

COMMITTEE NAME: BELONGING & INCLUSION POLICY COMMITTEE (BIPC)

MEETING DATE & TIME: 10/3/2025, 2 PM

MEETING LOCATION: ATKINSON 202

ATTENDANCE:

MEMBERS				“P” denotes Present, “A” denotes Absent, “R” denotes Regrets			
P	Javier Francisco			P	Nancy Mizelle		
P	Hedwig “Hedy” Fraunhofer			P	Christine Mutiti		
P	Maria Gordon			P	Laura Newbern		
P	Eric Johansen			R	Peter Rosado Flores		
P	Mehrnaz Khalaj Hedayati			P	Matheson “Matt” Sanchez		
P	Veronica Lively			R	Michael Snowden		
P	Nadirah Mayweather						
GUESTS							

AGENDA TOPIC	DISCUSSIONS & CONCLUSIONS	ACTION OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FOLLOW-UP
I. Call to order	Hedy Fraunhofer called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.		
II. Approval of Agenda	A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the agenda as distributed via email.		Hedy will post the approved agenda on the Senate website.
III. Approval of Minutes	The minutes from 9/5/2025 were approved unanimously via email & Maria Gordon posted the approved minutes on the Senate website.		
IV. Old Business/Review of Actions/Recommendations			
1. Membership roster & officer elections		Finalized and complete	
2. Operating Procedures for 2025-2026		Approved and uploaded on the Senate website	

V. New Business Actions/Recommendations			
1. Inventory and discussion of existing GCSU policies regarding Belonging & Inclusion	Eric Johansen shared there are no current Human Resources policies due to the Chancellor's mandate. Michael Snowden shared his regrets for this meeting & shared BIPC GCSU Information and BIPC Veterans Information, which are added at the end of this document. Laura Newbern spoke with the Director of the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC), who referenced the 3R's (Reason, Respect, & Responsibility).	Tabled the discussion with Michael to discuss at our next meeting. Recommendation to require faculty to complete training through SDRC to learn how to accommodate students. SDRC is willing to record training video for faculty.	Michael to present GCSU policies regarding Belonging & Inclusion on 10/31/2025. Consult with Office of the Provost, Human Resources, and SDRC on mandatory faculty training for teaching accommodations
2. Members report on Belonging and Inclusion policies at other post-secondary institutions researched	Nadirah Mayweather asked for clarification on why we are researching other institutions' policies. Hedy clarified to gauge how other institutions are handling policies regarding Belonging & Inclusion and to find best practices. Nadirah referenced the 3 R's (Reason, Respect, & Responsibility). Shared file documenting research and handouts shared at meeting are added at the end of this document.	Recommendation to include religious holidays on the academic calendar and note no work holidays. Christine Mutiti noted that they were previously noted on the academic calendar and removed due to the controversy over which ones to recognize/list. Recommendation to pursue expanding Campus Corner food pantry to West Campus.	Consult with the Registrar and Office of the Provost regarding inclusion of religious holidays on the academic calendar. Veronica Lively will consult with Amy Whatley regarding expansion of Campus Corner to West Campus and report findings on 10/31/2025. Continue discussing our research and discuss the spaces we need to provide on campus on 10/31/2025.
VI. Next Meeting	10/31/2025, 2 pm, Atkinson 202		
VII. Adjournment	A motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 3:15 pm.		

Distribution(as determined in committee operating procedure – one possibility given):

First; To Committee Membership for Review

Second: Posted to the Minutes Website

Approved by:
Committee Chairperson

Hedwig Franke

COMMITTEE NAME: BELONGING & INCLUSION POLICY COMMITTEE (BIPC)

COMMITTEE OFFICERS: HEDWIG FRAUNHOFER, CHAIR; JAVIER FRANCISCO, VICE CHAIR; MARIA GORDON, SECRETARY

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2025-2026

AGGREGATE MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR:
"P" denotes Present, "A" denotes Absent, "R" denotes Regrets

Meeting Dates	9/5/2025	10/3/2025							
Javier Francisco	P	P							
Hedwig "Hedy" Fraunhofer	P	P							
Maria Gordon	P	P							
Eric Johansen	P	P							
Mehrnaz Khalaj Hedayati	P	P							
Veronica Lively	R	P							
Nadirah Mayweather	A	P							
Nancy Mizelle	P	P							
Christine Mutiti	R	P							
Laura Newbern	P	P							
Peter Rosado Flores	R	R							
Matheson "Matt" Sanchez	P	P							
Michael Snowden	P	P							


CHAIRPERSON SIGNATURE

DATE Oct. 17, 2025

Inventory Findings: Student Life Policies on Comprehensive Student Support

Executive Summary

An inventory of Student Life missions confirms that while direct policy language explicitly naming **Inclusion** or **Belonging** is limited to one office, the collective missions establish a robust, operational policy of **Universal Support and Equitable Access**. This structure ensures the **comprehensive development** of all students within a supportive **learning environment**, which is the functional outcome of an aligned, holistic support system.

The Division's overarching approach is two-tiered: The Office of Inclusion and Belonging (OIB) provides specialized resources, while **Universal Support Departments** ensure the necessary conditions (safety, health, access) exist for every student to thrive.

Departmental Missions as Operational Policy for Success

The table below details how each department's mission acts as a functional policy, ensuring the necessary conditions for every student to thrive:

Focus Area (Department Name)	Policy Objective (Functional Goal)	Key Actions to Achieve Objective
Office of Inclusion and Belonging	To provide specialized resources that value individual differences.	Policy of Dedicated Resource Allocation: Focuses resources on support, advocacy, and affirmation for students based on personal and cultural identity .
Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC)	To ensure all students can fully participate in college life.	Policy of Accessibility: Provides necessary modifications and support to ensure equal access and opportunity.
University Housing	To develop dynamic communities where students form relationships.	Policy of Engagement: Actively promotes community development and relationship building in residential life to reduce isolation.
Office of Student Engagement	To connect students to engagement opportunities and organizations.	Policy of Involvement: Creates structured pathways for connection and active participation, directly supporting a sense of community.

Focus Area (Department Name)	Policy Objective (Functional Goal)	Key Actions to Achieve Objective
Student Care and Outreach	To assist students experiencing challenges that impact their success.	Policy of Universal Support: Provides a safety net and equitable intervention to stabilize students in crisis and maximize their ability to persist.
Dean of Students	To serve as an advocate and resource to help maximize student success.	Policy of Advocacy: Provides every student with an institutional voice and resource navigation, ensuring they are heard and supported .
Counseling Services	To attend to the psychological, emotional, and developmental wellbeing of students.	Policy of Holistic Health: Addresses the emotional and mental prerequisites for student resilience and successful community engagement.
Office of Student Health & Wellbeing	To support the holistic wellbeing of all GCSU students.	Policy of Comprehensive Health: Promotes physical, emotional, and intellectual habits necessary for academic and personal flourishing.
Office of Community Engagement & Service	To advance students' civic learning and community partnership.	Policy of Intercultural Values: Fosters values like respect, humility, and global citizenship —qualities necessary for productive interaction within a diverse society.
Outdoor Center	To provide excellent group development experiences and leadership training.	Policy of Experiential Development: Uses shared experiences to build cooperation and leadership skills that strengthen peer trust and community cohesion.

The Registrar's Office policies for our veteran and military-affiliated students are a vital component of the university's operational commitment to fostering **Belonging and Universal Student Success**.

Rather than utilizing specific "Inclusion" programs, the Registrar's services function as a powerful **policy of administrative support and personal validation**. These policies systematically dismantle the unique academic and logistical barriers that military students face, thereby creating a supportive and respectful environment where they are guaranteed the necessary conditions to thrive.

Committee Member	Institution Researching	Comments		Links	
Fraunhofer, Hedy	University of Georgia	GradFIRST program (Eric Johansen); Hedy will provide oral report during committee meeting		https://grad.uga.edu/gradfirst/about-gradfirst/#:~:text=The%20GradFIRST%20seminar%20series%20supplements,graduate%20students%20across%20UGA's%20campuses (Eric Johansen)	various webpages under www.uga.edu
Khalaj Hedayati, Mehrnaz	Georgia Tech	 BIPC GA Tech.pdf			
Lively, Veronica	Furman University			https://www.furman.edu/thriving-communities-initiatives/	
Mayweather, Nadirah	Elon University			https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/faculty-handbook/policies-protocols/policy-statements/#policy-expression-inclusivity	
Mayweather, Nadirah	James Madison University			https://www.jmu.edu/syllabus/faculty-syllabi-resources.shtml#DI	
Mizelle, Nancy	University of North Carolina - Ashville	 BIPC UNC Ashville.pdf		https://www.unca.edu/about/mission-values/	https://hr.unca.edu/equal-opportunity-diversity-and-inclusion/
Mutiti, Christine	University of South Carolina - Aiken	Had better luck with the USC system website and they have an "Office of Access and Opportunity"		https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/access_and_opportunity/index.php	https://www.usca.edu/departments/usca-life/
Newbern, Laura	University of Alabama - Huntsville	Title IX policies were the closest I could find. Also there's a link to SB 129 law (under 'Risk Management') that explains the law and lists exceptions.		https://www.uah.edu/images/administrative/policies/01.03.02-Interim-Equal-Opportunity-and-Non-Discrimination-2025.pdf	UAH Office of Risk Management and Compliance Federal Law & SB129 Compliance Guidance The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Newbern, Laura	Montevallo	Alabama's only public liberal arts college. There is a 'MADE' office, a 'SAFE ZONE' office, and an 'OFFICE OF CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY BELONGING. But the only Policy I could find was 'Disability Compliance.'		https://www.montevallo.edu/campus-life/student-services/access-and-compliance/accessibility-disability-compliance/	
Rosado Flores, Peter	Syracuse University	 BIPC Syracuse University Inclusion and Belonging			
Sanchez, Matt	Georgia State University	All the usual policies. Programs of note: Pantry "lockers" throughout the campuses, databases of international partnerships to facilitate collaboration and open dialogue with other countries/locales, up-to-date calendars for faculty and staff showing religious holidays and indicating which have associated "no work" requirements, Cultures Communities and Inclusion (CCI) student ambassadors		https://belonging.gsu.edu/	https://belonging.gsu.edu/resource-library/browse/policies-procedures/

Georgia Tech — Arts, Belonging, and Community (ABC) – One-Page Summary

Arts, Belonging, and Community Commitment Statement

We cultivate an inclusive and vibrant environment where all Georgia Tech students find a profound sense of belonging and contribute to the rich tapestry of our shared community.

Purpose

ABC's site centers on the message **"You Belong Here"** and states its purpose as: *championing a vibrant culture of belonging, creative expression, and community for all Georgia Tech students; nurturing engagement and creativity to support student success; and strengthening connections where diverse perspectives converge for innovative, collaborative solutions.*

Goals (aligned with Student Engagement & Well-Being)

Student Engagement & Well-Being lists four goal pillars that guide this work:

1. **Cultural Change**
2. **Capacity & Creativity** (improve access to equity-literate care; promote holistic wellness and prevention)
3. **Community & Connection** (expand engagement experiences that build belonging, resilience, self-efficacy)
4. **Commitment & Continuity** (sustain and scale efforts)

Departments (what they do)

- **Belonging & Student Support (B&SS)** – Promotes belonging for all students; facilitates **constructive dialogue** and **intercultural competencies**; supports holistic development and academic success; uses student data on outcomes, wellness, belonging, and engagement to set program priorities. Signature offering highlighted: **Perspectives** (Constructive Dialogue Institute) online course to help students engage across differences. All Yellow Jackets are welcome.
- **Student & Campus Event Centers (SCEC)** – Manages core student buildings and **event spaces**; runs programs such as **Student Center Programs Council (SCPC)**, **Tech Rec**, **Paper & Clay**, **Commuter Student Engagement**, **Graduate Student Lounge**, **Graduate Interest Groups**, **Multicultural Lounge**, **Reflection Space**, and **Campus Tickets**; supports planning and reservations for campus events; also oversees postal services. [Student Center](#)
- **Veterans Resource Center (VRC)** – Provides **comprehensive support services** that enhance the academic experience and degree completion for veterans, service members, guard/reservists, and dependents through information sharing, referrals, outreach, and opportunities for involvement (plus resources such as scholarships and employment assistance).

Arts (division highlight)

Within ABC, **The Arts** page points students to hands-on and performance opportunities (e.g., **Paper & Clay**, **DramaTech Theatre**, **student-led arts organizations**, **visual arts on campus**) and arts programming via SCPC—fostering creativity, connection, and leadership.

The UNC Asheville's mission emphasizes fostering belonging and supporting diverse communities, but the university's official policies have been heavily impacted by system-wide changes mandating "institutional neutrality".

Despite the UNC System changes, UNC Asheville still maintains a mission statement that emphasizes belonging and inclusivity. This statement envisions a future where all members feel they belong regardless of their race, ethnicity, age, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, gender expression, gender and sexual identity, national origin, culture, or ideological beliefs.

Impacts of UNC System-wide policy changes:

The UNC System Board of Governors has significantly altered the system's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), directly affecting UNC Asheville's formal policies and programs.

- Elimination of DEI mandates: In May 2024, the UNC Board of Governors eliminated a 2019 policy that required each campus to have DEI goals and staff.
- "Institutional neutrality" policy: The system implemented an "Equality Policy" mandating institutional neutrality. This prompted UNC System campuses, including UNC Asheville, to close DEI offices and review or reallocate DEI positions and funding.
- Centralized Student Success office: As a result of the changes, UNC Asheville's Intercultural Student Affairs Office was replaced with a new Student Success and Community office. Staff from the Women's Center and LGBTQ+ center were required to take "institutional neutrality training".
- Policy on sex/gender designation: In July 2025, new policies took effect that require transgender students to provide documentation to change their legal sex in university records for housing purposes.
- Course requirements removed: DEI course requirements were removed from the UNC System curriculum in early 2025, following a new policy directive.
- UNC Asheville Student Code of Responsibility
- The university's Student Code of Responsibility defines policies aimed at protecting the campus community. These policies, however, are subject to the broader UNC System policy directives. The code prohibits:
 - Discrimination and harassment: On the basis of legally protected characteristics, including age, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, gender expression, and gender identity.
 - Interference with freedom of expression: The university protects free speech but also has the right to articulate when actions or speech run counter to its values.
 - Acts of disrespect: The university takes any incidents that violate a student's respect seriously.
- Acknowledging the past
- In addition to its statements on inclusivity, UNC Asheville's "About Us" page features a land acknowledgment. The university acknowledges the land's history as Cherokee

homelands and renews its commitment to respecting the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and other Indigenous peoples.

Our Mission & Values

Mission (*Approved by the UNC System Board of Governors July 21, 2022*)

- The University of North Carolina Asheville is North Carolina's designated public liberal arts and sciences university and one of the 17 excellent, diverse, and accessible institutions of the UNC System. UNC Asheville's relationship-driven education prepares students for lives of leadership and service with an emphasis on critical thinking, clear and thoughtful expression, applied research, community engagement, free and open inquiry, and undergraduate and graduate programs that address the most pressing issues of our time. Through small class sizes, close collaboration, and high-impact experiences, we are preparing the next generation of leaders and productive citizens to serve North Carolina and the nation.

Values

- UNC Asheville is committed to living the core values of **diversity and inclusion**, innovation, and sustainability, and ensuring that they permeate everything that the university does. Meeting these commitments requires an openness to change, creative and innovative approaches to programmatic growth, and a sustained focus on education including **diverse** ideas, as well as sufficient operating resources and support systems, incentives, and accountability measures.

Non-Discrimination Disclosure

- UNC Asheville enrolls more than 3,000 full- and part-time students in more than 65 academic programs. The University of North Carolina Asheville is committed to **equality** of educational experiences for students and is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer. UNC Asheville does not discriminate against students, applicants or employees on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or any other legally protected status.
- To make a report to the university, contact the Title IX Office at 828.258.5658 or visit titleix.unca.edu.

Diversity and Inclusion

- We must continue to foster a deep commitment to supporting **diverse** communities and appropriately encouraging frank and honest conversation. Our commitment leads us to envision a future where all UNC Asheville students, faculty, and staff know they belong regardless of their race and ethnicity, age, religion, disability, socio-economic status, gender expression, gender and sexual identity, national origin, culture, and ideological beliefs.

- UNC Asheville's commitment includes ensuring that our curriculum and programs reflect the **diversity** of the world and our community; that our education embraces **inclusive** teaching and learning styles; that ongoing efforts are made to create a multicultural environment throughout the campus; that we include **diverse** perspectives in all conversations concerning the advancement of the university and our society; and that our recruitment, hiring and administrative practices place high value on all aspects of **diverse** identities.

Student Conduct

The University of North Carolina Asheville is North Carolina's designated public liberal arts and sciences university and one of the 17 excellent, diverse, and accessible institutions of the UNC System. UNC Asheville's relationship-driven education prepares students for lives of leadership and service with an emphasis on critical thinking, clear and thoughtful expression, applied research, community engagement, free and open inquiry, and undergraduate and graduate programs that address the most pressing issues of our time. Through small class sizes, close collaboration, and high-impact experiences, we are preparing the next generation of leaders and productive citizens to serve North Carolina and the nation.

In honor of its rich liberal arts tradition, UNC Asheville takes pride in our commitment to learning, creativity, **diversity**, engaged citizenship, **equity**, trust, and integrity. All students, as integral members of the UNC Asheville community, are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner which enhances an environment in which the rights, dignity, and freedom of each member of the academic community are respected and valued. To that end, responsible citizenship includes an expectation that members actively participate in behavior that upholds the values and mission of UNC Asheville. As such, each member of the University community is expected to adhere to the following principles:

- **Commitment to Creativity and Learning:** We will protect and promote academic freedom as the heart of the intellectual and learning process and the University's academic mission. We will engage in the learning process with respect and integrity for authentic learning, teaching, and research.
- **Commitment to Individual Integrity and Engaged Citizenship:** Our personal integrity is reflected in responsible actions and the willingness to offer support, referral, or direction to others whose actions may be harmful to themselves, others, or the community with truthfulness and care. We will not engage in behavior that endangers safety, academic well-being, privacy, personal welfare, or professional obligations of ourselves or others.
- **Commitment to **Diversity, Equity**, and Trust:** We are community co-creators who value the individual growth of all members through mutual respect and understanding. The University values and encourages a socially responsible community in which individual freedoms can be practiced without threatening the privileges or freedoms of other individuals or groups. The University is committed to open, honest, and equitable engagement.

Reference/resource: <https://go.unca.edu/>

Syracuse University: Private R1 institution in upstate NY. Syracuse, like many other campuses, has stripped away the Diversity and Inclusion verbiage for something a bit more general. However, they are still observing belonging and inclusion initiatives. The university is by far larger than our campus and with more economy, however I took away a couple of initiatives that I think would mesh well with our campus identify of belonging and inclusion. Something I notice around campus is lack of inclusion of people with developmental and intellectual disabilities such as autism. Sure, we do have the accommodations office, and they do a great job at accommodating students in their coursework, but as see below these disabilities tend to lean a lot into identity of an individual rather than just “accommodations”. We have GC-Thrive, but that seems to be only through the College of Education. We do not (or at least I didn’t find) have programming for campus community members (from students to staff to faculty) with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Take away from the search:

- **Belonging & Inclusion:** The University emphasizes that belonging means more than non-exclusion: it means people *feel* like they are seen, respected, supported, and empowered within the community.
- **Accessibility & Disability:** Disabilities are treated not only as a legal requirement (accommodations) but with identity in mind; there are centers and cultural units for disability identity and community.

Policies:

- **Code of Ethical Conduct:** Expected of all students, staff, faculty; includes respect for rights and dignity of all people and prohibits discrimination/harassment.
- **Non-Discrimination / Equal Opportunity Policy:** The University has explicit policies prohibiting discrimination based on protected categories (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc.) in both employment and education.
- **Anti-Harassment Policy:** Sexual harassment is prohibited; defines harassment in a way that includes “severe or pervasive” conduct that interferes with participation, work, or creates a hostile environment. Includes protected classes.
- **Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault Prevention:** Separate policies for sexual misconduct.
- **Family & Medical Leave / Disability Accommodations:** Policies to ensure that those who need medical leave or accommodations have protection.

InclusiveU Initiative: InclusiveU brings students of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities who want to experience college life in a fully inclusive setting to Syracuse University. I am particularly fond of this initiative since I am a parent of a son with autism.

Named one of the 20 Colleges in 2019 With Great Inclusion
Programs for Students With Disabilities by [The Mighty](#)

Ranked #1 College for Students with Autism in 2017 by
[College Choice.Net](#)

They have the Lawrence B. Taishoff center for higher education, which seeks to include students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and welcome them to campus. I've never heard of something like this beyond the usual course "accommodations".

The Taishoff Center is home to [InclusiveU](#), which offers a comprehensive college experience for students with intellectual disabilities including individualized coursework, person-centered planning, professional internships, and social and extracurricular activities.

Perhaps something like this can be implemented at GCSU. The parents or family members of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities can come together to form a committee that not only governs issues that this population faces for students but faculty/staff as well. We as employees can participate in the governing board as well.

I know space is limited, but perhaps the implementation of sensory rooms across campus is something that can be done.

This is probably a drop in the bucket of what could be a great belonging and inclusion initiative, but I think it's a start.