FY20 Diversity Plan Accountability Report

Introduction

Graduate and Professional Studies is located in Nagle Hall. Exhibit 1 provides the demographics of the unit in 2020 and those from 2019. The data are limited to budgeted staff, effective September 1 each year, with data provided by AABS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>N = 24</td>
<td>N = 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>5 (21%)</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13 (54%)</td>
<td>12 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>6 (25%)</td>
<td>6 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>18 (75%)</td>
<td>18 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>22 (92%)</td>
<td>21 (87%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff member age ranged from 24 to 57, with a mean of 40.36 (SD = 8.17).

Results show that, though there was turnover in the staff, the demographic percentages remained the same.

The mission of Graduate and Professional Studies is as follows:

Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS) is a global leader in graduate education, committed to the pursuit of knowledge and the power of intellect. Through exceptional service and commitment to the highest standards, OGAPS advocates for graduate education at Texas A&M and throughout Texas. The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies is committed to a diverse campus climate, enhancement of the graduate experience and the development of all students as global citizens.

The AACDC representative took the lead in the writing process. The Associate Provost, leadership team members, and members of the office’s climate and diversity committee reviewed and edited the report. The final report will be distributed to all office personnel, with a follow-up discussion on successes and areas for improvement.
Recruitment

Graduate and Professional Studies has adopted several recruitment strategies aimed at enhancing staff diversity. First, all job advertisements are posted on a variety of websites, both internal and external to TAMU. We keep postings open for at least 15 days to ensure all interested parties have the opportunity to apply.

In the job postings, we include the Commitment to IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equality, and Accountability) and ask finalists how they will work to support the IDEA principles. Before we begin the interview process, OGAPS evaluates the applicant pool to make sure they not only meet the listed job qualifications but that they represent a wide array of different backgrounds, ethnicities, and other personal identities.

Each year, we compare our staff demographics with those from previous years and the broader academic affairs unit. Every three years, we compare our staff demographics and recruitment techniques with peer graduate schools.

Our recruitment goal is for Graduate and Professional Studies to (1) represent the demographic character of the population of the state\(^1\) and (2) to lead our peers in staff diversity.

Retention

Graduate and professional Studies engages in a number of retention activities that also serve to promote a positive climate. These are primarily in the area of staff retreats, numerous social activities celebrating life milestones and cultural events, and individual professional development. The development opportunities are in addition to the business travel that Graduate and Professional Studies uses to increase office capacity.

In addition, staff members take advantage of HROE training (e.g., project management) and LinkedIn Learning training (e.g., using new technologies).

In FY20, seven full-time staff members exited Graduate and Professional Studies: all were women; 1 was Black or African American, 2 were Hispanic or Latina, and 3 were White. One left to finish her education, one relocated with family, and 5 others received promotions or obtained a position more closely aligned with their career goals (e.g., a person with a PhD who obtained a teaching position) or family businesses.

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\(^1\) According to the US Census Bureau ([https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/brazoscountytx](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/brazoscountytx)), Brazos County demographics are as follows. Race: 11.2% Black or African Americans, 0.7% American Indian or Alaska Native, 6.3% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian, 2.1% two or more races, 26.2% Hispanic or Latino, and 55.2% non-Hispanic White; 49.6% of county residents are women; the median age is 27.3 years. Demographics for Texas are as follows: Race: 12.9% Black or African Americans, 1.0% American Indian or Alaska Native, 5.2% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian, 2.1% two or more races, 39.7% Hispanic or Latino, and 41.2% non-Hispanic White; 50.3% of county residents are women; the median age is 34.4 years.
Our retention goals are to outperform national separate rate averages. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics\(^2\), the separation rate in 2019 for educational services was 29.3%, whereas Graduate and Professional Studies had a separation rate of 28%.

**Climate**

In terms of climate goals, each staff member is expected to engage in at least two diversity and inclusion focused development opportunities annually, and team leads provide time and resources to ensure this goal is met. For FY20 all staff members completed two such trainings.

We achieve these goals by offering staff-wide group training and supporting travel and webinar costs related to off-campus training and experiences. Staff-wide programming included Aggie Allies training and engaging with customers (staff, students, and faculty) from different cultural backgrounds. Examples of off-campus development opportunities include Texas Women’s Conference, NCORE annual meeting (canceled in 2020), and NCORE webinars.

Graduate and Professional Studies engages in additional activities to build an inclusive climate. Standing office committees focus on celebrating milestones, birthdays, and achievements, as well as welcoming new staff to the office. The committees also develop activities aimed at promoting togetherness, such as the summer Blue Bell ice cream contest and other potlucks.

Graduate and Professional Studies also seeks to enhance climate capacity across campus. We include sessions on inclusive advising during our annual Graduate Advisor Workshop. The Graduate Ombuds Officer is also a resource for students who have concerns about their safety and treatment in returning to campus during the pandemic.

**Equity**

Graduate and Professional Studies annually examines staff salaries to examine equity discrepancies, and when those are present, to make adjustments. Staff members and their supervisors annually review the staff matrices to ensure the job responsibilities are correct and equitably distributed.

Graduate and Professional Studies also uses the Graduate Student Specialist career ladder to ensure the timely advancement of staff members. This year, 3 staff members were promoted.

Graduate and Professional Studies also encourages staff members to pursue formal educational opportunities (e.g., certificates, advanced degrees), and upon their completion, staff members are considered for Job-Related Skill Enhancement Pay.

A number of processes have been codified to recognize staff members’ meritorious performance that goes above and beyond expectations. Twice a year, the leadership team appraises staff performance for the past 6 months and, where appropriate, makes nominations for one-time merit. The office has also established a standardized process for nominating staff members for division and university awards. This

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\(^2\) The separate rate represents “the annual total separations rate is the number of total separations during the entire year as a percent of annual average employment” [https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.t16.htm](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.t16.htm).
has resulted in an increase in the number of staff members who have been considered and who have received these awards.

In terms of equity goals, Graduate and Professional Studies draws from principles outlined in the AACDC Equity Matrix, including a focus on career ladders and advancement. Moving forward, the office will identify goals for pay equity, including ensuring that employees are within 10% of the median salary for their salary range and time in rank.

Reflection

Graduate and Professional Studies has engaged in a number of activities to promote a diverse workforce, retain staff, promote an inclusive and welcoming climate, and ensure equity across groups. Though many of the structures and processes have been successful, we also recognize areas for improvement.

What is Moving the Needle? Graduate and Professional Studies has purposefully focused on recruiting applicants who value and support diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This commitment is seen in the announcement and in the interview process. As a result, the office is diverse in many respects, particularly in the area of race and ethnicity.

Goals and Strategies Most Impactful. Beyond the purposeful focus on diversity and inclusion in the hiring process, two additional strategies have been impactful. First, Graduate and Professional Studies has standing committees focused on diversity, inclusion, and climate in the office. Participation on these is expected among those in the office, and office committees have budgets for their activities. Allocating the time and monetary resources to promoting an inclusive climate has proven helpful. Second, the lunchtime workshops (held on campus but not in the office) have helped to encourage participation in different development activities. By scheduling the events around lunch, we can promote the professional development for all staff members. As an added benefit, staff members are able to socialize with one another in a non-office setting.

Challenges Faced. We identified three primary challenges.

First, we advocate for a mechanism to advertise each position opening on campus more broadly. We recognize that interested applicants can check the jobs.tamu.edu site for postings; however, another mechanism that allows units to circulate announcements internally would help in recruiting.

Second, when the Texas Tribune posted government employee salaries, we could use this information to recruit and make competitive salary offers. Unfortunately, the organization has stopped posting the data, and access to TAMU employee salaries (or those who work for other state agencies) is not available readily. Providing ways to access that information would enhance our ability to make competitive offers and retain employees.

Finally, like other units on campus, we have experienced negative effects of COVID-19. These are primarily in the area of camaraderie and climate in the office. As an office, we were more intentional in such efforts at the beginning of the pandemic (March through May). However, as time has passed, the
previously-held activities have either been impossible (such as with lunch gatherings) or time constraints have resulted in the happenings being curtailed. Recognizing these shortcomings, the leadership has identified office climate and inclusion as a priority for the upcoming year, allocating the time and resources needed to sustain a welcoming environment.

**Funding Used.** Diversity Fund Awards have been used to support staff attendance at NCORE. If the conference is available this year, we will use the funds to support travel. If it is held virtually, we will use the funds to support participation in NCORE and other professional development to enhance office capacity.