

The University of Alabama College of Communication and Information Sciences  
Diversity Plan

Approved January 25, 2008  
Human Resources Committee (HRC)

The mission of the College of Communication and Information Sciences aims to promote the intellectual, social and cultural conditions of the University of Alabama community, as well as broader regional, state, national and international publics. This aim is actualized through teaching, research and service that advance a vigorous exchange of ideas within a culturally diverse learning environment. Members of such a learning community – from students and staff to faculty and administrators – who learn together are better equipped to understand, appreciate and contribute to a twenty-first century global society that emphasizes pluralism and freedom of speech. To this end, the College of Communication and Information Sciences supports and embraces a student, staff, faculty and administrative community enriched by members of diverse genders, national origins, races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, socioeconomic conditions, geographic backgrounds, sexualities, ages, religious beliefs and spiritualities, abilities, and political views. The College of Communication and Information Sciences is dedicated to sustaining diverse cultural events, curricular offerings, research programs, service opportunities, and other educational and professional initiatives that augment cultural awareness and appreciation, group and individual diversity, and the promotion of ethical and civically engaged societies.

We endeavor to fulfill this mission by attaining the following objectives. (Note: these objectives are not listed in order of hierarchical weight or importance)

### **Objectives**

- To foster a supportive and diverse environment
- To increase faculty and staff diversity
- To increase student diversity
- To maintain an inclusive curriculum
- To provide diversity through research, service and public events
- To train faculty and staff in diversity issues
- To seek grants and resources regarding diversity
- To assess and review annually the College's diversity efforts

### **Strategies for Objectives**

#### **Objective #1: To foster a supportive and diverse environment**

##### *Goals*

1. **To provide a public space consistent with UA's facilities use policy where faculty, staff, administrators and students can interact, regardless of status**

**or in-group.**

*Action Steps*

- Work with the Dean to find a space for a break room or College lounge open to all students, faculty and staff

**2. To create an environment for students to engage in diversity-related activities.**

*Action Steps*

- Ask advisors to student groups to encourage collaboration for diversity activities, meetings and socials across groups

**3. To organize events (i.e., town hall meetings, documentary screenings, presentations) to encourage discussions about diversity-related issues.**

*Action Steps*

- Take advantage of existing groups, “captive audiences,” and ask professors of key large lecture classes to hold a forum and panel discussions about diversity issues once a semester.

- Ask the Dean to invite comments about diversity in faculty meetings and to openly and freely discuss such issues

**4. To articulate the College’s efforts in diversity.**

*Action Steps*

- Encourage the Dean to discuss the College's commitments to diversity in the State of the College Address

- Encourage the Dean to mention the College's commitments to diversity during faculty meetings

- Find stories to publish in The Communicator and distribute stories about the College and its diversity efforts in appropriate publications

- Include diversity-related materials in orientation for new students

**Objective #2: To increase faculty, staff and administrative diversity**

***Goals***

**1. To increase the number of diverse faculty (as defined in the College Diversity Statement and University Statement) by seeking creative ways of attracting candidates and supporting issues related to diverse teaching and research.**

*Action Steps*

- Ask department chairs to designate a member on each faculty search committee to act as a “diversity advocate” so that a committee is attentive to the College’s desire to attract an applicant pool consistent with its educational mission

- Ask the diversity advocate to ensure that language in job descriptions describes the College’s educational mission and the desire to attract candidates who can help fulfill that mission

- Allow the College to partner with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), women’s colleges, tribal colleges, etc. to more widely distribute and advertise information regarding open positions

- Ask faculty and administrators to network within diverse divisions/caucuses of our national academic and professional associations to recruit diverse candidates

- Require search committees to work with the University's Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and/or the College's Unit Affirmative Action Officer to more widely distribute and advertise information regarding open positions
  - Ask search committees to provide information on the effort made to recruit and interview qualified candidates through a written memo from the chair of the search committee to the dean
2. **To increase the number of diverse staff and administrators (as defined in the College Diversity Statement and University Statement) by seeking creative ways of attracting candidates and supporting a diverse workplace.**

*Action Steps*

- Ask department chairs or the Dean to designate a member on each staff and administrator search committee to act as a "diversity advocate" so that the committee is attentive to the College's desire to attract an applicant pool consistent with its educational mission
- Ask the diversity advocate to ensure that language in job descriptions describes the College's educational mission and the desire to attract candidates who can help fulfill that mission
- Allow the College to partner with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), women's colleges, tribal colleges, etc. to more widely distribute and advertise information regarding open positions
- Require search committees to work with the University's Office of Equal Opportunity Programs and/or the College's Unit Affirmative Action Officer to more widely distribute and advertise information regarding open positions.
- Ask search committees to provide information on the effort made to recruit and interview qualified candidates through a written memo from the chair of the search committee to the dean

**Objective #3: To increase student diversity**

***Goals***

1. **To recruit diverse students at the undergraduate and graduate levels.**

*Action Steps*

- Increase the number of diverse undergraduate and graduate students (as defined in the College Diversity Statement and University Statement) by seeking creative ways of attracting students and supporting issues related to diverse teaching, research and student life
- Include course offerings and College activities dealing in diversity in promotional literature
- Create a student ambassador program as an outreach to contacting diverse students who are considering joining the College
- Create a faculty ambassador program as an outreach to contacting diverse students who are considering joining the College
- Review the allocation of undergraduate scholarships to determine if this recruitment tool is being effectively used to further the College's educational mission

- Propose graduate assistantships and fellowships for research and teaching in matters that will further strengthen the College's commitment to diversity as part of its educational mission
- 2. **To foster the representation of diverse individuals on College student boards and student organizations.**  
*Action Steps*
  - Encourage diverse students to apply to both membership and leadership positions within the College's student boards and organizations
  - Educate the College's student boards and organizations about the importance of diverse student participation
- 3. **To demonstrate a commitment to working with already existent student groups that concentrate on diversity issues**  
*Action Steps*
  - Motivate our student groups to form coalitions with existent University student groups (International House, GLBT-Alliance, Black Student Union, Graduate Student Association committee on diversity) in order to express our commitment to diversity
- 4. **To bolster relationships with the McNair Scholars Program**  
*Action Steps*
  - Work with McNair Scholars Program to publicize the College efforts in diversity
  - Recruit diverse students and prospective students in our College to apply for the McNair Scholars Program

#### **Objective #4: To maintain an inclusive curriculum**

##### ***Goals***

1. **To create or maintain courses whose primary focus is diversity or includes diversity-related topics.**  
*Action Steps*
  - Encourage faculty to consult with colleagues in their respective fields or sub-fields who teach such courses. Faculty are encouraged to attend diversity-related workshops and panels while attending professional conferences.
  - Maintain an archive of diversity-related resources that other faculty and instructors can access and consider for adoption in their courses. With the assistance of the University's Faculty Resource Center, the College will maintain an eLearning portal that will be accessible to faculty and instructors. This portal will contain diversity related syllabi, assignments, teaching modules and links to useful websites.
  - Allow faculty to report diversity-related activities (conference attendance, course improvements, etc.) on annual reports, dossiers and other evaluative measures for teaching and creativity respective to their field of teaching and research.
  - Allocate funds to purchase books and other types of teaching and research resources that focus on teaching diversity. These books and resources will be

- housed in the College's Winter Reading room. These sources will be included in the general catalogue under the search term "diversity."
- 2. To create a pedagogical environment that complements the College's and the University's diversity efforts.**  
*Action Steps*
    - Organize a College-wide diversity symposium for faculty, instructors and graduate students. The symposium will feature diversity-related research, research in progress, teaching modules, creative endeavors and assignments created by faculty and graduate students during the academic year.
    - Earmark funds for inviting nationally recognized scholars and professionals whose research, teaching or general foci involve diversity to give presentations to our faculty and students.
  - 3. To assess the progress of the College's curricular efforts.**  
*Action Steps*
    - Allow faculty to report diversity-related activities (conference attendance, course improvements, etc.) on annual reports, dossiers and other evaluative measures for teaching and creativity respective to their field of teaching and research.

#### **Objective #5: To provide diversity through research, service and public events**

##### ***Goals***

- 1. To encourage faculty and students to participate in academic and professional conferences and events involving diversity and inclusiveness .**  
*Action Steps*
  - Provide additional travel funds for faculty and selected students to attend regional/national conferences and events
  - Inspire faculty to undertake this by allowing them to report these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for research and service
  - Present an award to faculty and staff members who demonstrate exemplary diversity and inclusiveness efforts
- 2. To sponsor an internal colloquia series on research in diversity.**  
*Action Steps*
  - Motivate faculty to undertake this by allowing them to report these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for research and service
  - Publicize these diversity events within the community and across the campus through the College's communication specialist
- 3. To sponsor an external colloquia series on research in diversity.**  
*Action Steps*
  - Allocate funds to bring in highly regarded external presenters to discuss their research to give faculty exposure to a variety of diversity models and techniques

- Publicize these diversity events within the community and across the campus through the College's communication specialist
- 4. **To encourage faculty to research and write about issues in diversity.**  
*Action Steps*
  - Encourage faculty to involve their students in research and writing on/about diversity and changing demographics
  - Prompt faculty to undertake this by allowing them to report these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for research and service

**Objective #6: To train faculty and staff in diversity issues**

**Goals**

1. **To purchase videos, books and instructional materials focused on diversity for inclusion in the College Reading Room. These sources will be included in the general catalogue under the search term "diversity."**  
*Action Steps*
  - Allocate funds for this purpose
  - Create a specific list of items and a designated location for such a collection
2. **To encourage new faculty, staff and administrators to attend a diversity workshop organized by the College Human Resources Committee in cooperation with the University's diversity specialists in Human Resources.**  
*Action Steps*
  - Encourage the Human Resources Committee to provide the resources and space to conduct these workshops
  - Motivate faculty to undertake this by allowing them to report these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for teaching, research and service
3. **To encourage existing faculty, staff and administrators to attend a diversity workshop organized by the College Human Resources Committee in cooperation with the University's diversity specialists in Human Resources**  
*Action Steps*
  - Convince the Human Resources Committee to provide the resources and space to conduct these workshops
  - Motivate faculty to undertake this by allowing them to report these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for teaching, research and service
4. **To empower faculty with advising materials that point students towards curriculum involving diversity and College and University groups involving diversity.**  
*Action Steps*
  - Establish an advising guide with the aid of the Human Resources Committee for distribution to all College academic advisors and faculty

**Objective #7: To seek grants and resources regarding diversity**

## **Goals**

1. **To include a “diversity” category of grants within the Institute for Communication and Information Research(ICIR).**

### *Action Steps*

- Provide the ICIR the funds, staff and administrative resources to organize this effort
  - Appropriate specific funding for academic and service related diversity needs
  - Motivate faculty to undertake this by allowing them to report these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for teaching, research and service, and provide financial support for all efforts
2. **To encourage faculty to apply for grants dealing in diversity issues involving curriculum and research.**

### *Action Steps*

- Motivate faculty to undertake this by allowing them to report these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for teaching, research and service

## **Objective #8: To assess and review annually the College’s diversity efforts**

## **Goals**

1. **To assess the College’s diversity efforts**

### *Action Steps*

- Require the College to submit an annual report of its diversity efforts to the University of Alabama’s Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs each year, per ACEJMC guidelines. The Dean will craft this annual report with the aid of information provided by chairs and directors. Chairs and directors will submit to the Dean a compilation of diversity efforts gathered from the annual reports of the department’s faculty, staff and professional units (The Center for Public Television and Radio, WVUATV7, and WVUA-FM and WUAL-FM) for this purpose.
- Maintain that the Dean submit the annual report to the Provost and to the College’s Human Resources Committee (HRC) for review and assessment. The HRC will review each department’s contribution to building and improving an academic environment that supports diversity and inclusiveness. Direct measures used to assess the College’s efforts will include recruitment efforts, minority student participation in the College’s pre-professional and academic organizations, and diversity-related programs, such as the Multicultural Journalism Workshop, as well as the inclusion of diversity-related sessions in departmental programs and initiatives, such as Ad Day, Public Relations Day and the Communications Career Fair. Indirect measures will include student responses to the University of Alabama's exit survey question related to diversity and inclusiveness (Graduating Senior Survey, College of Communication and Information Sciences: 2006-2007. The question asks students to rate the extent to which their education at UA contributed to their knowledge, skills, and/or

personal development in the appreciation of racial equity.) In addition, the HRC will look for improvements and innovations based on the previous year's assessment of the College's diversity report.

- Ask the HRC to send its review and assessment to the College's Dean, as well as respective chairs and directors. The HRC will offer suggestions for corrective action(s)/plan(s) as needed and will serve as a resource for departments and faculty seeking ways to include and improve diversity-related course content. The adoption and execution of the HRC's suggestions is at the discretion of the department. However, department chairs should provide a timely written response to committee recommendations outlining corrective action(s)/plan(s).