Auburn University
School of Communication and Journalism Diversity Plan

The School of Communication and Journalism recognizes the importance of both reflecting and teaching diversity and strives to ensure diversity in the makeup of its faculty, staff, and students.

Definition
The School of Communication and Journalism supports Auburn University’s definition of diversity and its commitment to inclusion.

Diversity at Auburn University encompasses the whole of human experience and includes such human qualities as race, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, nationality, age, religion, sexual orientation, economic status, and veteran status. These and other socially and historically important attributes reflect the complexity of our increasingly diverse student body, local community, and national population.

Our School affirms the value of a diversity of viewpoints and ideas. We strive to recognize, reflect, celebrate and learn about diversity to promote growth and understanding.

Mission
As a School of Communication and Journalism, we understand that the open expression of ideas is vital to the success of our program, our students and society at large. That open exchange, however, must include diverse and varied perspectives for it to truly represent our community. With that understanding, it is the mission of the School of Communication and Journalism to foster an environment that is inclusive of all, regardless of background, experience, philosophy or status. This goal of inclusion extends not only to faculty and staff that we employ but in our instructional, research, outreach, and service activities.

Only by encouraging and nurturing participation from and engagement with all members of our community can our school truly embrace the mission of Auburn University as a land-grant institution, to serve the citizens of our state, as well as our broader goal of being a vital and dynamic member of the global education and research community.

Why Diversity Matters
Diversity is central to the mission of the School of Communication and Journalism and its goals of teaching, scholarship, service, and outreach. We recognize that as communicators, the perspectives one has, the questions one asks, and the audience one reaches are often related to the background, experience, and outlook of those communicating. Embracing diversity is then essential for fostering an environment in which students, faculty, and staff with unique viewpoints and backgrounds share their voices. Exposure to different voices is also important in preparing students to live in a global and multicultural world.

The School endorses the goals of the Auburn University Strategic Diversity Plan, which was adopted July 2005 and revised March 2015. The goals outlined in the Auburn University Strategic Plan include:

- Goal 1: Foster a total campus environment that respects differences and encourages inclusiveness.
- Goal 2: Increase the recruitment, retention and representation of people of color, women, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented students, faculty, administrators, and staff at Auburn University to a level that reflects the appropriate relevant pool of availability for the target population.
- Goal 3: Develop and implement a comprehensive system of education and training focused on effectively managing and leveraging diversity for students, faculty and staff.
• Goal 4: Build and strengthen partnerships with diverse communities, businesses, and civic and community organizations to support diversity and multiculturalism in the University and in external communities.
• Goal 5: Develop and execute a comprehensive Diversity Communication Plan.

The School pledges its support of the University plan and further adopts the following School of Communication and Journalism Diversity Plan. The School’s Diversity Committee, with the support of the Director, will be responsible for oversight of the plan and assessment of outcomes with full participation and input from all faculty members on execution of its goals and strategies.

Goals and desired outcomes are spelled out in the policy. A set of strategies are included under each goal. The School’s Diversity Plan will be reviewed annually to monitor and improve progress in each area and provide revisions to the plan as needed.

The School of Communication and Journalism adopts the following strategic plan in order to strengthen its efforts to support, recruit, retain, and mentor minority and female faculty, students and staff, and to advance cultural understanding and embrace diversity throughout its curricula and daily operations.

The School’s policy is intended to be inclusive of all underrepresented and minority groups whatever their race, religion, national origin, gender, age, ability or sexual orientation.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: STUDENTS
Increase enrollment and retention of students from underrepresented groups in the School of Communication & Journalism at both the undergraduate and graduate level so that it meets or exceeds the proportion of these groups in the Auburn University student population.

Strategy 1: Develop new programs targeting students in underrepresented high schools and middle schools.
• Tactic 1-a: Identify promising students from underrepresented groups in area high schools working with CLA and university initiatives.
• Tactic 1-b: Promote the School’s major programs through alumni, and groups such as the National Association of Black Journalists, Alabama Scholastic Press Association, Alabama Press Association, and Public Relations Council of Alabama.
• Tactic 1-c: Develop new outreach initiatives such as workshops to bring students to campus and make them aware of opportunities for future careers.

Strategy 2: Maintain and expand current scholarships designated for students from underrepresented groups. Seek increases in scholarship opportunities and monetary value of these scholarships.

Strategy 3: Build stronger relationships with university units such as the College of Liberal Arts Diversity team and resources designed to help students succeed in the academic environment such as opportunities offered through the Cross-Cultural Center for Excellence and Office of International Programs.
• Tactic 1-a: Support career fairs and other College of Liberal Arts recruiting efforts.
• Tactic 1-b: Continue existing and develop more cooperation with University units devoted to improving diversity at Auburn.
Strategy 3: Build more opportunities for current students to enhance retention and environment.
- **Tactic 1-a:** Encourage development of mentoring programs and establishment of student groups such as school-side DIG (Diversity Interest Group) and National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) chapter.
- **Tactic 1-b:** Promote student participation in regional and national scholarship and internship opportunities such as the Chips Quinn Scholarship Program.

Strategy 4: Focus on successful recruitment and retention of students from under-represented communities in the graduate program and create opportunities for continued service after graduation.

GOAL 2: FACULTY

Strategy 1: Recruit and retain people of color, women, people with disabilities and other under-represented faculty, administrators, staff and graduate students.
- **Tactic 1-a:** Utilize available tools, such as the Minority Faculty Registry. Send out position announcements to Historically Black Colleges and other institutions with high percentage populations from under-represented groups.
- **Tactic 1-b:** Enhance contacts with and participation in professional organizations and divisions in academic associations that advance the careers of underrepresented populations.
- **Tactic 1-c:** Earmark travel funds to facilitate School participation in these organizations and associations and to enhance contacts with underrepresented faculty.
- **Tactic 1-d:** Ensure search committees are diverse.
- **Tactic 1-e:** Enhance ties with groups such as AU Diversity Research Initiative and other programs that benefit recruitment and retention on the College and University level.

Strategy 2: Develop more opportunities for mentoring and support for retention of under-represented faculty, staff and graduate students.
- **Tactic 1-a:** Support diversity-related research and outreach by faculty members with resources and recognition.
- **Tactic 1-b:** Continue to develop new faculty mentoring opportunities on both professional and social levels.
- **Tactic 1-c:** Develop system for providing effective mentors for diverse graduate students to assist with research and other opportunities.

GOAL 3: CULTURE

Strategy 1: Foster a total environment that respects differences and encourages inclusiveness for both faculty and students.
- **Tactic 1-a:** Develop more training and discussion opportunities for faculty to assess climate and share ideas to improve a collegial climate that is supportive to all faculty and students.
- **Tactic 1-b:** Encourage faculty input and self-reporting on school diversity strategies.

Strategy 2: Prioritize and promote programs in the School of Communication and Journalism that emphasize its role in advancing an inclusive environment and in celebrating diversity.
- **Tactic 1-a:** Encourage programming among student groups, such as Lambda Pi Eta and chapters of the Public Relations Council of Alabama and Society of Professional Journalists, focused on diversity issues.
- **Tactic 1-b:** Seek funding sources to expand School-sponsored programming such as lecture series and other public events.

Strategy 3: Increase and continue support for enhancement of global outreach and education opportunities.

Strategy 4: Encourage student, faculty and staff participation in local, regional and national diversity
programs and conferences.

**Strategy 5**: Explore existing and develop new mechanisms for students, faculty and staff to report concerns and complaints about the School’s climate and culture.

**GOAL 4: Curricula**
Continue to improve and develop curricula that focuses on or includes discussions on diversity.

**Strategy 1**: Encourage statements of inclusiveness on all course syllabi.

**Strategy 2**: Use activities and assignments that are related to cultural literacy, diversity, and inclusion.

**Strategy 3**: Provide opportunities and funds for faculty to acquire and develop course materials that promote cultural literacy.

**Strategy 4**: Regularly explore development of new courses and special topics sections that achieve these goals.

**Strategy 5**: Offer experiential learning and civic engagement opportunities that expose students to the diversity on local, regional, national, and global fronts.

**Strategy 6**: Encourage participation of diverse professionals as guest lecturers, event speakers, and adjunct professors.

**GOAL 5: Communication**

**Strategy 1**: Develop and execute Diversity Communication Plan for the School

**Strategy 2**: Emphasize diversity as a core value through School media outlets (web site, brochures, videos, etc.)

**Strategy 3**: Disseminate the School diversity plan and promote it among all students, faculty and staff.

**Strategy 4**: Provide information about and promote current activities and resources at the school and university that support a culture of inclusion to faculty, staff, and students.

**PART II**

**A Process for Assessing Progress Toward Goals**

The Diversity Plan is a document that will be reviewed and revised annually by the Diversity and Outreach Committee with input from the Director and all faculty. The School Director will encourage and promote goals of diversity plan and collect information from individual faculty members during annual reviews. Reports and goals will be discussed in fall and spring faculty meetings. Assessment data for tracking the diversity plan and progress in improving recruitment and retention across demographic groups will be gathered and reviewed annually.

**To Measure Progress:**

- Diversity components in all programs will be reviewed every three years to help discover new opportunities and track progress toward goals.
- The school administration and social media team will review the representation of minorities annually to make sure it is regularly updated and that communication reflects goals.
- Staff and director will provide information to track expenditures for diversity initiatives and support.
- Faculty, staff and student input on the continued development of the School’s strategic plan will be collected.
- Data will compare scholarships available to students from underrepresented groups.
- Annually compare demographic population percentage between university and school both at the undergraduate and graduate level.

- Track contacts made at career fairs and other recruiting events.
- Track applicant data for faculty searches.
- Track expenditures for travel related to diversity efforts.
- Review collected promotional material related to diversity efforts, partnerships and programs.
- Review existing social media and other information to ensure material reflects inclusive environment.
- Track opportunities available for students, faculty, and staff to improve teaching and outreach effectiveness.
- Review course syllabi for elements connected to cultural literacy and diversity.
- Track acquisition of resources that help promote goals.
- Track faculty reports on course-specific efforts to enhance diversity and cultural understanding in annual reviews and information forms.
- Survey faculty every two years for information and input on goals.
- Solicit feedback from students through surveys, conversations, and other means on climate, curriculum and other goals.
- Audit curriculum every three years to map diversity components in classrooms to ensure consistency throughout coursework.