



# CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

**A PATH FORWARD: PROMOTING EQUITY,  
DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND RACIAL  
JUSTICE AT CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE**

*A Path Forward* is rooted in the Mission of Chestnut Hill College's founders, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, and in the Mission of the College itself. In the development, implementation and assessment of this action plan, the College continues its efforts to cultivate a campus environment marked by equity, diversity, and inclusion. These values are grounded in a four-centuries-old tradition of the Sisters of Saint Joseph which flows from the mission of Jesus "that all may be one" (John 17:21).

From their founding in seventeenth-century France, the Sisters of Saint Joseph have fostered the union of all persons with God and with every neighbor without distinction, cultivating a spirit of active, inclusive love in each of their varied ministries. Their founder in Philadelphia, Mother Saint John Fournier (1814-1875), herself a victim of racist violence for teaching adult slaves as well as teaching the children of emancipated slaves, crossed borders of nations, cultures and races to serve persons in need. Her legacy lives on in the lives of contemporary Sisters of Saint Joseph, Associates and Partners in Mission as well as in their institutions and ministries, where loving God and neighbor is paramount, not as cause to rest but rather as encouragement to continue the work of our predecessors. The Sisters of Saint Joseph strive to create inclusive communities where everyone is valued; communities that invite unity and just relationships; communities characterized by forgiveness and reconciliation.

*A Path Forward* both reflects and builds on the College's Non-discrimination Policy and Strategic Plan. It builds on a long history of commitment to all who seek a higher education, with particular attention and commitment to persons from underrepresented communities. This history includes providing access to postsecondary study for women, financial and academic pathways for minority students through thirty years of the Action for Advancement program and most recently through the Bretzlaff Scholars and the Tichenor- Greer Scholarship Programs and generous tuition assistance to meet students' unmet needs. As a result of these ongoing efforts, the College's student population has continued to grow in its diversity.

*A Path Forward* responds to the signs of our time, in particular, the current national dialogue about racial justice, and reflects the benefits of an ongoing dialogue with the entire College Community by integrating their recommendations, feedback and input. This initiative builds on the existing strengths of the College, such as the student diversity in the Schools of Undergraduate Studies, Continuing and Professional Studies and Graduate Studies, a burgeoning population of international students, and the presence on campus of the Foreign Language School of America. We seek to bring together the richness of the College's history and traditions with the contemporary voices speaking to modern day needs and concerns. At this critical moment in time, it is the expressed desire of the College community to continue to grow together, enriched, informed and unified by the experience, history and culture of each of its members. In this spirit, the College community commits itself to honest reflection and assessment and to authentic change and growth in its understanding of and commitment to racial justice.

## **Organizing Principles**

- Equity, diversity, inclusion, and racial justice are values central to the Mission of Chestnut Hill College and, as such, are institutional priorities in planning, decision making, and allocation of resources at all levels.
- Assessment plays a continued role in the institution's continued progress toward these values and in reporting the outcomes of the assessments to the College community as well as in adjusting and/or developing programs, policies and practices as appropriate, based on the facts.

- Access to higher education, support and inclusion of members of all communities of color and to members of all underrepresented communities are among ongoing and assessed Institutional priorities.
- Providing opportunities for education, exploration and dialogue among all members of the College Community will support continued efforts toward promoting and practicing these values.
- Consultation in decision-making processes invites input from diverse stakeholder groups.
- Increasing the presence of underrepresented groups on the Board of Directors, Faculty and Staff, especially at the Directors' level and above is an institutional priority.

### **Objectives Already Initiated**

- The College has instituted an Office of Diversity and Inclusion, including the appointment of an Interim College Officer for Diversity and Inclusion and the appointment of a diverse Advisory Committee to that Office.
- The College has instituted a search for a full time College Officer for Diversity and Inclusion as a Cabinet position which will report directly to the President.
- The College will continue to seek and create formalized and structured venues for active consultation of every member of the College community in the design and implementation of *A Path Forward*.
- The College held listening sessions and employed two rounds of Survey Monkey questionnaires in the drafting phases of *A Path Forward*. A Campus Diversity Survey was completed in May. Such efforts to gather and track information integral to the

planning and execution of the College's diversity initiatives will continue as needed.

- Sessions for diversity and inclusion education were held for Faculty and Staff in May and will be held for all Board members, Faculty, Staff, and Students during the Academic year 2016-2017.
- The SUS Curriculum Committee began discussions about a Diversity component in the CORE curriculum that would be required of all SUS students. This could include an infusion of diversity content in the CORE and/or an added required seminar. In SCPS, a diversity component is already required for Human Services and Criminal Justice majors. Discussion will continue in Fall 2016 in the SCPS Curriculum committee regarding a CORE requirement. In SGS, diversity is integral to graduate program requirements, course content, and professional codes of ethics and standards of accreditors. Faculty teach graduate courses in which diversity is the central theme, and several have expertise in the area of diversity. The Master's psychology program introduced a new concentration in diversity last year.
- The Acting College Officer for Diversity and Inclusion has held conversations with the Director of Human Resources, the Title IX Coordinator and in-house counsel, in order to integrate the process for staff, faculty and students to report discrimination and bring grievances forward with other already established College processes and policies.
- In consultation with Faculty and Staff, the Cabinet performed an inventory of diversity initiatives in curriculum, student activities, residence life, staff and faculty development and will do so on a regularly scheduled basis. This will allow us to identify gaps and seek to address them.

## **Objectives to be initiated in 2016-2017**

- Assess and continue retention and support services for students of diverse backgrounds [including but not limited to financial aid, tutoring, mentoring, and summer bridge programming].
- Include the College Officer for Diversity and Inclusion and the Advisory Committee as active participants in listening sessions and community building activities.
- Organize and implement an assessment of policies, procedures, and practices across the College in light of our goals of diversity, inclusion and racial justice.
  - Once developed and promulgated, include an explanation of each policy, procedure, and practice in orientation and on-going professional development; evaluate adherence to policy, procedures and practices as part of annual performance evaluations as appropriate
  - Develop ways to keep these policies and practices in the forefront of community awareness and explore ways to operationalize policies, etc., in keeping with our Mission
  - Provide faculty, staff, and student development opportunities about the implementation and interpretation of policies.
- The full-time College Officer for Diversity and Inclusion will review and make recommendations regarding the College's code of conduct policies. Subsequent to this review, the College will seek outside legal review and assessment of the policies.
- Take steps to increase the percentages of persons of color among Board members, Faculty, Staff, and Senior Administration
  - Examine hiring practices
  - Emphasize this priority in hiring in all decisions to create and/or fill positions

- Continue to provide diversity training for members of search committees
- Include existing College structures and expertise (i.e. the Institute for Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Certificate in Intercultural Foundations, faculty scholarly expertise, staff experience) as resources for programming and dialogue.