



CSIS DIVERSITY AND LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS PROJECT

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2023–2026



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## Letter from our President and CEO

We live in a rapidly changing world fraught with numerous crises, growing polarization in politics, and escalating tensions within and across borders. With increasing instability due to environmental, geopolitical, and socioeconomic inequalities, a call to action to secure a stronger and more stable future for the United States is clear. In this complex quandary, we must be united by a common cause, leveraging our differences to innovate and creatively design a better tomorrow.

CSIS's purpose is to define the future of national security. We believe that investing in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives ultimately strengthens our national security interests at home and abroad. The United States stands apart from its peers in its rich diversity and the ability to utilize this strength to its benefit. When we fail to recognize diversity as an asset to drive innovation and productivity, we fail over 300 million Americans and impede the world of further development, strengthened diplomatic relationships, and credible intelligence and security. Diversity in the workplace—at every level—is a source of strength, as every corporation has learned.

As a bipartisan institution dedicated to solving the world's greatest challenges, we believe that a diverse and inclusive workforce is an enabler to deliver our goals. We are committed to recruiting, training, and advancing talent who will serve as future leaders of foreign policy. We are committed to building a diverse pipeline, to carry forward equitable and inclusive practices inside and outside of CSIS.

The federal government's efforts to cultivate resilience to withstand future threats to national security starts with a resilient workforce. At CSIS, the Diversity and Leadership in International Affairs Project is crucial to our organizational commitment to DEI. Embedding DEI into our strategic priorities and organizational plans ensures that our workforce is high performing, impressively agile, and exceptionally motivated to deliver on our vision.

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**John J. Hamre**

*President and CEO*

## Message from the Director

CSIS strives to serve as a thought leader in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). As a top-rated national security and defense think tank, including and elevating diverse voices is essential to the continued relevance of our work. The goal of the CSIS Diversity and Leadership in International Affairs (DLIA) Project is to encourage innovation in international policy by expanding who is included in our research and scholarship. We will accomplish this by amplifying diverse perspectives and reexamining foreign policy with a DEI lens. Issues of equity, justice, identity, and belonging are critical to the framing and execution of smart, sound, effective, and innovative policy.

DEI is both a moral responsibility and a good business practice. A diverse and inclusive workforce is more creative and innovative, and more likely to be high performing. By contrast, a homogeneous workforce can lead to decisions and policies that disproportionately impact historically exploited and marginalized communities. Policy decisions made without the input of the audiences they serve can disenfranchise segments of our population domestically. On the global end, our strategic competitors are increasing investment in diverse populations and STEM. If we do not respond in kind, we are putting our national security interests at risk. Therefore, DEI is a pressing national security imperative.

The shifting demographics in the workforce to millennials and Gen Z make yet another case for investing in DEI. We must move with urgency to meet demands that the pathways to a career in international affairs are visible, accessible, and attainable to all. Finally, we must actively demonstrate that a career in international affairs can be a great path for anyone.

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### Hadeil Ali

*Director, Diversity and Leadership in International Affairs Project*

## Introduction

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a bipartisan, nonprofit policy research organization dedicated to advancing practical ideas to address the world's greatest challenges. The organization is guided by its core values: respect, collaboration, and transparency. CSIS's Diversity and Leadership in International Affairs Project (DLIA) exists to specifically focus on advancing these core values through a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens. DLIA is pleased to share its 2023–2026 strategy, which focuses on strategic methods of advancing CSIS's commitment to DEI.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) at CSIS

CSIS works to foster an inclusive work environment that recognizes, appreciates, and effectively utilizes the talent, skills, and perspectives of every employee.

CSIS recognizes diversity as all characteristics around race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, values, beliefs, experiences, and behaviors that make each person unique. A diverse workforce that is representative of our country strengthens our authority and relevance as a leading think tank.

Equity and inclusion are how CSIS leverages diversity to create a work environment in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can feel fully engaged to contribute to CSIS's mission and organizational goals.

## Mission

DLIA aims to ensure that CSIS's workforce is diverse, and its policies and practices support an inclusive culture. Through our programming, we strive to provide equitable opportunity for all employees to realize their full potential, cultivate strategic external partnerships, and re-envision foreign policy using a DEI lens.

## DLIA Pillars of Success

DLIA embodies a two-fold mandate focused on internally and externally facing programming. We aim to take a full-scope approach to DEI at CSIS, which includes supporting employees at every level through dedicated initiatives, ensuring support from top-level leadership, and establishing a transparent process for continuous engagement and growth. On the external front, we aim to promote diverse voices, facilitate meaningful conversations, and drive DEI strategy as an institutional imperative for the national security community. These are our five pillars for the success of our DEI programming:

- I. Championing Organizational Commitment
- II. Increasing Workforce Diversity
- III. Sustaining Employee Engagement and Inclusion
- IV. Bolstering External Engagement
- V. Embedding Accountability and Metrics

### ■ I. Championing Organizational Commitment

**Objective:** To ensure active participation from every level of the organization and to be a recognized DEI leader within the Washington, D.C. think tank community.

#### **PRIORITY ACTIONS:**

- Build center-wide scholarly acumen on the intersection of DEI and defense, national security, and foreign policy.
- Administer the DEI Annual Survey to understand employee sentiment and collaborate with senior management to inform organizational priorities.

- Publicly pledge to meeting DEI commitments with organizations such as Global Access Pipeline, Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy, and Organizations in Solidarity.
- Chair the Think Tank Diversity Consortium to facilitate exchange of DEI best practices among peers.

## ■ II. Increasing Workforce Diversity

**Objective:** To build a diverse cohort of talented individuals who exhibit CSIS's core values of respect, transparency, and collaboration, contribute to solving the world's most complex policy challenges, and leverage diversity as essential to our continued relevance as a think tank in national security.

### **PRIORITY ACTIONS:**

- Collaborate with Human Resources to train staff on the impact of unconscious bias during the hiring and recruiting processes.
- Engage with minority-serving institutions through academic and career events and programs to recruit and attract diverse talent.
- Identify new robust recruitment outreach strategies to reach underrepresented communities in the national security and foreign policy fields.

## ■ III. Sustaining Employee Engagement and Inclusion

**Objective:** To harness unique skills and talent that each employee brings to our research and analysis and ensure employees are actively engaged in creating and maintaining an inclusive culture.

### **PRIORITY ACTIONS:**

- Host internal and external facing programming that tackle issues of DEI in the workplace and the intersection of DEI and foreign policy, defense, and national security (e.g., commemorative month events, scholarly talks).
- Support Employee Resources Groups (ERGs) to serve as a safe space for



discussion and recommendations to be shared with CSIS leadership on building an inclusive workplace, and facilitate opportunities to build community between staff members.

- Recognize and promote appreciation of employees participating in DEI work through official performance processes.

#### ■ IV. Bolstering External Engagement

**Objective:** To leverage CSIS's position in the think tank and policy community and serve as a thought leader in practicing and promoting DEI values that ultimately improve the community.

##### **PRIORITY ACTIONS:**

- Promote and pursue bipartisan scholarship in DEI and foreign policy through research, programming, media, and publications to maintain a research focus on the value of DEI.
- Serve as a subject matter expert through speaking engagements and scholarly contributions on DEI issues within foreign policy and national security.
- Collaborate with external partners to amplify diverse voices and perspectives within the national security community.
- Invest in diversifying the pipeline of international affairs professionals through the **Enriching the Future of Foreign Policy Fellowship** and other forms of engagement with diverse talent interested in national security and foreign policy.

#### ■ V. Embedding Accountability and Metrics

**Objective:** To deliver on our organizational commitment to DEI, measure progress, and hold ourselves accountable to our long-term goals.

##### **PRIORITY ACTIONS:**

- Develop processes and metrics for collecting qualitative and quantitative

data to assess progress in DEI related to hiring demographics, retention, pay equity, and panelist representation at CSIS public events.

- Publish organizational priorities identified via the Annual Survey Report publicly on the CSIS website to ensure continuous growth.

This strategic plan represents a snapshot of DLIA's internal and external priorities to further CSIS's organizational commitment to DEI. Implementation of this plan is dependent on robust cross-collaboration with programs such as the Abshire-Inamori Leadership Academy, Human Resources, External Relations, and Development. To learn more about DLIA, visit our website [here](#).

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