Introduction (200-word limit):

Unit location and general mission: The Office of the Dean of Faculties (DOF), located in College Station main campus, promotes an environment in which faculty are inspired and enabled to reach their full potential. This office facilitates and oversees fairness and equity in the recruitment, evaluation, development and advancement of faculty and academic administrators. The office includes the Dean of Faculties, three Associate Deans, 6 administrative staff and four reporting units: ADVANCE (ADV), Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), Immigration Services for Faculty and Scholars (ISFS). Taken together, these entities facilitate promotion and tenure, faculty development, faculty hiring, various operations associated with faculty credentialing and governance, partner placements, award programs, oversight of faculty visitor programs for scholars and researchers, and the employment processing for foreign nationals. DOF supports the educational mission of TAMU through evidence-based professional development by promoting proven and innovative instructional approaches aligned with faculty and student success. DOF recognizes the integral value of diverse perspectives and inclusive teaching approaches and strives to ensure all faculty, teaching assistants, and students, regardless of their identity, can excel. DOF produces multi-pronged programming that focuses on the improvement of workplace climate and the recruitment, retention, and success of diverse faculty of excellence.

DOF goals are aligned with the TAMU Diversity Plan, Action 2015, and Vision 2020, various rules and SAPs associated with faculty, as well as, the goals of the State of Texas Higher Education Plan and the National Academies.

Writing and review process: This report was compiled by the DOF representative to the Academic Affairs Climate and Diversity Committee, Dea Polk. Dea Polk took over this role late November 2019. During later drafts of the report Dea worked closely with the DOF Leadership team. Subsequently, the final draft was distributed to all members of the office (7 leaders, 29 staff) to increase awareness.

Recruitment (500-word limit):

Beginning September 1, 2019, the DOF and reporting units started implementing the recommendations of the Academic Affairs Climate and Diversity Committee (AACDC), which require the inclusion of diversity components throughout hiring processes to include; reference checks, matrices, interview questions, and job requisitions. All staff positions postings include the standard EEO statement but also the university commitment to diversity statement. TAMU offers a number of professional development courses related to diversity and inclusion in the workplace and effective hiring practices. Furthermore, TAMU is currently rolling out implicit bias training initiatives for staff hiring processes.

ADVANCE implements STRIDE (Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence) a required search committee training designed to maximize the likelihood that well-
qualified and diverse candidates will be identified and recruited for faculty positions at Texas A&M University.

In March 2020, the United States was hit with the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic caused the state and local governments to issue “shelter in place” initiatives. COVID-19 directly impacted recruitment efforts as all travel was halted with the “shelter in place” lockdown.

TAMU posts all benefit eligible staff positions to the State of Texas Job Board, the Texas Workforce Commission and university specific job boards (Workday). With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the university experienced a soft hiring freeze. All essential staff positions had to receive university presidential authorization. Although procedures were in place to move the process as efficiently and effectively as possible, the nuance of this added step caused hiring delays.

In an attempt to recognize the effect of the Dual Career Program (DCP) in faculty hiring, we conducted an impact analysis for the last 5 years (Appendix I). The study indicated that “overall, the DCP is a viable and effective program for the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty at TAMU that can continue to have a positive impact on the continued success of the University with minimal but necessary improvements.” Specifically, the report recommended improved advertising to more clearly convey the services available, additional staff to ensure timely and efficient service, and adopting an appropriate client management database to expand programming and ensure better record keeping. Thus, in alignment with our commitment to continuous improvement, plans to address these recommendations are underway.

Retention (500-word limit):

Generally, for staff retention at TAMU, the Division of Human Resources & Organizational Effectiveness (HROE) there has been more professional programs, seminars and/or workshops. The university also allows all employees to participate in LinkedIn Learning Trainings.

In addition, the Office of the Dean of Faculties provides staff professional development workshops, staff meeting/trainings where discussion topics include cultural competency, diversity, and the importance of individual strengths development.

Working conditions due to COVID continue to be a challenge for staff, many of whom work remotely, and are not able to have the daily face to face interaction with peers, supervisor, and/or leadership.

DOF contributes to university level faculty retention and student success through faculty development opportunities for skill development, career advancement, and teaching best practices. In early fall, with New Faculty Orientation (NFO) and New Academic Leader Orientation (NALO) we seek to acclimate faculty and leaders new to campus and/or their position. Throughout the academic year we provide monthly Department Head Development workshops to target specific issues faced by department heads. In early, spring we provide workshops to advise faculty on dossier submission for tenure and/or promotion. At the end of the spring semester we offer a major teaching conference to all faculty, Transformational Teaching and Learning Conference (TTLC), and early career programs: GPS (to APT faculty) and Roadmap (to tenure track faculty), which encourage the participants to be intentional about building their dossier for tenure and promotion. Throughout the academic year, CTE provides
workshops, facilitated programs, and learning communities associated with best pedagogy. In addition to all these workshops we also offer some cohort oriented, longer-term learning communities. The Department Head Development Fellows (DHDFs) meet monthly across the academic year and identify professional development opportunities to create for department heads, either with the lunchtime series or in a longer form as necessary. The leadership learning community include the DHDFs and other leadership fellows (e.g. SEC-ALDP, ADVANCE Administrative Fellows). The Mid-Career Learning Community (MCLC) was piloted in AY 2020. Faculty volunteer to participate, with support of their Department Heads. As a cohort they explore their strengths and work together to develop strategic career plans which they share with their department leadership. Each semester ADVANCE hosts the Faculty Success Fellows, a learning community for early career tenure track faculty who participate in a series of monthly workshop while also participating in the Faculty Success Program offered by the National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development (NCFDD).

In response to COVID-19 all the faculty development offerings out of DOF, ADVANCE, and CTE are not provided virtually via ZOOM.

Climate (500-word limit):

TAMU conducts campus wide climate surveys for staff every four years. In addition, individual divisions/colleges conduct their own climate survey regularly. DOF staff participate in the university wide as well as AACDC climate survey and implements the recommendations put forward by AACDC.

DOF has implemented an expectation, for its staff, of at least two trainings per year that address diversity and inclusion. Examples of recent trainings include Ouch, Team Building, and Strengths Finder. The Center for Teaching Excellence has offered several workshops to its staff in the area of inclusion, equity, and civility, which aim to improve campus climate. DOF plans to continue seeking training that meets our needs in a just-in-time fashion, in addition to encouraging all staff members to attend university wide seminars and workshops related to diversity, climate and inclusion.

As COVID-19 offers continued challenges, DOF staff have participated in several sessions sponsored by the Flourish group. The Flourish group was created to encapsulate holistic wellness for employees of TAMU. The program is built on the holistic approach of thrive, connect, grow. Flourish offers courses to assist employees embrace work/life integration.

The staff of Office of the Dean of Faculties has created a working group called CREW (Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workplace) whose goal is to improve the work climate through more civil and respectful interactions. CREW meets weekly and provides members the opportunity to discuss concerns, successes, and best practices that help retention and climate within the unit.

In addition, and particularly pertinent here, the CTE supports faculty by facilitating a wide range diversity, equity, and inclusion related programming. Using a philosophical framework based on Universal Design for Learning, the Center’s programming not only aims to promote DEI in teaching and learning, but also strives to promote inclusive teaching practices that improve learning for all students. The Center collaborates with faculty and other university units to co-facilitate sessions. Recent programming has included how to write a diversity statement for the syllabus, how to manage difficult situations and teach controversial topics, understanding the basics of Universal Design for Learning,
helping students manage their mental health to increase academic performance, and how to support student veterans in the classroom. Other planned sessions for later in the Fall 2020 semester will look at how to teach about race, racism, and inclusion in the classroom. Future programming will also examine LGBTIA+ identities in the classroom and the intersectionality of identity.

ADVANCE offers on-demand workshops to address specific climate concerns within units (Communicating Respectfully in a Diverse World; Encouraging and Appreciating a Work-Life Balance in Academia; Improving Climate and Retention Through Evidence-Based Practices; and Tactics for Understanding and Improving Faculty-Staff Relations).

**Equity (500-word limit):**

The Dean of Faculties provides opportunities for employee advancement and recognizes staff achievements. In the past years, the following practices intended to create an equitable environment for its staff have been put into practice:

- Annual equity reviews of salaries
- Hiring salary/Equity adjustments
- Professional development opportunities
- Granting of administrative leave

**Reflection (800-word limit):**

The Office of the Dean of Faculties and its reporting units plan to do more to increase the diversity of its employees and improve retention, climate and equity.

In the DOF and reporting units, female and white employees are over represented. To ensure we increase the diversity of our candidate pool and finalists, we will implement strategies such as requiring supervisors and search committee members to participate in training related to best hiring practices as well as the implicit bias training. In addition, we will ensure that our search committees are diverse while ensuring that our underrepresented groups are not overtaxed with service activities.

To identify reasons for staff turnover we will encourage staff members to participate in exit interviews once they are developed by AACDC and HR. We will also continue to strengthen retention efforts by continuing to encourage staff members to participate in professional development workshops, and staff meeting/trainings where discussion topics include cultural competency and diversity. We will also strive to identify additional strategies that support the creation of an equitable and inclusive environment in support of staff retention.

With recent personnel changes within DOF, there has been a push and emergence by leaders and staff to ensure all individuals feel valued, represented and safe. Due to the effects of COVID-19 and the country experiencing unprecedented numbers in unemployment, DOF leadership has orchestrated strategies in which no staff person has been laid off or furloughed.