FOSTERING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY AT MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY:

IT TAKES GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Review diversity & inclusivity

Maastricht University

2018-2023

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Preface

This report presents the results of a six-month process of observation, analysis, deliberation, and evaluation on the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) policy and practices of Maastricht University.

It has been a remarkable experience. The process started with a laudably open and reflective attitude of the Board of the University, installing this committee and asking us to review the previous five years of D&I work in Maastricht University and to advise on possible future steps. The process then continued with the excellent support of the D&I Office, that not only demonstrated a deep commitment to the cause of D&I, but also a thorough understanding of all relevant D&I aspects. The process became particularly insightful because the members of the committee exemplified a wide spectrum of expertise and knowledge on D&I (and I do not include myself in this characterization), leading to inspiring and insightful conversations with a broad range of staff and students.

The conclusion of the committee is twofold. On the one hand, much good is already happening on D&I in Maastricht University. On the other hand, the current situation of how members of the university community—students and staff—experience D&I still does leave much to wish for.

For me personally, this has been a particularly insightful and rather painful learning experience. After more than 30 years of working at Maastricht University, my view of the university's social cohesion, the inclusivity and the generally welcoming atmosphere proved too rosy a picture. A clear case of 'colour blindness.' I still do not doubt the good intentions of (almost) all community members. But there is more systemic discrimination and unsafety in this university than I realized, resulting in too many people not feeling belonging to this community.

The good news is, though, that the committee saw many instances of superb work by the D&I Office, many promising D&I policies by the university leadership, many achievements during the previous years and many possibilities to strengthen the structural grounding of all D&I work more widely in the faculties and units of Maastricht University. So, we conclude that Maastricht University is well on track towards becoming the divers and inclusive community that it wants to be, but also that it is not there yet.

Prof. dr. Wiebe Bijker, chair of the review committee

Management summary

Background to the Review and UM Diversity and Inclusivity Strategy

Maastricht University (UM) is marking the 5-year anniversary of its Diversity & Inclusivity (D&I) strategy in 2023. To assess past achievements and plan for the future, the Executive Board (EB) has enlisted an independent committee to prepare a review report that includes recommendations.

The review process entailed an in-depth analysis of the self-assessment report produced by the D&I Office. This comprehensive report provided valuable insights into the historical background, core focus areas, conducted activities, faced challenges, and notable achievements of UM's D&I initiatives over the last five years. In June 2023, during the site visit, the committee conducted interviews with a diverse range of UM stakeholders. Additionally, the committee engaged in several online meetings with employees and other members of the community.

In 2018, UM appointed its first Program Manager for D&I, also known as the Diversity Officer (DO), within the HR department. Subsequently, in 2020, the D&I Office was established, encompassing various roles and responsibilities. The D&I Office has outlined two primary objectives in its self-assessment: to diversify the UM employee and student population and to create an inclusive atmosphere in which all talents and competencies can be mobilized for the well-being of the organization itself. As explained in the self-assessment report, UM intentionally avoids creating programs exclusively tailored to specific 'target groups.' Instead, the strategy focuses on addressing four core areas that affect minoritized groups: 1) attracting and retaining talent; 2) fostering cultural change; 3) strengthening diversity competences; and 4) developing life-phase and family-friendly HR policies.

General conclusion

The committee's conclusion is twofold. On the one hand, UM has made commendable progress in the realm of D&I. The committee commends the D&I Office for its unwavering commitment and collaborative spirit, as well as its efforts in sharing knowledge. The D&I Office has efficiently launched a diverse array of initiatives within UM, demonstrating adaptability and dynamism in its approach.

However, on the other hand, there is still significant room for improvement in how members of the university community, including students and staff, perceive and experience D&I initiatives. Multiple interviewees, both students and staff members, expressed feelings of exclusion. Besides these individual experiences of exclusion, the committee has observed that UM does not adequately address the needs of specific groups.

Overall, the committee believes it is essential to recognize that certain critical elements of the university's D&I objectives have not been fully achieved. Here is a summary of the most important findings and recommendations put forth by the committee.

Main findings and recommendations

The committee observed that the four core areas have served as a useful framework for developing various initiatives in a relatively short time frame. The committee acknowledges the value of this broad and flexible strategy. However, it also notes a downside to this flexibility. It has the impression that the Executive Board delegates the responsibility for resolving certain issues to the D&I Office, and faculty commitment often depends on individual deans due to lack of clear direction and support. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Executive Board provide clearer guidance and support to ensure consistent commitment and the implementation of D&I initiatives at the faculty level.

The committee found that within senior management, while well-intentioned, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the mechanisms of privilege and exclusion of individuals who do and do not meet the established norms. As visible support from decision-makers is vital for driving lasting change, it is important for staff members in leadership positions to cultivate and enhance their D&I literacy while adopting an inclusive leadership style. The committee advises UM to actively support the D&I Office in taking the lead in these training programs that incorporate D&I competencies. Furthermore, given that D&I competencies are desirable for all UM staff, the committee recommends their integration into both HR policies and staff professional development. Moreover, the committee emphasizes the importance of increasing the representation of people of color in leadership roles at Maastricht University, urging proactive measures to address this issue.

The D&I Office supports UM staff and student networks fostering community. The committee recognizes and values the significance of these networks and communities and recommends (pro)actively engaging with and providing support to these networks to foster dialogue and explore opportunities for mutual reinforcement between the D&I Office and the networks. Clear expectations and boundaries should be set to ensure fruitful partnerships.

During the site visit, several students and staff members expressed concerns about the absence of a safe space within the organization for discussing experiences of exclusion. The committee noted that confidential advisors are still in the process of developing their expertise, leading individuals to turn to the D&I Office to address their complaints. To address this issue, the committee recommends ensuring that counselors are adequately trained to effectively assist victims of discrimination and other forms of (systemic) exclusion. Additionally, the committee suggests exploring alternative support options. It has come to the committee's attention that students and staff from minoritized groups often provide a listening ear to those who have experienced exclusion. The committee advises collaborating with these individuals to establish compensated consultation hours where people can seek support in cases of (systemic) exclusion.

The self-assessment report highlights that communication was initially undervalued in the first two years due to limited expertise and resources. However, it has now become evident that communication must be seamlessly integrated into all phases of D&I initiatives. The committee supports this perspective and recommends that the D&I Office develop a comprehensive strategy for disseminating the D&I message. To reach a broader audience, the committee advises utilizing not only the D&I Office's existing channels such as social media and

newsletters, but also university-wide platforms, and incorporating D&I expertise into the central communication department. Furthermore, the committee advises considering the appointment of a dedicated D&I communication advisor in the UM communication office.

The committee strongly recommends incorporating 'equity' as a vital third component in the D&I policy. When combined with diversity and inclusion, equity offers a complementary and essential perspective to ensure fairness within the policy framework. It also serves as a mechanism to hold the organization accountable. Unlike 'equality,' which emphasizes equal rights and treatment for all, 'equity' acknowledges diverse needs and circumstances. It addresses existing inequalities and strives for fairness and equitable outcomes, even if it requires providing different forms of support to individuals.

The committee believes the four focus areas remain relevant and can guide the refinement of specific objectives. With the office's professional growth and the identification of needs, it's time for targeted implementation to achieve precise goals. To develop these objectives further, it's crucial to identify areas of friction. Therefore, the committee recommends conducting a comprehensive assessment of challenging areas and determining necessary actions. In the next policy period, UM should establish specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives.

The committee recommends adopting a systematic, iterative approach for effective D&I policy planning, execution, and evaluation. It has observed that many D&I actions tend to be symbolic, while essential interventions in HR practices or work-life arrangements are often overlooked or inconsistently applied. Therefore, the committee suggests implementing an intervention cycle, covering problem analysis, diagnosis, planning, evaluation, and reporting, followed by reorientation. This structured approach will improve the implementation of D&I policies and practices, fostering continuous improvement and meaningful impact.

The committee's scope extended beyond evaluating the D&I office; it assessed the university's D&I policy as a whole. To foster a community where everyone actively contributes to D&I, responsibility falls on both central and decentralized leadership. Visible leadership, especially at the highest levels, is vital for widespread change. D&I should be a core UM value integrated into all leadership practices. Therefore, the committee recommends formalizing D&I skills and professional development as assessment criteria for all UM staff in leadership roles. This approach ensures progress towards a UM community where everyone actively supports D&I and is accountable—and thus feels welcome to personally develop, support the community, and contribute to better teaching and research.

The committee advises the D&I Office to focus on its dual role as both an expert agency and an incubator of initiatives. Handing over the implementation of these initiatives should be a fundamental part of the D&I Office's workflow, done in collaboration with relevant departments, which should allocate resources for further implementation. To achieve this, it is crucial to set clear expectations from the beginning: the D&I Office primarily advises on new initiatives' development, while their structural implementation or coordination should be handled elsewhere. Additionally, granting the D&I Office a clear mandate for D&I policy development, coordination, and monitoring within UM is crucial.

The committee finds the current staff size (3.2 FTE) insufficient for handling the workload of the D&I Office. Additional human resources are necessary for tasks like communication, maintaining connections, in-house D&I literacy training, and staying updated on evolving D&I practices.

The Advisory Council (AC) for D&I, consisting of representatives from all faculties and some service centers, plays a crucial advisory role for the D&I Office. Members are selected based on their expertise and organizational positions. The committee has made several suggestions for changes in the AC composition, with the most important being the necessity of ensuring a visibly diverse AC to incorporate varied backgrounds and perspectives.

1. Introduction

2.1 Aim of the review

Maastricht University's Diversity & Inclusivity (D&I) strategy and efforts celebrate their 5-year anniversary in 2023 - a moment to look back and to look ahead. For this purpose, the Executive Board (EB) has asked an independent committee to write a review report including recommendations on how to take this policy area further at Maastricht University (UM) in the coming years.

The committee was requested to answer four central questions:

1. Have the core objectives as articulated in the D&I policy been achieved? What does the committee see as impeding and promoting factors?
2. Is the D&I policy sufficiently embedded within faculties and units at different levels and within the various sections? What does the committee observe in terms of visibility and ownership within faculties, programs and institutes, plans and policies (both among administrators, WP, OBP and students).
3. Should the policy be continued with the currently formulated objectives and in what form can this best be done? What support and form of organization is desirable from the point of view of effectiveness and support?
4. How can the structural embedding of the D&I Office within UM best be organized, both at the central level (within Maastricht University Office) and at the decentralized level (faculties and service centres)?

2.2 The committee

The UM Executive Board appointed the following members of the committee:

-   Prof. Dr. Wiebe Bijker (chair), Maastricht University (emeritus)
-   Dr. Marloes van Engen, Radboud University, associate professor Strategic HRM, Institute for Management Research, Radboud University
-   Hillmann Batuo, Maastricht University, medical student
-   Tibisay Sankatsing Nava, Mondriaan Fund, PhD candidate Royal Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies
-   Mary Tupan, ECHO, Center for Diversity Policy, Executive Director

The Executive Board of UM appointed Esther Poort of De Onderzoekerij as the committee secretary. All members of the committee signed a declaration form stating no conflict of interest and ensuring impartiality and confidentiality.

2.3 Procedures followed by the committee

The D&I Office wrote a self-assessment report providing an overview of the history of D&I at UM including the strategic development and institutional embedding of D&I efforts in the past 5 years. It also described the four core areas of UM's D&I policy and highlighted activities,

challenges and accomplishments of the past 5 years. The final chapter of the self-evaluation report reviewed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and reflected on lessons learned and points for attention for the future shaping of the D&I (policy) area within UM.

The committee members prepared the assessment by analysing the self-assessment report and the appendices provided by UM. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix A. The committee members individually formulated their preliminary findings and prepared several questions for during the site visit. The secretary made an overview of these preliminary findings and questions and sent these to the committee members. On June 19, 2023, the committee had a preparatory meeting. In this meeting, the committee discussed the preliminary findings and discussed the most important topics they wanted to address during the site visit.

The Executive Board invited a broad range of individuals and groups from the organization to meet with the review committee. These interviews took place on 20 and 21 June 2023 (see Appendix B). Additionally, the committee had two online meetings with several employees (a postdoc, a PhD candidate and an associate professor). In addition to these invitees and scheduled moments, the Executive Board gave the opportunity to anyone from the UM community to share their experiences, insights and vision related to UM's D&I policy during two walk-in moments. Anyone interested to join one of these moments could sign up for these walk-in moments. One person made use of this opportunity.

The committee utilized the last part of the site visit to discuss the findings and to deliberate on the conclusions and recommendations. In addition, the committee scheduled an online meeting to further discuss these. Based on these discussions and the written contributions from committee members, the secretary wrote a first draft of the report. This draft report was circulated to the committee for all members to comment on and provide input on specific sections. Subsequently, the draft report was presented to the D&I Office for factual corrections and comments. Subsequently, the report was presented to the Executive Board of UM.

2.4 Clarification of the approach of the committee

The committee would like to offer further clarification on its approach to the task at hand. Firstly, the committee not only addressed the four key questions but also took the liberty to provide advice on matters indirectly related to the questions. Secondly, the committee focused on evaluating and offering advice regarding both the university's diversity policy in general and the specific activities of the D&I office. These aspects are complementary but not identical; the university's diversity policy should encompass a broader scope than the work of the office alone. Thirdly, the committee wishes to emphasize that it did not conduct a comprehensive assessment of the level of (social) safety and inclusion at UM.

Furthermore, the committee wishes to emphasise that the success of initiatives aimed at enhancing diversity and inclusion is closely intertwined with factors such as demographic shifts, public debates, and societal norms. These norms dictate what is considered acceptable

and desirable within the context of the institution, particularly concerning the inclusion and social well-being of LGBTQIA+ students and staff.

The understanding of these norms has evolved over the past five years, influenced by various developments, including the impact of Covid-19, the continuous influx of refugees, social movements like #Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, increasing polarization, a heightened focus on social safety, and a growing recognition of diverse gender identities.

In this changing landscape, intentions, resources, and programs that may not have been deemed critical in 2018 have gained a heightened sense of urgency. Topics such as addressing racism can no longer be avoided, and the need for monitoring social safety is more apparent than ever. Consequently, we must now actively connect diversity and inclusion to concepts of equity and social justice, both directly and indirectly.

3. Maastricht University D&I's organization and strategy

This chapter contains a brief explanation of the organization and strategy of the UM concerning diversity and inclusion. This explanation is based on the texts from the self-assessment report.

3.1 Organization

Maastricht University

Maastricht University has approximately 22,000 students and about 5,000 employees. Over 50% of UM's students and approximately 40% of UM's academic staff come from abroad, reflecting the university's strong international profile. UM is a decentralized organization. Research and Education take place in six faculties: Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Faculty of Law, School of Business and Economics, Faculty of Science and Engineering, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience. Whereas the supporting services are divided into the University Library, Student Services, Facility Services and ICTS and Finance. The central administration, Maastricht University Office, consists of Legal Affairs, Academic Affairs, Human Resources Management, Marketing & Communication, Corporate Information Office and Development/Alumni Affairs.

Diversity at the CORE, Diversity Officer (DO) and D&I Office

As part of the revision and revitalization of the Human Resource Management (HRM) policy "Create Your Future" by the UM HR department in 2017, a first attempt was made to explore the topic of diversity at the UM in a working group. The efforts of this working group resulted in the preliminary advice 'Diversity at the CORE' to the UM Executive Board (EB) on the development and realization of UM-wide diversity policies, which considered the concept of diversity beyond its traditional confines of age, gender and nationality. In this advice, diversity within the UM community was deemed essential for a thriving working and learning environment that would benefit all members. As a result, the EB allocated temporary financial support (2018- 2020) for the further development and realization of a D&I strategy at UM.

In 2018, UM appointed her first programme manager D&I, or Diversity Officer (DO), as a member of the HRM department. The task of the DO was to develop a more comprehensive strategy to address D&I in the organization, relating to staff and students. The first year, the DO met with different stakeholders within UM and members of the broader national and international higher education network to form an idea of what a D&I strategy should and could entail, where to start and what potential pitfalls are. Based on these insights, the DO wrote an evaluation of 2018/19 and a proposal for 2020-2023) that suggested the establishment of a more comprehensive D&I Office with increased fte and increased working budget for various projects. In addition, the DO suggested relocating this office from HRM to its own independent unit in Maastricht University Office (MUO). Upon EB approval, the D&I Office was established in 2020 with 3.2fte consisting of one policy director (formally the programme manager D&I) who is also fulfilling the function of DO, two policy advisors,

communication advisor/project manager and three to four student assistants who mainly support internal and external communication and events.

D&I Advisory Council

In 2018, the D&I Advisory Council (AC) was installed as a body that is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the UM Diversity policy. It is chaired by then rector magnificus and now president. The goals of the AC are to act as an ambassador for diversity both within and outside the university, to issue recommendations on diversity policy to the chair and the diversity officer, and to propose new initiatives while consulting with external experts. The AC members also aim to advise the chair as a member of the EB and the DO on prioritizing specific diversity policies. It is also responsible for bottom-up funding for grassroots ideas under the scheme of UM's D&I Grants. Additionally, the AC is responsible for monitoring the effects of policies and issuing reports on the status of diversity and inclusivity at various levels of the university. The DO acts as secretary. The D&I AC convenes four times a year for regular meetings and once for the selection of the D&I Grants.

3.2 Strategy

As described in the self-assessment, the D&I Office aims to achieve two main goals: to diversify the UM employee and student population and to create an inclusive atmosphere in which all talents and competencies can be mobilized for the well-being of the organization itself.

The self-assessment report explains that UM consciously chose not to develop programs aimed at improving the inclusion of 'target groups' but instead focused on areas that affect minoritized groups. As explained in the self-assessment report, the reason behind this choice is twofold. Firstly, UM assumes that certain areas affect multiple minoritized groups. Secondly, UM's D&I strategy strives to acknowledge intersectional experiences. Intersectionality is explained in the self-assessment as follows: '*Intersectionality is a lens that understands people's experiences of exclusion in a given context based on multiple aspects of their identities. That means that some members of our community belong to multiple minoritized groups and experience a double (or manifold) burden of exclusion. Focusing on groups separately can overlook this intersectional reality of community members, creating (policy) interventions that turn out to be ineffective at best and harmful at worst'*.

The UM D&I Strategy includes four core areas that have served as a framework to develop different actions to fulfil these two main aims of D&I policy from an intersectional approach (appendix C provides a more detailed description of these four core areas):

- *Attracting & Retaining Talent* prioritizes the recruitment and retention of a diverse group of administrative/support and academic staff as well as students.
- *Fostering Cultural Change* promotes equity and inclusivity as core values of the organization, while concurrently raises awareness of these values.
- *Strengthening Diversity Competences* across the organization depicts a critical aspect of UM's commitment to retaining staff and students with diverse backgrounds.

- *Developing Life-Phase and Family Friendly HR Policies* is aimed at creating HR policies that accommodate employees' life-phases and family needs. This aligns with the UM's commitment to sustainable employability.

These four core areas have structured the efforts of UM's D&I Policy in the past five years.

4. Review

4.1 General findings

This chapter presents the committee's findings. Before the committee addresses the four specific sub-questions, here are some general findings.

The UM-wide diversity and inclusivity policy

The committee would like to express its appreciation to the University Board for initiating this review. This demonstrates the institution's commitment to holding itself accountable and learning from the developments of the past five years. Universities that showed being effective in making their institution more diverse, equitable and inclusive, succeeded by being intentional in policy and practice in combination with a constant process of development, implementation, evaluation and adjustment of existing policies and practices. This demonstrates that institutions are aware that D&I policy does not follow a linear development.

The committee considers the main objectives regarding D&I important and in general supports the UM's overall vision of D&I. Additionally, based on the discussions held during the visit, the committee is convinced of the importance and relevance of the D&I Office in supporting the implementation of the strategic goals, as it reflects the UM's commitment to making an impact. However, this should be considered within the context of the resources provided by the university (staff and funding). Equally important is the dual responsibility the D&I Office bears: acting autonomously when deemed necessary while also fostering close collaboration with the executive board, department chairs, faculty members, and student representatives. In conversations with various groups, the committee has heard much appreciation for the strong dedication and involvement of the D&I Office, particularly valuing its willingness to collaborate and share expertise.

However, the committee also noted that the vision and goals regarding D&I have not been fully realized in crucial aspects within the university, and there are still steps to be taken. This in itself should not be seen as a discouragement since initiating institution-wide changes requires a commitment, careful consideration and a determination to persist. What should be taken into consideration is whether the D&I office and departments were given the necessary mandate and resources for effective action. The committee believes that there are promising opportunities for the university to achieve its vision by strengthening the D&I Office and implementing organizational adjustments. More detailed recommendations on how to strengthen the D&I Office will be provided in subsequent sections.

Opposing expectations and criticisms

The committee has noted that the D&I Office is facing a complex situation with opposing expectations and criticisms. On the one hand, the D&I Office is criticized for not acting quickly and radically enough. This criticism comes from various groups who believe that immediate action is needed to bring about changes and that drastic measures should be taken to promote equity and diversity, i.e. "not being woke enough". On the other hand, the D&I Office

receives criticism for being perceived as "too woke", woke then being used in a condescending tone of voice. Being woke means having an active awareness of systemic injustices and prejudices, especially those involving the treatment of minoritized individuals and communities. Arguably, this is what could also be expected from a D&I office.

To address the challenges presented by this complex situation, it is essential to strike a balance between the different expectations and criticisms and at the same time be aware of the differences in power structures. This is particularly important because this is a university—and debate and professional criticism are core elements of scientific and scholarly work, of teaching and research. Engaging in a "brave space" dialogue with various stakeholders—including those who critique the pace and intentionality of actions, as well as those concerned about being "too woke"—is advisable. Moreover, initiating conversations aimed at "embracing discomfort" is recommendable. Embracing discomfort can be described as '*inclusion involves creating and maintaining safety, engaging in dialogue and soliciting and using multiple perspectives, and treating others fairly, in the way they would like to be treated. It also requires holding space for both similarities and differences, with suitably permeable yet appropriate boundaries such that members do not have to leave valued parts of themselves outside as a condition of membership, yet can feel stability and connection to others regarding collective goals*' (p. 239, Ferdman (2017) [1].

Additionally, it is essential to highlight the achievements and successes of the D&I Office, while also initiating discussions to gain a deeper understanding of why current actions may not appear sufficiently responsive to the concerns of critics. This approach ensures that accomplishments are not overshadowed by undue criticism.

4.2 Achievement of the core objectives

Have the core objectives as articulated in the D&I policy been achieved? What does the committee see as impeding and promoting factors?

As described in Chapter 3, the UM D&I Strategy encompasses four core areas that have provided a framework for implementing various initiatives to achieve the two overarching goals of diversification and inclusion. The committee observes that the way the objectives have been formulated makes it difficult to assess whether the results have been achieved. Ideally, the goals should have been more specific, tangible, measurable, and (though subject to debate) realistic and time-bound to enable an effective evaluation of their accomplishment.

The committee recognizes the value of the broad strategy combined with the independent position of the D&I Office, enabling a flexible process for developing new D&I policies. However, this approach has also fostered different and conflicting voices within the

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[1] Ferdman, B. M. (2017). Paradoxes of inclusion: Understanding and managing the tensions of diversity and multiculturalism. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *53*(2), 235-263.

community. Drawing from the self-assessment report and interviews, the committee noted that the D&I Office has been successful in addressing D&I by putting effort into responding to the needs and opportunities within the organization. This has brought previously unnoticed themes and needs to the forefront, allowing for potential adaptations in response to societal developments.

The self-assessment report indicates that the lack of a systemic (infra) structure of monitoring and mandate within the de-centralized organizational units of Maastricht University, makes it difficult to assess the impact of the D&I activities. Consequently, the self-assessment report does not offer an analysis of the impact of D&I policy and efforts within the organization. Instead, it provides a comprehensive overview and description of the D&I Office's activities and achievements over the past five years. These activities include providing advice and recommendations through policies or task forces/working groups, coordinating projects and monitoring processes, developing specific policies or interventions, funding D&I research ideas, delivering training and workshops, supporting relevant networks within the UM community, organizing events, and ensuring D&I awareness and exposure through internal and external representation and communication.

The self-assessment report explains that this description of activities and accomplishments is not structured along the four core areas because the D&I activities often address multiple core areas simultaneously. The D&I activities have been roughly categorized into nine different categories of activities. The table below displays these categories, along with the number of projects and activities that the D&I Office has undertaken since 2018.

Overview of D&I work 2018-2023

Policy	12
Advice and coordination	33
Community support and funding opportunities	13
Data collection, monitoring and evaluation	4
Events	19
Workshops and trainings	47
Representation and networking	3
Publications	8
Communication and advocacy activities • Instagram posts • Facebook posts • D&I newsletters • LinkedIn posts • Other	 • 448 • 200 • 41 • 22 • 5

Due to the absence of concrete impact measurements, the committee cannot conclusively draw conclusions from the self-assessment regarding the achievement of the core objectives. Nevertheless, the committee has observed, from the numerous examples provided in the self-

assessment, that the D&I Office has effectively initiated a wide range of activities within UM in a flexible and dynamic manner. The D&I Office has demonstrated determination and visibility in creating informational toolkits and various supportive documents to educate and raise awareness. This observation is further substantiated by the interviews the committee conducted with both staff and students. All interviewees expressed appreciation for the support they received from the D&I Office and spoke highly of how the DO and other staff members have actively engaged. They also emphasized their value for the D&I Office and commended their expertise and willingness to assist in navigating complex practical issues.

The committee wishes to emphasize the significance of the D&I grants, as they have made a substantial contribution to achieving the core objectives. These grants have played a pivotal role in supporting research projects and activities that complement the broader institutional efforts outlined in the D&I strategy. Importantly, they have provided a means for both staff and students to address issues relevant to specific themes, communities, and contexts within UM. The grants offer an immediate avenue to foster ownership, commitment, and innovative approaches to knowledge creation and competence building.

The committee highly values these grants, as they ensure that science and education remain integral components of the efforts to transform the university into a more inclusive institution. Despite their relatively modest size, these grants hold strategic importance with the potential to evolve into more sustainable endeavors. Since 2018, a significant annual budget has been allocated to support innovative bottom-up initiatives and projects.

The self-assessment report highlights several D&I grant initiatives that have resulted in lasting changes and impacts throughout the university. The committee believes that the D&I grants have been highly successful in nurturing D&I policies from within the UM community and supporting grassroots initiatives. Furthermore, these grants have facilitated the emergence of important topics that might otherwise have gone unnoticed."

Overall, the committee recognizes the value of the broad and flexible strategy, as well as the dedication and expertise demonstrated by both the D&I Office and the Advisory Council members over the past years. The four core areas have provided a useful framework for the development of various initiatives within a relatively short time frame. It is important to note that flexibility, although valuable, also has a downside. The committee has the impression that the Executive Board delegates the responsibility for resolving certain issues to the D&I Office. Moreover, the direction and support from the Executive Board is not always clear, which means that commitment at the faculty level often relies on the knowledge and intentions of individual deans. This can result in a situation where faculty-level engagement is contingent upon the expertise and motivations of the dean. This flexible approach can thus lead to insecurity among staff members. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Executive Board provide clearer guidance and support to ensure consistent commitment and implementation of D&I initiatives at the faculty level, reducing reliance on individual deans' knowledge and intentions.

The committee observed that significant progress is still needed to establish a genuinely diverse and inclusive learning and working environment. This was clearly demonstrated through the interviews conducted during the site visit. Multiple interviewees, both students

and staff members, expressed experiencing feelings of exclusion. These experiences of exclusion have a detrimental effect on their sense of belonging and overall well-being. The interviewees shared various instances of exclusion, including:

- Micro-aggressions. Microaggressions are subtle, often unintentional acts or comments that convey negative messages towards individuals based on their marginalized identities, such as (intersections of) cultural background, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The 'micro' aspect of discrimination refers to the subtlety rather than the severity of the insult. These seemingly harmless or small acts can accumulate and harm a person's well-being. Examples shared by interviewees include being ignored or being subject of insulting jokes, and improper questions.
- Stigmatization. Stigmatization occurs when individuals or groups are unfairly assigned stereotypes, labels, or social judgments based on specific characteristics or identities. The interviewees shared instances where they were subjected to stereotypes related to their cultural background, neurotypicality, or sexual orientation.
- Othering. Othering refers to the process of viewing or treating individuals or groups as fundamentally different or "other" from oneself or the dominant social group. It involves creating a sense of separateness, alienation, or marginalization based on characteristics or identities. Some interviewees shared their experiences of feeling marginalized, treated as outsiders, and having their opinions, norms, cultures, and experiences disregarded.
- Silencing. Silencing refers to the act of suppressing or diminishing the voices, perspectives, or experiences of individuals or groups. It involves creating an environment where their opinions, concerns, or identities are intentionally or unintentionally ignored, dismissed, or invalidated. The interviewees shared various instances where they felt discouraged from raising concerns due to the fear of damaging their reputation or being labeled as troublemakers.

Interviewees expressed a lack of support within UM regarding the various forms of discrimination and more systemic ways of exclusion they encounter, feeling that their concerns about exclusion are not taken seriously. They also highlighted the difficulty in openly discussing the meaning of these experiences and identifying appropriate sources of support. This is due to the potential negative perception of feeling victimized.

Apart from these individual experiences of exclusion, the committee has observed that the UM lacks adequate attention to the needs of specific groups:

- Staff members with disabilities. Students with disabilities have access to support and guidance from the Disability Support office regarding their needs. However, there is no specific support system available within the UM for staff members with disabilities to address their questions and needs. Additionally, there seems to be no general policy in place regarding staff members with disabilities, resulting in individuals being dependent on the willingness and support of their manager and colleagues. The committee noted that UM has academics with expertise on this topic who are eager to share their knowledge.
- Students and staff members facing mental health challenges due to feelings of exclusion. The committee learned of instances where staff members did not receive

the necessary support to address their mental health challenges within the workplace. Furthermore, the committee has the impression that support staff, including psychologists and academic advisors, may not always possess the complete competencies required to effectively address mental issues related to D&I.

- Students and staff members of color. The committee was presented with different examples where interviewees of color experienced micro-aggressions, racism, silencing, and othering by the UM community. These interviewees feel isolated and reported that there is no path for dedicated, qualified support for the specific challenges that people of color experience at UM.

- International students and international staff members. The committee was made aware of multiple cases where international staff members and students expressed feeling neglected in terms of their specific needs. This includes the lack of transparent information about the Dutch context and regulations, such as basic provisions to which everyone is entitled. This predominantly impacted community members whose cultural background significantly diverged from that of the Dutch. The committee was presented with examples of ethnic bias in the facilitation of work-life balance, which stems from normative views on work and care in the Netherlands and fails to meet the needs of UM employees with different cultural backgrounds.

- Staff members and students from LHBTQIA+ groups. The committee has been presented with an illustrative case of how a general policy has been insufficiently thought out in terms of its impact on LHBYQIA+ groups. The committee understood that the information disseminated to prevent sexual harassment had, in fact, caused individuals within the LGBTQIA+ community to feel a diminished sense of safety.

The committee wishes to emphasize that these findings are based on conversations with only a limited part of the entire UM community. This implies that the list is not exhaustive and there are likely other individuals and communities with similar experiences who also need the acknowledgement and sufficient support.

4.3 Embeddedness within faculties and units

Is the D&I policy sufficiently embedded within faculties and units at different levels and within the various sections? What does the committee observe in terms of visibility and ownership within faculties, programs and institutes, plans and policies (both among administrators, WP, OBP and students).

Staff members in leadership positions

The committee conducted interviews with various groups of staff members in leadership positions, revealing that the D&I Office has made significant progress, but further actions are

necessary. Many of these individuals publicly support D&I efforts at the university. However, as expected, the committee observed variations among individuals. Some displayed (covert) resistance and not everyone is equally adept at handling discomfort. Additionally, certain staff members exhibited a willingness to learn and grow, while others displayed a less prominent learning attitude. Furthermore, responses to initiatives varied, with some reacting defensively while others took a more proactive stance.

The committee observed that while the senior leaders generally have good intentions, many lack comprehensive knowledge regarding social justice and equity frameworks related to diversity and inclusion challenges and lack an understanding of the challenges faced by racialized- and minoritized groups in general. This so-called 'color blindness'[2] results in a lack of understanding regarding the mechanisms of privilege and exclusion of individuals who do and do not belong to the established norm. This often leads to generic measures, offering one approach or policy for all. Therefore, the committee is of the opinion that relying solely on good intentions is not sufficient to adequately safeguard and champion D&I in the organization.

According to the committee, acknowledging the presence of bias, discrimination and systemic mechanisms of exclusion, even by well-intentioned individuals, is essential for driving lasting change. As visible support from decision-makers is vital, senior leaders must recognize the existence of biases and systemic inequalities. It is crucial for staff members in leadership positions to cultivate and enhance their D&I literacy while adopting an inclusive leadership style. Such a leadership style is characterized by self-reflection, active listening, openness to change when necessary, and a focus on meeting the expectations and needs of the entire community[3]. Inclusive leadership also encompasses the ability to engage in discussions about complex issues like exclusionary mechanisms[4].

Based on the self-assessment and interviews, the committee gathered that enhancing D&I literacy and expertise among leaders has been a significant focus for the D&I Office over the past five years. As part of this effort, the UM Taskforce Professional Leadership Development, responsible for the UM Leadership Academy since 2022, includes representation from the D&I Office. The Leadership Academy offers training programs to help UM employees grow in their role as leaders within UM. These training programs incorporate D&I competencies. Additionally, the D&I Office provides a conversation-starter kit to facilitate Moving Conversations between leaders and their teams.

The committee believes that such initiatives are vital components of the D&I Office's work. The knowledge and expertise within the D&I Office are particularly valuable at a time when the need for such knowledge and expertise is increasingly recognized. Therefore, the committee advises UM to actively support the D&I Office in taking the lead in these training

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[2] See also: https://www.tlcenter.nl/kaders/kleurenbewust-kleurenblind-kader/
[3] Korkmaz, A. V., Van Engen, M. L., Knappert, L., & Schalk, R. (2022). About and beyond leading uniqueness and belongingness: A systematic review of inclusive leadership research. Human Resource Management Review, 32(4), 100894.
[4] Ferdman, B. M. (2017). Paradoxes of Inclusion: Understanding and Managing the Tensions of Diversity and Multiculturalism. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 53(2), 235–263.

programs. Investing in the D&I Office's expertise, instead of relying on external parties, not only demonstrates cost-consciousness but also ensures that the training is delivered by individuals who comprehend the unique aspects of UM (such as its international setting and the Problem-Based Learning approach) and the particularities of D&I. The committee also believes that there is a need for proactive guidance on participation from various faculties. The committee has the impression that participation currently depends primarily on the extent to which the dean and individual staff members consider it important, leading to a situation where efforts often stay confined to "preaching to the choir". The committee recommends establishing well-defined goals and expectations for participation in these training sessions and effectively communicating them to all stakeholders.

The committee advises taking this a step further because D&I competencies are desired for all UM staff. The committee proposes integrating these competencies into both HR policy and staff professional development. This integration is crucial at all levels of the organization. Additionally, the committee advises leaders at the central, faculty, and departmental levels to play a leading role in continuously and systematically enhancing their own and their employees' D&I competencies.

Last but not least, it is crucial to enhance the representation of individuals from minority groups in leadership positions at Maastricht University. Specifically, the underrepresentation of people of color in leadership roles is a pressing concern that requires action. To truly embody inclusivity, the university must not only talk about it but also proactively take tangible steps to promote the representation of people of color in leadership positions (in other words: walk the talk).[5]

Coordination and implementation of initiatives

The self-assessment report highlights a key question regarding the role of the D&I Office: whether it should primarily function as a central expertise office or also take on the responsibility of coordinating policy implementation at the centralized and decentralized level. As explained in the self-assessment report, the D&I Office has been fulfilling both roles. Both roles are crucial, However, it has become evident that the second role necessitates a significantly larger allocation of personnel and resources, as well as better access to the de-central structures. Consequently, the D&I Office often finds itself under pressure, rushing to address various matters, and struggling to meet the required or self-imposed workload and output.

Based on the interviews and the self-assessment report, another weakness identified by the committee is the inadequate follow-up on new initiatives. For example, the self-assessment report indicates that '*The lack of mandate in the de-central structures coupled with an assumed implementation responsibility at D&I Office has left many opportunities unused. Many ideas (e.g. Actions Against Racism, gender inclusive language, etc) drown in the conundrum of university policies and actions to the frustration of the D&I Office and more importantly to the frustration of marginalized groups who expect important D&I issues to be effectively addressed*

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[5] Thunnissen, M., van Arensbergen, P., & van den Brink, M. (2021). Talent Management in academia. In The Routledge companion to talent management (pp. 215-226). Routledge.

by their unit'. Other examples of projects lacking proper follow-up are the family-friendly university certificate trajectory and the taskforce Barrier-free Studying and Working at UM. Although these initiatives were initially received with enthusiasm, it has been challenging to maintain these activities due to the limited resources and time available within the D&I Office. The committee stresses the significance of adopting a structural approach to convert inherently temporary projects into more sustainable programs. Furthermore, it is vital to clearly determine the responsibility for implementation (for example D&I or HRM) and whether it should be carried out at a central or local level.

The committee would like to highlight that there are also projects within the organization that have successfully obtained a structural position. A notable example is the support and coordination provided by the D&I Office in relation to sexual safety at UM. This initiative began with the organization of two conferences, during which the D&I Office took charge of coordinating various activities, including two brainstorming sessions to gather input for the second conference. It became evident that additional expertise and resources were necessary to address this crucial issue adequately. Consequently, in 2023, the Sexual Safety Program team was established, and a Sexual Safety Programme Manager was appointed. The D&I Office will still be involved as advisor in the future of sexual safety efforts at UM.

While the committee regards such structural adaptations as positive developments, it is important to recognize that the presence of infrastructure alone does not automatically prevent individual persons to experience forms of unsafety and insecurity. For those experiences not to happen anymore, structural changes should be accompanied by changes in power relations and in the organizational culture. Maastricht University has, also on this point, still to go that extra mile. The committee heard, for example, of instances of insecurity stemming from differences in opinions and political beliefs, that led to discomfort and inequality due to unequal power relations.

Networks and communities

The D&I Office provides support to UM staff and student networks that aim to foster a sense of community within the UM. These networks organize events, activities, and projects that bring people together. The self-assessment report emphasizes the significance of these student and staff networks in promoting community involvement. They not only create spaces for understanding and exchange among individuals from marginalized groups but also possess and provide valuable insights into the needs and expectations when formulating and implementing D&I policies. According to the self-assessment report, the D&I Office recognizes the immense value of these networks, as they serve as invaluable sources of peer support, information, and input for policy advisors when developing policy proposals.

The D&I Office requested one student assistant who had been working at the D&I Office for over three years, to provide an additional SWOT analysis based on their experiences. According to the analysis, it is evident that the office plays a crucial role in offering essential advisory services related to diversity and inclusion across the entire institution. However, there were instances where the initial involvement of the D&I Office with student

organizations created tensions, particularly when managing students' expectations during periods of higher sensitivity surrounding societal injustices. Additionally, the relationship between the networks and the D&I Office faced challenges due to the lack of staff members within the D&I Office, given the extensive workload. These findings from the student's SWOT analysis were corroborated during interviews with representatives from these networks. Overall, the representatives highly appreciated the individuals working at the D&I Office but were critical about communication and collaboration with the D&I Office. They expressed a desire for a more transparent and proactive approach to communication.

The committee wholeheartedly recognizes and values the significance of these networks and communities. Their expertise and firsthand experiences (lived experiences) are essential in shaping inclusive and effective D&I policies that cater to the needs of minoritized groups. Consequently, the committee recommends (pro)actively engaging with and providing support to these networks to foster dialogue and explore opportunities for mutual reinforcement between the D&I Office and the networks. Collaborative efforts should be aimed at long-term sustainability. It is crucial to carefully manage expectations and establish clear boundaries when working together to ensure fruitful and harmonious collaborations.

Support for individual complaints

As described in section 4.2, many students and staff members report that there is no safe space within the organization for discussing experiences of exclusion. Although confidential advisors are available, they often are still building their expertise to offer effective assistance and support in addressing these sensitive issues.

The lack of a safe space to address exclusion results in individuals turning to the D&I Office to handle individual complaints rather than addressing structural issues. This is also addressed in the self-assessment report by the D&I Office, as follows: '*The position of the D&I Office(r) is not to provide support for victims of discrimination and instead can guide individuals to the confidential advisor or (in)formal complaint procedures. However, if these structures are not trained in D&I literacy, the D&I Office will remain a trusted point of contact for victims of exclusionary behavior and structures without the training or mandate to properly address these'*.

The committee recommends ensuring that counselors are adequately equipped to effectively assist victims of discrimination and other forms of exclusion. This entails providing comprehensive training in D&I literacy and implementing targeted hiring strategies. Additionally, the committee suggests exploring additional support options.

Based on conversations with students and staff who belong to minoritized groups, the committee understands that they frequently offer a listening ear to students or staff members who have had negative experiences due to exclusion. The committee advises, in consultation with the respective individuals, establishing compensated consultation hours where people can seek support in case of experiences of exclusion. This not only recognizes the valuable efforts of these individuals but also contributes to raising awareness and understanding of discrimination and exclusion.

Communication

As described in the self-assessment report, communication plays a significant role in the work of the D&I Office. The report indicates that during the first two years, communication was initially undervalued due to a lack of expertise and resources. However, it has become evident to the D&I Office that communication cannot be an afterthought but should be integrated into every stage of D&I initiatives. The committee fully supports this and encourages the D&I Office to develop a comprehensive strategy for effectively disseminating the message of D&I. To reach a wider audience, it is crucial to utilize not only the D&I Office's channels, such as social media and newsletters but also to make more use of university-wide communication platforms and to integrate specific D&I expertise into the university's central communication department. The committee advises appointing a dedicated D&I communication advisor within the general UM communication office.

The self-assessment report clearly demonstrates the D&I Office's productivity in creating policies, information toolkits, and various guides for educational and awareness-raising purposes. The committee urges the D&I Office to enhance its visibility by more extensively communicating its output. It advises the D&I Office to develop a communication plan that includes strategies and channels to increase the office's visibility.

4.4 Future policy

> *Should the policy be continued with the currently formulated objectives and in what form can this best be done? What support and form of organization is desirable from the point of view of effectiveness and support?*

Future objectives

As described in Chapter 3, the D&I Office aims to achieve two main goals: to diversify the UM employee and student population and to create an inclusive atmosphere in which all talents and competencies can be mobilized for the well-being of the organization itself. The committee acknowledges the value of the two overarching objectives, which have successfully put D&I on the agenda in recent years. The committee believes that these objectives remain relevant and can serve as a general foundation for the vision of D&I policy at UM. To progress further, it is important to establish more specific objectives that contribute to this vision.

The committee strongly advocates for including 'equity' as a third overarching goal in the D&I policy. Equity, diversity and inclusion combined provide a complementary and critical lens to ensure that D&I policy is also equitable and fair. Equity is a way to ensure the prevention of discrimination and institutional mechanisms of exclusion, such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism etc. It is part of the institution's agenda and a means to hold the organization accountable. It is crucial to recognize that equity is distinct from equality. While the terminology may seem similar, they represent distinct ideas with different implications. Equality refers to the state of being equal or having the same rights,

opportunities, and treatment. Equity, on the other hand, recognizes that people have different needs, starting points, and circumstances and is based on the premise of social justice. It acknowledges that treating everyone the same may not lead to fair outcomes due to existing inequalities, disadvantages, and imbalances in positions of and access to power. Equity aims to address these disparities by providing additional support or resources to those who need them the most. The goal of equity is to promote fairness and create more equitable outcomes, even if it means treating individuals differently to achieve that goal.

The committee also believes that the four focus areas remain relevant and considers that the experience obtained in these areas can serve as a starting point for redefining the specific objectives. As the office has matured, and identified a set of needs, now is the time for targeted implementation to achieve specific goals. When further developing these objectives, a first important step is to identify the areas where friction arises. Therefore, the committee advises to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the areas that pose challenges and to determine what is needed to address them. The committee recommends that in the next policy period, UM develops objectives that are specific, (qualitatively) measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

As described in Chapter 3, UM consciously chose not to develop programs aimed at improving the inclusion of 'target groups' but instead focused on areas that affect minoritized groups. The reasoning behind this choice is twofold. Firstly, UM assumes that certain areas affect multiple minoritized groups. Secondly, UM's D&I strategy strives to acknowledge intersectional experiences. The committee would like to make a few critical remarks about this. First, it is essential to have some indicators of how people from different (intersecting) identities experience their workplace in order to monitor progress in terms of inclusion. This information can be used to identify areas where efforts need to be focused. Gathering data can be a powerful tool for creating a sense of urgency for interventions. Second, research on the effectiveness of diversity interventions shows that a focus on one or more 'target groups' actually trickles down to positive outcomes for other groups and the larger community, whereas interventions with a broader aim (that do not have narrowly defined target groups) yield less positive results.[6][7][8]

Monitoring

To effectively support policy, the committee recommends adopting a more robust evidence-based approach and monitoring the progress of the D&I policy. The committee advises to distinguish the intended policy, the actual policy, and the perceived policy. By evaluating all three aspects, any discrepancies or issues can be identified, enabling appropriate measures to be taken to improve the policy and align it better with the intended goals and needs of the stakeholders.

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[6] Bezrukova, K., Spell, C. S., Perry, J. L., & Jehn, K. A. (2016). A meta-analytical integration of over 40 years of research on diversity training evaluation. *Psychological bulletin*, *142*(11), 1227.

[7] Kalinoski, Z. T., Steele-Johnson, D., Peyton, E. J., Leas, K. A., Steinke, J., & Bowling, N. A. (2013). A meta-analytic evaluation of diversity training outcomes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *34*(8), 1076-1104.

[8] Kawasaki, S., & Zou, X. (2023). A meta-analytic evaluation of diversity training outcomes across cultures. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *17*(5), e12741.

The committee advises using the biennial survey among staff members, known as the Sustainable Employability Monitor (UM-SEM), as part of this monitoring process. The committee understood that the DO has ensured the adaption of this monitor to include relevant questions related to inclusion and the option to provide self-identified characteristics. The committee highly values this because incorporating such questions into the UM-SEM generates valuable quantitative data, contributing to raising awareness of the challenges faced by minoritized groups within the UM. This data also serves as a useful resource for guiding further policy development. The committee advises utilizing this data more extensively to determine priority areas for action. Furthermore, in addition to quantitative data, the committee recommends gathering more qualitative information through methods such as interviews and individual testimonials. This type of qualitative information provides a deeper understanding of individuals' experiences, perspectives, and concerns.

Intervention cycle

Additionally, the committee advises adopting a systematic and iterative process to facilitate effective planning, execution, and evaluation of policy initiatives. The committee has observed that many D&I actions and activities tend to be symbolic, while instrumental interventions, such as concrete approaches in HR practices (recruitment, selection, compensation, development/careers), and work-life arrangements, have been either omitted or provisionally implemented. In some cases, these interventions have then disappeared or been forgotten without sustained development and evaluation. The committee noted in the interviews with the stakeholders that they sometimes feel frustrated about this. The committee also observed that when visiting websites, the links to policy follow-up did not appear to work or no longer existed.

Therefore, the committee strongly recommends the use of an intervention cycle for D&I interventions. This cycle includes problem analysis/orientation, diagnosis/direction, planning/intervention, evaluation/analysis/implementation monitoring, and reporting/presentation, followed by a reorientation phase. This comprehensive cycle will ensure a more structured and successful implementation of D&I policies and practices, fostering continuous improvement and meaningful impact.

4.5 Embedding of the D&I Office within UM

> *How can the structural embedding of the D&I Office within UM best be organized, both at the central level (within Maastricht University Office) and at the decentralized level (faculties and service centres)?*

As mentioned in section 4.1, the committee's scope extended beyond evaluating the work of the D&I office; it also encompassed the broader assessment of the university's D&I policy.

The committee deems it crucial for the UM to strive for a community where everyone actively contributes to D&I, not solely relying on the D&I Office. The D&I Office serves as an expert advisor, an incubator for pilot development, and evidently, a sounding board and safe space for staff and students. The responsibility for integration, implementation, and long-term impact lies with both central and decentralized leadership.

One of the most impactful ways to achieve sustainable and institution-wide change is through clear and visible leadership, starting from the highest levels. The university senior management team should take the lead in openly recognizing the bias-related issues, acknowledging the negative consequences for the entire community, and pushing for a comprehensive and strategic change programme for D&I.

Therefore, D&I should be a core value of the UM and deeply embedded in all leadership practices. As such, the committee advocates for D&I skills and professional development to be a formal assessment criterion for all UM staff members in (senior) leadership positions. This approach ensures that progress can be made towards fostering a UM community where everyone actively contributes to D&I and is held accountable for their actions.

D&I Office

The committee considers it crucial to strengthen the integration of D&I by including the DO in the bi-weekly Directors' meetings, during which policies and strategy at MUO and UM levels are discussed. Currently, the DO is not engaged in decision-making processes in other domains either. The committee recommends enhancing the position of the DO by ensuring consistent participation in decision-making meetings to ensure that D&I aspects are duly considered and not overlooked.

The committee advises the D&I Office to concentrate on its dual role as both a central expert agency and an incubator of new initiatives. The handover of these initiatives should be a fundamental aspect of the D&I Office workflow. Consequently, project incubation should consistently occur in collaboration with relevant departments, and these departments should allocate resources to support the further implementation of pilot/incubated initiatives. To achieve this, it is vital to establish clear expectations from the outset: the D&I Office primarily serves in an advisory capacity for the development of new initiatives, while the structural implementation or coordination of these initiatives should be handled elsewhere. This necessitates a comprehensive clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the D&I Office, coupled with a more strategic approach to ensure the effective follow-up on new initiatives.

Furthermore, it is crucial for the D&I office to be granted a clear mandate within the UM for the development, coordination, and monitoring of the D&I policy. A clear mandate ensures clarity regarding the office's role and responsibilities in relation to the faculties and departments. This helps to increase the involvement and cooperation of the faculties and departments.

D&I Office staff

The committee finds the current staff size (3.2 FTE) insufficient for handling the workload of the D&I Office. The committee acknowledges the inherent challenge of prioritizing D&I topics, as illustrated by the question raised in the self-assessment report: *'How can one say that racism is more important than attention to studying/working with a disability?'*

Even with a more defined scope of work for the D&I Office, the committee recommends expanding the staff to allow for greater allocation of time and resources to effectively carry out their tasks and respond to the needs of various minoritized groups. The committee believes that additional human power is necessary for various tasks, including communication, maintaining connections with networks and communities, and conducting in-house D&I literacy training rather than outsourcing these training programs.

For D&I employees, it is essential to continually update their knowledge in the rapidly changing social landscape and evolving D&I practices. This way, they can serve as valuable conversation partners and provide information to other individuals and organizational units within the UM. Additionally, the committee advises investing in the professional development of D&I staff members by offering support to acquire the complex skills to fulfill their roles effectively. In this regard, it is also crucial to provide employees with opportunities for professional growth and establish appropriate job profiles to facilitate their advancement and professional development.

Decentralized level

To effectively implement and operationalize the UM D&I policy at the local level, it is essential to allocate appropriate financial resources and human capital. Furthermore, it is vital to designate individuals with decision-making authority who hold specific responsibility for promoting Diversity and Inclusion (D&I).

The committee recommends the following strategies:

- Appointing staff members who receive allocated time (fte's) to implement D&I within their respective units across all university faculties and units.
- Establishing the role of a trained D&I portfolio holder within each of the six faculty boards.
- Appointing a "University Diversity and Inclusivity Dean" who directly reports to the Executive Board, following a similar model as Utrecht University.
- Making D&I formal assessment criteria for all UM staff members

The committee advises assessing these available options and developing a customized scenario that aligns with the specific requirements and context of the UM.

Advisory council

The Advisory Council (AC) for Diversity and Inclusion, consisting of representatives from all faculties and some service centers, has played a vital role as a dialogue partner and advisor for

the D&I Office and the selection of D&I grants in recent years. Each member is chosen for their expertise in D&I-related fields and their position within the organization. The self-assessment report highlights the invaluable insights contributed by each member during discussions on challenging portfolios, identifying obstacles, generating future ideas, and selecting D&I Grants.

Furthermore, the self-assessment report underscores the importance of including members from decentralized structures in the D&I governance and granting individuals in similar D&I advisory roles a clear mandate within their respective units. However, this is not yet the case in the current situation. The current AC members have an ambassador role at best. As described in the self-assessment report, the members voiced that they either do not have access or they do not feel comfortable to represent D&I in their local contexts.

Moreover, the committee has several recommendations regarding the composition of the AC. First and foremost, the committee emphasizes the significance of having a visibly diverse AC. A diverse AC brings together individuals with varied backgrounds, social positions, experiences, and viewpoints. This diversity allows for more effective alignment of decisions and advice with the needs and concerns of a wider and more diverse range of people. Additionally, when individuals can identify with the members of the AC, they experience a greater sense of being heard and understood. This reassures people that their voices are being listened to and that there is someone who genuinely considers and values their concerns. However, this can only be effective if there is an awareness of existing power (im)balances.

Secondly, the current composition of the AC includes only one student position. The committee recommends having a minimum of three (PhD) students on the advisory council responsible for selecting grantees. Furthermore, the committee advises establishing a separate Student Advisory Council comprising representatives from relevant student networks and communities, along with individual members possessing expertise or lived experience in D&I challenges and topics.

Appendix A – Overview of appendices to the self-assessment report

1. UM Diversity at the CORE

2. D&I Advisory Council Regulations

3. D&I Evaluation 2017

4. D&I Strategy 2020 – 2023

5. D&I Office roles and tasks

6. D&I Budget 2020 – 2023

7. DI Work Overview 2028 – 2023

8. Family Friendly University Progress Report

9. Taskforces and Working Groups

10. D&I Grant winners

11. UMSEM inclusion special

12. D&I in the media

13. SWOT analysis student assistant

14. LANDO-DO survey and activities

15. Twitter Shaming of the D&I officer

Appendix B – Programme site visit

Monday 19 June 2023

Time	Part
18.00 – 21.00	Preparatory committee meeting, including dinner

Tuesday 20 June 2023

Time	Part
8:30- 9:00	Preparation meeting review committee
9:00 - 10:00	D&I Office
10.00 - 10.30	Executive Board
10.30 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 11:45	Deans from three different faculties
11:45 - 12:30	Break/lunch
12:30 -13:15	Directors three different faculties
13.15 -13:30	Break
13:30 - 14:15	Directors HR, Academic affairs SCC
14:15 -14:30	Break
14:30 -15:15	D&I Advisory council
15:15 -15:30	Break
15:30 - 16:15	Professors
16:15 -17:30	Meeting review committee

Wednesday 21 June 2023

Time	Part
8:30 - 9:15	D&I Office
9:15 - 9:30	Break
9:30 - 10:15	SSC and CCP
10:15 -10:30	Break
10:30 -11:15	Student/staff Networks
11:15 -11:30	Break
11:30 -12:15	Student organizations
12:15 -13:15	lunch and consultation hour
13:15 -14:00	Participation councils
14:00 -14:30	Preparation final meeting D&I (DO)
14:30 -15:00	Final meeting D&I (DO)
15:00 -17:00	Review committee meeting (preparation of the report)

Appendix C – Description four core areas

Explanation of the four core areas (self-assessment report page 17)

Attracting & Retaining Talent prioritizes the recruitment and retention of a diverse group of administrative/support and academic staff as well as students. This requires a broadened conceptualization of "talent" in recruitment and retention efforts, with the implementation of career policies to address the needs of underrepresented groups and individuals with varied career plans and life decisions/circumstances. The adoption of recruitment strategies to non-EU staff and students is also integral to the effort.

The second area ***Fostering Cultural Change*** is crucial to promote equity and inclusivity as core values of the organization, while concurrently raising awareness of these values. Instilling cultural change is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable inclusivity, a task that not only necessitates the attraction of diverse individuals but also requires an ongoing practice of these values in order to retain them.

The third area ***Strengthening Diversity Competences*** across the organization depicts a critical aspect of our commitment to retaining staff and students with diverse backgrounds. All members of our community have to develop and strengthen diversity competencies and D&I literacy. Our teaching staff, for example, has to be able to navigate UM's international and intercultural classrooms. Equipping students with the same competences is also necessary to enable their successful participation in PBL and their subsequent integration into the global job market after graduation. Our leaders also need to be trained and assessed in D&I relevant competencies to facilitate the retention of minoritized staff. Furthermore, diversity competences are essential for researchers, given that research project content and presentations are increasingly evaluated on their diversity dimensions in funding applications. Therefore, it is necessary for all staff, including junior colleagues and those in leadership positions, to develop D&I literacy.

The fourth area ***Developing Life-Phase and Family Friendly HR Policies*** is aimed at creating HR policies that accommodate employees' life-phases and family needs. This aligns with the UM's commitment to sustainable employability. Acknowledging and facilitating these needs can improve employee satisfaction, as it enables better work-life balance and reduces absenteeism and personnel turnover. UM can offer more equity in career development by recognizing and facilitating the caring responsibilities of UM community members as well as the diversity of needs that arise at different moments in life and creating and by creating the necessary conditions so that diverging career models can be fulfilled.