

2016 University Diversity Plan Accountability Report

Reporting Unit: Academic Affairs

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The Academic Affairs Climate and Diversity Committee (AACDC) coordinates division level efforts. All AACDC reports mentioned in this document are available at <http://aacdc.tamu.edu>. Two peer data reports informed the benchmarking process below as well as the status of various projects. The January 2016 report documented ten Vision 2020 school strategies in recruitment, retention, equity and climate. The summer/fall 2016 effort gathered ethnicity and gender data from four peers. However, due to the lack of response from the universities contacted the Benchmarking Subcommittee attempted to obtain the information from their websites. Once compiled, it became clear that some data was not able to be reasonably compared to Texas A&M owing to inconsistencies or inaccuracies. Therefore, only data from two peers were shared within the division for consideration. Because of these complexities, in the next benchmarking process, AACDC will work with data available from Data and Research Services to do numerical benchmarking.

Units that make up the Division of Academic Affairs include the Division of Research, Undergraduate Studies, Graduate and Professional Studies, Academic Services, Public Partnership and Outreach, the Dean of Faculties, the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Office for Diversity. The Office for Diversity is included in this division report; however, this Office's mission is to coordinate and monitor the University and its accountability to the University Diversity Plan. Therefore, specific examples from this office are not included in the unit highlight sections below. Staff from this unit participate in AACDC activities and projects, such as benchmarking data and climate surveys.

I. ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Recruitment

Division Level

AACDC is conducting a second hiring process review in fall 2016 to determine whether interventions implemented after the initial 2013 review were successful. Results are anticipated early in 2017, but AACDC presented the results of the first review at the 2016 Climate Matters Conference in a poster session, and is submitting a proposal on this for the 2017 NCORE conference. This hiring review corresponds to a UC Davis strategy to monitor hiring processes. Specific efforts of peers related to recruitment are more heavily focused on faculty, but some techniques can be generalized to staff and include national searches, use of specialized networks, training hiring supervisors, toolkits for hiring managers, and including inclusive language in hiring processes (all of which are already done or being worked on in the division). Some efforts not currently pursued in the division include the UC Davis use of posting positions internally as well as externally. The business offices within Academic Affairs will publish a listing of all positions that are open for application. This listing could come in the form of a weekly digest, or as an updated list on the business office website(s) so that staff within the University could be more aware of jobs available in the Division of Academic Affairs. AACDC will also adopt the UNC-Chapel Hill strategy of including information about diversity resources in staff recruitment packages by identifying an information piece that can be used division-wide. Another recruitment strategy of UC Los Angeles would be to build on the practice of placing advertisements in places they will attract diversity. Our 2014 Supervisor Survey suggests that not all supervisors do this because they are not sure how. AACDC will work with supervisors to recommend websites, listservs, etc., that are desired for publication of notices, the division's business offices could work with central HR to have all notices for the division posted to these sites. Finally, the University of Wisconsin opens some positions uses both internal and external posting depending on the need to attract diversity. AACDC's Hiring Process Review Subcommittee is reviewing applicant pools for FY2016 and is exploring whether there is a difference in diversity pools for internally vs. externally posted positions.

Highlights from Specific Units in the Division:

- Division of Research (DOR) -- adds verbiage to position descriptions and notices of vacancy that places importance on previous experience in working with people of diverse backgrounds and encouraged supervisors to 1) seek information on a candidate's diversity and inclusion experience in reference checks and 2) to acquire larger, more diverse applicant pools before placing job postings on hold. Data shows that in FY16 the number of employees in DOR who self-identify as a minority grew from 21 to 67, most of whom held titles in the "Professional Job Group". A national peer comparison shows that the DOR had the highest percentage of females in management occupation roles at 68.1%.
- Undergraduate Studies (US) – US aligns with peers including UC San Diego, U of Florida, and UT to recruit diverse groups by using broadly known job posting sites but also reaches out to constituent networks that target diverse groups such as the African-American Professional Organization (AAPRO) and the Hispanics Professional Network (HPN). A strategy not widely used by peers includes using supplemental questions on the application on the candidates' philosophy, visions and experience with regard to support of diversity initiatives or diverse student populations.

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- Dean of Faculties (DOF) – three vacancies were filled by female applicants, maintaining its position as having one of the highest percentage of women in the division. DOF future recruiting efforts will be further enhanced by focusing on the following (done by many peers): drafting specific language in the vacancies tailored to attract diversity, emphasizing our commitment to diversity and inclusion, including descriptions of the diverse demographics in the DOF offices, and increasing efforts to balance the overall gender composition across the DOF. A new strategy from a peer that will be adopted is including minority representation on all searches.
- Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) – Peer strategies include training search committees to ensure that application pools contain a diverse representation of various ages, genders, and races/ethnicities. Peers also reach out to minority and underrepresented groups when advertising open 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 beginning 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. For FY17 OGAPS will include a consistent hiring matrix ranking based on diversity work experience, as well as standard interview questions that relate to each candidate’s competencies in the areas of climate and diversity.
- Public Partnership and Outreach (PPO) – PPO anticipates losing significant intellectual capital within the next 5 - 10 years due to retirements, regardless of diversity status, providing an opportunity to increase diversity. PPO will adopt several 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 (matches U of Florida and UCLA strategies). In addition we will network about potential new hires within diverse communities groups with whom we work where we are engaged with community leaders. The PPO leadership will investigate the possibility of diversity internships that could mirror the AAUP national program (University Press Diversity Fellowship Program to address the lack of diversity in the publishing industry and help create a career pipeline) for the University Press, Educational Broadcast Services and the Academic Affairs Communications group.
- Academic Services (AS) – Benchmarking data shows key AS departments above UT diversity percentages (African American and Hispanics make up 25% of Registrar staff and 50% of Admission staff compared with 15% and 35% at UT Austin), but the Career Center lags behind and will adopt Purdue’s strategy of notifying contemporaries at HBCU and HACU institutions of vacancies. Additionally, K-State University’s Career Center reaches out to diversity point people in their academic colleges and divisions to inform them of opportunities. Using current strategies, the Career Center has filled 3 of 4 vacancies and 2 of the 3 represent diverse populations. In Admissions, 8 full-time employees were hired in the last three years, including 3 this year, from the College Advising Corps – a one year service-oriented job in diverse high schools. In fact, 16 university employees have come from the diverse CAC, one of the AS strategies adopted last year that appears to be working well.
- Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA) -- The Aggie Honor System Office had one job vacancy during the past year. An initial review of applications by the Director and selection committee showed a lack of diversity in the applicant pool. The Director worked with Human Resources and Academic Affairs Business Services to expand the areas where the job was advertised. This resulted in a much more diverse applicant pool, which ultimately led to the selection of a highly qualified candidate. This mirrors strategies used at peer institutions, including University of Wisconsin – Madison and UNC-Chapel Hill.

B. Retention

Division Level

AACDC did a review of peer institutions and peer divisions on campus as relates to recognition and award strategies (see Fall 2015 Recognition and Appreciation Subcommittee report). It became clear that our division level awards were not in synch with other on campus peers in a variety of ways. In addition, 50% of winners had management titles and an average of 13.3 years of employment with the institution, which suggested an equity concern. Implemented actions included enhancing the division level Tradition of Excellence recognition and award program by increasing the number of awards, redefining the award categories to ensure diversity of recipients, and adding new awards focused on awarding diversity initiatives. Other strategies used to reward staff were shared with division supervisors via e-mail and in a division wide supervisor’s meeting in July 2016. Peer institution years of service award data showing Texas A&M as an outlier in not providing recognition until year 20 was shared with Human Resources, the Diversity Operations Committee, and the University Staff Council. Specific efforts of peers related to retention are more heavily focused on faculty, but some techniques can be generalized to staff and include creating mentoring programs and looking at exit surveys. While our supervisor survey data and choices made by attendees at our 2014 supervisor meeting do not support AACDC’s creation of formal mentoring programs, we are considering the University of Wisconsin’s exit survey strategy, which identifies patterns and issues that contribute to employee departures. This has spurred AACDC to explore whether the data collected in the Texas A&M exit survey may inform our retention strategies.

Highlights from Specific Units in the Division:

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- Division of Research – reclassified 24 positions, 18 of whom were women and several from minority groups, issued counter offers for three employees, and provided equity increases to 7 employees, five of whom were women. The DOR awarded out-of-cycle merit increases to 37 employees performing above expectations; of the 37, 30 are women.
- Undergraduate Studies -- While not as extensive as Georgia Tech’s mentoring program, an office within US (Study Abroad) offers a mentor program for new staff that pairs them with a seasoned staff member and works closely with the assistant directors during their training, the first year.
- Dean of Faculties -- has implemented new strategies to strengthen retention efforts such as participation of DOF staff in an anonymous self-exploratory exercise on their core values pertaining to service, teamwork, accountability and respect, inclusion on all staff meetings of discussion topics concerning cultural competency and diversity, encouraging career development by providing the staff with an array of training options, and lunch to welcome new staff. Benchmarking has identified several new strategies that will be implemented: have a staff workshop on diversity and inclusion to broaden our knowledge in these areas, match employees with staff mentors, and educate staff about University and AACDC diversity initiatives.
- Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) -- This year, OGAPS plans to expand upon the existing educational and professional development measures taken in the past by not only encouraging but requiring our staff to participate in at least one initiative each year that supports Texas A&M’s Diversity Plan. This requirement will be part of the Strategic Plan and PATH, and we aim to achieve 100% participation from all staff. Employees can meet this requirement by attending a professional development activity or by serving on an office, unit, or university committee.
- Public Partnership and Outreach (PPO) – PPO does an excellent job retaining staff since the average length of time to remain at Texas A&M is 10 years and about 50% of PPO staff have more than that, with about 25% having 20 or more years. However, since so many of the staff are facing retirement in the next 5 – 10 years, the leadership will adopt strategies from UCLA (helping new help new staff connect with the diversity networks both on campus and in the local community and supporting their participation in these groups) and UNC (all unit position descriptions will be edited for language that reflects PPO commitment to diversity as related to job duties).
- Academic Services (AS) – When benchmarking with peer institutions, many have more defined “enrollment management divisions” that create an identity for employees beyond a single unit focus. In addition, in reviewing comparably sized units internally, AS identified opportunities for employees for improving professional development and recognition of success. Therefore, AS is implementing a strategic plan goal to strengthen the AS identity through emphasizing the desire and need for all staff to have opportunities and be successful. Several initiatives include a new Professional Development Committee bringing two division wide workshops per year, a new employee recognition program – Pillars of Excellence, a central pool for professional development funds with an emphasis in succession planning and diversity. AS has also ensured that every unit has a program to recognize staff at least annually.
- Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA) -- In light of the creation of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Evaluation, Employee and Organizational Development facilitated a two-part teambuilding retreat during Fall 2015 to create a new mission statement for the organization and develop comradery. This workshop served as a jumping off point for the new unit, as well as an opportunity to develop internal processes to continue bringing the unit together. A variety of cross-unit social activities promote teambuilding, and attention to assuring professional development opportunities each staff member wanted to pursue was an important retention strategy. Peer institutions engage in this work in a variety of ways, from professional development opportunities to conversations within the units with colleagues.

II. CLIMATE

Efforts related to recognition and reward link to climate, but will not be repeated here. The first iteration of the Academic Affairs Climate Survey in 2012 resulted in 34 recommendations primarily gleaned from grassroots conversations in focus groups, staff forums, and supervisor meetings. Thirty three of thirty four have been implemented as of December 2016. Recommendations on the last of these, related to supervisory training, is expected in early 2017. The Climate Survey 2014 recommendations have just begun to be implemented. However, a comparison of findings between the two surveys indicate that the climate has either improved or remained the same with only a few exceptions: inappropriate comments about age and fewer feeling they could talk to their supervisors or co-workers about equity issues. Significantly, those from historically underrepresented groups reported improvements in perception of diversity climate and satisfaction with responses to discrimination incidents. In addition, fewer felt they needed to minimize characteristics of their identity to fit in, and fewer witnessed or experienced inappropriate behaviors regarding race/ethnicity or sexual orientation. Whether these trends continue remain to be seen.

Division Level

Specific efforts of peers related to climate include providing a broad range of training opportunities, requiring accountability in implementing strategies, allowing for decentralized options in strategies, and using climate surveys (all of which are captured in the University’s diversity plan). In FY 2016, the Division implemented the University of Florida’s strategy to provide awards for specific diversity efforts by expanding the Tradition of Excellence Awards to include an award for diversity effort awards. In addition, AACDC has established a mini-grant program that has awarded 13 grants (\$44K) to implement professional development

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and diversity initiatives. UC San Diego provides enrichment programming for managers related to leadership roles and duties. AACDC has begun a series of bi-annual meetings for supervisors in the division (2014 and 2016) and will continue this effort in the future. The business offices are partnering to offer a series of workshops and seminars called the Partners in Progress series. This series hosts monthly meetings for customers to deliver timely and relevant information to employees as well as supervisors. AACDC has also obtained and is offering training to managers on mediation and conflict resolution. The first 20 supervisors were trained in November 2016. It is our hope that this will help managers initiate difficult conversations and feel more comfortable managing conflict in their units, addressing some of the issues addressed by the climate surveys. A 2014 climate survey recommendation focuses on providing a consistent level of training across the division, requiring all division staff to complete the Introduction to Diversity & Inclusion training that is offered online by EOD. Staff will also follow-up with two additional courses (with at least one face-to-face). One of these two additional courses should focus on the issues identified in the climate survey results as critical needs (micro-aggressions, negative diversity, positive climate, invisibility, and generational differences). The second course should address cultural differences. To facilitate accountability, the goal is 100% participation in the online course by August 31, 2017, and 50% participation in the follow-up course by December 31, 2018. The University of California – Los Angeles, Georgia Tech, and UC Davis help employees identify career goals and explore options to enhance professional growth and mobility in the organization. AACDC is exploring how to implement a 2014 Climate Survey recommendation related to helping employees understand their role in pursuing development options that help prepare them for promotion and advancement in their workgroups. AACDC created a poster for the 2016 Climate Matters Conference sharing broadly the findings of the Appreciation and Recognition Subcommittee.

Highlights from Specific Units in the Division:

- Division of Research (DOR) – High stress over workloads noted in the climate survey were partially alleviated through new positions being added. The division also focused on networking and improving internal communications.
- Undergraduate Studies (US) -- U Minnesota did an audit of existing print and electronic publications to ensure equity and diversity are represented verbally and visually. Dr. Kathy O’Bear provided a ½ day workshop to all of US. As part of a follow up with US leadership, she provided labels representing underrepresented groups. US has encouraged all units to keep these groups in mind when designing publications, included but not limited to websites, pamphlets, and brochures.
- Dean of Faculties (DOF) – The DOF is focusing on implementing its established climate strategies (such as teamwork approach, open door policy, inclusion, and staff/team meetings), but is adapting a new strategy based on identifying peer benchmark strategies: enhance competency in dealing with diversity through training and education.
- Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) – The Social Climate and Diversity Committee is an important influence on the OGAPS office culture and relates to several peers who promote an environment of open communication through social events and provide release from regular job duties and focus on diversity and inclusion efforts. Composed of 10 staff members, the purpose of this committee is to promote a welcoming and diverse environment through team-building activities and events. As part of our strategy to improve office climate, the OGAPS Social Climate/Diversity Committee hosts at least one program annually to encourage a welcoming and diverse office environment and takes a leadership role in social activities.
- Public Partnership and Outreach (PPO) – PPO will set a new strategy that borrows from the comprehensive departmental program at the University of Michigan by doing a better job of onboarding new employees so they have a better perspective of the overall unit, its mission and strategic goals. Furthermore, there will be ongoing teambuilding efforts that include creating three staff committees that cross workgroup boundaries to plan the annual January staff retreat, focus on wellness issues and explore recognition efforts. We hope such teambuilding also assists in retention of new staff.
- Academic Services (AS) – Purdue University circulates a “You Rock” prize on a bi-weekly basis for those going above and beyond during that time period. In addition, each staff member receives five “You are Golden” slips that they’re invited to give to team members whom they wish to recognize. AS plans to explore Purdue’s practices noted above.
- Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA) -- During the Fall 2015 semester, the Associate Provost Leadership Team began planning quarterly meetings focused on a particular climate issue of relevance to the work the units engage in and/or a climate issue on campus. Suggested topics at the time ranged from micro aggressions (a topic of concern from the division climate survey) to the experience of historically underrepresented faculty, staff, and students on campus. The quarterly workshops are intended to be mandatory for all full-time employees and open to graduate student assistants if they are scheduled during their normal working hours. This practice is similar to programs at the University of Florida, who engage in diversity workshops for all members.

III. EQUITY

Division Level

In 2015, the Recruitment and Retention subcommittee issued a report noting that there did not appear to be any structural gaps in access of staff to career ladders and promotions. However, this contrasts with perceptions recorded in the 2014 Climate Survey which indicate that members of historically underrepresented groups report perceiving barriers to advancement and promotion in higher percentages than those who are not members of historically underrepresented groups. Therefore, the subcommittee

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recommended that there be a “red flag” report created annually to track proportionality of promotions occurring within ethnicity, gender, and age groups. The first red flag report will be issued in early 2017; the first iteration has taken more time as AACDC needed to work out the process and format of the information. This corresponds to a UC Davis strategy to monitor promotions. There was a significant discussion on equity issues at the bi-annual Supervisor’s meeting in July 2016, with staff from Human Resources present to respond to questions and concerns raised by attendees. This bi-annual half-day meeting has attracted between 165 (51% in 2016) and 103 (67% in 2014) of division supervisors as attendees and helped to provide opportunities for cross-unit discussion about equity, climate and other leadership issues. Agendas and meeting materials are on the AACDC website.

Highlights from Specific Units in the Division:

- Division of Research (DOR) – Peers employ such as salary increases, professional development, career counseling and mentorship programs. A new career ladder for Sponsored Research Services personnel has been broadly used; another is under review by the Human Resources Office as relates to research compliance and biosafety personnel. Another peer strategy is succession planning. In FY17, Human Resources’ Employee and Organizational Development office, which has partnered with the VPR, will roll out a new program aimed at preparing those with high leadership potential to be able to assume greater levels of authority and responsibility. The Executive Leadership Development Program will be piloted in the DOR.
- Undergraduate Studies (US) – Utilizes merit-increases and paid administrative leave for excellent work performance; allowing flex schedules, promoting staff, and providing equity adjustments.
- Dean of Faculties (DOF) -- Equity efforts continue to be the cornerstone of the success of the DOF work climate. DOF has put in practice a variety of measures and actions intended to create an equitable environment for its staff including such components as annual equity reviews of salaries across the unit, equity adjustments, flex schedule during summer months, granting administrative leave, hiring salary adjustments, team working environment by encouraging input and ownership of the programs and activities, cross training of staff across the offices in different operational areas, and succession planning for potential staff vacancies.
- Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) – Many of the strategies are similar to those employed by peer institutions. For example, OGAPS annually reviews salaries for equity discrepancies to ensure fair compensation. 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. This target was met this year. OGAPS utilizes a Graduate Student Specialist career ladder to ensure the timely advancement. OGAPS also allows staff to work flexible schedules to support family needs.
- Public Partnership and Outreach (PPO) – Because of the merging of workgroups into PPO in the last two years, PPO is unique among our peers in trying to address a broad range of equity issues that have emerged based on these mergers. Such issues include such equity issues as comparable duties, titles, salaries, space needs, physical plant needs, and SOPs that address internal processes. The strongest strategy that we have aligned with is that of UNC to provide equitable salaries and the UC Davis monitoring of hiring processes, salaries and promotions/title changes.
- Academic Services (AS) – Of particular concern from the recent survey of supervisors in the Division of Academic Affairs, a lack of knowledge and transparency was identified within regarding promotions, merit, admin leave, and other HR related policies. AS is in the process of creating unit guidelines that are documented and published regarding how decisions are and will be made in each of these areas with the intent to have it in place before the next performance evaluation cycle begins.
- Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA) -- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Evaluation took steps during the Fall of 2015 to begin addressing equity issues which came to light as a result of the merger between the Office of Institutional Assessment and Measurement and Research Services and the subsequent review of all existing position descriptions, pay, and classifications. Like what is seen in practices at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, job title and compensation analyses were undertaken (though at a more local level), lasting through the Fall 2015 to completely address. Through this close examination, issues of inequity were identified with adjustments taking effect at the beginning of calendar year 2016.