Equity Action Plan for the School of Education and Psychology
Walla Walla University

1. The School and the Equity Task Force

“Walla Walla University is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian comprehensive university founded in 1892. Dedicated to the academic, spiritual, social, and physical aspects of a holistic education, the university provides a broad range of activities and opportunities designed to add depth and maturity to a Christ-centered life.

“The university is located in the city of College Place, in the historic, fertile Walla Walla Valley of southeastern Washington. The old Oregon Trail, passing west of the campus, leads directly to the nearby Whitman Mission National Historic Site. The scenic Blue Mountains to the east and the Snake and Columbia Rivers to the north and west offer opportunities for recreation and reflection on the natural beauties of God’s creation Dunzweiler et al. (2016, p1).”

The parent organization of Walla Walla University, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with 18 million members worldwide, has the distinction of being named the most diverse church in the United States (Blair, 2015), being more diverse than the mix within the United States itself. This marvelous diverse demographic is meaningful in that children in the church grow up with mission stories and books from all over the world, often seeing returned missionaries. Many of the children grow up in missionary families themselves. In late elementary school, in academy/high school, and in tertiary school, Seventh-day Adventist children and young people travel to many areas of the United States, the Americas, and abroad to serve in whatever capacity is needed, without judgement and without pay. Many of the candidates within the School of Education and Psychology have chosen to spend three months or more at a school in another country learning another language or in a school setting on an island or in a developing country where their teaching services, though not yet theoretically strong, are enthusiastically appreciated.
The Walla Walla University administration, faculty, and staff are firmly dedicated to principles of equity in action (Maynard-Reid, 2010). As an integral part of the university, the faculty and staff of the School of Education and Psychology (WWU-SEP) are strongly involved in strengthening the School’s equity plans, especially with renewed conviction after an invaluable intermittent yearlong equity set of trainings by the Professional Educators Standards Board (Huff et al., 2015, 2016). Additionally, the WWU-SEP is dedicated to the principles written in its Conceptual Framework, recently revised as a joint action by the Professional Educators Advisory Board (PEAB) and the WWU-SEP faculty/staff:

The belief that we are all God’s children, created in His image, and redeemed by God through the infinite sacrifice of Jesus Christ, gives inestimable value and worth to every individual, no matter their race, cultural background, inherent intellectual abilities, learning styles, or physical limitations. Therefore, the WWU-SEP is committed to fostering the unique gifts of each individual and celebrating diversity. Dunzweiler et al. (2016, p3)

James Banks (2015), from Washington University, has problematized the notion of “race” with its concomitant racism on p. 10 of one of his recent books. After calling out the scientific perpetuation of racist theories in Darwinism and eugenics, he notes that biology data have more recently revealed “the characteristics that different racial and ethnic groups share, [along with anthropology’s work on] . . . universals in human cultures . . .”

With a total of 6.5 faculty members, one volunteer faculty member, 5-6 adjunct faculty, 3 staff, and 130 students in September, 2016, the School under the direction of Dean Dunzweiler offers five undergraduate degree programs: BS Elementary Education, BS Secondary Education, BA Psychology Major, BS Psychology Major, and a BS Forensic Psychology Major.
The School offers three graduate degree programs: MA in Education and Med in Education with three specializations—Curriculum and Instruction, Literacy Instruction, Educational Leadership—and a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) with five specializations—Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership, Literacy Instruction, Instruction with Certification—Elementary, and Instruction with Certification—Secondary.

In all the above programs, the WWU-SEP with this new equity plan chooses to intentionally create and better “define the education career pathway for students of color” (Airhart et al., 2006). With appreciation to the School of Social Work at University of British Columbia for invaluable assistance in determining issues of format (Riaño-Alcalá & O’Neill, 2013), the WWU-SEP states its Equity Action Plan in this document, which will be submitted for approval to our local Professional Educators Advisory Board (PEAB).

2. An Action Plan for Equity and Our Current State
On August 14, 2015, an equity-action team consisting of the Dean of the WWU-SEP, the Placement Officer, the Placement-Officer-in-Training, and both of the then full-time education-faculty members attended a full day training in Renton, WA., on the topics of “Orientation, Community Building, Racial Identify, and Culture Exploration.” In October of 2015 the team went back for a two-day training on topics of micro-aggressions, privilege, institutional/structural racism, historical and modern racism, oppression, and disrupting structural racism.

January 28 and 29 of 2016, the WWU-SEP equity-in-education team interacted in another two-day training on the topics of examining biases and stereotypes, along with racial caucuses. In April, the last two-day training dealt with culturally responsive instruction.

The “exit slip,” as it were, for the equity team was an equity plan that could be immediately implemented. The team had put together the germ of an equity plan, and immediately implemented one of the steps by inviting Erin Jones to the campus of WWU-SEP to meet and mingle with candidates, faculty, staff, administrators, and all of the administrators and staff at the
local public elementary school. Posters and online materials regarding Dr. Jones and her philosophy of education were disseminated to all the invitees before the meeting date. She gave a stirring talk, followed by questions and answers from the audience.

One other component of that first draft of an equity plan involved starting a journal entitled *Synergistic Education for Equity and Diversity (SEED)*. This journal is still in its incipient stages, but high on the priority list for education faculty. Informing adjunct faculty of the need for syllabus changes that reflect an appreciation of candidates representing a diverse demographic is still in process, with discussions among librarians who might host a site where all adjunct professors could avail themselves of necessary information and materials. One adjunct did attend the pre-quarter-start faculty colloquia this fall where issues of equity in diversity were part of the two-day series.

The last and most ambitious component of the equity plan involved taking the WWU-SEP Smith Hall space that had previously been claimed by the counseling psychology master’s program, soon to go into hiatus, to form it into a Center for Education in Equity and Diversity (CEED), an idea we took straight from the PESB training (Huff et al., 2015, 2016), is not at all gaining traction at this point. Perhaps better ideas for the space that will improve our WWU-SEP equity in diversity will supersede that one.

3. **Equity and the School of Education and Psychology: Strategic Issues and Areas of Needed Change**

Our WWU-SEP faculty and adjuncts need to understand protocols for teaching students from a diverse demographic. NSRF has an excellent list at [http://www.nsrpharmony.org/free-resources/protocols/a-z](http://www.nsrpharmony.org/free-resources/protocols/a-z), along with a one-page paper that explains the definition of and uses for protocols in equitable pedagogy.

Our WWU-SEP administration, faculty, staff, and adjuncts need to plan for and attend ongoing professional development activities that could include more speakers like Erin Jones, TED talks (including hers), videos (such as the
Paper Tigers documentary that was screened on the WWU campus recently and, incidentally, was filmed at the local high school site where several of our candidates have student taught and where many of them go to tutor students. This itinerary will take time and expense to develop, so our WWU-SEP is planning for a master’s student or other part-time staff to oversee the organization and implementation of the plan (see budget attached).

Our WWU-SEP administration, faculty, and staff are planning to intentionally recruit to our WWU-SEP a minimum of six paraprofessional aides from the local public schools who fit certain qualifications—they will be from a diverse demographic, they will have a goal of wanting to improve their teaching skills and possible earn a teaching certificate, and their administration agrees that they will be partially sponsored by their school site (as well as partially by WWU-SEP). Each of these candidates-to-be will be given a laptop and Internet access at home so that they can keep up with the demands of an evening academic program.

Our WWU-SEP administration, faculty, and staff additionally will be liaising with the Walla Walla Community College to invite adjuncts from their program to teach in the evening in our program for the purpose of giving the paraprofessional candidates an opportunity to increase their skills and their service capabilities. To increase the visibility and viability of this community partnership, a local group of further partners will be formed from community institutions such as the Children’s Home Society of Washington-Walla Walla, The Farm Labor Homes, both public school districts, two local Spanish-language churches, and the Children’s Museum of Walla Walla.

4. Where We Are Going! The PLAN

4.1 A Vision for a Living Action Plan

Inclusion and equity in diversity should be basic tenets of a Christian institution, and the Walla Walla University School of Education and Psychology takes it responsibilities seriously in this very important area. The prevailing attitude of faculty and staff
can be summed up by four seminal statements put forth in February of 1999 by the American Council on Education. These have been quoted over and over again by other groups and institutions—most recently by the American Association of Community Colleges:

- **Diversity** enriches the educational experience. We learn from those whose experiences, beliefs, and perspectives are different from our own, and these lessons can be taught best in a richly diverse intellectual and social environment.

- **It promotes personal growth**—and a healthy society. Diversity challenges stereotyped preconceptions; it encourages critical thinking; and it helps students learn to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds.

- **It strengthens communities and the workplace.** Education within a diverse setting prepares students to become good citizens in an increasingly complex, pluralistic society; it fosters mutual respect and teamwork; and it helps build communities whose members are judged by the quality of their character and their contributions.

- **It enhances America’s economic competitiveness.** Sustaining the nation’s prosperity in the 21st century will require us to make effective use of the talents and abilities of all our citizens, in work settings that bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

American Association of Community Colleges

4.2 **Goal**

The WWU-SEP faculty and staff recognize that, although efforts have been made in the past, now is the time to move forward in a united, consistent, and systematic manner to plan and implement an equity action plan. This must be done in to address systemic deficits.
4.3 Strategic Commitments

The equity action plan of the WWU-SEP is organized around five strategic commitments that can be implemented based on actionable steps.

1. Our WWU-SEP faculty and adjuncts will utilize protocols and other materials available from PESB Diversity Training for teaching students from a diverse demographic. Links to these will be available online at the WWU-SEP Curriculum Library site. Additionally, WWU-SEP will bring in one special inclusion/diversity/equity speaker for 2016-2017, to which venue all faculty, staff, administration, and adjuncts will be invited.

2. Our WWU-SEP will recruit a master’s student or other part-time staff to oversee the organization and implementation of this plan (see budget attached).

3. WWU-SEP administration, faculty, and staff will recruit, through the master’s student or other staff (see #2 above) to our WWU-SEP a minimum of six paraprofessional aides from the local public schools who fit certain qualifications, who will each be given a laptop and home Internet access.

4. Our WWU-SEP administration, faculty, and staff will liaison with the Walla Walla Community College so that adjuncts from their program can teach the paraprofessional cohort in the evenings in our program an opportunity to increase their skills and their service capabilities.

5. A local group of further partners from community institutions such as the Children’s Home Society of Washington-Walla Walla, The Farm Labor Homes, both public school districts, two local Spanish-language churches, and the Children’s Museum of Walla Walla will be fostered for the purpose of receiving input on increasing representatives from a diverse demographic as pre-service candidates in the WWU-SEP. This group will analyze data from the first two phases of the plan.
### 4.4 Specific Strategies, Actions, Responsibilities, and Timeline

Implementing this equity action plan is a long-term commitment, so it will be divided into three yearly phases. Phase I will be immediately actionable (see below); Phase II will be implementation of longer-term goals (see below); and Phase III will be re-evaluation and further policy development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Commitment #</th>
<th>Specific Actions</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. a.</td>
<td>PESB Training Materials, including links to protocols, will be posted on an easily accessible site on the WWU-SEP Curriculum Library homepage</td>
<td>Alix Harris, with permission from Franice Stirling, WWU-SEP Curriculum Librarian</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>Cost of paying Mrs. Stirling for her time—see WWU-SEP budget</td>
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<td>1. b.</td>
<td>Invitation for presentation by inclusion/diversity/equity speaker</td>
<td>WWU-SEP and Dean</td>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>Grant monies to pay fee and travel expenses</td>
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<td>2. a.</td>
<td>Recruit part-time worker to assemble recruitment materials, travel to surrounding school districts</td>
<td>WWU-SEP Dean</td>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>Grant monies to pay part-time worker</td>
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<td>2. b.</td>
<td>Design and produce marketing materials for use by recruiter</td>
<td>Part-time recruiter/marketer</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>Grant monies to purchase supplies for recruitment</td>
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<td>3. a.</td>
<td>Work out agreements with WWU financial administration and public-school-district administration to cover cost of tuition for 6 paraprofessional teacher</td>
<td>WWU-SEP Dean</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>Part of Dean’s workload</td>
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<td></td>
<td>aides to receive certification</td>
<td>3. b. Identify 6 paraprofessionals from local public school districts to take certification classes</td>
<td>Superintendents and principals of surrounding public-school districts and Dean of WWU-SEP</td>
<td>Sept., 2017</td>
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<td>3. c.</td>
<td>Purchase 6 laptops and 6 data plans</td>
<td>Brian Hartman, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Sept., 2017</td>
<td>Grant monies</td>
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<td>4. a.</td>
<td>Establish a connection with Walla Walla Community College so that one of their staff members can teach evening classes for WWU-SEP for the convenience of the paraprofessionals</td>
<td>WWU-SEP Dean</td>
<td>Sept., 2017</td>
<td>Part of dean’s workload</td>
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<td>4. b.</td>
<td>Evening courses</td>
<td>Staff from WWCC on campus of WWU</td>
<td>January-June 2018 and onward as needed</td>
<td>Money from WWU-SEP and school districts</td>
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<td>5. a.</td>
<td>Build a strong coalition with community partners to evaluate and strengthen Equity Action Plan so that others from a diverse demographic may be included in further iterations of plan</td>
<td>WWU-SEP Dean and Faculty</td>
<td>June, 2018, and beyond</td>
<td>Part of dean and faculty workloads</td>
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References


