

## **Academic Affairs Climate and Diversity Committee (AACDC)**

### **Overview:**

AACDC has responsibility for division-wide diversity and climate initiatives in the Division of Academic Affairs. AACDC is composed of a steering committee appointed by the academic affairs leadership team and several volunteer standing and short term committees. Together, these dedicated volunteers are working on a variety of projects to implement the University's Diversity Plan within the division that have engaged about 800 staff members through committee involvement, training programs, and supervisor programs.

The steering committee is currently co-chaired by Dr. Suzanne Droleskey and Dr. Arthur Watson. The steering committee's liaison to the Office of the Provost is Mr. Joe Pettibon, vice president for enrollment and academic services.

### **Charge:**

AACDC is charged with implementing the Diversity Plan in the non-college units in the Division of Academic Affairs. Its members are charged with the following responsibilities:

- Continuous improvement in recruitment, hiring, selection, retention, and promotion of groups identified in the University Diversity Plan
- Serve as a resource to non-academic units in the division in the pursuit of their diversity goals
- Assist the Provost in preparing for the annual Campus-wide Accountability Meeting
- Identify and implement Division-wide initiatives and address issues related to climate and diversity
- Complete Division-level climate assessments, gather benchmarking data and proactively address priorities established by the Provost
- Coordinate with the liaison for the Academic Leadership Team.

### **Structure:**

The AACDC Steering Committee consists of representation from the following units:

- Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies
- Associate Provost and Dean of Faculties
- Associate Provost for Graduate Studies
- Associate Vice President for External Affairs
- Vice President for Academic Services
- Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (3)
- Vice President for Research (2)

## **Projects and Programs:**

- **Mini-Grant Program (subcommittee led)**

The Mini-Grant Subcommittee was formed to create guidelines for and to award one-time funding for mini-grants for division staff member diversity development. This one-time funding was awarded to the Division of Academic Affairs in FY 2014 to recognize the progress made in advancing division diversity initiatives. To date, \$66,500 has been awarded allowing conference attendance, diversity programming, research and diversity training with subject matter experts.

- **Supervisor Programs (subcommittee led)**

Held every two years, the supervisors' meetings allow for thoughtful dialogue among division supervisors about key climate and diversity findings, implementation strategies, and needs. Additionally, a climate survey recommendation requested creating training opportunities for supervisors. The first effort, mediation training, was provided in November (2016) and July (2017).

- **Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee**

Looks into the recruitment and retention practices of Division units, with special emphasis on marginalized groups. The current task of this group is to investigate how to create, for Academic Affairs, an exit survey, as well as explore some common information to share with new division employees. This idea was born from the Climate Survey recommendations and those of the previous subcommittee.

- **Hiring Review Subcommittee**

Reviews and identifies areas of concern in hiring practices and sharing these concerns with Academic Affairs leadership and supervisors to address any issues found.

Recommendations pending approval for 2016 report, which repeated the study done in 2013 and identifies improvements that could be made in division hiring practices.

- **Ideas Contest (subcommittee led)**

The Ideas Contest subcommittee was formed in response to an item in the 2016 Climate Survey. Its charge is to establish a contest to allow Division of Academic Affairs staff to submit innovative program ideas that will improve climate, efficiency, and/or effectiveness. This contest is meant to provide staff at all levels an avenue to propose an idea and be heard on how to improve staff, work, make people feel more comfortable in the workplace, or work more efficiently/better.

- **Recognition and Appreciation Subcommittee**

Explored issues within the Division of Academic Affairs related to division-wide recognition/appreciation programs. In 2015, the subcommittee benchmarked Vision 2020 peers and shared their findings, along with recommending changes in the Tradition of Excellence awards, which have since been implemented, eliminating systemic inequities that were identified.

- **Climate Survey**

The climate survey is conducted every three years per guidelines in the University's Diversity Plan. The 2012 climate survey yielded several important findings. However, the findings related to the following categories are notable because of the number of employees impacted: demographics of division respondents, inappropriate behaviors and comments, commitment to diversity, diversity climate in the workplace, opinions ignored/judgment doubted, stressful environment, jobs, and minimizing characteristics of identity. Based on the results of the 2012 climate survey, 34 recommendations were made. To date, 33 of 34 recommendations have been implemented. Examples of these recommendations include: requiring division supervisors, who have primary responsibility to foster a welcoming environment, to attend a community-building program that discusses survey findings; creating an AACDC subcommittee to explore the past year's hiring and retention practices; creating training and development opportunities for supervisors and/or staff members; and exploring existing mechanisms related to recognition and appreciation programs and making recommendations where there are gaps.

The 2014 climate survey also yielded important findings and recommendations. Recommendations based on the findings include: determining what changed may be needed to enhance the 2017 survey; developing a diversity/inclusion training program made available to all Academic Affairs staff; working with AABS and HR on marketing strategies to address promotion and advancement opportunities; initiating an ideas competition for improving climate; investigating programs that help employees address their well-being as a person; and enhancing the summer supervisor workshop for Academic Affairs to include sessions on how to develop staff, improve climate, and recognize inappropriate stress levels. To date, 9 of the 13 recommendations from the results of the 2014 survey have been completed and the remaining 4 are in progress.

Complete details of the 2012 and 2014 climate surveys can be found on the survey reports.