



The University of Texas at Austin

UNIVERSITY  
DIVERSITY AND  
INCLUSION ACTION  
PLAN (UDIAP)

February 2018

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

---

The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) embraces and encourages diversity in many forms, and strives to create an inclusive community that fosters an open and supportive learning, teaching and working environment. Our strength as a university draws from our wide range of perspectives and experiences, and we support a free exchange of ideas alongside thoughtful consideration of our differences. As both the current UT Austin president and provost have stated, diversity, and excellence are mutually reinforcing. The purpose of this plan is to reflect upon how we can provide the best education possible for students from all backgrounds, especially those that historically have been marginalized. It should be noted that as a blueprint for optimal future diversity and inclusion efforts, successful implementation depends upon a number of factors including adequate budget and personnel.

The University Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (UDIAP) includes eight focus areas:

1. University Leadership
2. Campus Climate and Culture
3. Students
4. Faculty
5. Staff
6. Alumni and Community
7. Pre-K–12 Partnerships and Education Pipeline
8. Communications, Assessment, and Accountability

## UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Although the UDIAP identifies changes that should take place at all levels of the campus community, we begin at the top with university leadership. UT Austin seeks to transform learning, research, and service through recruiting and retaining best-in-class talent, including those individuals from traditionally underserved communities. Prioritizing hiring practices is crucial to this endeavor and requires the effort of every college, school, and unit (CSU) on campus. Not only do we want to hire administrators, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds, we want to hire those with a demonstrated commitment to diversity.

### ***Demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion through strategic and budgetary priorities:***

The University of Texas at Austin is considered one of the most diverse tier-one institutions in the nation. However, there are many areas and fields of study that are not as diverse as they should be. By dedicating resources to diversity and inclusion, we will send a strong message to the campus community about the importance of these goals.

### ***Achieve and maintain a diverse university leadership team:***

A diverse leadership team sends a powerful message to our students who need mentors and role models with shared experiences and an understanding of our diverse student body.

### ***Establish diversity, equity, and inclusion committees within each college, school, and unit (CSU):***

Every CSU should implement a committee charged with ensuring that diversity and inclusion strategies are included in all recruitment and hiring practices for all leadership positions. These committees would also help establish culture that is accessible, respectful, and supportive of diverse people and ideas.

### ***Monitor campus climate on ongoing basis.***

Establish campus climate group that includes representatives from across campus that will continuously and proactively monitor and discuss issues and activities that may affect campus climate.

## CAMPUS CLIMATE AND CULTURE

The university seeks diversity and a wide variety of perspectives in conversations, interactions, and learning on campus. As a university community we uphold freedom of speech, and value and affirm diverse individual, cultural, and intellectual perspectives in the search for a more complete understanding of the truth.

Although numerous successful initiatives have contributed toward creating a more positive, inclusive campus over the past decade, a disparity remains in how students from different demographics experience life on campus.

### ***Develop and execute comprehensive campus climate assessments that are tailored for faculty, staff, and students:***

Although we have a number of initiatives in place, including bias incident reports and satisfaction

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

---

surveys, there is a need for a comprehensive campus assessment individualized for faculty, staff, and students

**Review the role, composition, processes, and communications of the Campus Climate Response Team (CCRT) and look at the possible staffing structure for the CCRT lead team and the need for staff support as well as training:** A comprehensive review should assess best practices for processes, communications, and training and determine the most effective way to share outcomes of the incidents reported to CCRT.

**Invest in student housing:** It is an aspirational goal of the university to provide first-year students with on-campus housing to provide a common first-year experience for all. There is also a need for more accessible student housing to accommodate students with certain disabilities and to provide accommodations for students in the LGBTQA community.

**Develop a long-term transportation plan:** UT Austin will create a committee to review campus transportation and develop a Five-Year Transportation Plan to go into effect at the conclusion of the current Capital Metro contract. The committee should have student, faculty, and staff involvement.

**Review the purposes and accomplishments of the police oversight committee:** UT Austin will review the purpose, materials, successes, and accomplishments of the committee with an eye toward increased transparency and student input.

**Continue to implement recommendations from the 2016 Department of Public Safety (DPS) Comprehensive Security Assessment:** Numerous safety measures have already been implemented. These include working closely with the City of Austin and Austin Police Department on issues of the transient population around campus, improving lighting, assessing and making landscape improvements, expanding the SURE Walk program, increasing evening transportation options, adding later shuttle service, and more night time parking options, among other improvements.

**Support the new Hate and Bias Incident Policy (HOP\_9-1810) implemented in March 2017:** This new policy applies to all UT Austin students, faculty,

staff, university affiliates, visitors, and applicants for admission to or employment with the university and others conducting business on campus.

**Require faculty teaching Cultural Diversity Flag courses to complete inclusive classroom training:** In order to demonstrate understanding and competency in dialogue involving diverse perspectives, faculty should have completed inclusive training.

**Require diversity component within First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs) and 360 Connections:** One session each should focus on the topics of respect, social justice, university core values, and intercultural dialogue.

**Continue and expand inclusivity on campus tours:** UT Austin will continue to prioritize an inclusive perspective of our campus community and history on all campus tours and include locations that are historically, culturally, and socially relevant to students and prospective students from underrepresented groups.

**Support residence halls' goals for more inclusive conversations and diversity training workshops for students and enhance programming on hate and free speech issues:** Residence Life in Housing and Food Services is piloting an intercultural competency and development program for residential students during spring 2017.

**Prioritize safety and maintenance for the Malcolm X Lounge in Jester Residence Hall as well as other spaces where students belonging to underserved communities congregate:** The Department for African and African Diaspora Studies will maintain responsibility for policy and programming but the maintenance, cleaning, and care of the space will be added to future planning for the Department of Housing and Food Services.

**Establish a university-wide testing center:** Approximately 85 percent of students served by Services for Students with Disability (SSD) are approved for testing accommodations, but SSD only has 15 seats available for testing. A centralized testing center would alleviate this issue and serve all students, faculty, and departments.

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

---

**Undertake improvements to make paths and sidewalks more accessible:** Wayfinding and accessible paths of travel are challenges for all on campus, but especially for persons with physical disabilities. An updated transition plan will provide a roadmap to accessibility on campus.

**Explore the legal requirements, financial support, safety, and overall feasibility for developing and operating a campus point-to-point transportation system with a focus on accessibility:** There is an ongoing need to provide transportation options within the campus core for those with acute health or disability-related concerns that makes it difficult to travel on campus. The proposed Longhorn Lift program can include one or two drop-deck wheelchair golf carts to ensure access to the program for all riders that need to make use of the service.

**Review and consider best practices recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Initiatives:** These include pedagogy and scholarship recommendations as well as recommendations for enhancing the student experience.

**Review and evaluate family involvement during orientation and Family Weekend, including family association membership for greater inclusion:** Review the structure, programs, and materials for Texas Parents to better reach out to all families and increase the opportunities for their participation, including family members of international students, first-generation college students, Pell-eligible students, and students from traditionally underserved communities.

**Expand and strengthen the Counseling and Mental Health Diversity Initiative:** The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) has actively refined their outreach and service initiative for diverse communities, including meeting at different locations on campus.

**Review statutory, building names, and signage according to guidelines included in the 2015 report from the Task Force on Historical Representation of Statuary at UT.** Although the statue of Jefferson Davis was relocated to the Briscoe Center for American History in 2015, there

remained five other Confederate statues on the South Mall of campus plus signage exalting the Confederacy. These statues and signage should be reviewed as well as building names to assure consistency with the university's core values and mission.

## STUDENT BODY

After the university's successful defense of its admissions policy in the Fisher case, we are committed to recruiting more students from backgrounds historically underrepresented at UT Austin. Though our percentages reflect a majority of non-white students, diverse students are underrepresented in certain areas of study including business, engineering, and the sciences. We also acknowledge the need to include diversity within groups to break down stereotypes. Intragroup diversity also means diversity in economic and geographic backgrounds, points which are often lost in the discussion of diversity. Lastly, diversity and inclusion play a role beyond academics. Because much of a student's experience during the college years happens outside the classroom, the more opportunities we provide students to interact with students of other backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives, the broader their education.

**Strengthen and expand our undergraduate recruitment and admissions efforts, and include financial aid packaging as necessary:** UT Austin will expand minority outreach and recruitment programs and continue to fuse recruitment with early financial aid packages.

**Connect all undergraduate students who would benefit from academic success programs:** UT Austin will identify gaps in existing success programs and establish processes at each college and school to identify students who would benefit most from enrollment in academic success program, particularly in STEM disciplines.

**Review holistic admissions process to achieve a level of enrollment whereby students from underrepresented groups no longer feel isolated:** UT Austin will examine best practices and provide recommendations for refinement.

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

---

## **Identify and remove barriers for high-demand majors and the university's honor programs:**

UT Austin will encourage high-achieving students to apply to honors programs by increasing communication and removing barriers, while also mitigating barriers to student access to high-demand majors in engineering, natural sciences, and business.

## **Inform and expose diverse undergraduate students to graduate school and professional schools:**

UT Austin will expand existing efforts to provide opportunities for undergraduate research and working with graduate students and faculty mentors.

**Each CSU should appoint a formal leader to head diversity efforts for graduate students:** The minority liaison officer in each CSU should serve as an advocate and advisor, charged with encouraging and counseling minority students and supervising their academic growth and development.

## **FACULTY**

Faculty play an important role in creating a healthy campus culture at the university, bridging our academic mission to achieve excellence with our core purpose to transform lives for the benefit of society. It is therefore vital that we recruit and retain intellectually and culturally diverse faculty and provide the necessary resources to support research serving underprivileged individuals and communities. We must also ensure that diversity is a key feature of the faculty evaluation and selection process.

**Implement a diverse faculty recruitment plan:** Each college and school will develop a diversity and inclusion plan, which includes the processes it will use to attract a diverse candidate pool.

**Institute diversity and implicit bias training for faculty search committee chairs and increase training on faculty recruitment and hiring:** Training would cover topics such as creating job descriptions that lead to more diverse pools, minimizing implicit bias in the search process, and creating effective candidate evaluation processes. Also, a resource search portal should be developed with information on best practices.

## **Assist in the creation of a more diverse faculty candidate pool:**

UT Austin will provide funds to assist in the search for diverse faculty and provide assistance to bring an additional faculty finalist to campus if that candidate would add diversity to that department/school.

## **Create a faculty advocates/allies program:**

Faculty would serve as advocates for diverse faculty, not only during hiring/recruitment, but also as they establish careers.

## **Expand professional development on inclusive approaches for improving classroom climate:**

Offerings should focus on cultural competency, understanding identities and backgrounds students bring to the classroom, fostering difficult discussions, and creating an inclusive classroom environment.

## **Provide professional development for department chairs on creating and sustaining an inclusive culture:**

Because an inclusive departmental climate has a direct impact on a department's ability to recruit and retain diverse faculty members, professional development should focus on fostering a positive culture and equips faculty with the tools to sustain that culture.

## **Provide opportunities for leadership development for mid-career diverse faculty:**

UT Austin will partner with organizations like American Council on Education Fellows to provide professional development for mid-career diverse faculty to establish a ladder for academic leadership positions.

## **Increase pipeline of diverse candidates through postdoctoral programs:**

Programs could include a university wide postdoc program as well as the enhancement of the postdoctoral association across campus.

## **STAFF**

As one of the largest employers in Central Texas, UT Austin aspires to be a model for staff diversity. Like with university leadership, similar policy should be established to ensure that diversity is a key feature of the staff selection process. We should also continue to increase professional development opportunities.

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

---

***Institute diversity and implicit bias professional development for staff at the director level and above and increase training sessions on staff recruitment and hiring:***

Staff search committees should offer diversity and implicit bias tutorials. Where appropriate, each school or department should develop a diversity and inclusion plan for hiring staff.

***Examine and implement best practices on providing ways for unit heads to have ability for direct appointment to director-level positions and above in areas identified as underrepresented:***

Direct appointments would require HR review and approval but would enable CSUs to make direct hires to director-level positions for qualified individuals.

***Provide diversity and inclusion trainings and implement peer-led diversity workshops for staff:***

These workshops, which should leverage existing training, should include sessions that address career skills and cultural competency.

## ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY

UT Austin has one of the largest alumni associations in the world — a system of 140 chapter affiliates and targeted networks, organized around ethnicity, profession, and prior UT Austin organizational affiliation. This pool of engaged citizens enables the university to have a wide-ranging network to connect on issues of diversity and community engagement.

Regarding the broader Central Texas community, UT Austin has taken great strides to improve what at times has been a strained relationship.

The university should continue to work with the Texas Exes to reach out to alumni through special events and service projects and maintain its outreach to underserved communities. We must also continue to address community health disparities, leveraging the transformational power of the Dell Medical School — the recently launched Sandra Joy Anderson Community Health Center on the Huston-Tillotson University campus in partnership with the Dell Medical School — is just one example of what is possible. Across the state, we should continue to support and strengthen the work of University Governmental Relations.

***Continue to work with the Texas Exes to reach out to alumni through special events and community service projects:***

Special events like the celebration honoring the first African-American undergraduates, and service events like The Project have proven to engage alumni with the university in meaningful ways.

***Enhance multicultural philanthropy and educate development officers and Texas Exes Networks in ways to reach out to different community populations, and create opportunities to engage diverse populations:***

New opportunities should be leveraged among alumni from affinity networks as part of the ongoing process to increase diverse alumni participation.

***Continue efforts around Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs):***

The university must continue its commitment to enhancing relationships with Historically Underutilized Businesses and small businesses so there is full and equal opportunity to supply the goods and services needed to support the university's mission.

***Continue to engage with local, city, county, and state government agencies as well as neighborhood associations, alliances, and other civic groups to be a responsible and engaged neighbor and collaborative partner:***

The university's value to the greater community is formed in large part by our community partnerships and initiatives.

## PRE-K–12 PARTNERSHIPS AND EDUCATION PIPELINE

With a mission dedicated to service, it is imperative that UT Austin continue to strengthen partnerships with Pre-K–12 entities to produce effective, culturally competent teachers and policy. This will include continued support of our many Pre-K–12 initiatives, including our pre-college programming, the University Scholastic League, UT-University Charter School, and many others.

***Leverage existing partnerships with schools to recruit students from underrepresented groups across the state:***

UT Austin will continue our long-standing efforts to help improve public education across the state and attract students from diverse backgrounds.

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

---

**Partner with community colleges for increased dual credit programs:** Since community colleges around the state provide most of the dual-credit opportunities, they are an ideal partner to create even more pathways.

**Implement success programs that create pathways from pre-college academic readiness efforts to post-secondary education:** Successful pathways programs will use best practices that help students from underrepresented and first-generation backgrounds transition to higher education.

## COMMUNICATIONS, ASSESSMENT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Using a variety of channels, UT Austin should continue to communicate with students, faculty, staff, and the campus community on issues related to diversity, inclusion, and community engagement. This includes strengthening university-wide community engagement and diversity web pages. Each area of the UDIAP should have a point person or office accountable for implementation. Data should also be collected and shared widely.

**Establish a check-in meeting and conversation among the president, campus leadership, and students at least once a semester to address the campus cultural experience and issues around campus climate and respect:** These meetings will be used to share information with students, while also providing campus leadership further insight into the state of the campus climate.

**Strengthen the university-wide community engagement and diversity web pages to reflect progress that is being made and significant work undertaken:** UT Austin will develop a relationship management system to collect and share information about programs and progress on these web pages.

**Track progress and changes for UDIAP and revisit the plan every five years:** Keeping the UDIAP a living document ensures that the work of the plan reflects the need of all constituents. A website should be maintained that reports on progress—possibly via a dashboard—and provides a way for the campus to ask questions.