

# UC Davis School of Law

## Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

### Strategic Plan 2021-2022

***“We are not makers of history. We are made by history.” - Martin Luther King, Jr.***

In 1969, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice, Earl Warren, dedicated the UC Davis School of Law building to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a tribute to Dr. King’s vision of social justice for all. Throughout its history, the community in “King Hall” has promoted diversity, equity, and inclusion through various initiatives including socioeconomic support and mental health resources for students, recruitment of a majority-minority faculty and diverse student body, and development of curriculum and programs designed to create an overall inclusive environment.

***Socioeconomic Support.*** King Hall provides economic resources to support students from low-income backgrounds. Many incoming students receive generous financial aid packages at the point of admission (more than most UC law schools) to allow students to budget and plan for their full three years. Students can also apply for a variety of King Hall grants and scholarship opportunities during their time as students, and receive library textbook resources if unable to purchase books. Moreover, the Law Student Association (LSA), funded by student fees, provides funding for student organizations, a food pantry and a professional clothing closet for King Hall students.

***Mental Health Resources.*** King Hall students have on-site access to Dr. Margaret Lee, licensed psychologist, with more than 20 years of clinical experience. The Academic and Staff Assistance Program (ASAP) offers confidential, cost-free assessment, intervention, consultation and referral services to UC Davis faculty, staff and their immediate families. In addition, King Hall has both a student wellness committee and a staff wellness committee focused on creating events and providing resources to benefit community health.

***Majority-Minority Faculty.*** King Hall has successfully recruited and retained a majority-minority faculty through a sustained effort over many years (See Kevin R. Johnson, *How and Why We Built a Majority-Minority Faculty*, The Chronicle of Higher Education (July 24, 2016), <https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-and-why-we-built-a-majority-minority-faculty/>). This accomplishment is due to support from top leaders and commitment at every level, curation of diverse appointment committees, consistent effort to form diverse shortlists and longlists, focus on retention of minority faculty, and prioritization of candidates’ concerns about climate.

***Overall Inclusive Environment.*** King Hall has developed an inclusive environment for students of color and LGBTQIA+ students through several key programs such as the Racial Justice Speaker Series, the First Generation Advocates Program, and the MLK Day of Service event. Further, King Hall has numerous affinity groups for students and campus-wide affinity groups for staff and faculty.

## King Hall's Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

In the Spring of 2021 Dean Kevin Johnson created King Hall's Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (CDEI). Each year the Dean appoints committee members composed of faculty, students, staff, and a member of the UC Davis Law School Alumni Board. The Dean of Students and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Fellow are ex officio committee members.

The charge for the CDEI includes the following:

- To develop, review and maintain the School of Law Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan;
- To engage students, staff, alumni, and faculty in conversations about DEI issues including needed assessments, resources, programs and events;
- To support students, staff, faculty, and alumni who engage in work, programs, events, and activities that increase accessibility, sense of belonging, and equitable practices within the law school community; and
- To identify opportunities for the law school to address historical and current inequities in resources and services.

For its inaugural academic year, 2021-2022, the CDEI members were:

- Alexis Elston, DEI Fellow, CDEI Chair, Ex Officio
- Dena Bauman - Director of Externships
- Celine Bisson '23
- Karen Charney – Executive Director of Development and Alumni Relations
- Giselle Garcia '23
- Beth Greenwood – Associate Dean for International Programs
- Beth Inadomi – Alumni Board Representative
- Andie Johnson '23
- Natalie Johnston Butcher '08 – Assoc Dir of Career Services and Judicial Clerkships
- Neha Malik '23
- Kristen Mercado – Assistant Dean of Admission and Financial Aid
- Cinthia Padilla Martin '23
- Rachel Ray '11 – Managing Attorney – UC Immigrant Legal Services Center
- Joe Schneider – Director of Admission and Outreach
- Aminah Shakoor '23
- Alyssa Thurston – Senior Research Law Librarian
- Dennis J. Ventry Jr. – Professor of Law – Martin Luther King, Jr. Research Scholar
- Emily Scivoletto – Senior Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Ex Officio

The Committee met monthly throughout the 2021-2022 school year, reviewing and discussing how best to expand upon the DEI work in progress and develop a strategic DEI vision for the law school's future. These discussions led to the creation of four subcommittees that provided **the four overall DEI goals presented below**, as well as the objectives and plans for moving these four goals forward. The CDEI members view these goals as seeds of ideas that will grow into a sustainable DEI plan. This is not an exhaustive list of DEI goals for King Hall, but is a starting point that we will build on in the coming years.

*“Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives. “ -Martin Luther King, Jr.*

### **Goal 1: Inclusive Atmosphere and Sense of Belonging**

Our goal is for all students to have a sense of belonging at King Hall; that all students know this law school is “for them.”

### **Goal #2: Support Community Mental Health**

Our goal is to support community members’ mental health. We recognize the inequitable toll that law school can take on students, depending on their affiliation or identity. We also know faculty and staff can be impacted by depression, anxiety and other mental health issues. At times there can be stigma attached to having mental health needs and we want to make our school a place where seeking assistance and developing healthy and consistent mental health routines is supported.

### **Goal #3 Diverse Staff and Student Recruitment**

Our goal is to understand the current identity of staff at King Hall and determine how we can strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion for purposes of recruiting and retaining diverse staff. We seek to increase the diversity of staff across all categories with each additional hire.

Our goal is to continue to increase diversity in the student body across all categories (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic, etc.).

### **Goal #4: Socioeconomic Support**

Our goal is to develop and provide more resources to students from lower-income backgrounds. We envision streamlining communication between students and law school departments to better provide resources to students.

## **Goal 1: Inclusive Atmosphere and Sense of Belonging**

**Our goal is for all students to have a sense of belonging at King Hall; that all students know this law school is “for them.”**

**Objective:** Create a committee of students, staff, and faculty to provide input to the dean about the media adorning the walls of King Hall.

**Rationale:** One can learn a lot about a place from what is seen on the walls. What we choose to name buildings, the days we make holidays, the statues that mark our public spaces—all of these things are part of the stories we tell about ourselves. [Bryan Stevenson’s position](#) on what we choose to memorialize, and on the relationship between what we name things (schools, streets, etc.) and the narratives to which those names contribute is instructive here. Being honest about our history—the good as well as the bad—will contribute significantly to the sense of belonging that is so important for us.

**Implementation:** [All objectives required a determination by CDEI of who should be involved to oversee that progress is made on this goal, what the timeline should be and how success should be measured.]

- Oversight: The dean of the School of Law, the Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Timeline: This committee can be created in the fall of 2022
- Assessment: Establishment of the committee meets this goal, but the CDEI should regularly assess effectiveness.

## **Goal #2: Support Community Mental Health**

**Our goal is to support community members' mental health. We recognize the inequitable toll that law school can take on students, depending on their affiliation or identity. We also know faculty and staff can be impacted by depression, anxiety and other mental health issues. At times there can be stigma attached to having mental health needs and we want to make our school a place where seeking assistance and developing healthy and consistent mental health routines is supported.**

**Objectives:** Attend to the immediate needs of student mental health by providing the following:

1. Launch an ADHD peer support group
2. Create a resource sheet/training for faculty who want to incorporate mindfulness/wellness practices into the classroom (e.g., minute of deep breathing, "wellness absences" per semester for students) in consultation with Dr. Lee and Dean Afsharipour.
3. Provide informational/support sessions on substance abuse
4. Increase awareness of existing mental health resources for community members through email messages and/or website (e.g., Dr. Lee's Mindfulness exercises email, LSA's weekly email, perhaps creating a section on DEI website).

**Rationale:** These goals can beneficially impact the King Hall community by growing the amount of support available to students with mental health needs. These goals will help destigmatize mental health by supporting open communication, mindfulness/wellness education, and community consciousness of mental health concerns.

**Implementation:** [All objectives required a determination by CDEI of who should be involved to oversee that progress is made on this goal, what the timeline should be and how success should be measured.]

- Oversight: Dr. Margaret Lee, Dean Afsharipour, LSA Student Wellness Committee, Dean Scivoletto, DEI Fellow, CDEI Members
- Timeline: All of the goals could be achieved by the end of the next academic year, but we would prioritize the peer support group before the others.
- Assessment: At least one meeting of the support group, with identified leadership to continue the group. The other goals would be measured by materials produced/communications sent, etc. LSSSE survey or other all-student survey instrument every two years, specifically questions about wellness and mental health issues.

### **Goal #3 Diverse Staff and Student Recruitment**

**Our goal is to understand the current identity of staff at King Hall and determine how we can strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion for purposes of recruiting and retaining diverse staff. We seek to increase the diversity of staff across all categories with each additional hire.**

**Our goal is to continue to increase diversity in the student body across all categories (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic, etc.).**

**Objective 1:** Because we currently have limited data on staff diversity, we suggest developing an anonymous identity survey including questions about race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic diversity, UCD alumni status, what interested them in working at King Hall, and what keeps them working here.

**Rationale:** The survey results will provide a baseline for measuring increased recruitment of diverse staff. It will provide insight into what KH is doing right to attract and retain diverse staff as well as ways to improve. The survey can be adapted to other important populations, such as students, to gauge issues of retention including a sense of belonging and mental health support.

**Implementation:** [All objectives required a determination by CDEI of who should be involved to oversee that progress is made on this goal, what the timeline should be and how success should be measured.]

- Oversight: Lead: DEI Subcommittee for diverse staff and student recruiting. Active Involvement: Senior Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, DEI Fellow, DEI Committee, Human Resources Manager, IT
- Timeline: Spring/Summer 2022 – Secure anonymous survey platform and develop survey questions with input from HR Manager. Fall 2022 – Send survey to KH staff to complete. 2022-2023 School Year – Adapt survey for students and send Spring 2023. Ongoing - Send survey on annual basis
- Assessment: Progress entails seeing an increase in diversity across survey categories from the previous annual survey results on an ongoing basis.

**Objective 2:** Ensure our hiring practices are meeting our goals of a diverse staff at King Hall. We suggest the following for the staff recruitment cycle (while understanding that some of this is already being done):

1. Managers of departments meet to discuss best practices for diverse recruiting
2. As King Hall jobs open, managers review and simplify job descriptions with HR
  - a. 5-7 minimum qualifications and 2-4 preferred qualifications. Look for interpersonal skills during the interview process.
  - b. Consider whether a position requires a college degree as a minimum qualification.
3. Expand beyond current platforms to advertise open positions

4. DEI in recruitment training for staff, many of whom participate on hiring panels
  - a. Professor Leticia Saucedo developed the diversity in recruitment training program for faculty, perhaps this could be adapted for staff
5. Make candidate assessment process more equitable
  - a. Make resumes/applications anonymous by removing names
  - b. Develop structured interview evaluation matrix (neutral metrics)
  - c. Allow for anonymous individual interview feedback from the panelists

**Rationale:** These changes to the staff recruitment cycle will make the hiring process more equitable and inclusive, allowing KH to increase staff diversity.

**Implementation:** [All objectives required a determination by CDEI of who should be involved to oversee that progress is made on this goal, what the timeline should be and how success should be measured.]

- Oversight: Lead: Managers of Departments, Human Resources. Active Involvement: Current staff, Senior Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, DEI Fellow, DEI Committee
- Timeline: Summer 2022 - Managers of departments meet to discuss best practices in diverse recruitment. Managers and HR work to update job descriptions as they become available on an ongoing basis. HR researches places to expand position advertising, removing names from resumes/applications, options for DEI in recruitment training for staff. Fall 2022 - Implement staff training and updated recruitment procedures.
- Assessment: Progress entails consistent diverse applicant pools, diverse short lists of final candidates, and an increase in diverse staff hires as we move forward as measured by results of the annual staff identity survey.

**Objective 3:** We suggest the following for procedures throughout student recruitment (while understanding that some of this is already being done):

1. Recruit from a larger variety of colleges and universities that are not predominantly white institutions (PWIs)
  - a. Create list of Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSIs) and contacts, with a focus on recruiting at California State Universities (CSUs)
  - b. Create list of Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) contacts
  - c. Create list of LGBTQIA+ groups contacts
2. Send diverse staff to recruit diverse students. Reallocate recruitment travel budget to diverse staff willing to travel and recruit students.
3. Assess current DEI marketing materials, in particular materials demonstrating ways we are retaining and assisting diverse students with matriculation.

4. Meet with other law school admissions departments to discuss their success in diverse student recruiting
5. Add a diverse admit event/reception that has diverse alumni/staff/current students/faculty to Admitted Students Weekend lineup with a long-term goal of hosting multiple ASW events/receptions for diverse admits.

**Rationale:** These changes to student recruitment will allow KH to be more inclusive and increase the diversity of the student body.

**Implementation:** [All objectives required a determination by CDEI of who should be involved to oversee that progress is made on this goal, what the timeline should be and how success should be measured.]

- Oversight: Lead: DEI Subcommittee for diverse staff and student recruiting, Admissions. Active Involvement: Senior Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, DEI Fellow, DEI Committee, Marketing.
- Timeline: Summer 2022 - Meet with the Marketing Department, develop a list of HSIs, HBCUs, LGBTQIA+ contacts. Admissions reviews travel recruitment budgets and schedules meetings with other law school Admissions re successes. Fall 2022 - Send diverse staff to recruit diverse students. Spring 2023 – Admissions adds diverse admit event to ASW
- Assessment: Progress entails more inclusive outreach to colleges and universities, increased diversity in admitted students, and ultimately increased diversity of the student body.



#### **Goal #4: Socioeconomic Support**

**Our goal is to develop and provide more resources to students from lower-income backgrounds. We envision streamlining communication between students and law school departments to better provide resources to students.**

**Objective 1:** Develop and provide more resources to students from lower-income backgrounds by doing the following:

1. Short term goals:
  - a. Work with LSA and/or other student-led organization(s) to identify student business attire needs each year, establish location for a business attire closet, and work with the Department of Development and Alumni Relations to secure donations from alumni.
  - b. Work with LSA to establish permanent location for student food bank with recurring food donations from local agencies
  - c. Expand compensated externships pilot
  - d. Expand externships to include remote options, reducing costs to student
    - In progress (Dena Bauman - Director of Externships)
2. Long-term goals:
  - a. Scholarships:
    - Work with Development, Admissions, and Financial Aid offices for an inventory of current scholarships that support students with lower-income backgrounds and assess additional related needs with respect to campus-provided funding.
    - Work with the Department of Development and Alumni Relations to identify opportunities for new / additional scholarships in support of students with lower-income backgrounds. Examples may include the following:
      1. Launch fund for MLK scholarship  
Utilize MLK Day to leverage fundraising
      2. Expand summer funding to include judicial placements
      3. Launch DEI-oriented scholarship(s)
      4. Scholarship for student who demonstrates interest/experience in DEI-oriented career
  - b. Support bar study
    - Emergency loans

**Rationale:** Equitable access for socio-economically varied students is essential to recruiting, retaining, matriculating, and graduating a diverse student population.

**Implementation:** [All objectives required a determination by CDEI of who should be involved to oversee that progress is made on this goal, what the timeline should be and how success should be measured.]

- Oversight: Alumni & Development office, alumni board representative as well as the Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Timeline: By end of current Alumni Board term – gauge interest and discuss possibilities; Pilot for DEI-oriented scholarship by end of 2022-2023
- Assessment: Tasks completed by timelines mentioned above; send surveys to participants/stakeholders to gauge functionality.

**Objective 2:** Streamline communication between students and departments by doing the following:

1. Establish CDEI Socioeconomic liaison to SOL departments
2. Use financial aid website more effectively
  - a. Add calendar to financial aid website w/scholarship deadlines?
3. "Financial Aid 101" early in semester
4. Educate regarding tuition remission

**Rationale:** Equitable access for socio-economically varied students is essential to recruiting, retaining, matriculating, and graduating a diverse student population.

**Implementation:** [All objectives required a determination by CDEI of who should be involved to oversee that progress is made on this goal, what the timeline should be and how success should be measured.]

- Oversight: Financial Aid (Montréal), Admissions (Kristen and Joe), Career Services (Craig), other department heads
- Timeline: Fall 2022 for establishing CDEI socioeconomic liaisons; meet with Director of Financial Aid by fall 2022
- Assessment: Tasks completed by timelines mentioned above. Send surveys to participants/stakeholders to gauge functionality.