maria Carvalho
- Quincy Chapman
- Selika Ducksworth-Lawton
- Leslie Huntington
- Chris Jorgenson
- Alan Rieck
- Audrey Robinson
- Dale Taylor
- Jodi Thesing-Ritter
- Jeff Vahlbusch
- Charles Vue
- Odawa White

EDI Implementation Draft: Timeline and Strategies

A two-year timeline is anticipated for the initial implementation of this plan:

- Spring semester 2016: pilot initiatives and quick wins
- Summer 2016: leadership transition and strategy summit
- Fall semester 2016-spring semester 2018: full implementation of action plan
- Spring semester 2018/summer 2018: impact assessment and plan revision

The two-year timeline described above will culminate with an impact assessment and a revision of strategies for subsequent years. The impact assessment will include a review of progress, strategies
and leadership structures needed to continue progress toward the guidepost goal. The current EDI Implementation Team will complete its work in May 2016 and an EDI Roundtable will convene as a new leadership body. However, by the start of second implementation year (2017-18), it would be timely to consider whether a Chief Diversity Officer model is the best mechanism for ongoing EDI leadership at UWEC. Meanwhile, the EDI Roundtable is envisioned as a campus hub for plan implementation through 2017-18 and beyond.

This implementation timeline is guided by a conviction that a substantial increase in recruiting students of color must be accompanied by a similar increase in campus capacity for providing an equitable educational experience for all. Thus, we do not advocate a campus-wide race to meet the 20 percent recruiting goal without equal attention to the quality of the on-campus experience for students of color. In fact, this team has moved cautiously when recruitment strategies are suggested that lack a corresponding vision of how student retention and equity will be strengthened. Progress toward the guidepost goal will require targeted investment in professional staff and faculty that will strengthen our ability to serve students of color equitably.

So, as we prepare to recruit and serve more than 2,000 students of color at UWEC, it is critical that our entire workforce deepens its understanding of the challenges students of color typically face at a predominantly white institution. Some of these challenges mirror patterns of racism and inequality in the larger culture, while other challenges relate to UWEC’s distinctive campus climate. This includes our status as a predominantly residential campus with predominantly white student enrollment (91.1 percent in 2014), nestled in a catchment area where the numerical representation of persons of color in the community is also limited (although nearly 20 percent of enrolled students in the Eau Claire Area School District are of color). The full EDI Implementation Team charge is posted below:

**EDI Implementation Team: Charge from the Chancellor**

**Guidepost goal:**

Building on successful EDI efforts, develop a focused action plan for achieving an enrollment of 20 percent students of color and eliminating the opportunity gap. The action plan will include five goals and an accountability measure:

1. Strategies for including faculty and staff EDI contributions in annual evaluation, promotion and tenure decisions.
2. Recommendations for campus-wide professional development to increase employee and student cultural intelligence, improve campus climate and support the action plan.
3. Strategies for faculty and staff of color recruitment and retention.
4. Suggestions for how departments and units can contribute to reaching the guidepost goal.
5. Recommendations for streamlining and improving communication in and among groups working to support recruitment and retention efforts.

**Accountability measure:**

Recommend criteria for an EDI “key performance indicators” dashboard, including metrics for departments and units, a timeline for goal achievements and benchmarks for progress.
2. EDI IMPLEMENTATION DRAFT: HIGHLIGHTS AND IMPACT

Goal 1: Highlights and Impact
Goal 1 calls on all campus units to assess faculty and staff contributions to equity, diversity and inclusivity in personnel review processes. The general aim is to expect, evaluate and reward EDI contributions among all employees, in annual reviews and reappointment decisions for university staff and academic staff, in hiring for new employees, and in promotion and tenure of faculty. The following action steps will lead to the attainment of Goal 1:

1.1. Relevant language in personnel documents is revised so that workforce contributions to equity, diversity and inclusivity are valued, expected, assessed and rewarded across all units, departments and programs.
1.2. Student evaluations of instruction will include at least one question related to equity, diversity and inclusivity.

Attaining these goals across the many units, programs and departments at UWEC will require an early commitment from experienced EDI advocates to distribute models for inclusive language and to partner with individual units during this process of change. Ultimately, the willingness (or resistance) of our campus to pursing of Goal 1 amounts to a clarification of values. As in any organization, our core values are illustrated by what we expect, what we assess and what we reward. Do we expect our campus workforce to excel at serving students equitably, including students of color? Is this expectation stated in (or absent from) employee performance standards?

A number of units have already drafted language regarding EDI performance. In the Student Affairs division, Housing and Residence Life assesses unit contributions to EDI using student satisfaction surveys and other means. In the College of Arts and Sciences, at least six academic departments refer to EDI contributions in their Department Evaluation Plan (DEP) for faculty, including the Department of Geography and Anthropology: “Actions and accomplishments that improve department and campus climate and that support or promote university priorities are highly valued and include such things as EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusivity), civic and global engagement, and university citizenship.” The DEP for the Materials Science Program states that “Activities of a faculty or staff member to enhance the equity, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) of the program, college, or campus are strongly valued by materials science … EDI could impact a faculty member’s teaching, scholarship, service or advising (or some combination thereof) and as such are seen as an important dimension to a faculty member’s balance of efforts.” The English department has already integrated EDI-related questions into its student evaluations, including this question: “The instructor demonstrates respect for diverse people and perspectives.”

These specific examples illustrate action steps to be adopted across all departments, with the end goal of expecting, assessing and rewarding EDI contributions in ways that strengthen service to students of color and to all students preparing to live and work in a diverse world. The EDI Implementation Team looks forward to working proactively with the University Senate as well as individual departments and units to fully achieve Goal 1, starting in spring 2016.

Goal II: Highlights and Impact
Goal 2 centers on strategies for campus-wide professional development to increase employee and student cultural intelligence, improve campus climate and support the action plan.
2.1. Implement a three-tiered approach for professional development for the university community, which will accommodate students, staff and faculty with distinctive professional development needs.

2.2. Create and implement a first-year experience for all students that emphasizes core vocabulary, intercultural communication and critical understandings related to equity, diversity and inclusivity.

Sub-goal 2.1 is multilayered and will require a phase-in period extending over a two-year cycle. Below is a brief explanation and timeline for staff and faculty professional development:

- **Tier 1: Conversation and Concepts**: General knowledge and an ability to converse about concepts related to race and racism, implicit bias, equity, diversity and inclusivity. Required for 100 percent of our employee base. Attained by completion of an online training module, in-person workshops, or related options.

- **Tier 2: Inclusivity and Intentionality**: Demonstration of unit-specific skills and an ability to perform job duties in ways that reduce the effects of bias. Optional or required, as determined by unit managers, departments and colleges, amounting to approximately 30 percent of our employee base. Attained by participation in a CETL program, EDI roundtable discussion or unit-specific experience (such as a departmental retreat or workshop with an invited trainer).

- **Tier 3: Literacy for Leadership**: Maintenance of advanced skills for leading groups (both diverse and homogenous) toward EDI goal attainment. Optional or required, as determined by unit managers, departments and colleges, amounting to approximately 15 percent of our employee base. Attained by full participation in professional development experiences in a campus, state or national context, extending one or more days, with a stated job-related outcome.

**Timeline for implementing faculty/staff development:**

- **Tier 3 (Spring 2016/2016-7)**
- **Tier 1 (Spring 2016/2016-7)**
- **Tier 2 (2017-8)**

In the diagram, we emphasize Tier 3 and Tier 1 development as starting points for multiyear action. Tier 3 development increases the number of campus leaders who can work across units and in public settings to move EDI initiatives forward. Tier 1 development expands the base of employees, campus-wide, who are receptive to EDI-driven changes within units, programs and departments. We anticipate that Tier 2 development represents the greatest opportunity and challenge, where unit supervisors integrate and assess strategies for equitably serving students in their immediate work environment.

Among our current challenges, we do not have sufficient numbers of staff and faculty who can work at a Tier 3 competency, which would include professional preparation and current availability for working in a leadership capacity on these issues. Several items in this initiative (including the EDI Roundtable, Item 5.1) provide a way to increase the number of campus faculty and staff who are prepared to support EDI initiatives at a Tier 3 level. Tier 3 competency is defined as:
• Sufficient conceptual knowledge about social/racial inequality, our own individual role in social systems, and social group and individual differences to enable successful working relationships with a large population of students of color.
• Established relationships on campus and in the external community to help connect students of color with opportunities and support.
• A professional disposition that leads to success in working with diverse stakeholders including: majority students, students of color, strong-minded EDI advocates, the public, university faculty and administrators, and audiences who are skeptical about EDI initiatives.
• A commitment over the short- and medium-term to continue working collaboratively and energetically to accomplish the aims of this initiative.

Without enough staff and faculty who can consistently bring all of these qualities to campus-wide EDI work, it will be exceedingly difficult to engage our entire campus of 10,500 undergraduates and more than 1,000 employees in an EDI change process. Thus, we aim to work quickly to build these essential capacities among our workforce as we plan to serve a more racially diverse student population.

**Sub-goal 2.2** will require creativity as we design and/or adapt a first-year experience model that can provide tools for reducing acts of bias and racism across the campus climate, while simultaneously preparing students to understand cultural identity, power and inequality in complex ways. The FYE model should also be designed to complement required coursework that students take for the university-wide Responsibility 1 learning outcome (which includes cultural diversity courses and related themes). Fortunately, a rich array of FYE models have been used in campuses across the state and nation, including on our local campus. Many lesson plans that were articulated in relation to an academic discipline might also provide tools for student development in other contexts. Certainly, one or more student-focused models can be piloted during the fall of 2016.

### Goal III: Highlights and Impact

Goal 3 items will assist in recruiting and retaining faculty and staff of color, along with increasing the number of faculty and staff who attain higher levels of EDI competency.

3.1. Develop a multicultural post-doc/dissertation fellows program on a pilot basis.
3.2. Create a faculty and staff excellence award category specifically geared toward EDI efforts (ex: Excellence in EDI Award).
3.3. Strengthen EDI campus-community engagement
3.4. Personnel practices are strengthened regarding recruitment and hiring of faculty/staff with professional interests and competencies with equity, diversity and inclusivity.

Among the Goal 3 items, 3.1 (multicultural post-doc program) requires the highest financial investment, but this item may also have the highest upside, especially as a pilot program. We envision this hiring program as fulfilling an ongoing need for contingent faculty across academic departments. Ideally, a cohort of four fellows (two completing dissertation research, two who are doctorate holders) would teach high-value student credit-hour courses (larger enrollment) each semester and would interact with students and faculty/staff of color on campus. To create such a program at UWEC would distinguish the campus from its regional competitors and would provide an ongoing source of expertise and interest regarding EDI issues. Leveraging the Visiting Minority Scholars Fund has been suggested as one possible approach to funding this initiative, though we would encourage the development of a unique funding source for a pilot program.
Items 3.2 and 3.3 provide further opportunities for on- and off-campus recognition, connections, and collaboration, all of which would assist faculty and staff of color with building relationships that can support their work. 3.3 (campus-community connections) is included because the quality of the community experience is essential to the level of life satisfaction enjoyed by diverse faculty and staff. Our campus can be a more competitive employer if it collaborates with the wider community and identifies resources that are of interest to a prospective employee of color, including resources for housing and public education, churches and other places of worship, the diversity of surrounding communities, and organizations that play an active role in serving diverse community clients (including El Centro, Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Clear Vision Eau Claire).

**Goal IV: Highlights and Impact**

Goal IV requires departments and units across the university to review and strengthen their contributions to EDI goals.

4.1. Every campus unit (including departments, programs and service offices) conducts a survey of their EDI-related resources, challenges, and achievements.

4.2. Implement proactive strategies to reduce the number and impact of bias incidents on campus, to ensure a fair resolution of incidents, and to notify the respective parties and the campus community of said resolutions while respecting individuals’ federal privacy rights.

4.3. The University will conduct strategic planning to refine Housing and Residence Life education, climate and behavior standards related to EDI.

Item 4.1 is guided by an awareness that departments and units across the campus contribute to the common mission of equity, diversity and inclusivity, but their work may not be widely known and accessible across the student body. It would be highly useful to specify the contributions of all units to an equitable experience for students of color. The EDI Asset Survey will provide a snapshot of EDI current activity, and with the assistance of the EDI Roundtable (Item 5.1), consultations with individual departments and units will be offered to help improve the effectiveness of EDI activity.

Item 4.2 is included to help strengthen response protocols, whether a bias incident occurs in a classroom, in a residence hall or elsewhere. Improved awareness on campus is needed as to where and how bias incidents are reported and will be resolved. Thus, 4.2 calls for ongoing policy review and a public rollout of revised strategies. Housing and Residence Life (4.3) will also review and strengthen its strategies for helping students navigate and respect individual and social group differences.

**Goal V: Highlights and Impact**

5.1. Create an EDI Roundtable to be the primary leadership group charged with assessing progress toward plan goals and providing campus consultation and leadership.

5.2. Amplify and roll out cross-campus recruitment and retention strategies: FYE programming and high-impact practices.

5.3. Review and publicly articulate the missions and strategies of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Blugold Beginnings.

If the EDI Implementation Plan is to succeed, ongoing coordination and review will be essential. Given that UWEC does not currently employ a Chief Diversity Officer and no single office is charged with
university-wide attainment of EDI goals, the EDI Implementation Team will transition into a stable leadership structure (5.1, EDI Roundtable) with 10 members: three student members, five at-large faculty/staff members, and two EDI fellows, who will serve as primary facilitators.

To improve transparency, an application process is recommended for EDI Roundtable membership, which requires every member to describe their qualifications and interest in serving. The work of Roundtable members will also be guided by clearly specified member duties. With the clarity and specificity of the 20 percent guidepost goal, there are clear outcomes to be pursued by this leadership group. The EDI Roundtable will work closely with the primary offices charged with recruitment and retention of students of color (including Admissions, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Blugold Beginnings and Housing and Residence Life). Further details of the application process will be clarified in early spring 2016, along with details related to employee reassignment, logistical support, professional development and compensation.

Items 5.2 and 5.3 call for strengthened collaboration and enhanced personnel resources among several units, including the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Blugold Beginnings, Admissions, and Housing and Residence Life. These units are at the core of recruitment, retention and equitable experiences among students of color, and it is essential that all stakeholders in the campus community are aware of unit missions and are invited to contribute to their continuing success. Item 5.2 recommends the hiring of a Latino retention coordinator, a hiring that had notably strong support in listening sessions, including particularly strong support from the Student Organization of Latinos (SOL) and Admissions. Hispanic/Latino students represent the second largest community of students of color on campus, and given demographic trends in the state, this community may soon be the largest on campus. The relationship between UWEC and Hispanic/Latino populations in Trempeleau County has been cultivated intermittently in recent years, and the opportunity exists to strengthen our service to this region through a coordinator who can work with both Admissions (charged with recruitment) and the Office of Multicultural Affairs (charged with retention). The addition of two coordinators will also assist with creating culturally relevant high-impact experiences that will help serve all multicultural students.

A public rollout of clarified missions for OMA and Blugold Beginnings (5.3) will communicate our accomplishments and future aims to a wider internal and external audience, including current and prospective students of color.

### Accountability Measures:

In the *Report of the Enrollment Management Task Force* (2014), achieving 20 percent enrollment of students of color was envisioned as a 10-year initiative. This EDI Implementation Plan calls for an intense period of campus EDI transformation over two years (from now through 2017-18), focused on achieving measurable improvement in student retention and eliminating opportunity gaps. During this cycle, we anticipate moderately increased enrollment students of color, due in part to demographics and due in part to plan action. An intense and intentional focus on recruitment is envisioned for spring 2018, once it is clear that our whole campus is dedicated to the goal of equitably serving more than 2,000 students of color.

A team that includes Andy Nelson (Institutional Research) is developing a public dashboard with a mix of leading and lagging indicators of progress toward the guidepost goal:

- **Standard “nationwide” measures:**
- Graduation, retention, first-year enrollment.

- **Standard statewide measures**
  - Accountability report – comparisons within the UW-System.
  - Peer institutions – *Wisconsin and beyond*.

- **High-value UWEC activities:**
  - High Impact Practices (undergraduate research, study abroad/immersions, internships)
  - University-wide data about EDI outcomes collected using the Public Accountability Matrix (PAM) and Strategic Accountability Matrix (SAM) assessment tools
  - EDI Survey Results (Item 4.1)