DEI Assessment

Executive Summary Report

Prepared by julius erolin, Erolin Solutions LLC
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About this Executive Summary Report

This Executive Summary Report is a brief summary of the findings of DEI assessment and our recommendations.

The following separate reports are available:

1. CoE DEI Executive Summary.
2. Detailed Analysis and Supporting Data Report:
    - IDI Group Reports - (1) College, (2) Faculty, (3) Staff, (4) Office of the Dean
    - Faculty/Staff Survey Analysis (College and Depts)
    - Faculty/Staff Survey Analysis (By demographic groups)
    - Students Survey Analysis (College and by demographic groups)
    - Interviews, Focus Groups and Document Review - Summary of Analysis
    - Intercultural Development Inventory Group Results

Other analyses and reports may be generated upon request.

Executive Summary

The College of Engineering (CoE) partnered with Erolin Solutions LLC (Erolin), an external consulting firm, to assist in developing and implementing a College-wide strategic approach to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). The key goals of the collaboration are to:

- Gather **baseline data** on the current state of DEI in CoE (Assessment);
- Provide actionable **recommendations**; and,
- Assist in developing a multi-year **DEI strategic plan** for the College.

This report summarizes the results of the organizational assessment along with Erolin's recommendations.

The goal of the assessment was to assess CoE's current strengths, challenges and opportunities around building a diverse, equitable and inclusive College.

The assessment was limited in scope. The focus was on building upon current information already available to the College. Erolin sought to obtain quantitative and qualitative information in the form of individual and groups experiences of faculty, staff and students. These experiences and perspectives were obtained through surveys, individual interviews, focus groups, briefings/dialogues, and administration of the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory), a psychometric instrument that measures individual and group capacity for intercultural competence. The level of individual and group intercultural competency has been shown to be a predictor of achieving DEI goals.

Data was gathered and analyzed using McKinsey's 7-S framework, which looks at an organization's "7 S's" - shared values, structures, systems, strategies, staff (people), skills and style. **The results of the assessment provided sufficient data for sound generalizable analysis of the progress of the College in relation to DEI, and for development of actionable recommendations.**

The following themes from the assessment are arranged in terms of Goals, Strengths (what CoE is doing well) and Opportunities (what can be or needs to improve). Recommendations are based on the assessment results, research and practice on DEI in organizations, and our experience helping organizations on DEI.

We conclude that CoE has a significant opportunity to leverage the current high levels of commitment, support and optimism for achieving DEI goals, and the creative, innovative and problem-solving ethos of engineers and scientists, to plan and implement transformational change towards a diverse, equitable and inclusive College.

College DEI Goals

Based on the assessment, the College has three primary goals on DEI:

1. Diverse representation: A College community of faculty, staff and students that reflect the diversity of the communities it seeks to serve.

2. Equitable and inclusive structures, systems and practices: A College whose DEI values are reflected across all its functions and activities - research, education and outreach.

3. Equitable and inclusive culture: A College culture where all members are treated equitably, feel valued and have the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

Strengths (What CoE is doing well)[1]

1. **Shared understanding of the value and impact of DEI.** Across the College, DEI is seen as essential or important to the College mission, to the success of students, and to faculty and staff in their performance of their jobs.

2. **Clear commitment and aspiration from departments and units on DEI.** Departments and units express their commitment and engage in ongoing planning and activities on DEI.

3. **Significant actions and efforts from departments and units on DEI.** Departments and units have engaged in ongoing learning (discussions, dialogues and training), continue to identify strategies, and have implemented specific actions on DEI, particularly in the last academic year.

4. **High interest and aspiration to learn more on DEI**: About 80% of faculty/staff and 71% of student survey respondents expressed interest in learning more about DEI, and the IDI group results reflect an intent or aspiration to deeply value and understand cultural differences.

5. **Optimism and encouragement on the current efforts and "trajectory" of DEI.** Across the College, the discussions/dialogues, planning and specific actions, are welcomed by most faculty, staff and students. Faculty and staff are particularly encouraged by the focus on DEI in the past academic year with the hiring of a new Associate Dean of DEI and this DEI assessment.

6. **Awareness and ongoing efforts, with some success, on increasing representation of underrepresented groups, particularly women.** Departments and units have made ongoing programmatic efforts with some success to increase representation among students, faculty, staff and leadership roles.

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[1] Both the Strengths and Opportunities are numbered in order of highest/most to lowest/least identified in the assessment.

Opportunities (Areas to Improve)

1. **Develop consistent integrated strategies, structures and systems to support DEI**. Assessment results highlight the lack of a consistent integrated strategy, structures and systems to support action planning, implementation, accountability and sustainability.

2. **Improve synergy (communication, coordination and collaboration) of DEI efforts across the College.** DEI efforts appear dispersed and siloed among different departments and various groups, sacrificing synergy, accountability, and effective communication.

3. **Provide consistent, coordinated and appropriate learning and development on DEI for faculty, staff and students, particularly those leading the work on DEI**. There is a general recognition that faculty, staff and student capacity (awareness, knowledge and skills) are not commensurate with the College community's shared value and commitment on DEI. Moreover, individuals and groups facilitating DEI change highlight the need for support, subject-matter expertise, tools and skills to effectively "do DEI work". Three key priority areas emerged from the assessment: (1) Capacity building for leaders and "change agents" to facilitate DEI change; (2) tools and skills for engaging in dialogue and difficult conversations; and (3) tools and skills for handling inappropriate behaviors and complaints.

4. **Increase diversity and representation across the College**. While departments and units continue to make efforts to increase diversity and representation with particular focus on gender, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic differences, progress has been slow and/or minimal.

5. **Deepen shared meaning and understanding**. Although faculty, staff and students report that diversity, equity and inclusion are seen as essential or important to individual, department/unit and College success, there are different levels of understanding, engagement and "buy-in" across the College.

Recommendations: Build Capacity, Increase Focus

The recommendations are intended to build upon CoE's successes and current efforts, address current challenges and opportunities, and establish a more coherent, sustainable and measurable approach to achieving CoE's DEI goals. The recommendations are aimed at **building organizational capacity and increasing focus**.

1. DEI STRATEGIC AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

   Develop and implement a multi-year DEI Strategic and Implementation Plan.

   A College-wide multi-year (3-5 years) DEI Strategic and Implementation Plan (DEI SIP) will facilitate shared understanding and value of DEI, provide clarity of CoE goals, and serve as a framework and roadmap to focus efforts, measure outcomes, and adapt to changing organizational challenges and opportunities.

   The DEI SIP can be integrated into the current penultimate draft of CoE's Strategic Plan 2021-26. However, we recommend that CoE develop a separate strategic and implementation document within the next 2-3 months. This is due to the (1) the salience and urgency of DEI, particularly for students, (2) the need to build College structures and systems that support the strategy, and (3) the need to develop and implement capacity building in the near future. The DEI SIP can serve as actionable framework and guide for departments and units in their ongoing efforts. The CoE Strategic Plan 2021-26 can serve as guiding principles and a clear way to integrate DEI in all aspects of CoE's mission, vision and values.

   We recommend organizing the DEI SIP under three actionable and measurable "pillars": People, Capacity/Capability, and Culture.

2. STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT DEI

   Establish and/or improve College structures that help achieve DEI goals.

   CoE consists of independent and autonomous departments and units. This autonomy can be a source of strength in accomplishing DEI goals, with reliance on "local" or "on the ground" knowledge and initiative, creative and innovative problem solving, and efficiency and speed of planning and action. This independence and autonomy can also function as "silos" that inhibit collaboration, sharing expertise, experience and resources, and measuring and learning from outcomes. It can also generate inconsistent or uneven experiences on DEI for individuals and groups across the College, which can minimize the impact of successes and/or magnify challenges and shortcomings.

We recommend structures that take advantage of the benefits of autonomous departments and units while increasing synergy (communication, coordination and collaboration). Each part of the structure should have clear roles and responsibilities as well as the capacity (i.e., resources, knowledge and skills) to carry out those responsibilities.

Given the current structures and systems in place, we recommend the following 4-level structure:

a. Office of DEI: The newly created position of Associate Dean of DEI is a critical first step in developing a strategic approach to DEI. We recommend that the Office is structurally empowered (i.e., resources) to provide guidance and support in at least five areas: (1) DEI subject matter expertise, (2) communications, (3) metrics, (4) compliance and conflict resolution, and (5) DEI-related training and development.

b. EDDC and/or DEI Council: A skilled, knowledgeable, connected and supported committee or council is essential to effective and sustainable communication, coordination and collaboration of DEI activities and practices. Committees like the EDDC serve as critical "bridges" and must be empowered and have the capacity to serve that purpose.

c. Faculty, staff and student councils and groups: Identify or develop councils and groups that can facilitate communication, feedback mechanisms and accountability.

d. Affinity groups: Establish and/or support current affinity groups (groups formed by social identities and/or DEI-related interests). Affinity groups primarily function as support networks. As part of the CoE structure, these groups can also function as communication/feedback systems to increase accountability.

3. SYSTEMS - COMMUNICATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND REWARD

Review and improve College communication, accountability, and reward systems to achieve DEI goals.

We recommend a review four key systems to identify gaps and improvements:

a. Communications. Currently, information and resources on DEI-related programs and initiatives are dispersed across the different departments and units. While having departments/units develop and use their own communication systems (e.g., web pages) can be most effective in reflecting the unique cultures and needs of the departments/units, having an integrated communication system (e.g., CoE DEI portal) would increase visibility, convey commitment across the College, and facilitate collaboration.

b. Bias and harassment reporting and resolution systems. The assessment results highlight a lack of confidence in the system and a high hesitancy to

report incidents. While this may be addressed to a large degree through training, the system(s) should be reviewed to ensure clarity and transparency, ease of use, and responsiveness to different cultural ways of dealing with difficult issues and conflict. We recommend developing a holistic Compliance and Conflict Resolution system within the College or in partnership with the University.

c. Metrics. We recommend that metrics are developed and maintained across the College on (1) diversity (demographic representation), (2) equity (access and outcomes), (3) inclusion (engagement and satisfaction). A visible and up-to-date "dashboard" or "scorecard" on these metrics, along with current strategies and programs to achieve DEI outcomes, would increase effectiveness.

d. Critical incident response and communication. The past year's critical community incidents related to social justice highlighted the need for timely and effective response and communication.

e. Reward systems for DEI work. Review and ensure that reward and talent management systems (e.g., performance management, Promotion and Tenure) recognize DEI activities and efforts in ways that are commensurate with the core DEI value of the College.

4. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LEADERS AND "CHANGE AGENTS"

Build leadership and "change agents" capacity for facilitating change on DEI.

The assessment results highlighted the need to build the capacity (knowledge and skills) of leaders and change agents (faculty, staff and students) - those who "do DEI work" - to ensure effectiveness, resilience and sustainability.

Individuals and small groups in separate departments/units tend to identify their own needs and opportunities, conduct their own research, and find their own support and resources to implement training and development. This lack of a structured, data and research driven approach to development can impede effective learning and application of knowledge, tools and skills necessary to facilitate individual and organizational change on DEI.

5. DEI LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE COLLEGE

Increase awareness, knowledge and skills on DEI across the College community.

Students, faculty and staff are in different places in their awareness, understanding and skills around DEI. We recommend developing a learning and training strategy that facilitates engagement and learning from where individuals are in the DEI journey. The intercultural developmental approach to DEI is an effective guiding framework and a theory of change. It is an approach

that raises intentionality on the specific "target audience", learning outcomes and organizational goals.

Within this developmental framework, we recommend that CoE develop college-wide actions that facilitate:

a. Engagement and awareness: Activities such as dialogues, forums and briefings, and unidirectional communication are effective in raising awareness of what the College means by DEI, why it is important to the College community,

b. Knowledge and understanding: Activities that focus on DEI concepts and how they might relate to the individual, group and organizational goals.

c. Skills: Learning and training opportunities that focus on building skills to understand and effectively navigate (or bridge) "differences that make a difference" or those differences that impact the ability of individuals, groups and organizations to achieve their goals.

d. Facilitating change: Activities that focus on the capacity to facilitate change among individuals/groups and systems/structures. This is addressed to a large degree in the Recommendation #4 above.

Conclusions: Opportunity for Transformational Change

CoE has achieved some success in raising awareness, developing and increasing shared value and commitment, implementing strategies and actions, and achieving results. The College has generally achieved these successes through the efforts of individuals and small groups across departments and units.

Despite its successes, the College community recognizes the urgent need for strategic, sustainable and measurable change. Given the results of this assessment, we conclude that the College has a significant opportunity for transformational change towards a truly diverse, equitable and inclusive research and learning community. The recommendations are aimed at building the necessary organizational focus and capacity achieve the College vision and goals on DEI.