Instructions: The purpose of this report is to assess the continuing progress towards diversity at the unit-level. Please review your unit’s strategic plans, diversity plans, and assessment plans for goals addressing diversity, recruitment, retention, climate, and equity. Where appropriate, use specific examples from individual departments in your unit to provide evidence for your narrative regarding progress towards Texas A&M University’ Diversity Plan goals: Accountability, Climate, and Equity.

1. Introduction (200-word limit): Describe your unit (campus location, 2018 demographics of students/faculty/staff, departments, etc.) and its general mission. Describe the writing and review process for this report: For example, was your unit’s diversity council included in the writing or review? Was this report reviewed by unit leadership? 200 words

Unit Composition: Over the past 4 years, Public Partnership and Outreach (PPO) roles and people have been added or removed. This constant organizational restructuring makes strategic planning difficult. Therefore, this report focuses only on the structure existing since Sept. 2018 and those FTEs, including all data discussions.

2018 Demographics: 23 FTEs, majority white female, with 2 African American, 2 Hispanic, 1 Asian, and 1 two or more races; median age of 45. Attached historic trends show major gain in gender balance, decreasing age as staff retire, and small gains in ethnicity balance, with stability in Hispanic and African American employees.

General Mission: PPO provides services that establish and support partnerships and engagement efforts that include serving as a portal for those seeking connections with the University and facilitating relationship development; facilitating academic affairs events, advocacy, communications, philanthropic investment and program development; and providing centralized support for community partnerships, K-12 outreach, global partnerships, and continuing education.

Locations: Williams Building; Rudder Tower 1st and 8th Floors

Writing/Review Process: AACDC liaison facilitates discussion at leadership team meetings about strategic goals related to diversity initiatives in progress. The draft comes from these discussions, reviewed by the leadership team and finalized by the unit leader.

2. Recruitment (500-word limit): As informed by two or more years of assessment data, describe your unit’s goals, measures, and progress on student/faculty/staff recruitment. If goals, measures, or data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess goals for student/faculty/staff recruitment. 494 words
Since 2018, 3 staff were transferred to the unit, 5 positions were posted and filled (the first hires approved in 5 years), and 2 positions were attached to the unit from another organization through an actively sought partnership. For new hires,

1. All five postings met our two previously stated strategies, and two new hires, an Hispanic/White and a White female were the direct result of strategy “a” below:
   a. PPO will network about potential new hires within diverse community groups with whom we work and are engaged with community leaders.
   b. PPO will adopt peer strategies by advertising PPO jobs to audiences beyond BCS where we have a Texas A&M presence, and reach out to our former student networks, ensuring advertising within diverse professional networks appropriate to the job duties.

2. Four positions were posted and hired in PPO starting in Spring 2018. As compared to findings reported by the AACDC 2016 Hiring Process Review Report, PPO has higher percentages on three of the four hiring file components. The lowest areas were not including a job related diversity skill in any NOV and only 25% asking questions about diversity skills or experience during interviews. The highest elements were 100% compliance in use of a diversity related element in the reference checks and 75% in use in the hiring matrix, both exceeding division findings by 50%. PPO leadership are committed to including diversity elements in all areas of our future hiring processes.

Analysis of retirement/termination patterns over 5 years shows the average age of voluntary terminations/retirements is 55.1 and the median age 64, with the average and median years of service being 25. Therefore, leadership will discuss succession-planning strategies for staff in this age range/service year range as a strategy to ensure smooth transitions.

With loss of communications and publishing workgroups, our strategy related to developing diversity internships has refocused to developing a diversity internship for work related to Texas Target Communities and the Institute for Sustainable Communities. The purpose of this internship will be to facilitate website and other communications efforts for these programs.

New strategies implemented in spring 2018:

a. To ensure that there is a diverse pool, Human Resources was asked to send all applicants for vacant positions, not removing any through their pre-screening. While able to identify any applicants recommended by HR, this ensured a broader pool of applicants for consideration.

b. To ensure that diverse candidates have equitable access to interviews, hiring supervisors must justify to the unit leader the rationale for selecting interviewees. In one case, this strategy resulted in a broadening of the pool to include a range of ethnicities that had not existed in the original pool.

c. Hiring supervisors or those recommending staff appointees from other units must justify to the unit leader the individual recommended for a vacant position. This
ensures the opportunity to consider diversity needs in relation to the total talent package a candidate represents.

**Retention (500-word limit):** As informed by two or more years of assessment data, describe your unit’s goals, measures, and progress on student/faculty/staff retention. If data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess goals for student/faculty/staff retention. 340 words

1. Five-year retention data shows that prior to 2015, staff retention was unusually high. From 2015 – 2017, there were 5 transfers out, 7 retirements and 4 voluntary terminations (although some of these are in work groups transferred out; we were unable to obtain data that removed these). Specifically, in 2015, there were 4 transfers out and one retirement. In 2016, three retirements and 3 voluntary transfers. In 2017, 3 retirements, one voluntary termination, and one transfer out. The mean ages for these are 50 (2015), 65.5 (2016), and 65 (2017), suggesting that the potential for departure increases with age. Since retirement was the top reason for loss of staff, this again suggests focusing on succession planning for staff nearing age 65. In some cases, these transfers, retirements, and terminations created opportunities to retitle positions, shift staff duties and enhance equity, facilitating retention of other staff members. Therefore future strategies will include the following:
   i. Leadership will discuss succession-planning options as staff reach age 60.
   ii. Leadership will identify opportunities to facilitate retention of existing staff by refocusing titles and workload as part of succession-planning.

2. Of the five new hires, two did not have the benefit of our previously stated strategies listed below. However, the three new hires are working through a new employee checklist developed to ensure consistent onboarding of new employees by supervisors. Their supervisors are collecting feedback and will share it with the leadership team so that the checklist and process may be improved for use with future employees.
   i. **PPO will do a better job of onboarding new employees so they have a clearer understanding of the overall unit, its mission and strategic goals.**
   ii. **The unit will help new staff connect with various networks both on campus and in the local community and support their participation in these groups**

3. Continue dialogue peer to peer and supervisor to supervisee to identify and address staff needs. This takes place most consistently during annual reviews, but leadership is encouraged to discuss needs and concerns as they arise.

3. **Climate (500-word limit):** As informed by two or more years of assessment data, describe your unit’s goals, measures, and progress on unit/campus climate issues. If data are not
available, describe plans to develop and assess climate-related goals. 331 words

PPO has been relying on the climate assessment data for the division to guide climate concerns owing to the size of the PPO office (e.g. too small to conduct a climate survey on its own and preserve anonymity.). These survey results and a report by the AACDC Recognition and Appreciation Subcommittee, informed a major strategy focused on appreciation and recognition efforts. This has resulted in two major changes in PPO, facilitated by a unit team focused on these efforts:

1. Coordinated efforts to submit applications for major campus awards, which had never been done before within the unit. Over the past 2 years these are the results:
   a. FY 2017 – two applications submitted – One Tradition of Excellence Award and one Fish Camp Namesake garnered.
   b. FY 2018 – two applications submitted – one Presidential Meritorious Service Award garnered

2. Noting other unit level award programs cited in the AACDC report, PPO implemented a recognition component within the annual staff retreat based on years of service in 5 year increments. January 2018 was the first iteration of this program which was received with universal acclaim from all staff, 7 of whom were recognized with awards suggested by the staff committee who developed and ran the program. For many, it was the first award/recognition they had received at Texas A&M. This will continue annually.

Our major strategies to facilitate an improved climate were

1. Better onboarding of new employees (see information in retention segment)
2. Teambuilding by creating cross unit teams for wellness, recognition/leadership, and appreciation. Based on the decreased size of the unit starting FY2019, the campus wellness efforts and overlapping roles, only one cross-unit committee will remain, focused on staff appreciation. The leadership team will lead recognition activities.

Future strategies that have been added to these include:

1. Succession planning based on data related to past five years of voluntary termination/retirement data
2. Identify possible solutions to any issues raised by staff in an assessment of work-related concerns/needs (already noted in retention segment).

4. **Equity (500-word limit):** As informed by two or more years of assessment data, describe your unit’s goals, measures, and progress on equity-related goals (e.g., advancement, promotion, development, salaries, graduation rates, etc.) If data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess equity-related goals. 227 words

At the point of the reorganization of PPO in late FY2018, many equity issues had been resolved or left the unit with the movement of outbound workgroups. However, with several
years of inability to hire new staff, workload equity has become a major concern among remaining staff, particularly with retirements in the last two years, as existing staff have had to pick up critical projects on top of their existing workloads. Progress in this area includes:

1. Workload corrections began with the hiring of an Administrative Assistant III (November 2017) and Program Manager (January 2018). This relieved four existing staff members who had taken on additional duties related to these roles for over a year. In addition, the Program Manager took on K-12 duties that had languished with a retirement in summer 2017.

2. Two new positions posted and filled in summer 2018 relieved the longstanding burden of the director whose communication duties have expanded dramatically over the last three years. Both positions report to this director.

3. With the completion of the Confucius Institute contract, a 75% Program Coordinator position became available for reassigned duties. This position is sharing workload on several programs with seven other staff members to relieve burdens related to these. In addition, this facilitates succession planning by having this position paired with longstanding staff members (over 30 years) working on joint activities.

5. **Reflection (800-word limit):** This section provides you with an opportunity to outline your 2019 unit presentation for the Council on Climate and Diversity. Related to diversity, accountability, recruitment, retention, climate, and equity: 492 words

   a) Describe how your unit is “moving the needle” (e.g., changing numbers/composition, awards, recognition, grants, funding, etc.).
   - Despite having only had approval to fill new positions since January 2018, unit diversity has increased. Prior to this, the last new hire was in FY2013.
   - There is a decreasing overall age among staff. Moreover, we are likely to face additional retirements. This suggests a need to focus on succession planning and onboarding/training. Owing to generational differences, research suggests we need to focus on workload/life balance and reward systems for younger staff members if we wish to retain them.
   - We have had major gains in gender to balance the unit with recent hires and mergers in the last year; this reversed a trend of falling percentages among males.
   - Minor gains in ethnicity; two major state ethnic groups (African American and Hispanic) are essentially stable. Primary gains have been owing to mergers vs. new hires. We need to continue efforts to attract ethnic minorities to hiring pools that proved successful in the last year.
   - Efforts to recognize staff through award nominations and the new annual recognition program combined with conscious efforts to balance work equitably across staff has resulted in some improvements in climate. Leadership needs to
continue to ensure that these efforts continue and that we listen to and address staff needs in the future so we don’t lose these gains.

b) What challenges has your unit faced? What plans are in place to address the challenges?

- Instability of organizational structure over the last 5 years
- Retirement/termination/voluntary departure of significant numbers of longstanding staff members combined with an inability to hire new staff from 2013 to 2018 owing to leadership changes and redirections of our energies and time.

Plans:
The Provost has indicated that she does not foresee additional changes at this time or the need to freeze hiring to fill future vacant positions. All there are no current vacancies, but leadership is working on a process that can be used to onboard future new staff. With departures of three large offices (communications, EDBS, and University Press) and the Confucius Institute, staff work is being redistributed to facilitate equity issues.

- Hiring Supervisors did not remember to include diversity elements in their NOVs. This was largely due to the intense desire to post vacant positions as quickly as possible after finally receiving permission to do so. They also did not remember to include diversity elements in interview questions.

Plans:
Leadership has re-affirmed its commitment to include these elements in all future hiring processes.

c) What innovative strategies have been implemented in your unit that might be useful to other units?
Sharing postings with community networks and partners with whom we work. Two of five hires came through these networks. Others were drawn to the applicant pools.

d) Describe how funding from the Diversity Plan awards has been used (or will be used) to support and advance your unit’s recruitment, retention, climate, and/or equity goals.
Not Applicable