Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives Unit
Diversity Report
Submitted Oct 31, 2018

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.

Formatting: Use portrait orientation and 12 point font or larger for the narrative, tables, and figures. Word limits are provided for each of the six sections. Please note: References, graphics, and tables for demographic data are not included in the word count.

1. Introduction (200-word limit):

The offices reporting to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives consist of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Evaluation, the Aggie Honor System Office, the recently created Office for Student Success, and Academic Program Review. Each of these support the mission of Texas A&M University by supporting faculty, staff, and/or students in the pursuit of high-quality educational programs. Each of these offices are located on the College Station campus with responsibilities support academic programs at all campus and off-site teaching locations. Currently the units employ 21 people, with approximately 25% representing historically underrepresented groups.

It is critical to note that the unit is beginning a process of significant growth and restructuring, with expectations to double overall staff headcount in the next quarter to support the oversite of the Student Success Initiative. Over the next two months the Vice Provost Leadership Team, comprised of the Vice Provost’s direct reports, will meet to establish new goals for the diversity plan in light of the units’ growing size and priorities. The contents of this report were discussed at the leadership team meeting, with the Academic Affairs Climate & Diversity liaison completing the initial draft. The final draft was reviewed by unit leadership.

2. Recruitment (500-word limit)

Employment across the previously existing unit (as structured under the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs) has been relatively stable over the last year. Currently, approximately 25% of the unit is comprised of individuals from underrepresented groups. With the anticipated exponential growth, the recruitment goal for new hires, particularly within the Office for Student Success, is to meet or exceed 25% underrepresented groups. As previously stated, the leadership team will meet early in 2019 to establish additional goals related to recruitment, retention, climate, and equity given the expansion and changing priorities for the unit.
3. Retention (500-word limit):

The current goal is to **retain 100% of employees who are performing at or exceeding expectations on their annual performance reviews**. These retention efforts seek to continue to employ those individuals within the unit who are performing their duties at a level that contributes to the overall success of the unit. Only one individual left the unit over the course of the last year\(^1\); although the person was at or exceeding expectations in terms of performance the individual moved to another unit for professional advancement.

As the unit continues to grow, this primary goal is anticipated to remain. Additional goals may be established when the leadership team meets early in 2019 for strategic planning purposes.

4. Climate (500-word limit):

Two years ago, the groups reporting to then Associate Provost for Academic Affairs began holding quarterly meetings for all staff across the unit. The purpose of these quarterly meetings was twofold: 1) to provide an opportunity for staff across the groups to collaborate and get to know one another since none of the groups were co-located, and 2) to provide a built-in time for workshops, training, or other informational events that would be of benefit to the staff across the unit. Since Spring 2016, approximately eight meetings have covered a variety of topics including free speech on campus, the experience of students with disabilities, the role of state government in the operation of Texas A&M University, sessions to learn about emerging priorities from the new Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity, and, most recently, a workshop on generational differences in working styles. Several of these workshops were informed by the discussions surrounding the 2014 Division of Academic Affairs Climate Survey and were opportunities for staff to fulfill at least one of their required face-to-face trainings related to diversity and inclusion.

While no formal surveys have been administered to assess the impact of these meetings, anecdotally these meetings and socials have received positive reviews from staff members and many employees genuinely look forward to the time together. Currently, the leadership team discusses potential topics at their regular meetings in order to identify topics of relevance, interest, or necessity. However, moving forward, and as more staff join the unit, a more concerted effort will be made to assess the effectiveness of these meetings and solicit input from staff regarding potential topics of interest or need. These efforts will also be influenced by the implementation of the Student Success Initiative and the growth the unit will experience as a result of that initiative.

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\(^1\) During AY17-18; staff changes in the prior year were reported in last year’s Diversity Report.
5. **Equity (500-word limit):**

The rapid growth of the unit has brought equity to the forefront of the diversity conversation. With positions being created in the new Office of Student Success, it is critical to unit leadership that staff from existing units and the new positions receive equitable pay based on title, education, and years of experience. The unit, in collaboration with Academic Affairs Business Services, is conducting a pay analysis based on title, education, and years of service to ensure equity in pay and to establish markers for the new employees who will be hired into the Office of Student Success, as well as current staff within the unit. This is an ongoing initiative that will provide data about the equity of staff across the unit and inform goals as the unit expands and moves forward.

6. **Reflection (800-word limit):**

As the unit grows, attention to the University Diversity Plan will be key in informing next steps. The new Office for Student Success, the newest office in the unit, has responsibility for the implementation and assessment of the university-wide Student Success Initiative. Each of the efforts within the initiative are designed to help reduce or minimize any disparities with respect to recruitment, retention, climate, and overall student success among underrepresented students and first-generation students. Mirroring these practices within the unit is critically important. However, with rapid, accelerated growth in the unit comes challenges. The nature of the conversation around the diversity plan has had to shift suddenly and significantly given the unit is going from relatively stable to rapidly expanding. The mission of the unit is shifting drastically as well, and so revisiting these conversations will be a critical part of the expansion plan and success of the new unit.