

UNIVERSITY HOUSING

Culture and Climate Action Plan

2023-2026



Student Affairs



I

A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT VICE CHANCELLOR, ALMA R. SEALINE:

I am honored to introduce University Housing's Culture and Climate Action Plan. This plan is the result of a great deal of hard work and collaboration by individuals and committees from across the department and Student Affairs. In particular, I want to thank the University Housing Inclusion Committee and Beth Hoag, director for assessment and planning in Student Affairs, for their work to help our plan come together.

This action plan further affirms University Housing's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and our strategic direction for increasing our commitment. Inclusion work is a dedicated, continuous effort to recognize the value and talents of all who live in, work with and serve our residential communities. This work can be challenging, and the change is not always easy to see.

Change is not smooth or easy. We don't always get things right in response to our inclusion efforts. We stumble, we fail and we forget. We also get back up and try again to understand where we have fallen short. We learn, we grow and we apply the knowledge we gain as we continue to strive to better recognize and value all voices within the residential experience. This work is essential for the future of University Housing!

I encourage you to study this document to learn more about the priority initiatives we have identified for the next 3 – 5 years in expanding our resources, training and advocacy for the residential experience.



Alma R. Sealine

Assistant Vice Chancellor for Auxiliary,
Health & Wellbeing and Executive
Director of University Housing

BACKGROUND

In 2020, the University Housing Inclusion Committee was tasked with assessing University Housing's commitment to and implementation of inclusive and equitable policies, practices and facilities. This assessment began with a review of the diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives in place at that time for students and staff. The committee also asked staff what efforts were working, and if there were populations not being served by those efforts.

While this assessment showed areas of strength, it also shed light on our employees' experiences with exclusion, bias and discomfort, indicating problems to be fixed and areas for improvement. One identified need was to attract and retain diverse talent.

With the assessment results in-hand, strengthening our commitment to change, the committee was asked to develop a three-year strategic plan for a more inclusive and equitable University Housing. The University Housing Culture and Climate Action Plan was to

include recommendations on issues and actionable responses for the department; the review and enhancement of large-scale bias and intolerance response protocols; identification of training and development needs for all staff members, including student staff; and recommendations on hiring and retention practices with the intention to create a more diverse work force within University Housing.

In addition, the committee was tasked with developing an accountability plan to ensure the strategic plan goals and objectives of each University Housing unit are met. This included the identification of behavioral expectations for staff pertaining to diversity, equity and inclusion policies and practices and developing follow-up strategies for non-responsive units.



ACCOUNTABILITY

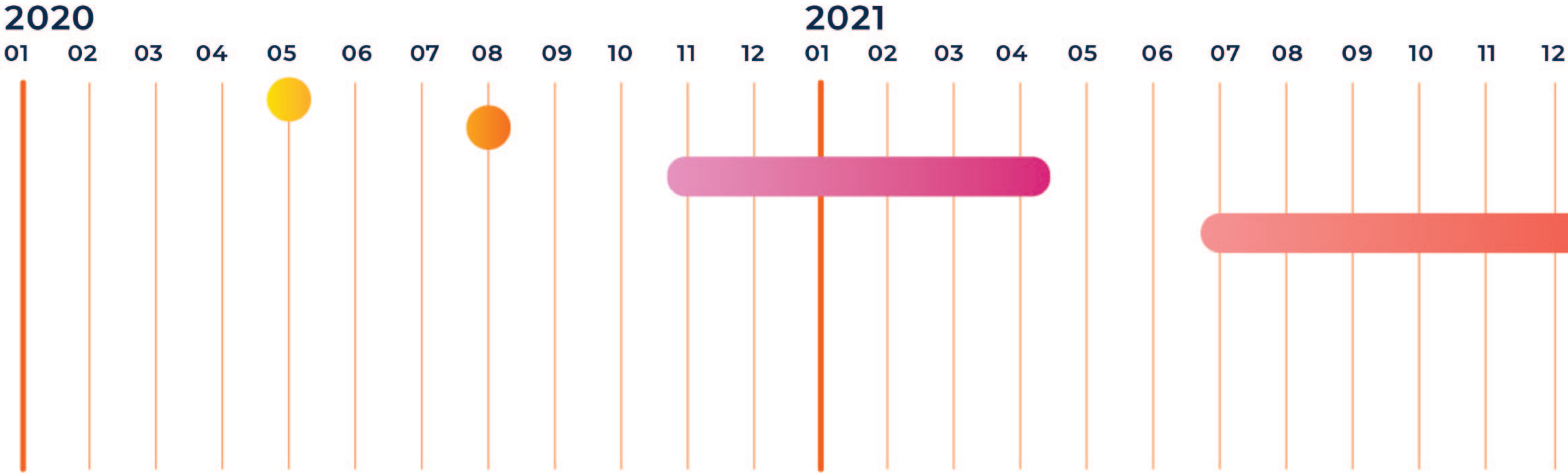
University Housing consists of a diverse community with varying ideals and beliefs, and we believe practicing accountability is an obligation we have to ourselves and to each other. Demonstrated accountability builds trust in our community and its members and reaffirms our commitment toward providing a welcoming environment for all.

Accountability in University Housing means:

- › We do what we say we will do and act with integrity. When we fall short of an expectation or agreed upon commitment, we will respond to departmental staff with a rationale and plan of execution to course correct. We will create space for University Housing staff to express the impact of falling short and then co-construct a path forward.
- › We take ownership of our actions, decisions and impact, including the areas where we need to improve.
- › We will discuss and mutually agree on who owns the responsibility of actions to be executed to clarify and streamline work.
- › We will provide quarterly, transparent progress reports to document our successes, failures and challenges.
- › We will prioritize financial and human resources toward realizing our commitments and priorities.



TIMELINE OF PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS



May
2020

Creation of the Inclusion and Talent Development unit in University Housing.

Aug
2020

The inclusion committee was convened, and the need for a University Housing climate assessment was identified.

Nov / Apr
2020 / 2021

Internal departmental audit of DEI staff activities, training, initiatives, needs and opportunities.

Jul / Mar
2021 / 2022

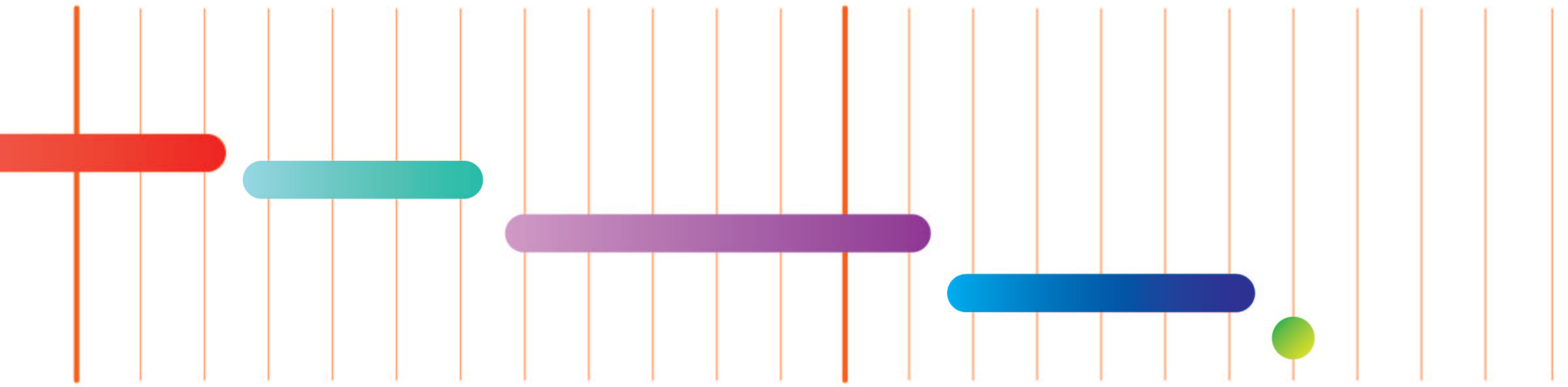
The Illinois Human Resources Strategic Initiatives Office administered a survey, hosted focus groups and individual interviews through a confidential process.

2022

01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12

2023

01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12



Apr / Jul
2022 / 2022

The Illinois Human Resources Strategic Initiatives Office developed and shared recommendations during a town hall meeting to elicit employees' feedback. These recommendations informed the scope of the Culture and Climate Action Plan.

Aug / Feb
2022 / 2023

Commitments and priorities were developed, and staff feedback sessions were held for all employees to provide feedback.

Mar / Jul
2023 / 2023

The inclusion committee developed action steps, a timeline and methods to measure progress and accountability standards.

Aug
2023

Launch of Action Plan.

IN PROGRESS

1

DEVELOPMENT

Creation of manager training on inclusion and conflict management



RECOGNITION

University Housing staff appreciation and recognition events



2

3

PERFORMANCE

Development of performance evaluation best practices



RESOURCES

Development of a diversity resource guide for managers

4

WHAT COMES NEXT 2023-2026

COMMITMENTS, PRIORITIES, ACTION STEPS AND MEASURES

COMMITMENT 1

Build an informative and consistently accessible culture of inclusive and transparent communication to ensure staff of all backgrounds and positional responsibility are heard and acknowledged.

Priority 1: Establish clear and consistent methods for communication of key decisions and rationale for all levels of staff. Increase transparency and ensure communications meet accessibility guidelines for all staff, with special consideration to staff technology access.

- › **Action Step #1, Year #1:** Establish a standard of information that is consistently accessible to all employees. Communicate the information, where it can be found and how often it will be updated. *Championed by Kim Otchere.*
- › **Action Step #2, Year #2:** Identify existing inclusion projects and professional development opportunities happening in each unit and share this information with employees. *Championed by Kim Otchere.*
- › **Action Step #3, Year #3:** Develop and publish a department diversity profile, reporting staffing demographics on the University Housing employment website. *Championed by Cindi Vandeventer.*

Priority 2: Create opportunities for staff to provide input and feedback on current and developing initiatives, processes, policies and procedures. *Championed by Chris Axtman-Barker.*

- › **Action Step #1, Years #2 and 3:** Implement an assessment strategy for routinely obtaining staff feedback and through impromptu means.
- › **Action Step #2, Years #2 and 3:** Determine how to communicate responses and information related to feedback in a timely manner.
- › **Action Step #3, Years #2 and 3:** Create a simple channel of communication that will allow staff to share ideas and questions anonymously.
- › **Action Step #4, Years #2 and 3:** Communicate opportunities to participate in committees, task forces, searches and processes.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. Staff members will feel confident their opinions will be heard and acknowledged.
2. Staff will be able to identify how to provide input and feedback to University Housing.
3. Tracking measures will be utilized to measure staff feedback submitted through input forms.
4. Development of a staff communications platform that will convey information related to decisions, policies and practices.

COMMITMENT 2

Create training and development programs designed to empower supervisory staff to confidently respond to the complex, changing needs of University Housing's diverse community.

Priority 1: Develop a clear set of expectations and best practices for consistent engagement between staff and supervisors utilizing the lenses of diversity and inclusion. *Championed by Jeanette Weider.*

› **Action Step #1, Year #1:** Develop best practice guidelines for performance evaluation, including 360-degree feedback.

› **Action Step #2, Year #1:** Utilize existing policies, procedures and governing materials to create source materials to identify overarching high-priority DEI performance goals for supervisory staff (departmental and unit-specific).



- › **Action Step #3, Year #2:** Create a supervisor onboarding and orientation training program to include tools for self-assessment and a plan for skills-coaching.
 - › **Action Step #4, Year #2:** Develop feedback process for employee academic professional and open range performance evaluations, to include peer feedback and participation of the employee being evaluated.
 - › **Action Step #5, Year #3:** Launch supervisor orientation and onboarding training program.
-

Priority 2: Implement conflict resolution and coaching skills programs to better equip supervisors to navigate problematic situations in their area of control. *Championed by Kim Otchere.*

- › **Action Step #1, Year #1:** Develop conflict training content to include accountability training and skills for managing conflict.
 - › **Action Step #2, Year #1:** Develop a supervisor-to-supervisee one-on-one monthly coaching skills plan and a list of talking points, including discussion of job-specific skills and diversity, equity and inclusion.
-

Priority 3: Provide professional development opportunities and departmental infrastructure for supervisors to lead training and development experiences for the advancement of inclusion efforts in University Housing. *Championed by Herb Jones.*

- › **Action Step #1, Year #2:** Initiate supervisor participation in DEI training and development workshops, beyond the annual required training.
- › **Action Step #2, Year #2:** All unit heads/directors will create succession plans for key supervisory roles with significant business functions, potentially including cross-training of staff.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. Supervisors will demonstrate increased confidence in how to manage employee interpersonal conflicts.
2. Managers will employ the skills learned and participation will be tracked and audited.
3. Pre- and post- surveys will show an increase in supervisors' feelings of empowerment, confidence and ability to mitigate conflicts and problematic situations.
4. An increased number of attendees at inclusion-focused professional development workshops for supervisors.
5. The development of a conflict management program for supervisors.

COMMITMENT 3

Establish equitable compensation expectations for all staff with purposeful consideration to those historically marginalized. *Championed by Alma R. Sealine and Cindi Vandeventer.*

Priority 1: Review compensation history and policies by employee groups to provide recommendations to ensure historical barriers to compensation equity are reviewed, recognized and responded to.

› **Action Step #1, Year #3:** Secure compensation data from the last 10 years for select Academic Professionals & Civil Service open range and negotiated staff in each unit.

› **Action Step #2, Year #3:** Secure historical compensation policies from Illinois Human Resources, Student Affairs Human Resources and University Housing Human Resources.



- › **Action Step #3, Year #3:** Identify historical barriers to creating and sustaining equitable compensation for staff.
- › **Action Step #4, Year #3:** Provide recommendations to University Housing to better respond to compensation issues and barriers identified in this review.
- › **Action Step #5, Year #3:** Educate University Housing employees on compensation policies and processes, as well as the historical and current state of compensation.

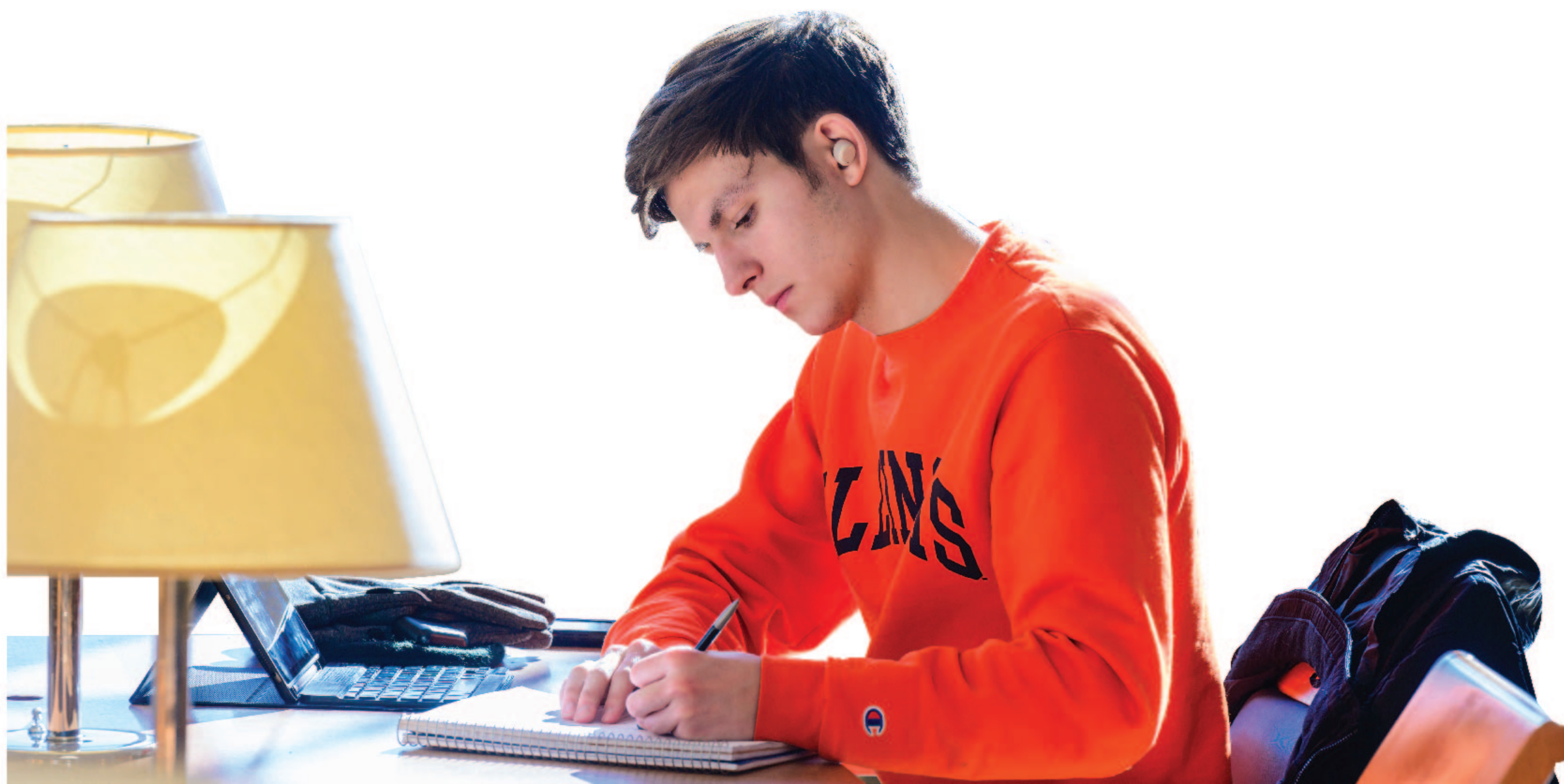
Priority 2: Assess the history of compensation for historically marginalized staff of protected classes (i.e., race and gender) to identify equitable compensation needs.



- › **Action Step #1, Year #2:** Collect compensation data for a sample set of University Housing employees with marginalized identities over the last 10 years.
- › **Action Step #2, Year #2:** Evaluate collected data and identify needs.
- › **Action Step #3, Year #2:** Share findings with University Housing employees.

Priority 3: Assess work by unit and position to identify needs and opportunities in support of compensation equity across the department.

- › *Action Step #1, Years #2 and 3:* Identify common titles and working titles across units and the related pay range for the identified roles with a focus on the official salary range, not the current pay of employees in those roles.
- › *Action Step #2, Years #2 and 3:* Identify positional responsibilities, skills and education based on current job descriptions.
- › *Action Step #3, Years #2 and 3:* Identify which responsibilities, skills and education level required are unit-specific and which are related to departmental needs.
- › *Action Step #4, Years #2 and 3:* Identify opportunities for common departmental responsibilities for more departmentwide consistency in similar roles across units.
- › *Action Step #5, Years #2 and 3:* Conduct a compensation review against field-related market compensation and campus compensation.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. Staff will have knowledge of the historical components of compensation and awareness that their pay meets or exceeds industry standards and benchmarks, resulting in knowing they are being fairly compensated.
2. Staff will have access to reports that include a summary of barriers, gaps and salary ranges.
3. University Housing will have reviewed 30% of its positions by 2026.
4. Culture and climate surveys will show increased scores.

COMMITMENT 4

Develop a culture of recruitment, retention and advancement of a diverse staff who reflect the diverse identities of the residents we serve and University Housing's inclusivity values.

Priority 1: Explore and implement systems where staff feel valued and supported through responsive work environments. *Championed by Mari Anne Brocker Curry.*

- **Action Step #1, Year #1:** Develop and launch pulse surveys to identify what employees need to feel valued in a responsive work environment.
- **Action Step #2, Year #1:** Develop recurring employee recognition initiatives and highlight talent.
- **Action Step #3, Year #2:** Market the University Housing brand by highlighting our impact on the community and publicly acknowledging the donations University Housing provides to community partners.



- › **Action Step #4, Year #2:** Develop new hire orientation for University Housing, which will include a faculty/staff assistance segment.
 - › **Action Step #5, Year #3:** Implement a community showcase for positions within University Housing.
-

Priority 2: Engage divisional and campus stakeholders to develop best practices for diverse talent sourcing. *Championed by Matt Brown.*

- › **Action Step #1, Year #2:** Explore and implement new opportunities to broaden diverse talent pools for recruitment through industry symposiums, events and digital outlets.
-

Priority 3: Develop methods to identify and provide growth opportunities for staff. *Championed by Beth Slotnick.*

- › **Action Step #1, Year #1:** Explore utilizing one-on-one coaching sessions biannually with supervisors related to performing yearly staff evaluations.
 - › **Action Step #2, Year #3:** Assess each unit's need for staff onboarding training and create a training and onboarding plan as indicated.
-

Priority 4: Establish and engage in proactive retention activities to increase employment longevity of staff whose work actively reflects the values built into the DEI goals of Student Affairs and University Housing. *Championed by Jason Ensign.*

- › **Action Step #1, Year #2:** Explore the salary adjustments and equitable pay needed to retain staff.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. The production and use of a best practices guide with strategies for recruitment, retention and advancement.
2. Increased participation in growth opportunities such as coaching, training and development workshops and departmental committees and initiatives.
3. Opportunities and pathways for advancement will be identified and communicated.
4. University Housing employees will feel a sense of belonging.
5. There will be an increased percentage of qualified staff of protected classes included in search pools.
6. There will be increased retention of staff after one year and after five years of service.







WITH
I
THE CAMPAIGN FOR
ILLINOIS

WITH
I