As the nation undergoes an awakening on systemic racism, the critical question before us is: How can we use our position to push for positive change, equity and social justice within our realm of influence at Mason, in higher education generally and the early talent recruiting and hiring space?
Executive Summary

George Mason University Career Services is a leader in the career services field, modeling best practices for others.

More specifically, our industry model for student advising and employer development, virtual career courses, faculty engagement initiatives such as the Career Influencers Network, Clearance Ready Program, and employer education on diversity recruiting have all been adapted for implementation at universities across the country.

As the nation undergoes an awakening on systemic racism, the critical question before us is: how can we use our position to push for positive change, equity and social justice within our realm of influence at Mason, in higher education generally and the early talent recruiting and hiring space?

Producing this strategic plan is not a performative act. This plan is a reaffirmation and extension of our work in access, inclusion and resource redistribution begun years ago. As part of our last strategic plan (2018-2020), here is just a sample of what we accomplished:

- established the Scholarship for Unpaid Internships Fund and distributed $119K to students with expressed financial need
- increased number/diversity of employers recruiting at Mason by 22% through transition to new career management system and job/internship database, Handshake
- added staff position to increase access via evening virtual career counseling 5 nights per week
- eliminated career assessment fees for students and alums
- reviewed pay structure to ensure equity across student job positions in UCS
- provided childcare for job seekers attending Career Night event
- partnered with Lockin China to increase access to internships/jobs for international students
- collaborated with Mason Autism Support Initiative on staff training and student programming
- made office space more accessible and welcoming
- revised service delivery policies to expand career support to more students (e.g., ADVANCE, INTO)

And, we recognize that there is still more work to do! At this time, we more intentionally and explicitly focus on the social justice nature of our work. We share this document with you, our key stakeholders, with the expectation that you will help hold us accountable for delivering on these goals.
About UCS

University Career Services (UCS), a unit within the Division of University Life (UL), is the centralized career center for George Mason University (Mason), serving 38,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

UCS is dedicated to helping students identify and pursue opportunities where they can make a positive impact in a complex and quickly evolving world. In partnership with our strong network of employers, alumni, and faculty we are able to break down barriers and successfully connect students with meaningful opportunities in their industries of interest to help them reach their full potential and advance not only themselves socio-economically, but their families too.

Existing services and programs include one-on-one appointments, career exploration, industry-specific programs, career fairs, experiential learning opportunities and graduate school preparation. University Career Services currently has 16 professional staff members, 5 support staff, 2–4 graduate assistants and 6–10 student employees. The approximate career advisor to student ratio is 1: 2,900.

Mission
We prepare and connect career ready students for postgraduate success.

Vision
Eliminating barriers to economic and social mobility.

Method
Cultivating an inclusive, community approach to career preparation so that every Mason student graduates career ready.

Goals
1. Eliminate disparities in student outcomes, engagement, and satisfaction.
2. Enhance intercultural development and social justice training of staff.
3. Attract and promote employers committed to inclusion and equity.
Strategic Planning Approach

University Career Services engaged in a comprehensive data-driven strategic planning process. It began with a self-initiated external review of our diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts around assessment, marketing, team/network and partnerships/advocacy, which involved consultant-led interviews with staff and students.

This was closely followed by an invitation for internal, Mason identity-based units to review UCS on similar dimensions. Recommendations were received from the Early Identification Program (first generation students), Office of Disability Services, Office of International Programs and Services, Office of Diversity Inclusion and Multicultural Education (students of color/undocumented/DACAmented students), LGBTQ+ Resources and Contemporary Student Services (adult learners).

The entire UCS staff, with guidance from UCS leadership, used the qualitative data gathered in addition to quantitative student engagement and outcomes data to refine the goals and formulate strategic actions and annual activities for each. The efforts of this work make up this document.
Goal Alignment
These tables demonstrate how our goals support university and divisional strategic plan goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UCS Goals</th>
<th>University Goals</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2: Accessible Pathways</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Return on Investment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4: 100k Career-Ready Graduates</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6: Community Builder</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 7: Well-being</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 8: Diverse Academic Community</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate disparities in student outcomes, engagement and satisfaction.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance intercultural development and social justice training of staff.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attract and promote employers committed to equity and inclusion.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UCS Goals</th>
<th>University Life Goals</th>
<th>Goal 1: Organizational Excellence</th>
<th>Goal 2: Holistic Student Support Services</th>
<th>Goal 3: Inclusive Thriving Communities</th>
<th>Goal 4: Engage All Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate disparities in student outcomes, engagement, and satisfaction.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance intercultural development and social justice training of staff.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attract and promote employers committed to equity and inclusion.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal 1: Eliminate disparities in student outcomes, engagement, and satisfaction

Student engagement means connectedness. It is not enough for us to simply make our resources and services available. We commit to adapting our programs/services and employing a personalized outreach strategy to engage students from marginalized identities who are under-utilizing UCS.

Strategic Action One: Identify student identity groups not being served

Collect and analyze student engagement and career outcome data for: Asian/Asian Pacific American, Black/African Heritage, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American students, U.S. work authorization/international students, first generation status, students with disabilities, military/veterans and contemporary (adult) students.

Year One
- Define meaningful measures of student engagement and develop strategy to consistently collect and interpret engagement data over time
- Determine data sources and gain access to collect and analyze demographic data
- Develop baselines and investigate the factors underlying disparities
- Set targets and success metrics for outreach efforts
- Seek approval for graduate assistant position(s) to support data collection, cleaning, analysis, interpretation, and distribution

Year Two
- Collect, monitor and appraise defined engagement data
- Review service portfolio based on student engagement data and recommend changes to UCS delivery mechanisms (services, programs) if needed
- Assess and refocus outreach priorities as needed
- Hire graduate assistant(s)

Year Three
- Collect, monitor and appraise defined engagement data
- Assess continually and refocus outreach priorities as needed
- Review service portfolio based on engagement data and recommend changes to delivery mechanisms if needed
- Develop future priorities

Success Metric(s):
Ability to identify student identity groups not being served, report on trends in engagement across various service delivery methods and develop a data-driven outreach strategy.
Goal 1: Eliminate disparities

Strategic Action Two: Prioritize student-centered communications

Scrub the bias in professionalism standards, as we review and update website, marketing materials and social media to ensure they are student-centered, authentic and inclusive in language, images and content.

Year One

1. Review existing data from DEI external review, student survey, focus groups and input from UL units to inform content strategy
2. Set benchmarks and goals for student engagement with website, marketing emails and social media
3. Select or develop a style guide for inclusive writing
4. Replace coded language, idioms, and figurative speech with plain language and develop a consistent tone across all communications
5. Reorganize, update and create new website content to enhance the student experience
6. Fully dedicate and hire a student to grow the UCS social media following

Year Two

1. Complete website reorganization and content creation ensuring accessibility
2. Rollout staff training on inclusive language style guide and revise print materials, Mason360 news posts, etc.
3. Hire a photographer to build inventory of unstaged pictures of Mason students engaging in UCS services and events
4. Ensure images in UCS communications reflect the Mason student body
5. Implement cohesive content strategy and review student engagement across all channels monthly
6. Develop toolkit of content (e.g., infographics, videos, Mason360 news posts) to define common career-related jargon in plain, relatable language for use by faculty and staff

Year Three

1. Continue monthly student engagement analysis, making necessary adjustments to strategy
2. Convene student focus groups to assess needs, preferences related to communications and perceptions of UCS website, social media and collateral materials
3. Provide ongoing staff training on inclusive language style guide

Success Metric(s):

Improved student engagement analytics for website (5% increase overall), social media (2-3% increase overall) and marketing emails (3% increase overall) and UCS is perceived as inclusive and welcoming (psychologically safe) across all social identity groups based on marketing and communications.
Goal 1: Eliminate disparities

Strategic Action Three: Directly address career concerns around identity

Expand identity-based resources and program offerings to directly address timely, relevant career and employment concerns of students from marginalized identity groups (e.g., Navigating Respectability Politics in the Workplace, Imposter Syndrome).

Year One

- Re-imagine staff assignments related to student identity groups, liaison partnerships, and diversity webpage ownership
- Based on news, research, and relationships in the Mason community, stay current on unique career-related needs of students from marginalized identity groups, with special attention to those with intersecting identities
- Offer at least one program per month on an identity-based career topic or social justice issue in career development

Year Two

- Design template and marketing campaign for DEI webpages in collaboration with marketing and communications team
- Update existing and create additional DEI webpages
- Continue to offer at least one program per month

Year Three

- Monitor DEI webpage analytics and student engagement in programs and update as necessary depending on student feedback

Success Metric(s):

90% satisfaction of program attendees and 3% increase in engagement of DEI related webpages.
Goal 1: Eliminate disparities

Strategic Action Four: Ensure equity of access
Leverage Career Influencers Network, Peer Career Advisors, and Mason’s new coaching model to ensure equity of access to career development support.

1 Year One
- Revamp Career Readiness Guide with activities for use by faculty and staff during advising, coaching, and class instruction
- Embed major-fit and career exploration topics and referral process into required Mason Care Network success coach training
- Intentionally recruit faculty and staff who actively support students from marginalized identities to join Career Influencers Network
- Expand Growth student talent development program to UL’s graduate student workers
- Based on input from leaders of professional student organizations, select appropriate model and launch student Career Influencers Network

2 Year Two
- Based on feedback, review and refine success coach training
- Offer customized faculty/staff Career Influencers Network training to all schools/colleges
- Evaluate and update student Career Influencers Network for expansion to all identity-based student organizations and UL student employees
- Leverage Peer Career Advisors to offer programs in student spaces (e.g., residence halls, identity-based student services offices)

3 Year Three
- Review student engagement data and adjust outreach strategy by social identity group, as necessary
- Conduct learning assessment of Career Influencers Network trainings

Success Metric(s):
Expanded network (10% increase) of Career Influencers supporting career development across Mason and 90% of learning objectives of Career Influencer Network trainings met.
Goal 2: Enhance intercultural development and social justice training of staff

We must do our own work. UCS staff commit to exploring the bias, privilege and power we possess in our social identities in order to assume greater responsibility for creating a more inclusive and just community at Mason, meeting the unique career development needs of students, particularly those from marginalized identity groups.

Strategic Action One: Support interpersonal development

All UCS staff take the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), create an individual Interpersonal Development Plan (IDP) based on their results and then retake the IDI to measure growth.

Year One
- Invest in two UCS staff members to become IDI Qualified Administrators
- Require full staff participation in the IDI assessment then facilitate group and individual result interpretations
- Develop guidelines and train supervisors/staff to incorporate IDP goals into their annual performance plans and evaluations
- Provide resources and support staff’s IDP completion (e.g., Anti-racism Learning Group)

Year Two
- Assess staff’s annual goals and IDP for completion
- Invest in additional UCS team member to become an IDI Qualified Administrator
- Schedule and administer retake of IDI assessment to measure UCS staff growth
- Facilitate follow-up IDI group interpretation and determine need for another year commitment (IDP) with new goals
- Based on positive experience, advocate for adoption of the IDI assessment by UL

Year Three
- Research options for conference presentations and/or article submissions
- Offer IDI Qualified Administrator services to other UL units
- Continue to measure staff progress along the IDI continuum

Success Metric(s):
UCS staff, as a group, will progress along the IDI continuum from a Transitional mindset toward a Global mindset.
Goal 2: Enhance staff training

Strategic Action Two: Participate in the communities we serve

Require and track full staff participation in community events hosted by the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Education, LGBTQ+ Resources, Women and Gender Studies, and Office of International Programs and Services (e.g., International Week, Pride Week, Heritage Month events) and staff trainings offered by these units or affiliated student organizations.

**Year One**

- Identify all trainings, for professional and student staff, offered by Mason on the topics of DEI, intercultural development and social justice
- Assess level of staff completion of SafeZone, UndocuAlly, Working with International Students, Inclusive Learning Community and similar Mason trainings
- Create tracking mechanism, develop reporting process and set expectations with full-staff for participating in Mason community events hosted by units and student organizations supporting marginalized identity groups
- Promote upcoming trainings and events to staff and make recommendations for trainings to coordinate for a group or the entire UCS staff

**Year Two**

- Maintain updated list of trainings and staff completion levels, as well as staff attendance at community events
- Provide reminders to staff who are due to complete a training

**Year Three**

- Sustain commitment to training /development and community building

**Success Metric(s):**

100% of staff complete at least one training and attend at least one community event per year.
Goal 2: Enhance staff training

Strategic Action Three: Contextualize community education
Contextualize, within the work of Career Services/career development, learning from SafeZone, UndocuAlly, Unconscious Bias, Inclusive Learning Community, Mental Health First Aid, and similar trainings offered at Mason.

1 Year One
- Coordinate with facilitators to customize trainings for UCS staff, when possible
- Participate in at least one training per semester
- Schedule and lead debrief for UCS staff immediately following training to reflect on and discuss application of learning at individual, organizational and systemic levels
- Integrate learning into UCS student staff training

2 Year Two
- Evaluate updated student staff training and refine as necessary
- Facilitate quarterly discussions to maintain focus on and encourage integration of learning into marketing/communications, development of workshops/events, 1:1 career counseling/industry advising sessions, UCS policies/procedures, etc.
- Enhance professional development opportunities on culturally responsive career development interventions for faculty/staff Career Influencers Network members

3 Year Three
- Create engaging reference materials based on learnings

Success Metric(s):
Enhanced training and reference materials for professional and student staff.
Goal 2: Enhance staff training

Strategic Action Four: Sustain anti-racism learning

Engage in anti-racism dialogue and learning regularly within the office. As a staff, share resources, address relevant and timely questions, participate in book/article discussions, and host viewing parties of films/videos on issues of race and equality.

Year One

1. Develop shared definitions of anti-racism terminology
2. Create and curate UCS Lending Library
3. Implement monthly viewing parties
4. Engage in weekly (audio)book club sessions and current event discussions using virtual collaboration space
5. Research and evaluate structured anti-racism learning curricula/modules available for purchase

Year Two

1. Appraise staff learning needs based on group IDI results and racism self-assessment scale
2. Identify and obtain additional/new resources for UCS Lending Library
3. Invest in structured anti-racism learning curricula/modules for professional and student staff development
4. Continue monthly viewing parties
5. Continue weekly (audio)book club sessions and current event discussions

Year Three

1. Invite Mason/UL colleagues to participate
2. Continue monthly viewing parties
3. Continue weekly (audio)book club sessions and current event discussions

Success Metric(s):

Sustained anti-racism learning and dialogue for duration of the plan/three years.
Goal 2: Enhance staff training

Strategic Action Five: Connect well-being and career readiness
Embed culturally responsive career development theories and well-being interventions into career education (e.g., appointments, workshops, career courses).

Year One
- Define inclusive career well-being
- Do a baseline assessment of professional and student staff’s ability to recognize social justice issues in career development and utilization of culturally responsive and inclusive well-being language, strategies and resources
- Based on Mason trainings, input from UL units, student surveys/focus groups and literature reviews, identify culturally responsive career development interventions for use in 1:1 appointments and drop-ins
- Update language, content and integrate at least one inclusive well-being exercise into workshops and career courses
- Create learning outcome and assessment strategy

Year Two
- Develop portfolio and routinely conduct case studies to build staff capacity for using culturally responsive career development interventions and inclusive well-being strategies in 1:1 appointments and drop-ins
- Integrate at least one additional inclusive well-being exercise into workshops and career courses
- Review assessment data and adjust content and staff training as necessary

Year Three
- Continue to review assessment data and adjust content and staff training as necessary

Success Metric(s):
At least 90% of students indicate on post-appointment survey that UCS is an inclusive space that affirms their identities. At least 90% of workshop attendees and enrolled career course students meet inclusive career well-being learning objective.
Goal 3: Attract and promote employers committed to inclusion and equity

Many employers say they value diversity. But, for well-being and success, Mason students/graduates need fair treatment, access, opportunity, resources, advancement, and decision-making power within their places of employment. UCS commits to strengthening partnerships with employers that have demonstrated a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Strategic Action One: Provide education and consulting to employers

Regularly provide virtual engagement opportunities and recruiting consultations to educate employers on how to enhance their strategy for successfully building a pipeline of talent from marginalized identity groups at Mason.

Year One
- Deploy employer needs assessment
- Update Diversity Recruiting webpage content and videos
- Conduct research on current best practices and seek out thought leaders/experts (e.g., HR professionals, faculty, colleagues, students from marginalized identities) to inform employer education
- Train staff facilitating recruiting consultations
- Craft schedule and marketing plan to promote 4-6 webinars

Year Two
- Finalize content for employer webinar series and add videos to Diversity Recruiting webpage
- Track and report webinar participation by employers enrolled in DEI badging program
- Review feedback on webinar rollout, making adjustments as necessary

Year Three
- Regularly market live and recorded sessions
- Continue to track and report webinar participation by employers enrolled in DEI badging program
- Develop new incentives, content or delivery methods to drive employer engagement

Success Metric(s):
90% employer satisfaction with webinar content and recruiting success stories to profile.
Goal 3: Promote committed employers

Strategic Action Two: Connect students and employers with shared values

Facilitate identity-based and social justice oriented recruiting activities and events to connect students and employers with shared values.

Year One

• Informed by students, promote community-based activities as a way for employers to share their mission and values with candidates
• Embed identity-based questions and social justice themes into Industry Week programs
• Begin planning new annual signature recruiting event

Year Two

• Host social justice oriented signature recruiting event featuring an employer sponsored community service project and panels on relevant topics (e.g., salary/benefit negotiation for women)
• Track and report signature event participation by employers enrolled in DEI badging program
• Identify best method to collect feedback from employers and students doing community-based activities together
• Continue to embed identity-based questions and social justice themes into Industry Week programs

Year Three

• Host social justice oriented signature recruiting event again
• Assess sustainability based on student and employer engagement and feedback

Success Metric(s):

Set baseline and increase student and employer participation in social justice signature recruiting event by 15% each year. Obtain recruiting success stories from students and employers to profile.
Goal 3: Promote committed employers

Strategic Action Three: Identify employers committed to DEI hiring practices
Badge employers with a demonstrated commitment to inclusion and equity in their recruiting and hiring practices at Mason to be easily identifiable to students from marginalized identities.

Year One
- Conduct student and employer focus groups to inform structure and elements of badging/recognition program
- Establish criteria, application and review process, marketing plan, tracking mechanism and recognition visible to both students and employers
- Train UCS staff, update website/Employer Recruitment Guide and develop email outreach campaign to engage employers in the program

Year Two
- Dedicate employer relations student staff to support the program
- Invite employers to submit an interest form/application
- Recognize employers demonstrating leadership in their DEI efforts at Mason and serve as consultant to those desiring to challenge their cultural norms, practices and policies
- Solicit feedback from employers and assess change as a result of program participation
- Investigate partnership opportunities with other Mason units

Year Three
- Update program, marketing, and staff training to reflect changes based on feedback and engagement data
- Continue to invite and recognize qualifying employers and offer consultative services
- Conceptualize new signature recruiting event for recognized employers to connect with identity-based UL units and student organizations

Success Metric(s):
Employers eliminate a practice/policy that served as a barrier, or enact a practice/policy that creates more fair or equitable access to opportunities within their organization for students from marginalized identities.
Every UCS staff member is assigned a strategic action to support fulfillment of the plan goals. Goal leaders are as follows:

**Goal 1:** Eliminate disparities in engagement, satisfaction and outcomes of students  
**Kristin Leonato, Associate Director, Strategic Initiatives**

**Goal 2:** Enhance intercultural development and social justice training of staff  
**Elena Chiru, Associate Director, Career Development**

**Goal 3:** Attract and promote employers committed to inclusion and equity  
**Trasi Watson, Associate Director, Industry Advising & Employer Development**