

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

Unit: Undergraduate Studies
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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.

Instructions: The report is limited to five pages, single-sided, including graphics. Use the four-steps below to review your unit's selected strategies in each of the following dimensions: Recruitment, retention, climate, and equity.

Step 1. Link strategies to evidence from data (e.g.; institutional presence data, peer-comparison data, equity studies, campus climate studies, exit surveys, etc.).

Step 2. Describe the impact of your unit strategies and how the impact is determined/assessed. Examples of "impact" include, but are not limited to: Evidence such as changing trends in demographics, numbers of participants, etc.; Implementation with institutional and/or community collaboration; Integration with unit and/or institutional planning such as accreditation, assessment, and financial; Presentations and/or publications in unit-level, institutional, or national meetings, conferences, task forces etc.; Awards/recognition by institutional/national/discipline and/or field-specific awards; and, grants/funding awarded from external resources.

Step 3. Reflect on the effectiveness of your unit strategies. For example, were there any revisions or challenges in implementing the strategies? Were participants/unit leadership satisfied with the impact of the strategies?

Step 4. Describe future strategies, projects, or ideas your unit intends to pursue based on this assessment and review.

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.

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

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.

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.).

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

I. Recruitment:

The student population in Undergraduate Studies consists of students who are General Studies majors (GEST), which falls under the advisement of Transition Academic Programs (TAP). The role TAP is to provide advising and support for students already admitted to Texas A&M University. Students who move into the GEST major do so for one or two semesters as they move from one major/college to another major/college for which they must meet course and GPR requirements. Students are not recruited into GEST. Other students under the purview of TAP are students enrolled in the Gateway to Success program and Blinn Team.

Departments in Undergraduate Studies consider diversity in broad terms—sex and ethnicity, yes, but also educational background (institutional variety), area of expertise (major, other training), upbringing (area of country or countries lived in), sexual orientation, gender identification, religion, or political leanings where that is volunteered in the applicant's materials or interviews.

When staff positions are open, departments in Undergraduate Studies employ the following methods to elicit and recruit diverse applicants:

- Advertising positions to the largest possible audience through general education-based websites and groups such as the Chronicle of Higher Education. Also, requests are made through HR that vacancies be posted to listservs and professional organizations of under-represented groups.
- Colleagues who represent under-represented groups are asked to suggest candidate names and those individuals are contacted and encouraged to apply.
- Careful examination of all applications are conducted; however, particular attention is given to applications of under-represented candidates to ensure they get credit on the applicant matrix for all relevant experience and credentials.
- Asking candidates in interviews to discuss their experience with diverse populations.

Areas in Undergraduate Studies have been able to increase the diversity of staff through these means; however, departments believe there is a need to reach more. For example, the University Writing Center has increased the Latino/a consultant staff. However, they also feel they have not yet recruited a diverse enough staff, especially African-American males. The Writing Center plans to continue to push forward in recruiting a diverse consulting staff and continue to contact diverse organizations and find new strategies.

Also, the Academic Success Center has had four positions become available in the last year. An effort for geographic, educational background, and age diversity was made in the recruiting and hiring process for these positions and is still the focus of current recruitment. Of the last two open positions (data available), the gender and ethnic breakdown of the candidates are as follows: White males-11 and White females-16; African-American males-4 and African-American females-2; Hispanic/Latino males-3 and Hispanic/Latino females-6; Multiracial males-0 and Multiracial females-2. Of this applicant pool 2 Hispanic/Latino males were invited for an interview and 1 Hispanic/Latino male was ultimately hired.

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

II. Retention

For GEST students, the table below reports the fall 2013 to fall 2014 retention rates comparison:

Row Labels	Count of Enrollment Status FA14
Enrolled*	911
Amer Indian/Alaskan Native	6
Asian or Pacific Islander	61
Black, Non-Hispanic	41
International	4
Not Reported	6
White, Non-Hispanic	571
Other	1
Hispanic or Latino	221
Not Enrolled	113
Amer Indian/Alaskan Native	4
Asian or Pacific Islander	9
Black, Non-Hispanic	4
Not Reported	1
White, Non-Hispanic	55
Other	1
Hispanic or Latino	39
Grand Total	1024

**Most students changed major into Colleges of: Business (18%), Education (17%) and AGLS (17%)*

The persistence rate for all GEST majors, including 1028 (continuing plus Gateway) students from 2013 to 2014 was 89%. More than a few of these students moved into the GEST major on probation in the quest to regain good standing and declare another major in a college.

Departments within Undergraduate Studies also strive to maintain a diverse staff and equip staff with the knowledge and expertise to work with diverse groups of students and other faculty/staff. To do this, departments employ the following methods to do so:

- Continuing training in implicit biased and communication.
- Encourage staff to attend and participate in diversity events, conferences, committees and other educational opportunities.
- Support for individuals in their roles
 - Worked closely with an African-American female staff member and HR to allow her unusual professional development leave opportunities (application for National Fellowship and ability to work part-time for a year while in China on the fellowship).
 - Working with mixed-race male staff member to allow him to take on role of Honors Staff representative on 2.5 week MSC-Honors Champe Fitzhugh International Leadership Conference in summer of 2016.
- Offering flex scheduling and the ability to work remotely to the extent compatible with their responsibilities to staff with emotional, physical, or care-taking needs.
- Paying constant attention to the needs of all individuals.
- Open communication and transparency as a standard practice.
- Continued availability of funding and active encouragement for all members of unit, regardless of level, to avail themselves of professional development opportunities.

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

- Support for staff members participation in various diversity related trainings and committees
 - Community of Respect Seminar and Training.
 - Climate Matters Conference.
 - Enhancing Diversity Seminar Series.
 - Certificate of Diversity and Inclusion through EOD.
 - Train-the-Training Community of Respect Certificate.
 - Committees include:
 - AACDC Subcommittee—Staff Recognition and Appreciation.
 - AACDC Subcommittee—Benchmarking.
 - Diversity Operations Committee.
 - AACDC Co-Chair.
- Other retention efforts include merit increases and promotions for staff members of under-represented groups. While this reflects merit it is also a move towards retaining staff.

III. Campus Climate

Overall, staff members in Undergraduate Studies view the climate as satisfactory, based on both group and one-on-one conversations and observations by supervisor level staff members. To continue to ensure a satisfactory climate among the unit, the following measures take place:

- Monthly, bi-weekly, and weekly staff meetings with in the various departments of undergraduate studies to facilitate a sense of community; in some departments, all staff members are given the opportunity to submit items for discussion and input
- Continued focused effort to maintain open communication across all levels of staff
- Valued teamwork and collaboration among departments
- Respect for family and other outside obligations
- Structured teams in order to provide one-on-one mentorship
- Celebrations of milestones in staff members' lives (examples: birthdays, family additions, graduations, etc.)
- Empowering staff members to take ownership of their work and giving them opportunities for leadership (i.e. leading office committees, controlling individual program budgets, etc).

Other data to support positive climates within the departments of Undergraduate Studies include providing staff with opportunities for flex scheduling, the ability to work from home when needed, IT support, in-house reward systems, and tailoring roles with responsibilities that speak to the strengths of the individual staff members.

Overall the climate is positive and seems to be succeeding. However, there are instances where making sure all staff members feel included can be difficult. For instance, one department in Undergraduate Studies reported there is only one male staff member on their staff. Sometimes he may feel excluded; however, every effort is made to include him and to ensure everyone has a chance to speak at meetings. Also, lack of space in some areas for personal, private offices for main staff can be problematic and cause distractions. These issues are being addressed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Students in Undergraduate Studies are supported through various programs in TAP to provide a connection to campus and feelings of inclusion and support. These programs include the Gateway to Success Program, Blinn Team and FOCUS (now under LAUNCH, which is still under the umbrella of Undergraduate Studies).

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2015 Diversity Plan Accountability Report (Due 12/08/15)**

IV. Equity

Undergraduate studies addresses issues of equity by:

- Providing administrative leave for staff to assist in building up a balance proportionate to years of service.
- Making equity adjustments in terms of salary for identified staff members when justified.
- Decisions on equity and administrative leave are based on performance evaluations in most departments in Undergraduate Studies in an effort to get employee feedback so reviews are not unintentionally biased.
- Salary analyses are also conducted, with the help and support of Academic Affairs Business Services, when large salary gaps are found in an effort to make salary adjustments as needed.

While every attempt is made to ensure equity for all staff members, this seems to be the most difficult issue within Undergraduate Studies. This difficulty is directly related to budget limitations; however, directors and supervisors try their best to reward staff members in other ways when equity adjustments cannot be immediately made.