



Office of Inclusion and Equity

Diversity Roadmap

Strategic Plan

2021-2022

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

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DIVERSITY ROADMAP

Introduction

The Diversity Roadmap provides a comprehensive, multi-faceted plan to develop and implement policies, procedures, and initiatives that recognize the uniqueness of each individual and respects each person's differences. The roadmap integrates principles of diversity at all levels of the University's operations. Such integration is necessary for students to achieve excellence and for the University's remaining constituents to thrive. Through such integration, the University communicates a strong and positive image to the Community. The cultivation and sustenance of an environment permeated with respect for, and acknowledgement of the uniqueness of everyone, empowers everyone with the freedom to achieve success in all their endeavors.

This Report articulates four goals on which the University should focus to achieve and sustain a diverse, welcoming environment in which students can excel and the University's workforce can thrive:

- **GOAL 1:** Cultivate a Campus Environment Respecting Diversity
- **GOAL 2:** Create Global Awareness and Multicultural Understanding in Faculty, Staff & Students
- **GOAL 3:** Recruit, Retain, and Graduate More Students with Diverse Backgrounds
- **GOAL 4:** Recruit and Retain More University Employees with Diverse Backgrounds

GOAL #1: Cultivate a Campus Environment Respecting Diversity

➤ **Strategy 1:** Conduct a Biennial Climate Assessment and Action Plan for Assessing Campus Inclusiveness

○ **Action:**

- Develop a process for the collection and reporting of data and for the implementation of recommendations.
 - Create teams to assess the University climate. The teams will establish uniform rules and procedures. The teams will ensure the survey instruments also include specific questions concerning the University's progress on achieving the goals articulated in the Diversity Roadmap Report. Upon completing the survey, the teams will make recommendations based on survey results and assist in implementing those recommendations to improve the campus climate.
 - Provide climate assessment summary and data to constituency groups on campus. Charge these groups to set goals and integrate feedback with strategic planning initiatives.
 - Convene biennial workshops and outreach strategies to inform board of trustees, executive leadership, deans and academic administration, faculty, students, and staff of what the diversity assessment has demonstrated and engage community members in setting strategic goals to achieve.
 - Create an action items list (part of Action & Key Results(AKR)) for implementation of recommendations within colleges and administrative units.

○ **Partners:**

- President, Provost, Vice President for the Office of Inclusion & Equity/Chief Diversity Officer (VP-OIE /CDO), Institutional Research, University Diversity Council, Equal Employment Office/Affirmative Action Department (EEO/AA), University Departments, all Graduate and Undergraduate Colleges

○ **Measure:**

- Survey instruments developed; data collected; reports published, publicized, and analyzed; and actions taken.

➤ **Strategy 2: Commit to a Safe and Accessible Campus**

○ **Action:**

- Review campus facilities with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator, Help-a-Zip, Testing Center, and representatives of Office of Accessibility to work towards making all facilities safe and accessible in collaboration with Office of Accessibility, Physical Facilities, and Human Resources, Director of Equal Employment Office/Affirmative Action Department (EEO/AA), and VP of Student Affairs.¹
- Review virtual accessibility with University Libraries to ensure inclusive, barrier-free physical and online environments for teaching, learning, and research that are responsive to the needs of the university community.
- Review campus access to mental health services with counseling services, ADA Coordinator, Help-a-Zip, Student Judicial Affairs, community support resources, and Student Life representatives to ensure all facilities are safe and accessible in collaboration with Office of Accessibility, Career Services, Human Resources, Student Support Resources, Director of EEO/AA, VP of Student Affairs.
- Planning and implementation of an annual campus safety walk. This would be a collaboration between the University President, Students, Physical Facilities, and University Police. This walk would take place in the evening with the goal of identifying campus safety concerns and addressing the priorities.

○ **Partners:**

- President, Office of Accessibility, Physical Facilities, University Libraries, Human Resources, Director of EEO/AA Department, Vice President-Student Affairs, VP-OIE/CDO, University Police, and Director of Off-Campus Safety

○ **Measure:**

- Strive toward regular safety walks with reports accessing safety conditions.
- Decrease in percentage of safety concerns reported and address any outstanding reported concerns.
- Reduced barriers and improved access to all University services, resources, facilities and technologies through a coordinated approach.

➤ **Strategy 3: Work Towards Creating a Diversity Center**

○ **Actions:**

- Create a center welcoming all students and employees with diverse backgrounds including students and employees who identify as LGBTQIA, African American, Black, People of Color (POC), Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)Hispanic, LatinX, Native American, Pacific Islander, American Inuit, faith based, spiritual, interfaith, worldview, part of a moral organization, international, persons with disabilities, part of a woman's groups, or other

¹ All facilities reviewed annually, and action plans are initiated.

under-represented group. The Center would offer them community—a place to connect with each other—sharing their experiences, culture, and preferences to promote a sense of belonging among underrepresented groups on campus.

- Create a team to research best and promising practices by identifying and examining successful models of existing university diversity centers. This team will also research funding sources for the center. Data gathered by this team will be used to guide the development of the UA Diversity Center.
 - Centrally locate the Diversity Center in high traffic area such as the Student Union providing physical spaces for students to gather in community and space for administrative support and professional assistance.
 - Dedicate individual staff members to provide support and coordinate engagement with each group of students. Create additional positions to ensure coordinated effort necessary to sustain and expand programs and initiatives to determine if viable.
 - Provide integrated liaisons to faculty and staff in academic colleges including, but not limited to, the College of Engineering & Polymer Science, Women in Engineering, IDEAs program, and Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences Women’s Studies Program, to name a few.
 - Provide leadership for the Diversity Center through the Vice President for Equity and Equity/Chief Diversity Officer.
 - Increase recruitment of students and employees with diverse backgrounds thereby creating a more welcoming environment in which existing persons with diversity backgrounds desire to remain.
 - Support the promotion of persons with diverse backgrounds in all areas of University operations, not just functions that focus on diversity or related issues.
- **Partners:**
 - President, Provost, VP-I&E, and the EEO/AA Department
 - **Measure:**
 - Commitment from senior administration and creation of a Diversity Center.

GOAL #2: Create Global Awareness and Multicultural Understanding in Faculty, Staff, and Students

- **Strategy 1: Establish A Baseline of Assessment, Training, Education, and Experiences Focused on Principles of Diversity**
 - **Action:**
 - Determine whether diversity and inclusive excellence were incorporated as performance dimensions within the annual employee performance appraisal process for all faculty, administrative staff, contract professionals, and staff as

recommended by the 2009 Strategic Report.

- **Partners:**
 - President's Office, Provost, and Human Resources, and EEO/AA Department
- **Measure:**
 - Development of performance appraisal instruments for all University employees.
- **Strategy 2: Develop and Implement A Comprehensive System of Education and Training that Assist Faculty in Identifying Areas in their Curriculum Where Diversity Issues May Arise**
 - **Actions:**
 - Provide faculty with learning opportunities and workshops designed to further the University's goal of valuing diversity and to address gaps in our efforts to be more inclusive.
 - Increase development of culturally competent faculty to ensure the importance of diversity in the curriculum is standardized across the University by:
 - Providing learning opportunities for faculty to enhance their cultural competence within their field.
 - Providing ongoing workshops on topics such as creating an inclusive classroom, diversifying course syllabi with expected student participation to encourage respect and empathy for others, etc.
 - Supporting community-based learning initiatives especially from faculty of diverse backgrounds that focus on structural inequalities and social justice concerns in the City of Akron and surrounding region.
 - **Partners:**
 - Dean of Students, Graduate and all Undergraduate Colleges, Faculty Senate and other governance groups, and OIE
 - **Measure:**
 - Commitment from senior administration and implementation and evaluation of training.
- **Strategy 3: Develop and implement a comprehensive system of education and training focused on handling student grievances involving diversity**
 - **Action:**
 - Provide adequate training on how to:
 - Distinguish between conduct that is violative of the Code of Student Conduct and that which is related to race, religion and protected classes that may not rise to the status of prohibited conduct, as defined in the Code.
 - Intervene (e.g., bystander intervention), to stop or provide support in response to harassment based on race, religion, ethnicity, sex, or other protected classes.
 - **Partners:**

- VP-OIE/CDO, University Departments, EEO/AA Department, and all Graduate and Undergraduate Colleges
- **Measure:**
 - Commitment from senior administration and implementation and evaluation of training.

GOAL #3: Recruit, Retain, and Graduate More Students with Diverse Backgrounds

➤ **Strategy 1: Increase Recruitment and Retention of Students with Diverse Backgrounds**

- **Action 1:**
 - Reestablish the McNair Scholars program at the University to recruit and retain graduate students of color, ethnic minorities, and other underrepresented groups.
- **Partners:**
 - Provost, OIE, Graduate and all Undergraduate Colleges, Financial Aid, and University Communications & Marketing
- **Measure:**
 - Number of scholarships granted
- **Action 2:**
 - Research data about programs and services to consider establishing or developing strategies which would attract and retain more students of color, ethnic minorities, and other underrepresented students.
 - Determine what progress was made in enrolling students with diverse backgrounds through the implementation of the Zips Affordability Scholarship (2021) and the continuation of the Underrepresented Student Scholarship (2011) programs. Assess and identify resources to establish scholarships to facilitate achieving a diverse student body including students of color, ethnic minorities, and other underrepresented groups, and [to] provide for broad dissemination of the availability of such scholarships especially to high schools populated by such groups.
 - The Provost is conducting an intensive review of our scholarship model to determine how best to advance the opportunity model efficiently.
- **Partners:**
 - Student Affairs, Graduate and all Undergraduate Colleges, Admissions, Financial Aid, Adult Focus, and Military Services Center
- **Measure:**
 - Assess annually whether the University has reached 100% of its targeted high schools.
 - Determine annually whether additional high schools should be added.
 - Monitor on a semester basis the number of scholarships awarded.

- Assess annually the value received from the resources committed to these scholarship recruitment efforts by evaluating minority and underrepresented student enrollment and retention numbers.
 - **Action 3:**
 - Assess the barriers students of color, ethnic minorities and other underrepresented groups face and recommend programs and support services to better facilitate achieving a diverse student body.
 - **Partners:**
 - Student Affairs and Graduate and all Undergraduate Colleges
 - **Measure:**
 - Annual assessment of percentage increase/decrease in minority and underrepresented student enrollment and retention from the previous academic school year.
- **Strategy 2:** Assess the Effectiveness of the Mentoring Program Established for Incoming and Existing Students with Diverse Backgrounds.
 - **Actions:**
 - Reassess peer mentoring program established at the College/School level per 2009 Strategic Report to focus on retention of students and provide for broad dissemination of the availability of such programs, especially to minority students.
 - Ensure all first year and existing students, especially those with diverse backgrounds, are registered with the peer mentoring program.
 - Review some existing peer university mentoring programs.
 - **Partners:**
 - All Graduate and Undergraduates Colleges and Student Affairs
 - **Measure:**
 - 100% implementation of the program campus wide.

GOAL #4: Recruit and Retain More University Employees with Diverse Backgrounds

- **Strategy 1:** Recruit Contract Professionals and Staff with Diverse Backgrounds
 - **Actions:**
 - Review all job descriptions before posting to determine if the requisite skills and/or experience are overly restrictive.
 - Reinitiate the 2019 Classification and Compensation study process to develop an updated classification plan which can be employed to update non-bargaining staff and contract professional (CP) requirements for job descriptions and hiring qualifications.
 - Collaborate with the bargaining unit on the development of an updated classification plan as described above.
 - Develop a Classification plan that can allow for the identification and recognition of soft job skills—these may be applicable skills for filling a

- position, even though they may not directly align with the job specifications.
 - The Office of Inclusion & Equity may provide suggestions to Human Resources (HR) and hiring departments concerning their use of paid advertisements for recruiting including sample messaging when ads are placed on social media outlets. These suggestions could include ads and messages customized to target specific audiences with messaging on LinkedIn, Glass Door, Diversity Issues in Higher Education, etc. (i.e., Women in Tech, targeted ads to HBCUs, etc.), while adhering to overall UA branding (which should, in turn, be strongly inclusive).
 - HR/EEO should create a list of places to advertise to attract a more diverse applicant pool.
 - Create mentoring cohorts for new hires (as opposed to strictly one to one mentoring relationships).
 - Provide opportunities for new employees to connect with other newly hired peers employed across campus.
 - **Partners:**
 - Human Resources, Hiring Managers, and VP-OIE/CDO
 - **Measure:**
 - Include at least one qualified minority candidate in every candidate pool
- **Strategy 2:** Retain Currently Employed Contract Professionals and Staff with Diverse Backgrounds.
 - **Actions:**
 - Determine whether 2009 Strategic Report’s recommendation to implement and broadly disseminate a career development program for all employees especially persons with diverse backgrounds was completed.
 - Reassess the effectiveness of the program.
 - Explore with Human Resources the feasibility of administering exit interviews to all departing staff and CPs with a goal towards analyzing the data to determine why departing CPs and staff chose to leave the University.
 - Develop a “Reverse Mentoring Program” that allows new employees or lower-level management CP and staff the opportunities for professional development and relationship building with senior team members to share knowledge, skills, and understanding.
 - Accommodate and encourage the celebration of globally recognized religious observances representing a spiritually diverse community.
 - **Partners:**
 - Human Resources, Hiring Manager, and CDO
 - **Measure:**
 - Monitor program.

➤ **Strategy 3: Recruit Faculty with Diverse Backgrounds**

- **Action 1:**
 - Determine whether 2009 Strategic Report’s recommended action to “[i]dentify doctoral students through professional organizations who are women, people of color, ethnic minorities, or members of other underrepresented groups for possible recruitment to The University of Akron faculty” is implemented currently and successful.
- **Partners:**
 - Graduate and all Undergraduate Colleges, EEO/AA, and VP-OIE/CDO
- **Measure:**
 - Number of applications and resumes received; number of positions filled.
- **Action 2:**
 - Incorporate practices in faculty search committee training that will help identify and recruit qualified faculty of color while also addressing potential bias (implicit and explicit) built into the job description, the expectations of the search committee, and outreach to racial and ethnic minority colleagues in collaboration with Human Resources.
- **Partners:**
 - Human Resources, OIE
- **Measure:**
 - Number of applications and resumes received of diverse qualified candidates; number of positions filled.
- **Action 3:**
 - Develop a post-doctoral Teaching and Research Fellowship. Such a program could consist of a 2- or 3-year appointment allowing new PhDs to gain experience teaching one course per semester, receive mentoring from UA faculty. The course could develop into a tenure tack position in collaboration with the Colleges.
- **Partners:**
 - Provost, CDO, Graduate and all Undergraduate Colleges, and Human Resources
- **Measure:**
 - Diverse faculty appointment numbers, resulting in tenure track positions realized

➤ **Strategy 4: Retain Faculty with Diverse Backgrounds**

- **Action 1:**
 - Analyze exit interview data to determine the reasons and decisions why faculty with diverse backgrounds left and make recommendations.
- **Partners:**
 - Provost, OIE, Human Resources, and EEO/AA Department.
- **Measure:**
 - Analyze reports.

- **Action 2:**
 - Ensure established mentoring programs are effective in retaining faculty members with diverse backgrounds.
 - Conduct focus group(s) with faculty possessing diverse backgrounds to hear and document their voices to capture their experiences at The University of Akron
 - **Partners:**
 - OIE, Undergraduate and Graduate Colleges
 - **Measure:**
 - Collect annual data on the University's percentage of retention of minority faculty.
- **Strategy 5: Recruit Administrators with Diverse Backgrounds**
- **Actions 1 & 2**
 - Adopt a recruitment policy providing that for all senior administrative level openings at least one qualified minority candidate must be part of the candidate pool.
 - Ensure currently employed minority administrators and faculty, who satisfy the job qualifications of an administrative opening, are part of the candidate pool. Under such a system, each search committee should document their efforts to identify qualified, internal minority candidates.²
 - **Partners**
 - *Partners:*
 - President, Provost, CDO, Human Resources, EEO/AA
 - **Measure:**
 - Include at least one qualified minority candidate in the candidate pool.
 - **Action 3:**
 - Advertise job openings with minority professional organizations that are likely to reach minority candidates.
 - Consider retaining executive search firms specializing in diversity.
 - **Partners:**
 - CDO, Human Resources, all Undergraduate, Graduate Colleges, University Departments
 - **Measure:**
 - Number of applications and resumes received, number of positions filled with diverse candidates

² If a minority candidate is not selected to advance past the first round in the interview process, the search committee or hiring decision-maker will have a well-articulated reason for why the candidate was not selected to move forward. Additionally, candidates who are not selected to fill an open position will receive meaningful feedback to assist the candidates in their career objectives and development.

- **Actions 4 & 5**
 - Create leadership internship programs within the various colleges, departments, and administrative leadership divisions for minority undergraduate, graduate, and professional students to prepare them for potential administrative positions within the University.
 - Explore the feasibility of reinstating a “New Employee Orientation” program to provide new hires an introduction to the campus and the outside community. This can be done for all recently hired administrators, including recently hired administrators with diverse backgrounds.
 - Involve current minority administrators in the planning and conducting of the orientation program to increase the likelihood the program will be useful for incoming minority administrators.
 - **Partners:**
 - All Undergraduate, Graduate Colleges, University Departments, Human Resources, EEO/AA, and Institute for Teaching and Learning.
 - **Measure:**
 - Commitment from senior administration and implementation and evaluation of a leadership internship programs.
- **Strategy 6: Retain Administrators with Diverse Backgrounds in Collaboration with University Departments, Graduate, and Undergraduate Colleges.**
- **Actions:**
 - Research best and promising practices to guide the establishment of junior administrator mentorship programs.
 - Develop mentorship programs for all junior administrators, including minority administrators—same background and cross background mentorships in collaboration with University colleges and departments.
 - Create networking opportunities by providing all administrators with the necessary resources to join professional organizations, including minority-focused organizations, and making a concerted effort to set aside travel money to participate in conferences held by those organizations.
 - Encourage administrators with diverse backgrounds to establish an on-campus organization whose mission would be to support and mentor administrators and perhaps other employees with diverse backgrounds.
 - **Partners:**
 - Graduate and all Undergraduate Colleges, all University Departments
 - **Measure:**
 - Commitment from senior administration and implementation and evaluation of a junior administrator mentorship programs.

Moving Forward

Members of UA’s DEI Advisory Council will endeavor to collaborate with appropriate senior administration representatives to prioritize action items and fully execute said action items outlined in this strategic plan, based on available funding.