
Subject: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION Reinvestments

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From: Emporia State University



October 26, 2022

Dear Hornet Nation,

Emporia State is investing in new and continued educational opportunities, programming, curriculum changes, career pathways and systematic reviews of policies and practices designed to increase retention and graduation rates among historically marginalized populations.

The enhancements and investments include:

- Doubling the size of the **summer BRIDGE program** for first generation, low-income students and students of color.
- Creating an **Intercultural Center** to bring together student services built around diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging
- Hiring a full-time **Basic Needs Coordinator** to oversee Corky's Cupboard student food pantry and expand its resources for students.
- Increasing stipends for **Diversity Ambassadors**, who work to facilitate DEI learning among their peers and prospective students.
- Realigning **Interdisciplinary Studies and Ethnic Gender and Identity Studies** to the Office of Diversity, Equity + Inclusion

A student's ability to connect to their community and create a sense of belonging is critical to retention at higher education institutions. Across the state of Kansas, underrepresented populations — racial and ethnic minorities, low income, and rural students — are declining at institutions of higher education. Rural students face the largest enrollment equity gap at two- and four-year institutions across the state.

Today's announcement is the fifth reinvestment initiative Emporia State University has released since late September. Strategic investments are the outcome following comprehensive analysis

of academic and student programming. The goal is to elevate Emporia State University by aligning resources to student and academic programs with the greatest impact for the most students, and are designed to meet both student and employer demand.

During summer 2022, Emporia State launched BRIDGE, which stands for Building Relationships, Inclusion, Diversity, and Global Equity. The program is designed to assist incoming first-year students with their transition from high school to ESU. For the first program, nearly 30 students moved into the residence halls a week before new-student orientation in the fall. They were introduced to faculty, staff, administrators, student leaders, and other campus resources to help ease their transition to ESU.

Another new project will create an Intercultural Center in the Memorial Union that will bring together a myriad of student services built around diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. These include an office for the director of Diversity Student Programs (DSP), an interfaith room, spaces that can be used for recognized student organization meetings and DSP events plus a lounge for studying and finding community.

In September 2020, Emporia State launched the Basic Needs Coalition, which pulled together students, faculty, staff and community members who work together to ensure all Hornets have access to sufficient food, housing, mental and physical health services and financial resources to succeed inside and outside the classroom. These services now report to Robertson and includes a new, full-time position of Basic Needs Coordinator who oversees the Corky's Cupboard food pantry and works to connect students with additional community resources.

Another key DEI initiative is the Diversity Ambassadors program in which current students actively work to educate the campus on DEI issues. These student ambassadors now will receive higher stipends that compensate them for their labor and efforts to increase DEI education among their peers and prospective students.

Finally, Interdisciplinary Studies and Ethnic Gender and Identity Studies academic programs will now report to the Office of DEI. Interdisciplinary Studies is a unique offering that creates specific pathways that incorporate multiple academic disciplines, allowing students to tailor their education to their interests.

In addition, the Ethnic Gender and Identity Studies program can prepare ESU students for future careers in DEI positions in workplaces.

Additional Resources:

- Video from Nyk Robertson, senior director of diversity, equity and inclusion: <https://youtu.be/fDQ98WVUJp0>
- News release about these reinvestments: <https://www.emporia.edu/news/october-2022-dei-investments/>
- Website about all of the announced reinvestments: [emporia.edu/future](https://www.emporia.edu/future)

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