

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

Unit: Division of Academic Affairs
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Overview: Each unit in the Division of Academic Affairs creates a unit Accountability Report that provides in depth information about that unit's most impactful and transformative diversity related strategies. In addition to individual unit efforts, the Academic Affairs Climate and Diversity Committee (AACDC) facilitates efforts that span the division. This report is a compilation of both unit specific and division wide efforts and strategies. The units include: Academic Services (AS), Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA), Dean of Faculties (DOF), Public Partnership and Outreach (PPO), Office of Graduate and Professional Students (OGAPS), and Undergraduate Studies (US).

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

Division Level Strategies: Recruitment is primarily a hiring department activity. However, AACDC provided information and a forum for discussion to all supervisors in summer 2014 about hiring practices in the division that impact recruitment strategies. Among the recommended strategies were the following:

- Hiring managers should be encouraged to review, and include in position descriptions/postings, the language in an existing Texas A&M University Human Resources document entitled "Increasing Diversity in the Hiring Process."
- It would be useful to describe, during the hiring process, the different groups of people that the applicant might expect to have contact with in the course of the job and ask applicants to imagine what challenges they might have with each group as well as with what group(s) they might have most experience.
- Considering all positions in the Division involve interacting with the general public and/or colleagues from different walks of life, all matrices should address diversity experiences, as Texas A&M is an institution that strives to be inclusive, welcoming, and supportive of individuals from all groups, "encompassing the various characteristics of persons in our community. The characteristics can include, but are not limited to: age, background, citizenship, disability, education, ethnicity, family status, gender, gender identity/expression, geographical location, language, military experience, political views, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and work experience." Source:
<http://diversity.tamu.edu/WhatsDiversity/Definition.aspx>.

AACDC will review division hiring practices in Fall 2016 to determine whether there has been change in the above and other hiring practices recommended since the initial review in Fall 2013. Benchmarking data will be examined to determine whether hiring practice changes may have influenced staff diversity.

Unit level Sample Strategies: the following sample strategies are being employed in units where hiring has occurred:

- In AS, seven in ten employees are female and three in ten employees are either Black or Hispanic. While both of these numbers are higher than the university as a whole, we have engaged in targeted efforts to attract diversity talent. Despite these efforts, the percentage of diversity staff members has changed little in the last three years, from FY '12 - FY '15. However, the AS has had more success with diversity when hiring full-time employees from student worker positions. In FY15, almost half of the 39 full-time employees hired from student worker positions to staff positions were Black or Hispanic. Therefore, it is proposed that we enhance the quality of our student worker positions through meaningful work experiences related to office functions that

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prepare them for full-time employment in AS and engage in a targeted effort to recruit diversity in student workers and graduate assistants. A similar effort can be made to recruit the diverse staff funded through soft money in the College Advising Corps (CAC) to regular funded staff positions. (The CAC are grant-funded positions for recent A&M graduates who work in underserved high schools for a duration of up to two years.)

- DOF has not often recruited, but two positions this year were filled after utilizing strategies recommended by Human Resources to locate a diverse applicant pool. Future recruiting efforts will focus on the following: using specific language in the NOV's to attract diversity, emphasizing the DOF's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and including descriptions of the diversity demographics of DOF offices. These strategies align with recommendations made in the 2014 AACDC report on hiring practices in the Division of Academic Affairs.
- APPA's Office of Institutional Assessment (OIA) used data from AACDC's hiring practice review to include questions in the interview and reference checks about candidates' personal experience with and competencies in "working with differences" a critical component in providing services for the office. These questions led to a greater understanding of the candidates in the pool including their approach to the work. This technique will be used in future hiring interviews.
- US departments use a variety of techniques including inviting colleagues from underrepresented groups to suggest candidates who are contacted and invited to apply and asking interviewees to discuss their experience with diverse populations. Several open positions have been filled with underrepresented ethnicities and genders. Benchmarking trend data, when it becomes available, will determine how successful these and other US efforts have been in diversifying the staff.
- There have been few open positions in PPO over the last year, so there has been little opportunity to recruit staff. However, when new positions are posted, the following strategies will be used:
 - Prior to an NOV being created, supervisor(s) responsible for hiring will be provided with the AACDC's report on hiring practices within Academic Affairs.
 - Supervisors will implement recommendations in the AACDC report in the hiring process, for example, including use of diversity language in NOV's, posting on diversity networks, and using reference and interview questions that explore diversity experience and skills.
- As they generate new positions or re-open existing positions, OGAPS continues to examine job postings/descriptions to ensure that each reflects our requirement for applicants to possess personal and/or professional experience working with people of diverse backgrounds. Before we begin the interview process, OGAPS evaluates the applicant pool to make sure they not only meet the listed job qualifications but that they represent a wide array of different backgrounds, ethnicities, etc. Of new hires added in the past year, all added to diversity in terms of age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

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

Division Level Strategies: Retention is primarily a hiring department activity. However, AACDC provided information and a forum for discussion to all supervisors in summer 2014 that included retention strategies. Furthermore, the AACDC subcommittee on Recruitment and Retention explored in 2014-2015 a question of equity that relates to retention: "*Are there any gaps in use of existing career ladders/paths that leave employees from historically underrepresented groups with fewer opportunities for advancement?*" Data from the 2014 Division Climate survey have indicated that despite the evidentiary review conducted by the AACDC subcommittee that identifies no inequitable situations related to promotions and career ladders, there is a perception among some staff that there are barriers to promotion. The AACDC subcommittee's November 2015 report recommendations take this difference of

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perception vs. factual data into account. For example, the Academic Affairs Business Services Office (AABS) and AACDC will monitor potential red flags that may indicate a need to dig more deeply into data related to career ladders and promotions:

- The report indicates that some offices sampled have experienced no promotion during the 5 years sampled. While there may be logical reasons for no promotions to exist, these and other units who have had no promotions for five consecutive years or more should be examined annually to determine whether there is an equity issue that needs to be addressed. AABS can monitor this and report to AACDC annually.
- Currently, Whites, females and employees over age 40 are most frequently promoted and this is strongly linked to the data showing these are the predominant populations. However, AABS should monitor these data to determine whether there is proportionality of promotions occurring within ethnicity, gender, and age groups. This information can be reported to AACDC annually.
- Climate survey findings may suggest that perception of barriers to advancement and promotion exist even if findings for an in-depth review of advancement and promotion data do not support this perception. As already noted, the 2014 Climate Survey indicates that this red flag exists; therefore, additional recommendations are included in the subcommittee report to address this.

Future strategies for division level retention include implementing the above and other recommendations in the AACDC Subcommittee on Recruitment and Retention's report, once they have been approved by the division leadership.

Unit Level Sample Strategies: PPO has been the subject of several mergers since the last accountability report, increasing staff from 10 to 66. The leadership team has focused on equity efforts to facilitate staff retention through these mergers and will closely examine the next benchmarking data to identify appropriate retention strategies based on the unit's changed demographics.

- AS is dedicating centralized funding to support training and development needs including such focus areas as mid-level managers, networking, succession planning, team building and diversity, all of which have been cited in both the 2012 and 2014 Division Climate Survey as a need. Furthermore, AS will create an internal recognition program with a meaningful monetary award to help address the 2012 Climate Survey finding that 25% and the 2014 Climate Survey finding that 20% of the staff feel unappreciated. (Note: the 2014 survey findings have not yet been publicly released, so other units in the division have not had access to these data.)
- OGAPS has a strategic plan goal to create and nurture an office climate that leads to excellent performance and collegiality among staff. One aspect of this is staff Lunch 'n' Learns that have focused on such topics as IT rules, presentation skills, Aggie traditions, GLBT issues, and interacting with international students. Future programs will cover Native American Heritage Month and Green Dot Bystander Intervention training.
- US oversees advising services for General Studies majors. The persistence rate for all GEST majors, including 1028 (continuing plus Gateway) students from 2013 to 2014 was 89%. The highest rates by ethnicity were for international students (100%), Black Non-Hispanic (93%), and White Non-Hispanic (91%). Asian or Pacific Islander was at 87%, Hispanic or Latino retention was at 85% and American Indian/Alaskan Native was at 60%. Students are supported through various programs to provide a connection to campus and a feeling of inclusion. These programs include the Gateway to Success Program, Blinn Team and FOCUS, additionally, academic advising and referrals to various campus resources.
- For its staff, US is striving to maintain a diverse staff and equip staff with the knowledge and expertise to work with diverse groups of students and other faculty/staff. Methods used include the

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following: training in implicit bias and communication; encouraging staff to participate in diversity events, conferences, committees and other educational opportunities; and providing support for individuals in their roles through use of unique staff developmental leave options.

- The DOF celebrates the accomplishments of all its staff in an all-inclusive office environment. The unit uses teambuilding strategies that include progressive training and cross training, team work as a learning community, opportunities for staff to lead projects, and use of remote work locations. These strategies have been successful in retaining all staff through the past year.

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.

Division Level Strategies: .All recommendations generated from the 2012 Climate Survey have been implemented. The last of these was a one-time subcommittee on Recognition and Appreciation which submitted a report to the leadership in November 2015. Among the recommendations division leadership has endorsed are significant changes in the division level Traditions of Excellence Award program owing to data the committee provided about 1) inequities based on title of awardees and 2) the make-up and expectations of generational groups in the division workforce. AACDC will be implementing this and other recommendations in the 2016 iteration of the award program. The AACDC Climate Survey Subcommittee plans to share results of the 2014 Climate Survey with the leadership in December 2015, when the leadership will help to develop recommendations based on the findings; unfortunately, results have been delayed owing to complexities related to compiling the results of the survey. Recommendations for future climate survey assessments include contracting with a faculty member to conduct the assessment and provide the report to expedite this process so that there is a longer opportunity between climate surveys to identify and implement interventions

- Unit Level Sample Strategies: OGAPS established a measure to include at least two activities per year that will be held to examine the Academic Affairs Diversity and Climate Committee findings. At least one of these would be an internal activity/discussion taking place (during the weekly staff meeting) using the academic climate and diversity survey report. In addition, the unit has a Social/Climate and Diversity committee to direct teambuilding and a welcoming environment.
- US has a number of strategies to ensure a satisfactory climate. Among them are providing structured teams in order to provide one-on-one mentorship, continued focused effort to maintain open communications across all levels of staff, and empowering employees to take ownership of their work and giving them opportunities for leadership (i.e. leading office committees, controlling individual program budgets, etc.)
 - APAAs' OIA experienced a merger this year and facilitated teambuilding exercises and workshops to address challenges and bring the group together as a single team, working with Employee and Organizational Development. 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 cultures, as this is a more culturally diverse group of individuals than either separate group was prior to the merger.
 - PPO has identified several strategies. One of these is to develop SOPs for critical services as a part of merging units. This was the result of asking staff for input about PPO climate concerns in spring 2015. Staff have been encouraged to identify additional areas that need to be addressed. Future strategies include thoughtfully discussing division climate survey data and potential interventions as well as having a staff retreat.

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- AS uses the division Climate Surveys as a primary source of data about staff climate concerns. Among their strategies to address findings related to the stressful environment is the creation of a Staff Development Committee similar to Liberal Arts' committee (<http://liberalartscommunity.tamu.edu/html/lasdc.html>) with development activities, networking opportunities, and recognition events. An initial budget of \$5,000 will be provided to the committee.

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.).

Division Level Strategies: A division-level equity plan, focused on gender, ethnicity and age, contains 4 advancement and promotion strategies and 5 hiring practice strategies. The full plan with status of each strategy is available on the AACDC website. The outcome of one strategy was discussed in this report under the "recruitment" category. Results and recommendations within the AACDC subcommittee's report, once fully endorsed by the leadership, will be shared broadly within the division as one strategy. In addition, the AACDC subcommittee on Recruitment and Retention will be recommending in spring 2016 how to proceed with another equity plan strategy: determining whether members of historically underrepresented groups are disproportionately represented in any of the performance evaluation rating categories or blocked from advancement despite good performance.

Unit Level Sample Strategies:

- In PPO, because of the many mergers that have taken place, the leadership has expended considerable effort through the last year to explore and address equity issues in relation to salaries, titles, and duties. Virtually all units report having similar standing equity strategies.
- APPA leadership recognize the importance of providing opportunities for staff to participate in professional development opportunities. Aggie Honor 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.
- DOF reports using a variety of strategies to create an equitable environment, including use of techniques they and other units use to facilitate climate and retention; for example, flex schedules, administrative leave, cross training, professional development and succession planning.
- OGAPS has a target in its strategic plan for staff matrices to be reviewed annually to ensure job descriptions are accurate and duties are distributed appropriately. The target was met this year.
- Results from the 2014 Climate Survey regarding advancement and promotion opportunities will be provided to the leadership of AS -- these results indicate that 66% of employees reported they are not aware of advancement or promotion opportunities and 24% reported they felt they had encountered barriers to these opportunities. AABS already tracks employee eligibility for consideration of a sixth month hiring salary adjustment and provides a report to department heads. AABS will explore expanding this service to include career ladder eligibility based on years of experience to assist department heads in tracking who is potentially eligible. In addition, we will develop some additional materials for employees and managers to use that discuss advancement and promotion opportunities. (Note: the 2014 survey findings have not yet been publicly released, so other units in the division have not had access to these data.)