

# Ponce Health Sciences University

## PONCE HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE POLICY



PHSU

PONCE HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

Tamdiu Discendum Est. Quamdiu Vivas

**Policy Number:**  
PHSU-PP-2023-2-06

**Date Issued:**  
July 31, 2023

**Next Review Date:**  
June 30, 2024

**Applies to:**  
All active PHSU Students, Staff,  
Employees and Faculty Members

**Owner:**

**Primary Contact:**

**Related Policies:**

- Student Dress Code - PHSU-PP-2022-2-04

**Supporting Forms:**

- Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. Office of the Under Secretary. U.S (United States). Department of Education (2016) *Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education. Key Data Highlights Focusing on Race and Ethnicity and Promising Practices.*  
<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf>
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2022), *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.* (Fourteenth Edition, Version).
- Barbu D., Corbet I., McKittrick S., Peavy T., (2023, May 23) Part 2: *What do I Include? Documenting Compliance Under the Revised Standards.* [PowerPoint slides] Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). <https://www.msche.org/event/part-2-what-do-i-include-documenting-compliance-under-the-revised-standards/>
- Liaison Committee on Medical Education (2023) *Functions and Structure of a Medical School. Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the MD (Medicine Doctoral) Degree.*  
<https://lcme.org/publications/>
- Council of Education in Public Health (2021) *Accreditation Criteria Schools of Public Health & Public Health Programs.* <https://media.ceph.org/documents/2021.Criteria.pdf>
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2017, March 20) *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Academic Nursing. AACN Position Statement.* <https://www.aacnnursing.org/news-data/position-statements-white-papers/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-academic-nursing>
- American Dental Education Association (2016, March 15) Statement of ADEA (American Dental Education Association) Policy on Diversity and Inclusion.  
[https://www.adea.org/policy\\_advocacy/diversity\\_equity/Pages/DiversityandInclusion.aspx](https://www.adea.org/policy_advocacy/diversity_equity/Pages/DiversityandInclusion.aspx)
- American Psychological Association (2019) *Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology and Accreditation Operating Procedures.* <https://irp.cdn-website.com/a14f9462/files/uploaded/standards-of-accreditation.pdf>
- University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine (2014) *Diversity & Inclusion Policy. Executive Summary.*  
<https://md.rcm.upr.edu/diversity-inclusion-policy-University-of-puerto-rico-school-of-medicine-3/>
- Universidad Central del Caribe (2019) *Diversity and Inclusion Policy.* <https://www.uccaribe.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/UCC-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Policy-Sep-1-2019-signed.pdf>
- San Juan Bautista School of Medicine (2012) *Equity and Diversity Policy.*  
<https://www.sanjuanbautista.edu/user/pages/docs/aboutus/2006-12.pdf>
- San Juan Bautista School of Medicine (2012) *Non-discrimination Policy.*  
<https://www.sanjuanbautista.edu/user/pages/docs/aboutus/2006-04.pdf>
- Princeton University (2023) *Office of Diversity and Inclusion.* <https://campuslife.princeton.edu/campus-life-units/office-diversity-and-inclusion>
- Ohio Wesleyan University (2018) *Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Policy Statement*  
<https://www.owu.edu/about/diversity/diversity-equity-inclusion-policy/>

- Grim, J. K., Sánchez-Parkinson, L., Ting, M., & Chavous, T. (2019). The Experiences of Academic Diversity Officers at the University of Michigan. *Currents*, 1(1), 131-150.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/currents.17387731.0001.111>
- National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (2020) *Standards of Professional Practice for Chief Diversity Officers in Higher Education 2.0*  
[https://nadohe.memberclicks.net/assets/2020SPPI/\\_NADOHE%20SPP2.0\\_200131\\_FinalFormatted.pdf](https://nadohe.memberclicks.net/assets/2020SPPI/_NADOHE%20SPP2.0_200131_FinalFormatted.pdf)
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1964) *Title VII of the Civil Rights Act*.
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1978) *The Pregnancy Discrimination Act*.
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1963) *The Equal Pay Act*.
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1967) *The Age Discrimination in Employment Act*.
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1990) *Titles I and V of the Americans with Disabilities Act*.
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2008) *The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act*
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1973) *The Rehabilitation Act*
- Health Resources & Services Administration (n.d.) *Office of Civil Rights, Diversity, and Inclusion*.  
<https://www.hrsa.gov/about/organization/bureaus/ocrdi>
- Health Resources & Services Administration (2012) *Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedures Manual*
- The HHS (Health and Human Services) Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity & Inclusion (1968) *Architectural Barriers Act*
- NIH (National Institutes of Health). National Institutes of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (n.d.) *Diversity Policies & Resources*. <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/about-ninds/workforce-diversity/diversity-policies-resources>
- Department of Defense (2022-2023) *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan*.  
<https://media.defense.gov/2022/Sep/30/2003088685/-1/-1/0/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-DIVERSITY-EQUITY-INCLUSION-AND-ACCESSIBILITY-STRATEGIC-PLAN.PDF>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023) *Minority Health and Health Equity*.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/minorityhealth/>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2023) *Poverty Guidelines*. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2022) *Federal Poverty Guidelines Adjusted for LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) Use by Puerto Rico. Attachment 3 FPG Territory Table PR (Puerto Rico) FY2022*.  
[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ocs/COMM\\_LIHEAP\\_IM02%20Attachment%203%20FPG%20Territory%20Table\\_PR\\_FY2022.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ocs/COMM_LIHEAP_IM02%20Attachment%203%20FPG%20Territory%20Table_PR_FY2022.pdf)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ponce Health Sciences University Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competence Policy..... 5

Introduction: ..... 5

I Legal Basis: ..... 5

II Scope: ..... 5

III Justification: ..... 6

IV Definitions..... 7

V Policy: ..... 8

- Policy
- Advancing DEIC
- Addressing DEIC
- Diversity Profile
- Diversity Categories
- Institutional DEIC Council
- School/Program/PRI DEIC Council

VI Amendments: ..... 16

VII Repeal and Validity: ..... 16

VIII Approval: ..... 16

# Ponce Health Sciences University Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competence Policy

## Introduction:

The mission of Ponce Health Sciences University is to provide high-quality education in all our health services-related schools and programs through an innovative curriculum while preparing our students to be ethical practitioners. Our institution strives to provide students and faculty with exposure to a diverse population so they can succeed in an increasingly diverse workplace and global communication culture. An academic and working place environment that fosters interaction among a diverse student, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff body will significantly prepare our graduates to provide the high-quality care all diverse communities deserve.

Several racial and ethnic minority groups, as well as people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, among others, are significantly underrepresented among health professionals in the United States. From an ethnics' perspective, underrepresented minority groups have traditionally included individuals of African American, Mexican American, Native American, and Puerto Rican descent. Numerous public and private programs aim to remedy this underrepresentation by promoting the preparedness and resource availability to these groups and socioeconomically disadvantaged students interested in health-related professions. Our institution will encourage admission and retention policies that support University's self-defined, priority under-represented populations and allow them either to enter the health professions pipeline or to discover a safe working place at PHSU.

PHSU schools and programs are guided by our mission "to provide a world class, culturally competent, health sciences education to the population we serve." Our students, faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff are mostly of Puerto Rican and Hispanic descent. This brings to our university a special diversity status in the USA (United States of America) (United States of America) Mainland spectrum.

PHSU incorporates elements of diversity in their planning that include gender, racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic. University establishes focused, significant, and sustained programs to recruit and retain suitably diverse students, faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff.

PHSU recognizes diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence as critical to health sciences education and fundamental to developing a health care workforce able to provide high quality, culturally appropriate, and congruent health care in partnership with individuals, families, communities, and populations and a health care workforce who fully value the importance of diversity, inclusion, and equity to promote the health of the nation and the world.

Based on the previous statements, PHSU has policies and practices aimed at achieving appropriate levels of diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence among its students, faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff. The University engages in ongoing systematic and focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff from diverse backgrounds, and systematically evaluate comprehensive strategies to improve the institutional climate for diversity.

PHSU recognizes that cultural differences affect all aspects of health and health systems.

The elaboration of this policy was the result of teamwork that included the representation of all the Programs and Schools of the University, Ponce Research Institute, and the collaboration of the following institutional components: Compliance Officer, Dean of Curriculum and Academic Affairs, Vice President for Students Affairs, and a representative from the Human Resources Office.

## I Legal basis:

This Policy has been approved by the Institutional Administrative Committee and is effective as of July 31, 2023.

## II Scope:

This Policy applies to all active PHSU students, faculty, staff, and employees at Ponce Main Campus, San Juan University Center, St. Louis Campus, and all associated entities with which the university conducts business or has affiliations with.

## III Justification:

Research demonstrates that student body diversity in institutions of higher education is important not only for improving the economic and educational opportunities for students of color, but also for the social, academic, and societal benefits that diversity presents for all students and communities. Diverse learning environments help students sharpen their critical thinking and analytical skills; prepare students to succeed in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world; break down stereotypes and reduce bias; and enable schools to fulfill their role in opening doors for students of all backgrounds.

This policy will bring the required framework to address the PHSU dimensions of diversity including structure, curriculum, and institutional climate. This will enable the University to articulate its expectations regarding diversity across its academic, workforce and research community in the context of local and national responsibilities, and regularly assess how well such expectations are being achieved. The policy will provide data that allows the University to incorporate elements of diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence in their planning.

When diversity is integrated within inclusive educational environments with equitable systems in place, assumptions are challenged, perspectives are broadened, and socialization across a variety of groups occurs, resulting in intellectual and cognitive benefits for all learners. In diverse and inclusive environments, students, staff, faculty, researchers, and senior administrative staff recognize the value of and need for diversity to achieve excellence in teaching, learning, research, scholarship, service, and practice. As academic health sciences become more inclusive in the recruitment of diverse learners, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff may need to acquire new knowledge, skills, and attitudes to foster success of the student learner.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence serve as an important educational function. One of higher education's essential functions is to broaden the perspectives of students by exposing them to individuals from different backgrounds and to a variety of disciplines, cultures, and points of view. Given the enormous changes taking place in our nation and the world, it would be difficult to conceive of receiving a high-quality education without such exposure.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence in higher education help prepare students for the world of work and for participation in a democratic society. Employers in all sectors of the economy increasingly see diversity as critical to organizational success and competitiveness. The expectation is that higher education will prepare students for a diverse work environment. We believe that a diverse workforce is a better, more productive workforce – which is as true in higher education as it is in other sectors. In addition, as the demand for higher levels of education for employment and advancement continues to rise, we cannot hope to achieve true equality of opportunity unless diversity and inclusion is attained on our college campuses.

Diversity, equity, inclusion and cultural competence in colleges and universities enhance the quality of higher education. A diverse faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff are essential for colleges and universities to provide academic excellence in teaching, mentoring, scholarship, and service to the campus community.

## IV Definitions:

(Source: Terms adapted from American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2017, March 20) *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Academic Nursing. AACN Position Statement* <https://www.aacnnursing.org/news-data/position-statements-white-papers/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-academic-nursing> )

- Diversity:
  - Diversity references a broad range of individual, population, and social characteristics, including but not limited to age; sex; race; ethnicity; sexual orientation; gender identity; family structures; geographic locations; national origin; immigrants and refugees; language; physical, functional, and learning abilities; religious beliefs; and socioeconomic status.
- Inclusion:
  - Inclusion represents environmental and organizational cultures in which faculty, students, staff, and senior administrative staff with diverse characteristics thrive. Inclusive environments require intentionality and embrace differences, not merely tolerate them. Everyone works to ensure the perspectives and experiences of

others are invited, welcomed, acknowledged, and respected in inclusive environments.

- Equity:
  - Equity is interrelated with diversity and inclusion. Equity is the ability to recognize the differences in the resources or knowledge needed to allow individuals to fully participate in society, including access to higher education, with the goal of overcoming obstacles to ensure fairness (Kranich, 2001). To have equitable systems, all people should be treated fairly, unhampered by artificial barriers, stereotypes, or prejudices (Cooper, 2016).
- Cultural competence
  - Cultural and linguistic competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations. Cultural competence emphasizes the idea of effectively operating in different cultural contexts and altering practices to reach different cultural groups. 'Culture' refers to integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. 'Competence' implies having the capacity to function effectively as an individual and an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by consumers and their communities.

(Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021, September 10), *Cultural Competence in Health and Human Services* <https://npiin.cdc.gov/pages/cultural-competence>)

## V Policy:

### Policy

- PHSU aligns with the U.S. Department of Education's mission to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. Integral to furthering that mission is supporting efforts to create diverse and welcoming campus communities for all students.
- PHSU promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence (DEIC) and planning for DEIC is aligned with the institution's mission and goals.
- PHSU reflects deeply and shares results on diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence in the context of its mission by considering DEIC at goals and actions, demographics and policies or processes, curriculum and services, assessments, and resource allocation
- PHSU recognizes the impact of shifting U.S. population demographics, a health system challenged by workforce shortages, and persistent health inequities on academic health sciences. Therefore, PHSU commits to accelerating diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives to prepare the current and future health sciences workforce to be reflective of the society it serves while simultaneously fulfilling societal expectations and needs.
- PHSU legally constituted governing body has sufficient diversity, independence, and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution.



- PHSU addresses disparate impacts on an increasingly diverse student, faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff population if discovered.
- PHSU fosters a climate of inclusion and prohibits discrimination based on age, place of birth, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, national origin, race, historical under-representation, refugee status, religion, culture, sexual orientation, health status, community affiliation and socioeconomic status, for students, faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff members. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.
- PHSU fosters campus cultural competence. For this policy purposes, cultural competence refers to competencies for working with diverse individuals and communities in ways that are appropriate and responsive to relevant cultural factors. Cultural competence requires from PHSU community members competencies related to self-awareness, open-minded inquiry and assessment, and the ability to recognize and adapt to cultural differences, especially as these differences may vary from the school or program's dominant culture, among others.
- PHSU requires outside entities with which the University does business (such as vendors, contracted food services, entertainment contracts, and licensees) to comply with the University DEIC Policy.
- PHSU actively seeks to recruit and retain diverse students, faculty, staff, researchers, and employees and to create an environment of cultural competence.
- This policy is communicated to all PHSU community members on Campus, in hard copy (brochures, posters, infographics, etc.) and through the Institutional Schools, Programs and PHSU's websites.
- PHSU will consider diverse community needs in providing counseling and support services to students, employees, and faculty.
- Based on this Policy, PHSU academic, research, and administrative offices will implement rules, regulations, and standard operating procedures that reflect equity, inclusion, and cultural competence with diverse PHSU community members.

#### **Advancing DEIC:**

PHSU Schools, Programs and PRI advance DEIC through a variety of practices, which may include the following, but not limited to:

- Incorporation of DIEC in the curriculum.
  - The goal of PHSU is to focus on student learning outcomes and student achievement that considers diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence principles.
- Recruitment and retention of diverse students, faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff.
  - PHSU possesses and demonstrates fair and impartial employment practices, including all phases of hiring, evaluation, promotion, discipline, and separation, with appropriate attention to diversity.
- Development and/or implementation of policies that support a climate of equity and

- inclusion, free of harassment and discrimination.
- Reflection of DEIC in the types of scholarship and/or community engagement conducted.
- The measures of a PHSU applicant's readiness for health sciences education and preparedness for practice and the requirements of Human Resources Office when recruiting employees, should extend beyond reliance on specific quantitative data such as standardized test scores and grade point averages, to include other valid and reliable measures of prospective success. Factors such as leadership skills, ability to overcome obstacles, strengths, communication and language skills, ability to gain entrée into underserved communities, other transferable skills and abilities, and prior life experiences of individuals, may be relevant when determining how the applicant might contribute to the health care profession and/or to the academic environment of PHSU.

PHSU encourages and supports its students, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff members to promote inclusion, respect, and culturally competent communication. This will be done by ensuring that:

- The curriculum integrates and support the development of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to promote the elimination of health disparities
- The University maintains itself relevant to the community by maintaining current alliances and partnerships, and establishing new ones
- The faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff receive training in cultural competence thus fostering the development of the skills and attitudes needed to facilitate DEIC.
- Research efforts are aligned with the mission of providing significant and long-lasting contributions to the elimination of health disparities.

### **Assessing DEIC:**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- PHSU lists the University's self-defined, priority under-represented populations, explains why these groups are of particular interest and importance to the University, and describes the process used to define the priority populations. These populations must include students, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff.
- Based on this information PHSU provides the specific diversity categories identified that guide recruitment and retention activities for students, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff. Note that the University may use different diversity categories for each of these groups.
- PHSU lists the University's specific goals for increasing representation and supporting the persistence, if applicable and ongoing success of the specific self-defined priority under-represented populations.
- PHSU lists the actions and strategies identified to advance the goals defined in the previous statement, and describe the process used to define the actions and strategies that may include collection and/or analysis of university-specific data, convening

stakeholder discussions and documenting their results, and other appropriate tools and strategies.

- PHSU generates quantitative and qualitative data that document the University approaches, successes and/or challenges in increasing representation and supporting persistence and ongoing success of the University's self-defined, priority under-represented populations.
- PHSU lists each current University component aimed to broadening the diversity of qualified University's applicants.
- PHSU documents the concrete actions it is taking to achieve diversity, identifying the areas of diversity recruitment in which it excels as well as the areas in which it is working to improve.
- PHSU demonstrates that examines the effectiveness of its efforts to attract students, faculty, staff, research, and senior administrative staff who are diverse and document any steps needed to revise/enhance its strategies.

#### Cultural Competence:

- PHSU lists the actions and strategies identified that create and maintain a culturally competent environment and describes the process used to develop them. Actions and strategies include but are not limited to:
  - Address curricular requirements.
  - Assurance that students are exposed to faculty, staff, preceptors, guest lecturers and community agencies reflective of the diversity in their communities; and
  - Identify faculty and student scholarship and/or community engagement activities.
- PHSU provides students, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff with perceptions of the University's climate regarding diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence.
- PHSU assesses strengths and weaknesses related to the University cultural competence environment and plans for improvement in this area.
- PHSU ensures a welcoming, supportive, and encouraging learning and working place environment for all PHSU community members, including students, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff members from diverse and underrepresented populations.
- PHSU cultural competence climate is reflected in the recruitment, retention, and development of students, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff members, as well as in didactic, experiential training and working experience that fosters an understanding of cultural and individual differences and diversity as it relates to health care academics and University working experience.
- PHSU conducts periodic self-assessment of its academic and working cultural competence climate regarding diversity, equity and inclusion and maintains an atmosphere promoting the success of all PHSU community members.

## Diversity profile

- PHSU provides the total number of offers of admission to the University made to individuals in the University identified diversity categories.
- PHSU provides the number and percentage of enrolled students in each of the University diversity categories
- PHSU provides the total number of faculty and staff positions available to the University made to individuals in the University identified diversity categories.
- PHSU provides the number and percentage of employed faculty and staff in each of the University diversity categories
- PHSU provides the total number of senior administrative staff positions made to individuals in the University identified diversity categories.
- PHSU provides the number and percentage of senior administrative staff in each of the University identified diversity categories
- Profile is meant as a snapshot for the institution improvement and assessment but should not be construed as a mechanism to establish or enforce quotas for specific aims regarding numbers of community members identified as within Diversity categories.

## Diversity Categories

PHSU articulates its expectations regarding diversity across its academic community. These expectations are reflected into specific categories of diversity upon which the University must focus its diversity and inclusion efforts. These categories are aligned with the University mission and responds to the community it serves. To accomplish what is proposed in its Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Cultural Competence Policy, PHSU has defined its categories of diversity for students, faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff members.

### Students' diversity categories

- The PHSU's mission is "to provide a world-class, culturally competent, health sciences education to the population we serve, through innovative adaptive learning environments focused on the success of its students to become ethical practitioners and scientists." This mission is rooted in the PHSU's vision which include "to educate underrepresented diverse populations while focusing research efforts on solving health disparities."
- Crucial to this commitment is the recruitment, retention and advancement of a student body that better reflects our communities. Students recruited from these diverse backgrounds will expand other students' understanding of the health disparities in these areas. Furthermore, it is expected that their participation in PHSU health sciences academic programs will affect health care services in their communities.
- Therefore, based on the above and the available data, the following are the PHSU designated diversity categories (Each program/school will adapt these categories based on their specific requirements):
  - Traditionally underrepresented in Health Sciences students with particular attention to those from Black Caribbean ethnic backgrounds (For the purpose of

this policy, the Black/African American ethnic category is defined as Black Caribbean)

- Economically Disadvantaged Students - As defined by the federal or local standards and who qualify for Need-based Scholarships.
- Educationally Disadvantaged Students - Self-described or graduates from the public-school system
- Students from Rural or Health Professionals Shortage Areas – As defined in the HPSAs federal documentation or local municipality’s classification.
- First-generation University students.
- Non-traditional students.
- Students with military services/veterans.
- Neurodiverse/Neurodivergent students.
- Students that self-identify or are identified as members of LGBTQI+ community with particular but not exclusive emphasis in non-binary individuals.
- Students with diverse religious backgrounds.
- Students with diverse migratory status.

Faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff diversity categories:

- A diverse faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrators staff members is achieved when the University recruit, retain, and further develop faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff members that reflect the diversity of the communities served and when the University opens its doors to other underrepresented groups in our society.
- As employees, rules and regulations from the human resources University system apply in terms of non-discrimination policies and open recruitment. However, it is in the best interest of the University to carry out its mission to further recruit researchers, basic scientists, and clinicians as well as to appoint faculty and qualified staff to leadership administrative positions that represent diverse groups.
- The inclusion of more diverse faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff will enrich the research agenda and the academic environment serving as role models to the student body.
- Therefore, based on available data, the following are the designated categories:
  - Traditionally Underrepresented in PHSU faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff with particular attention to those from Black Caribbean ethnic backgrounds
  - Faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff with an Educational Disadvantage Background (originally from the public-school system at the high school level) or originally from selected Health Professional Shortage Areas so designated by HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) or Faculty who is first-generation University students.
  - Female faculty members as candidates to academic leadership positions.
  - Individuals with military services/veterans.
  - Neurodiverse/Neurodivergent individuals or faculty, staff, and senior

- administrative staff with Neurodiverse/Neurodivergent direct relatives.
- Individuals that self-identify or are identified by others as members of LGBTQI+ community with particular but not exclusive emphasis in non-binary individuals.
- Individuals with diverse religious backgrounds.
- Individuals with diverse migratory status.

### **Institutional DEIC Council**

The Institutional Council for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and cultural competence shall serve in an advisory capacity to assist the President in reviewing the implementation of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Cultural Competence Policy. The Council shall also advocate for the University's Policy and commitment to creating a culturally diverse academic and work environment.

The following are the most frequent Institutional DEIC Council responsibilities and actions:

- Leadership: organizational change, fundraising, liaison, respond to campus incidents, strategic plan implementation, advise school leadership, additional committee work, strategic communication.
- Programming: event planning/management, intercultural assessments, program evaluation, climate surveys, external speakers, awards & ceremonies, DEIC-related training.
- Faculty / Staff / Senior Administrative Staff engagement: outreach, recruitment/hiring, retention, formal evaluation changes, pedagogical training, curricular change.
- Student engagement: advise student groups, recruitment, retention, success, outreach, student forums, teaching, response to student activism.

The Council shall include faculty, administrative staff, and student representatives.

### **School/Program/PRI DEIC Council**

Every PHSU School and Program, as equal as Ponce Research Institute, will establish its own Council on Diversity and Inclusion responsible for carrying out this policy's purposes. The Dean/Associate Dean of the School or Program and PRI President will appoint its chairperson, based on appointee's credentials and commitment to diversity and health disparities.

The Council will directly respond to the Dean/Associate Dean of the School or Program and PRI President and will oversee all issues pertaining to diversity and inclusion at the School/Program/PRI. This means involvement with recruitment, retention, and quality services for students, faculty, staff, and senior administrative staff belonging to the diversity categories so described applicable to the School/Program/ PRI and those relevant. As such, this Council will be responsible for the development and implementation of a particular Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Cultural Competence Strategic Plan that will be aligned with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Cultural Competence Institutional Council guidance. Either way, School/Program/PRI will provide information to the Institutional Council used for institutional

policies and processes design.

It is expected that as part of the School/Program/PRI DEIC Strategic Plan the following activities and responsibilities will be included, among others:

- Ensure that all members of the School/Program/PRI are made aware of the DEIC Policy.
- Promote a culture of inclusiveness, respect, communication and understanding of diversity.
- Develop students, faculty, staff, researchers and senior administrative staff recruitment programs with the appropriate offices, and enrichment programs to facilitate the admission of qualified students from diverse backgrounds.
- Develop programs in collaboration with the appropriate offices, for the academic advancement and success of students, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff from diverse backgrounds.
- Promote the inclusion of diversity, equity, and cultural competence topics in the curriculum and in the Faculty Development Program activities.
- Work closely with the Students Affairs and Human Resources Office to promote the institutional and School/Program/PRI policies and regulations when dealing with issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence.
- Promote research agendas that address health disparities, particularly in areas consonant with this policy diversity category.
- Should seek to impact student selection committees and faculty recruitment processes.
- With the assistance of the Institutional and School/Program/PRI administrative structure, track and collect demographic data on School/Program/PRI's constituents (students, faculty, staff, researchers, and senior administrative staff) in order to properly consider such domains and characteristics that could strengthen this Policy and their particular ones, such as educational background, life experiences, sexual orientation, record of service, among others.

It is expected that the work of the Council will be dynamic, and it may promote future revisions of this Policy regarding the inclusion of additional diversity categories and changes in the Governance structure to advance the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Cultural Competence goals.

## VI Amendments:

PHSU Institutional Administrative Committee reserves the right to review and amend this Policy when it is deemed necessary. Any changes to the Policy will be posted on the PHSU Portal for immediate community access.

Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, discharge after the established due process.

---

## VII Repeal and Validity:

This Policy does not repeal the provisions established by other University policies and/or governmental agencies' regulations but establishes the requirements of PHSU's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competence Policy.

This policy will be effective for the AY 2023-2024.

## VIII Approval:



David Lenihan, PhD, JD, DC, MBC  
President-PHSU

07/05/2023 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date