

**University of Louisiana at Lafayette**

**Department of Communication**

**DIVERSITY & INCLUSIVENESS PLAN AND INITIATIVES**

**Adopted by the Faculty Spring 2014**

**Revised by the Faculty Fall 2016**

## INTRODUCTION

### **Definition and Purpose:**

The department embraces a broad definition of diversity as “ the condition of having or being composed of differing elements: variety . . . .” (Merriam-Webster.com, 2011) and values the perspectives of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, issues of ability, and other facets of the human condition. The department, in expanding this definition, points out that diversity is more than just those concepts noted above, but also should reflect other minorities like international students, our student veterans, Native, Latina and Mexican Americans, as well as our unique minority groups here in Southwest Louisiana which include Cajuns and Creoles in our definition of diverse groups. The purpose of the department’s diversity plan and initiatives is to foster understanding of and appreciation for these perspectives as an essential element in the success our key stakeholder groups (students, faculty, administration and community).

### **Mission:**

Our mission is to prepare tomorrow’s media professionals for success in a diverse global community, by maintaining a climate that is free of harassment and discrimination; that is supportive of diverse student and faculty needs; that values the contributions of all forms of diversity; and that promotes ever-greater exchange among differing cultures and perspectives.

### **Strategy:**

Building on the experiences and resources outlined in the Department’s 2011 ACEJMC Self-Study report and departmental Diversity Library, a two-pronged strategy is employed. New and existing quantitative measures (enrollment, hiring, campus and regional demographics, etc.) will gauge success in maintaining a community that accurately reflects the larger world. Qualitative measures are employed in support of an environment in which all are welcomed, supported and encouraged to thrive. This approach relies on proactive outreach and creative exploration as well as diligence in refraining from activities not characteristic of diverse, equitable and inclusive communities.

## THE FACULTY

**Goal 1. Proactively recruit, hire and maintain a full-time faculty that reflects the diverse makeup of the broader University community.** The department ends its 2012-2013 academic year with a slightly revised faculty roster, which meets or exceeds departmental goals for diversity in relation to the University's student population of approximately 30% minority enrollment. The department is committed to maintaining faculty ranks that reflect the campus community as the need for new full-time faculty hiring arises.

**Tactic.** For each search, aggressively recruit a diverse candidate pool with particular emphasis on attracting applications from female and non-white candidates.

**Criteria.** For each faculty search the Search Committee will document:

- Language and placement of all advertising
- Demographic makeup of the applicant pool and finalists interviewed
- Summary of challenges and outcomes (offers made/rejected, etc.)

**Accountability.** Each departmental Search Committee Chairperson is tasked with documenting the above criteria and submitting it to the departmental Diversity Committee Chairperson. The Diversity Committee will compile results and report to the faculty at the end of each school year.

**Goal 2. Proactively recruit and hire minority adjunct, part-time, visiting or temporary personnel within budgetary and enrollment needs, to better reflect the diverse makeup of the student population.** Adjunct faculty often makes up the "front lines" of departmental interaction with students (especially freshmen and sophomores), so development of an increasingly diverse adjunct faculty pool is an important diversity goal.

**Tactic:** Aggressively seek out applications from qualified mass media and allied professionals for part-time or limited-term teaching contracts, through as many channels as possible (personal contacts, mailing lists, Web sites, letter-writing, etc.). Emphasize channels likely to reach women and non-white candidates.

**Criteria:** Each school year, document:

- The number and kind of outreach activities (emails, ads, personal contacts, etc.)
- The number and demographic makeup of applications received
- The number and demographic makeup of adjunct/temporary hires
- Summary of challenges and outcomes (new hires, rejections, etc.)

**Accountability.** Each Sequence Head along with their sequence colleagues will recruit a diverse pool of new adjunct candidates who are appropriately qualified to teach within that sequence. Sequences are best qualified to determine not only the needs for adjunct faculty in their subject areas, but also appropriate sequence-specific qualifications. Every spring, sequence heads will submit summaries of recruiting efforts and lists of resulting recommendations for adjunct personnel to the chairperson of the Diversity Committee and to the Department Head. After the Department Head makes adjunct appointments each semester, the Diversity Committee will prepare a report of recruiting efforts and hiring outcomes for the faculty.

**Goal 3. Enrich opportunities for department-level faculty leadership and advancement by mentoring new and junior faculty members to help them prepare for future service and achievement of advancing rank, tenure, etc.** Some service and leadership assignments are based largely on faculty members' interests, workload, rank, experience, etc. and may be held by the same faculty member for several years. Sequence heads, for example, are fairly stable assignments. Others are rotated annually or less frequently depending on a number of factors. Likewise, Rank and tenure are awarded work performance in various categories as described in the Faculty Handbook. Instructors are included to provide mentoring and support for future graduate study, specialized assignments, those seeking Master Instructor status, etc. The purpose of this initiative is to support and mentor new and more junior faculty members from the time of their employment through the achievement of tenure and progressively higher faculty ranks, so that all faculty members have the greatest possible opportunity for advancement and for service assignments that suit their interests and goals.

**Tactic:** Review and coordinate the rotation of mentoring assignments so that faculty members are supported in their pursuit of available leadership, advancement and service opportunities.

**Criteria:** Each school year, document:

- The pairing of senior faculty mentors and junior faculty mentees
- The results of such mentor/mentee pairings, via an internal survey (to be developed)
- Summary of challenges and outcomes

**Accountability.** The Department Head already assigns rotating leadership and service duties at the beginning of each school year or as often as is appropriate for each particular assignment. The Head is asked to include mentoring assignments well, so that junior faculty will each have a more senior mentor. Adjunct faculty should be included for the purpose of developing part-time talent and providing more diverse exposure for students. The Diversity Committee will then prepare and use internal feedback surveys and prepare an annual report to faculty on challenges and outcomes.

## STUDENT BODY

**Goal 1: Continue and enhance existing international student recruiting, research and academic/professional partnerships, maintaining current connections and developing new ones.** One of the department's great strengths is its strong International flair, which should be fostered to generate even more academic and professional partnerships of a global nature.

**Tactic:** Modeling after past successes and drawing on our most experienced faculty members, develop and support individual or team efforts to increase international connections.

**Criteria:** Each school year, document:

- Individual and team achievements in international research, professional service, etc.
- Graduate/International student application and acceptance rates
- Impact on teaching, research, service, professional activities, etc.
- Challenges and outcomes (travel funding, etc.)

**Accountability.** Each faculty member is accountable for his or her own participation with international projects. The Department Head and Graduate Coordinator already produce reports of the criteria just mentioned (for example, via annual workload reports). The Diversity Committee will include this information in its annual report to faculty.

**Goal 2: Enhance graduate and undergraduate recruiting efforts at local and regional levels with expanded outreach to diverse segments of the population "in our own back yard," including people with disabilities.** New admission standards make it more important than ever to recruit heavily among populations in the Acadiana area, the southeastern region and the U.S. as a whole – in addition to the international initiatives outlined above. Acadiana and the southeastern United States in particular are richly diverse in culture, language and religion. Veterans and people with disabilities are also included.

**Tactic:** Utilize the energy of departmental student organizations by involving them, through their organizational advisors and/or sequence heads, in maximizing contacts with schools and other community organizations and establishing new partnerships among ethnic/cultural groups, veterans and the disabled in Acadiana and the southeastern U.S. Build stronger collaborations to this end with appropriate campus offices.

**Criteria:** For each school year, document:

- Recruiting visits to high schools in the eight-parish Acadiana area, particularly those with more diverse student bodies (i.e., those heavily African-American, Hispanic, Vietnamese, Creole, French-Acadian, religious/parochial, etc.)
- Hosting of summer and/or intersession short courses for high school students and adults in one or several departmental topics, to attract new majors.
- Expansion of departmental student groups and partnerships with campus organizations to address a more diverse range of student interests.
- Challenges and outcomes (travel funding, etc.)

**Accountability.** Faculty advisors and student group presidents should report to the Department Head at the end of each year on recruiting activities completed in the academic year just ending, as well as recruiting events planned for the upcoming academic year. The faculty advisor and president of SGM are tasked with offering one department-wide recruiting or visibility event each

year, in support of other student groups' off-campus recruiting efforts. Faculty and student group members are expected to participate with and support these recruiting events.

## CURRICULUM

**Goal 1: Develop and maintain, across all course offerings and major sequences, curricular materials that highlight and explore the contributions of diverse stakeholders; that require students to think critically about diversity in the historical context, as well as in the context of modern, globally converged media activity; and that instill in students the knowledge and skills they need to achieve success in that world.** The department's existing Diversity Library was designed to support this initiative, and already houses a variety of resources. However, consistent and meaningful contributions from faculty will be required to maintain library resources that are current, relevant and useful for students and teachers in the classroom setting. The Library must also be consistently utilized by faculty and students if it is to be successful in supporting curriculum goals.

**Tactic:** From each class offered in each semester, collect syllabi, supplemental teaching resources and specific diversity-related assignments for inclusion in the Diversity Library. Establish and use a sign-in/sign-out page, or any similar system that allows the department to track actual usage of the Diversity Library by faculty and students.

**Criteria:** For each school year, document:

- Faculty submissions of materials to the Diversity Library
- Faculty and student utilization of Diversity Library materials
- Effectiveness for teaching and research, via surveys to be developed
- Challenges and outcomes (travel funding, etc.)

**Accountability.** Chairs of the Curriculum and Diversity committees are tasked with collaborating to compile the criteria listed above. They will submit their findings to the Department Head and faculty at the end of each school year.

**Goal 2: Proactively expose students to special events, guest speakers, research opportunities, and other events outside of regular classroom activities, to increase awareness of diverse contributions.** The Department has hosted a number of diversity-related events including visits by guest speakers, visiting faculty and participation with campus events such as Black History Month and National Coming Out Month. These efforts can be enhanced by the addition of internal, departmental diversity forums and by stronger partnerships with offices across campus and beyond.

**Tactic:** Add to our departmental calendar the events mentioned above under "Recruiting" along with at least one specifically diversity-related event each school year.

**Criteria:** For each school, document:

- Event development, scheduling and promotion
- Event participation (faculty, students, guests)
- Effectiveness for teaching and research, via surveys to be developed
- Challenges and outcomes

**Accountability.** Sequence heads and advisors of student groups are asked to submit event information for inclusion on the Department Calendar. The Diversity Committee will include a summary of events in its annual report to faculty.

## CLIMATE

**Goal 2: Ensure for all students, faculty and staff an environment that protects them from all forms of harassment and discrimination; and also recognizes, values, and encourages expression of diversity in all its forms.** The University already has a variety of avenues available for addressing diversity-related issues; the student ombudsman and the faculty grievance process are but two examples.

**Tactic:** Require each faculty and staff member, including adjunct personnel, to attend at least one diversity-related training session each academic year. These may include campus based advisor (or other) training, departmental training sessions, or appropriate off-campus training events. Create a Communication Diversity Advocates (CDA) Program, to facilitate effective communication of diversity issues between students and faculty.

**Criteria:** For each school year, document:

- Each employee's participation in training activities
- Efforts to develop and offer training within the department itself
- Effectiveness for teaching and research, via surveys to be developed
- Challenges and outcomes

**Accountability.** Each faculty or staff member is tasked with reporting his or her annual training participation to the Department Head. The Diversity Committee is tasked with developing and offering at least one in-house (departmental) training opportunity every year. The Department Head and Diversity Committee chair will collaborate to produce a list of all training completed, for inclusion in the Diversity Library.

At the department level, the Diversity Committee, with the assistance and support of Dr. Taniecea Mallery, Director for the Office of Campus Diversity, recently developed the Communication Diversity Advocates (CDAs) Program. The committee observed that, in many instances, communication students in every sequence often had concerns related to school, but didn't feel comfortable in addressing these issues with their respective professors. The creation of CDAs for the department can provide a forum for students to share their concerns with one of the two CDAs who volunteer each year from the faculty and staff. Dr. Mallery will provide the training and expertise needed to serve these CDAs and they will report directly to the Department Chair. More important, these CDAs, in this capacity, can work with any student in need of more effective communication skills to deal with any situation, both here on the campus and in the community they will serve upon graduation. Dr. Caryn Winters volunteered to serve as one of the first CDAs and has begun training with the Office of Campus Diversity.