



November 14, 2018

Dear Dr. Katz and DCLA Admissions Committee Members,


I fully and firmly endorse Mars Hill University's application to the Diversity, Civility, and Liberal Arts Institute. Principled and pragmatic reasons motivate my support. On principle, the DCLA Institute will enable MHU to fulfill its mission; it will help us prepare students for "service...and responsible citizenship in the community, the region, and the world" by providing them an education "grounded in the liberal arts." Our society grows more diverse by the day. So does our campus. Thirty six percent of our student body are persons of color, making MHU one of the most racially diverse campuses in the Western NC region (race is only one metric of diversity, but it is an important one). In this context, responsible citizenship means responding to diversity constructively, with respect, compassion, and creativity. This is no easy task, and MHU's faculty and staff need the insights the DCLA Institute can provide to model this kind of citizenship to our students.

If we succeed on our principles, we will also succeed pragmatically. MHU—like many access-oriented colleges—struggles with retention of students, especially students of color. Seeing these students to graduation is of the utmost importance to the university fiscally as well as morally. The DCLA Institute can provide critical insights toward that end. Our goal in utilizing the DCLA's insights is to raise 2nd year retention rates of African American male students by 10% (57% to 67%) and African American female students by 5% (69% to 74%). We aim to achieve this goal by fall 2021.

For principled and pragmatic reasons, the DCLA team will enjoy my full backing as they implement the action-steps spelled out in this application. During our budgeting season in March, the Board of Trustees and I will fully fund the pedagogy workshops and student-leadership trainings proposed below. I will empower and vocally support the policy review and realignment to be undertaken by Alaysia Black Hackett, the Director of the Office Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the University Intercultural Council. I will also support the UIC's work with Drs. Reigle and Pierce to assess the diversity of authors assigned in General Studies courses. Lastly, I will honor the efforts to the Curriculum Committee to promote inclusive excellence in our course offerings.

Academic year 2018-2019 is my first year as MHU's president. In my short tenure, the campus's desire for inclusive excellence grows ever more apparent. Their desire matches my own. I intend for inclusive excellence to be the defining feature of my tenure here. Therefore, MHU's application to the Diversity, Civility, and Liberal Arts Institute has my strong and enthusiastic support.

With high regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Floyd', written over a horizontal line.

Anthony Floyd, J.D.

President of Mars Hill University



November 14, 2018

Dear Dr. Katz and DCLA Institute Admissions Committee Members,

In recent years, Mars Hill University (MHU) has seen a rash of racially-fueled incidents. From the use of racist language to cases of cultural appropriation, our campus has clearly reflected the ill-effects of widespread discrimination found in a so-called colorblind society. In response to these campus events, MHU hired its first Diversity Officer, Alaysia Black Hackett, in fall 2012. Upon the hire of Ms. Hackett, a small group of faculty and staff were gathered and charged with building an agenda around diversity and multicultural issues on campus. This group calls itself the University Intercultural Council (UIC) and has worked to the present day on a variety of diversity-related projects.

After committing ourselves to the Inclusive Excellence model outlined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, the UIC set to work. A vitally important component of our work has been to help all minoritized students find their voices through new organizations. Hence, we have supported Ms. Hackett in forming the Native American Student Organization, the Latinx Student Organization, and PRISM, an LGBT+ organization. In addition, we worked with the former president to postpone classes on Dr. Martin Luther King Day for the first time in the history of the university, instead offering a full day of commemorative programs. To further engage the campus community, we have co-sponsored or co-planned events for Black History Month, Native American History Month, Women's History Month, Asian Pacific History Month, and Hispanic History Month. The UIC has also co-authored with Ms. Hackett numerous proposals for institutional reform, none of which has been implemented. These include: a Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT), hiring policies to recruit persons of color, and a Men of Color mentoring program to name a few. Such programs are "shovel ready" for implementation.

MHU's new senior leadership team shares our desire to move this work forward. However, these aspirations require further development. Hence, the UIC fully endorses MHU's application to the Diversity, Civility, and Liberal Arts Institute. We hope its insights will have institution-wide influence.

The UIC looks forward to collaborating with Ms. Hackett and Drs. Omachonu, Reigle, and Pierce in the curricular and co-curricular efforts spelled out in MHU's DCLA Narrative Application. Concerning curriculum, we will partner with Drs. Reigle and Pierce in assessing the extent to which general studies courses introduce students to multi-cultural authors. Also, we

will support the efforts of Drs. Omachonu and Reigle and the Curriculum Committee to create criteria for course adoption/revision that promote inclusive excellence. On the co-curricular side, we will rely on Ms. Hackett's use of DCLA Institute resources to lead a full review and revision of campus policies, with the goal of aligning all policies around an explicit commitment to inclusive excellence and equity. We will also utilize her takeaways from the DCLA Institute as we implement the long-planned Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT). BIRT will allow us to establish a baseline measure of bias incidents on campus, so that we can craft intelligent responses to them. Lastly, we will rely on Ms. Hackett's insights as we build fora for student leaders from marginalized groups to make their voices known with regard to campus policies (such as a Student University Intercultural Council). Using DCLA Institute insights, we will amplify student voices to faculty, staff, and administrative leadership.

In the past, diversity efforts at MHU have been under-funded and conducted in ad hoc fashion, with some small successes here and there. The potential for meaningful change is different now. With the resources of the DCLA Institute, and with new university leadership, conditions are ripe for institutionalizing a variety of sustainable inclusion initiatives. In the short-term, however, our concrete goal is to improve first year to second year retention rate of African American students. Our goal is to improve African American male student retention by 10% (57% to 67%) and African American female student retention by 5% (69% to 74%). We hope to achieve this goal by fall 2021.

We will not stop there, however. The UIC at Mars Hill University will do everything possible to cultivate a campus climate that is responsive to the needs of all members of the community. We heartily believe MHU's participation in the DCLA Institute supports that goal.

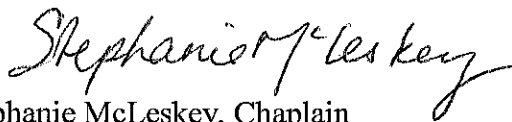
Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Destino, Professor of Education



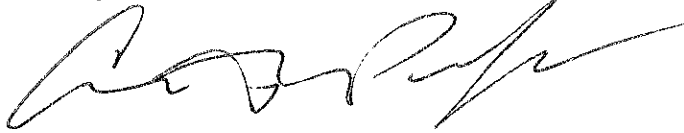
Brett Johnson, Associate Professor of Sociology



Stephanie McLeskey, Chaplain



Deb Myers, Director of the Center for Community Engagement



Ann Peiffer, Assistant Professor of Psychology



Caroline Twigg, Community Partnerships Coordinator



Jessica Van Cleave, Professor of Education

Dr. John O. Omachonu, Provost, Mars Hill University

Dr. Omachonu views enacting MHU's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan as his chief responsibility as provost. His second responsibility is enabling the campus to craft wise, mission-driven strategic plans for the next decade. The DCLA Institute supports both tasks. With regard to the first task, MHU's DCLA implementation plan addresses four of the five goals listed in MHU's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan: 1) Student Enrollment and Retention, 2) Student Experience, 3) Quality Academic Environment, and 4) Valuing Faculty and Staff (biographies below will describe concrete steps to be taken toward these broad goals). With regard to the second task, MHU's implementation plan will kick start discussions on MHU's institutional vision for 2022-2027. Pedagogy workshops, Curriculum Committee discussions, and faculty-student-staff collaboration on policy development will familiarize MHU with the concepts and methods of inclusive excellence, thereby enabling us to pursue them more effectively in the coming years. Dialogue about inclusive excellence will aid buy-in for more inclusive excellence.

As provost, Dr. Omachonu leads MHU's Academic and Student Development Divisions, co-chairs the University Intercultural Committee, and supervises the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Prior to Mars Hill, Dr. Omachonu served as Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (July 2015 – June 2018) at Kennesaw State University (KSU), with oversight in three critical areas – recruitment, retention, and graduation. He also supervised the administration of a \$1 million Goizueta Foundation grant for the recruitment, retention, progression, and graduation of Hispanic/Latino students, and the American Democracy Project (ADP). Previous to Kennesaw, Dr. Omachonu was Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer at Middle Tennessee State University. Dr. Omachonu has been a fellow of the American Council on Education with a 1-year senior administrative residency at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, a fellow of the Management Development Program at Harvard University, and a fellow of the Executive Leadership Academy at UC Berkeley, sponsored by the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education.

Ms. Alaysia Black Hackett, Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Alaysia Black Hackett serves as the inaugural Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The tasks she will undertake for MHU's DCLA implementation plan address two goals in MHU's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan: 1) Student Experience and 2) Valuing Faculty and Staff. Ms. Hackett will improve students' experience, i.e. "their ongoing sense of welcome throughout their career at MHU" by collaborating with marginalized student groups and the UIC to review and revise campus policies. These policies include: residence hall search policies, student protest policies, student free speech policies, housing policies, etc. Furthermore, by implementing the Bias Incident Report Team, Ms. Hackett will "[a]ssess the student body to identify populations that are marginalized, underrepresented in higher education in general, and/or less likely to persist and graduate at MHU."

With regard to "Valuing Faculty and Staff," Ms. Hackett will "retool the search process to increase opportunities to hire diverse faculty and staff." She will also instantiate policies that aim to retain faculty and staff persons of color. Many of these policies—such as family leave and performance review procedures—will positively impact white staff persons as well.

Ms. Hackett's experience and training for institutional policy development are extensive. Her professional experience includes six years dedicated to establishing an Inclusive Excellence educational model at MHU. In these efforts, Ms. Hackett drew on 15 years of experience in higher education administration; she has worked at a large state institution, two small private institutions, and a historically Black institution. In addition, Ms. Hackett works to develop equity-oriented policies within her community. Ms. Hackett holds numerous board positions within social justice organizations in Asheville, North Carolina: The Racial Justice Coalition, The WNC Diversity Coalition, Stop the Violence Coalition, Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, and the United Way of Asheville. She also serves her community as an educator—giving conference speeches, hosting workplace diversity trainings, and facilitating workshops on recognizing institutional racism. She advises the Asheville City Council, Asheville Police Department, Asheville School Board, and the Buncombe County Sheriff's offices, helping them adopt successful methods of conflict de-escalation and build positive community relationships.

Ms. Hackett attended Western Carolina University where she earned a Bachelor's of Science in Sociology with a concentration in Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Relations and a Master's of Public Affairs with a concentration in Organizational Development. Ms. Hackett is currently a candidate for an Executive Juris Doctor degree from Concord Law School at Purdue University Global.

Dr. Kimberly Reigle, Associate Professor of English and Faculty Chair of the Ramsey Center for Regional Studies

MHU faculty see Dr. Reigle as a teacher of teachers. Her work on MHU's DCLA implementation plan reflects this role. Her primary task will be to lead an inclusive pedagogy workshop for composition instructors and to co-lead two other workshops for broader faculty audiences. These activities fall short of the MHU 2017-2022 Strategic Plan goal to "[c]reate and maintain a Teaching and Learning Center" (Quality Academic Environment). However, these pedagogical workshops constitute an important stop-gap measure since it is unlikely that MHU will establish such a center for 2-5 more years.

Happily, Dr. Reigle's pedagogical influence extends well beyond one-off workshops. She serves on the First Year Composition (FYC) sub-committee within the English department. This committee sets up the curriculum for FYC courses, from suggested writing assignments to textbooks. Since all students must complete two semesters of composition, her position on this committee means that she will be able to implement changes to the FYC curriculum based on knowledge gained from the DCLA Institute.

Dr. Reigle's administrative influence also reaches beyond the English Department. She served as secretary of the Curriculum Committee for three years and currently serves on the Assessment Committee. Moreover, she sits on the faculty and steering committees of both the Regional Studies and Women and Gender Studies programs. As part of the steering committees, she has input on courses, course content, and program sponsored campus events. For example, in 2016 she brought Dr. Barbara Duncan to campus for Women's History month to give a talk titled: "Cherokee Women: Respected Not Ranked; Contrasting Ways That Cultures Value Women." In 2018 she brought Dr. LaShanda Sell to MHU, again, for Women's History month, to give a talk titled "Minorities in Nursing in the early 20th Century."

This administrative experience has well prepared Dr. Reigle to assist the Curriculum Committee in writing criteria for the adoption and revision of new courses. It has also prepared her to collaborate with Dr. Pierce and the UIC in assessing the representation of diverse authors in General Studies reading assignments. Through both tasks, Dr. Reigle will help MHU achieve another goal of our strategic plan, i.e. to “assess the sustainability, effectiveness, and efficiencies of our current academic programming to better position MHU as the preeminent, private liberal arts university in western North Carolina.”

Dr. Elizabeth Whiting Pierce, Assistant Professor of the Philosophy of Ethics and Director of the Center for Ethics

Like Dr. Reigle, Dr. Pierce will lead and co-lead three inclusive pedagogy workshops. One workshop will target First Year Seminar in Ethical Reasoning Instructors, equipping them to constructively discuss race and ethical challenges related to race with their students. The other two workshops will target broader faculty audiences. Dr. Pierce approaches these workshops from the perspective of a junior faculty person, an important perspective since 50% of MHU joined the institution within the last four years, usually right out of graduate school. Dr. Pierce will also partner with Dr. Reigle and the UIC in assessing the representation of diverse authors in General Studies courses. Her role as Director of the Center for Ethics positions her well for both tasks; faculty expect her to undertake these sort of pedagogical/administrative efforts.

In addition to these tasks, Dr. Pierce will serve as the administrative lead for curricular elements of MHU’s implementation plan (follow-up reporting to CIC, organizing team planning meetings, advertising workshops, reserving rooms, ordering food, managing budgets, etc.). To these tasks she brings significant project management experience. From July 2016-June 2017, she managed the Culture, Religion, Ethics and the Environment Program (CREATE) for Emory University’s Center for Ethics. She maintained advisory board relations, oversaw the creation of an adult environmental ethics curriculum, and planned a national conference, for which she won \$10,000 of grant funding. Prior to graduate school, Dr. Pierce managed a community garden within the East Nashville Community Mission’s garden network. Her work involved grant writing and management, volunteer coordination, budgeting, and stakeholder engagement.

Dr. Pierce’s commitment to the DCLA Institute’s mission arises from her abiding interest in conflict, especially moral conflict. This concern motivates Dr. Pierce’s teaching, research, administrative efforts, and volunteer work. Her course load allows her to probe moral conflicts in a number of different fields (Business Ethics, Environmental Ethics, Theories of Democratic Legitimacy, and First Year Seminar in Ethical Reasoning). Her doctoral research evaluated institutional options for addressing interstate water allocation conflicts (Ph.D., Emory University, 2017). As Director of MHU’s Center for Ethics, she develops co-curricular programming that equips students to deal constructively with moral conflict in the public square (conflict-resolution trainings, depolarization workshops, bi-partisan lobbying trips). In her personal life, Dr. Pierce has been registered with the Georgia Commission on Dispute Resolution as a trained neutral since 2016. She currently volunteers with the Asheville Mediation Center.

(A) Specific challenges or opportunities: Ms. Alaysia Black Hackett, Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, recounts a recent protest on campus: “Weeks after Philando Castile was murdered in July 2016, there was a police shooting of Keith Scott in Charlotte, NC. Charlotte is two hours from campus and the hometown of many students. Directly affected by the nightly protests, students were hurt and felt a need to make a statement about police brutality toward black lives. Midday, students came to my office to say they planned to hold a protest at 4pm, organizing themselves mostly through word of mouth, text, Snapchats, etc. Key university administrators were not willing to allow students to hold the protest and some threatened student conduct complaints. Worried for my employment, I explained to the (now former) president that this protest *was* going to happen and that students needed to be heard. The president understood and thanked me for informing him. I worked with the new police chief, Mr. Garrison, and Campus Security to ensure safety and flow. At 4pm, around 200 students from multi-racial groups and numerous student organizations were joined by some faculty and staff to protest in front of Blackwell Hall and along the highway through campus. While the protest was non-violent, some community members drove by repeatedly with a noose hanging out of a truck. We started seeing more Confederate flags driving up and down as the students marched.”

Despite these disturbing symbols, the protest ended peacefully. This event revealed MHU’s unpreparedness to respond to student protests. No policies existed to guide student, faculty, or staff behavior, and none exist today. Much less are we prepared to treat protests as opportunities to better understand and address the sources of racial tension in US society.

Our lack of preparedness to constructively address racially charged conflicts surfaced again in 2018. MHU’s clogging team (almost all white students) organized a show featuring covers of dance performances by several African American artists. The show’s advertisements generated a heated social media debate about cultural appropriation. Students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni all participated quite publicly. MHU’s policies on the use of social media by university entities were quite murky at the time. They remain so. MHU makes our application to the DCLA Institute in the hope that it will enable us to develop policies for handling these controversies more constructively.

Furthermore, we anticipate the DCLA Institute will help us learn to responsibly cultivate one of MHU’s greatest assets: exceptionally high socioeconomic and racial diversity. Fifty-two percent of our students are the first in their families to attend college and 98% receive financial aid. Sixteen percent are international students. Thirty-six percent of the student body are persons of color, making MHU one of the most racially diverse campuses in the Western NC region. Unfortunately, MHU struggles to support our diverse student body all the way to graduation. MHU’s fall 2011 cohort showed 6-year graduation rates of 38% for White students, 16% for African American students, 50% for Hispanic students, and 19% for American Indian students. Drivers of these graduation rates are complex. However, we strongly suspect one causal factor is employee demographics. MHU’s faculty and staff are overwhelmingly White (although, see next section on recent, high-ranking hires that move in the right direction). Demographics may explain why our students feel less confident than students in peer institutions that “[i]n general, my cultural community is valued on campus” (National Survey of Student Engagement, NSSE 2017 Inclusiveness and Engagement with Diversity).

Demographics may not be the only driver of students’ ambivalence. Students enjoy few channels of influence over campus decision-making. MHU has no campus newspaper. The former president shut it down several years ago for printing offensive content. Students do not sit on administrative committees (though there has recently been some movement on this front);

they currently have no input on the curriculum, which speakers come to campus, academic integrity policies, athletics policies, scholarship awards, etc. MHU does have a Student Government Association. However, SGA gets very little done because it is poorly resourced—miniscule budget (\$5,300 for all programming and scholarships), overtaxed staff advisor (he oversees all campus activities including Greek life, outdoor programming, clubs, etc.), and no formal leadership training for student representatives. In sum, perhaps students feel their cultural perspectives are not highly valued because MHU does not solicit or utilize students' perspectives in decision-making. MHU's clear lack of fora for empowered student dialogue hinders constructive responses to conflicts surrounding diversity.

Nonetheless, students have persisted; so have faculty and staff who support students' efforts to cultivate inclusive excellence on campus. The opening story of a peaceful campus protest constitutes one example, and multi-year student-driven efforts to begin and sustain an openly recognized LGBT+ club on campus constitutes another. In both cases, student leaders relied on voluntary support from faculty and staff. In order to formalize and coordinate the efforts of these faculty and staff, the former president appointed the University Intercultural Council (UIC) in 2012. The UIC has authored numerous proposals for institutional reform. These include: a Bias Incident Reporting Program (BIRT), LGBT+ best practices, hiring policies to recruit persons of color, and a Men of Color mentoring program. These programs are "shovel ready" for implementation in the years ahead. The UIC supports MHU's DCLA Institute application, as detailed in their attached letter of support.

(B) Previous or current efforts to support diversity and civility on campus: Also in 2012, MHU hired Ms. Hackett as its first Director of Diversity and Multi-Cultural Affairs. While an important step forward, Ms. Hackett's hiring illuminated MHU's administrative clumsiness regarding diversity. Ongoing conflicts between lacrosse men (mostly White) and men on the football team (mostly African American) concerned MHU's former president and coaches. Without consulting deans, faculty, or staff, without forming a search committee, the president interviewed and hired Ms. Hackett. She had not even been informed her first meeting with the president was a job interview. Her initial position was part time and lacked a job description. Despite these challenges, Ms. Hackett has worked closely with the UIC to lay the groundwork for inclusive excellence at MHU. She has spearheaded and/or promoted the Black Student Association, the Native American Student Association, the Latinx Student Association, PRISM (LGBT+), MLK Jr. Commemorative Programs, a series of diversity lectures, seminars, and workshops, Unity Candlelight Vigils, events to celebrate Black History Month, Native American History Month, Women's History Month, Asian Pacific History Month, and Hispanic History Month. Happily, conditions for her work are improving.

In the past year, MHU took great strides forward with regard to diversity and inclusion. We are poised for a full-out sprint. This new potential results from several key hiring decisions. First and foremost, we have a new president. Mr. Tony Floyd previously served as Executive Vice President at Coker College. During his tenure, he researched Coker's racial history and established Coker's first Center for Diversity, Interfaith, and Inclusion Education. He supports similar efforts at MHU, tailored to our particular history and needs. This support is evident in his decision to hire Dr. John Omachonu as MHU's new provost. Dr. Omachonu previously served as a Chief Diversity Officer and has an administrative track record of promoting diversity initiatives (see Section C). Also this fall, Dr. Audrey Martin-McCoy joined MHU's administrative leadership as the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment. Dr. Martin-McCoy will

provide MHU with clearer data on MHU's diversity challenges and strengths and the efficacy of its inclusion efforts. Lastly, the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences hired Mr. Jonathan McCoy to establish an African American Studies minor and to teach within the history department. Three of these four leaders are persons of color, and all are committed to amplifying the voices of students of color, LGBT+ students, first generation college students, and the faculty and staff who support them.

These administrators' moral vision comports with widespread efforts on campus to promote inclusive excellence. The Bonners Scholars Program—a service-leadership scholarship which covers all tuition costs—reserves half of its spaces for students of color. The College Democrats and College Republicans—led by professors in the Political Science Department—regularly host public lectures and discussions of pertinent policy concerns (policing, immigration, voting rights, etc.). The Women and Gender Studies Department conducts yearly events like the Human Library and Clothesline Projects and on-campus research, including a 2015 survey of the perceptions and experiences of LGBT+ students on campus. In response to the survey's results, the Chaplain's Office trained 12 faculty in providing a "Safe Space" for LGBT+ students. In 2016, the Writing Center hosted a discussion of Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*, attracting 50 students, faculty, staff, and area residents. This event was followed by a discussion of MHU's use of slave labor early in its history. In 2017, Ms. Virginia Bowers (English), organized civil discourse workshops for faculty, staff, and students (conducted by the Asheville Mediation Center, funded by the Bringing Theory to Practice Grant). In spring 2018, the Center for Ethics facilitated a "Better Angels" workshop, which aimed to depolarize political discourse in advance of the mid-term elections. It also sponsored a spring break trip to Washington, D.C. wherein students lobbied their senators to protect DACA recipients and their families. In November 2018, Dr. Fred Bonner II, Professor and Endowed Chair at Prairie View A&M University, led a workshop for faculty and staff on cultivating resilience in millennial students with a specific focus on African American males. Dr. Peiffer (Psychology) used an on-campus, community pedagogy grant to fund Dr. Bonner's visit.

These efforts demonstrate a cross-campus desire to cultivate inclusive excellence, especially among younger faculty (50% of faculty were hired in the last four years). MHU's new leadership team desires the same thing. Yet, those aspirations require further definition. So do the tools and methods for cultivating it. This proposal and the DCLA institute can provide expertise to guide MHU's next steps.

(C) A preliminary plan to apply the content of the Institute to the curriculum and co-curricular activities: Our overarching goal is to improve first year to second year retention rates of African American male students by 10% (from 57% to 67%) and African American female students by 5% (from 69% to 74%). We plan to accomplish this goal by fall 2021.

Curriculum Implementation Plan: We use the term "curriculum" broadly. We aim to reform classroom dynamics and not simply revise course offerings. Our strategy is three-fold: 1) improve pedagogy, 2) assess the current diversity of authors assigned in General Studies courses, and 3) generate criteria for the adoption and revision of courses that promote inclusive excellence.

Improve Pedagogy. As mentioned above, most of MHU's faculty are white, and about a third of our students are persons of color. These white faculty need training to promote inclusive excellence in their classrooms. Hence, MHU's team will use DCLA content to craft four pedagogy workshops. The first day long workshop will take place in August 2019, during the

Fall Faculty Workshop, which all full-time instructors are required to attend. All DCLA team members will work with Dr. Mullinax (Faculty Chair) to design and implement this workshop. The second workshop will take place in October and will target the 14 instructors of the First Year Seminar in Ethical Reasoning (FYS 112). Every first year MHU student must take this course. This workshop will explore why talking about race is difficult, how to do it well, and why the skills and strategies for talking about race contribute to ethical reasoning in general (the subject matter of the course). As leader of the FYS 112 teaching team's professional development, Dr. Pierce will organize this workshop. The third workshop, targeting composition instructors, will also take place in October, hosted by Dr. Reigle. This workshop will focus on the cultural and ethical implications of teaching composition in the US, given our diverse linguistic traditions. The DCLA team will host its last workshop during a faculty retreat in spring 2020. Instructors will be invited to apply for this retreat during the Fall Faculty Workshop. Over the intervening months, fifteen accepted faculty will read assigned texts and write reflections on their efforts to pursue inclusive excellence in their classrooms. The retreat will provide an opportunity to share what best practices we have learned, what progress we have made, and what challenges we still face. The DCLA team envisions this retreat occurring annually to promote a faculty culture of inclusive excellence. We will assess the efficacy of these workshops through follow-up surveys that ask how and how often faculty use workshop concepts and tools in their teaching.

Assess diversity of authors assigned in General Studies courses. An important step toward equal representation of diverse voices in MHU's curriculum is assessment of their current representation. Previous student focus groups have identified the classroom space as the most inclusive area of campus, but we have no formal metric for how culturally representative this space is. Because General Studies courses define the academic "Mars Hill Experience" shared by all students, across all majors, we will begin our assessment there (with plans to review other divisions in subsequent years). The Dean of General Studies already collects syllabi listing course authors. Drs. Pierce and Reigle, with the help of UIC, will create a spreadsheet detailing each syllabus taught in the last 4 years, authors assigned, their race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion (to the extent these data are available). Drs. Pierce and Reigle will use these data to write a report highlighting areas with strong representation of minority voices and opportunities for improvement. They will submit the report to the Provost, Dean of General Studies, and Curriculum Committee for review. The outcome we hope to achieve is a clear baseline by which to measure improvement in diversification of assigned authors.

Generate criteria for the adoption and revision of courses that promote inclusive excellence. At MHU, the Curriculum Committee authorizes the creation of new courses and the revision of old courses. The criteria the committee uses to judge the merits of curricular changes are fairly simple: 1) does the proposal help students achieve university-wide and departmental student learning outcomes; 2) does MHU have instructors with expertise to teach the course as proposed/revised; 3) is student demand likely high enough to justify offering the course. The simplicity of these criteria is laudable, but they do little to ensure that MHU courses promote inclusive excellence. Hence, the DCLA team will work with the Curriculum Committee to craft additional criteria that formally promote that outcome. Drs. Omachonu and Reigle will meet with the Curriculum Committee at the beginning and end of the 2019-20 school year. The goal of the first meeting will be to convey what we have learned at the DCLA institute and establish an *ad hoc* committee to generate criteria for the Curriculum Committee's consideration. Dr. Reigle will assist the *ad hoc* committee in finding resources for their proposal, and Dr. Omachonu will

receive progress reports throughout the year. At the end of the year, the Curriculum Committee will meet with Drs. Omachonu and Reigle to review, revise, and adopt the criteria their *ad hoc* committee produced. Writing these criteria will be good preparation for MHU's upcoming effort (in 2-5 years) to reformat our General Studies curriculum. Our short term goal is to ensure that standards of inclusive excellence are incorporated into all course revision/adoption decisions.

Co-Curricular Plan: We also view the term “co-curricular activities” broadly and use it to refer to any activity outside the classroom. We seek inclusive excellence not just in traditional student-life activities (clubs, Greek life, homecoming, etc.) but throughout students' experience of life at Mars Hill, i.e. their interactions with campus police, university-endorsed social media, financial aid staff, etc. Previous student focus groups have cited this area as our biggest opportunity for growth. Our co-curricular strategy is three-fold: 1) review and align campus policies; 2) create a Bias Incident Reporting Team; 3) empower and equip diverse student leaders.

Review & align campus policies. MHU welcomed a new president and provost this year. With a changing of guard, all campus policies are open to review and revision. Ms. Hackett, Director of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, will oversee that effort. She will act with the support of President Floyd and Provost Omachonu and with the assistance of the UIC. Policies under review include: hiring policies that actively pursue faculty and staff persons of color; retention strategies for faculty and staff persons of color; annual diversity trainings for faculty and staff; family leave policies for faculty and staff; social media and print-marketing policies for university entities; free speech policies in student, faculty, and staff handbooks; student protest policies in student, faculty, and staff handbooks; housing policies that aim to minimize class and race segregation; and dorm room search policies for Student Life and Campus Security. At first glance, this list seems overwhelming. Happily, the UIC began preparations for a policy overhaul several years ago. They have already drafted a number of policies (e.g., policies related to hiring and retention of diverse faculty and staff). Using insights from the DCLA Institute, Ms. Hackett and the UIC will complete their policy review and revision effort this year and present a list of proposals to Provost Omachonu and President Floyd by May of 2020. The outcome we hope to achieve here is an explicit, intentional commitment to equity and inclusion—especially with regard to race and gender—in all campus policies.

Bias Incident Response Team. Recognizing the need to track bias incidents on campus, the UIC drafted a plan to create a Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) several years ago. Ms. Hackett will utilize insights gained from the DCLA Institute to sharpen the BIRT's focus and methods. She will oversee the UIC's effort to pilot the BIRT program this year. Data generated will be used to inform future campus policies. We aim to achieve a clear account of the quantity and quality of bias incidents on campus, so we can craft intelligent responses to them.

Empower and equip diverse student leaders. Over the last 6 years, students have carved out spaces for inclusive excellence via clubs like PRISM (LGBT+), Black Student Association, Latinx Association, and Native American Student Association. These clubs provide spaces of recognition and expression for marginalized groups. However, their potential far exceeds their current impact. To exercise real influence on campus, these students need leadership training and access to university administration. Utilizing insights from the DCLA, Ms. Hackett will work with Student Life staff to design leadership training opportunities for student leaders of these clubs. The UIC will both invite students' input in policy revisions and help them craft independent policy proposals related to student life. In so doing, the UIC will amplify these

student's voices to MHU's administration. The desired outcome of this program is that 10-15 student leaders receive formal leadership training and that these student leaders collaborate with Ms. Hackett and the UIC to shape 3-5 policy revisions.

(D) the relevant experience and campus roles of the proposed team members:

Dr. John Omachonu, Provost: Dr. Omachonu will guide and authorize MHU's implementation of its DCLA plan. His 20-year career in academic administration—which involved the reform and reinvigoration of multiple departments and schools (developing Middle Tennessee State University's Diversity Plan, overseeing a \$1 million Goizueta Foundation grant for the Recruitment, Retention, Progression, and Graduation of Latino/a students, and co-chairing Kennesaw State University's 10 year Quality Enhancement Plan)—has equipped him extraordinarily well for this task. Dr. Omachonu holds the authority to implement MHU's DCLA plan and has ready access to the Deans Council, Curriculum Committee, Faculty Chair, UIC, Student Life, etc. His willingness to throw his weight behind this project meets tremendous enthusiasm from these constituents. The campus has waited for leaders who will support this work.

Ms. Alaysia Black Hackett, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Ms. Hackett will lead the co-curricular side of MHU's DCLA plan. In so doing, she will continue to collaborate closely with the UIC, a relationship that began when MHU created her office in 2012. Strong administrative support plus the insights taken from the DCLA Institute will enable prioritization and implementation of these long-planned projects. Furthermore, Ms. Hackett sustains strong rapport with student leaders, especially those from the Black Student, Native American Student, and Latinx Student Associations. She can amplify their voices because she knows them well.

Dr. Kim Reigle, Associate Professor of English & Faculty Chair of the Ramsey Center for Regional Studies: Dr. Reigle, in close collaboration with Dr. Pierce, will disseminate the pedagogical insights of the DCLA Institute among faculty and teaching staff via a series of workshops. Dr. Reigle has hosted many workshops over the course of her 8-year tenure at MHU, primarily aimed at English composition instructors. She introduced many of the instructional best practices that are now standards for her department. Dr. Reigle will also assist the Curriculum Committee, where she previously served as secretary from 2014-2017, in promoting standards of inclusive excellence as criteria for course adoption and revision.

Dr. Elizabeth Whiting Pierce, Assistant Professor of the Philosophy of Ethics and Director of the Center for Ethics: Dr. Pierce, in collaboration with Dr. Reigle, will disseminate pedagogical insights from the DCLA Institute to faculty and teaching staff via a series of workshops. The faculty may be particularly receptive to Dr. Pierce's leadership for three reasons. First, because she directs the Ethics Across the Curriculum Program, DCLA Institute material is the kind of content faculty expect her to provide. Second, Dr. Pierce has strong working relationships with faculty across campus because she teaches ethics courses in several departments: Religion and Philosophy, Business Administration, Environmental Studies, Political Science, and General Studies. Third, Dr. Pierce provides professional development resources for the First Year Seminar in Ethical Reasoning instructional team, a group of 14 faculty who are passionate about teaching *and* about justice. The DCLA Institute will provide the kind of pedagogical resources these instructors already demand. Dr. Pierce will also manage administrative tasks associated with the curricular aspects of this implementation plan: scheduling meetings, reserving space, writing follow-up reports, etc.