The University of Alabama
College of Communication & Information Sciences

Diversity Plan
Approved by the Faculty and Staff, April 26, 2019

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 gender expressions, national origins, races, ethnicities, cultures, 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.

In keeping with the College's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan that lists providing a "learning environment that promotes diversity and equity" as a strategic priority and sets a goal of "Strengthening Diversity and Inclusion," this diversity plan provides specific action steps. Furthermore, it provides shows how the College of Communication and Information Sciences is carrying out Goal #3 of the University's Strategic Plan, which is to "enrich our learning and work environment by providing an accepting, inclusive community that attracts and supports a diverse faculty, staff and student body."

Overall Objectives:
1. To foster a supportive and diverse environment
2. To increase faculty, staff, and administrative diversity
3. To recruit and retain a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body
4. To maintain an inclusive curriculum
5. To provide diversity through research, service and public events
6. To assess regularly the College's diversity efforts

Objective #1: To foster a supportive and diverse environment

> **Goal 1-1: Create an environment for students to engage in diversity-related activities.**
> A. Ask faculty to encourage students to attend diversity-related programs and events.
> B. Ask advisors to student groups to encourage collaboration for diversity in activities, meetings and socials across groups.

> **Goal 1-2: Organize events (i.e. town hall meetings, documentary screenings, presentations) to encourage discussions about diversity-related topics.**

A. Take advantage of existing groups, "captive audiences," and ask professors of key large lecture classes to hold a forum and panel discussions about diversity topics once a semester.
B. Ask the Dean to invite comments about diversity in faculty meetings and to openly and freely discuss such topics.

Goal 1-3: Articulate the College's efforts in diversity.
A. Encourage the Dean to mention the College's commitment to diversity during faculty meetings.
B. Identify diversity-related stories to publish in The Communicator and distribute stories about the College and its diversity efforts in appropriate publications.

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

Goal 2-1: Increase the number of diverse faculty, staff and administrators (as defined in the College Diversity Statement and University Statement) by seeking creative ways of attracting candidates and supporting topics related to diverse teaching and research.
A. Design and conduct semi-annual training (once per semester) for diversity advocates, who will serve on all faculty search committees in the College. The pool of diversity advocates focuses on such things as attracting an applicant pool consistent with the University 's mission to have a faculty, staff and administrators who reflect all aspects of diversity, ensuring language in job descriptions reflects diversity and inclusion is pa part of every phase of the search process.
B. Ask department chairs to select a diversity advocate from the pool of those who have completed the training, with the understanding that diversity advocacy is a responsibility of EVERY member of a faculty search committee.
C. Ask all college administrators to considering selecting a diversity advocate from the pool of those who have completed the training to serve on as many staff and administrative search committees as possible.
D. Ask the College to partner with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), women's colleges, tribal colleges, diversity organizations, etc. to more widely distribute and advertise information regarding open positions.
E. Ask faculty and administrators to network within diverse divisions/caucuses of our national academic and professional associations to recruit diverse candidates.

Goal 2-2: Develop materials to aid faculty and staff search committees in facilitating the search process that includes diversity as one the primary goals.
A. Produce a faculty search handbook with detailed information on how to conduct a faculty search where diversity is considered at all stages.
B. Provide to search committees examples of job announcements that include language outlining diversity as a College strategic priority that goes beyond the required EEO statement.

Goal 2-3: Develop faculty/staff recruiting materials that showcase the diversity of the College in all of its forms.
A. Produce a visually appealing brochure or information piece that shows images of the College's diverse faculty and staff engaged in teaching, research and service.

B. Produce video testimonials of faculty from diverse backgrounds that can be published on the College's YouTube Channel.

Objective #3: To recruit and retain a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body.

Goal 3-1: Recruit diverse students at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

A. Increase the number of diverse undergraduate and graduate students (as defined in the College Diversity Statement; see above) by seeking creative ways of attracting students supporting topics related to diverse teaching, research and student life.

B. Encourage diversity in recruiting students for the C&IS Ambassador Program.

C. Create a faculty ambassador program as an outreach to contacting diverse undergraduate and graduate students who are considering joining the College.

D. Annually review the allocation of undergraduate and graduate scholarships to determine if this recruitment tool is being effectively used to further the College's diversity mission.

E. On the College's website, provide a listing of available scholarships and criteria, deadlines and whether or not the scholarships are renewable.

F. 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.

G. Create a task force of faculty, staff, and student leaders to discuss ways to recruit diverse students.

H. Utilize community engagement activities as a means of recruiting a diverse student body, with emphasis on K-12 partnerships.

Goal 3-2: Retain diverse students at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

A. Allocate resources to support participation of student organizations that emphasize diversity (i.e. Capstone Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Women in Communications) in state, regional and national professional conferences and professional development activities and events.

B. Utilize programs such as the Oakley Fellows Mentoring Program to help ensure success in the retention and graduation of all students, especially those from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

C. Encourage undergraduate and graduate academic advisers to identify advisees who may be at risk of falling behind or dropping out of their programs of study.

Goal 3-3: Foster the representation of diverse individuals on College student boards and student organizations.

A. Encourage diverse students to apply to both membership and leadership positions within the College's student boards and organizations.

B. Educate the College's student boards and organizations about the importance of diverse student participation.

Goal 3-4: Demonstrate a commitment to working with already existing student groups that concentrate on diversity topics.

A. Motivate our C&IS student groups to form coalitions with existent University student groups (International House, Spectrum, Black Student Union, Hispanic Latino Association) in order to express our commitment to diversity.

B. Encourage student-leader participation in the monthly Inclusive Campus Breakfast meetings as a way to strengthen ties to groups that concentrate on diversity topics.

Goal 3-5: Encourage students to seek training in diversity.

A. Promote on-campus programs such as SafeZone and those sponsored by Crossroads Community Center and the Women & Gender Resource Center (WGRC).

B. Ask all student leadership groups to engage in diversity training of some type.

C. Seek online diversity training modules that students can take to introduce them diversity strategies.

D. Create a task force of faculty, staff and student leaders to discuss ways to encourage students to seek training in diversity.

Objective #4: To maintain an inclusive curriculum.

Goal 4-1: Create or maintain courses whose primary focus is diversity or includes diversity-related topics.

A. 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.

B. 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 a Blackboard portal that will be accessible to faculty and instructors. This portal will contain diversity-related syllabi, assignments teaching modules and links to useful websites.

C. Encourage faculty to document 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.

D. 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 CIS Learning Commons. These sources will be included in the general catalog under the search term "diversity."

Goal 4-2: Create a pedagogical environment that complements that College's and University's diversity efforts.

A. Organize an annual University-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.

B. Earmark funds for inviting nationally recognized scholars and professional whose research, teaching or general foci involve diversity to give presentations to our faculty and students.

Goal 4-3: Purchase films, books and instructional materials focused on diversity for inclusion in the C&IS Learning Commons. These resources will be included in the general catalog under the search term "diversity."
    A. Allocate funds for this purpose.
    B. Create a specific list of items and a designated location for such a collection.

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

Goal 5-1: Encourage faculty and students to participate in academic and professional conferences and events involving diversity and inclusiveness.
    A. Provide additional travel funds for faculty and selected undergraduate and graduate students to attend regional/national conferences and events.
    B. Inspire faculty to undertake this by suggesting that they document these diversity efforts in /on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for research and service.
    C. Present an award to faculty and staff members who demonstrate exemplary diversity and inclusiveness efforts.

Goal 5-2: Sponsor an internal colloquia series on research in diversity.
    A. Encourage faculty to organize the events, working with Diversity Forum and the Office of Research.
    B. Motivate faculty to undertake this by suggesting that they document these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measure for research and service.
    C. Publicize these diversity events within the community and across the campus through the College's communication specialist.

Goal 5-3: Sponsor an external colloquia series on research in diversity.
    A. Allocate funds to bring in highly regarded external presenters to discuss their research to give faculty and students explore to a variety of diversity models and techniques.
    B. Publicize these diversity events within the community and across the campus through the College's communication specialist.

Goal 5-4: Encourage faculty to research and write about diversity-related topics.
    A. Encourage faculty to involve their students in research and writing on/about diversity and changing demographics.
    B. Prompt faculty to undertake this by asking them to document these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for research and service.

Goal 5-5: Include a "diversity" category of grants within the Institute for Communication and Information Research (ICIR).
    A. Provide the ICIR with the funds, staff and administrative resources to organize this effort.
    B. Appropriate specific funding for academic and service related diversity needs.
    C. Motivate faculty to undertake this by asking them to document these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for teaching, research and service, and provide financial support for all efforts.

Goal 5-6: Encourage faculty to apply for diversity-related grants involving curriculum and research.

 A. Encourage faculty to apply for/participate in the Strategic Grant Funding programming, which allocates funds for the College's Strategic Priorities, of which promoting diversity is one such priority.

 B. Motivate faculty to document these diversity efforts in/on annual reports, dossiers, and evaluative measures for teaching, research and service.

Objective #6: To assess regularly the College's diversity efforts.

Goal 6-1: Document the College's diversity efforts annually.

 A. Require the College to submit an annual report of its diversity efforts to the University of Alabama's Executive Vice President/Provost each year. The Dean will craft this annual report with the aid of information provided and 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, Alabama Public Radio and WVUA-23).

 B. Publish this annual report on the College's website.

Goal 6-2: Regularly assess the College's diversity efforts.

 A. Utilize direct measure to assess the College's efforts such as retention and graduation data dis-aggregated by gender and race.

 B. Periodically account for minority student participation in the College's pre-professional and academic organization and diversity-related programs such as the Multicultural Journalism Workshop, the National Latino Children's Literature College and the College of Communication and Information Sciences Career Fair.

 C. Utilize indirect measures such as student responses to the University of Alabama's exit survey question related to diversity and inclusiveness, Alumni Survey and Graduate Survey.

 D. The College's Human Resource Committee will receive and review these periodic assessment reports and report findings to the College's faculty.