

**ASEE Diversity Recognition Program
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan**

**RISE: Realizing Intersectional Standards of Excellence
University of Kansas
School of Engineering
September 23, 2022**

1. DEI Plan

The vision of the [IHAWKe Diversity and Women's Programs](#) for the University of Kansas (KU) School of Engineering (SoE) is in alignment with the University's Realize Intersectional Standards of Excellence (RISE) by recruiting, educating, retaining, and graduating world-class diverse engineers that create empathetic and viable solutions for our local and global communities. IHAWKe supports and prepares innovative, team-oriented diverse engineers that conquer their classes, connect with others, and change the world through intentional programming and engagement with staff and faculty to foster an inclusive climate and enable success for all.

Our University's mission is to, "Educate leaders, build healthy communities, and make discoveries that change the world." When we [Realize Intersectional Standards of Excellence \(RISE\)](#), we contribute to the fulfillment of KU's mission and vision by ensuring that diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) are integral to every part of KU's research, scholarship, teaching, service, community engagement, and support. RISE offers an action-oriented framework to advance equity and social justice at KU and within Engineering. There are four priorities of RISE: (P1) recruitment and retention; (P2) education, research, and scholarship; (P3) campus climate and infrastructure; and (P4) community engagement and impact. Each priority is listed, along with the SoE's overarching goal and specific objectives for addressing each priority. Our goals and objectives are intended for a three-year time-frame, and should be re-evaluated in two years.

1. Priority: Recruitment and Retention

Goal: Increase diversity in the School of Engineering, and contribute to increasing diversity in engineering and computing industries, government, and academia.

- Promote and engage diverse K-14 students in engineering and computing through school relationships, community partnerships, and on-campus events.
- Recruit and nurture diverse undergraduate and graduate students to be innovative leaders that successfully graduate and advance their engineering and computing careers.
- Expand and improve summer acclimation programs for incoming freshmen who are from BIPOC/global majority identities, under-resourced areas, first generation college students, women, LGBTQIA+ students, military-affiliated students, and students with disabilities.
- Engage and retain undergraduate and graduate students who are from BIPOC/global majority identities, under-resourced areas, first generation college students, women, LGBTQIA+ students, military-affiliated students, and students with disabilities through community building, design thinking, and project-based leadership development.
- Expand and improve peer mentoring and tutoring programs for undergraduate students.

- Expand the university's and regional companies' participation in the GEM Consortium and increase the number and pool of diverse graduate students and faculty and staff candidates.
- Increase the number of women and BIPOC/global majority faculty who are recruited, promoted, and tenured through KU's enhanced hiring for excellence practices.

2. Priority: Education, Research, and Scholarship

Goal: Nurture and empower diverse SoE students, staff, and faculty towards success.

- Create networking opportunities and exposure to engineering and computing careers through enhanced alumni and industry connections.
- Strengthen our academic and engineering partnership with Haskell Indian Nations University (co-located in the same city).
- Build academic and research bridges with local minority serving institutions such as Kansas City Kansas Community College and Donnelly College.
- Require staff and faculty to complete annual diversity and inclusion training.
- Provide information and training resources and encourage the staff and faculty to advance their learning of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), the needs of diverse engineering students, and their role in advancing DEIB initiatives.
- Develop research and education opportunities with faculty to broaden participation in engineering.
- Develop research-based, grant-funded programs that support the SoE's DEIB goals.

3. Priority: Campus Climate and Infrastructure

Goal: Build community around DEIB, including seeking input from and fostering engagement with students, staff, faculty, and alum, and expanding how the SoE operates inclusivity.

- Provide programmatic support and leadership training to IHAWKe student organizations, including NSBE, oSTEM, SASE, SHPE, SWE, WiC, AbilityKU, and AISES.
- Support the development and inclusion of the AbilityKU and AISES student organizations in IHAWKe and the SoE.
- Celebrate first generation college students currently pursuing degrees within the SoE and highlight first generation SoE faculty.
- Provide opportunities to the students to interact with diverse role models through existing speaker series, such as the Tiberti lecture, and existing award series, such as the Distinguished Engineering Service Award (DESA).
- Collaborate with and support existing KU programs such as the Multicultural Scholars, McNair Scholars, Emerging Scholars, GEAR-UP, and TRIO STEM.
- Dedicate space within Engineering to IHAWKe students for peer mentoring and community building.
- Demonstrate appreciation and provide reward to staff and faculty for the work they do to advance DEIB initiatives.
- Administer a climate survey to undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty to evaluate climate and identify DEIB needs in the SoE on a periodic cycle.

- Frequently engage the DEIB committee, which consists of undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty, to encourage continuous dialogue and active channels throughout the SoE on DEIB needs and initiatives.

4. Priority: Community Engagement and Impact

Goal: Leverage KU's mission to improve DEIB outcomes among those employing our students in Kansas and beyond.

- Partner with national professional societies in outreach, such as SHPE's Noche De Ciencias program and SHPE Academic Partnership Council.
- Partner with majority-minority public school systems, such as the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools through the Diploma+ program, to introduce K-12 students to engineering as a rewarding career.
- Partner with KU Libraries, KS EPSCoR and other on-campus programs to expand outreach to families in Kansas.
- Utilize social media platforms to disseminate IHAWKe activities, positive impacts, and opportunities.

The SoE commits to equity, implicit bias and inclusion training across the School through:

- Charging the Engineering Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging and IHAWKe Program Coordinator to establish and promote RISE, cultural competency, and implicit bias and inclusion training within the School of Engineering.
- Committing to practicing KU's enhanced Hiring for Excellence standards and best practices to increase the diversity of the faculty and staff hiring pool.

The SoE will hold itself accountable for pursuing the goals and objectives stated in this plan, and assessing progress through:

- Documenting metrics for each goal and objective, and evaluate on an regular basis, strategizing interventions for improvement, as needed.
- Administering a climate survey to undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty to evaluate goals and objectives more broadly on a two-year cycle.
- Regularly engaging the DEIB committee, to maintain continuous dialogue and active channels throughout the SoE on assessment of DEIB needs, initiatives, and outcomes.

2. Rationale for Changes

Over the past three years, many changes have occurred in the School of Engineering, at the University of Kansas, and more broadly in a national context. As such, the goals and objectives of our IHAWKe Diversity and Women's Programs have also transformed. In the fall of 2021, along with the appointment of a new Associate Dean for DEIB, we rebranded. We have kept our namesake as the IHAWKe Diversity and Women's Programs, but importantly we no longer use IHAWKe as an acronym. This change was made based on student input, and with the approval of our IHAWKe student group leaders. In 2019, IHAWKe called out several identities to which it catered. This direct call-out was important at that time; however, in 2021 with a new national context, it became exclusive. The identities called out in IHAWKe left out Asians and Asian Americans, LGBTQIA+ students, students with different abilities and disabilities, neural diversity, first generation college students, and military affiliated students, among others. The original naming of IHAWKe was never intended to be exclusive, and collectively we agreed to drop the use of IHAWKe as an acronym. The focus of the IHAWKe Diversity and Women's programs is still on BIPOC/global majority and women students, and it now operates with an expanded reach to other under-resourced and marginalized identities, as well as with more intention to support students, staff, and faculty.

A second major change is the movement from an inclusive excellence framework for organizing and executing our diversity goals, to a Realizing Intersectional Standards of Excellence (RISE) framework. This movement holds many of the same values of inclusive excellence, and expands in a purposeful and organized way that recognizes the overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. The concept of intersectionality recognizes that people are adversely affected by infrastructures, laws, and practices that have historically impacted the academic, social, cultural, and economic outcomes for people based on their identities, such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, veteran status, and other identities. [RISE](#) is "a more progressive and contemporary interpretation of the widely used Inclusive Excellence framework, that attends to simultaneous and inseparable facets of identities. This model seeks to raise our collective consciousness around systems of inequity which directly affect SoE students, staff, and faculty who experience compounding oppressions based on overlapping social identities."

These two major changes create ripples into other smaller and nuanced changes between the original and new DEI plans. Additionally, given the progress that has been made in the past three years, some goals have been met and/or require rephrasing to capture the current state of progress. These collective changes are briefly described herein and elaborated on in the Narrative.

The original plan called out a summer undergraduate research experience (REU) and site. Such an REU program has been funded as part of the Kansas National Science Foundation (NSF) EPSCoR award titled, '[Adaptive and Resilient Infrastructures driven by Social Equity \(ARISE\)](#)'. ARISE is a \$20,000,000 award from the NSF with \$4,000,000 in state-matching funds to enhance research competitiveness in the State of Kansas. ARISE had an official start date of June 1, 2022. As part of ARISE is a REU site co-located at KU, Kansas State University, and Wichita State University, and as part of the equity-driven approach, the REU program will have a special emphasis on recruiting and supporting BIPOC/global majority and women students. Dr. Elaina Sutley, the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (AD DEIB), is a co-lead and Co-PI on the ARISE project.

Similarly, the original plan called out the development of a summer bridge program. This program has been designed and developed, was piloted in Summer 2021, was redesigned and offered again in Summer 2022 with tremendous success (from the organizers and attendees' perspectives). As such, the new goal is to expand the Summer Bridge program.

The original plan called out supporting the Women in Computing (WiC) student group. WiC has been successfully formed and maintained for several years now with IHAWKe support. The new goal is to help support the development and inclusion of AbilityKU and AISES student groups in KU Engineering, and to celebrate first generation college students, faculty, and staff in engineering.

Other expansions to the goals include dedicating space within Engineering complex for IHAWKe student use, more goals related to faculty and staff, and a communication plan for sharing IHAWKe news, sharing education opportunities for advancing culture and climate, and venues for continuous input and feedback from students, staff, and faculty. Adding goals related to faculty and staff is critical for changing culture and creating a welcoming environment that fosters belonging for all. Some faculty and staff-related goals are also aimed at generating human and financial resources such that there are more people who are actively working to broaden participation and enhance the overall climate in engineering.

3. Documentation of Faculty, Staff, and Student Perspectives

There are six efforts aimed at gaining perspectives from the students, staff, and faculty in the SoE as part of an ongoing determination for improvement. These include, (1) IHAWKe Ambassadors and KUEST Leaders; (2) IHAWKe Student Leadership Retreat; (3) regular feedback surveys after key events; (4) a School-wide DEIB Committee; (5) the bi-annual School-wide Climate Survey; and (6) monthly School-level leadership meetings. Each of these is explained herein.

The IHAWKe Ambassadors and KUEST Leaders positions were initiated prior to 2019. At that time, IHAWKe Ambassadors received a scholarship and KUEST leaders were paid hourly to provide staffing support for the KUEST ONE program. In 2021, these two positions were re-envisioned in a way that supports the goals of IHAWKe and provides continuous feedback to the IHAWKe director and program coordinator. IHAWKe Ambassadors now receive a scholarship and are paid hourly to help set-up major IHAWKe events, manage the IHAWKe social media pages, improve the DEIB webpages for the School of Engineering, speak to K-12 students, and host office hours for mentoring, tutoring, and building community with other students. The KUEST leaders are provided a scholarship, are paid hourly to provide staffing support for the KUEST Bridge and KUEST ONE summer programs and for bi-weekly peer mentoring of KUEST Bridge and KUEST ONE students throughout the academic year. Both the IHAWKe Ambassadors and KUEST Leaders meet every other week to provide feedback to the IHAWKe Director and Program Coordinator thus providing continuous input, and a platform to seek their input/assessment/critique when special situations and needs arise.

In August 2022, IHAWKe hosted its first Student Leadership Retreat. Students serving as IHAWKe Ambassadors, KUEST Leaders, on the executive boards of IHAWKe student organizations (e.g., NSBE, SHPE, SWE), multicultural scholars, and general IHAWKe students were invited to attend. In total, 54 students participated in the two-day leadership retreat. The retreat programming consisted of team-building activities, leadership training, networking, and planning for the academic year. The planning was focused around what the different ambassadors/leaders/student organizations/students needed to thrive in their roles, and how IHAWKe could support them. Results from the School-wide climate survey were presented, and the group collectively discussed strategies to address identified issues, including being intentional about increasing active membership in the student groups. The Student Leadership Retreat will be an annual event moving forward, providing a venue to continue the valuable dialogs with many of our most engaged IHAWKe students.

Throughout the academic year and summer, IHAWKe hosts numerous events. After specific events, a survey is administered to attendees for their feedback. These surveys have been administered after the Welcome Back Event that brings out hundreds of students for outreach, games, networking, food, and fun; the IHAWKe-a-thon which is a weekend-long team-based project-oriented design competition; the KUEST ONE week-long summer acclimation program for incoming first-year students; and the KUEST Bridge four-week long summer math preparedness and acclimation program for incoming first-year students. The surveys ask closed- and open-ended questions to learn what the participants enjoyed the most, what aspects we might improve, and for evaluating overall success of the events/programs.

In Fall 2021, Dr. Sutley, the AD DEIB and Director of IHAWKe, launched a DEIB committee in the School of Engineering. The committee consists of three undergraduate students, three graduate students, four staff members, and five faculty members. The three undergraduate students serve as representatives for the Engineering Student Council, IHAWKe, and broader student body. The three graduate students serve as representatives for the Graduate Engineering Association, the Graduate Women and Allies Network, and the broader student body. Two staff members are from different engineering departments and two are school-level academic staff. The five faculty members represent each engineering department. The group is diverse, meets monthly, and is charged with communicating and advancing DEIB goals with their respective constituents as well as providing feedback on needs and areas of improvement from the perspective of their constituents.

In January 2022, Dr. Sutley, in collaboration with the DEIB Committee and SoE Leadership, launched a school-wide Climate Survey. Different surveys were sent to undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, and faculty. Department chairs sent out the student surveys. The Associate Dean of DEIB sent out the staff and faculty surveys. The surveys remained open for four weeks. Three 'complete a survey for a brownie' events were hosted during the four weeks to boost response rates. All four surveys exceeded 35% response rates, and collectively we heard from 1,292 individuals (40.1% of the SoE). The surveys consisted of closed- and open-ended questions. The student surveys had five sections: diversity and demographics, engagement and student success, connectedness and climate, hostile behavior, and closing comments. The staff and faculty surveys also had five sections: diversity and demographics, connectedness and climate, engagement in DEIB activities, hostile behavior, and closing comments. The surveys were administered, and the results were reviewed by the DEIB committee. A report of the results was shared with the entire School and is published on the School of Engineering webpage. In addition to the survey, the DEIB committee members were each charged with conducting unstructured interviews with members of their constituent body about the climate in the School of Engineering. One-page summaries were submitted, and incorporated into the Climate Survey report. The AD DEIB presented the findings to the School's leadership, including School-level, identity- and department- specific findings. Collectively, the DEIB Committee is strategizing ways to improve culture and climate, in collaboration with SoE leadership.

During the academic year, the Dean, three associate deans (AD), and five department chairs, meet, during which the AD DEIB provides an update and receives feedback from the group on DEIB initiatives.

Feedback and lessons learned from each of these six efforts will directly inform the goals and objectives of the revised DEI plan. Documentation of these efforts can be found on the KU School of Engineering's [DEIB webpages](#). The executive summary of the climate survey report is appended here for convenience.