**DIVERSITY BEST PRACTICES**

**Background**

The Marquette University Alumni Association National Board of Directors created the Diversity Committee to design and implement inclusive policies, practices and measures that promote opportunities for all Marquette graduates and in the process, heighten the alumni experience.

The mission of the Diversity Committee is aligned with that of Marquette University and its statement about human dignity.

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**Marquette University’s Statement on Human Dignity and Diversity**

*As a Catholic, Jesuit university, Marquette recognizes and cherishes the dignity of each individual regardless of age, culture, faith, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability or social class. Precisely because Catholicism at its best seeks to be inclusive, we are open to all who share our mission and seek the truth about God and the world. Through our admissions and employment policies and practices, our curricular and co-curricular offerings, and our welcoming and caring campus environment, Marquette seeks to become a more diverse and inclusive academic community dedicated to the promotion of justice.*

*Our commitment to a diverse university community helps us to achieve excellence by promoting a culture of learning, appreciation and understanding. Each member of the Marquette community is charged to treat everyone with care and respect, and to value and treasure differences. This call to action is integral to the tradition we share.*

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The Diversity Committee devoted considerable time and energy to put together a useful document designed to assist current regional and club leaders in their roles on behalf of Marquette. The document, which is included hereafter, provides suggestions and insight on best practices for promoting inclusiveness at alumni events and recommendations on diversifying board leadership. It is imperative that club leaders and board members understand that diversity is a value of Marquette University, as we are all part of the Marquette family.

The Diversity Committee developed the following document using information gathered during the course of interviews with faculty and administrators from Marquette and other institutions. Individuals consulted represent significant positions including the Assistant Dean for Intercultural Programs, Associate Provost for Diversity, Director of Development, and Diversity Recruiter/Adviser. In addition, alumni leaders of various backgrounds and ethnicities were interviewed.
Suggestions for Promoting Inclusiveness at Alumni Events

1. **Marketing**

   When creating marketing pieces—especially when using photographs—be mindful of the audience.

   - Focus on the fact that people want to be able to see themselves as part of an event and to think the event is meant for them.
   - Use familiar faces and names of fellow alumni so that the potential attendees feel an instant connection. (However, be sure to not overuse these photos as marketing pieces should remain updated and fresh.)
   - Use photographs and/or quotes representing male and female alumni of different ethnicities and ages.
   - Avoid “staged” scenes as a part of your marketing pieces—the best way to develop these pieces is to genuinely begin to integrate the events, classes, etc. so that the pictures are real and truly reflect what is happening on and off campus.
   - Make sure it is clear for whom the event is designed: e.g., is it for alumni of color, recent graduates of color, an older demographic group, etc.? Different ethnicities and generations will respond differently to various photographs and marketing pieces.
   - Be conscious of what you put in writing, always being sure to use inclusive verbiage. (Consult with Marquette Alumni Relations as well.)
   - Above all, make the targeted group feel included and remember that there is no such thing as “one size fits all” when creating marketing pieces.

2. **Venue Choice**

   When selecting a venue for an event, be sure the location adheres to the university’s statement on human dignity.

   - Research the venue to ensure it is inclusive of all ethnicities and welcomes women and men alike (e.g., this is necessary to avoid selecting a site such as a country club where perhaps African-Americans or women historically have not been allowed to join).
   - Select the location based on the demographics of the area. If you want high attendance from a certain group, consider planning the event in a part of the city or suburb where these alumni reside or work.

3. **Finding Common Ground**

   When designing an event for a targeted group, be mindful when reaching out to them.

   - Try to find a common ground other than ethnicity, such as a profession, workplace or a sporting event.
   - Do not isolate or segregate a particular group. When planning specialty events, attempt to make everyone feel included.

4. **Co-Sponsorship**

   When coordinating an event, invite the Ethnic Alumni Association (EAA), Association of Marquette University Women (AMUW), etc., to serve as a co-sponsor (e.g., if the EAA were to co-sponsor an event, alumni of color would feel more comfortable attending, knowing that the event is designed to be more diverse). Co-sponsorship with specific groups sends a good message to the alumni.

   - Ensure that at least three members of the co-sponsoring group are present at the event to make an immediate connection with alumni who have an affinity for the group.
5. **Reaching Out to Current Students of Color**

When scheduling a calendar of events, create opportunities for increasing participation among current students of color. This will help increase the likelihood for their engagement as future alumni and also will help establish a strong alumni base among students of color. Possible strategies include the following:

- Design a “Meet and Greet” event during which members of the Ethnic Alumni Association visit with current student organizations to educate them about the EAA.
- Offer mentoring programs. It can be inspiring for current students of color to see someone like themselves who has graduated from Marquette, remained involved with the university and cares about the students and alumni. Consider matching students (EOP and non-EOP) with alumni from their hometown.

**Suggestions for Increasing Board Leadership**

Diversifying board leadership is an important goal. All ideal candidates for board leadership must be committed volunteers who:

- Will do a solid job.
- Be qualified for the position.
- Love Marquette University.

The following suggestions serve as helpful guidelines for recruiting board leadership.

1. **Set Goals**
   - Create a recruitment plan and set a two-year goal based on the demographics of your region.
   - Strive to create a board that reflects Marquette’s value of diversity (i.e., be mindful that the board is inclusive of the entire Marquette community, which reflects men and women representing different ethnicities, ages, etc.).
   - Be proactive about recruiting for leadership opportunities, being assertive when approaching the people you want to fill positions. Be sure to only offer opportunities of substance to future leaders.

2. **Seek Dialogue**
   - Talk with potential future leaders so they feel comfortable sharing their opinions and stories, particularly their Marquette experiences. Open discussion might help eliminate any self-segregation that still exists today and will create an atmosphere on the board that brings together different ethnicities, is cross-generational and represents both genders.
   - Encourage those that have positive memories to help someone else share the same experience; encourage others to help create a more inviting place for future generations.
   - Be mindful that honest discussions are imperative for future leaders and the success of the board.