

Office for Diversity
2017 Diversity Plan Accountability Report
(Due 12/1/17)

Unit: Office of Graduate & Professional Studies **Date:** November 2, 2017

Contact Person: Rachelle Dudley **Email:** r-dudley@tamu.edu

Purpose: The purpose of this report is assess the continuing progress towards diversity at the unit-level by reflecting on the recent cycle of benchmarking against your peers.

Instructions: The report is limited to five, single-sided pages (including graphics). Please use a 10 point font or larger. Where appropriate, use specific examples from individual departments in your unit to provide evidence for your narrative regarding progress towards Texas A&M's Diversity Plan goals: **Accountability, Climate, and Equity.**

1. **Recruitment.** Assess what you have learned recently from your peers and describe future plans, including barriers, to attain a strong, demonstrable presence of diversity in our faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

Our peer institutions are employing several main strategies to address recruitment in their units. One of these strategies is to train search committees to break down barriers and ensure that application pools contain a diverse representation of various ages, genders, and races/ethnicities. They also reach out to minority and underrepresented groups when advertising open positions.

This is similar to the measures our office takes to ensure a strong presence of diversity within our unit. In addition to posting all open positions with Human Resources, OGAPS also contacts targeted staff organizations via email to promote employment opportunities through the Office of Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity.

As we 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.

Several new hires were added to OGAPS in the last year, and all add to our diversity in terms of age, gender and race/ethnicity.

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.

2. **Retention.** Assess what you have learned recently from your peers and describe future plans, including barriers, to retain diversity in our faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

Our peer institutions are employing several main strategies to address retention in their units. First, many of them have a strategic plan to promote an inclusive environment and provide professional

development opportunities for their staff. This plan often includes facilitating a campus climate survey, clearly defining and publicizing the institution's commitment to diversity, and providing diversity training and education to all members.

This is similar to the measures our office takes to ensure a high level of retention within our unit. OGAPS is operating on the basis of a strategic plan that includes a goal to create and nurture an office climate that leads to excellent performance and collegiality among staff. Additionally, we also require that each staff member must engage in at least one professional development activity each year.

OGAPS also set a target for the Climate and Diversity Committee to host at least one program annually to educate employees and promote diversity. All staff were invited to the following "Lunch n'Learn" events that were hosted on the following topics:

- Green Dot Bystander Training

The Green Dot Bystander Intervention Training teaches Aggies to be aware of potential violence around them and provides the skills to use the power of peer influence to intervene appropriately in high-risk situations.

- Aggie Ability Awareness

Aggie Ability Awareness was an interactive 2-hour workshop designed to increase knowledge, awareness, and respect for people with disabilities among faculty at Texas A&M University. It promoted positive, equitable, accepting attitudes towards people with disabilities on campus.

- Multi- generations in the work place - Identify what generations are in the workforce. Identify what are some of the values and work themes for each generation. Create and identify strategies to work more effectively with each generation

In addition, staff members take advantage of the many courses offered by the Employee and Organizational Development Department. A target in the OGAPS strategic plan is for all full-time staff members to attend at least one course or alternate (approved) activity that focused on climate and diversity to raise awareness and build skills. This target was met this year.

OGAPS encourages all staff to participate in campus committees so they can impact decision-making in the office and across campus. There are several office committees where staff can give input on social media strategies, aesthetic website changes, and utilizing the CEM system.

OGAPS expanded 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 became part of the Strategic Plan and PATH, making it one of the components of each employee's annual review. Employees could meet this requirement by attending a professional development activity or by serving on an office, unit, or university committee.

At the moment, OGAPS feels that the current unit level strategies are working effectively, and we are focusing our efforts on fine-tuning the measures already in place. We are continuing to research retention methods utilized by our peer institutions, and we are confident that our unit will implement new measures as we grow and develop.

3. **Unit Climate.** Assess what you have learned recently from your peers, including campus and unit climate assessment data and describe future plans, including barriers, to enhance the educational environment where the opportunity to fully participate does not inappropriately or unintentionally depend on elements of an individual's identity.

To promote an inclusive climate, our peer institutions are employing several main strategies. First, many of our peers strive to promote an environment of open communication through social events that provide an opportunity for staff to develop relationships with high-ranking staff and faculty. Second, they often provide partial release from regular job duties to allow staff to devote time to learn ways in which they can include diversity and inclusion at work.

The Social Climate and Diversity Committee is an important influence on the OGAPS office culture. 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 will host at least one program annually to encourage a welcoming and diverse office environment.

In addition, the committee is responsible to: plan holiday gatherings, maintain a birthday calendar and celebrate office birthdays monthly, celebrate employee milestones (e.g. retirement, baby showers, etc.), plan events for employees to better understand the cultures of the students they serve, and support the planning of staff retreats. Regular social functions are scheduled to promote employee interactions. Some of these include: potluck meals, birthday luncheons, a summer baking contest, and holiday celebrations.

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.

To promote an inclusive and welcoming office climate, which could positively influence the campus climate as a whole, OGAPS held an office retreat in January 2017. The retreat featured team building activities to promote office solidarity, including completing a communication style inventory for each member of the team.

Staff are encouraged to attend cultural/diversity events on campus, and often do attend. For example, several staff attended the Climate Matters Conference this past year.

Team leaders demonstrate the importance of diversity and climate issues by their own example of respectful behaviors, encouraging professional development and diversity training, and endorsing the reporting of inappropriate behaviors in the workplace.

Members of the executive team meet to determine and allocate the unit's financial support to various programs throughout the university that support university-wide diversity. For example, last year the unit supported Brazos Valley Worldfest, Student Research Week, the MLK Breakfast, Ethel Ashworth Tsutsui Memorial Awards and Lecture, and Women in Science and Engineering.

OGAPS has a target in its strategic plan for functional and cross-functional interactions to occur bi-monthly with a representative from each office area attending another area's regular meetings. This target was not met this year due to shifting employee roles.

The University's Diversity Operations Committee (DOC) representative regularly attends lectures, meetings and trainings on diversity and climate, and reports back to OGAPS with information and instructions to the lead team and staff.

4. **Equity.** Assess what you have learned recently from your peers to address equity issues

in your unit and describe future plans, including barriers, to address equity or inequity in your unit (e.g., advancement, promotion, professional development, salary studies, staff training and development, student leadership development, start-up packages, leadership succession planning, etc.).

When addressing equity and perceptions of inequity for students, faculty and staff in their units, our peer institutions encourage mentorship programs between senior and junior staff members, assisting employees in developing roadmaps for their careers, and promoting the use of standardized and proactive human resource processes.

Many of the strategies employed by OGAPS are similar to those employed by our 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.

This year, we incorporated a Cultural Competency component into our New Graduate Student Orientation sessions. Through collaborative efforts with equity and inclusion experts on campus (Community of Respect and C.L.E.A.R.), we created a main plenary session focusing on defining the TAMU community, encouraging proactive alliances and respectful communication, and encouraging students to stand up and speak out.

OGAPS utilizes a Graduate Student Specialist career ladder to ensure the timely advancement of all staff. OGAPS also allows staff to work flexible schedules to support family needs.

Additionally, supervisors in our office promote the use of standardized and proactive human resources processes for all staff.

OGAPS is excited about the current collaboration among our unit and the organizations, C.L.E.A.R. and Community of Respect. These organizations bring excellent resources to the table, such as trainings, workshops and presentations, that we feel are working effectively to cultivate an atmosphere of respect and equity among students, staff, and faculty. We are now focusing our efforts on fine-tuning the collaboration already in place.