Pratt School of Engineering- Diversity and Inclusion Plan
Executive Summary

The strategic plan for diversity and inclusion is intended to serve as a guide for the Pratt School of Engineering to outline the vision, plans and coordinate strategic diversity and inclusion activities designed to benefit all Pratt faculty, students, and staff. We are dedicated to solidifying Pratt’s commitment to uphold and reinforce the values of diversity, inclusion, and a vibrant, engaged community. Empowered by the advocacy of our university and school leadership, it is imperative that these efforts be integral to our overarching goals as an engineering school to be a model of excellence and innovation among our esteemed peer institutions.

Our commitment to uphold the ideals of diversity and inclusion is founded on valid arguments and rationale related to promoting equality and fairness and underscored by the understanding that increasing cultural diversity will enhance our ability to innovate and solve complex problems, advance scholarship, prepare our students to be leaders in the engineering workforce, and create a vibrant culture and environment in which all constituents of the Pratt community are respected and valued as fully contributing members.

Through a comprehensive process which included listening sessions, discussions amongst stakeholders representing various groups within the Pratt community, analysis of demographic and cultural climate survey data as well as reviewing best practices from peer institutions and successful diversity and inclusion initiatives, the Pratt Diversity and Inclusion Committee identified six strategic priority areas on which to focus for the development of targeted recommendations to enhance Pratt’s diversity and inclusion efforts. These strategic priorities areas are:

1. Accountability, Rewards, and Recognition
2. Building an Inclusive community
3. Identifying and Strengthening New and Existing Partnerships- on and off Campus.
4. Awareness, Training, and Professional Development
5. Hiring, Recruitment and Admissions Practices
6. Mentoring

As the Pratt School of Engineering continues to pursue excellence in diversity and inclusion, we plan to take a holistic, nuanced approach that recognizes the importance of diverse representation and demographics across the entire Pratt community and places an equally high value on fostering a supportive climate and vibrant community in which differences are respected, valued, and fully embraced. Impactful and effective implementation of the committee’s recommendations will require collaboration and support from Pratt students, staff, faculty, and administrators at all levels. Thus, it is critical that each unit and department within Pratt be actively engaged and partner with the Pratt Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Feedback and suggestions from the broader community are welcome to continue to refine and implement these initiatives inspired by the goal of fostering an environment where the best minds in engineering can thrive.
Strategic Priority 1. Accountability, Rewards, and Recognition

Recommendations:

1. Each Pratt department/unit should submit an annual diversity and inclusion progress report. These reports should be published on the Pratt website. Data for each report will be drafted by Pratt’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion and reviewed by a departmental/unit planning committee in consultation with the chair. Proposed action items should be presented at one or more faculty meetings to obtain feedback and build consensus within the department/unit.

2. Faculty mentors/advisors should develop and submit annual progress reports for graduate students using a standardized format, which also allows for customization at the department level.

3. Faculty and staff performance evaluations should include a section highlighting activities related to mentorship, outreach activities, and diversity and inclusion.

4. A “service and/or “mentoring” criterion should be considered as part Faculty tenure process; assessments should include efforts to promote diversity and inclusion.

5. A feedback mechanism should be implemented to ensure that best practices regarding faculty/staff recruitment are being followed and that a diverse pool of candidates are identified before candidates are invited to campus for formal interviews.

6. Feedback mechanisms should be implemented to ensure graduate student recruitment reflects best practices and that a diverse pool of candidates have been identified before the onset of interviews.

7. Undergraduate and graduate student participation in Diversity and Inclusion programming should be incentivized. For instance, participation in D&I activities could be rewarded by distributing "points" culminating in various prizes such as DPAC tickets, etc.

8. A workshop on relevant issues regarding diversity and inclusion should be coordinated annually to enable graduate students to obtain RCR credit or partial credit for participation.

9. Awards should be given on an annual basis to recognize student, faculty, and staff members who set inspirational examples of making Pratt a more diverse and inclusive community. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee should also identify faculty, students, and staff to nominate for existing awards at the School and University level.

Strategic Priority 2. Building an Inclusive Community

Recommendations:

1. A stronger diversity and inclusion focus should be integrated into graduate and undergraduate E-social events.

2. Each department/unit should host or co-sponsor at least one annual seminar featuring a topic related to diversity and inclusion.

3. Departments should be encouraged to host annual off-campus retreats and research showcase events as well as other departmental-wide activities (informal picnics, socials, etc.).
4. A component of sensitivity training should be included into the undergraduate and graduate curriculum at regular intervals. For instance, a 15 minute “connecting across cultures” activity could be incorporated into specific engineering courses at undergraduate and graduate levels or offered at the conclusion of seminars.

5. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion should co-host at least two seminars per year to highlight speakers from under-represented backgrounds or featuring topics that pertain to innovations in advancing diversity and inclusion.

6. The Pratt School of Engineering should work towards creating a culture and infrastructure that allows staff to participate in diversity and inclusion efforts as well as social events.

7. More women and URMs should be placed in leadership roles in Pratt.

8. In coordination with the Engineering Staff Council and staff sub-committee, a welcome person and/or committee should be designated to facilitate orientation of all new employees.

**Strategic Priority 3. Identify New and Strengthen Existing Partnerships- On and Off Campus**

**Recommendations:**

1. Outreach opportunities at local Durham Schools should be identified and regularly advertised.

2. Pratt should become a strategic partner with existing programs at Duke as well as NC A&T and other North Carolina HBCUs by co-sponsoring events and/or pursuing joint funding opportunities.

3. Funding should be pursued to reinstate a formal REU program to strengthen the pipeline of URM students gaining research experience and exposure to Duke and Pratt.

**Strategic Priority 4. Awareness, Training, and Professional Development**

**Recommendations:**

1. Diversity and Inclusion training should be integrated into the undergraduate and graduate curricula. For instance, a cultural competency/diversity awareness module could be incorporated into a required Freshman level course as well as by providing Responsible Conduct in Research workshops for graduate students.

2. Annual workshops should be organized for faculty and staff to facilitate discussion regarding issues related to diversity and inclusion including implicit bias training, cultural sensitivity, having difficult conversations, etc.

3. Mechanisms should be instituted to ensure that staff are kept updated and encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities.

4. A Pratt wide professional development initiative should be implemented to promote and increase staff awareness of existing departmental funds available for these professional development opportunities.
Strategic Priority 5. Hiring, Recruiting, and Admissions Practices

Recommendations:

1. Explore funding and/or sponsorship opportunities to create an early-start program for underrepresented undergraduate and/or graduate students that have been admitted to Pratt to provide students with opportunities to strengthen connections and form academic and social networks before the academic year begins.

2. The graduate school and fellowship application workshops should be expanded to target URM and female undergraduate students from key engineering programs including HBCUs and MSIs. These efforts will help diversify the application pool and enhance the recruitment of students from diverse backgrounds into Pratt’s graduate programs.

3. Female and URM faculty should be proactively invited to give seminars.

4. Initiatives should be developed to identify and invite URM and female faculty from other institutions to join Pratt during sabbatical leave.

5. Female and URM faculty candidates should be actively invited to apply for all positions especially those at the junior level rank. In addition, an initiative to allow promising postdocs or fellows to transition to tenure track faculty positions should be incorporated.

6. Relationships should be developed with potential diverse candidates early on with parallel databases curated to enable tracking progress of prospective candidates throughout their career.

7. Pratt’s hiring process should be made more transparent. All hiring committees should be held accountable for giving serious consideration to all candidates, including those from diverse backgrounds.

8. An interdepartmental admissions committee should be created to review PhD applications to ensure that all applicants receive thorough consideration for entry into Pratt’s graduate programs.

Strategic Priority 6. Mentoring

Recommendations:

1. Mentoring components should be incorporated into performance evaluation for faculty and staff that interact with students or who supervise other staff.

2. Track-record on mentoring/service should be included as part of review for tenure and promotion.

3. A comprehensive mentoring program should be implemented including the development of mentoring training that can be adapted to students, faculty, and staff participants.

4. All new faculty should undergo mentor training based on the “Entering Mentoring” curriculum available through the National Research Mentoring Network during orientation/onboarding.