



Office of the President

February 28, 2025

Due to the "Dear Colleague Letter" (DCL) issued by the Department of Education (DOE) on February 14, 2025, and which requires compliance by February 28, 2025, the University must put the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee in abeyance, to comply with the mandates of the current federal interpretation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 set forth in the DCL.

The President of the University in 2002 (Sister Mary Reap, IHM, Ph.D.) established this University Standing Committee (USC) at the recommendation of the Policy Committee of the University. The Committee was formerly known as the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (2017 to 2021) and as the Cultural Diversity Committee (prior to 2017). At all stages and iterations, this USC, which flows from Marywood's welcoming and inclusive Mission, has been non-discriminatory with equal access to all, both in practice and in composition, complying with all applicable federal laws, and, specifically, with Title VI.

Additionally, the former Executive Director of Equity and Inclusion accepted a faculty position, thus leaving the Office of Equity and Inclusion unstaffed and key leadership positions of the DEI Committee vacant. Considering these factors, and following the academic restructuring of the University, effective July 1, 2024, the Office of Equity and Inclusion was dissolved. We are hopeful that during this abeyance period, our mission-centric efforts can be thoughtfully reimagined, and this USC, which has been dedicated to the education and enrichment of all people since its establishment more than 20 years ago, will resume this valuable work in a new way.

Please note that the DCL does not impact academic instruction, First Amendment-protected speech, or academic freedom. Even as legal matters surrounding DEI and the DCL are currently debated in federal courts, what remains constant, as it always has, is our Mission.

Marywood University believes *"education empowers people."* Our programs provide *"a comprehensive learning experience"* to *"promote academic excellence, advance innovative scholarship, and foster leadership in service to others."* Our Mission further affirms: *"Within a welcoming and supportive community, Marywood challenges individuals of all backgrounds to achieve their full potential and make choices based on spiritual and ethical values. Marywood University prepares students to seek sustainable solutions for the common good and educates global citizens to live responsibly in an interdependent world."*

Our Core Values further support our Mission, and we actively espouse the values of *Catholic Identity, Respect, Empowerment, Service, and Excellence*, all of which affirm the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching, namely the dignity of all persons, which comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment.

Lisa A. Lori, J.D.
President