School of Journalism & Strategic Media
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan
Adopted December 2015
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The School of Journalism & Strategic Media endorses a plan to create a culture of integrating diversity across the curriculum to foster a more inclusive learning environment for current and prospective students, and to provide the students with a knowledge base that will allow them to accurately portray diverse and underrepresented communities.

Diversity focuses on individuals and groups that have been systematically marginalized and underrepresented based on factors out of their control. Great attention should be paid to those historically misrepresented by the media based on their gender and race/ethnicity, but the list of diverse topics should also include ability, class, politics, religion, sexual orientation, urban-rural classification, etc., as well as first generation status and non-traditional students in classes. Faculty will be at the heart of the cultural shift to make diversity ever present throughout syllabi, course materials, and class discussions. This will be a program-level effort with the understanding that academic freedom will allow the faculty to select diverse topics for their courses in the form and fashion that each individual feels will present the topic in a well-rounded manner for the students.

Goal 1: Define and communicate the School of Journalism & Strategic Media's commitment to diversity.

Diversity is defined as the inclusiveness, and equitable treatment of students, faculty, staff, and other people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, socioeconomic class, ability, disability, geographic origin, learning styles, etc. We believe that a diverse climate incorporates an array of perspectives and people that go beyond tolerance to promote awareness and acceptance of viewpoints, as well as the intersectionality of dominant and othered groups. With the publicity of diverse speakers and workshops, paired with encouragement to address diversity in the classroom, the School of Journalism & Strategic Media has communicated to faculty, staff, and students that diversity awareness is vital to create a cultural climate in which difference is celebrated.

Strategy 1: Develop and present to our students, the campus community, and public, a mission statement that demonstrates diversity is a core value of the School of Journalism & Strategic Media.

Strategy 2: Present the importance of diversity and the understanding and appreciation of diversity as a core value to currently enrolled and future students, the campus community, and the public.

Strategy 3: Use surveys and/or focus groups to periodically assess student and employee feedback on the climate for diversity in the School of Journalism & Strategic Media.

Key Performance Indicators: The inclusion of diversity in the SoJSM mission statement, shared publicly on the SoJSM website; evidence that diversity is a core value consists of diverse guest

speakers and diverse topics discussed by those speakers; diversity and inclusion demonstrated in syllabi (through diversity statements, readings, course topics, and assignments); training undertaken by faculty and staff on diverse topics; emotional and financial support for all students, including support for student clubs, organizations, and experiences; and other indications of a core value. Quantitative and qualitative data from the surveys on campus climate will also serve as key performance indicators.

Timeline: The SoJSM adopted a revised mission statement emphasizing diversity in June 2023 and published it on its website. Ongoing process. The College of Media & Entertainment's diversity committee (which includes SoJSM faculty representatives) is in the process of conducting a series of surveys on the climate for diversity. Completed reports on the survey data are available.

Goal 2: Create diversity-rich curriculum and classroom experiences.

Strategy 1: Have faculty regularly update syllabi, assignments, and lectures to ensure that all courses integrate concepts and practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Strategy 2: Set the tone for inclusive classrooms: encourage students to update pronouns and names in the University Pipeline system, discuss the Disability Access Center and reasonable accommodations for students, and use other means to connect to potentially-marginalized groups within the classroom.

Strategy 3: Create opportunities for students to draw on their own experiences and perspectives.

Strategy 4: Bring in diverse guest speakers and speakers to talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion topics.

Key performance indicators: Updated syllabi that address diversity and inclusion (through diversity statements, readings, course topics, and assignments); training undertaken by faculty and staff on diverse topics; emotional and financial support for all students, including support for student clubs, organizations, and experiences; and other indications of a core value.

Timeline: Syllabi review completed for Spring and Fall 2023 semesters. Ongoing process.

Goal 3: Develop and sustain a more inclusive community defined by free speech, intellectual inquiry and a climate of respect that encourages discussion of diversity and tolerates no discrimination of any kind.

Strategy 1: Invite industry leaders (print media, advertising, public relations, and media design) who demonstrate dedication to the best practices in diversity and equity.

Strategy 2: Use faculty and administrative meetings and retreats as opportunities to discuss issues of diversity and equity.

Strategy 3: Charge the School's diversity committee with assessing and improving the School's climate in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Strategy 4: Develop a culture and a framework of thinking that equates excellence in journalism and mass communication education with fairness and diversity.

Strategy 5: Bring in speakers to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Key Performance Indicators: Guest speakers in classes and on campus, meeting and retreat agendas conveying diversity as key topics, scholarship on diverse topics, and other measures. Trainings and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on diverse topics.

Timeline: Significantly improved the diversity of speakers and increased speakers on diverse topics. The SoJSM regularly addresses diversity in meetings and workshops. The unit organizes at least one voluntary training per year on diverse topics.

Objective 4: Build a program of recruitment and retention to attain and sustain a critical mass of underrepresented groups among enrolled students, faculty, and staff in the School of Journalism & Strategic Media.

Strategy 1: Host on- and off-campus student recruitment programs, conferences, student organization events and job fairs, and encourage participation in national organizations dedicated to the advancement of minority scholars.

Strategy 2: Communicate clear charges for faculty/staff search committees to seek a diverse applicant pool. Advertise in places to seek diverse pools of applicants. All open position announcements require applicants to indicate commitments to diversity. Search committees ask applicants about diversity during the interview process.

Strategy 3: Continue to improve representation of underrepresented groups in the faculty. For the School, this means aiming for at least 40% diverse representation among full-time/part-time faculty.

Strategy 4. Use data from The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning and Research to track retention and graduation rates of all students and to closely examine graduation and retention among diverse groups. If retention and graduation rates are lower, investigate the cause and develop a response strategy to accompany broader university efforts to promote retention and graduation.

Strategy 5: Use the data from MTSU's Office of Institutional Diversity that tracks enrollment demographics to determine what student groups, by year, are underrepresented compared to their numbers in the state of Tennessee to guide targeted recruitment programs for prospective minority students.

Strategy 6: Strengthen outreach programs to area high schools and provide mentoring of targeted prospective and existing underrepresented student populations.

Strategy 7: Intensify the School's mentoring program for new untenured faculty and lecturers with special attention to the challenges faced by faculty of color, female faculty, and others who may require or benefit from additional support.

Strategy 8: Disseminate more widely information about University programs such as the McNair Scholarship and provide an incentive system to increase student and faculty participation in these programs.

Strategy 9: Establish need-based and merit scholarships for students of underrepresented groups and tap into resources for underrepresented student groups.

Strategy 10: Ensure that students of underrepresented groups are visible within the School and participate in out-of-class experiences, clubs, and student media organizations.

Key Performance Indicators: Increased diverse demographics for faculty, staff, and students; retention and graduation rate data from The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning and Research; mentoring program implemented for new faculty; information on scholarships disseminated; scholarships created; ensure that underrepresented groups from the SoJSM are represented in social media, on the SoJSM website, and in promotional materials.

Timeline: Ongoing.