2019 ACCT Charles Kennedy Equity Awards: Equity Award Nomination
HACC – Central Pennsylvania’s Community College

Demonstrable evidence of leadership in setting policies

HACC’s leadership team consists of two separate entities: the Board of Trustees and the President’s Cabinet. Both of which include the engagement and leadership of HACC President, John J. “Ski” Sygielski, Ed.D. These two entities are charged with ensuring that the College is cultivating an environment of inclusive excellence throughout every area of institutional operations. HACC’s Board of Trustees, and the President’s Cabinet, both provide consistent leadership to ensure that the College is both a culturally supportive environment for the current students and employees of HACC, and for the future members of the College community.

Criteria 1: Increases in access by underrepresented or underserved populations and increases in completion of the educational objectives (attainment of a degree, certificate, credential, transfer or gainful employment) of those populations.

HACC, Central Pennsylvania’s Community College, maintains a focus on ensuring access to diplomas, certificates and degrees for students from historically underrepresented, underprivileged, underserved, and other minority populations, and that the College remains a leader of institutional access to higher education within the Central Pennsylvania region for generations to come. HACC serves an 11-county region that includes some of the most diverse communities within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As the largest provider of higher education within our region, HACC is poised to increase our service region through virtual learning by providing innovative offerings that serve the communities and diverse populations. Below is a listing of strategic initiatives that the College is engaged in that demonstrates our commitment to access and success of underrepresented and underserved populations.

- **Dual Enrollment** – Dual enrollment provides opportunities for qualified students to receive high school and college credits simultaneously. Over the past academic year, approximately 3,600 unduplicated students participated in one of the dual enrollment programs, including College in the High School. Dual enrollment provides high school students, within HACC’s service region, the opportunity to participate in college-level courses at any of the College’s five campuses (Harrisburg, Lancaster, York, Gettysburg, Lebanon), at an off-site location (i.e. – high schools), or virtually. Students enrolling in dual enrollment enroll in credit-bearing courses at the 100 level and above, which satisfy high school curricular requirements. There has been an additional emphasis on increasing the number of minority students participating in the dual enrollment program. At the Lancaster campus, a partnership has emerged between the English department and J.P. McCaskey High School. The McCaskey Initiative consists of a developmental English course, designed by HACC faculty, offered on-site at the high school. This particular dual enrollment program provides an opportunity for at-risk students to earn college credits, without the students having to travel to the HACC campus, which can present a barrier to participation. In the previous academic year, 36 students participated in the McCaskey High School Bridge Program, with 23 students completing the course achieving a grade of C or higher. These types of programs are intended to identify and dismantle the barriers that students coming to HACC often face related to being underprepared upon entering post-secondary studies.

- **McCaskey Path Bridge Program (FS 100)** – In partnership with the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), this program is designed specifically for students with Individual Education Plans (IEP). The students, who are selected by their respective high schools, participate in college-level courses at HACC, and are provided additional support services and academic accommodations through Student Access Services (formerly Disability Services). To date, this initiative has serves 24 students who plan to continue in future semesters, and the program boasts a 100% college acceptance rate for participants.

- **HACC S.T.E.P.** – S.T.E.P. (Set goals, Take action, Expect success, Put in the work) is a four-week training experience that has prepared approximately 190 high school students (in 10 school districts
across the region) with the tools needed to be successful in today’s work environment and address the “essential skills” needed to perform today’s jobs. This four-week training program empowers students to convert the conceptual understanding of soft skills into everyday practice on the job. All training participants will receive a certificate of completion for this training, which enables them to be competitive in the open job market.

- **Policy Development and Implementation** – The Office of Inclusion and Diversity has worked with constituents across the College to ensure that the policies that guide our institutional direction are fair, equitable and educate the community on how to avoid bias and discrimination. These policies are designed to protect and support students and employees, and include policies related to sex discrimination, gender discrimination, (dis)ability, academic equity, racial discrimination, hiring and firing, freedom of speech/hate speech, and student success.

- **HACC Students of Color Initiative (SoC)** – Beginning as the Men of Color (MoC) Initiative at HACC, these programs have been expanded to include Foundational Studies (FS) courses specifically designed to impact the retention outcomes of the most at-risk populations in higher education: African-American and Latino males, females, and students with developmental needs. This initiative is currently offered to all entering African-American and Latino male students, and will expand to other targeted populations beginning Fall 2019. Retention rates for the MoC participants on the Harrisburg and York campuses both outpaced the College’s overall retention rate.

- **HACC Foundation** – The HACC Foundation serves as the fundraising and philanthropic arm of the institution. The Foundation generously supports programs and initiatives that instill inclusivity into the framework of the institution. The Foundation has supported many of the strategic initiatives that advance the academic and social success of both current and incoming underrepresented minority populations. As the fundraising and philanthropic arm of HACC, the Foundation has been instrumental in both raising and providing critical financial assistance to the members of the HACC community. While not specifically earmarked for underrepresented minority students, the barriers that these students face in pursuit of academic excellence, often requires the intervention of the HACC Foundation to ensure their collective academic success. The Foundation at HACC has:
  - Created the Fund for Inclusive Excellence to support continued cultural and intercultural growth and development initiatives across the College.
  - The Foundation has exceeded its goal of $500,000 to support the HACC Emergency Assistance Funds. The Emergency Assistance Funds provide funding for current HACC students to ensure that every day and extraordinary occurrences do not completely derail a student’s chances at success.

**Criteria 2: Increases in the institution’s workforce and leadership positions by underrepresented or underserved populations.**

- **HACC Board of Trustees** – HACC is led by a 19-member Board of Trustees, which includes two African-Americans, one Latino, and two Asian-Indian members. Trustee Hector R. Ortiz, Ph.D. serves as the Board of Trustees assistant secretary, chair of the Board Diversity Committee and, nationally, serves as a Trustee on the 2019-20 ACCT Board of Directors.

- **HACC College Leadership** - HACC’s Cabinet consists of 15 college-wide and campus-based administrative leaders. The cabinet is diverse with 11 of the 15 members identifying as racial, ethnic and gender minorities, and one identifying as a member of the LGBT community. President John J. “Ski” Sygielski identifies as a member of the LGBT community, and is a staunch advocate for equity and access in higher education. It is this advocacy that shapes his vision for ensuring that his leadership team serves as a model for inclusive excellence. Six members of Cabinet identify as racial

The President created the position of vice president for inclusion and diversity officer in 2016 to ensure that principles of inclusive excellence are represented throughout every aspect of the College. At the time this position was created, HACC was home to the only chief diversity officer, serving in a cabinet level role within the 14 community colleges within the state of Pennsylvania. This position is also serves as the College’s Title IX Coordinator and has institutional responsibility for Student Access Services. This administrative Vice President, charged with institutional inclusive excellence, underscores the institution’s commitment to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion.

Commitment to a Diverse Workforce – Ensuring a diverse workforce is critical to the sustainability of HACC. The vice president for Human Resources and Organizational Development and the vice president for Inclusion and Diversity worked to develop a set of strategic goals that map the College’s continued commitment to ensuring a search and recruitment process that minimizes bias and increases access for prospective applicants who identify as a member of an underrepresented minority population. This strategic direction emphasizes three key areas:

1. Ensure equity throughout the recruitment and search process
2. Ensure continuous improvement in climate around recruitment and retention of underrepresented and minority applicants and current employees
3. Develop a comprehensive plan for the recruitment, hiring and retention of qualified applicants and employees belonging to historically underrepresented or underserved populations

This commitment has expanded to the review, development and implementation of equitable policies and procedures to ensure the retention, engagement and advancement of employees that identify as a targeted minority in higher education.

Journey to Excellence 2015-19 - The College’s strategic plan, Journey to Excellence 2015-19, guides the College’s Board and Cabinet toward the goal of sustaining a foundation of excellence for the students who pursue diplomas, degrees and certificates at HACC. The Journey to Excellence consists of four strategic goals:

1. Advance academic excellence
2. Foster student success
3. Strengthen institutional sustainability
4. Instill inclusivity

Currently, the president has charged a committee, led by the vice president for human resources and organizational development, with the development of the college’s new strategic plan, which takes the inclusion of diversity-related principles to another level. This includes the saturation of inclusion and diversity within three key strategic goals (instead of four), re-envisioning of the college’s mission, vision and values, and ensuring that each goal and sub-goal is aligned with our principles of equity and inclusion.

Journey to Inclusive Excellence 2017-20 – During the fall 2017 semester, the College’s Board of Trustees unanimously adopted the Journey to Inclusive Excellence, which further strengthens the institution’s commitment to inclusivity, which is represented in the Journey to Excellence 2015-19. The Journey to Inclusive Excellence is the College’s blueprint toward ensuring an equitable, accessible, and inclusive college environment. The Journey to Inclusive Excellence includes one strategic goal: Promote and enhance a diverse and inclusive college environment, and four key sub-goals:

- Maintain a commitment to the equitable access, engagement, and success of HACC’s current and future members of HACC’s diverse community
- Nurture an environment that fosters opportunities for cultural and intercultural engagement
Enhance the recruitment and search processes to ensure a workforce reflective of HACC's diverse service market

Develop and promote opportunities for active and sustainable engagement that strengthens the diversity-rich communities within our service region

This foundational strategic plan sets the stage for ensuring that HACC is the most forward-thinking and progressive community college in the country. With input and support from all members of the College Cabinet, the Journey to Inclusive Excellence touches every single area of the college, and accountability metrics ensure that the scope of work around inclusion and diversity is shared by the entire institution.

**Institutional Diversity Committees** – HACC knows that the work of inclusion and diversity cannot fall on a single officer or office. In recognition of this fact, HACC has implemented two diversity committees that serve HACC collegewide: Board of Trustees Diversity Committee and the HACC Inclusion and Diversity Committee.

- **Board of Trustee Diversity Committee** – this committee is charged with developing strategic priorities of the College. The committee consists of five Trustees, the College President and the College’s Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity & Chief Diversity Officer.
- **HACC Inclusion and Diversity Committee (IDC)** – The HACC Inclusion and Diversity Committee serves as the advisory arm of the Office of Inclusion and Diversity. This committee includes members from each of the College’s five campuses, and Virtual Learning. Members of this committee also include four cabinet-level members:
  1. vice president, student affairs and enrollment management
  2. vice president, human resources and organizational development
  3. provost and vice president, academic affairs
  4. vice president for inclusion and diversity & chief diversity officer

**Campus-Based Diversity Committees** – Understanding the local landscape of educational environments is critical as we cultivate a culturally competent institution. As a mechanism for the inclusion of every individual at each campus, the IDC established campus-based diversity committees. Each of the five physical campuses has a diversity committee that is led by its campus Vice President, and includes members of the respective campus (e.g. - academic deans, student affairs deans, faculty, staff, and students), in addition to selected community members that bridge the gap creating an enhanced town-gown effect. These committees are charged with developing and implementing local inclusion and diversity-based programmatic initiatives.

**Criteria 3: Success of the institution’s community engagement or outreach efforts in attracting and maintaining the interests of underrepresented or underserved populations regarding the institution**

- **Community Diversity Forum** – The Community Diversity Forum is a monthly series that features panelists and facilitators from the internal and external community. Each month’s Forum focuses on a different aspect of diversity and inclusion. The Community Diversity Forum has become an event that attracts members of the local and regional community, with the aim of working together to create a more equitable and educated Capital Region. Over the past academic year, these Forums have attracted in excess of 1,000 attendees, with the majority being external to the College.

- **Harrisburg Promise** – Harrisburg Promise is a partnership between HACC, the City of Harrisburg, and the Harrisburg Housing Authority. This program is a pipeline program for youth in Harrisburg, specifically students in the public housing sectors of the city. Harrisburg Promise offers students, beginning in the seventh grade, career awareness, career-readiness, and college-readiness skills. Currently, the number of students in this innovative pipeline program stands at 60 in grades seven through nine. Students must maintain high academic standards and are rewarded with free tuition upon graduation from high school.
Employee Search and Recruitment – As a unit under the umbrella of Human Resources and Organizational Development, the employee search and recruitment process works to ensure that the appropriate information regarding employment opportunities is shared with the appropriate communities and organizations to attract the most diverse and qualified pool of applicants. This process works with each search committee on eliminating bias, reviews questions and applicants at each stage, and certifies that each search is conducted and completed in a manner that follows national and industry best practices, rooted in equity and fairness. Most importantly, each applicant to HACC is now required to complete some level of equity and diversity-related activity before an application for employment can be completed. The activity ranges from answering a direct question regarding their experience working in a diverse environment (entry level applicants), to submitting their individual statement or philosophy related to inclusion and diversity in higher education (senior/executive level applicants). This strategic direction has helped to fulfill a strategic goal of increasing the number of underrepresented minority employees at the College by three-percent at the conclusion of Journey to Excellence 2015-2019.

Disability Awareness Month – Each year, Disability Services offers various campuses training and activities to explore the barriers faced by students and individuals with disabilities. Through individual, small group, and campus/college-wide activities, attendees discover insights into the college's dedication to ensuring equal access to education for all of our students. Attendees better understand the barriers and challenges that students needing academic and non-academic accommodations face on a daily basis on their way to attaining their degree, diploma or certificate.

Student Recruitment, Retention and Graduation Strategic Plan – The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management is the student success arm of the College. This unit houses the departments of admissions and recruitment, financial aid, counseling and advising, student development and multicultural programs, and student/academic success. With the hiring of a new Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, a new emphasis on the minority student experience at every stage of the enrollment cycle has been established. Currently, admissions teams from each of the five physical campuses and virtual learning engage in recruitment activities throughout their respective communities. Representatives can often be found at community events including India Day, church admissions days, local and national college fairs targeting minority students, and working to establish pipelines with national initiatives like GEAR-UP. Whether it be visiting community based organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS), or engaging in the development of culturally-based student organizations like African-American Student Alliance (AASA), the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management is working to increase the recruitment, retention, engagement and graduation rates of students belonging to historically underrepresented, underserved, underprepared, minority and other marginalized populations. Developing a comprehensive strategic plan, which is centrally focused on the recruitment, retention and success of underrepresented and/or minority students will be key to our ongoing institutional efforts to build a more inclusive environment. Currently, the fall-to-fall retention rates for non-white students stand at approximately 54 percent and the graduation data for the targeted minority populations are as follows: African-American (4.6%), Hispanic/Latino (9.0%), and Asian (11.4%), with African-American and Hispanic/Latino students showing gains over the previous year.

Procurement for Minority-Owned Small Businesses – The Office of Inclusion and Diversity has partnered with the Office of Finance to develop policies and procedures designed to ensure access for the region’s minority and women-owned businesses to procurement opportunities at HACC. This includes access to opportunities to submit bids to small and large-scale contracts awarded by the College. Initiatives include partnering with the Commonwealth to host information sessions on the processes of engagement, relationship building, and ensuring that selection matrices are equitable and provide incentives for minority and women-owned businesses to submit bids for contracts.