

**Unit** College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
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**Date:** 12/17/2018  
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**1. Introduction (200-word limit):** *Describe your unit (campus location, 2018 demographics of students/faculty/staff, departments, etc.) and its general mission. Describe the writing and review process for this report: For example, was your unit's diversity council included in the writing or review? Was this report reviewed by unit leadership?*

A draft was shared with the Dean's office before meeting to reflect on progress towards the Diversity Plan goals. College leadership and staff expanded, reviewed, and edited the report.

The College has 14 departments; 12 are located on West Campus. COGNOS counts 322 T/TT faculty and 109 other faculty for 2018; this is inflated compared to the gold plate of 273 T/TT and 92 APT faculty, and likely captures AgriLife faculty who teach. There are only 6 black, 20 Hispanic, 50 Asian, and 77 female T/TT faculty in the College. Over 70 T/TT faculty earned their terminal degrees before 1987. Only 112 of 484 College staff are University; the remainder are AgriLife personnel.

Half of our 6,466 undergraduates are from 9 counties encompassing Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Bryan/College Station, Austin, and San Antonio; 77% of enrollment is from 20 urban counties. Undergraduates for Fall 2018 are 69.1% White, 20.6% Hispanic, 3.7% Asian, 3.3% Black, 57.8% female, 14.6% first-time in college, and 26.9% first generation.

Demographics of our 469 master's and 799 doctoral students are quite different: 63.7% vs. 41.4% White, 11.1% vs. 8.6% Hispanic, 3.6% vs. 2.4% Black, 0.4% vs. 3.1% Asian, 19.2% vs. 40.8% international, and 57.4% vs. 48.5% female.

**2. Recruitment (500-word limit):** *As informed by two or more years of assessment data, describe your unit's goals, measures, and progress on student/faculty/staff recruitment. If goals, measures, or data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess goals for student/faculty/staff recruitment.*

Intentional recruitment of faculty, staff and students is important to ensure the College leverages talent to continue improving upon our local and global impact.

**Faculty:** Diversity-related goals from the College's 2010-2015 Strategic Plan were to increase faculty in underrepresented groups by 33% in 5 years and to achieve a minimum of 35% females among the College's faculty. The College's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan did not include specific diversity-related goals, and it is perhaps for this reason that little change has occurred. In 2015 there were 8 Black (2.7%), 18 Hispanic (6.0%), 36 Asian (12%), and 231 White

(77.0%) T/TT faculty. Some progress has been made in recruiting Asian T/TT faculty (50; 15.5%), but there are now only 6 Black (1.9%) and 20 Hispanic (6.2%) T/TT faculty. Indeed, there are no Hispanic faculty and only 1 Black faculty member on the tenure track.

In 2015 there were 64 female T/TT faculty (21.3%) and 36 other female faculty (25.3% total) in the College. Now there are 77 female T/TT faculty (23.9%) and 43 other female faculty (27.8% total). According to COGNOS, there are more women (22) than men (17) on the tenure track in the College, demonstrating gender parity was achieved among recent hires. Among the 71 faculty who obtained their terminal degree before 1987, only 2 are women so one way the College could make rapid progress in improving gender representation is if it could incentivize retirements.

**Staff:** Recruitment of staff occurs in a decentralized manner within departments and typically does not require College approval, so assessment of practices associated with staff recruitment has not occurred. However, *“staff from historically underrepresented groups voiced concern regarding the lack of priority in recruiting/retaining diverse staff”* in the 2011-2012 college climate surveys. We plan to collaborate with AgriLife HR on how to implement assessment of staff recruitment practices.

**Undergraduates:** In the 2018 Provost Scorecard, the College goal is that *“Our engagement with the State through our Student Body represents the rich diversity of the State”* as measured by graduating a student body that is over 6% African American, 25% Latino/a, 50% women, 25% first-generation students, and 30% undergraduate Pell Grant recipients. To graduate these students, we must first recruit them. In three categories, the College has surpassed its goal by graduating 59.5% women, 31.2% first-generation students, and 30.1% Pell Grant recipients. In 2016-2017, recipients of the 1830 degrees awarded were 3.5% Black and 17.1% Hispanic. In 2017-2018, our 1910 graduates were 3.1% Black and 18.3% Hispanic. Black and Hispanic women are applying, being admitted, and enrolling in the College at almost twice the rate of men (13.36% vs. 7.27% Hispanic and 1.96% vs. 1.29% Black enrolled in Fall 2018).

**Graduate students:** Our graduate student body does not represent the diversity of the State and has changed little in representation since 2013-2014 when master’s degrees were awarded to 22 Hispanic and 4 Black students (out of 230 degrees) and doctoral degrees were awarded to 9 Hispanic and 4 Black students (out of 116 degrees). In 2017-2018 those graduating with a master’s degree included 25 Hispanic and 3 Black students (out of 223 degrees) and recipients of doctoral degrees included 6 Hispanic and 5 Black students (out of 102 degrees). International students contribute to the diversity of our graduate student population and represent almost a third of our graduate population.

**3. Retention (500-word limit):** *As informed by two or more years of assessment data, describe your unit's goals, measures, and progress on student/faculty/staff retention. If data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess goals for student/faculty/staff retention.*

In the 2018 Provost's Scorecard, the College's goal is "Timely graduation of exceptionally high number of our students," as measured by first-time, fulltime (FTFT) undergraduates achieving a within College graduation rate of 60% in 4 years, 80% in 6 years and an average time to degree of 4 years. Based on the 2011 cohort, within College first year retention was 74.9%, 4-year graduation rate was 48.2%, and 6-year graduation rate was 61.2% for FTFT students. In 2017-2018, average time to degree in the College was 4.19 years.

Over the past year, as part of the student success initiative, University-level retention and graduation goals have been discussed: 95% first year retention, 65% 4-year graduation rate, 85% 6-year graduation rate. White FTFT students in the College have attained these rates (95%, 71.2%, 87.4%), but our Hispanic (88.3%, 54.8%, 68.4%), Black (100%, 51.9%, 53.1%), and first generation FTFT students (87%, 61.9%, 78.6%) have not.

The College's goals for master's students are a 2-year graduation rate of 75%, a 3-year graduation rate of 90%, and average time to degree of 2.5 year. For doctoral students, the goal is a 5-year graduation rate of 50%, 6-year graduation of 70% with an average time to degree of 6 years. For the 2014 cohort of master's students, first year retention was 89.9% (i.e. less than the desired 3-year graduation rate), 2-year graduation rate was 40.8%, and 3-year graduation rate 69.7%. For the 2011 cohort of doctoral students, first year retention was 90.0%, 5-year graduation rate was 45.8%, and 6-year graduation rate was 55.2%. In 2017-2018 average time to degree was 2.48 years for master's students and 5.99 years for doctoral students, thus attaining the College's goal in this respect.

**4. Climate (500-word limit):** *As informed by two or more years of assessment data, describe your unit's goals, measures, and progress on unit/campus climate issues. If data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess climate-related goals.*

To enhance faculty retention, one action reported in the College's 2010-2015 strategic plan was to "foster a welcoming environment that values and rewards diversity of all types by departmental culture" – of course, such an inclusive climate is expected to positively impact faculty, staff, and students. The College assessed climate in the workplace in 2011 and 2012 and used those data to make long-range plans. At that time, "15% of total respondents were uncomfortable with the climate for diversity within the college" to varying degrees based on aspects of their identity.

A uniform College Climate Survey, created by College administration and approved through the Department Head Council, was administered to faculty, staff, postdoctoral research associates, and graduate students in all 14 departments and the Dean's Office in January/February 2018. Overall College participation in the survey was 43% and participation within departments ranged from 59% to 28%. Although global analyses are continuing, the response to the question: "What three words would you use to describe the workplace climate in your department?" provides a snapshot of current climate in the College.



Equity was not specifically addressed in the last two strategic plans for the College and our previous diversity plan accountability reports have only considered equity in salaries and opportunities for professional development. A 2014 whitepaper from the College of Education and Human Development defines equity as “*A set of structures, processes, cultural practices, and circumstances that allow individuals the opportunity to achieve optimal success.*” In that College there were perceived or actual inequities in six areas: opportunity, support, expectations, benefits/rewards, access, and information. As part of strategic planning for 2020-2025, we will form a taskforce to help us establish goals and measures of equity.

Some examples of perceived or actual inequities that were shared as we prepared this report were:

- Perception that there is a culture in some departments of stigmatizing faculty development leave may indicate inequity in opportunity.
- Overrepresentation of first-generation students among complainants on issues related to advising may indicate inequity in support.
- Lack of representation of women and faculty of color among holders of Chairs and Professorships may indicate inequity in rewards.
- Differences in the merit pool allocation for University and AgriLife employees may indicate inequity in benefits or inequity in expectations.
- Doctoral stipends in the College range from \$16.2K to \$30K and may indicate inequity in benefits or inequity in expectations.
- Wide variance in scholarly productivity may indicate inequity in support, expectations, or access.
- Differential use of parental leave may indicate inequity in access or inequity in information.

**6. Reflection (800-word limit):** *This section provides you with an opportunity to outline your 2019 unit presentation for the Council on Climate and Diversity. Related to diversity, accountability, recruitment, retention, climate, and equity:*

*a) Describe how your unit is “moving the needle” (e.g., changing numbers/composition, awards, recognition, grants, funding, etc.).*

New leadership in the College means there is a new vision for this Unit over the next 10 years. The vision will be shared widely in the new year and strategic planning will follow. Dr. Stover uses taskforces to effect positive change through shared governance. Policies, procedures, and practices across the College are being examined to identify changes, strategic investments, or ongoing assessments needed to “move the needle” more substantially.

The leadership team was asked for examples of how the College had “moved the needle” the most in the last 5-10 years:

- Faculty mentoring for promotion and tenure
- Strategic graduate fellowship funding
- First-generation veteran learning community (#FirstGenVets)
- International academic programming
- Departmental climate plans
- ANRP internship program

b) *What challenges has your unit faced? What plans are in place to address the challenges?*

***Challenges and Plans for Recruitment.***

***Faculty.*** Each Diversity Plan Accountability Report submitted by the College since 2014 has stated that “*Search committees must meet with the Dean to provide specific proof of aggressive/thorough recruiting and diversity of applicant pool before the formal interview process may begin.*” However, no summary data related to the size or composition of applicant pools or best practices in recruiting were collated by the previous administration. More sophisticated approaches to recruiting outstanding diverse faculty and assessment of recruiting will need to be considered in the College’s next strategic plan. For example, the ACES Fellows Program being piloted in Liberal Arts to pipeline outstanding early scholars into tenure-track positions is being considered by our College. We must also hold faculty and departmental leadership accountable for professional development in faculty recruiting, such as requiring STRIDE training for all members of search committees.

***Undergraduates.*** The College has three full-time undergraduate recruiters covering the cities yielding most of our students: Houston/College Station, Dallas/Ft. Worth, and San Antonio/Austin. Targeting these metropolitan areas and facilitating strategic recruiting programs are designed to show urban high school students that the College offers majors that serve more than just rural students who have been active in traditional agricultural programs such as 4-H and FFA. Innovative recruiting programs for high school students like Summer Training in Agriculture and Related Sciences (STARS), Hunger Summits, and World Food Prize Youth Institute are purposely held at high schools that are not thought of as traditional pipelines for the College. However, assessment of these programs relative to eventual representation in enrollment in the College has been limited so far.

***Graduates.*** One challenge for the College is that most departments rely on passive rather than active recruiting of graduate students. Furthermore, although there is strong engagement from faculty in local, regional, and national 4-H and FFA events, our collegiate chapters of SACNAS and MANRRS are weak. Recently, Genetics has demonstrated the impact of active recruiting on transforming the domestic applicant pool. Faculty, students, and/or the graduate advisor attended SACNAS and ABRCMS and visited Puerto Rico, UTRGV, TAMU-Prairie View, and St Edwards. At the conferences they met with students who were presenting research posters and shared recruiting materials for Genetics. Compared to 2017 when there was no active recruiting, the number of complete out-of-state applications rose from 6 to 22, in-state applications rose from 3 to 10, and the numbers of applications from current TAMU students (9) and International students (11) remained the same. As part of strategic planning for FY2020, the College will investigate

how to incentivize and institutionalize active recruiting for the graduate program. Another tactic being considered is providing support from the College for REU experiences to positively impact the doctoral pipeline.

***Challenges and Plans for Retention.***

***Undergraduates.*** Several programs and procedural changes for at-risk populations to build community and academic support have been implemented:

- The Voices of Impact, Boldness and Engagement (VIBE) Scholars program supports STEM majors.
- #FirstGenVets develops support networks for first generation student veterans.
- The AGLS study abroad experience to Mexico provides targeted groups of students, including Regent's Scholars and Century Scholars, with an international cultural experience and faculty mentorship.
- Increases in scholarship funding by 23% in FY18 and 12% in FY19 (over FY17 levels) for undergraduate students is expected to allow more first-generation students and students of low socio-economic status to receive funding through degree completion.

***Graduates.*** Many graduate students in the College are unfunded and this negatively impacts scholarship, retention, and time-to-degree. Taskforces will be examining the role of master's programs in the College and best practices in graduate student support. One outcome may be the introduction of a College-wide minimum stipend for graduate students. Professional development opportunities that enhance scholarly productivity and visibility are also being considered.

c) *What innovative strategies have been implemented in your unit that might be useful to other units?*

The College's commitment to fostering a welcoming and supportive community did not spontaneously permeate down to departmental personnel. To proactively engage departments in effecting positive change in climate across the College, the process of developing departmental climate plans was implemented in 2016. Most departments formed climate committees to develop their plans. These reports have provided evidence for which aspects of climate need greater focus. An opportunity now exists to further engage the climate committees to more widely share best practices and to operationalize assessment.

Addressing student climate continues to be a challenge for the College. The College strives to regularly engage its majority population in educational opportunities related to climate, diversity, and inclusion. Based on evaluations from a few large townhall-style workshops, we have learned that such dialogues are not effective for our populations. More basic efforts are needed to equip individuals to have confident conversations with those who are different than themselves. We are still evaluating a first-year experience effort facilitated this year on this topic.

*d) Describe how funding from the Diversity Plan awards has been used (or will be used) to support and advance your unit's recruitment, retention, climate, and/or equity goals.*

Most funding was passed to the departments to support climate and inclusion efforts outlined in their Departmental Climate Plans. Some was used to support the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast, ElectHer, AWESOME faculty mentoring, a College booth at SACNAS, and as matching funds for two Diversity Matters Seed Grants.