

CASE STUDY
**MARYMOUNT
UNIVERSITY**



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At a time when our community and country were grappling with a range of social justice issues, Icarus Consulting was asked by Marymount University to help create “a diverse and inclusive community of learners.” Icarus Consulting conducted focus groups with faculty, staff, and students. The results were presented to the University’s leadership, and the president asked Icarus Consulting to help the School address them. The goal was to create an environment so that everyone had a positive and fulfilling experience as part of the University’s community. Icarus Consulting used a multi-phase action strategy:

Phase 1 Enhance Accountability to Ensure Sustainability

• **Reporting Roles, Responsibilities, and Remedial Actions:**

- Enhanced processes and increased awareness of policies and procedures for reporting instances of racism.
- Clarified the roles that senior leadership, HR, honor council, and discipline council play in combating racism at the University.
- Communicated that all racial incidents and comments were to be promptly reported to the HR and the Provost.
- Reinforced that all reported acts of racism are required to be promptly and thoroughly investigated in accordance with the University’s policies, which are designed to protect confidentiality and prevent retribution.
- Reiterated that all substantiated cases of racist conduct are subject to prompt and effective remedial action and subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal/discharge.

- **Off-Site Venue Assessment:** Reviewed all School-hosted events and their locations to ensure they foster a feeling of inclusivity.

- **Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Position**: Elevated Director of Inclusion position to the Academic Leadership Group to better foster communication and professional development from that office.
- **Inclusion Committee Elevation**: Expanded the role of the Inclusion Committee, increased resources, and enhanced the visibility of the School's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council.
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council**: Revised bylaws and renamed the committee on diversity, equity, and inclusion, previously called the Responsible Citizenship Committee, to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council.
- **All-Volunteer Boards**: Reviewed and recommended changes to the bylaws governing volunteer boards, including the Board of Trustees and Alumni Board, to ensure that each group and its members were fully aligned with the School's DEI vision.
- **DEI Training for Faculty and Staff**: Conducted training for faculty and staff that focused on the bias, racism, anti-racism, white privilege, and other diversity, equity, and inclusion topics.
- **Town Hall Sessions**: Facilitated town hall and listening session to help the School's leadership gain a deeper understanding of DEI, to identify where the School was falling short, and to identify areas where the School's DEI efforts could make a more substantial impact through additional forums and direct outreach.
- **Affinity Groups**: Expanded the scope and awareness of the School's affinity groups. These groups allowed people who share an identity, usually marginalized, to talk in a safe space about issues related to that identity, to feel more visible and more included in the community.
- **External DEI Advisory Council**: Formed an external council of nationally recognized stakeholders to work with the School's leadership team and advise on steps to achieve schoolwide justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.
- **Curriculum Audit**: Audited the School's curriculum and drafted a plan to implement a more culturally inclusive curriculum.
- **Task Force on Civil Discourse**: Formed a Task Force for Civil Discourse to facilitate constructive dialogue and equip the School's external community with the skills to have continued productive dialogue and to make a durable change.

These crucial actions were foundational for the next steps need to advance and accelerate DEI efforts.

Phase 2 → **Develop DEI Business Case and Action Plan**

Icarus Consulting worked with the School's Board and developed a DEI strategy. The DEI Strategy was mission-driven and aligned the entire University experience with a mission focused on inclusivity. Icarus Consulting facilitated DEI action teams and solicited additional feedback from students, faculty, and staff to get fresh perspectives. Icarus Consulting helped the school form an Alumni Advisory Group (AAG), which focused on opportunities for students of color. Icarus Consulting also helped increase diversity across the School and by helping to revise policies and practices to foster inclusion by addressing racial, ethnic, and gender concerns.

Phase 3 → Enhance Culture and Learning Environment

Icarus Consulting helped the School formulate a long-range DEI strategic plan. The effort involved more than 400 alumni, parents, students, and faculty and staff who provided valuable feedback. This vital planning work validated DEI as a significant strategic pillar essential to the School's future. Icarus Consulting collected data using a University-wide survey, which helped inform the strategy development. The final DEI strategic plan helped create a roadmap to make the School a better place for all students and a positive force in building a more just community. The DEI strategic plan included measurable two critical long-term goals and milestones for reaching them:

1. Prepare students to impact the world as responsible citizens positively.
2. Maintain relevance in an increasingly diverse and inclusive world.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU

More information can be found on our web site:

www.icarusconsult.net



863 Flat Shoals Road SE
Suite C-129, Conyers, Georgia 30094



Dr. Shelton J. Goode, CEO and president
Email: shelton.goode@icarusconsult.net



Mobile: (770) 550-3374
Office: ((678-806-3922)