Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Business & Finance

Business and Finance (B&F) provides essential infrastructure services to support the students, faculty and staff of the University of Michigan. Together, we “Make Blue Go.” Made up of over 40 business and finance units, B&F includes the offices of Investments, Finance, Facilities and Operations, Shared Services Center, and University Human Resources, and employs over 2,400 staff members.

B&F seeks to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion among its many employees. The more diverse our staff, the more equitable our experience, and the more inclusive our workplaces, the better we are able to create a positive workplace climate. We believe this type of climate attracts and retains the best talent and enables us all to provide exceptional service to advance the university’s mission.

B&F DEI Strategic Plan

In 2016, B&F launched its five-year DEI Strategic Plan along with other units on the Ann Arbor campus. The B&F DEI plan sought to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion through four key areas:

1. Recruitment, retention, and development
2. Education and scholarship
3. Promoting an equitable and inclusive community
4. Service (This fourth objective was removed in Year 2.)

Recruitment, Retention and Development

Within the domain of “recruitment, retention and development,” B&F developed two strategic objectives:
1. Enhance career path development and advancement opportunities.
2. Cultivate an inclusive and diverse applicant pool, and attract and maintain a diverse staff.

Accomplishments

Though there were many accomplishments in this area, the overall DEI effort that had the greatest impact was, “Cultivate an inclusive and diverse applicant pool, attract and maintain a diverse staff, and mitigate bias in the hiring process.”

To address bias in the talent acquisition process, B&F collaborated with Michigan Medicine to develop the “Unconscious Bias in Hiring and Selection” training. The training was piloted with hiring managers and HR directors, then rolled out to supervisors, managers and hiring managers. All senior-level search committees in B&F were required to complete training before serving on the hiring committee. Some B&F areas have made this training mandatory for hiring managers as well as staff serving on a hiring committee. B&F areas made a number of changes to their talent acquisition processes. For example, Facilities & Operations used the Korn-Ferry tool to increase awareness of bias and form behavior-based interview questions. Finance used the “Handshake” system to recruit from many schools/universities to produce a more diverse applicant pool and have reevaluated schools based on yielded candidates. The Shared Services Center made the Unconscious Bias in Recruiting and Hiring training mandatory for all hiring managers and search committee members. UHR began using DataPeople (formerly called TapRecruit) as part of its practice for all postings and supported other B&F areas as they adopted the tool. All UHR job postings must now be run through DataPeople to test for inclusive language.

Education and Scholarship
Within the domain of “education and scholarship,” B&F developed the following strategic objectives:

1. Continue to invest and build cultural competency of B&F managers and supervisors.
2. Invest in developing cultural competency of B&F staff.

Accomplishments

Throughout DEI 1.0, B&F staff members were encouraged to participate in DEI related educational sessions from Organizational Learning and LinkedIn Learning. Course topics included intercultural communication, understanding power and privilege, multi-generational workplaces, unconscious bias, bystander intervention, and disability awareness.

99.7% of B&F staff completed the mandatory sexual harassment and misconduct prevention training in an effort to promote a safe and supportive environment for all members to work, learn and thrive. The EVPCFO shared the Interim Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and reiterated our commitment to create a culture of safety and a work environment in which sexual misconduct is not tolerated and people feel safe to report it. B&F shared resources across the university, including an article in the Record and a link to the online course to help staff determine/understand reporting obligations.

Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community

Within the domain of “promoting an equitable and inclusive community,” B&F developed two strategic objectives:
1. Commit to improve the B&F culture related to Diversity Equity and Inclusion by building awareness of the University's commitment.

2. Build a more inclusive cross-functional community within B&F - via facilities, events, communication and by establishing routinized mechanisms to solicit and respond to ongoing employee engagement.

Accomplishments

B&F staff are talented, highly skilled and loyal to the university. They take great pride in stewarding the university’s resources and creating an environment where everyone in the university community is safe and able to achieve their goals. They appreciate being recognized for the great work they do to MAKE BLUE GO.

In B&F, more than 2,300 activities, events, educational sessions and other engagement efforts were undertaken across B&F during DEI 1.0. These efforts were designed to promote a positive organizational culture and promote our values of diversity, equity and inclusion.
Service

While the service domain is foundationally important to B&F, our university-wide service work relative to DEI was specifically reflected in the central U-M DEI Strategic Plan (accessible facilities, staff recruitment and retention, employee training, etc.) and thus was not duplicated in the B&F DEI Plan. Nevertheless, B&F accomplished much in terms of service to the U-M community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accomplishments

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, B&F demonstrated the flexibility and adaptability necessary to adjust to COVID within the unit while also supporting the entire university and Michigan Medicine with policies and practices that responded to the pandemic. Changes to policies, practices and processes were made rapidly and effectively. Supporting safety and health on all three campuses and Michigan Medicine will be an ongoing issue. The COVID-19 pandemic has created changes that will remain in place even when the pandemic is over. The pandemic tested our abilities, and B&F leaders and staff rose to the challenge.

B&F leaders and staff have been able to come up with creative and innovative ways to steward university resources and meet university needs, especially in a time of crisis. Providing flexibility and support for staff to maintain work-life balance promotes loyalty and a positive and inclusive culture.