Executive Summary and Mission Statement

As the Chief Academic Officer for Rutgers, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (EVPAA) convenes the academic leads at the varied institutional units to promote policies and practices that foster inclusive excellence in undergraduate and graduate education and to ensure equitable opportunities for advanced interdisciplinary research across the university that can improve the human condition in New Jersey and throughout the world. Academic excellence and continued, impactful innovation require the wide variety of experience, expertise, insight, and knowledge that flourishes in a fully diverse, equitable, and inclusive academic environment. As the steward of Rutgers’ academic mission, the EVPAA is committed to creating a culture of inquiry and accountability in which all members of our community thrive and have a role in bringing about meaningful change.

To coordinate the development of an Equity Action Plan for the EVPAA, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Prabhas Moghe charged a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Planning Committee (DEI Committee).

Serving as members of the EVPAA’s DEI Planning Committee were eight members of EVPAA reporting units: Consuela Askew (Interim Vice President for University Libraries and University Librarian), Glenda Daniel (Business Manager), Alice Hernandez (Senior Program Coordinator), Bernadette Gailliard (Director of Racial Equity and Early Career Support), Sunita Kramer (Associate Vice President for Research and Experiential Education; Committee Co-Chair), José M. Román (Vice President for Research Administration), Henry Turner (Vice President for Academic Initiatives; Committee Co-Chair), and Bill Welsh (Associate Vice President for Access and Disability Resources).

Given that the EVPAA has been newly re-constituted by President Holloway, the DEI Planning Committee recognized that moving the strategic planning process forward successfully would require thoughtful, dedicated time spent building a firm DEI foundation for the office and its reporting units. To that end, the EVPAA DEI Planning Committee adopted a phased approach to a developing a strategic action plan. **Phase I** will unfold over two years (2021-22, 2022-23). **Phase II** will unfold over years 3-5 (2023-24, 2024-25, 2025-26). In the first phase, we have set forward a set of foundational steps that draw on the core work our reporting units and that will delineate the mission of the newly reimagined EVPAA around the purpose of inclusive academic excellence. These steps will result in a clear understanding of who we are and what we can be: of our make-up, our policies and practices, and the guiding principles that shape our engagement with the academic units at Rutgers. In the second phase, we will undertake the first steps toward change in collaboration university-wide, leveraging the EVPAA’s central convening role to create a space for realizing our collective equity goals.
Goal 1: Develop an Institutional Infrastructure to Drive Change

Establish advisory bodies to inventory EVPAA policies, procedures, and practices so as to undertake intentional planning processes that yield structures of transparency and accountability in the pursuit of a university mission anchored by inclusive academic excellence and aimed toward a more just and equitable community, at Rutgers, in New Jersey, and for the world.

Action Steps:

1. **Create** a DEI infrastructure for EVPAA office-wide: the EVPAA will create a standing DEI Council composed of EVPAA personnel. All unit leads would designate at least one member to lead DEI efforts in their unit who can meet with the DEI Council on a bi-monthly basis or as needed. EVPAA’s DEI Council would advise on the formation of standing DEI committees within large reporting units (Rutgers Global, Division of Continuing Studies, Office for Research, University Libraries, Rutgers University Press, Institute for Quantitative Biomedicine), if this infrastructure does not already exist.

2. **Assess** to establish a baseline for change: the EVPAA’s DEI Council will inventory assessment tools and data available at Rutgers, including through the Equity Audit and Institutional Research, and identify gaps and opportunities in gathering data relevant to equity planning. DEI Council to meet bi-monthly with unit DEI leads to discuss assessment tools and development activities relevant to their units that are aimed specifically at fostering an inclusive and equitable climate, in preparation for Phase 2.

Goal 2: Build the Capacity of Leaders to Create Inclusive Climates

Integrate increased and expanded DEI education and training programs for EVPAA leadership and staff to promote better understanding of the causes and effects of bias and discrimination in higher education, as well as of the effective means for addressing them through structural change, policies, public address, and direct action.

Action Steps:

1. **Train** for capacity: EVPAA DEI Council to make an inventory of professional development activities and training programs available at Rutgers, including with and at the office of University Equity and Inclusion, and to determine the feasibility of a department-wide training program that can include high-level administrators, unit heads, and mid-level managers as well as staff. If feasible, the EVPAA DEI Council to work with unit leads to purchase and implement an appropriate training program office-wide, track progress, and report on outcomes.

2. **Convene** for competency: EVPAA DEI Council to convene EVPAA leadership, unit heads, and mid-level managers, as applicable, in discussions focused on establishing a shared baseline understanding of DEI concepts, definitions, engagement practices, and skills to assist leaders in developing DEI competency and to plan for Phase 2.

Goal 3: Promote Inclusive Scholarship and Teaching

Support an infrastructure that fosters excellence in research, instruction, and promotion by working with CLUs, academic units, the Office for Research, the Rutgers University Foundation, and University Equity
and Inclusion to enable a broad range of scholarship that engages all aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion, across scientific, social, and humanistic disciplines.

**Action Steps:**

1. **Align** current activity: the DEI Council to inventory initiatives within EVPAA units that are designed to promote DEI in research, instruction, and promotion, integrating existing reports and data from erstwhile SVPAA self-study to align their current activities in support of inclusive academic excellence. DEI Council to consult and advise reporting units as they assist with implementation of existing and new university-wide initiatives in partnership with CLUs, University Equity and Inclusion, the Office for Research, the Rutgers University Foundation, Rutgers Federal Relations, and other relevant offices to support inclusive scholarship (e.g. Research Council Awards, REACH initiative, public and private intelligence on funding opportunities, seed funding and research incubation programs, faculty advancement, webinars, workshops).

2. **Develop policy** around tenure and promotion: work, through appropriate coordination with leadership of academic units, to design and implement policies and practices for fostering, strengthening, assessing, and promoting DEI-related scholarship and teaching, including in collaborative research and publicly-engaged and community-engaged scholarship and in scholarship throughout the humanities, social sciences, STEM, and biomedical fields.

**Goal 4: Recruit, Retain, and Develop a Diverse Community**

Generate a Rutgers staff and faculty that reflects the rich diversity of New Jersey by creating the necessary infrastructure that supports hiring from underrepresented groups along with providing opportunities for career advancement, both within EVPAA and in coordination with Chancellor-led efforts to diversify the faculty community.

**Action Steps:**

1. **Assess** our diversity: DEI Council to work with reporting units as they assess their organizational composition from the point of view of diversity of background and experience, focusing on obstacles and patterns in past and current hiring, promotion, and retention practices within the unit.

2. **Map** paths toward a more inclusive future: DEI Council to collect best practices within EVPAA, at Rutgers, and among peers toward developing a diverse faculty and staff in consultation with EVPAA reporting units and with other university-wide units (e.g. UHR, OULR, UEI, CLU leadership). DEI Council in turn to provide guidance to reporting units on best practices that successfully incorporate DEI in the recruitment, retention, and development of a richly diverse faculty and staff, that promote a thriving environment for student success, and that strengthen innovative inclusive excellence in all areas of study at the university.