



Diversity Audit Field Project: Villa Maria College

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ADS750 – Diversity in Organizations

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# Villa Maria College



# Background Information: Institution

- ❖ Diverse and inclusive student-centered institution
- ❖ Small class sizes with 9:1 faculty ratio
- ❖ Textbooks and supplies included in tuition
- ❖ Students are defined by their potential, not their socioeconomic status
- ❖ Provide internships, scholarships, student clubs, career advising
- ❖ Diverse student body (roughly 500 students) continuing to grow each year
  - Villa serves a “higher percentages of Pell grant recipients, of African-American students, and of students with learning differences than most, if not all, of the private colleges in Western New York” (Giordano, 2021, p. 5).



Villa is the most diverse private college in Western New York



Villa has the highest percentage of African-American students of any private college in Western New York



Villa has the highest percentage of Pell-eligible students of any private college in Western New York



Villa is the highest-ranked college for social mobility in Western New York according to U.S. News

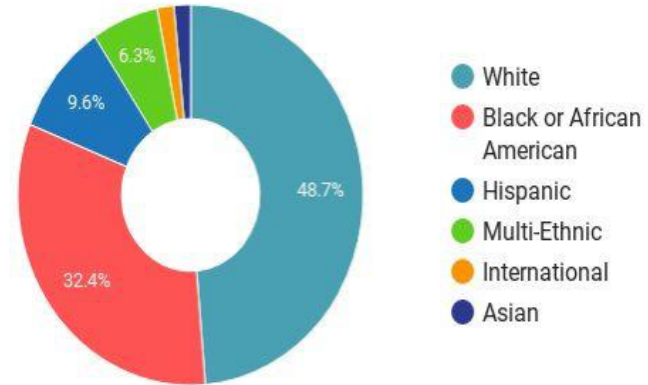


# Student Population

**Villa Male/Female Ratio**



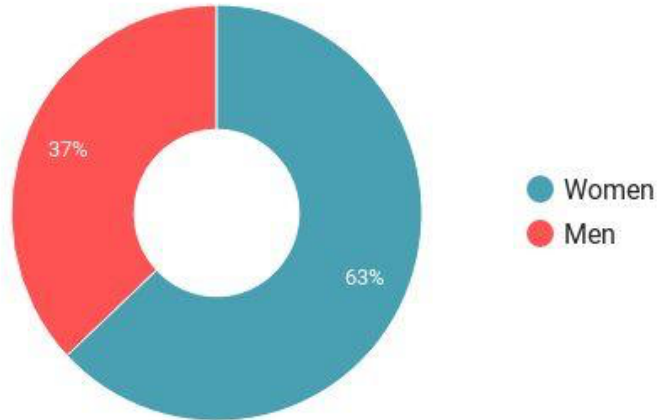
**Racial-Ethnic Demographics of Villa Full-Time Undergraduate**



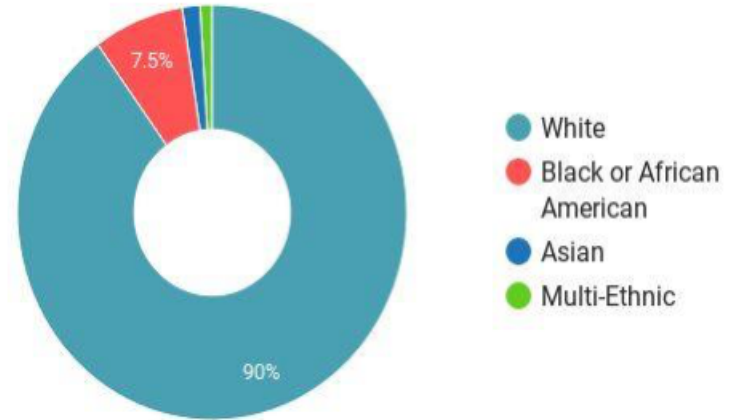


# Faculty Population

Villa Faculty Male/Female Diversity Breakdown



Racial-Ethnic Demographics of Villa Faculty





# Background Information: Academics

- ❖ 18 majors, 26 minors, 12 certificate programs, and always adding more
- ❖ Small but diverse institution: 3 departments (music, art, and liberal arts/professional studies)
- ❖ Teaches skills to do well not just in the classroom but also after they enter the professional world

“Offering academic programs with a broad core curriculum, the College transforms and empowers students to realize their intellectual, creative, professional, and spiritual potential”

*(About us, 2022)*



# Background Information: Mission

- ❖ Five core values: Respect for Human Dignity, Compassion, Transformation, Solidarity with the Poor, Justice and Peace
  - Each academic year, a different core value is highlighted with guest speakers, activities, and learning opportunities
- ❖ Three core ideals: Veritas (truth), Caritas (charity), Unitas (unity)
- ❖ Service learning
  - Implemented in multiple courses, including COR101 (first year students) and COR401 (graduating students)
  - Students work with community partners (particularly in East Buffalo)



**19%**

Say Yes Students

**68%**

First Generation Students

**16%**

Students with a Documented  
Disability



# Literature Review

- ❖ Mission statements are an effective strategy that aims to communicate an organization's overall vision (Mas-Machuca, Ballesterro-Sola & Guerrero, 2017)
- ❖ It was found that only 40% of managers believed that the mission statement reflected what the reality actually was; it was also mentioned that 91% of the cases found that the mission statements focused more on customer service and not necessarily on employees and/or the workplace environment (Wright, 2002)
- ❖ It was suggested that creating a culturally competent environment be central as this can enhance awareness and cultural empowerment (Chambers and Alexis, 2020).
- ❖ Specifically if educational institutes wholeheartedly followed through with the diversity aspect they outlined, it would benefit students and employees and even protect individuals from experiencing violent encounters (Rozado and Atkins, 2020)
- ❖ Particularly in higher education organizations, “diversity promotes a positive attitude toward accepting, tolerating, embracing, and ultimately respecting differences” (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015, p. 671).



# Research Questions

Q1 - How does Villa Maria College implement diversity, equity, and inclusion policies?

Q2 - What aspects of Villa Maria College's mission statement are implemented within the institution?



# Research Methods

- ❖ Review of Villa Maria College's Mission Statement
- ❖ Review of Villa Maria College's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policies
- ❖ Review of Villa Maria College's Accessibility Procedures, with particular attention being dedicated to the Achieve Program
- ❖ Compare Mission Statement to DEI and Accessibility Procedures

## **Mission Statement:**

**“Offering academic programs with a broad core curriculum, the College transforms and empowers students to realize their intellectual, creative, professional, and spiritual potential.**

**Inspired by a welcoming Catholic tradition and a dynamic Franciscan spirit, Villa Maria College offers individual attention and fosters compassion, justice, peace, respect for human dignity and a commitment to service” (*About us*, 2022).**

## DEI Statement:

**“At Villa Maria College, we value diversity and respect for human dignity as foundations for our collective growth. We develop effective reciprocal relationships based on compassion, trust, and authenticity. To fulfill this purpose, we welcome all students and employees who contribute to the richness of our diversity. We work every day to ensure that all who join our inclusive community have what they need to realize their full potential” (*Diversity, equity, and inclusion, 2022*).**

## **Achieve Program Statement:**

**“The Achieve Program provides specialized services to students with learning differences. At Villa, we look at students’ needs individually, and develop a plan to help ease their transition into college. Through the Achieve Program, students can build their confidence as they develop the skills that are critical for achieving academic and social successes at the collegiate level and beyond” (*Achieve, 2022*).**



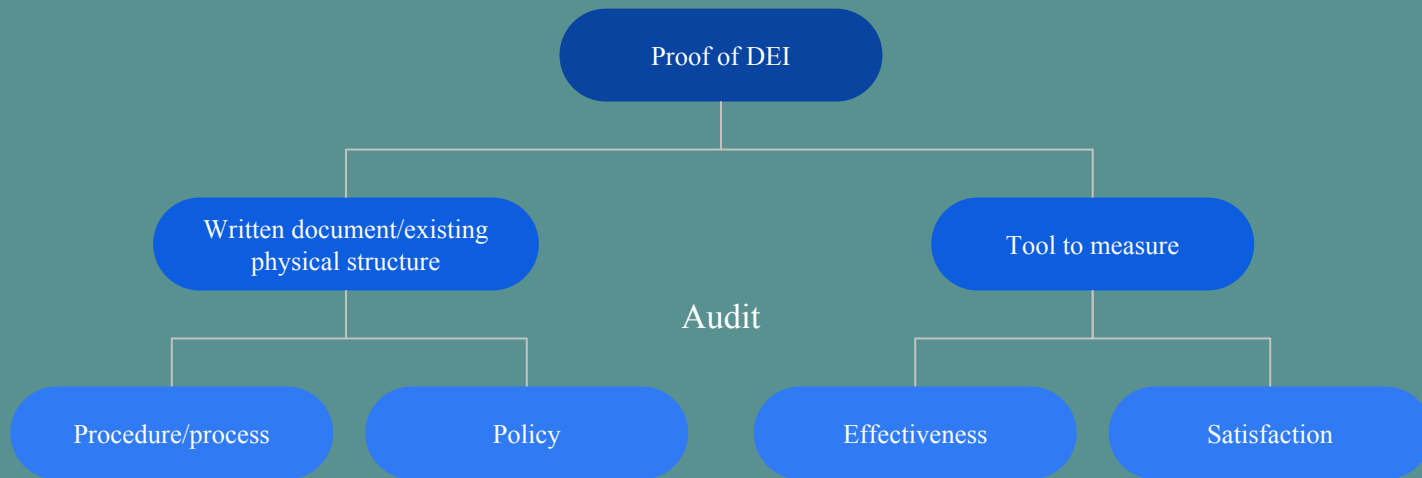
# On Campus DEI Initiatives

- ❖ No required entry exams
- ❖ Books and supplies included in tuition
- ❖ Food pantry on campus that serves students, employees, and individuals in the community
- ❖ Heritage Week
- ❖ Day of Service
- ❖ Transportation Committee
- ❖ Student Emergency Fund
- ❖ Achieve Program for students with Learning Differences
- ❖ Replacing non-credit/remedial courses with supplemental instruction for all ENG101 courses



# Questionnaires

1. In your policy, you use “equity” → show me the proof (any written documents that can show equity when it comes to interview students before and after you provide the service? Demographic of staffs...)  
→how can you implement them in the procedure of hiring teachers, staffs and the criteria of hiring them?
1. In the mission, you say “five core values” and “three core values” → how can you implement them in the DEI training? How can you reflect them in the process of providing students service and accessibility?
2. You mention about “broad curriculum”... in the policy→ can you show me the proof that the broad curriculum is reflecting the DEI for the diverse population of students?)
3. How the facility of the school that reflect DEI for staff and students? (the function of each classes or buildings)
4. In the policy, your organization mention about accessibility, do you have any proof (written document? Curriculum? Activities? Projects )
5. Do you have any documents that you train your employees about DEI? (written documents? materials?)
6. How do you measure your EDI training ... (success/effective) → show me (any written document? Interview notes? Follow-up report or meetings?)
7. How often you train your employees about EDI? → show me (any agenda, annual meetings calendar?...)
8. Who are the people that you include in the training? → how often they work with students? How do they reflect the training to the work that they do?





# Initial Findings

- ❖ Diversity included in the organizations mission statement
  - Implied not mentioned directly
  - Non-Discrimination, DEI Statements
- ❖ Representation of diverse people in all levels of the organization
  - Translates non-discrimination to spanish and polish
- ❖ Corporate social responsibility programs that contribute resources, people, financial resources, etc to a range of causes that benefit diverse groups of people
  - Tutors, accessibility services, learning labs
  - Financial aid, scholarships
- ❖ Evidence that the organization is inclusive
  - Non-Discrimination, DEI Statements



## Conclusion

Q1 - How does Villa Maria College implement diversity, equity, and inclusion policies?

- ❖ Accessible learning available to students
- ❖ Tutor services
- ❖ Scholarships - affordability considerations

Q2 - What aspects of Villa Maria College's mission statement are implemented within the institution?

- ❖ Empowering students - tutor/accessibility services, test centre services
- ❖ Commitments to service - 99% of students receive some form of financial aid and 96% receive Villa-funded grants/scholarships



# Limitations

- ❖ Limited to only using the policies it is hard to determine what the actual implementation of what their outline really is
- ❖ One of group member is working in the organization that the audit was implemented, it is hard to avoid the hesitation from the interviewees or interviewer because of the political dynamics (when it comes to interview people who is in charge of any aspects that we conduct the audit)
- ❖ There might be some unconscious bias from the interviewer because he/she is working within the organization, it is unavoidable because she might be used to the system and the agenda within the organization
- ❖ Villa Maria College is still experiencing a big change in diverse population in the last 2 years, there is a new wave of international students coming in the last 2 years and the number has been increasing
  - Challenge the organization to adapt and adopt the change culturally and academically when it comes to proof of strategic plans or long-term effective projects/plan (might not develop enough (good) plans to cover/implement the mission statement into the policy)



# Future Research Questions

Q1 - Do students who access accessibility services feel supported in their classes?

Q2 - What is the student, faculty, and staff experience on campus like in relation to DEI?

Q3 - How can hiring practices change so that the faculty and staff demographic better aligns with the diverse student body?



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