

# Cendara University Diversity and Inclusion Statement

## Commitment to Equity

Cendara University is steadfast in its dedication to nurturing an academic community where equity, access, and belonging are woven into the fabric of campus life. Our commitment goes beyond compliance; it is an enduring pledge to champion fairness, confront barriers to opportunity, and assure that every community member is empowered to thrive.

From its inception, Cendara University has viewed diversity as integral to academic excellence and institutional vitality. The adoption of the *Inclusivity Pact* in 1985 solidified our role as a leader among regional universities in fostering equity. The Pact mandates ongoing evaluation and action in the following areas:

- Equitable recruitment, retention, and advancement of students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented groups.
- Active identification and removal of institutional barriers.
- Comprehensive support systems to enable personal and academic achievement for all.
- Transparent and inclusive policy development that reflects a range of perspectives.

Our Office of Diversity Initiatives, now in operation for nearly four decades, coordinates these efforts in collaboration with all colleges, research centers, and administrative units.

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## Demographic Information

Cendara University's diverse population is evidence of sustained outreach, support, and engagement efforts. The following data represent a snapshot of our campus community for the 2023–2024 academic year.

### Student Demographics

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total Enrollment
Total Students	3,211	842	4,053

Demographic Category	Undergraduate	Graduate	Overall %
<b>Women</b>	1,735 (54%)	512 (61%)	2,247 (55%)
<b>Men</b>	1,447 (45%)	324 (39%)	1,771 (44%)
<b>Nonbinary/Other</b>	29 (1%)	6 (0.7%)	35 (0.9%)

Demographic Category	Undergraduate	Graduate	Overall %
<b>International</b>	270 (8%)	119 (14%)	389 (9.6%)
<b>African American/Black</b>	346 (11%)	77 (9%)	423 (10%)
<b>Asian/Asian American</b>	448 (14%)	145 (17%)	593 (15%)
<b>Hispanic/Latinx</b>	478 (15%)	61 (7%)	539 (13%)
<b>White</b>	1,539 (48%)	475 (56%)	2,014 (50%)
<b>Multiracial/Other</b>	184 (6%)	66 (8%)	250 (6%)
<b>First-Generation College Students</b>	995 (31%)	168 (20%)	1,163 (29%)

### Faculty and Staff Demographics

Demographic Category	Faculty (356)	Staff (424)
<b>Women</b>	158 (44%)	254 (60%)
<b>Men</b>	197 (55%)	163 (38%)
<b>Nonbinary/Other</b>	1 (0.3%)	7 (2%)
<b>African American/Black</b>	41 (12%)	32 (8%)
<b>Asian/Asian American</b>	54 (15%)	23 (5%)
<b>Hispanic/Latinx</b>	35 (10%)	41 (10%)
<b>White</b>	202 (57%)	299 (70%)
<b>Multiracial/Other</b>	24 (7%)	29 (7%)

*Note: Cendara University regularly reviews and publishes demographic data to inform transparent goal-setting and program evaluation.*

## Inclusive Campus Culture Initiatives

Cendara University believes that true inclusion is a collective endeavor requiring intention, creativity, and accountability. Our comprehensive strategy includes:

### 1. Institutionalized Programs and Centers

- **Office of Diversity Initiatives (ODI):**  
Serves as the nexus for diversity programming, training, and advocacy. The ODI sponsors annual listening sessions, maintains the campus climate survey, and oversees the Bias Incident Response Team.
- **Multicultural Resource Center (MRC):**  
Opened in 1990, the MRC provides resources, mentorship, and programming for Latinx, Black, Asian, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and international

students. The MRC's Peer Advocate Program pairs first-year students with upperclass mentors.

- **Center for Gender Equity:**  
Coordinates educational campaigns and support services relating to gender identity and sexual orientation. Initiatives include the annual "Rise Together" seminar series and confidential counseling.
- **Accessibility Services Office:**  
Ensures physical, technological, and programmatic accessibility for students and employees with disabilities, including adaptive technology labs and alternative testing accommodations.

## 2. Signature Programs & Initiatives

- **Cendara Unity Dialogues:**  
Quarterly campus-wide facilitated conversations addressing topics such as race, belonging, and interfaith understanding.
- **Inclusive Pedagogy Fellows:**  
Faculty fellowship program focused on developing inclusive curricula, classroom engagement workshops, and syllabus review for implicit bias.
- **Equity in STEM Initiative:**  
Targeted efforts to increase participation and graduation rates among women and underrepresented minorities in STEM fields, including research internships and paid summer bridge programs.
- **Global Ambassadors Program:**  
International and domestic students collaborate to design intercultural exchange experiences and language partnerships.
- **Annual Diversity Leadership Summit:**  
A day-long event with keynote speakers, alumni panels, and student project showcases; the 2024 keynote is Dr. Yara Emezi on "Resilience and Justice in Higher Education."

## 3. Support Networks and Advocacy

- **Cultural Student Organizations:**  
Over 30 active student groups, including the Black Student Union, Latinx Collective, Asian Pacific Students Association, Cendara Pride Alliance, and International Students Association.
- **Faculty & Staff Affinity Groups:**  
Professional development and peer-support networks for staff and faculty of color, LGBTQ+ colleagues, and first-generation professionals.

#### 4. Assessment and Accountability

- **Campus Climate Surveys:**  
Conducted biennially with 71% student and 63% faculty/staff participation in 2022, informing action plans for improvement.
  - **Equity Scorecard:**  
Publicly accessible dashboard tracking progress on recruitment, academic performance, faculty hiring, and retention by demographic category.
  - **Diversity Action Plan (2022–2027):**  
Specifies measurable objectives, including reducing opportunity gaps, expanding support for marginalized populations, and diversifying leadership.
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#### Message from the President

“At Cendara University, diversity and inclusion are not supplementary—they are central to our mission. We celebrate the vibrancy that difference brings and hold ourselves accountable for creating the conditions in which every student, faculty member, and staff colleague may flourish. Our progress is ongoing, and our commitment, unwavering.”

— President Marisol Ortega

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*For questions or consultation regarding diversity and inclusion, please contact the Office of Diversity Initiatives at [diversity@cendara.edu](mailto:diversity@cendara.edu) or visit [cendara.edu/diversity](http://cendara.edu/diversity).*