Strategic Diversity Plan 2017 -2022

Policy Statements

Equal Employment Opportunity

Policy Statement Regarding Gender Discrimination

Policy Statement Regarding Discrimination

Shared Values

- Integrity – We act ethically and do what is right.
- Respect – We treat others with courtesy and civility.
- Diversity and inclusiveness – Everybody counts every day. We actively seek varied perspectives in our decision-making.
- Collaboration – We trust each other and work cooperatively across disciplinary boundaries in the spirit of shared governance.
- Excellence and achievement – We constantly innovate, solve problems, and improve ourselves and others through learning.
- Stewardship – Fiscal and environmental sustainability guide our decisions.
- Accountability – We are answerable to each other and act with the best interests of the university in mind.

Vision: UAB Inspiring Equity and Inclusive Excellence, Every Day.

Mission:

Our mission is to champion equity and inclusion and, in particular, to advocate for inclusive excellence and equity so that UAB students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners and friends can flourish and excel. Our mission is inspired by what we value, what we learn from research and what we teach and share with the world. It is our goal to motivate our
people to take a courageous step to inspire equity and inclusive excellence throughout our state, nation and world, every day.

Defining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at UAB:

**Diversity** is a defining feature of Alabama’s and UAB’s past, present, and future; and refers to the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, geographic region, and more.

**Equity** is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff in every stage of UAB’s education and career development, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of marginalized groups.

**Inclusion** is the act of creating an environment at UAB in which any individual or group can feel welcome, respected, supported, and valued. An inclusive climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions so that all people can fully participate in the University’s opportunities.

Building a Community at the University of Alabama at Birmingham that values Diversity, Equity and, Inclusion.

In order for our students to thrive in an increasingly diverse and complex global world, UAB must assist them in developing their abilities to communicate, understand, and work with people who are different from themselves. Building a community at UAB in which every member is welcome, supported, and valued is an essential foundation to education and learning, and therefore is central to our identity and mission. At UAB we strive to prepare our students not just to participate, but to lead, and effective leadership in the 21st century requires the skills to build productive partnerships in contexts and institutions that are increasingly diverse.

As we work to meet the goals outlined in this strategic diversity plan, UAB will continue to be a leader in preparing students for success, and UAB—through the work of its faculty, staff and students—will have a major impact on economic renewal in our state and region, and in maintaining our quality of life.

The Strategic Diversity Planning Process

In 2016 the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion restructured the Affirmative Action Officers and Diversity Council to establish the Equity Leadership Council (ELC). The ELC is charged with promoting diversity, equity and inclusion at all levels of the University.
The Equity Advisors who make up the ELC represent all academic and administrative support divisions of UAB and serve as an advisory council to the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Comprised of students, faculty, and staff from UAB enterprise, the ELC works to help UAB achieve its goals of promoting diversity and equity and inclusion as core values.

**Equity Leadership Council Roster**

*(Insert Roster)*

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**Strategic Diversity Planning Timeline 2016 - 2017**

- **October 28, 2016** Equity Leadership Council retreat with William Shackelford, Strategic Planning 101 to introduce strategic planning process and Equity Advisor role.

- **December 12, 2016** Strategic Planning Subcommittee meeting - reviewed 2007 Strategic Plan goals, and discussed creation of 2017 strategic goals

- **December 21, 2016** Strategic Planning subcommittee chair meeting/discussion regarding goal creation.

- **January 17, 2017** Strategic Planning Subcommittee meeting. Reviewed draft of goals and discussed ways to gather feedback on goals.

- **January 17, 2017** Gathered feedback from Equity Leadership Council Strategic Plan Subcommittee regarding draft of goals

- **January 26, 2017** Gathered feedback from Equity Leadership Council on draft goals

- **March 2017** Equity Advisors held focus groups/listening sessions in each school/unit to gather feedback on performance strengths, challenges, and climate for diversity, equity and inclusion at UAB. Equity Advisors submitted categorized feedback (grouped by strategic goal) from school/unit focus groups.

- **March 20, 2017** Strategic Planning Subcommittee meeting reviewed focus group feedback, for inclusion in strategic diversity plan.

- **April 1, 2017** Draft of Strategic Diversity Plan goals and strategies created
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 21, 2017</td>
<td>Equity Leadership Council Strategic Planning Retreat, Strategic Planning 102. Reviewed draft of strategic plan, goals, actions and benchmarks and provided feedback for edits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 21, 2017</td>
<td>Feedback from SDP incorporated into draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>September - November 2017</td>
<td>Public Comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>September - November 2017</td>
<td>Final SDP draft to be shared with President’s Cabinet, Deans, Faculty Senate, Staff Council</td>
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We will work to develop and sustain a diversity, equity and inclusion continuous improvement process to support a campus community that is diverse, inclusive and is more than a series of education sessions or events. At UAB, our efforts will focus on ensuring that diversity, equity and inclusion are woven throughout our DNA and is anchored in how we do our work. Creating a just and inclusive campus community is central to our planned, intentional organizing effort to ensure we have the ability and capacity to respect and welcome variety in cultures and differences and incorporate those differences into innovative research, teaching, and service practice, everyday.
Through a process of continuous improvement we are striving to lay the foundation for increasing the diversity and inclusion relational skills of the UAB community. A process of continuous improvement will support our effort in the following ways:

- It will encourage everyone to use the same language. This is key to deploy lessons learned and best practices across academic and administrative units, processes and business practices. Formalizing documents, procedures and work instructions will make it easier to facilitate the development of shared a understanding.

- It will foster an inclusive excellence mindset. Instead of viewing continuous improvement as something to restart with every new project, a formalized and consistent approach to continuous improvement teaches our people that equity and inclusion is inherent to how UAB functions as a diverse enterprise. Foremost, diversity, equity and inclusion is not something you add to how you work — it becomes how we work, everyday.

- It makes people accountable to UAB and each other. When continuous improvement permeates throughout all levels of our enterprise, diversity stops being one person’s job and becomes part of everyone’s job. Knowing that our diversity and inclusion efforts never stop evolving will help the UAB faculty, staff, students, alumni, community friends and partners see where they can be an active participants in continuous improvement.

- It reinforces the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion. Today, in a higher education environment it is very easy to get lost in what is currently trending with diversity speak, and institutional slogans. A diversity and inclusion continuous improvement process should be treated as an integral foundation for UAB, and formalizing how we approach it makes it more concrete.

Our Plan

The University’s Strategic Diversity Plan serves as a blueprint for the academic and administrative units’ plans. The overarching strategies and actions emerged from and reflect the insight and innovation produced by Equity Advisors from those units. They are intended to support and enhance the unit plans. For that reason, they focus on areas where centrally coordinated and supported programs and initiatives will be most effective. The core campus wide strategies will be:

Goal 1: Foster and sustain a campus culture that recognizes and respects differences, and practices equity and inclusive excellence in all aspects of teaching, cross cultural learning, research, service and community engagement.
The climate at UAB must be continuously cultivated in order to create and maintain a campus culture in which the values of diversity and inclusion will continue to deepen and flourish. Respectful, thoughtful interchange is at the core of a dynamic environment that values the contributions of all members of the UAB community and is committed to living its diversity values in everyday learning, research, engagement, and work settings. Intentional efforts must focus on the inclusion of underrepresented members of the university community including faculty and staff members at all levels of the University regardless of their roles so that they are afforded the opportunities and respect they deserve as members of the UAB community.

**Strategic Actions and Initiatives**

- Expand opportunities for informed, respectful civil exchange. Increase co-curricular engagement opportunities for enhancing understanding of diversity.
- Expand the President’s Diversity Champion Award to recognize faculty, student, staff, alumni leadership and community partners and friends in diversity initiatives.
- Support, encourage and engage faculty to consider and include content and discussion about the value of diversity in their curriculum.
- Develop incentives for faculty to incorporate diversity into existing coursework and to develop new courses that respond to persistent issues facing our society.
- Provide support to faculty for the development of strategies that enhance school- and department-level climates for underrepresented staff, students and faculty.
- Implement a climate survey to assess the UAB environment, and use data to inform future changes/improvements needed for UAB to be a more inclusive and equitable community.
- Provide ongoing support for UAB leadership including administrators, supervisory and management staff in order to create climates in the workplace that are conducive to open and civil exchanges.
- Provide staff with a safe environment where all employees are welcome to express their ideas about diversity. Focused attention given to the interests of facilities and service employees.
- Create a more inclusive campus community, where all feel welcome, supported, and have equal access to networks for mentoring and sponsorship.

**Descriptive Benchmarks**

Examples of benchmarks that can help measure the success of efforts to promote a positive climate and to stimulate discussion of diversity include:

- Upon completion of a campus climate survey, staff will report more inclusive work environments.
- Incorporate diversity competency into supervisor annual performance reviews.
• Upon completion of campus climate survey, staff will report increased opportunities to discuss diversity issues with colleagues in open and civil exchange.
• Enhanced retention of underrepresented students, faculty and staff
• Inclusive messaging to students regarding UAB’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
• Creation and dissemination of clear policies and procedures for handling diversity, equity and inclusion issues/concerns in the workplace
• Hotline (anonymous) to report questions or issues regarding diversity, equity and inclusion at UAB
• Create opportunities for UAB community to engage in discussions around diversity, equity and inclusion (town halls, listening campaign, open forums)
• Incorporate a yearly assessment inventory of all diversity, equity and inclusion related initiatives occurring at UAB.
• Explore initiatives to help staff members feel more protected in their roles (perception that faculty and students have more ability to speak up without fear of retaliation)

Goal 2: Enhance the capacity for equity in recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff to support performance and success

Diversity is more than presence, but a lack of diversity among faculty, students and staff impedes the educational process. Even among undergraduates, where the University achieves far greater diversity, the lack of a critical mass can place undue pressures on underrepresented students and interfere with all students experiencing the educational benefits of a diverse learning environment. Effective measures for the recruitment, support and retention of underrepresented students, faculty and staff are critical to the achievement of this goal. The principal responsibility for faculty recruitment rests with each of UAB’s 12 Schools. The Provost’s Office works in partnership with the departments and Deans to make the University’s standing faculty even more excellent and diverse.

Strategic Actions and Initiatives

• Research and implement best practice strategies to achieve diversity of presence tailored to the specific student, faculty and staff populations we seek to enhance.
• Maintain and enhance outreach and recruitment efforts for students from historically underrepresented populations.
• Expand incentives for successful recruitment and retention of a diverse student body at all levels. University recruitment practices require substantial policy and legal support and this support should be in place to assure the recruitment and enrollment of students who enhance the diversity of graduate and professional programs.
• Target resources to enable the establishment or expansion of programs for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from diverse backgrounds.
• Maintain UAB’s commitment toward achieving a diverse faculty.
• Achieve the critical masses of underrepresented populations necessary to ensure the educational benefits of diversity in faculty, staff, students and executive, administrative and managerial positions.
• Build a more diverse faculty, whose composition reflects the pool of exceptional, qualified applicants nationally in all fields.
• Refine and strengthen the search process to recruit an excellent and diverse faculty.
• Implement a continuous improvement plan to refine and strengthen the faculty search process.
• Develop School-specific diversity plans that are aligned with UAB’s strategic priorities, follow the goals and principles of the UAB affirmative action program and identify specific strategies to enhance the diversity of the faculty workforce.
• Expand diversity content in search materials and search orientations to improve the effectiveness of the recruitment and interview process, and contribute to the fair and equitable evaluation of applicant materials and candidates.
• Develop a faculty search tool kit with resources for building a diverse pool of applicants.
• Assess faculty search process to identify areas of success and areas to develop; use findings to make program improvements.
• Expand and publicize incentives and resources for faculty diversity, including for example, a diversity initiative in the Provost’s Office and the UAB Post-Doctoral Programs for Faculty Diversity, and incentives for schools and departments to hire faculty from these pools and other sources.
• Faculty search committees and department chairs will be provided with assistance for implementing effective strategies to ensure the diversity of applicant pools.
• Foster and support faculty exchanges with historically minority-serving institutions to increase the diversity of schools and departments.
• Continue and enhance outreach and recruitment efforts for staff from historically underrepresented populations as well as ensure sufficient professional development opportunities exist to develop a larger, more diverse pool of employees qualified for management and supervisory level positions.
• Continued monitoring of staff applicant pools and hires is critical to evaluating the success of these efforts.
• Continued on-going monitoring of salary and promotion to assure equitable outcomes for women and underrepresented populations at all levels of faculty and staff.

Descriptive Benchmarks

Examples of benchmarks that can help measure the success of recruitment, support retention efforts include:
• Increases in underrepresented student representation in applicant and enrollment pools at all levels, undergraduate, graduate and professional.
• 100% Unit participation in recruiting incentives at all levels.
• Enhanced retention and graduation rates for students from underrepresented populations.
• Enhancement of academic, financial and social support programs for all levels of students, undergraduate, graduate and professional
• Position advertisements will reflect diversity values.
• Enhanced diversity in candidate pools and hiring outcomes.
• Increase in department participation in incentive opportunities and post-doctoral programs.
• Equal opportunity recommended search strategies are employed in faculty searches.
• Collaborative programs and research are developed with minority-serving institutions.
• Increase in employee participation in professional development opportunities.
• Increase in diverse in-house applicants qualified for management level positions.
• Salaries are equitable based on occupational categories and are not disparate due to gender or race. Applicant and hiring pools exhibit diversity.
• Incorporate a diversity evaluation for each school/unit to complete annually on status of initiatives and progress related to recruitment and retention.
• Include inclusive language on all job announcements and postings
• Increased mentoring programs to assist underrepresented faculty/staff in professional development
• Explore new recruiting strategies (targeted hires, one-to-one personal recruiting) to create more diverse pools and hires.
• Create university wide expectations regarding diversity, and hold accountable those in leadership positions for the implementation, progress and reporting of these.
• Increase support for International students, staff and faculty
• Implement hidden/Implicit bias training for supervisors

Goal 3: Develop and implement an ongoing comprehensive system of diversity education and cultural competency education for students, faculty and staff

It is not enough to expose people to ideas about diversity and inclusion. It is also crucial to help them open up to new possibilities, including the option of responding differently to situations. This is where education and talent development comes in. As a strategic diversity priority Goal 3 makes high quality diversity education, orientation, and training available to all members of the university community.

We like to think we know instinctively how to interact with others, regardless of our differences. Too often, it’s not that easy. On-going educational opportunities are essential to the development of a thoughtful, informed university community that is skilled at
interaction in multicultural settings. Diversity education, orientation and training offer students, faculty and staff the opportunity to improve interpersonal skills through meaningful education and training relevant to their context in the University.

**Strategic Actions and Initiatives**

- Expand interactive opportunities for learning about different dimensions of diversity. Key areas include enhancing opportunities for student leaders to develop skills in diversity issues and infusing diversity in orientation programs for all students – undergraduate, graduate, and professional.
- Provide students with information on procedures and strategies for handling experiences or observations of disrespect and/or bias.
- Encourage new initiatives to assist with drawing upon the diversity in the classroom to enhance the learning experience. Where appropriate, we should support faculty in the incorporation of diversity into “interactive learning” components of the curriculum.
- Provide Faculty with information regarding diversity competence issues and support to enhance their ability to mentor diverse students.
- Increase the cultural competency of the workforce by expanding opportunities to learn about and effectively manage diversity issues in the workplace. Supervisory staff should be expected to attain competency in dealing with diversity in the workplace through diversity education and training. To encourage staff engagement with diversity, units should provide recognition and support for completion of diversity education and training for all employees.

**Descriptive Benchmarks**

Examples of benchmarks that can help measure the breadth and focus of opportunities for deepening community understanding of diversity include:

- Implement diversity education and talent development modules for effective classroom inclusion. Include strategies for incorporating diversity into course materials
- Provide continuous diversity education opportunities for faculty, staff and students that explicitly cover all the areas protected by the UAB Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy (race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, national origin, disability unrelated to program performance, veteran status, or genetic or family medical history).
- Provide targeted training for managers and supervisors on diversity, equity and inclusion issues in the workplace, and provide strategies for effective management
- Establishment of and student participation in new co-curricular programs and activities addressing diversity.
- Provide student leadership education initiatives that includes diversity issues and resources.
• Orientations for all levels of students include diversity issues and resources.
• Creation of class room diversity management skills competency program for Faculty.
• Creation and implementation of a competency based skills education for faculty on diversity issues in mentoring and advising.
• Diversity issues are incorporated into courses and curricula where appropriate.
• Enhanced curriculum and education opportunities for managers and supervisors.
• Incorporate diversity competency into annual performance reviews.
• Expansion of professional development programs that address diversity.
• Increased supervisor and staff participation in programs that address diversity.
• Adjust the undergraduate core curriculum to include a requirement for diversity, equity and inclusion.
• Include Universal Design and accessibility as a part of staff onboarding

Goal 4: Build and enhance mutually beneficial partnerships with diverse communities, businesses and civic organizations to support diversity at UAB and the surrounding communities.

In order for our students to thrive in an increasingly diverse and complex global world, UAB must assist them in developing their abilities to communicate, understand, and work with people who are different from themselves. Building a community at UAB in which every member is welcomed, supported, and valued is an essential foundation to education and learning, and therefore is central to our identity and mission. UAB must strive to prepare our students not just to participate, but to lead, and effective leadership in the 21st century requires the skills to build productive partnerships in contexts and institutions that are increasingly diverse.

Strategic Action and Initiatives

• Cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships that further the values of diversity, equity and inclusion of UAB with an emphasis on historically and currently underserved communities.
• Develop and promote academic and co-curricular activities that provide opportunities for connections between the intellectual resources of the university and priorities of the community.
• Develop criteria for evaluating engaged scholarship and education as well as other faculty/staff collaborations with communities and stakeholders.
• Develop a comprehensive plan for inventory, reporting, tracking and assessment protocol for community outreach and engagement.
• Strengthen relationships with development, foundations, schools, alumni and other entities to develop and increase monies for diversity initiatives (i.e. scholarship, professional development, and employee hiring).

• Build interdepartmental partnerships to explore workforce development grant opportunities to create funds for employee hiring.

• Establish guidelines for partnership evaluation and a financial stewardship system to examine and measure the benefit of each partnership as well as the roles of individual units in each partnership.

Descriptive Benchmarks

• Increase mentoring programs with current UAB students and local high school students

• Implement service-learning requirement into the undergraduate curriculum. Develop a “Good Neighbor” subcommittee consisting of students, local residents and business owners in campus communities to help improve communication between these groups.

• Develop a print and an online application form for formalizing a partnership request with community engagement portfolio.

• Develop protocol for ongoing transfer of information.

• Implement quality control systems to ensure that community engagement information is updated and reliable.

• Revise the undergraduate curriculum and require that all undergraduate students take and pass a service-learning course to prepare students for life-long learning, service, and citizenship engagement.

Goal 5: Develop and execute a comprehensive communication plan for diversity, equity and inclusion.

To support students, faculty and staff in valuing and understanding diversity, University leaders must make specific efforts to clearly define and publicize the University’s and their unit’s commitment to diversity. Units also should be clear in articulating diversity as a key contributor to educational excellence. In defining and communicating the significance of diversity, University leaders will promote a respect for all individual differences regardless of age, gender, race, class, color, national origin, religion, philosophical perspective, disability, or sexual orientation. Leaders will also communicate the University’s core values and vision for diversity, presenting the University’s commitment clearly for all members of the University community and the general public.
Strategic Action and Initiatives

- Clearly define and publicize the University's commitment to diversity.
- Communicate the University’s core values and vision for diversity openly for all members of the University community and for the general public.
- Processes for redressing disrespectful behaviors, harassment and discrimination should be clearly outlined and publicized.
- Diversity values and commitments should also be integrated into leadership training and professional development programs for faculty, staff and students.
- University and unit leaders must take an active role in articulating diversity values to both the general public and their school/unit’s faculty, students and staff.

Descriptive Benchmarks

Benchmarks that can help measure progress towards clarifying and communicating the significance of diversity to UAB ‘s education mission include:

- Public communications include diversity values and vision.
- University internal communications include diversity values and vision.
- Distribution of information for students, faculty and staff outlining processes and policies.
- Students, faculty and staff can demonstrate knowledge of diversity mission, values and policies.
- Create a repository for diversity guideline, tool kits, dash boards, and principles available to UAB community
- Create a toolkit of resources on effective communication with faculty and staff regarding diversity issues

Implementation of the Plan

The outcomes of the Strategic Diversity Plan will be used as feedback for the various academic and administrative operating plans throughout the University. Overall responsibility for implementation of the Strategic Diversity Plan rests with the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer. Specific implementation strategies will be developed in consultation with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the deans of the various schools and colleges, Staff Council, and other University officers as appropriate. As needed, specific items requiring further discussion or elaboration will be referred to appropriate senate and university committees. The vice president will be responsible for the development of annual operating plans and annual progress reports. A set of metrics will be used to measure progress toward meeting UAB’s strategic diversity goals.
Our Metrics for Success

The following is a list of metrics that will guide our assessment and evaluation of how well UAB is doing on its diversity and inclusion program.

- Percentage of students enrolled from underrepresented population and percentage of EEO targets for faculty and staff recruitment
- Overall percentage increase in underrepresented populations
- Increase in underrepresented populations at different levels of UAB
- Employee satisfaction surveys
- Better relationships among diverse staff members
- Fewer discrimination grievances and complaints
- Fewer findings of discrimination by adjudicators and government agencies
- Improved employee relations
- Reduction of bias related incidents
- More diverse hiring
- Improvements in productivity
- Improved focus on more innovation and creativity associated with diversity, equity and inclusion (There are various metrics for this, such innovative for recruitment, teaching, research and community engagement)
- Improved job satisfaction
- More career development over time for underrepresented group members.
- Use of bridge positions for lower level employees to bridge to professional positions.
- Better retention
- Decrease in pay disparities
- More positive responses on exit interviews
- Higher ranking of the organization in terms of best places to work
- Becoming an employer of choice
- Awards from special interest and advocacy groups
- Inclusion of diversity in UAB’s social responsibility efforts
- Recognition of the independence and professionalism of the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion leading accountability and transformation