Westminster College is dedicated to social justice, equity, and respect as fundamental components of our mission and core values. Informed by our college-wide learning goals, Westminster acknowledges and engages with the values, experiences, worldviews, and intersectional identities and characteristics of all members of our campus community. Furthermore, we strive for Inclusive Excellence by consistently interweaving diversity and inclusion into our curricula and co-curricular activities, programs, policies, practices, and external engagement. It is our goal to cultivate a respectful, equitable, and healthy campus community.

As part of this statement, we define diversity as individual differences, life experiences, group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, nationality, and disability), historically underrepresented groups, and groups with cultural, political, religious/spiritual, or other affiliations.

This Diversity Statement is further supported by our Commitment to an Inclusive Westminster, the President’s Statement on Safe Haven, and our Equal Opportunity, ADA, and Title IX policies.

Our Commitment to an Inclusive Westminster is only realized through our specific actions and beliefs:

- We continue to live and embody our core values as they relate to diversity and inclusion and we recognize that the work of diversity and inclusion is an ethical imperative.
- We fully realize that engaging our students in diversity-focused curricula and co-curricular activities better prepares them to be leaders, thinkers, and global citizens.
- We strive to diversify our campus through proactive and intentional policies and strategies aimed at the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- We engage our local and extended campus community in dialogue and shared experiences in a continuous process of learning with and from each other.
- We recognize that our pursuit of excellence depends on our ability to have individuals from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, beliefs, and philosophical outlooks.
- We are committed to building relationships among social identity groups and we strive to have productive dialogue and meaningful action across our differences while engaging in critical and rigorous analysis.
- We understand and embrace the educational benefits of diversity because different viewpoints and lived experiences enrich the learning experience. We also understand that power, privilege, subordination, and other forces of inequality play a role in shaping our individual and collective experiences and identities.
- We strive to build an equity-minded college where everyone feels welcomed.

Approved:

/s/_________________________________        September 8, 2017
Board Chair                                Date Adopted

\[1\] Underlined terms are described on Page 2
Description of Terms

**Diversity**: Individual differences, life experiences, group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, nationality, and disability), historically underrepresented groups, and groups with cultural, political, religious/spiritual, or other affiliations. *Adapted from the AAC&U.*

**Disability**: The term disability or (dis)ability may capture a range of identities and characteristics – mental and physical differences, neurodivergence, and other conditions that might affect one’s behavior, function, and learning. *(Center for an Accessible Society, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)*

**Equity**: The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that address institutionalized achievement gaps in student success and completion. *Adapted from the AAC&U.*

**Inclusion**: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity – in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect – in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions. From the *AAC&U.*

**Inclusive Excellence**: As an alloy, Inclusive Excellence re-envisions both quality and diversity. It reflects a striving for excellence in higher education that has been made more inclusive by decades of work to infuse diversity into recruiting, admissions, and hiring; into the curriculum and co-curriculum; and into administrative structures and practices. Through the vision and practice of inclusive excellence, AAC&U calls for higher education to address diversity, inclusion, and equity as critical to the wellbeing of democratic culture. Making excellence inclusive is thus an active process through which colleges and universities achieve excellence in learning, teaching, student development, institutional functioning, and engagement in local and global communities. *From the AAC&U.*

**Intersectionality**: Recognizes that individuals have multiple interlocking identities defined in terms of sociocultural power and privilege, and that these identities shape people’s individual and collective experiences. Identity is understood as all identities held by the individual, as well as the systems of privilege and oppression within which their identities are located. Informed by *(Shields, 2008)*.

**Social Justice**: Recognizes that for centuries, U.S.A. and global societies have been based on the systematic oppression of marginalized groups and that diversifying higher education is a way to begin addressing historical injustices and exclusion. Social Justice is a commitment to taking concrete steps to reverse the effects of centuries of systematic exclusion. In building a community of learners, social justice fosters critical thinking and a deeper sense of social responsibility toward and with others, society, the environment, and the broader world in which we live. Informed by (Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, 2016; *Nelson, Creagh, & Clarke, 2012*).