

**Quinnipiac**  
UNIVERSITY

# EQUITY & INCLUSION REPORT



FALL 2024



## A Commitment to Inclusive Excellence: Our path forward

As we continue our journey toward the University of the Future, a critical goal for that journey is inclusive excellence. Inclusive excellence is a shared responsibility, woven into the fabric of our culture and values, into the expectations for each member of our community. And we hold ourselves accountable. How? By measuring our progress and by publicizing that progress, with transparency, in our annual Equity & Inclusion Report.

What do we mean when we say that we aspire to inclusive excellence? That aspiration calls for dedication to equity, fairness and respect for all differences in every aspect of living and learning, in every policy and institutional decision, in every public event or statement. We strive to achieve inclusive excellence also in how we teach, in how we engage with one another publicly and privately, in the sense of belonging among every member of our Bobcat family, and in preparing our students to be thoughtful global citizens.

These collective values, embedded in our Statement of Inclusive Values, have impact beyond the institutional and individual actions noted above. They are also the guiding framework for numerous programs advancing equity and inclusion, including First-Year Immersion, Bobcat Academy, Sawhney Leadership Program, Critical Conversations Speaker Series, and Inclusive Excellence Teaching Lab.

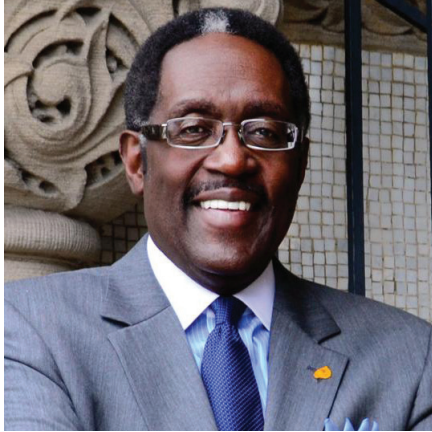
"The progress outlined in this year's report reflects the purposeful work of our students, faculty, and staff who are committed to building Quinnipiac as a just, inclusive, and empathetic environment, where all community members feel seen and heard."

We have made notable strides as documented in this report, yet this journey is far from complete as we continue to strive for greater justice and understanding within our own community, and in the world around us.

Congressman John Lewis reminds us that "each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society." So, let's do our part — let's view this report as cause for celebration of the progress we have made, and importantly, as a call to action for the vital work still ahead.

Together,

Judy Olian  
*President*



## Meeting the challenges of equity and inclusion with innovation, empathy

It is my privilege to serve as interim vice president for the renamed Office of Inclusive Excellence at Quinnipiac University. Since January, I have been tasked to rebuild and reimagine the former Equity and Inclusion office into a modern, fully staffed Office of Inclusive Excellence. The name change is indicative of the current goals and objectives of the office: to make Quinnipiac University a place where inclusion is not just a phrase but a lived reality for all who are a part of this institution.

The landscape for the work of diversity, equity and inclusion, which I have devoted my life to facilitate, has dramatically changed over the past few years. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. taught us, "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle."

"It is important for institutions to recognize the changes and to respond to current realities."

Quinnipiac University is taking the current change opportunity to be at the forefront of a 21st-century approach to inclusive excellence.

The Quinnipiac Office of Inclusive Excellence has not only restaffed, but it has also expanded its influence. The goal is to reach each person in this institution with

the message of inclusion, equity and belonging.

The office is now housed in a renewed space that includes offices and a student space to augment existing student multicultural spaces. Claude Mayo, in a new position of Director of Inclusive Excellence, supervises Assistant Director of Inclusive Excellence Briona Grant and Cheri Brooks, in the new position of Assistant Director of Student Success and Leadership.

In addition, Patricio Jimenez, an experienced attorney and Title IX professional, is our Title IX coordinator and director of bias response. We have augmented this section with Susan Petties, JD, a full-time Title IX and bias investigator. Administrative support is provided by Sarah Catenza, the glue that keeps the office working together.

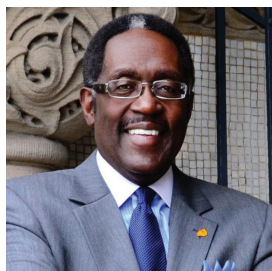
The Office of Inclusive Excellence is poised to provide professional expertise to meet the current challenges of equity and inclusion with excitement and innovation. Quinnipiac University continues to expand its efforts to be an institution of inclusive excellence.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. Fryson".

David M. Fryson, Esq.  
*Interim Vice President of Inclusive Excellence*

## Meet the team



### **David Fryson**

*Interim Vice President of Equity and Inclusion*

David M. Fryson joined Quinnipiac University as the interim vice president of inclusive excellence in January 2024. An experienced diversity professional, attorney and community organizer with a bachelor's degree in education from West Virginia State University and a Juris Doctorate from West Virginia University, David was retained to rebuild and expand the Quinnipiac Office of Inclusive Excellence. He was the inaugural chief diversity officer and vice president at West Virginia University and served as interim vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Brandeis University.



### **Sarah Catenza**

*Administrative Assistant to the Office of Inclusive Excellence*

Sarah Catenza joined Quinnipiac University in November 2021 as an administrative assistant for the vice president of the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement. In 2023, Sarah worked through the office transformation that was later restructured and renamed to Office of Inclusive Excellence. Sarah has a diploma in Medical Administration and has over 18 years in the administrative field. Through the years she has found her passion in helping others and looks forward to her growth at Quinnipiac.



### **Patricio Jimenez**

*Title IX Coordinator*

Patricio served as Title IX investigator at Syracuse University. He previously served as a senior investigator and Title IX coordinator at Brooklyn College. The Hofstra School of Law graduate has also worked in private practice and as an assistant district attorney in New York.



### **Susan Petties**

*Civil Rights and Title IX Investigator*

Susan Petties joined the Office of Inclusive Excellence in July 2024 and is responsible for conducting civil rights and Title IX investigations. Prior to her time at Quinnipiac, she spent more than a decade at a workers' compensation and social security law firm. In 2020, Susan's trajectory took an unexpected turn into the world of academia. Susan started out advising and mentoring students. Previously, she has served as an Americans with Disabilities Act and Title IX coordinator and adjunct professor in criminal justice.

Susan earned her Juris Doctorate from West Virginia University School of Law, a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Marshall University and an associate degree in legal assisting from Marshall University. She is completing her doctorate in criminal justice with a concentration in restorative justice.



**Claude E. P. Mayo**

*Director of Inclusive Excellence*

Claude E. P. Mayo joined the Office of Inclusive Excellence in March 2023 after serving as an academic administrator in academic innovation and effectiveness for nearly three years. He has experience as a full-time faculty member at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and a student affairs administrator at multiple institutions. Claude also serves as an adjunct faculty member, faculty affiliate for equity and inclusion in The Grove, and vice chair on the Staff Council.



**Cheri V. K. Brooks**

*Assistant Director of Student Success and Leadership*

Cheri Brooks began her journey at Quinnipiac University as a standardized patient, helping medical students and nurses refine their communication and examination skills. In 2021, she transitioned to Quinnipiac's newly established One Stop office, where she served as a student services counselor for three years. As a proud Quinnipiac alumna with a master's degree in organizational leadership, Cheri is driven to make a greater impact on students. She now serves as the assistant director of student success and leadership, focusing on supporting traditionally underrepresented and first-generation students. Cheri is dedicated to providing guidance and resources to help students thrive academically and in leadership positions, while fostering an inclusive environment that promotes equity and success.



**Briona Grant**

*Assistant Director of Inclusive Excellence*

Briona Grant joined Quinnipiac University in July 2021 as a residence hall director in the Office of Residential Life, where she oversaw first-year and second-year student residential communities. In June 2024, she transitioned to her current role as Assistant Director of Inclusive Excellence while also serving as an adjunct faculty member. Briona holds a bachelor's degree in clinical psychology and a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling, with extensive expertise in addressing mental health concerns among college students. She is driven by a deep commitment to community development, fostering a sense of belonging and championing the voices and needs of underrepresented students at Quinnipiac.



A group of Student Orientation Leaders  
at the Mount Carmel Student Center

## QU Statement of Inclusive Values

At Quinnipiac University, we believe excellence is inclusive and built upon equity, so all groups feel welcome to fully participate in and contribute to our mission.

Achieving this level of excellence requires creating a sense of belonging for all individuals — especially historically marginalized members of society — by affirming the worth, dignity, legitimacy and equality of everyone in the Quinnipiac community and beyond, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, national origin, political viewpoints, veteran status or socioeconomic background.

Our university-wide culture is not built on any single program, initiative or action. Rather, it blossoms when guided by heartfelt care for the well-being of fellow community members. This is what inclusive excellence looks like at Quinnipiac:

- We bring our “whole selves” to our work and study, which means we bring our hearts as well as our minds.
- We stand for the quest for knowledge, encourage the vigorous exchange of ideas, and foster honest, courageous conversations about sometimes uncomfortable subjects.
- We aim to always think and act with kindness to create a safe, respectful environment for these dialogues, with particular sensitivity to fellow community members’ individual or collective experiences.

Reasoned, academic and rigorous debate requires us to hear viewpoints with which we may disagree. However, those disagreements must not question the worth, dignity, legitimacy and/or equality of our fellow community members.

We affirm our belief in the ideals of inclusive excellence as a way to continue nurturing Quinnipiac as a university full of people who care deeply about each other and the communities around us.

LEARN MORE



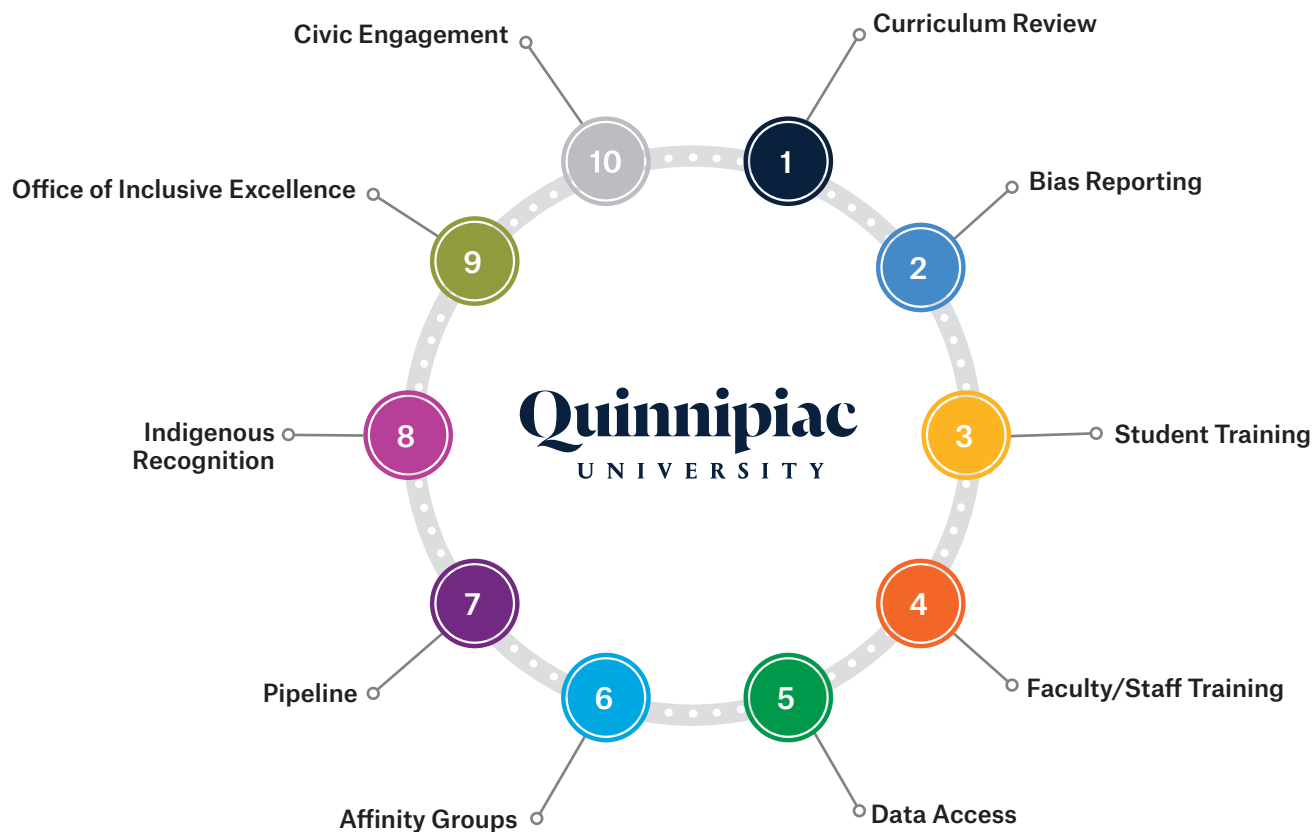
[qu.edu/inclusion](https://qu.edu/inclusion)

# A 10-Point Plan to Advance Racial Justice

In the summer of 2020, we introduced Quinnipiac’s “Actions to Advance Racial Justice.” The actions outlined in this plan were informed by statements, pledges and ideas from both faculty and student groups. The 10-Point Plan is intended to be a long-term roadmap to advancing racial justice for all communities – Black, Brown, Asian-American, Indigenous and Native American, LatinX and so many others.

Collectively, we can bring about change in our own communities – and within our own institution – by advancing equity, inclusiveness and anti-racism as cornerstones of who we are at Quinnipiac. Following are the latest updates and highlights of progress that continues to be made against each component of the 10-Point Plan.

## 10-POINT PLAN OVERVIEW



# Our 10-Point Plan: Progress since the 2023 report

## 1. CURRICULUM REVIEW

**Goal:** Increase learning about the roots and contemporary manifestations of social injustice, privilege, oppression and the drivers of social change.

- ▶ In its final year of the Davis Foundation grant, the Inclusive Excellence Teaching Lab (IETL) continued the Inclusive Excellence Summer Assembly, which drew more than 100 registrants. The Summer Assembly continues to be the campus' premier convening of faculty and staff who are thinking intentionally and strategically about better and more inclusive teaching. It featured presentations on indigeneity, neurodiversity, transgender and gender-diverse populations, as well as trauma-informed transformational justice. The IETL intends to continue the Summer Assembly into the future.
- ▶ The IETL also developed the Inclusive Excellence Educational Resource Repository (IEERR), an interdisciplinary online resource where faculty and staff can submit, exchange and retrieve pedagogical best practices for creating more inclusive classrooms. The IETL is continuing its investment in the growth and successful exchange of pedagogical support facilitated by the IEERR.
- ▶ The IETL also continued to foster communities of practice focused on supporting a sense of belonging, engaging in difficult dialogue among faculty, staff and students, artificial intelligence and other important topics.
- ▶ The Micro-Credit Initiative (MCI) now includes more than 20 different courses, including 200-level offerings that empower students in cocurricular and independent supervised experiences. The university continues to support and grow the MCI, which has aimed to offer diversity, equity and inclusion education since 2022.

## 2. BIAS REPORTING

**Goal:** Educate the community about the reporting process to ensure a fair and efficient investigatory process that supports a welcoming community for all.

- ▶ The Office of Title IX and Bias Reporting adopted its new name to reinforce its commitment to eradicating all forms of bias on Quinnipiac's campus and in its community.
- ▶ Importantly, the office has hired a full-time Title IX and bias investigator to work under the Title IX coordinator/director. The investigator is tasked with follow-up for any bias complaints and to assist the Title IX coordinator/director with training and strategies to ensure a fair and rigorous investigatory process.

- ▶ The office also published the discrimination, discriminatory harassment, and bias-motivated acts and behavior policy before August 1, 2024, to ensure that the institution remained in compliance with federal and state regulation regarding bias and discrimination.
- ▶ In accordance with the new policy, the office has and continues to conduct numerous in-person training courses to ensure that all community members are informed about the university's stance on and resources for the elimination of bias and discrimination. These in-person trainings are supplemented by online education that is required of all members of the campus community.

## 3. STUDENT TRAINING

**Goal:** Explore the roots of racism and actions to counter discrimination in society and in our own behaviors.

- ▶ The newly reconstituted Office of Inclusive Excellence is working to redevelop the campus training that it has offered to undergraduate and graduate students on campus. The vision for the new formulation will include a variety of asynchronous, hybrid and live offerings and will be available to faculty, students and staff signing up individually or as organizational units with the possibility of earning badges and/or micro-credentials in the future.
- ▶ The office has also been actively partnering with various student organizations including fraternities and sororities, the Learning Commons' peer catalysts and Student Government Association to host conversations and trainings toward a more inclusive community.
- ▶ The office has also received training from and partnered with The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. The organization has visited the campus to participate in several events in support of the university's multicultural community.

## 4. FACULTY AND STAFF TRAINING

**Goal:** Explore the roots of racism and actions to counter discrimination in society and in our own behaviors.

- ▶ The university hosted its Critical Conversations Speaker Series during the 2023-24 academic year. The series featured eight events that included regional and national presenters who engaged the campus community in discourse about topics including civility, politics, sports and race. Faculty members were encouraged to attend independently or bring their classes to participate in the formal presentations or a variety of talkback sessions held with each presenter.



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## 5. DATA ACCESS

**Goal:** Enhance access to data to promote greater transparency, strategic planning and accountability.

- ▶ The campus climate survey was constructed, disseminated and analyzed by an independent third party and overseen by the climate survey working group. The survey returned a great amount of information about the current state of the faculty, staff and student body. The survey achieved response rates above recent trends and results were shared with the community via several listening sessions.
- ▶ The climate survey action planning group was established after the completion of the survey to analyze the results, execute on improvement opportunities suggested by the survey data and amplify the positive features of the Quinnipiac community as indicated by the survey. This group has been comprised of a cross-section of the campus community, including faculty, staff and student representatives.

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## 6. AFFINITY GROUPS

**Goal:** Amplify the voices of diverse groups on campus and in our alumni community.

- ▶ The newly revamped Office of Inclusive Excellence is planning a concerted effort to expand and improve employee resource groups at the university.
- ▶ Although the women of color affinity group continues to prosper as the only recognized employee resource group at the university, initial support has been given to the recently combined Southeast Asian and Asian resource group. Plans are to expand affinity groups to improve the level of inclusive excellence.
- ▶ Staff Council has committed to fostering a community where employee resource groups are established and supported. Based on interest from the Council body, the Staff Council initiated the process to recognize a working parents' group at the university.

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## 7. PIPELINE

**Goal:** Improve policies and practices to enhance the pipeline and retention of underrepresented faculty, staff and students.

- ▶ The Office of Inclusive Excellence was expanded by the establishment of an assistant director of student success and leadership position. This position occurs as a direct partnership with the Provost's office and will be a lead administrator for two programs that focus on supporting underrepresented students' transitions and academic success: Bobcat Academy and the Sawhney Leadership Program. Each of these programs continues to achieve great success with their student participants.

- ▶ Admissions and the Office of Inclusive Excellence have expanded their partnership in the recruitment of diverse students as Office of Inclusive Excellence staff have participated in key events such as College and Career Exploration Day and the Multicultural Admitted Student Experience. Office of Inclusive Excellence staff have also partnered in off-campus recruiting events both alongside and independent of Admissions personnel.
- ▶ Additionally, the office is exploring ways to supplement existing strategies for the recruitment of diverse constituencies. For instance, in the late summer, the office provided and staffed a recruitment booth at a Southern multicultural festival with over 50,000 in attendance. It was very well received.
- ▶ In its third year of existence, the Multicultural Living-Learning Community (LLC) for the first time welcomed second-year students to join the first-year students who have always filled this community. This mixing of student classifications naturally enabled cross-class connection, additional mentoring opportunities and longitudinal community building for the underrepresented student community.
- ▶ To foster an inclusive and supportive community, Quinnipiac continues to provide students, staff and faculty trainings on 1) Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR), which focuses on recognizing the warning signs of a suicide crisis and 2) Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), which provides skills to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges. In May, 10 Quinnipiac employees were certified as MHFA instructors to expand the delivery of MHFA training to students, faculty and staff. MHFA training was provided to all incoming resident assistants (RAs). Additionally, the entire Quinnipiac public safety department has received MHFA training.
- ▶ Recent student surveys and predictive modeling have emphasized that our students' sense of belonging and their future orientation are critical to their retention and success.
- ▶ To further align retention processes and accountability, a cross-school and unit working group named "Get Them Back" was established in Fall 2023. This group focuses on improving course registration outreach and data management. Preliminary Fall 2024 enrollment numbers suggest that these enhanced strategies and interventions are effectively increasing student retention.
- ▶ The Learning Commons has expanded the Quinnipiac Learning Strategies Seminar (QU 105), which is a one-credit course designed to help students improve academically through practice, reflection and personal development.

## 8. INDIGENOUS RECOGNITION

**Goal:** Appropriately acknowledge the Indigenous people of the land of this region who are Quinnipiac's namesake.

- ▶ The annual Indigeneity Initiative Teach-In was held on Nov. 7. It was co-sponsored by the Albert Schweitzer Institute (ASI), the Indigenous Student Union (ISU) and the Center for Teaching and Learning.
- ▶ The Inclusive Excellence Summer Assembly featured a session entitled "Relationship-building between tribal nations and academic institutions: An exploration of pitfalls, promises and possibilities to further explore opportunities for progress in this area." Alongside several Quinnipiac faculty members, a panel of members of nations indigenous to Connecticut hosted this dialogue.
- ▶ The Indigeneity Initiative members curated an annual exhibit at the Arnold Bernhard Library for Native American Heritage Month (in collaboration with library staff, the ISU and Prof. Giblin's Practicing Archaeology course students).
- ▶ Profs. Giblin and Dickerson provided training to orientation leaders on Quinnipiac's indigenous name and ways that students can learn more about that at orientation leader training in June.
- ▶ ISU president Aiyana Baker, Quinnipiac alumnus Daniel Galvet and Prof. Giblin held two engagement workshops with incoming students at Welcome Weekend in August that focused on indigeneity.

## 9. OFFICE OF INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

**Goal:** Attract philanthropy and augment the resources of the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement.

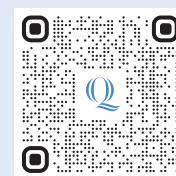
- ▶ The re-envisioning of the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement into the Office of Inclusive Excellence fully manifested as a larger staff focused on multicultural education, a refurbished office with student lounge space and an expanded offering of programs and services.
- ▶ The longstanding Prison Project has been realigned within the Office of Inclusive Excellence. The Project hopes to continue facilitating classrooms shared by incarcerated and Quinnipiac students and participating in justice-oriented advocacy around sentencing legislation in the state of Connecticut while also exploring access to degree pathways for incarcerated persons.

## 10. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

**Goal:** Promote greater global awareness and engagement that holds leaders accountable.

- ▶ The Office of Community Engagement has continued to develop its walking tour of the history of the Black community in New Haven to bring greater awareness to this important initiative. The tour has been offered both recreationally and as a part of a micro-credential (MCI) course. Other regular offerings include a walking tour of the LGBTQ Civil Rights movement in New York City and the New Haven History and Culture walking tour.
- ▶ Establishment and continuation of the voter education team, which coordinates activities, educational opportunities and programs to ready the campus community for participation in the 2024 presidential election. This university-wide team is comprised of faculty, staff and students from various departments, offices and organizations unified with the clear purpose of increasing the Quinnipiac community's engagement in this important civic responsibility.

Read more  
about our  
commitment  
to diversity and  
inclusion.



[qu.edu/inclusion](https://qu.edu/inclusion)

# Foundations for Student Success



## BOBCAT ACADEMY (BA)

Designed to help students navigate their first year of study, Bobcat Academy focuses on three key transition areas: succeeding in academics, adjusting to life away from home and building a trustworthy social network of friends, classmates and faculty advisers.



## FIRST-YEAR IMMERSION (FYI)

At Quinnipiac, our mission is to create a diverse and inclusive community where every member is acknowledged and respected and has the necessary resources to thrive, both individually and collectively. Research suggests that summer immersion programs help to facilitate a successful student transition to university life, improve academic performance, increase retention rates and lead to on-time graduation. Quinnipiac University has established a First-Year Immersion (QU FYI) summer program for admitted students from traditionally underrepresented and marginalized groups. During this program, students participate in social, cultural and academic initiatives, and fully immerse themselves into the Bobcat community while laying a solid foundation for future success.



## QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY ENRICHING STUDENT TRANSITIONS (QUEST)

The Quinnipiac University Enriching Student Transitions (QUEST) program provides a means for first-year underrepresented students (students of color, international students and first-generation college students) to connect directly with peer and professional mentors to aid in their success and adjustment to the college environment. The program creates opportunities for students to become acclimated to the campus and the local area, and to develop their personal, academic, social and cultural experiences through programming and guidance.



## QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TRAINING (QUILT)

QUILT empowers students to become active stewards of inclusive excellence by providing opportunities for participants to develop a framework for practicing inclusive leadership. Student leaders that go through the QUILT program are nominated by campus partners of the Office of Inclusive Excellence.

Benefits of participating:

- Gain marketable skills with inclusive excellence and leadership
- Increase your cultural understanding of self and others
- Receive completion certificate and recognition from the Office of Inclusive Excellence as a university leader



## SAWHNEY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (SLP)

The Sawhney Leadership Program aims to expand leadership development and corporate immersion opportunities for historically underrepresented students in higher education. Participants work collaboratively with partners across campus and in the regional business community to expose students to multiple examples of leadership and prepare them for entry into the workforce.

Our goal is to prepare the Sawhney Leadership Fellows for future careers through leadership development workshops, alumni engagement, faculty/staff connections, corporate immersion and a community of supportive, goal-oriented peers.

Sample session topics:

- Self-Inventory — Locating Yourself in the World
- Understanding Your Leadership Style
- Building Interpersonal Skills for Workplace Success
- The Language and Culture of the Professional/Corporate World

# Culture and Identity Student Groups

The following student organizations are advised in the Office of Inclusive Excellence:

- ▶ African and Caribbean Student Union
- ▶ Asian Student Alliance
- ▶ Black Student Union
- ▶ Gender Sexuality Alliance
- ▶ Girls That Invest
- ▶ Hellenic Culture Society
- ▶ Indigenous Student Union
- ▶ Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) Student Chapter at Quinnipiac University
- ▶ International Student Association
- ▶ Italian Cultural Society
- ▶ Juvenile Urban Multicultural Program (JUMP) Nation
- ▶ Multicultural Student Leadership Council
- ▶ Muslim Student Association
- ▶ NaturallyMe
- ▶ Organization of Latin American Students
- ▶ QU Active
- ▶ QU Association of Minority Engineers
- ▶ Quinnipiac Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students
- ▶ QU Women in STEM
- ▶ QU Women's Health Organization
- ▶ Quinnipiac Women in Film
- ▶ Society of Women Engineers
- ▶ South Asian Society
- ▶ Student Chapter of the Association of Women in Sports Media
- ▶ Women Empowered



# Graduate uses experience to advocate for inclusivity and self-expression



Film, television and media arts graduate Reinett Chefu '24, MS '25, devoted her time at Quinnipiac to advocating for self-expression, fostering a welcoming environment for international students and serving as a leader in the Bobcat community.

As Chefu completed her undergraduate education at Quinnipiac this past May, she left an undeniable impact on the community through her various leadership roles including president of the International Student Association (ISA), content curator and producer of the Quinnipiac University Podcast Studio, fellow of the Sawhney Leadership Program and assistant producer for the Office of Marketing and Communications.

Among the many clubs and organizations that Chefu served, she was certain to be an advocate for the student body.

"My most rewarding experiences have come from the moments when I played a role in creating and establishing things that other people believe in strongly," said Chefu.

Of these experiences, Chefu played a role in the Quinnipiac Golden Mic Awards during her time working at Quinnipiac's Podcast Studio. These awards aim to give student podcasters recognition and encourage them to explore new ways of self-expression.

As an international student herself as well as president of the International Student Association, Chefu drew upon her own experiences and became a steadfast advocate for creating a welcoming and supportive environment.

Through her leadership, the International Student Association has made substantial efforts to establish a support system and provide resources for students to feel at home on campus.

"I felt a responsibility to create a safe space for international students to share their experiences unfiltered," said Chefu. "So this coming fall, the International Student Association will be working with a Hartford HealthCare counselor to provide a regular group session for current and incoming international students. This is something I am very proud and excited about."

In addition, Chefu played a key role in supporting the International Student Association's "Say My Name" movement which served as a means to spread inclusivity across campus.

"Say My Name" served as a means for people to embrace their names, what they mean, where they come from and ultimately encourage them to ask their community to do the work in learning how to say them right," said Chefu.

As an assistant producer in the Office of Marketing and Communications at Quinnipiac, Chefu had the opportunity to blend her academic knowledge and passion for production by uniting Bobcat Nation through fun and engaging content such as QKart Trivia. Chefu credits this position for providing her a glimpse into the industry and helping her grow and learn as a producer.

"I got an unmistakable surety about what it is I could do for the rest of my life and never get bored — that is producing," said Chefu. "Something that I will take with me on my professional and even personal journey is how creativity and efficiency, if mixed well, are key ingredients to making something great."

# Critical Conversations address complex issues to promote inclusivity

Although the discussion topics were varied, the guest lecturers in Quinnipiac University's Critical Conversations Speaker Series emphasized one common message: building stronger communities requires empathy and respect, particularly when inclusivity is challenged.

The university hosted eight conversations during the 2023-24 academic year, tackling relevant issues at the heart of acceptance and belonging, from navigating cultural differences and healing trauma to fostering respectful dialogue and finding common ground on polarized issues like politics, government and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

## Speaker urges universities to lead in building inclusive communities

Ronald L. Jackson II launched the fall Critical Conversations series on Nov. 28 by exploring "The Road to Community: Navigating Difference, Healing Traumas and Building Inclusive Communities."

Jackson, a distinguished professor and former dean at the University of Cincinnati, challenged the audience to think about ways to build respectful, inclusive communities, before sharing several strategies to help understand marginalized people's sense of invisibility.

Jackson said it is the job of universities to respond to marginalized people's concerns by pursuing not just inclusivity, but excellence in inclusivity.

"What's clear is that we, as universities, have a higher mission and a higher calling," said Jackson. "We are the citadel of intellectual integrity, of moral aptitude, of civic preparation, and it is true that our legacy is inscribed on our children's souls. And yet we must avoid the slippery slope of divested morality, or else we'll find ourselves recycling the same old thing."

## National author, lecturer addresses racism on college campuses

Lawrence Ross, noted author, lecturer, writer and creator, encouraged the Quinnipiac audience to take action to help undo the perpetuation of racism in their communities during his Feb. 1 event. Ross shared dozens of news stories and social media

posts detailing racist incidents from his book "Blackballed: The Black and White Politics of Race on America's Campuses."

Inspired by students who confided in him about their experiences, Ross researched racism on campuses, uncovering persistent issues. He detailed how incidents of racism are often dismissed as isolated or unintentional events, perpetuating systemic racism.

"You have to take action," said Ross. "We have to be proactive, not reactive."

Ross urged universities to go beyond performative actions, emphasizing the importance of dismantling inequitable systems and ensuring all students — regardless of race — feel included and supported.

## Speakers recommend 'brave spaces' for courageous conversations

Cindy Maher and Jamie Guite of Leading Edge Coaching and Development offered tools to foster inclusivity and respectful dialogue. Their Feb. 27 session, "Can We Talk? Engaging in Meaningful Dialogue That Might Be Uncomfortable," included a mix of light humor and improv blended with practical strategies for having difficult conversations.

Guite emphasized the importance of creating a "brave space" over a "safe space" for courageous conversations.

"In a brave space, people can push back," said Guite. "You're going to listen to learn, and the goal is seeking knowledge and understanding."

The session included breakout discussions and introduced tools like the "conversation compass" to guide participants in understanding different perspectives.

## Former U.S. senator calls for unity during March event

Joseph Lieberman, the late U.S. senator and former vice presidential nominee, called for unity in divisive times during his March 7 series event.

His talk, "Creating Dialogue Across Differences," emphasized the importance of fostering inclusive, respectful dialogue.



Ronald L. Jackson II



Lawrence Ross



Leading Edge Coaching



Joseph Lieberman

Lieberman said unity lies in the fundamental behavior of listening respectfully and with civility to others, particularly those with differing opinions, and then working together to bridge ideological differences.

"The kind of courtesy and country we have, and government, is up to you, and all of us," said Lieberman. "We can do no better than aspiring to get us back to where we need to be than if we take the goals of Quinnipiac's Critical Conversations series and try to realize them in our own lives."

### Discussion explores the art of democratic discourse

John Wood Jr., a leading figure in the American depolarization movement, visited the Mount Carmel Campus on March 26 to discuss "The Art of Democratic Discourse in 2024."

Wood, a national ambassador for Braver Angels, advocated for civil society-based interventions to foster dialogue, restore trust and bridge the country's divides.

He addressed America's current "affective polarization," where people harbor contempt for those with different political views, driven by social media and media incentives.

"We're all Americans, we are all human beings, and we all want to feel like we belong in this country...but we can't truly feel like we belong to this country if we do not also belong to each other," said Wood. "And so that, to my mind, is the goal."

### State legislators urge opposing parties to work across the aisle

Martin Looney, Connecticut Senate President Pro Tempore, and Themis Klarides, JD '92, who served 11 terms as a state representative, discussed bipartisan cooperation during a fireside chat on March 28. Reflecting on their time in the Connecticut legislature, Looney and Klarides shared how they managed to remain friends as opponents on policy and worked across the aisle to move issues forward.

Looney said to address polarization and pursue compromise, opposing sides must come together with the intent to find an agreement. Klarides stressed the importance of listening and compromise, even in disagreement.

"You can be the person that makes that difference," said Klarides. "If you have that feeling you should get involved, at whatever level, see what's available. Because that's the only way change is made."

### Experts encourage empathy in conversations on Israel and Palestine

Middle East experts Omar Dajani and Mira Sucharov shared insights on navigating differences in the Israel/Palestine crisis during their April 8 Critical Conversations event.

Dajani, a Palestinian-American law professor, and Sucharov, a Canadian Jewish political science professor, are co-authoring a book and podcast based on their travels to the region as part of their effort to address and test assumptions on both sides of the Israel/Palestine crisis.

"We realized we would have to go there together," said Sucharov. "We would have to go to a lot of the places we normally would go to...with the other one beside us. And that created some surprises and some moments that we really needed to reflect on."

Despite challenges, they believe a shared vision of peace is possible.

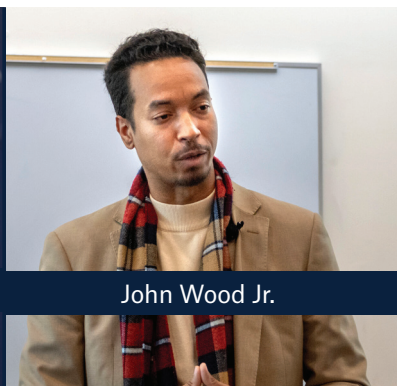
"We understand this land is cherished by Palestinians and Jews alike," said Dajani. "We advocate for gradual steps for freedom of movement across that land and later, freedom of residence across that land, for both Palestinians and Jews."

### NCAA president urges building bridges to reach common ground

Charlie Baker, NCAA president and former Massachusetts governor, shared how building bridges to reach common ground is the best blueprint to enact transformational change during his Critical Conversations event on April 29. His talk drew a full house on the Mount Carmel Campus to wrap up the Critical Conversations Speaker Series.

Now leading the NCAA, Baker highlighted challenges in navigating diverse viewpoints within college sports and emphasized that there are no shortcuts to resolving complicated issues involving a lot of different enterprises.

"This is easily the most challenging decision-making environment I've ever been around...What you need to be able to do is see if you are making progress," said Baker. "And I believe on some of these issues, we are making progress."



John Wood Jr.



Klarides & Looney



Dajani & Sucharov



Charlie Baker

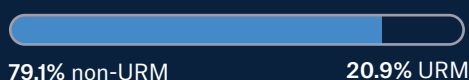
# Diversity by the Numbers

The university has committed to enhancing access to data to promote greater transparency, strategic planning and accountability.

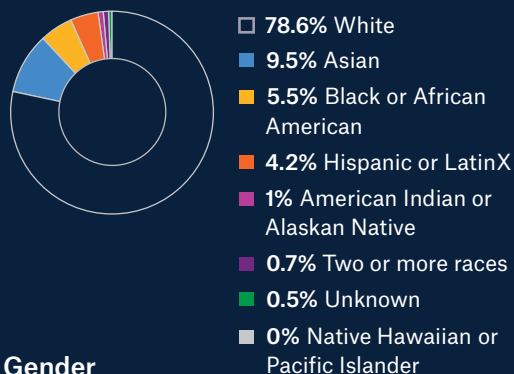
We must keep in mind that this data provides a snapshot in time. Context and long-term trends are essential, as is our goal to achieve lasting change rather than one-off, reactive solutions. This is a multiyear journey and changes in data may feel incremental at times, depending upon the university's hiring rates, the size of its incoming classes, and the fact that students are only together 30 weeks a year (academic year), with most graduating after four years. QU's commitment is to make systemic and foundational changes as outlined in this E&I report, that will, over time, create the inclusive culture and environment to which we all aspire.

## ► FULL-TIME FACULTY DIVERSITY

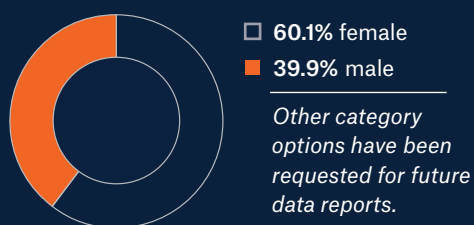
### Race/ethnicity



### Breakout of race/ethnicity



### Gender



### Race/ethnicity by school

#### College of Arts & Sciences



#### School of Business



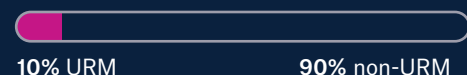
#### School of Communications



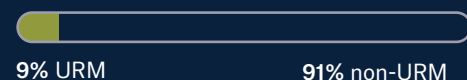
#### School of Computing & Engineering



#### School of Education



#### School of Health Sciences



#### School of Law



#### School of Medicine



#### School of Nursing



## ► FULL-TIME FACULTY DIVERSITY (2022-24)

Race and Ethnicity	2022	2023	2024
American Indian or Alaskan Native*	0.8%	1.0%	1.0%
Asian*	7.8%	9.2%	9.5%
Black or African American*	4.5%	5.0%	5.5%
Hispanic or LatinX*	4.0%	4.3%	4.2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Two or more races*	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%
Undisclosed	1.0%	0.8%	0.5%
White (Non-Hispanic)	81.1%	78.9%	78.6%
<b>* URM</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>20.9%</b>

### Faculty/staff recruitment

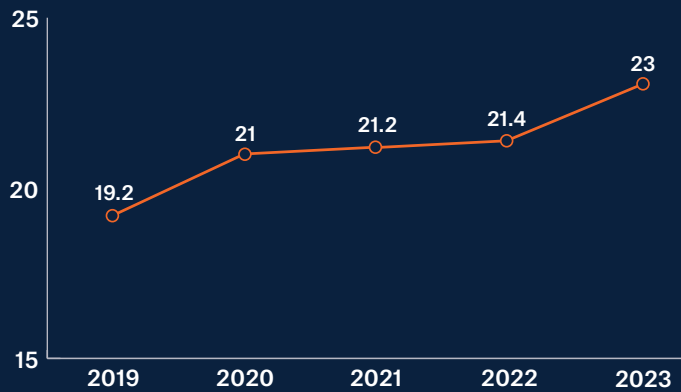
# 29%

Percent of full-time faculty and full-time staff hired between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, who identified as underrepresented minorities (URM).

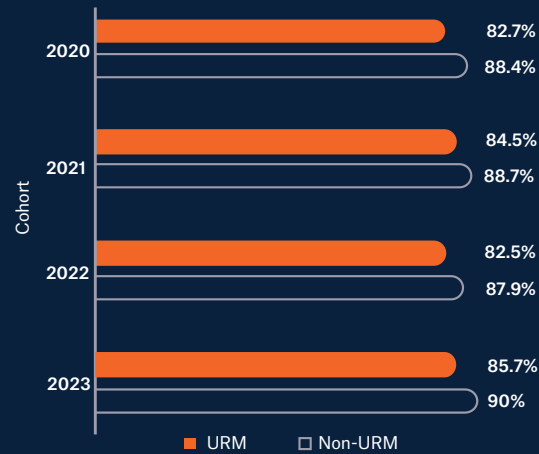


## STUDENT DIVERSITY

Diversity of our incoming class over time



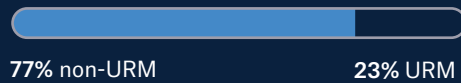
Retention rate for first-year students (retention measured from first year to sophomore year)



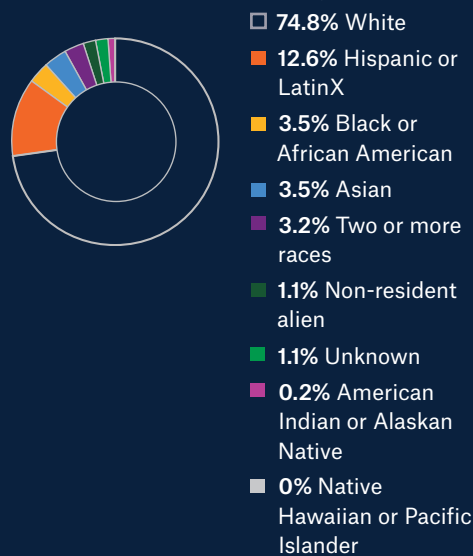
### CLASS OF 2027 DATA

(entered Fall 2023) - First-year students including both full-time and part-time

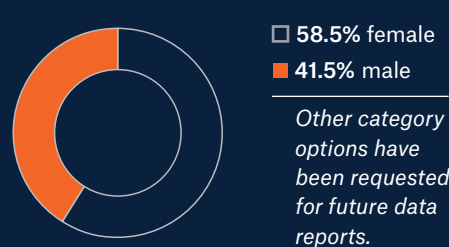
#### Race/ethnicity



#### Breakout of race/ethnicity

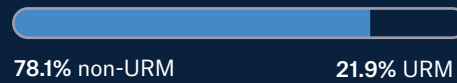


#### Gender

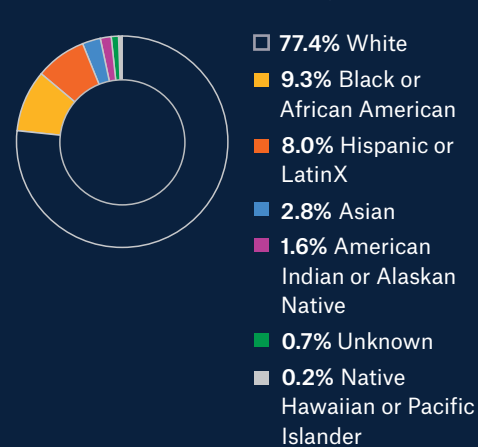


### FULL-TIME STAFF (NON-FACULTY) DIVERSITY

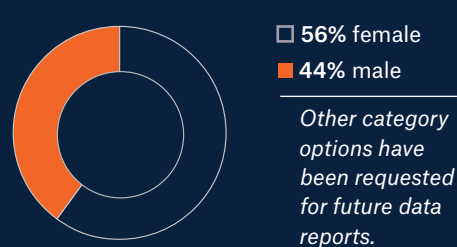
#### Race/ethnicity



#### Breakout of race/ethnicity



#### Gender



### FULL-TIME STAFF DIVERSITY (2021-23)

Race and Ethnicity	2021	2022	2023
American Indian or Alaskan Native*	0.8%	0.6%	1.6%
Asian*	2.2%	2.5%	2.8%
Black or African American*	6.1%	7.8%	9.3%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander*	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Hispanic or LatinX*	8.5%	9.6%	8.0%
White (Non-Hispanic)	81.1%	78.6%	77.4%
Unknown	1.1%	0.8%	0.7%
<b>* URM</b>	<b>17.7%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>	<b>21.9%</b>

Data for students was compiled as of 9/19/23

Data for full-time staff was compiled as of 11/7/23

Data for full-time faculty was compiled as of 9/20/24

Percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth decimal point

Underrepresented minorities (URM) are individuals who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or LatinX, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or Two or More Races.



## Physician assistant graduate recognized for exceptional transgender care

Cheryl Sturgis, MHS '14, a graduate of the physician assistant program at Quinnipiac, recently earned recognition at Dartmouth Health as the 2023 physician assistant of the year.

Sturgis was exposed to the field of medicine at an early age, growing up with her father working as a pediatrician and her mother as a nurse and then a nurse practitioner. Due to her familiarity and passion for the field, Sturgis immediately became interested in working at a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in primary care during her time at Quinnipiac.

Her experience at Quinnipiac transformed her career path, she said, leading her to a six-year position at a community health center, Northwest Human Services, Inc. in Salem, Oregon.

*"I had the opportunity to care for a super diverse patient population including patients experiencing homelessness, migrant farmworkers and patients speaking a variety of languages including Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, American Sign Language (ASL), Arabic and Vietnamese, among others," said Sturgis. "About half of my visits each day were done in a language other than English. I also started the transgender program at the clinic and was able to gain experience in working with transgender patients in a primary care setting."*

Sturgis moved to her current position at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire, due to burnout at her previous job.

"Primary care gives you the chance to see a little bit of everything, so you can truly learn about what you like and don't like regarding areas of medicine," said Sturgis. "I found that I loved the relationship building with patients that diabetes and transgender care provide, so when deciding to move to a specialty practice, endocrinology seemed like the best choice for me. I grew up in Vermont, so was interested in moving back to this area to be closer to family. When I interviewed for my current job, I found out I would be doing both diabetes and transgender care, so it seemed like a perfect fit."

Sturgis was introduced to transgender medicine while at Quinnipiac in her primary care rotation at Fenway Health in Boston, she said.

During this experience, she discovered that healthcare access is difficult for transgender people, as many medical providers have had little to no training in either their education or professional careers. Sturgis added that many transgender patients avoid accessing healthcare as a result of this.

"I saw firsthand how life-changing hormone therapy is and the quality-of-life improvements that occur after starting medical transition," said Sturgis. "Given that not many people do this work, I am honored to provide care to this patient population and provide a service that is difficult to access, especially in a rural setting like where I live. I feel blessed to watch my patients over time as they progress in their transition and have more confidence about how they present themselves to the world."

Joining the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and attending conferences have expanded Sturgis' knowledge and capabilities in this area of medical care.

Additionally, Fenway Health hosts an annual conference that she has attended in the past and offers many training videos on its National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center website that are free and accessible to anyone. The American Academy of Physician Assistants also has an LGBTQ+ caucus which is a great place to make connections, she added.

Sturgis said that it is unique to treat transgender patients since the focus isn't curing an illness; it is providing care to benefit LGBTQ+ people. This area of medicine is personal to her, as she is a lesbian and aims to support those in her community.

Working at Dartmouth Health for three years now, Sturgis' passion helped her earn the honor of PA of the year, an announcement that was a shock to her.

At a weekly case conference meeting, many members of the pediatric endocrinology transgender team were gathered, making Sturgis anticipate bad news, she explained. However, when an administrative PA began speaking about the award, Sturgis quickly realized that she was the only one in her department in the room. To her total surprise, she was chosen for the honor.

She expressed how emotional it was for her to earn the award and how she always strives to advocate for her patients. Being recognized on a personal level was an achievement, but bringing positive attention to the endocrinology practice and transgender program at Dartmouth Health was even more significant.

"I always try to do my best for my patients, treat them with care and respect and meet them where they are," she said. "There's a lot of medical trauma and distrust of the medical system with this population, and for good reason given their previous experiences in a variety of medical settings. My hope is that I can provide a positive place for them to access healthcare where they feel trusted and heard."



## Reenvisioning Inclusive Excellence at Quinnipiac

Quinnipiac's Office of Inclusive Excellence has undergone a transformation that bolsters its commitment to creating a community of equity and inclusion. Along with its name change, the office has expanded, diversified its offerings and services, and reached out to become a contributor in every conversation on campus that impacts any of its key stakeholders — faculty, alumni, students and staff.

Mission critical to the developmental and transformative work of the Office of Inclusive Excellence is the Inclusive Excellence Fund. Our donors' generous support of this fund from QU alumni, students, parents and friends provides programming and student support resources that impact the campus community profoundly. A key priority for both our office and the university is to continue fostering alumni connections in the equity and inclusion space. Your philanthropy will make a difference in some of the following ways:

- The hosting of university-wide programming such as the Critical Conversations Speaker Series, which fosters inclusivity of thought, respectful dialogue, empathetic engagement and open-mindedness among students, faculty and staff.
- The investment in successful transitions for first-year students from historically underrepresented backgrounds who become better equipped to confront at-risk factors through programs such as Bobcat Academy, First Year Immersion (FYI), Quinnipiac University Enriching Student Transitions (QUEST) and Quinnipiac University Inclusive Leadership Training (QUILT).
- The preparation of outstanding students from historically underrepresented backgrounds as they are poised to graduate and join the workforce as young leaders through the Sawhney Leadership Program.

- The creation of developmental opportunities and spaces for faculty to supplement their learning and improve their pedagogical approach toward inclusive classrooms through the Inclusive Excellence Teaching Lab and other faculty-focused collaboration with Academic Affairs.

Programming and student support resources like these are foundational to the work of the Office of Inclusive Excellence. And together, they represent a vital element in Quinnipiac's aspiration to become the University of the Future. The activities, personnel and programs residing here are dedicated to the advancement of opportunities for faculty, staff and students throughout the community in ways that both educate and empower. And it is the generosity of alumni and friends that makes them all possible. Please consider participating in this consequential work of the Office of Inclusive Excellence.

To give, please follow the QR code to the giving page and choose "Inclusive Excellence." For more information on how you can make a lasting difference, please contact Nick Wormley, VP for Development and Alumni Affairs, at [nick.wormley@qu.edu](mailto:nick.wormley@qu.edu) or 203-582-7852.

Sincerely,

Nick Wormley  
*Vice President for  
Development and Alumni Affairs*



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