

2016 University Diversity Plan Accountability Report

Reporting Unit: Public Partnership and Outreach (PPO)

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Public Partnership and Outreach has several organizational teams that will be referenced in the below report: the University Press, Educational Broadcast Services, PPO, and Academic Affairs Communications.

I. ACCOUNTABILITY – Review and compare current year and previous years’ data for applicable groups within your unit(s) across your peers and articulate what the data tell you related to unit, peer, local, and national contexts. Describe accountability procedures in place for unit leaders (*e.g., leadership team, department heads, supervisors, managers, student leaders, etc.*) and any specific action/intervention plans instituted as a result of the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of your data.

Recruitment. Examine how peer institutions’ strategies and unit strategies are contributing to the recruitment of a strong, demonstrable presence of diversity for staff.

Progress on PPO 2015 Strategies:

- All supervisors who hired staff in the last fiscal year used AACDC’s report on hiring practices to improve their hiring practices and learned the position’s EEO goals prior to opening their NOVs.
- All leadership team members who had not been to an EOD Position Description and Hiring Procedures training in the last five years and who hired staff attended a training prior to developing and posting an NOV.

Results: PPO units continue primarily to have long term employees with little turnover. Eight position were filled in the past year. One organization wasn’t fully incorporated into PPO when their positions were filled but will follow the unit standards in future hirings. All other positions filled met the above unit strategies. Academic Affairs Communications hired two males, one African American and one White, both of whom diversified their team and PPO overall. Several PPO units have also intentionally diversified student employees.

1. What strategies are your peer institutions using to address recruitment of staff in their units or departments? How do peer institutions compare to what your unit is doing?

PPO foresees a need to plan for future recruitment of new employees. While over half of the current staff are long tenured employees, it is anticipated that significant intellectual capital will be lost within the next 5 - 10 years due to retirements, regardless of diversity status. In exploring peer benchmarking data, it is clear that PPO’s staff have significantly higher white females as compared to comparable UT organizational entities (54.1% vs. 35.7%). The unit also has less ethnic diversity than comparable UT entities by percentage in every category except Asian. As compared to the division level data for Texas A&M and peers, PPO is more balanced male/female than the division and across peers. However, PPO lags behind the division and all peers in percentages of ethnicities other than White. In considering these data, the leadership team sees future vacant positions as opportunities to increase diversity.

The University of Florida conducts searches nationally when recruiting for women, minorities and underserved groups, and UCLA does targeted advertising to attract individuals who would contribute to diversity using community and professional organizations. The AAUP University Presses have established a University Press Diversity Fellowship Program in January 2016 to help address the lack of diversity in the publishing industry and help create a career pipeline through apprenticeships.

2. In light of peer comparison findings, are there any plans to modify current or add new unit level strategies? Why or why not?

PPO will adopt these 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. In addition we will network about potential new hires within diverse community groups with whom we work and are engaged with community leaders. All unit leaders already reach out to professional networks as appropriate to the job duties. The PPO leadership will investigate the possibility of diversity internships that could mirror the AAUP national program for the University Press, Educational Broadcast Services and Academic Affairs Communications.

B. Retention. Examine how peer institutions' strategies and unit strategies retain diversity in staff.

About one quarter of the PPO employees have 20 or more years' tenure at the university. It is not surprising, therefore, that the overwhelming majority of turnover is through retirement. This presents a challenge for diversifying staff and for retaining the diversity we currently have if diverse individuals wish to retire. Indeed, seven staff members submitted paperwork to participate in the Voluntary Separation Program for staff. This represents 10% of the unit's staff members, with one of these being an African American male.

Progress on PPO 2015 Strategies:

- Review new benchmarking data and discuss the implications for retention of diversity in PPO staff.
- The leadership team will implement staff recognition activities and identify gaps related to professional development opportunities

Results:

Benchmarking data was reviewed when it became available and those results are noted above in the segment on recruitment. Educational Broadcast Services has recognized staff achievements in weekly communications from the interim director; a PPO staff member was nominated and won a Tradition of Excellence Award this year, and staff were invited to participate in unit specific and university wide staff appreciation and wellness activities throughout the year including football tickets, rally flags, among others. The leadership team will be establishing three unit level teams, one of which will be related to making recommendations about staff recognition. The Unit made headway in identifying gaps related to professional development opportunities:

- Academic Affairs Communications and PPO -- Full- and part-time staff were asked to submit proposals for professional development. All requests were fulfilled.
- EBS has recognized that duties need to be realigned to create more effective processes and workflows and this will entail additional training to update staff skills.
- University Press has recognized that each department's responsibilities in the book publishing business necessitate a range of professional development goals, which will require careful allocation of budget and staff time to accommodate.

1. What strategies are peer institutions using to address retention of staff in their units or departments? How do peer institutions compare to what your unit is doing?

Existing data suggest that PPO staff have unusually long tenure at Texas A&M (per Human Resources data, the average length is 10 years). Therefore, the unit is doing excellent work in retaining staff. However, in anticipation of future staff retirements, the leadership is has explored several retention strategies among peer institutions. UCLA helps new diverse staff connect with diversity initiatives and support their participation in them. At UNC, position descriptions reflect diversity values.

2. In light of peer comparison findings, are there any plans to modify current or add new unit level strategies? Why or why not?

PPO will adopt both of these peer strategies. PPO already supports staff participation in diversity efforts (participation in the division level diversity committees, supporting the various networks for specific groups -- women, Hispanics, African Americans --, etc.). However, the unit will help new staff connect with these networks both on campus and in the local community and support their participation in these groups. Furthermore, all unit position descriptions will be edited for language that reflects our commitment to diversity as related to job duties. For example, “communicating effectively with diverse clientele and colleagues” could be added to all position descriptions, and some jobs may have other duties that can be linked in this way.

II. CLIMATE – Examine how your peer institutions are working to create and maintain an inclusive and healthy working and learning environment for students, faculty, and staff.

Progress on PPO 2015 Strategies:

- SOPs were developed for services related to Continuing and Professional Education, event planning, and the University Press. Furthermore, EBS has taken steps to transfer business services to AABS, utilizing AABS’ SOPs for their services, and moving to paperless processes. Academic Affairs Communications staff are still not integrated although they are co-located, so SOPs may be needed in future. Leadership Team members have been invited to suggest additional SOPs to assist the unit in merging successfully.
- A new electronic shared folder called PPO General has replaced the GPS and PPO-GPS folders. Academic Affairs Communications staff have also created shared files so they may better work together. These efforts complete this strategy.
- Staff were asked in their performance evaluations about their past efforts to improve climate and potential future ideas.
EBS (suffering from three years of uncertainty related to the TAMU-IT reorganization, eventual movement to PPO and retirement of a long tenure leader) has significant work to do to establish a new level of “calm and stability”. In addition to establishing clear goals, new leadership, there are several other areas being addressed as climate issues:
 1. Physical plant improvements
 2. Staff communications improvement (weekly newsletters, monthly meetings, leadership team meetings, one on one with director)
 3. Workplace respect & conduct (employee interaction)
 4. Need for staff responsibility review and resultant re-alignment
 5. Overall dissatisfaction level (attitude) improvement

University Press has

1. installed and maintained filtered drinking water
2. requested facilities assessment to address maintenance issues
3. acquired ergonomic desks and desk chairs for staff
4. purchased pallet lift for warehouse staff
5. installed a security gate for warehouse entrance

PPO acquired standing desks for all staff who requested them, and there were more frequent staff meetings in the past year, although about one third were cancelled.

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Academic Affairs Communications has not merged, although they are co-located, sharing space and resources. They have achieved the following:

1. A shared electronic calendar helps keep track of team members planned absences.
2. Project management software has been purchased to help staff manage projects and identify priorities. Phase 1 of implementation is complete. Phase 2 includes the migration of all units and has begun.
3. Stand up desks were purchased for staff who prefer this.

All units continue to request enhanced communication and decision making from the Associate Vice President level. While not specific to our unit, the University Wellness Program for staff has positively impacted staff climate.

- While the Unit was not able to execute a full staff retreat that addressed issues identified by staff and allowed for discussion and feedback, there was a full staff meeting held in spring 2016 to review strategic planning and future goals and help the staff meet each other for the first time. Further, there was an in depth retreat held with Educational Broadcast Services in Summer 2016 and individual interviews with staff, which identified climate change needs noted above. Finally, staff in the unit continue to educate themselves on key diversity issues (unconscious bias, microaggressions, Green Dot Training, Respect in the Workplace, etc.) as a way to raise awareness and facilitate a welcoming, supportive climate for all.

A. What strategies are peer institutions implementing to address climate for staff in their units or departments? How do peer institutions compare to what your unit is doing?

There are few institutions dealing with the stress related to merging units and resolving long term issues in some of the merged groups. However, in considering the needs of new organizations, we found that the University of Michigan does a comprehensive departmental orientation program for new employees.

B. In light of peer comparison findings, are there any plans to modify current or add new unit level strategies? Why or why not?

For organizations recently merged with PPO and for new hires, it would be helpful to have a consistent way to share information about the unit and what each group does. Leadership believes this will help with team-building. Therefore 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 clearer understanding 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 1) plan the annual January staff retreat, 2) focus on wellness issues and 3) explore recognition efforts. Leadership hopes such teambuilding also assists in retention of new staff.

III. EQUITY – Examine unit level strategies to address equity issues and perceptions of inequity for students, faculty, and staff (*e.g., advancement, promotion, access to information and opportunities, professional development, salary studies, student leadership development, start-up packages, leadership succession planning, etc.*).

Progress on PPO 2015 Strategies:

- Leadership reviewed needed adjustments to title and salaries due to professional experience, education level, job duties, length of service and the merger of offices. Adjustments were made September 1, 2016.

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However, Educational Broadcast Services has several staff with significant increases in job responsibilities without additional compensation. Furthermore, the FLSA mandated changes have raised concerns of inequity among some staff in PPO. With 10% of the staff participating in the Voluntary Separation Program, and retiring soon, the leadership anticipates exploring new alignment of duties for some positions that remain as vacant positions are filled.

- Workspace changes are in progress for Educational Broadcast Services (heating/cooling, roof repairs, new space use), University Press (bathrooms), in Rudder Tower (office reassignment, better space use, moves from other buildings), and leadership is looking for additional space in the Williams Building for Academic Affairs Communications.
- The mission and strategic plan are evolving documents; they allow the unit to remain nimble in addressing leadership's goals, but are now inclusive of all the various components that have been merged into the unit as of FY 2016.
- Revision of PDs to show current duties has been finalized in PATH for all of the old PPO and Global Partnership Services (GPS) roles. Educational Broadcast Services will be reviewing future staffing needs and a realignment of current staff responsibilities to reflect a changing environment within the University and within the broadcast industry as a whole.

Because the teams that will compose Academic Affairs Communications have not merged, there has been only modest progress toward the achieving the stated goals regarding equity within this group: Salaries/titles, Workspaces, Mission and Strategic Plan, Revision of Position Descriptions, and Establishment of SOPs.

A. What strategies are peer institutions using to address equity and perceptions of inequity for staff in their units or departments? How do peer institutions compare to what your unit is doing?

As already noted above, there is a great deal of work being done on equity issues within PPO in the unit's existing strategies. Leadership was unable to identify many equity strategies among peer institutions. Most focus on recruitment and retention strategies (per the AACDC Benchmarking report from January 2016). UC San Diego has an enrichment program to help managers understand their duties, UNC is providing equitable salaries, and UC Davis is monitoring hiring processes, salary, and promotion.

B. In light of peer comparison findings, are there any plans to modify current or add new unit level strategies? Why or why not?

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 resulting from these mergers. Such equity issues include 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. Most other strategies do not align with current needs that PPO is facing, or, like that at UC San Diego, is more suited to implementation at a division level vs. unit level.