

Inclusive Education Department Strategic Plan

2022-2025

Overview

Beginning in Fall 2021, the Inclusive Education Department of Kennesaw State University, a unit within the Bagwell College of Education, engaged in strategic planning to examine and reassert our principles and commitments and to plot new pathways to achieving our objective of preparing professional educators equipped to support diverse learners. This endeavor was necessary in light of a country and educational landscape reshaped by pandemic conditions including the “Great Resignation” and chronic, critical understaffing in special education fields. This document represents the outcome of that valuable planning and includes the revised mission, vision, and values, along with goals for recruitment, faculty development and morale, and stakeholder engagement. Action steps for the first year are delineated and lay the foundation for the planning in years 2 (2023-2024) and 3 (2024-2025).

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Our Mission

The mission of the Inclusive Education Department is to prepare professional educators who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to educate and honor all learners by partnering with and advocating for families and communities, with an emphasis on academically, linguistically, and culturally diverse learners who have been historically marginalized within educational contexts.

Our Vision

In our pursuit to improve the lives and opportunities of individuals with exceptionalities and those from historically marginalized groups, Kennesaw State University's Inclusive Education Department forges ahead as a national leader, building the capacity of all schools to promote the educational success of every learner. The Inclusive Education Department is committed to the collaborative development of expertise in teaching, learning, and leadership through student-centered learning that is integrative and intentional. In cooperation with families, school systems, and community agencies, the department prepares teacher and school leaders to exhibit the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to facilitate high levels of learning through inclusive practices. Through an integrated research-based approach, programs are systematically created and implemented to transform teacher candidates' worldviews, thus empowering them to become teacher leaders who are life-long advocates for learners, families, and communities nationally and internationally.

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Our Core Values

- ★ **Diversity:** We value the representation of humanity's unique identities, and all that shapes and informs the essence of every individual. We, therefore, commit to developing teachers who can effectively teach children who are diverse linguistically, culturally, and in abilities, emphasizing inclusive practices.
- ★ **Inclusion:** We deliberately seek and involve people from a range of backgrounds, establishing local and global connections so that voices from various cultures, socio-economic statuses, languages, abilities, gender, and sexual orientations are affirmed and embedded in our work. We, likewise, commit to preparing teachers who use asset-based frameworks to similarly engage families and communities. Finally, we seek the development and adoption of inclusive practices at all levels, locally and globally.
- ★ **Social Justice:** In our pursuit of fairness and equitable outcomes for every member of society, we are dedicated to uplifting everyone so that no one is left out.
- ★ **Advocacy:** We fight for those who are marginalized so that they have equal access to life opportunities. Likewise, we prepare teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to affirm and fight for children and families.
- ★ **Collaboration:** We are dedicated to reaching across differences to interact in ways that allow us to achieve shared goals.
- ★ **Respect:** In all we do, in all our interactions, we demonstrate our reverence for humankind.

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Recruitment

Goal: Through deliberate, routine engagement, increase student enrollment by 10%.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Faculty	Open House development and participation	Use feedback to improve Open House as needed.	Use feedback to improve Open House as needed.
	Circulate recruitment info through current students (snowball), orchestrate email connections, look into how to start INED newsletter	Circulate and monitor success of newsletter as recruitment tool	Develop survey to determine how students select our programs
	Connect with students' principals and maintain list	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
	Distribute flyers or information at professional conferences	Continue flyer distribution	Continue flyer distribution
Chair	Open House development and participation	Use feedback to improve Open House as needed.	Use feedback to improve Open House as needed.
	Connect with principals	Use principal feedback to support PCs	(Action items TBD)
	Allocate funds for recruitment efforts	Continue funding allocation	Continue funding allocation
	Identify KSU cost, benefits, scholarships for candidates that could be used to attract candidates	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)

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Faculty Development

Goal: Strengthen the network of support for mentoring, retaining, and building leadership capacity so that teaching is continuously improved, research is increased and prominent, and service is impactful.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Chair and PCs: Develop intentionality in transition to PC/CC roles	Provide support to full-time, part-time professors in the program	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)
Faculty: Improve research productivity, quality, visibility, and impact. Remain innovative, current, and relevant in teaching. Engage in impactful service to the department, college, university, and community at large.	Engage in peer support activities in teaching and research	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
	Seek external opportunities for development (Teaching and Research)		
	Seek opportunities to engage in research with students		
	Stay abreast of university opportunities for development (i.e., CETL, SOTL, etc.)		
	Pursue writing engagement activities		

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<p>Chair: Develop a multi-level mentoring model</p> <p>Fund and Facilitate professional development</p>	<p>Continue early-career faculty mentoring program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify those interested in becoming mentors (possibly specific to teaching v. research) • Assign faculty mentors • Prepare faculty members to be mentor (e.g., PD) • Develop process/procedure to identify and assign mentors 	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)
	Allocate funding for faculty development	Continue funds allocation	Continue funds allocation
	Investigate potential writing engagement activities	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
	Provide professional development opportunities within the department (e.g., Dept. meeting)	(Action items TBD)	Action items TBD

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Faculty Morale

Goal: Maintain a positive departmental culture and climate through faculty collegiality, support, and engagement

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Faculty	<p>Establish a Culture & Climate Committee to organize and oversee events(??)</p> <p>Develop Social Events Calendar for Activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mid-semester refresher ● Birthdays ● Career milestones ● Community office hours/days (voluntary) ● Off-campus Retreat ● Team building (e.g., ropes course) ● Cash prize for Publication/career milestone ● KSU games, Braves, Falcons 	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)
Chair	Facilitate events and allocate funding	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)

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Commitment to Stakeholders

Goal: Attend to the needs of our stakeholders through the assessment of student success, development of programs, and increased involvement with districts and professional organizations

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Faculty: Service to Students Strand 1: Improve student success as measured by student feedback	Annual Orientation for new students	Implementing Student Success Initiatives (Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)	Advancing Student Success Initiatives (Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)
	Faculty survey students about needs to develop departmental student success initiatives		
	Engage students in “well-being” surveys and frequent check-ins		
	Develop lines of communication between faculty/chair/students (Brainstorm PLC models)		
Faculty: Service to Students Strand 2: New Program Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a graduate in TESOL (non-cert) • Develop an undergrad degree in special education (Cert.) 	TESOL faculty begin brainstorming and engaging with stakeholder on possible TESOL graduate degrees SPED faculty continue in the development and timeline of the Special Education Undergraduate degree	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)	(Action items will be determined at the end of previous year)

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Faculty: Engagement with External Partners Increase presence in professional organizations and establish leadership Increase relationships with districts	Evaluate all professional organizations affiliated with our disciplines and determine/increase involvement	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
	Establish relationships with district level personnel overseeing our discipline	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
	Engage with Cooperating Teachers, principals, and students through surveys/rating scales	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
	Sponsor luncheon for Cooperating Teachers, principals, students	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
	Engage with Advisory Board on relevance of our curriculum to K12 needs	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
Chair: Service to Students Facilitate and support faculty within the implementation of Student Success Initiatives	Allocate funds when applicable to support needs of SSI	Continue funds allocation and support	Continue funds allocation and support
	Support faculty in the development and pursuit of new programs		
	Develop lines of communication between faculty/chair/students (Brainstorm PLC models)	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
	Prioritize student success across meetings	Continue to prioritize student success	Continue to prioritize student success

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Chair: Engagement with External Partners Increase Partnerships by 10% Restructure and Diversify Board	Re-engagement with Advisory Board	(Action items TBD)	(Action items TBD)
	Develop a Partnership Handbook (Passive Pathways?)		
	Determine which faculty desire district work		
	Assist faculty with identifying stakeholders with needs aligning to our discipline/area		
	Build presence at professional organizations		

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