



Creating a More Equitable and Inclusive Environment:
*Bridging to 2025 by Enhancing Current Staff
Hiring and Retention Practices*

UC-CORO Systemwide Leadership Collaborative
2016 Northern California Cohort

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Workforce diversity. It has been examined at Regents' meetings, industry conferences, and higher education symposia—as well as a recurring theme in national and regional news coverage. Touted as the key to improved employee performance, engagement, and an increase in the bottom line, it is also critical to an organization's ability to attract, leverage, and retain talent. In 2006, the University of California published “UC 2025: The Power and Promise of Ten,” which envisioned a system “that is cross-disciplinary, nimble, innovative, and responsive to the needs of society...grounded in a renewed social contract with the people of California that is a reaffirmation of its...longstanding commitment to serving the needs of...the state's diverse population.”¹ A diverse workforce is an integral part of this vision.

Fast forward a decade, and the good news is that, for the most part, UC and its campuses have the tools needed to continue efforts to build a robust culture of equity and inclusion, one that can sustain a diverse workforce well into the future. What's missing, however, is a focus on fully 80% of that workforce—the over 140,000 staff members, vital to the day-to-day operations of the university, comprising the majority of UC's leadership positions, and whose contributions and expertise are critical to the continued delivery of UC's mission, now and in the decades ahead. The need for action is particularly urgent, with one in three current employees predicted to retire by 2024 and women and minorities still underrepresented in positions of leadership.

To get a better understanding of how UC can improve its ability to further embed principles of equity and inclusion in its workforce, the 2016 UC-CORO Northern California Cohort considered the following question: *What best practices would enable the UC to excel in having the most equitable and inclusive staff hiring and retention practices in higher education?*

As explained in the following report, we conducted an extensive literature review regarding staff equity and inclusion efforts in higher education; reviewed available UC data and information about staff equity and inclusion practices at the campuses and the Office of the President; interviewed approximately 100 individuals and met with key constituency groups across the entire UC system; and examined practices at other companies and institutions.

While much research to date has focused on “diversity” (i.e., individual differences, especially racial and ethnic ones), our report looks more broadly at the concepts of “equity” and “inclusion” (i.e., how to create an environment in which employees feel fairly treated and

included). With regard to current UC practices, the sheer number of efforts alone that we uncovered – nearly 200 examples of trainings, programs, groups, specialized positions, statements of principles, and leadership communications—speak to the passion, innovative spirit, and creativity with which people are working toward positive changes. However, staff recruitment and retention efforts are inconsistent and lag those for students and academics. Among other things, managers are not necessarily held accountable for equity and inclusion outcomes, relevant metrics regarding turnover and promotions are difficult to obtain, and there are inconsistent practices with regard to recruitment committees and candidate pools.

In comparison, we found a set of common attributes and practices that have benefited private industry and other institutions and that can assist UC as well. The key cornerstones are for leaders to champion the goals of equity and inclusion and for everyone throughout the organization to “own” the responsibility for improving equity and inclusion in order to achieve sustained and measurable change. Five industry best practices that we identified are:

1. **COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE:** Clear and consistent communication of the commitment to equity and inclusion and the ownership of these goals by all employees.
2. **LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** Establishing organizational metrics on specific equity and inclusion goals and including such metrics in performance reviews.
3. **RECRUITMENT:** Ensuring diverse candidate pools, training hiring managers and committee members, knowledge of and adherence to diversity and/or affirmative action goals, examining position announcements and evaluation matrices.
4. **RETENTION:** Creation and support of formal sponsorship and mentoring programs, Employee Resource Groups, and work-life balance and other professional development programs.
5. **PROMOTION:** “Promoting from within” whenever possible, developing internal candidates as well as non-traditional candidates with different educational or training backgrounds.

To capture and build on the University’s ongoing initiatives, to address persisting challenges to these efforts, and to incorporate industry best practices, the 2016 UC-CORO Northern California Cohort proposes the following seven recommendations:

1. **COMMON DEFINITIONS FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION:** Develop UC-wide definitions for equity and inclusion, building on the Regents’ Statement on Diversity to form a broader framework that supports and sustains long-term diversity initiatives and provides a common reference point for efforts and outcomes.
2. **CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY:** Create a pervasive culture of accountability and shared responsibility across UC and at all levels of the organization for equity and inclusion.

3. **MEASUREMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF STAFF RECRUITMENT, CAREER PROGRESSION, AND RETENTION PRACTICES:** Measure the outcome of all recruitment, career progression, and retention efforts for UC staff with particular emphasis on data for staff from diverse and underrepresented groups.
4. **STAFF RECRUITMENT:** Determine and implement strategies to substantively improve hiring of staff from diverse and underrepresented groups.
5. **STAFF RETENTION:** Actively and formally support promising diverse and underrepresented staff in their career progression. Strengthen affinity groups/employee resource groups available locally. Managers and supervisors utilize available staff retention options.
6. **TRAINING IN EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMPETENCIES:** Develop and support cultural competency and best practices in equity and inclusion throughout the organization.
7. **COMMUNICATION:** Positively and continually influence the cultural shift towards an equitable and inclusive environment at UC through communications and outreach to all UC stakeholders.

Our goal is not a “one size fits all” set of equity and inclusion initiatives; as we have seen from our time in the UC-CORO program this year, each UC campus has its own distinct personality and culture, and each has developed “home grown” programs and policies. Even so, we recommend a shared understanding of key terms, goals, and best practices to create a more cohesive and prevalent experience of equity and inclusion throughout the UC system.

We give our heartfelt thanks to those in the UC System who nominated us for this program and to the UC-CORO program for the opportunity to undertake this study of our institution. We have thoroughly enjoyed this leadership development training, getting to know the University of California better, and building relationships across the system. We look forward to continuing to apply the lessons we have learned as we work together to pursue an institutional culture characterized by equity and inclusion.

¹ University of California Long-Range Guidance Team. (2006). p. 1.