

College of Education Diversity Plan

August 2012

* This document is submitted to the faculty of the College of Education on behalf of the Diversity Committee for implementation beginning August 2012.

Introduction

The College of Education at the University of South Carolina values diversity. We subscribe to an inclusive definition of diversity focused on, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, veteran's status, (dis)ability, and intellectual perspective. This document serves as a plan of action across the college community regarding the nature and centrality of diversity in our climate and culture.

To that end, we seek to enhance the climate and culture of the College to better support diversity of faculty, staff members, and students as well as ensure that all programs prepare candidates for the diverse populations with whom they will work. As such, this document reflects the goals and priorities of the Provost's "Dashboard for Success" and the President's strategic plan, "Focus Carolina."

In order for the College to achieve diversity as a core institutional value and as a foundation for the future, this plan outlines five strategic goals coupled with measurable implementation initiatives:

- A. Achieving Diversity through Faculty Governance**
- B. Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Faculty**
- C. Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Student Body**
- D. Access to a Diverse Curriculum**
- E. Embracing Diversity in Community Engagement and Partnerships**

By fostering an environment where diversity in all of its forms is celebrated, affirmed, and vigorously pursued, the College of Education strives to be a leader in the State and within our local community. It is our goal to create a community of individuals that places an equal value on the understanding and appreciation of our differences as it does on our similarities. We strive to instill in each member of the COE community the skills, attitudes, and sensitivities that are essential to become leaders and change agents in our diverse, multicultural world.

A. Achieving Diversity through Faculty Governance

Expected Outcome: In order to facilitate the incorporation of diversity throughout the College of Education, efforts should be made to fully involve faculty and, where appropriate, staff members in the governance of the College. The leadership of the College recognizes that participatory governance lies at the heart of an effective and healthy organizational culture. The College's model of faculty governance should be an exemplar of 'best practice' in the articulation of faculty voices at USC. To improve, extend, and to the extent possible, guarantee, participatory governance that is inclusive, representative, and diverse, multiple strategies should be undertaken.

A1. Objective: To include diverse faculty and staff representation on all college committees to the extent possible.

Action: This goal, while important, should be undertaken so as to not overly tax faculty of Color, particularly those at the assistant level who may be working toward tenure. A delicate balance must therefore be sought to include the perspectives of faculty of Color while at the same time no overly burdening these faculty members with service commitments. Similarly, other diverse voices and perspectives should be welcomed and incorporated on college committees, particularly those that deal with fiscal matters.

A2. Objective: Build and sustain diverse leadership (e.g., deans, assistant and associate deans, department chairs, center directors).

Action: Recruit, mentor, and provide opportunities for ethnically diverse persons to assume leadership roles and responsibilities across the College.

A3. Objective: In order to fully engage and involve faculty and staff in the governance of the College, transparency should be a key objective in decision making. College leadership should communicate regularly and comprehensively with faculty and staff, particularly regarding budgetary concerns, management decisions, and the future direction of the College.

Action: The creation and distribution of a College of Education Handbook which includes the College's by-laws, as well as standard operating procedures and policies which heretofore have been transmitted by tradition or word of mouth, should be a top priority. This handbook should reiterate the College's commitment to diversity in its myriad forms such that diversity is given full prominence in the mission, vision, and goals of the College.

A4. Objective: College staff members should be included in diversity efforts and programs in the College due to their prominent interactions with students.

Action: Staff member representation shall be appointed by the Dean's Office. College staff members shall be represented on the Diversity Committee and as such have an equitable voice on diversity issues.

B. Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Faculty

Expected Outcome: The College of Education has developed means to seek, identify and attract a diverse pool of candidates for tenure-track, clinical, and adjunct faculty positions and has been successful in hiring representative candidates from this pool. Additionally, the COE has identified the challenges to the retention of a diverse faculty and has developed programs to remove or lessen the potential obstacles. The ultimate goal of such recruitment and retention efforts is to maintain a balanced faculty which includes individuals from various under-represented groups.

B1. Objective: To develop diversity standards and processes for recruiting diverse faculty that are consistent with University guidelines and expectations for the University's strategic plans.

Action: In addition to the information provided by the EOP Office regarding critical needs and under-utilized groups, each department and center will submit a needs assessment to search committees.

B2. Objective: To ensure the inclusion of diverse membership on faculty search committees.

Action: Search committees will be comprised of diverse faculty representing multiple perspectives and social identities with particular attention to racial, gender, and sexual orientation diversity.

B3. Objective: To write job advertisements that encourage applicants with research, teaching and service agendas centered on diversity, equity and social justice issues.

Action: In addition to the required EOC phrase, (e.g., "women and minorities are strongly encouraged to apply"), job advertisements should explicitly speak to the College's commitment to diversity and social justice.

B4. Objective: To systematically identify diverse candidates who may be considered for potential future faculty positions.

Action: Faculty members should use professional contacts in scholarly organizations to identify diverse individuals as potential future hires.

B5. Objective: Identify aspects of the existing annual performance review and tenure and promotion guidelines which present challenges to the academic development, promotion, and social success of particular segments of a diverse faculty; propose programs /actions to address these issues.

Action: APR committees will include a diversity representative. A diversity representative serves as an advocate for faculty of Color or any faculty member whose identity or work related to diversity issues may have an impact on their teaching, research or service during reviews of their respective annual performance and candidacy for tenure and promotion. As such, the representative serves to clarify any issues or concerns in which an individual's performance in research, teaching, and / or service might be impacted by issues related to race or other aspects of diversity.

B6. Objective: Identify conditions or circumstances of particular diverse segments of the faculty which create obstacles to their academic development, promotion or social success; propose programs / actions to address these issues.

Action: Exit surveys will be conducted with faculty who leave the College of Education, especially prior to tenure and promotion. These data will be shared with the Diversity Committee and the Executive Council annually.

C. Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Students

Expected Outcome: The College of Education will reflect a diverse student body which includes both individuals from underrepresented groups as well as individuals whose viewpoint, interests and background expand the College's perspective and intellectual dialogue.

C1. Objective: Increase recruitment, retention, and representation of diverse undergraduate and graduate students including, but not limited to, people of color, ethnic minorities, LGBT individuals, people with learning differences, veterans, individuals with physical disabilities, individuals from diverse religious traditions, and other underrepresented students.

Action: Identify potential underrepresented undergraduate students. Determine on an annual basis outreach to potential partners including, but not limited to, local and regional high schools, the South Carolina technical college system, student organizations which serve students from minority populations, and other relevant student organizations as well as the USC Registrar's Office and the USC Graduate School. Invite guidance counselors and teachers from targeted high schools and districts. Use existing relationships through USC Teaching Fellows and Teacher Cadets.

Action: Identify potential partners including HBCUs, AERA and related divisions and Special Interest Groups, National Association for Multicultural Education, USC Graduate School, NCTE and other professional organizations. Partner with student organizations which serve students from minority populations.

Action: Provide mentorship to students from under-represented groups. Potential partners include COE student peer mentors and COE / ITE group for pre-service teachers of color. Also conduct review and analysis of COE curriculum, content, policies and procedures. Potential partners: COE OPE, Office of Multicultural Affairs, WGST, and / or outside consultants.

C2. Objective: Provide additional and/or better promotion of existing scholarship funding for underrepresented graduates and undergraduates. Potential partners include donors, foundations, community members, the Office of Student Affairs, and all USC Colleges and Schools.

Action: Publicize available scholarships and funding opportunities to members of under-represented groups and individuals.

Action: Efforts should be made by the Dean to seek benefactors to provide scholarships to students of Color.

C3. Objective C: Recruit increased numbers of international students and / or establish a committee focused on this aspect of the plan.

Action: Develop promotional materials targeted toward international students. Potential partners include the Office of International Student Affairs, the Office of Admissions, and the COE Office of International and Comparative Education.

C4. Objective C: Increase representation of under-represented students in student organizations and on committees within the College.

Action: Faculty members should take an active role in recruiting members of under-represented student groups to join student organizations and college committees.

D. Access to a Diverse Curriculum

Expected Outcome: The COE is committed to preparing education professionals to have a sincere understanding and appreciation of diversity as we challenge ourselves and others to work for social justice. Programs in the COE include curricula and experiences that expose students to a broad range of cultural, ethnic, and societal situations in order to broaden their understanding of the social context of education. Through course assignments, lectures, exhibitions, field studies, community interaction, service, and service-learning activities students gain a broader and deeper understanding of the context in which our discipline is practiced. Future education professionals are provided knowledge and tools necessary to become leaders in the area of diversity in their respective fields of study and work places.

D1. Objective: Programs of study will explicitly address issues of diversity with particular attention to underserved and underrepresented groups. Faculty should strive to consider and provide curricula that are representative of the profession's best aspirations toward diversity.

Action: Programs of study should infuse diversity throughout as well as offer specific courses and clinical/field/service experiences that address various issues of diversity important in the field of study.

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Action: Every student's clinical/field/service experiences should encompass meaningful exposure to and experience with diverse environments and provide opportunities to engage with racially, ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse students/clients, institutions and communities.

D2. Objective: The COE will create faculty, staff and student spaces for dialogue, critical thinking and collaboration around diversity and sustain a climate in which respectful discussions of diversity are encouraged.

Action: In order to create an environment where diversity is valued, opportunities must be provided which allow for the honest discussion of issues related to diversity. It shall be the responsibility of the Diversity Committee, in concert with College leadership, to plan annual events which showcase diversity-related scholarly content, promote best practices, and encourage dialogue.

Action: Departments, programs, and centers will be encouraged to host exhibitions, lectures, symposia, service, social, and other activities focused on diversity issues.

Action: Faculty, staff and/or student initiated organizations and groups (e.g. *The Alliance for Diversity and Social Justice*) focused on diversity will be welcomed, supported, and promoted as viable spaces for critical thinking, collaboration and dialogue.

E. Embracing Diversity in Community Engagement and Partnerships

Expected Outcome: The COE is consistently engaged in partnerships that address issues of diversity as well as the needs of underserved and underrepresented populations. To this end, the COE is consistently engaged within a wide range of its neighboring communities, school districts, agencies, and organizations, as well as those throughout the state, with a focus on issues of diversity as well as where a high concentration of underrepresented demographic are present.

E1. Objective: The COE will actively seek stronger relationships with community organizations, school districts, institutions, and government, and leverage those relationships to engage the needs of diverse community with particular attention towards underserved and underrepresented groups. Such engagement promotes awareness and appreciation of the education environment and its interdisciplinary scope, as well as education fields as possible career paths to the very groups underrepresented in our programs. Community engagement may also serve as a longer-term recruitment strategy, by increasing the visibility of the COE in the community.

Action: Faculty should be strongly encouraged and supported to offer service in local and regional communities, agencies, organizations, school districts, and government with particular focus on diversity issues and underserved and underrepresented groups. This service should be recognized and valued in APR criteria.

Action: Faculty should be strongly encouraged and supported to incorporate community engagement and partnerships in programs of study and coursework.

Action: The Office of School-University Partnerships and Clinical Experiences should work with the programs to promote direct engagement in diverse communities and schools. As such the office should ensure that students have balanced and varied exposure in schools inclusive of placements where there is a significant amount of underrepresented and underserved populations.