**Champlain College Hosts Collaborative Spyglass Session to Examine Future of Diversity and Inclusion**

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More than 170 Champlain College faculty, staff, students and community members from surrounding colleges and local organizations gathered at the Champlain Room in the Center for Communications and Creative Media yesterday to participate in roundtable discussions surrounding diversity and inclusion. The event was moderated by Assistant Prof. Julian Portilla. .

The “Spyglass Session” is a part of Champlain’s Futures Initiative, an effort to envision the future of the institution through collaboration of the larger College community and its partners. The goals of the Futures Initiative are two-fold: first, to create sustainable processes that ensure a culture of innovation at the College, and second, to generate as many ideas about Champlain’s future as possible. This includes furthering the diversity & inclusion goals included in the College’s 2020 Strategic Vision, including access & success, climate and intergroup relations, education & scholarship, and institutional planning around viability and vitality.

“Today is a day to have a conversation around different experiences and identities,” noted Associate Vice President & Chief Information Officer Ted Laskaris, “and to add to existing momentum and traction of inclusion across the entire community.”

Dr. Leslie Averill, vice president of Student Life and lead of the Futures Initiative voiced her appreciation of participants and reiterated the importance of the session. “By coming together today, we’re creating a vision of inclusivity for our future; working to figure out how we can come together to build a future where all voices can be heard, can be valued and are, most of all, empowered.”

Participants of the Diversity & Inclusion Spyglass session, spearheaded by Chief Diversity Officer Ame Lambert, were prompted to draw on personal stories around inclusion and exclusion because of identity. Next, facilitators asked participants to articulate personal definitions of inclusion and to brainstorm what the perfect vision of inclusion looked like on a college campus. Ideas ranged from support, conversations, awareness, and continuous learning. Groups generated ideas to influence change on both the individual and institutional levels and strategies to engage key leadership and the larger community. Lastly, the people in the room were asked, “What would inclusion look like if you left the institution for an undetermined amount of time and came back?” Suggestions ranged from “love” and “tolerance” to “forgiveness,” “open dialogue,” “understanding,” and developing methods for accountability for all levels of the organization.

“I am not the type of president who will come out and define inclusion for you or tell you how to be inclusive,” President Donald Laackman shared during his closing remarks. Instead, Laackman said he strives to inspire a culture of community conversation and brainstorming to collectively determine the institutional views on larger topics such as this.

“You are being heard. We are trying to understand, looking for solutions to figure out how Champlain can be a model institution for others. I leave with a sense of hope and a genuine gratitude for the work being done here,” he said.

Notes and ideas from the session will be collected and analyzed for a larger initial findings report, expected to be released in January.