

## **Bentley University launches new diversity, equity and inclusion major**



The Bentley University campus, located in Waltham.

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Bentley University will begin offering a new major in diversity, equity and inclusion, offering students the foundation for what is projected to be in-demand careers as a chief diversity officer, inclusion specialist or similar roles.

Bentley says it's among the first universities anywhere to create such a program as a new major.

The Waltham business school, which will begin enrolling students in the new undergraduate major starting July 1, said the program is aimed at what's expected to be a more popular field in the coming years. Diversity and inclusion roles have grown by 71% in the past five years, with median salaries running from \$84,000 to \$126,000, according to LinkedIn data cited by the university.

Government labor data isn't available on such jobs, but the job-search site Glassdoor reported year-over-year growth of those jobs at 30% last August, and 37% worldwide. Glassdoor said it expects that growth to continue.

While Bentley is one of very few to have such a major, the area of study on diversity, equity and inclusion is a growing one for many colleges, said Larry Schall, the president of the New England Commission of Higher Education, an accrediting body. In fact, the commission itself revised its standards last July to include diversity as one of nine areas where it expects accredited colleges to include in academic offerings.

Bentley faculty who proposed the new academic program said their research indicated that only 24 schools provide degrees in multicultural and diversity studies but that it wasn't clear how many, if any, did so as part of a business-degree focus, as Bentley will.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology requires a single 45-minute diversity, equity and inclusion course for all incoming graduate students. Tufts University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences includes a diversity and inclusion leadership program.

Bentley students will be able to complete the major as a bachelor of arts degree, with a focus on critical and theoretical approaches to social justice, or a bachelor's of science degree with an emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion in organizational strategy.