

**ANNUAL CERTIFICATION & REPORT**  
**EQUALITY WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Peter Hans, President  
University of North Carolina System  
223 S. West St., Ste. 1800  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Dear President Hans:

The University of North Carolina Board of Governors adopted Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Equality Within the University of North Carolina*, on May 23, 2024, to reaffirm the University's longstanding commitment to equality.

As such, the chancellor and director of student affairs (or equivalent officer) of each constituent institution must certify and report on his or her constituent institution's compliance with Section 300.8.5<sup>1</sup>.

As such, I certify the following on behalf of my constituent institution:

- I. I certify that Winston-Salem State University fully complies with the University's commitment to institutional neutrality and nondiscrimination required by law and Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual.
- II. To achieve compliance, my constituent institution took the following concrete actions:

**A. Eliminated Positions:**

The DEI mandates of the UNC System were implemented at a time when WSSU was navigating enrollment and funding challenges. To meet the former DEI requirement without available resources, the university implemented a fiscally conservative strategy to incorporate DEI into the culture and operations of the campus. This strategy was decentralized; no centers were created, nor were positions funded for the sole purpose of DEI. This allowed the university to fulfill its obligations to carry out the policy of the day without additional resources. As such, WSSU has not had to eliminate nor reassign positions based on the repeal of the diversity, equity, and inclusion policy.

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<sup>1</sup> The Equality Policy requires annual certification as to compliance and expects reports of savings derived from achieving compliance. It is likely that any savings achieved will occur in the first year and that succeeding annual certifications will not report on any additional savings in the out years (because non-compliant programs, employment divisions, and employment positions should be addressed completely in the first year).

## B. Realignment of Positions:

Prior Job Title	Prior Job Description	New Job Title	New Job Description
<b>Case Manager for Student Belonging, Well-being, and Advocacy</b>	Belonging and advocacy	Case Manager for Health and Well-being	Updated the job description to submit student support.
<b>Director of Services for Students with Disabilities</b>	Indicated diversity in job classification title.	Director of Services for Students with Disabilities	UNC System Office is currently working on updated job classifications.
<b>Executive Director of University and Donor Events</b>	This department's scope includes fundraising, donor stewardship, donor reporting, special events, board management for the Foundation Board, Board of Visitors, Parents Council, Friends of WSSU, and Board of Trustees External Affairs Committee, as well as to promote diversity throughout the WSSU campus and community	Executive Director of University and Donor Events	This department's scope includes fundraising, donor stewardship, donor reporting, special events, board management for the Foundation Board, Board of Visitors, Parents Council, Friends of WSSU, and Board of Trustees External Affairs Committee, as well as to promote participation throughout the WSSU campus and community.
<b>Assistant VC for Student Affairs</b>	Demonstrated leadership experience in Student Affairs of a progressively responsible nature (particularly in the areas of strategic planning, assessment and evaluation, budget and fiscal management, student leadership and	Assistant VC for Student Affairs	Demonstrated leadership experience in Student Affairs of a progressively responsible nature (particularly in the areas of strategic planning, assessment and evaluation, budget and fiscal management, student leadership and conduct); documented administrative

	conduct); documented administrative skills in budget management, policy development, and personnel supervision; program design, implementation and evaluation; demonstrated experience in student guidance and advocacy; strong communication and organizational skills; and strong values for and experience with diversity as an essential ingredient for whole student development.		skills in budget management, policy development, and personnel supervision; program design, implementation and evaluation; demonstrated experience in student guidance and support; strong communication and organizational skills; and strong values for and experience with student equality as an essential ingredient for whole student development.
<b>Chief Legal Affairs Officer</b>	Winston-Salem State University has a strong commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion, and to maintaining working and learning environments that are free from all forms of unlawful discrimination.	<b>Chief Legal Affairs Officer</b>	The Winston-Salem State University is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a protected veteran.



<b>Assistant Dean Campus Life</b>	Programming provided by the Office of Campus Life is essential in supporting student engagement, leadership skills and development and implementing initiatives which increase student awareness and appreciation of campus and global diversity	Assistant Dean Campus Life	Programming provided by the Office of Campus Life is essential in supporting student engagement, leadership skills, and development and implementing initiatives which increase student awareness and appreciation of campus and the global community.
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### **C. Other Content or Programmatic Change**

In alignment with the recent update to the DEI policy, WSSU has taken deliberate steps to adjust its approach and support the new policy direction. The university has reviewed and adapted its practices to ensure compliance with the updated guidelines while continuing to support the development of its employees and broader institutional goals. The following overview will detail the university's comprehensive response, including adjustments across various domains: overall institutional efforts, changes in student programming, and modifications related to grants.

#### **Overall Institutional Efforts**

WSSU has undertaken a thorough review and adjustment of its institutional efforts relative to DEI. This comprehensive reassessment was aimed to ensure that the university's practices and resources align with the new policy guidelines.

#### **Removal of DEI Content**

In response to the previous System policy that emphasized DEI, WSSU undertook a comprehensive approach to embed DEI principles into its operations. This included the creation of DEI-specific resources and initiatives, such as:

- **DEI Webpages:** Developed to educate the university community about the institution's DEI initiatives and showcase the contributions of university employees in this area.
- **DEI Calendar:** Established to promote and organize DEI-related events and activities across the university.
- **Resolution in Support of DEI:** Issued to formally express the university's commitment to DEI values.
- **DEI Language in Contract Templates:** Incorporated into official contracts to ensure that DEI considerations were reflected in the university's agreements.

However, with the recent change in DEI policy, the university has diligently worked to decommission these resources and update its practices to align with the new policy directives. **All items identified above have been deleted.**

### **LinkedIn Learning Platform Review**

The university currently leverages LinkedIn Learning as a learning platform for employees. A review of the content offerings (both mandatory and optional courses) was conducted. The platform offers access selection of *optional* courses on diversity, inclusion, and belonging. These courses are available for those interested but are not required, reflecting a neutral stance on DEI within the organization. This opportunity supports employee growth and development while maintaining a neutral perspective.

### **Student Programming**

In response to the updated DEI policy, WSSU has also re-evaluated and modified its student programming and support. This adjustment reflects the university's commitment to aligning with the new policy directives while continuing to support student engagement and development.

**Updated Signature DEI Programs at WSSU:** WSSU will continue to prioritize student success by offering programs that help students connect and thrive in their academic and social environments. These initiatives are designed to create a sense of belonging and support. **All initiatives will be nondiscriminatory and centered on enhancing student success without taking positions on social or political issues. These programs will serve as platforms for students to express and debate diverse viewpoints.**

**Student Organizations and Support Groups:** WSSU supports over 100 student groups, with about 20% focused on DEI-related areas. These groups can continue their work if their programming stays focused on student success and avoids political or social commentary. Examples include supporting first-generation college students, veterans, and students from various cultural backgrounds. **The descriptions of the following student programs and events are provided by the student organizations; the list is illustrative rather than exhaustive.**

- **African Student Association General Body Meeting:** Encourages cultural exchange and understanding among students, focusing on education and connection without political advocacy.
- **Weekly Worship Service:** Provides an inclusive space for spiritual growth, welcoming participants from diverse backgrounds and beliefs in a neutral environment.



- **Black Brilliance Bazaar:** A networking event supporting student and local entrepreneurs, focusing on business development without engaging in political or social advocacy.
- **Black History Month:** Celebrates achievements and cultural heritage through educational and inspirational programming, avoiding political stances.
- **MLK Building the Dream Banquet:** Honors community service and leadership, reflecting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s values, without political advocacy, in collaboration with Wake Forest University.
- **Brother 2 Brother Empowerment Session:** Part of the WSSU Male Initiatives program, empowering male students and promoting excellence while maintaining neutrality.
- **Courageous Conversations: Liberation Spaces:** A monthly gathering for open dialogue about diverse experiences on campus, including those of the LGBTQIA+ community, fostering social growth in a neutral, supportive setting.

**Health and Well-being Units: Counseling Services, Services for Students with Disabilities, Health Education, Pharmacy Services, Student Health, and University Recreation provide support neutrally.** Programs focused on student success, inclusivity, and neutrality, aligning with WSSU's commitment to nondiscrimination and academic freedom.

- **Women's History Month:** Focuses on recognizing resilience and strength, especially those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault, through educational events like the Women's History Tea, in a neutral and supportive environment.
- **Courageous Conversations: Warning Signs 101:** A workshop educating students on recognizing harmful relationship behaviors, focusing on safety, awareness, and personal responsibility in a neutral context.
- **Bystander Intervention Training:** Empowers students to recognize and respond to harmful situations responsibly, promoting community well-being and proactive engagement in neutral terms.
- **Consent Week:** Hosted with the Title IX Office, this event emphasizes understanding and respecting consent. It offers educational resources and discussions in a non-political context, focusing on healthy interactions.
- **Courageous Conversations: The Consent Exchange:** Provides discussions on the importance of clear communication and agreement in relationships, educating students about consent in a neutral, educational setting.
- **Walk a Mile in Her Shoes:** An awareness event promoting understanding and empathy regarding violence's impact. The event includes a mile-long walk, symbolizing support for those affected, focusing on education and community building.

- **Denim Day:** Part of an awareness campaign addressing misconceptions about consent and victim-blaming. The event includes neutral, educational activities to raise awareness and understanding.
- **Clothesline Project:** An annual initiative that raises awareness about violence and abuse. It provides a platform for expressing support for survivors, focusing on education and reflection, in line with neutrality and inclusivity.
- **Homecoming Campaign:** An educational campaign promoting safety and well-being through YouTube videos, in collaboration with the Wellness Center. It covers safe practices, academics, and responsible behavior, ensuring neutral, supportive information for students.

To align with our commitment to neutrality and student-centered development, we have made thoughtful adjustments to certain programs within the **Office of the Dean of Students and Community Standards & Civility**. These changes prioritize the personal growth and self-agency of our students while avoiding any form of political or social advocacy.

- **Advocacy Day:** Traditionally held in August, this event did not take place in August 2024. Instead, our focus is shifting towards initiatives that encourage students to develop their sense of self-agency and personal responsibility. By providing students with the tools and resources to navigate their own paths, we support their personal and professional development without advocating for specific political or social positions. This approach fosters a neutral environment where students can explore their values and make informed decisions that are authentic to their individual beliefs and aspirations.
- **Ram Standards Council:** Formerly known as “Ram Advocates,” this peer-to-peer mentorship program has been redesigned to emphasize education and understanding of the Student Code of Conduct and campus guidelines. The Ram Standards Council provides students with an opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations about the standards of behavior expected within our community, focusing solely on conduct processes and community standards. By removing any elements of political or social advocacy, the program ensures that all interactions are centered on educating students about their responsibilities and rights, fostering a campus environment that is respectful, inclusive, and supportive.

Both adjustments reflect our broader commitment to maintaining neutrality in all aspects of our programming. Our goal is to empower students by equipping them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed, both within the university setting and beyond, without aligning with any external political or social agendas. These changes underline our commitment to upholding student empowerment, ensuring that every student feels respected and supported in their journey at our institution.



**Housing and Residence Life** is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive living environment for all students. We prioritize respect, safety, and a sense of belonging for every resident, regardless of their background or beliefs. Our approach is to maintain neutrality, ensuring that all programs, services, and policies are implemented without bias or advocacy for any political or social positions. Our goal is to foster a community where all students feel valued and empowered to thrive academically and personally.

**Career Development Services (CDS)** at WSSU is dedicated to preparing students for graduate school and the professional world. Through initiatives like the Career and Graduate School Expo and Employer/Graduate School Information Sessions, CDS provides students with the resources and opportunities to explore and achieve their career and academic goals in a neutral, supportive environment. **Commitment to Professional Development and Neutrality:** CDS is committed to supporting the professional development of students while maintaining a neutral stance. We do not advocate or politicize the views or positions of our external partners and stakeholders. By focusing on student success and providing a supportive, unbiased environment, CDS upholds its commitment to preparing students for life after graduation, ensuring that all interactions are respectful and focused on empowering students to make their own informed choices.

- **Career and Graduate School Expo:**  
Held each fall and spring, this event allows students to connect with potential employers and graduate schools. It helps students discover internships, co-ops, full-time job opportunities, and graduate programs, enabling them to make informed decisions about their futures. The Expo also enhances the visibility of participating organizations on campus, benefiting both students and employers.
- **Employer/Graduate School Information Sessions:**  
These sessions offer valuable insights into specific graduate programs, scholarships, and career opportunities. They equip students with the knowledge needed for academic and professional success, allowing them to make informed choices that align with their aspirations.

### **Grant Reporting**

To align with the new UNC System policy on institutional neutrality, Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) will focus its reporting and communications on how grants and initiatives contribute to student success, educational access, and overall academic achievement.

- **Gear Up Grant:** WSSU received a \$28.2 million Gear Up Grant, the largest grant in the university's history. This seven-year initiative supports low-income students across several North Carolina counties. **Focus on Student Success:** The program's primary focus is on improving student success metrics by providing resources and support that enhance students' academic preparation and readiness



for college. The initiative aims to create a pathway to higher education for students who might otherwise face barriers to academic achievement.

- **Lumina Foundation Grant for Adult Learners:** The university received a \$175,000 grant from the Lumina Foundation as part of its Adult Learner Initiative. This grant supports the WSSU ACCESS Program. **Focus on Student Success:** By providing greater access to degree completion opportunities, the initiative aims to improve educational outcomes for adult learners, which contributes to their personal success and benefits their families and communities. The program aligns with WSSU's commitment to expanding educational opportunities and supporting students' success.
- **HBCU Fellowship Grant:** WSSU received a six-year grant from the US Department of Education totaling \$11,383,638. The funding is intended to enhance master's programs in the STEM and Allied Health Fields. **Focus on Student Success:** The fellowship's primary focus is to enhance graduate education through recruitment, retention, development, and enhancement of innovative curricula. The grant funds scholarships for students within the identified fields, provides support for curricula development, enhances graduate support services, and implements strategies for the recruitment and retention of STEM and Allied Health students.

#### **D. Savings & Recommended Reallocations:**

No financial resources needed to be reallocated to support our commitment to maintaining neutrality in our programs and initiatives. Our existing budget and resources have been sufficient to uphold this approach, ensuring that we continue to provide high-quality support to our students without any additional budgetary impact. This allows us to focus on fostering an inclusive, supportive environment that prioritizes student success while remaining neutral and unbiased in our partnerships and interactions.

#### **E. Redirected Use of Funds:**

As noted earlier in the certification, the university's strategic approach to DEI implementation was decentralized and fiscally conservative. As such, the university's efforts to comply with the new policy yielded no financial resources that required reallocation or redirection. However, if the university had identified funds to be redirected, funding would have been redirected to directly impact the university's core metrics by supporting existing and launching new student success initiatives, shoring up the university's enrollment management strategies to attract a robust class of qualified students, and to support the university's continued efforts to support the growing number of Pell-eligible students who constantly seek access to the institution without the resources to partake in the life-changing educational and social experiences offered at WSSU.

<b>Savings (\$\$\$)</b>	<b>Prior Use of Funds</b>	<b>Redirected Use of Funds</b>
\$0	NONE	NONE

**WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY**

Title: Chancellor

By:  \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Bonita Brown, J.D.

Date: August 30, 2024

Title: Interim Associate Provost and Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs

By:  \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Lamonica Sloan Wilhelmi, Ph.D.

Date: August 30, 2024











# Equality Policy Certification Final

Final Audit Report

2024-08-30

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