



# TEXAS A&M ESSENTIALS

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## The Educational Benefits of Diversity

Texas A&M University's mission statement affirms that we "welcome and seek to serve persons of all racial, ethnic, and geographic groups, women and men alike, as we address the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy," and that we pledge to "prepare students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility, and service to society." To fulfill this mission we must make thoughtful and intentional decisions about diversity and inclusion by cultivating diverse teaching and learning environments. We believe that diversity, in its many dimensions, provides significant educational benefits to our students, the university, and society at large. An explicit acknowledgment that such diversity enhances academic excellence is a crucial first step.

Our students benefit from learning and teaching that takes place within a setting that values diversity. The college years are known to be a critical period for students' personal growth and cognitive development. During this time students encounter and learn from others who may have differing ideas, worldviews, characteristics, and backgrounds. Research suggests that frequent and deep exposure to diverse thoughts, opinions, and social environments helps students develop more complex, sharper critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It also contributes to their academic development, level of cultural and self-awareness, and satisfaction with their college experience, and it prepares students for success in their chosen careers within an increasingly global society. In fact, research suggests that students who previously were not exposed to historically underrepresented individuals frequently gain more from interactions with individuals of varying backgrounds. Therefore, we believe that a diverse student body is an important educational resource that enhances the overall campus environment.

Our students and campus community benefit from diverse faculty. Teaching, learning, and research are also enhanced by the inclusion of a diverse faculty. Faculty members from diverse backgrounds not only broaden and deepen the knowledge base available to students and to society, but also expand the boundaries of civic engagement and education. Having diverse faculty also creates opportunities for students to engage in scholarship and research that presents different cultural perspectives and contributes knowledge that reflects the experiences and contributions of all peoples in our society and world.

Diversity is part of our responsibility as a land grant institution. As a land-grant institution, we have an obligation to create a high quality academic environment and to being a university that is available to all, not just a select few. Our mission makes us responsible for ensuring that our graduates gain the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to be productive members of our increasingly complex, global, and diverse society. They should be capable of understanding, communicating, and working with people from different backgrounds and with different perspectives. The future of our democracy rests on such competence.



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