

Diversity

Inclusive
Excellence

Narrative



PREFACE

President
Mark R. Nemec



As a Jesuit, Catholic university, Fairfield is dedicated to diversity and inclusion; to radical hospitality in service of racial, social, and economic justice. As a Jesuit, Catholic university, we are dedicated, as our motto states, *in omni re quaeritur veritas* through faith to the fullness of truth.

To pursue these dedicated efforts with *in omni re* (excellence in all things); our work must always be characterized:

1. by an unceasing spirit of inquiry — the embrace of faith and reason;
2. by an authentic humility — the recognition that no one of us, no one scholarly approach has a singular hold on the truth; and,
3. by a generosity of spirit — a recognition of the dignity of every individual and an assumption of goodwill in others.

As a university and scholarly community founded upon and fully embracing of the classical liberal academic tradition, our work is focused on the formation of individuals, as John Henry Newman summarized in *University Education*, published in 1858:

“A university training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society...It is the education which gives a person a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them and a force in urging them.”

And as the seminal Land O' Lakes statement on the nature of the contemporary Catholic university echoed over one hundred years later, our work must be grounded in a community of boundless inquiry and open dis(ruth)15.J0.784 J/.35 -2.3 Td[(A—3205I25 (ohe int)15.1 (ellectual tcd y)30.1 (umg) 40.1 (O.(oh-2. (v4n



Grounded in these three sentiments of inquiry, humility, and the dignity of every individual, we offer this narrative both as:

- a. an exercise in common reflection, keeping in mind the words of James Baldwin: “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced,” and,
- b. as an instrument for aspiration, responsive to the call of Rev. Arturo Sosa, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus, in the most recent Apostolic preferences for works of the Society to accompany our youth toward a hope-filled future.

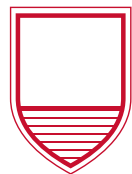
In this, an Ignatian Year (May 2021-July 31, 2022), we offer this narrative to further our work as “contemplatives in action” as well as to enhance activities well underway. Our commitment to radical hospitality in service of racial, social, and economic justice is instantiated in many initiatives, but perhaps most notably in our ongoing effort to advance access and affordability, and with a recognition that our goal is not simply to recruit a broader community of students, but rather to recruit, retain, graduate, place, and engage a community of students — with the support of faculty and staff — that is reflective of the rich tapestry of humankind and that celebrates the dignity of every individual. AMDG. All for the Greater Glory of God.



INTRODUCTION

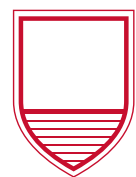
Radical Hospitality

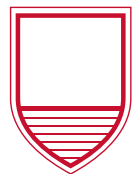




Radical hospitality, the fourth pillar, involves the practice of equally welcoming, and being welcomed by, one another with keen attention to those on the margins of society, in keeping with the apostolic preferences of the Society of Jesus. Remembering, welcoming, and belonging make up the three sequential steps in radical hospitality and frame each of the following chapters: **e e e** calls us to look back to our historical and traditional roots. **e** involves reflecting on the past, and moving from this reflection toward understanding, and accountability for how well we, as a University, include diverse peoples in our present context. **e** looks forward by responding to current strengths of, and limits to, our ongoing efforts toward cultivating a culture of inclusiveness founded on a respect for the richness of diversities that constitute our community.

e, which former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Rev.

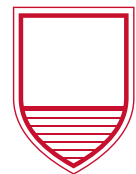




Fairfield, as a Jesuit Catholic university, belongs within a 500-year continuum of Jesuit educational and spiritual traditions meant to transform individuals by unlocking their full potential so that they can



Tectonic shifts also occurred in the Catholic Church. Vatican II (1962-65) and the Society of Jesus, through the Jesuit General Congregation 32 (1973-75), brought a critical recommitment to Catholic social teaching that altered how campuses such as Fairfield responded to the era's push for inclusion by marginalized groups. During this time, Catholic universities and colleges gained greater independence from the Catholic Church which moved them away from the constraints of Catholic theology to secure the diversity of ideas aligned with academic freedom. Fairfield University directly joined this national shift as a litigant in the



achievements. Embracing diverse faith traditions continues to animate Fairfield's commitment to the religious freedom of its community.

- 1968-69, amid an intense period of the Civil Rights movement, marks a point when student activism began to generate significant institutional change related to diversity, much of which specifically focused on Black students, faculty, and staff. History professor emeritus Walter J. Petry Jr., PhD, joined Fairfield in 1957 as its first faculty member of color and became a leading voice for civil rights on campus. Art Crawford '61 became the first African American to play varsity basketball at Fairfield and later became the first African American branch manager at Xerox. In November 1969, Black students presented a list of six demands that included increasing Black student enrollment, hiring Black professors in all departments, and establishing a

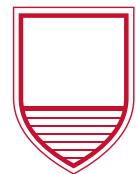


- Vatican II's pronouncement in the mid-1960s that women have as equal a right to education as men led to six years of controversy about admitting females to Fairfield University. Yet, females started taking undergraduate nursing courses in 1949. Female graduate students enrolled in the Graduate Department of Education, now the [School of Education and Human Development](#), starting in 1950, making it coeducational from the beginning. Female graduate students today outpace their male counterparts in terms of enrollment by nearly 50 percent. The first female full-time professors, Dorothy Shafer, PhD, (mathematics) and Joan Walters, PhD, (economics), however, were appointed in 1963. Fairfield University welcomed female undergraduate students in 1970, joining the coeducation movement that swept the nation. That same year, the School of Nursing opened under Fairfield's first female dean, Elizabeth K. Dolan, PhD.

A number of female firsts followed throughout the 1970s and '80s. In 1975, Amy Zigmont '76 became the first female editor of the student newspaper, then called *The Fairfieldian*, and Geralyn Radowiecki '76 became the first female head of the FUSA Legislature. The first women's varsity sports programs in tennis and basketball, called the Stagettes, began in 1974. Female outnumbered male students 52 to 48 percent by 1980. Arnetha Eaddy excelled as the first female African American coach in Fairfield athletics history when she became head coach of the women's volleyball program in 1987. Katrina Fields '85 earned a spot in the Fairfield University Athletic Hall of Fame for her prowess on the basketball court, the first African American woman to earn that honor. The 1987-88 women's basketball team defied the odds, won the MAAC, and became the first Fairfield women's team to go to the NCAA tournament.

The 1990s brought key institutional changes amid some tense debates. One debate focused on renaming the Stag-Her Inn, a popular campus hangout, due to its sexist connotation. The Women's Studies Program, now Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies (WGSS), began in 1993 under co-directors Johanna Garvey, PhD, and Lucy Katz, JD. Mary Frances Malone, PhD, was the first woman appointed to a key administrative leadership position as associate academic vice president, which she held for 25 years. In 1997, Rosa Rebimbas '98 became the FUSA Court's first female chief justice.

Throughout the 2000s, females continued to break through glass ceilings and shape the conversation. Karen Donoghue '03, now the first female vice president of Student Life, won election in 2002 as the first female FUSA president, an event significant enough that it garnered coverage in *The Fairfieldian*. To explore what Women's Studies looks like at a Jesuit Catholic institution, Fairfield University hosted the first, and to-date only, [Jesuit and Feminist Education: Transformative Discourses for Teaching and Learning Conference](#) in October 2006, organized by Jocelyn Boryczka, PhD, and Elizabeth Petrino, PhD,



to examine how Jesuit and feminist pedagogy intersect. Lynn Babington, PhD, became the first female senior vice president for Academic Affairs and provost, and was later appointed by the Board of Trustees as the first female interim lay president in 2017. Christine Siegel, PhD, assumed the position of provost in July 2018.

Looking to our past grounds us in a history resonating with the richness of religious, economic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity that generates the change necessary to meet the world, our students, and each other where we are now, and pushes us in the direction where we hope to go. This history continues to encourage us as a Catholic university to empathize with those who now experience themselves as other, or as excluded from the mainstream of American life. Our Jesuit Catholic tradition calls us to tap into our history, faith traditions, and common humanity, to learn from the past and listen to all individuals, including the historically wounded, in order to continue to be a force for healing in our communities.



CHAPTER TWO

Where We Are Now — Welcoming



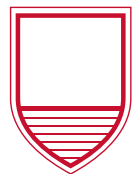
Remembering our past enables us to better understand the present. Welcoming — the second step toward radical hospitality — is in keeping with Fr. General Arturo Sosa’s call for each Jesuit university to “throw open its doors and windows to people at the margins” and to invite everyone into our community based on unconditional respect for the diverse characteristics of human experience and identity. Embracing our differences generates mutually transformative experiences in and outside the classroom and campus, deepening and expanding our collective understanding of the world, and advancing our commitment to academic excellence.

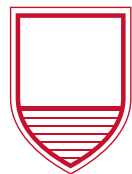
Here, we scan the current terrain of diversity and inclusive excellence at Fairfield University with an eye on our achievements and towards areas in need of attention. We do so in the midst of a nation reckoning with its past as manifest in a present marked by a resurgent concern for social, cultural, economic, and political inequities faced by Black American communities in our nation, contentious border politics, and a polarized polity. In particular, our current moment calls us to recognize race as a historically important issue, often focusing national conversation.

As a Jesuit Catholic university, we take to heart the words of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in their 2018 pastoral letter against racism, “Open Wide Our Hearts,” that Christ’s central commandment to love “compels each of us to resist racism courageously and...to begin to change policies and structures that allow racism to persist.” This message informs how we meet the demographic predictions, indicating that, by 2025, a majority of the college-bound population in the United States will come from traditionally minority communities. Such demographic shifts prioritize Fairfield’s preparedness for welcoming and being welcomed by an ever-changing student population.

The terrain mapped out below conveys the broad contours of Fairfield University’s current efforts to meet the world where it is. To help us do so, Fairfield issued in April 2018 its Principles of Discourse to ensure that all community members can engage in civil modes of discourse marked by the free and rigorous exchange of ideas, debate, discussion, and disputation as vital to our academic mission. The public targeting of a Fairfield faculty member for sharing research and analysis on race prompted President Nemeč to draw upon his experience, undergirded by the University’s Core Values and its Statement of Core Values, to animate a faculty committee leading to the creation of these principles and the ad hoc committee established in May 2020 tasked with bringing further clarity on any related issues. Fairfield University approaches diversity with an intentionality of inclusion that provides the groundwork for our curricular, co-curricular, and community-oriented initiatives. Three pillars of our Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Mission Statement — inclusive excellence, a diverse community, and global engagement — organize these initiatives to help us discern the impact of what we are doing now, as we continue to chart our journey toward the fourth pillar of radical hospitality.







about race, religion, sexual orientation, and other aspects of their lives, in an effort to dismantle stereotypes and prejudices through positive dialogue.

- **A** **A** emerged from 2019 to 2021 to advance efforts related to

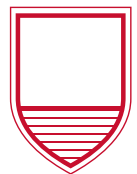
The School of Education and Human Development (SEHD) was the first to establish its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee in fall 2019. In fall 2021, the CAS followed, creating its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, and the library formed a Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Committee. The Charles F. Dolan School of Business established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force in spring 2020 with the Marion Peckham Egan School of Nursing and Health Studies forming its Egan Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force in fall 2021 and the School of Engineering creating its task force in fall 2021.



A



SDMA coordinates two incoming student support programs. The [Cura Personalis Mentoring Program](#)



The **A** formed the Fairfield University Alumni of Color Network in response to, and collaboration with, Fairfield alumni of color in spring 2021. This network, an official affiliate group of the Office of Alumni Relations, will create a community and gateway to support Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Stags during and after their time at Fairfield. The network hosts various programs that cultivate personal and professional connections and opportunities to support the University while demonstrating the strength and success that exists within the BIPOC community. [The Fairfield Awards Dinner](#), a flagship event started in 1988 to celebrate inclusive excellence, has raised nearly \$20 million through the Alumni Multicultural Scholarship Fund, which grants around 20 students a year \$24,000 awards.

- focuses efforts of and the (MCIS). Both are inspired by the Second Vatican Council, recent General Congregations of the Society of Jesus, and the Universal Apostolic Preferences, to seek to accompany our community in a rich encounter with the living God. Protestant, Muslim, and Jewish chaplains join the Catholic ministry team in offering diverse opportunities for prayer, worship, and reflection faithful to the respective traditions and open to interreligious engagement. Our community can participate in retreats, challenging discussions about social and racial justice, volunteer service in traditionally underserved communities, immersion trips, and outreach to those most likely to suffer marginalization. Campus Ministry recently hosted services for victims of racial



faculty of color. Faculty and staff of color lunches also occur each semester. The Fairfield chapter of the Connecticut ACE (American Council on Education) Women's Network (CTAWN) hosts events to support women's professional development. In 2019, the University hired its first full-time administrator for matters of equity, to serve as Title IX coordinator and oversee institutional responses to discrimination. Fairfield has standard compliance training programs on diversity and sexual harassment in the workplace. The [Center for Academic Excellence](#) (CAE) delivers racial and social justice workshops on teaching and course design, and coordinates diversity-focused faculty learning communities. In spring 2022, the CAE launched the Mid-Career Faculty of Color Professional Learning Community. Fairfield, in fall 2020, became an institutional member of the [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#) (NCFDD). This nationally recognized, independent organization offers career development and mentoring resources for faculty and graduate students with particular attention to diversity.



This third pillar conveys our commitment to preparing our students to become global citizens at home in the world, able to engage in different cultural contexts with an open mind and capacity to empathize with the perspectives of diverse peoples. In the Jesuit spirit, we also welcome and hope to be welcomed by the world as we engage with partners across the globe.

- _____ is the focus of [Global Fairfield](#)



CHAPTER THREE

Where We Want To Go – Belonging



Looking to the future, Fairfield aspires to ensure that all members of our campus community feel that they belong at Fairfield and consider it to be their home. We acknowledge that our current campus demographics do not reflect the diversity of our region, much less our nation or the world, and, as such, are not where we want them to be. As a student-centric, values-based, outcome-focused institution, Fairfield is called to prepare our students to be 21st century leaders in a complex world rich with diverse peoples and ways of knowing and being. To do so, we are called to recruit, admit, retain, graduate, place, and engage diverse, underrepresented, and first-generation college students.

To ensure that students, staff, faculty, and administrators of all backgrounds and experiences belong as full members in our community,

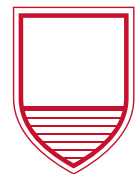
we are committed to the following:

Initiative #1

Initiative #2

Initiative #3

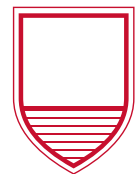
Initiative #4:



Initiative #1

Fairfield will continue to expand student access to higher education with a focus on diversity and inclusive excellence. Fostering a sense of belonging among all new members of our student community extends from in-person to online experiences.

- **Recruiting** prospective underrepresented students through partnerships and by building pipelines, focusing as early as middle school to establish a successful pathway to Fairfield. We will continue to build our partnerships with Cristo Rey, Nativity, and Jesuit middle schools and high schools such as Fairfield Prep, Brooklyn Jesuit Prep, St. Ignatius Prep, and St. Martin de Porres. We will deepen these partnerships while developing new pipelines reflecting Fairfield's increasing role on the national stage.
- **Admission** underrepresented students through outreach programs such as the Multicultural Visitors Program (MVP) and preparatory programs such as Upward Bound, which prepares high school students in Bridgeport to attend college and Fairfield Prep's S.E.E.D. program. The Company Scholars program will recruit a fully funded student cohort annually. The Academic Immersion program will continue and expand its capacity to transition students to Fairfield University through its summer bridge program. We plan to develop further strategies to address financial need, and sustain and build out our Admission programs while developing new ones.
- **Supporting** first-generation students and students of color by providing student support services such as those offered by our Academic Access Counselor, and easy access to formal mentoring and leadership programs to assist students' social identity development and academic engagement. We will attend further to advising students about their changing financial needs. We will provide more opportunities for all of our students to engage in high-impact practices such as conducting independent research and studying or participating in service while abroad.
- **Preparing** our students in jobs, careers, and graduate programs by ensuring their access to high-quality internships, community engagement experiences, and career placement services. We will continue to cultivate our national alumni network with attention to providing underrepresented students with mentoring and career-building opportunities.
- **Engaging** our alumni in the Fairfield community and advance our underrepresented students. We will increase membership in the Alumni of Color Network and collaborate with them to create pathways for alumni of color to mentor and support students of color.



The Bellarmine College project encompasses Fairfield's multiple efforts to identify, attract, admit, retain, graduate, place, and engage a diverse student body. This project is our most recent initiative initially advanced under President Nemeč's leadership in 2020 and in partnership with the Diocese of Bridgeport. The Bellarmine College project is on track to offer a fully funded two-year associate degree for qualified students from our local community by fall of 2023. The Bellarmine College project promises to expand access to higher education and its associated benefits for students of color, first-generation, and Pell-eligible students by ensuring students graduate with a clear pathway to a four-year degree program or employment.



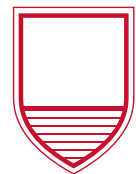
Initiative #2



Initiative #3

Fairfield will continue to cultivate an inclusive community by attending to the ways in which we prepare and support students, faculty, and staff to engage meaningfully with each other as individuals, as they pursue their own growth trajectories. Such attention will invite all members of the community to the range of experiences that comprise our Jesuit Catholic university.

- our curricular and research opportunities to ensure our ability to meet our academic mission that calls us to learn and continuously build our capacity to prepare our students to meet an ever-changing world. We will continue to develop workshops, curriculum development institutes, and learning communities to ensure that faculty members are prepared to engage all of our students, and help them interact with people different from themselves and in local, national, and global contexts. We will continue to build an inclusive community through the shared Core Curriculum, while expanding on and developing the Social Justice signature element. We will continue to support faculty and student scholarship that examines the critical questions of our time. With the recognition that no one scholarly approach has a singular hold on the truth, we will invite all forms of research into conversations examining issues of diversity and inclusive excellence.
- further socialization opportunities that will embed diversity and inclusion into our way of proceeding. Such opportunities will be designed to encourage community members to build meaningful relationships across differences, develop awareness about race, ethnicity, and other affinities, and seek change in the local, national, and global community. The continued development of affinity groups for students, staff, and faculty is one example of such socialization opportunities.
- professional development opportunities for employees across all divisions and departments that will support and promote participation in building capacity for greater diversity and inclusion. For example, we will continue to improve sexual harassment and diversity training available through Human Resources. We will offer opportunities for faculty, staff, and student leaders to learn how to better support students with disabilities, students navigating mental health issues, international students, first-generation students, underrepresented students and undocumented students as we accompany all our students in their learning and development.
- our community to participate in spiritual growth and learning opportunities offered through the Murphy Center for Ignatian Spirituality, Campus Ministry, the Bennett Center for Judaic Studies, and the Center for Catholic Studies. We will develop further our commitment to interfaith religious dialogues and community-building.
- a University-wide learning pilot program grounded in our Jesuit Catholic tradition that offers the opportunity to engage our members in a process that cultivates a shared understanding of, and commitment to, our mission of diversity and inclusive excellence. Grounded in radical hospitality, this program will focus on the richness of diversity as necessary to recognizing the dignity of each individual and developing an inclusive community that strives for belonging.



Initiative #4:

Since its founding in the mid-century as an institution dedicated to providing opportunity to those who were then at the margins of higher education, Fairfield University has evolved as a modern, Jesuit Catholic university, forming students from across the country and around the world to be men and women for and with others. As we continue to evolve, we commit to progress monitoring and continuous improvement of our diversity and inclusion goals. Further, we commit to clear, coordinated, and current communication about the ways in which we enact our mission of diversity and inclusive excellence.

- by identifying and assessing key performance indicators linked to efforts to diversify our student and employee populations and cultivate an inclusive community. In addition to monitoring demographic trends in student admission, retention, and completion, we will conduct periodic surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions to assess students' sense of belonging and engagement on campus. We will note the experiences of part-time, commuter, international, and graduate students to ensure their full membership in the Fairfield University community. We will likewise monitor demographic trends in employee hiring, retention, and promotion, and develop methods to assess engagement and belonging among our full- and part-time faculty, staff, and administrators.
- of accountability and collaboration around diversity initiatives, practices, and policies. Based on data from our assessment practices, we will revise, as needed, policies and practices to ensure that they reflect the breadth of diversity on our campus. We will include diversity and inclusion in annual reports, goal setting processes, and performance evaluations. We will review and, as needed, revise organizational structures and committees to ensure effective implementation of diversity strategies.
- with greater frequency and synergy our diversity and inclusive excellence messaging around events, resources, and opportunities. We will continue to build the Diversity and Inclusive Excellence website as a hub for information about Fairfield's diversity programs and initiatives to advance our educational efforts and create connections across departments and divisions. We will provide regular updates to the community about the Presidential Working Group's efforts, in conjunction with those areas across campus, including various committees and task forces.



CONCLUSION

Reaching for
the *M*'s



These initiatives help to chart our path forward. This path, while taking many twists and turns, is guided by our shared pursuit of excellence, the more, a beacon on the horizon that calls us to do better, try harder, and strive for a form of excellence that links each of us together through a broader sense of the common good. Together, we engage in continuous learning that enables us to answer the call of Fr. General Arturo Sosa, S.J., to seek to understand the lived experience of so many, the “inequality that generates violence, the forced migrations, racial discrimination and injustice, populism and authoritarianism, and the deterioration of the environment.” Such understanding then informs how we animate the Universal Apostolic Preferences to “accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future” and to “walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated in a mission of reconciliation and justice.” To do so, our community will cultivate its practice of radical hospitality, which calls us to remember our past as we welcome and are welcomed by one another, with full recognition and equal valuation of our shared dignity as human beings with richly diverse backgrounds and experiences, in order to deepen our sense of belonging.

As a Jesuit Catholic University, Fairfield was founded to act as an agent of social transformation. We aspire to accompany our students and by extension, young people everywhere, in their efforts to build a shared human society that respects the dignity of all people and is enriched by diversity. Through our collective efforts, we strive to respond to Fr. Sosa’s invitation in 2018 to open our doors and windows to all, including our most vulnerable, “who will, in turn, bring with them a new, fresh breath of air that will be the source of life in abundance to all that we are trying to do to transform the world.”

