Preface: As our Texas A&M community adapts to this new environment of learning, teaching, working, and connecting virtually, it is imperative that our Diversity Plan goals of accountability, campus climate, and equity remain at the forefront of all our decisions. To put a finer point on the issue, particularly in times of crisis, we must ensure that all existing and planned policies, operations, procedures, and major plans for organizational change continue to be pursued with careful attention to their impact on our diversity, inclusion, and accessibility goals.

For the 2020-2021 Diversity Plan Accountability Report, the Office for Diversity is balancing the need to track and collect longitudinal data and narratives with the need to understand current, and sometimes unique, challenges and strategies presented by social distancing and the pandemic. Please use the 2020-2021 Diversity Plan Accountability Report as a tool to document and share your unit’s strategies, plans, challenges, and successes advancing diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in 2020.

Instructions: The purpose of this report is to assess the continuing progress towards diversity and inclusion at the college and division-level. Please review your unit’s strategic plans, diversity plans, and assessment plans for goals, data-informed actions, and strategies addressing diversity, recruitment, retention, campus climate, and equity. Where appropriate, use specific examples from individual departments in your unit to provide evidence for your narrative regarding progress towards Texas A&M University’s Diversity Plan goals: Accountability, Campus Climate, and Equity.

Formatting: Use portrait orientation and 12-point font or larger for the narrative, tables, and figures. Word limits are provided for each of the six sections. Please note: References, graphics, footnotes, and tables for demographic data are not included in the word count.

1. Introduction

The mission of Undergraduate Studies (US) is to provide programs and services that enrich student learning and promote student success. Led by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, the following departments comprise the unit: the Academic Success Center, Center for Student Athlete Services (reports to Athletic Director with dotted line to the Associate Provost for US), L.A.U.N.C.H., Public Policy Internship Program, Education Abroad Programs, Transition Academic Programs, the University Writing Center, the Higher Education Center in McAllen, TX, and the newly formed Math Learning Center. The departments within US are located in various buildings throughout campus (Rudder Tower, Henderson Hall, the Pavilion, Hotard Hall, etc.).

The current make-up of the staff in Undergraduate Studies is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EEO - RACE/ETHNICITY</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Recruitment

Units within Undergraduate Studies have employed various strategies to assist in recruiting a more diverse staff. The following are examples of different strategies that have been implemented:

- Adhering to the Academic Affairs requirements to incorporate elements of diversity into each phase of the hiring process (job description, hiring matrix, interview questions, reference checks, etc.).
- Advertise open positions to listservs that represent BIPOC and other marginalized groups.
- Adding a person of color to each search committee for open positions.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, all units in Undergraduate Studies have committed to the following recruitment goals:

- Create a list of both on and off campus affinity groups that target diverse populations and make sure our open positions are posted on their websites and/or to their listservs. We will measure the effectiveness of this goal with HR data to determine whether advertising to these specific groups give us a more diverse applicant pool—Workday data can show where the applicant assessed the position.
• All department heads and supervisor level staff will complete implicit biased training prior to the start of the hiring process. We will assess this by conducting a survey or focus group with those who participate in the training to determine if it helped them in the hiring process and/or reduced their implicit bias.

• For all finalists for open positions, especially those who would have to relocate, conduct campus tours and community tours with a real estate agent. We would ask these finalists if these tours assisted in their decision to accept or decline the position.

3. Retention

Retaining a talented and skilled staff is paramount to the leadership in Undergraduate Studies. The following are both past and current strategies in the area of retention:

• Staff are provided with ample professional development opportunities.
• Both merit raises and equity adjustments are made when the budget allows and is warranted.
• In-house awards for staff have been created where staff are able to nominate their colleagues.
• Staff are encouraged to utilize the University’s Wellness Works program.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, all units in Undergraduate Studies have committed to the following retention goal:

• Create a mentorship program (unit-wide) to help groom and prepare staff for higher level positions. This goal is to be embedded into the performance review process for those who mentor. In order to assess this, a survey to those who participate in the mentorship program will be given in addition to monitoring promotions within the unit and looking at the rate of those in the program are promoted.

4. Climate

Creating and maintaining a climate where all feel welcomed and included continues to permeate the vision and mission of Undergraduate Studies. Units across Undergraduate Studies implemented the following strategies to assist in this goal:

• Supervisors have monthly meetings to provide support to staff. These meetings allow staff to engage with their supervisor, troubleshoot problems, discuss ideas, obtain resources, and track accomplishments.
• Commit one professional development staff meeting per semester to diversity, equity and inclusion related training.
• Host a book club focused on underrepresented minority authors and themes where all directors attend.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, units throughout Undergraduate Studies have committed to the following goals related to climate:

• Each unit within Undergraduate Studies will include an inclusivity statement for their website; along with a list of things each unit does related to diversity and inclusion. This will also be placed on the Undergraduate Studies website.

• Undergraduate Studies will provide a diversity training annually for all staff within the unit.

• During staff appreciation week, Undergraduate Studies will host a panel discussion from among our own staff to discuss various topics and have tables discussions over lunch.

All of these initiatives will be assessed for effectiveness and increased learning through surveys and/or focus groups.

5. Equity

Creating equitable opportunities across the units in Undergraduate Studies is equally important as diversity categories above. Some units have been very creative in their strategies regarding equity. For example:

• One unit lost a staff member who took a higher position in another department on campus. Instead of hiring for the one position, this unit was able to divide the duties of that position and promote three current staff members. This created the director level staff to 25% female (previously it was 100% male) and also increased the overall leadership to 33% female and 33% Black/African American. All of the opportunities were warranted based on experience and skillset.

• Some title changes were approved to accurately reflect the responsibilities and duties of the job.

• Flex schedules were granted to accommodate staff with health concerns, professional development, post-graduate studies, family needs and FMLA.

• Annually review position descriptions and compare across the units, comparing to others in similar positions and considering balance of workload.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, units across Undergraduate Studies have committed to the following equity goals:

• Request data for each of the following areas: advancement, promotion, development, salaries, etc.) to see where we are in Undergraduate Studies and look to see where we can make changes. Tracking the changes made is how we will measure this goal.
• Request a representative from Academic Affairs Business Services (AABS) and/or Human Resources (HR) to provide guidance on promotions/retention; when to post or when to promote from within; promotion pathways (that don’t necessarily require management skills). We would have them come to a directors’ meeting. Again, tracking the changes made is how we will measure this goal.

6. Reflection

a) Describe how your unit is “moving the needle” (e.g., changing numbers/composition, awards, recognition, grants, funding, etc.).

Providing opportunities university-wide is extremely important. Units within Undergraduate Studies continuously nominate staff for university awards and have been successful in winning various awards, specifically advising awards and the Tradition of Excellence Award. Additionally, overall staff in Undergraduate Studies is comprised of approximately 43% people of color, which exceeds the overall university averages.

b) Describe goals and strategies that have the greatest impact on, or the potential to impact, student, faculty and/or staff recruitment, retention, campus climate, and/or equity. Describe how strategies implemented in your unit might be useful to other units.

Creating opportunities for staff training is becoming increasingly more important as we navigate the racial tension not only in our country but also right here on our campus. Using funds for professional development and staff meeting time to train our staff is beneficial to assisting in helping staff learn more about others, whose opinions may differ from their own. Additionally, this understanding will hopefully help to create increased positive climate, stronger retention rates and more inclusive recruitment practices.

c) What challenges has your unit faced? Specifically, acknowledge the impact of the responses to COVID-19 on your unit’s diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

COVID-19 has impacted our staff as we have had to change how we work with students and each other. Our advising, meetings and other activities are almost 100% online via Zoom. As far as our diversity, equity and inclusion goals, they have been affected in the sense that we have not had as much time to focus on training through professional development. Our primary focus has been on redirecting our work to online. Now that we have a better grasp of that, we are able to now turn our focus to include more DEI work.
d) **Describe how funding from the Diversity Plan awards has been used (or will be used) to support and advance your unit’s recruitment, retention, climate, and/or equity goals.**

While Undergraduate Studies does not directly receive funding for diversity, we do take advantage of training opportunities offered by Academic Affairs. Additionally, many staff have applied for and received the AACDC mini-grant to attend diversity conferences and pay for diversity related initiatives, such as a membership to the Diversity Abroad Network.