

**Office of the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity**  
**2015 Diversity Plan Accountability Report (Due 12/08/15)**

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**Unit:** Associate Provost for Academic Affairs

**Date:** 11/13/15

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this report is to assess the evidence for - and progress towards - respect for diversity in your unit. Please select the most impactful and transformative diversity-related strategies that have advanced the mission of your unit and the institution by addressing recruitment, retention, campus climate, and equity.

**Overview:** The units reporting to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs are committed to upholding objectives of the Texas A&M University Diversity Plan. Despite their small numbers and recent changes in organizational structure, the units of the Aggie Honor System Office, Academic Program Review, and the Office of Institutional Assessment are committed to ensuring employees and those acting in mission-essential capacities on behalf of the units do not perceive barriers related to recruitment, retention, campus climate, or equity.

**I. Recruitment -** Assess and describe the strategies your unit has implemented to attain a strong, demonstrable presence of diversity in our faculty, staff, students, and administrators where they have historically underrepresented in your discipline, your unit, and/or in the institution.

*Office of Institutional Assessment – Hiring Practices*

The Office of Institutional Assessment (OIA) hired a new Program Coordinator during the fall 2014 semester. The Division of Academic Affairs Supervisor Survey results had indicated that few units questioned their candidates or candidate's references regarding their personal experience or competency in "working with differences," which is extremely important given the variety of individuals who seek out OIA's support in preparing their annual assessment reports. These data, as well as the office's desire to hire an employee who would be able to work with the office's diverse stakeholders, lead to the decision to include a question of candidates during the initial phone interview, as well as a question of the references of final candidates. This question held equal weight as other interview questions such as their relevant assessment experience. This ultimately led to a greater understanding of the candidates in the pool and gave interviewers an opportunity to understand a little bit more about where a candidate was coming from in their approach to the work. The interviewers found the question useful and will be used in future hiring interviews.

*Aggie Honor System Office – Honor Council Recruitment*

The Honor Council members serve an important and mission-essential role for the Aggie Honor office, and while they are not employees of the unit, their participation allows the unit to function under their current model. The recruitment of faculty members for the council is essential, and because there is roughly 20% turnover of members every four years, a lot of time and effort is put into ensuring the council is made of diverse faculty from a range of disciplines, backgrounds, and perspectives. Additionally, last year, the Office received more cases, proportionally, involving international students than are represented at the University. Therefore, an intentional recruitment

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step was taken by the Aggie Honor Office early this year to actively recruit faculty at events held specifically for international students. This resulted in a number of interested parties coming forward for Honor Council membership. Aggie Honor System Office continuously strives to maintain diverse perspectives on the Honor Council, a critical mission-essential group representing the Aggie Honor System Office, and their recruitment efforts also served an identified need on campus.

*Academic Program Review – Review Committee Selection*

Academic Program Review has a small process-oriented role in organizing the external review of academic programs. While the individual in this unit does not have direct control over the process itself, she is always considering the importance of bringing diverse perspectives to the campus to conduct the program review. Departments provide a list of potential reviewers to the office, who then coordinates the visit by scheduling the team. During this process she ensures the review committee is made of various diverse individuals, perspectives, and experiences rather than choosing the first two or three names on the list provided.

**II. Retention** - Assess and describe the strategies designed to retain diversity in our faculty, staff, students, administrators, and supporters where they have been underrepresented.

The three units comprising the Academic Affairs units have had little turnover this year. The Director of the Office of Institutional Assessment took another position within the university, but all other professional staff have remained. All units report a variety of methods of continuously engaging employees, including opportunities for professional development, the inclusion in the hiring process, and social activities within the office, among others, to contribute to a positive working environment and their desire to stay.

**III. Campus Climate** - Assess and describe the strategies used to create an environment where the opportunity to fully participate does not inappropriately or unintentionally depend on elements of an individual's identity.

*Office of Institutional Assessment – Teambuilding Exercises and Workshops*

With the merger of OIA and the former MARS units, multiple functionalities were brought together for the first time into a single unit. This change, along with changes in leadership and reporting structure, created a unique opportunity to discuss roles with increased intentionality while also creating opportunities to collaborate which had previously not existed. However, the merger has also posed challenges for the staff, particularly with the perception of the new unit being a single team rather than three or four functions brought together. The decision was made to bring in Employee and Organizational Development for a series of workshops focused on bringing the group together into a single team. It is too early to discuss the impact, but intended outcomes of the workshops include a new office name and articulated mission, a new assessment plan for the fully integrated unit, and continued opportunities for collaboration within the office as well as with other stakeholders and units on campus. The workshop will also address communication style across

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cultures, as this is a more culturally diverse group of individuals than either separate group was prior to the merger.

**IV. Equity** - Assess and describe your unit's strategies to address equity issues across applicable groups (e.g., advancement, promotion, professional development, salary, staff training and development, student leadership development, start-up packages, leadership succession planning, etc.).

Each unit reporting to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs is small – prior to the merger OIA was the largest unit with five full time staff, one graduate assistance, and two student workers. While there are not any singular strategies brought up by the three units, each spoke to the importance of providing opportunities for staff to participate in professional development opportunities. Aggie Honor System Office provides professional development funds and encourages staff to attend seminars and workshops on campus which expose them to diverse perspectives and ideas. OIA encourages all staff to attend and present at conferences, and the staff (from the original OIA) have all participated in Leadership Institute as well as other on-campus professional development opportunities.