

Maxwell DEI Strategic Plan

As our community becomes increasingly diverse, so does our own contextual understanding of the world and the challenges our underrepresented faculty, staff, students, and alumni face. We are committed to recognizing and addressing not only the barriers that inhibit their success but also – and this is critical given we are an institution grounded in the social sciences – the wider systemic issues that continue to thrive in our own blind spots. We adopt a more focused approach for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) that goes beyond educating students to be engaged citizens; rather, we see ourselves training a more diverse student body to be engaged leaders who work in the broader professional and academic environments. Our students take with them a commitment to improving outcomes for all peoples, not just those who look like them or have comparable backgrounds and experiences.

We share with the university a vision of a campus environment that appreciates and promotes diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, caste, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, class, learning style, language and country of origin, disability, political ideology, religion, and cultural perspectives. Inclusion means respectful, intentional and purposeful engagement with diverse students, faculty, alumni, and staff. Equity entails ensuring that individuals receive the support they require to perform at their highest level. Accessibility requires making sure that physical and psychological obstacles do not prevent an individual's participation or achievement. We integrate these core values to Maxwell's vision for making them actionable.

Vision

- To contribute as an educational institution towards the formation of engaged citizenship, shared prosperity, and a functioning, just society for all of us.
- To increase our efforts in our teaching and research to document, discuss, interpret, and reckon with, the long record of racial, ethnic, religious, and gendered injustice, violence, and inequality, that have damaged the United States and other societies over human history.
- To push ourselves and our students to do more than merely understand systems of oppression, but also to use our knowledge of the social sciences to devise more creative and sustainable solutions to addressing injustices and systemic racism.
- To understand the inequalities and injustices that have affected our increasingly diverse population of faculty, staff, and students and to express solidarity from our respective positions with those of others.

- To recognize that it takes consistent hard work to build and sustain a more inclusive, accessible, and safer environment for all members of the Maxwell community.
- To foster an inclusive learning environment where diversity of thought, rigorous debate, and respectful disagreement is cultivated and expected.
- To appreciate that many of our community members have experienced violence or threats of violence as a result of their identity or ideology, and to reinforce that the Maxwell School is a safe place for the free expression and exchange of ideas so long as they do not threaten the safety of our community members.

The Four Pillars: A Roadmap of DEI Initiatives at Maxwell

Awareness

This pillar signals a clear commitment to educating ourselves and making information on DEI readily available to all constituencies in Maxwell. Through a common understanding of the importance of learning and incorporating DEI into our teaching, research and administrative work, we make a statement that the lack of knowledge is no longer acceptable. We will work in a coordinated way with resources that already exist on campus and facilitate their use inside Maxwell. When necessary, we will generate our own initiatives to raise the profile of DEI throughout all our constituencies. Though our short-term goal is to raise awareness that DEI is one of our core values, we hope that it will become an organic feature of Maxwell's culture in the longer term.

Initiatives will include:

Encourage revision of pedagogies and curricula: Offer curriculum reviews to enhance DEI in Maxwell's courses. Encourage faculty to diversify their course offerings and compile updated lists of DEI-related courses.

Awareness building: Raise awareness of our membership in DEI-advocacy organizations to Maxwell constituencies, such as our participation in the Public Affairs Diversity Alliance.

Community

This pillar seeks to foster a sense of belonging among specific constituencies in Maxwell to nurture their connections and shared interests. The initiatives below bring together individuals from underrepresented groups into umbrella organizations that ensure against isolation and foster a sense of belonging in Maxwell. They also extend to fostering intellectual communities to allow both faculty and students to understand how issues of interest to DEI, such as racism or inequality, are understood and studied in their discipline.

Initiatives will include:

Affinity groups: Create groups for Maxwell graduate students, alumni and staff similar to the Faculty of Color Group to establish social bonds among groups of color and to outline goals for collective interests.

Increase Underrepresented Minority (URM) speakers: Encourage the invitation of speakers from underrepresented groups to address various departments in Maxwell. Offer to co-sponsor these events, provide funding and support, and other assistance to invite URM speakers.

Advancing

This pillar represents our commitment to addressing DEI issues as they are brought to light and problem solving around equitable solutions. It is intended to focus on targeted initiatives geared towards fostering a

richer DEI environment for faculty, students and staff of color. Areas of focus include recruitment, retention, skills building, award selection and student services.

Initiatives will include:

Retention: Review the institutional rubrics of Maxwell departments to uncover any barriers to the retention and promotion of URM faculty and staff. Formalize mentorship for URM faculty and staff to guide them towards their professional goals and career advancement.

Accountability

The driver behind this pillar is to institutionalize a change in culture inside Maxwell that renders permanent the need for diversity, equity and inclusion. If we have learned anything from past efforts, it is the need for sustained action to implement reforms and for holding leadership—and each other—accountable on following through on these reforms. We have also learned that this process for operationalizing such a strategic plan has to be transparent and include the voices of Maxwell’s many constituencies.

Initiatives will include:

Faculty accountability: Consult with faculty on incentives to fully complete yearly CV updates on DEI section to demonstrate how they are working to achieve these goals. Consult with the Maxwell Faculty Council and department chairs on ways to increase faculty completion of this section of updates.

We welcome and encourage the community's participation to the development of this strategic plan. If you have thoughts, we would love to hear from you.

Send us an
email [➤\[mailto:MaxwellDEI@syr.edu\]](mailto:MaxwellDEI@syr.edu)

Strategic Plan [➤\[/diversity-equity-inclusion/strategic-plan\]](/diversity-equity-inclusion/strategic-plan)

DEI News [➤\[/diversity-equity-inclusion/news\]](/diversity-equity-inclusion/news)

Leadership [➤\[/diversity-equity-inclusion/people\]](/diversity-equity-inclusion/people)

Strategic Initiatives

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