



# United Campus Ministry Center

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

### STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Adopted on February 25, 2023.

**Progress Updates: Approved on May 21, 2024.**

*In this review process we corrected grammatic and other errors in the original plan and we revised our DEI hiring statement.*

**Updates of our progress appear in bold purple under each action step.**

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Prepared by the United Campus Ministry Center's Board of Directors and Staff

In collaboration with:

Compass Consulting Services, LLC



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## OUR DEI & SOCIAL JUSTICE VISION

*UCM Center's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice Vision is grounded in serving our community. We strive to always be known as a warm, welcoming, and non-judgmental space for all by being responsive to the diverse needs of the community. We value partnership and collaboration, working towards common goals for the betterment of all involved. UCM helps to shape, drive and advocate for social justice issues that impact the Ohio University and Southeastern Ohio communities.*

## DEFINITIONS

**Diversity:** Diversity is a dynamic, nuanced, and complex phenomenon which encompasses a range of individual identities. Diversity is an asset, a mosaic of people, backgrounds, beliefs, styles, perspectives, and values.

**Inclusion:** Inclusion is the intentional act of welcoming diversity. It is the creation of an environment where all kinds of people can thrive and succeed.

**Equity:** Equity means removing systemic and structural barriers so that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate and be nurtured. It means that we strive to create a just culture, where each person is sincerely valued and encouraged to develop according to their abilities and needs.

**Social Justice:** Social Justice addresses foundational inequities that exist both systemically and in the social milieu of everyday life. As a socially just organization, we empower people to organize against an unjust system by amplifying the voices of the people who are most impacted. Social justice asks that we interrogate socially embedded systems of privilege and power so that opportunities and resources are equitably distributed.

## UCM CENTER'S DEI-RELATED STATEMENTS

### **From the UCM Bylaws:**

In keeping with UCM's mission and our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Vision, the Board's makeup shall be as diverse as possible with extra consideration given to race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, class, status, national origin, lived experience, and faith tradition.

### **From past job position postings:**

United Campus Ministry Center is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employer and adheres to the principles embodied by these statements. All applicants will be considered for employment with attention to qualifications and not race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, ability, age, national origin, or veteran status. UCM invites all interested individuals to apply and especially encourages Women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ people and other marginalized people to apply.

# STRATEGIC GOALS

## STRATEGIC GOAL #1 INTERNAL & WORKPLACE

**Objective:** *Ensure the UCM Center turns this plan into an actionable and on-going process to make the organization the best employer it can be for all current and future employees.*

### Action Steps

**Action Step # 1:** Review and update all governing documents and human resources-related processes with an eye to continuity and DEI values.

**Timeline:** By February 28, 2023

**Persons Responsible:** Board Chair, Executive Director, and Committee Members

**Metrics:** Form a committee to conduct the review by November 30, 2022.

Approve revised governing documents and procedures at the February 2023 board meeting.

**COMPLETED February 2023**

**UPDATE:** A committee consisting of our Executive Director, Board Vice-Chair, and Board Treasurer worked to thoughtfully review and revise our By-Laws and Policies & Procedure Manual. This process revised our Affirmative Action and an Equal Opportunity Employer statement and DEI affirming hiring posting language. To create continuity and a deeper understanding of UCM's past, historical notes were included in italics to some parts of the documents.

**Step #2:** Add DEI-related metrics to the Executive Director's evaluation (conducted by the board) and to other staff's evaluations (conducted by the Executive Director).

**Timeline:** By May 30, 2023

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Committee and Executive Director

**Metrics:** Review other organization's evaluation documents to develop metrics by April 30, 2023

Approve the revised evaluation documents and processes at the May 2023 board meeting.

**UPDATE:** We added and approved a DEI section to both the employee's self-evaluation and the staff evaluation in 2024 for the evaluation process in June. Below are the questions and evaluation criteria.

**SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONS:** In what ways have you contributed to UCM Center's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion? Are there any concerns you see at UCM Center related to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

**STAFF EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

Rating: Exceeds Expectation Meets Expectation Below Expectation

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:**

*Advocates for and actively participates in promoting an inclusive workplace and community.*

**Inclusive Behavior:**

*Effectiveness in creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive.*

**Cultural Competency:**

*Level of understanding of and interactions with diverse cultures and perspectives.*

**DEI Advocacy & Leadership:**

*Advocates for diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization and community.*

**Action Step #3: Revise DEI hiring statement to be included in all future position postings to encourage a diverse applicant pool.**

**Timeline:** By February 28, 2023

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Committee and Executive Director

**Metrics:** Develop the statement by January 30, 2023

Approve the statement for use at the February 2023 board meeting.

**COMPLETED February 2023**

**UPDATE:** This statement was revised as part of the governing documents update and revised in May 2024. The statement reads: **United Campus Ministry Center is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employer and adheres to the principles embodied by these statements. All applicants will be considered for employment with attention to qualifications and not race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, ability, age, national origin, or veteran status. UCM invites all interested individuals to apply and especially encourages Women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ people and other marginalized to apply.**

**Action Step #4: Establish a DEI standing committee of the whole board to keep these important issues on the Board of Directors' agenda.**

**EDIT:** *Dates in this step were changed from the original document since some came before the plan was approved.*

**Timeline:** June 30, 2023 and Ongoing

**Persons Responsible:** Now: Board Chair & Executive Director/ Later: DEI Committee

**Metric(s):** Form the committee with the charge of developing a list of annual priorities by May 31, 2023.

Establish dates for the annual priorities list, quarterly reviews of the list, and annual evaluation of priority completion by April 30, 2024 and each year after.

**UPDATE:** With the policy and procedures revisions, a DEI committee is now one of the standing committees. However, only a fundraising committee has been formed due to the loss of several board members over the past year. Until we grow, this step will take place as part of the annual Board & Staff Retreat and will be considered at each Executive Committee meeting where the board meeting agendas developed.

**Action Step #5: Ensure a DEI training component is part of the annual Board & Staff Retreat until this plan is revised.**

**Timeline:** February 2023 and Annually (Fall or Spring semester)

**Persons Responsible:** Board Chair & DEI Committee

**Metric(s):** Develop a list of topics and activities prior to each retreat.

Determine what topics and approaches are most needed prior to the retreat.

Determine if the training can be conducted internally or if outside expertise is needed.

**COMPLETED...and Ongoing.**

**UPDATE:** This DEI document was approved at our February 2023 retreat where we spent time discussing implementation. A DEI activity and discussion were on the agenda for the 2024 retreat as well as the review of updates to this plan.

**Action Step #6: Monitor and evaluate this DEI plan and revise or expand it to strengthen it as needed.**

**Timeline:** March, August, October, and December at a Board meeting each year

**Persons Responsible:** DEI Committee & Executive Director

**Metric(s):** DEI Committee will evaluate whether the goals and action steps are being met or not and report to the whole Board each March, August, October, and December.

Revise or add goals and action steps as necessary.

**UPDATE:** Update notes were added to the plan for review and approval at the 2024 Board Retreat in May. Once approved the document with updates will be uploaded to our website.

**FUTURE:** In August 2024 we will review this current DEI plan to discuss next steps. In October 2024 we will determine the steps of this plan that will be continued after December 2024 and we will consider additional action steps to add.

## STRATEGIC GOAL #2 NETWORKING & PARTNERSHIPS

**Objective:** *Build sustainable community and campus partnerships with organizations that share mutual social justice goals*

### Action Steps

**Action Step # 1: Develop a value proposition to share with organizations when we reach out.**

**Timeline:** By March 31, 2023

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Committee & Executive Director

**Metric:** The “value proposition” is used in 2 - 3 meetings by June 30, 2023

**UPDATE:** It was determined at we use our mission to speak for the organization rather than creating a specific values proposition statement in our approach to outreaching to other community organizations. With the mission front and center, we engaged and collaborated with a variety of campus and community organizations as noted in step #2 below.

**Action Step #2: Identify other organizations and activists with whom UCM Center has shared DEI and social justice values to explore future collaborative efforts.**

**Timeline:** By March 31, 2023

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Director & Staff

**Metrics:** Review the suggested contacts list with the Board of Directors by February 28, 2023

Connect with at least 3 new partner organizations by April 30, 2023.

Hold a meeting at UCM Center with social justice partners and activists at UCM Center by October 31, 2023.

**UPDATE:** In the past year we have collaborated and/or programmed with a diverse range of community organizations including: Athenians for Bodily Autonomy, Athens Asian American Alliance, Athens Community Rights Coalition, Athens Friends Meeting, Athens High School Asian Culture Club, Athens Ohio Free Community Meals Network, Athens Rethink Plastics, Appalachian Peace & Justice Network, Alzheimer Association, Community Food Initiatives, Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd Church, Food Not Bombs, Indivisible Appalachian Ohio Community Fund, OU Asian American & Pacific Islanders Student Union, OU Chinese Language Student Association, OU Indian Student Union, OU International Student & Scholar Services, OU International Student Union, OU Office of Experiential Learning, OU Pride Center, OU Nepalese Student Association, Rural Action’s Appalachian Understories, Rural Action’s Zero Waste Initiative, Southeastern Ohio Rainbow Alliance, UGATA Drumming Circle, University Interfaith Association, and Workers Voice Reading Group.

In addition to these collaborations, we have hosted meetings of other local activists or community support organizations in our center, usually at no or low cost. Many of these organizations were new partners. We will be even more intentional in our outreach to a wider range of DEI organizations and efforts during the next academic year.

**Action Step #3: Bring together all local organizations that provide weekly meals in our area to build community, strengthen the network, and enhance communications.**

**Timeline:** By July 31, 2023

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Director and Staff

**Metric:** First meeting is held by July 31, 2023.

Contact information is shared and future meetings timeline is established by August 15, 2023.

**COMPLETED December 2023...and Ongoing.**

**UPDATE:** We hosted the first meeting of the Athens Ohio Free Community Meals Network in December 2023. UCM is serving as the coordinating organization since most meals providers have limited or volunteer staffing. We created an updated the collective meals flyer and other promotional materials. A press release about our gathering and the new promotional materials garnered several print media stories and a WOUB story. A second meeting was held in March 2024 to explore collective needs and future collaborations. At the March meeting, we formed 3 working committees (Weekend Meals, Needs Assessment, and Food Day Educational Summit) and established that we would meet as a whole at least quarterly. We are also part of the Athens Move Out Coalition and co-coordinated the collection and distribution of food from local apartment complexes and other off-campus housing with Rural Action's Zero Waste Initiative. We collected over a ton (2,144 pounds) of food and distributed the food to 7 free meal providers for their pantry tables.

## STRATEGIC GOAL #3: EDUCATION & PROGRAMMING

**Objective:** *Inform and educate the community about social justice issues and help individuals become better aware of current issues in order to become better advocates and activists.*

### Action Steps

**Action Step # 1:** Seek out community leaders to serve as dedicated volunteers to help facilitate new discussion groups on a host of DEI topics to expand UCM Center's reach and impact given our small staff size. (Staff will continue to offer at least 2 such groups.)



**Timeline:** By July 31, 2023

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Director & Staff

**Metrics:** Make connections with at least 5 individuals by May 31, 2023.

Make connections with at least 8 individuals by June 30, 2023.

Recruit at least 3 dedicated volunteers to host discussion groups for Fall semester by July 31, 2023.

Host at least one DEI-focused discussion group during the Fall 2023 semester and at least 2 during the Spring 2024 semester.

**UPDATE:** We reached out to several community members who wanted to give more time to pass before engaging with UCM Center to help facilitate discussions. We have worked to outreach to the LGBTQ+ and International student communities but did not have much success in gaining critical mass or support to establish discussion or community action groups. Momentum in this area has been more challenging than we had anticipated and have more work to do to move this forward. We will continue to address this action step during the next academic year. We are currently working on programming plans for Fall semester that will include DEI focused programs.

**Action Step # 2: Form a community committee of local activists and educators to explore the possibility of hosting a young activist training intensive or series.**

**Timeline:** April 31, 2024

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Director & Staff

**Metrics:** Research to see if similar trainings are offered in other college communities and learn from them by August 31, 2023.

Make connections with potential committee members with an invitation to the narrowed-down list by November 31, 2023.

**Stretch metric:** Develop and host a training intensive (retreat) or series during Fall 2024 semester.

**UPDATE:** We did not meet this goal as defined above, but our Outreach Director has co-hosted a couple teach-ins in recent years. He is currently working with a few stakeholders to develop additional teach-ins. The goal is to offer something late Fall 2024. Relatedly, our Director is co-leading a committee of the Athens Ohio Free Community Meals Network to host a World Food Day mini conference on campus during the 2024 harvest season.

**Action Step # 3: Continue to develop programs and events with an eye toward or a direct focus on DEI topics, issues, and concerns to stay current with social trends and needs.**

**Timeline:** August 31, 2023 and ongoing thereafter.

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Director & Staff

**Metrics:** Develop an intentional and engaging series of programs prior to each semester.

Offer quick-response processing sessions as the need will unfortunately arise.

Conduct an annual review of programs and events and their DEI impact at the end of each semester and report back to the Board of Directors.

**UPDATE:** With limited turnout at our ongoing programs and events post-pandemic (game nights, series, etc.), we have largely focused on other efforts of the organization and collaborations over direct programming. However, as noted above we will offer some DEI focused programs during the next academic year. This will involve reaching out to organizers of additional DEI events to seek involvement and/or to ensure our programs do not overlap other program offerings and dates.

Here are some DEI-related programming successes:

We co-sponsored Southeastern Ohio Rainbow Alliance's Athens Pride March in 2023 and will do so again in 2024. We also took part in the community festival following the 2023 march and will table there again this year.

We co-hosted the Lunar New Year Celebration for a second year in 2024. This program has a large turnout with various activities and a variety of noodles and dumplings to enjoy. Our 2024 co-hosts included Athens Asian American Alliance, OU Asian American & Pacific Islanders Student Union, OU Chinese Language Student Association, and Athens High School Asian Culture Club.

We co-sponsored 3 local LGBTQ+ History walking tours as part of the Appalachian Understories project with 14 participants. We worked closely with OU's Pride Center to coordinate the tours. After the most recent tour met to discuss how we could continue to tell this history in other formats and venues and how best to incorporate additional voices and experiences.

We organized a memorial vigil and march with two OU students to honor the life of Nex Benedict, an Oklahoma high school student, who faced bullying and physical harm for identifying as non-binary. The event was held on College Green at the West Portico of the Templeton-Blackburn Memorial Auditorium and concluded with a march to and rally at the Athens County Courthouse.

We were involved with two programs focused on the local Appalachian area. Around the winter holidays we co-sponsored a holiday gift and food giveaway program with Indivisible Appalachian Ohio Community Fund. During Spring semester, we partnered with OU's Office of Experiential Learning to offer an Alternative Spring Break. This Appalachian immersion service and reflection trip involved 7 students and 2 facilitators working to help 5 local organizations including our Thursday Supper as the final location. The week kicked off in the UCM Center lounge and the group returned to the space for the final reflection discussion.

**Action Step # 4: Utilize UCM Center’s social media accounts to educate about important DEI and religion-related awareness celebrations and holidays.**

**Timeline:** December 31, 2023 and annually thereafter

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Director & Staff

**Metrics:** Determine what days/dates to recognize by March 1, 2023.

Create a series of promotional graphics to share on designated days for March through December by March 31, 2023, and the next year by December 15, 2023.

Interns or staff will revamp the series annually.

**UPDATE: We did not fully meet this goal in 2023. We made some posts, but a yearlong plan was not implemented. Spring 2024, an intern began this process starting in February. She has made one or two social media posts each week. She is also creating posts that will be posted beyond Spring semester. Over the summer staff and interns will create the remainder of annual posts.**

## **STRATEGIC GOAL #4: PUBLIC RELATIONS & MARKETING**

**Objective: Strengthen awareness about UCM Center, our programs, services, and community impact with a focus on media and community relations.**

### **Action Steps**

**Action Step # 1: Create a rapid response team and guidelines to be able to develop and release statements, to submit letters to the editor, or to host community processing events (i.e. news related to social justice or DEI topics).**

**Timeline:** Plan created by April 31, 2023

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Committee & Executive Director

**Metric:** Establish the team and criteria by March 31, 2023. Continue to improvise in the interim.

**UPDATE: The executive committee has filled the role of the rapid response team. Overall, the organization has pulled back on issuing statements about national incidents to focus locally. We will review this approach in Summer 2024. UCM Center has hosted two community processing events related to LGBTQ incidents. The most recent being the vigil and march to honor the life of Nex Benedict as noted above (See Goal 3. Action Step 4).**

**Action Step # 2: Promote the work and programs of UCM Center by taking part in tabling/exhibiting events on campus and in the community (Engagement Fairs, Bobcat Student Orientation, Juneteenth, International Street Fair, Pride Celebration).**

**Timeline:** Ongoing with a review by December 15 annually.

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Director & Staff

**Metrics:** Determine a general timeline of annual events to ensure we are in the invitation loop by March 15, 2023.

Participate in at least 6 events each year. Review by each December 15.

Book at least 2 general tabling events each semester via Nourish Athens (UCM Center's student organization). Review by each December 15.

**COMPLETED...and Ongoing.**

**UPDATE: We have participated in all of these events annually and tabled outside of Baker Center on occasion. Our Bobcat Student Orientation involvement is via the University Interfaith Association and our Director co-coordinates this effort.**

**Action Step # 3: Increase the use of UCM Center's social media accounts (Instagram and Facebook) and Community Connections (e-Newsletter) to further engagement and outreach.**

**Timeline:** December 31, 2023 and annually after

**Persons Responsible:** Executive Director & Staff

**Metrics:** Establish publication dates and editorial content calendar for Community Connections by March 1, 2023, and annually by December 15 thereafter.

Add to the editorial calendar as needed throughout the year.

Create promotional graphics to promote each program and event prior to the start of each semester, but no later than 2 weeks prior to each event.

**UPDATE: We had a plan in place and have kept up with the programming related social media posts. We were going strong with Community Connections with two distributions each month. We need to grow this list to have more of an impact. Given its limited reach, it is easy to pause this when other programs or needs take priority. We will work to send something less comprehensive if needed instead of nothing at all. Our tri-yearly mailings have continued to help tell our story to a wider audience.**