Foundations of 50in5
The 50in5 Initiative was constituted November 2018 in response to our strategic focus to build “capacity towards strengthening the Iliff Community through increasing racial and ethnic diversity.” Our strategic focus led to an internal assessment of the racial and ethnic diversity of our student body, staff, and faculty, informed by the scholarship of Dr. Tink Tinker and Dr. Vincent Harding, and feedback from conversations with our internal Iliff community, accreditors, and Greater Denver metro area community leaders.

From its inception, we realized that striving towards 50in5 is only a beginning crucial step in our pursuit of social justice. We have continued to outline our approach by actively focusing on the intersecting critical actions of recruiting, nurturing, and sustaining. We seek to recruit, retain, and graduate students who are racially and ethnically diverse to "serve as activists, servant leaders, and innovators in diverse religious, secular, and academic communities.” We also seek to provide a nurturing environment for all members of the Iliff community that results in sustaining a healthy, diverse, inclusive, just and vibrant Iliff community.

Recruiting New Students
Iliff attracts students from 44 of 50 states across the U. S. and globally, with the majority of students residing in Colorado, Texas, and the Western region as a whole. During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Enrollment team recruited students primarily through virtual environments and activities due to the global pandemic. The team hosted virtual open houses, financial aid and literacy webinars, and academic topic focused webinars. In addition, the team attended virtual denominational, diversity, graduate school, and undergraduate research fairs across the country in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Kansas, Maryland, New Mexico, North Carolina, Utah, and Virginia, which included the UMC Lead Conference, annual MARCHA: Methodist Associated with Representing the Cause of Hispanic-Americans conference, Creating Change conference, McNair Scholars Fair, National Conference on Undergraduate Research, and Q Christian Fellowship conference. The team also participated in the first collaborative AUMTS virtual recruitment fair with enrollment representatives from all 13 United Methodist seminaries in the U. S. attracting students from across the country and globe. The one exception to the primary
virtual recruitment approach was the team’s in-person participation in the annual Denver Juneteenth Music Festival as an exhibitor in June 2021. The team served as a conference sponsor for the Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership annual conference at Union Presbyterian, the UMC Lead Conference, and the Unitarian Universalists Association annual conference. Additionally, a national and Western regional focused digital marketing and social media campaign was implemented to build brand awareness and increase prospective student inquiry and application conversion. The campaign emphasized our commitment to social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion and included a diverse representation of current Iliff students to ensure authenticity.

Members of the Iliff senior leadership, faculty, and student success staff continued to join the Enrollment team to host virtual open houses that attracted 100+ prospective students from across the country and globe. The virtual open houses were offered in June, August, and October of 2020 and January, March, June and July of 2021. Every virtual open house offers a faculty panel and Q&A session, sample classes, and student success breakout sessions with admissions, academic advising, financial aid, spiritual formation, professional formation, and student ambassadors.

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity
Since launching the 50in5 initiative in 2019, the percentage of the Iliff student population that self-identifies as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC) was 21% in fall 2019, 17% in fall 2020, and 18% in fall 2021. For fall 2021, students who self-identified as BIPOC were from Black/African American (7%), Asian American (3%), Latinx (5%), and Multiracial (3%) backgrounds. As of the fall 2020, on average, ATS schools reflect a BIPOC student representation of 21.45%. Click here to access The Association of Theological Schools, Data Visualization tool for more details.

Over the past year (fall 2020 compared to fall 2021):
- Black/African American and Latinx representation has remained steady.
- Asian American representation has increased by one percentage point.
- Multiracial representation has increased by one percentage point.
- Students choosing to not self-identify their race/ethnicity has increased by one percentage point.

We have opportunities to continue to increase our local, national, and global representation.
- Our LGBTIQ+ community and faculty diversity remains strong.
- Student, faculty, and alumni engagement in recruitment activities is increasing.
- Partnerships with Women’s colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Minority Serving Institutions across the country are
being developed and implemented to support future enrollment by BIPOC undergraduate students into the new Master of Arts in Social Justice and Ethics 4+1 program.

- New half to full tuition scholarships are being offered to new students for fall 2022 and future terms to keep Iliff as an affordable option.

**Nurturing and Sustaining Student Belonging at Iliff**

Nurturing and sustaining every student’s success towards a sense of belonging is one of many significant priorities at Iliff. We strive to meet this goal through a variety of approaches.

- **Mentoring** - Iliff contracted with the Mentor’s Collective whose role has been to match students with an alum or another professional in the area of the student’s future vocation or ministry.

- **Student Foundational DEI education** – We have maintained our policy that all degree seeking students are required to take a yearlong course “Identity, Power and Vocation in Community” in their first year.

- **Diverse Representations at Iliff Beyond the Student Body** – We know that representation matters.
  - Faculty racial and ethnic diversity was 45% in fall 2021.
  - Staff racial and ethnic diversity was 23% in fall 2021. This remains an area for growth while we continue to consistently seek diverse pools of candidates by posting job descriptions across Colorado and the United States. All hiring processes include questions about each applicant's experience of DEI, because it is a core school value. Our hiring policy also requires that all questions across a position be identical as a part of ensuring the equity of the interview process.
  - Faculty continue to hone syllabi to present robust perspectives traditionally omitted in the White, European canons of various relevant fields.
  - 2021 Commencement speaker and message resonate with 50in5 Focus – Rev. Dr. Willie James Jennings gave the 2021 commencement address entitled, “To Become A Place.” In the 2021-2022 academic year he is also scheduled to lecture on and provide facilitations around his pivotal work *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging.*

- **Provide Multifaceted Support**
  - Faculty are encouraged to be flexible with individual students in response to the complex factors influencing their success in courses.
  - Our Academic Advisors, Financial Aid Director, and the Academic Dean are intentional in their outreach to individual students dealing with various challenges.

**Conclusion**
While reaching the recruiting goal of 50in5 remains important, we also recognize that our goal is not just a number. In our alignment with the intersecting commitments to recruiting, nurturing, and sustaining, the true essence of our goal is for a complete transformation in cultural humility as we build a more diverse, just, equitable, and inclusive community. The 50in5 Initiative has ambitious goals that we continue to strive for and provide an honest assessment of the challenges along the way.

This report was prepared by:
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