The University of Alabama
Division of Student Life
Staff Multicultural Competence Work Group

REPORT

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Executive Summary

Following an analysis of data collected through a survey and follow-up discussions with division directors, a survey of division staff members, and a review of resources available through Human Resources, the work group has determined that there are both best practices and areas for improvement within the Division of Student Affairs related to staff competencies in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). With a 100% response rate from directors and a 64% response rate from staff, the process appears to have been well received. The overall process utilized by the work group received positive feedback, with several respondents expressing their appreciation for the transparent, non-critical, and inclusive approach to data collection.

Department directors consistently identified common barriers related to institutional policies, divisional resources, and departmental budgets that constrained efforts to increase staff competencies in these areas. The work group has recommendations related to five of the six areas covered by the survey completed by department directors and discussed in follow-up meetings. These include hiring and recruitment, training and orientation, job descriptions and feedback, professional development, and resources. Additionally, the work group has recommendations related to the overall divisional climate in response to data collected in the staff survey. These recommendations address feedback, analyzed in conjunction with respondents' self-identified demographics, in the areas of organizational policies, procedures, and practices; available resources; division staffing; program and service delivery; and self-awareness.

With a commitment to the allocation of recommended financial and human resources in FY17, implementation of framework for learning outcomes can commence in summer 2016, with an initial assessment occurring in summer 2017.

Work Group Charge

The Multicultural Competence Work Group will conduct an audit of the Division using the Multicultural Organization Development Checklist (MOD) (Greiger, 1996) and any other methods the group agrees upon to gather a full picture of the current status of the Division as a multi-culturally competent organization. The Work Group will create a list of learning outcomes, as well as a plan to assess them, for Multicultural Competence in the Division.

Process and Timeline

Following initial discussions by the group's members, common definitions of "diversity," "equity," and "inclusion" (collectively referenced as DEI throughout this document) were agreed upon as a starting point for successive work. In general, these definitions recognized the division's desire not only to recognize and appreciate difference (diversity), but also to promote fairness and equal treatment and access (equity) and to create a welcoming community that promotes social justice (inclusion). When referencing competencies in these areas, included are the necessary attitudes, skills, and knowledge to build and promote the concepts through professional activities.

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Based on feedback from prior divisional work in this area, there were a number of concerns that dictated the approach used by the work group. First, clarity of our goals and transparency of the process we were utilizing needed to be communicated to division directors and staff. Second, we needed to assure staff that our primary goal was creating a framework for on-going development of staff and administrator DEI competencies, not critiquing individual departments' staff members or processes. Third, we sought to highlight best practices utilized by departments. Fourth, recognizing that the overall divisional culture related to DEI was important, all members of the division would have input into the process.

The work group started its task by reviewing the Multicultural Organizational Development Checklist (MOD) and determined that it would need significant modification to suit our purposes. The survey in its original format extended beyond the scope of the work group's charge (student affairs) and was also missing some units within student affairs at The University of Alabama. Using the key concepts consistent with the MOD, the group developed a tool, which met the original charge but was shorter in length and also reflected current trends and updates in the field.

Two separate surveys were created which focused on several areas of interest to the work group: the division director survey covered hiring and recruitment, training and orientation, job descriptions and feedback, professional development, and resources, while the division staff survey covered divisional climate. The purpose of the director survey, which was non-anonymous, was to identify trends and best practices across the division; the survey also served to establish the foundation for a follow up discussion with each department director to garner further buy-in to the process and better understand the survey results. The purpose of the staff survey, which was confidential, was to collect relevant data to staff perceptions of the divisional climate related to DEI; these data were also linked to self-disclosed demographic information related to minority status across several categories.

Each group of respondents had approximately 10 days to complete their surveys, after which the work group met with directors from each department in pairs. Prior to the start of the follow up discussions, a preliminary analysis of the director and staff surveys was completed and findings were used to create a common set of discussion questions. Follow up discussions were completed over the course of two weeks, with each pair of work group members reporting their findings.

Summary of Data Analyses

- **Area 1: Recruitment and Hiring Process**

    - Overall, directors report a high level of agreement that women, persons of color, and members of other underrepresented populations are actively recruited for entry-level and mid-level positions and DEI competencies are utilized as hiring criteria. There is a much lower level of agreement among directors, however, about having received training around equal treatment of job candidates.
    - Staff responses are consistent with directors' response profile in certain areas and diverged in others. Specifically, staff does largely agree that the division supports the recruitment and hiring of individuals in a manner consistent with equal opportunity policies. Also, staff members agree that they have not been trained in the utilization of

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DEI competencies when hiring. Disagreement does exist between staff and directors that DEI competencies are a consideration in the evaluation of new hires qualifications. Staff largely disagrees where directors largely agree.

- ○ Directors referenced receiving little guidance on how best to incorporate DEI expectation and competencies when constructing search committees and when facilitating the application review process.
- ○ Among responses from self-reported members of minority groups, the pattern of data from the staff survey indicate a perception that promotion of staff is not "consistent with the university's equal opportunity policies."

- **Area 2: On-Boarding**

  - o On average directors disagree that there is a department specific orientation process that includes DEI competencies. Despite directors' perceived lack of department specific orientation on DEI competencies staff largely agreed that there were departmental expectations regarding DEI competencies. In addition, staff members did not feel divisional DEI expectations existed to the same extent as departmental DEI expectations.
  - o Multiple directors described their communication of departmental DEI competency expectations to new staff members as informal, because DEI competency expectations are not included in official job descriptions and are thus more difficult to discuss in a formalized manner.

- **Area 3: Professional Development**

  - o On average directors agree that staff members have opportunities to engage in professional development activities around DEI. Largely, staff members agree that their departments provide access to on-campus training resources on DEI competencies. However, less than half of staff reports accessing university resources on DEI competencies in the past year. This number jumps to nearly three-quarters of staff when asked if they had accessed university resources on DEI competencies since they had been hired. Safe Zone Training, Title IX Office, and Crossroads were the three most utilized resources (in that order) reported by staff.
  - o Directors were mixed in reporting the ratio of their staff that takes personal responsibility for DEI professional development. The majority of directors report that 50% or less of their staff take personal responsibility for DEI professional development.
  - o Limited financial resources were a factor repeatedly identified as a barrier to staff pursuing DEI professional development opportunities external to UA.

- **Area 4: Job Descriptions and Feedback**

  - o The majority of directors indicate that only "some" or a "few" job descriptions actually incorporate DEI competencies. Despite this lack of a formal structure in job descriptions staff mostly disagree with the statements that there are divisional or departmental "barriers that prevent them from utilizing [their] DEI competencies." While on the whole the majority felt this way there was still approximately 20% of staff that agreed or

strongly agreed that divisional or departmental barriers existed around the use of their DEI competencies. When controlling for Race, staff responses about perceptions of "barriers that prevent them from utilizing [their] DEI competencies," show that African American staff report a much higher ratio (42%) that agree or strongly agree that barriers exist at the division and department level.

- o Feedback on DEI competencies is not consistent throughout the division with just over half of the directors reporting DEI feedback. Directors' expressed concern about providing feedback in an area that is not a formal part of job descriptions during follow up interviews. As a result directors incorporating DEI competencies into formal or informal feedback is not consistent throughout the division. This lack of structure around DEI competency areas shows up in the staff survey as well. Overall, staff does not agree that there are divisional or departmental "structures in place that allow for responsiveness with regard to DEI issues and concerns raised by staff members." It must be noted again that there is a gap between how the African American staff population and the White staff population responded to these questions about structures in place to address concerns raised over DEI issues. Nearly 60% of African American staff had a negative response to these questions. With a higher ratio negatively responding to the divisional structure questions. Conversely, only 20% of the white staff population responded negatively. Similarly, in both groups there were more negative responses to division structures than departmental structures being in place.

- ● **Area 5: Environment**

  - o Directors agree that there department's "print, visual, audio, and electronic communications intentionally reflect…the diversity of The University of Alabama community." Through follow up conversations on this topic, directors express appreciation for the work of the department of External Affairs and their assistance in facilitating intentionality in this area.

- ● **Area 6: Staff Self-Awareness**

  - o A series of questions asked staff about their perspective around their identity and how this impacts their work. Overall staff is positive about how their cultural background impacts their relationship with staff and students. Despite this positive attitude about their personal background and how this impacts relationships with staff and students, staff is less positive about the sharing of their identity enhancing others DEI competencies. An additional area of conflict is seen with staff indicating they have "experienced professional isolation or exclusion within the division…based on social identity or cultural background." Nearly 50% of African American staff agrees they have experienced professional isolations because of the social identity or cultural background. Conversely, less than 20 of white staff report feeling professional isolation.

- **Self-Reported Demographic Breakdown:**

  o This chart represents the self-reported expression of staffs feeling about their minority status across a number of areas. This list is not meant to be exhaustive and was not prescribed as to what is and is not a minority group. As such, this chart represents what percentage of staff feel as though they are outsiders from the majority in these areas.

Category	Not Member of a Minority Group	Member of a Minority Group
Gender Identity	78%	22%
Race	79%	21%
Ethnicity	80%	20%
Religion	81%	19%
National Origin	93%	7%
Gender Expression	94%	6%
Sexual Orientation	96%	4%
Disability Status	98%	2%
Veteran Status	99%	1%

Division Strengths

- Leadership commitment at the director level - directors viewed DEI as a significant component of their role, because they recognize it as an appropriate and ethical work practice
- Directors expressed openness to change and professional growth through the audit process
- High utilization of some campus resources (e.g. Safe Zones, Harbor Training, Women and Gender Resource Center, Crossroads Community Center, and QPR) to improve DEI competencies
- There is a high level of professional expertise within director level staff - achieved through formalized education in some graduate degrees
- Recognition of reciprocity of learning with students - staff willing to learn from students at the same time they are teaching
- Some departments require trainings while, at the same time, affirming positive value of content
- Hold students and student leaders to high standards (e.g. inclusion of DEI as required component of standard training)

Division Areas for Growth

- Low utilization of some campus resources (e.g. academic departments, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, Title IX Office, Office of Veterans and Military Affairs, and Office of Community-Based Partnerships)
- Unequal opportunities for non-exempt staff to participate in ancillary trainings
- Perception that divisional organizational structure above the director level does not reflect the diversity of the institution

- Perception that historically, DEI competencies have not been a priority at the highest levels of administration. In order for any new DEI initiative to be successful, executive council and top leadership will need to lead by example to facilitate a culture shift across the division.
- Personal sensitivity expressed by supervisors when requiring staff to participate in required trainings when supervisors are members of minority population - similar sensitivity when hiring staff that are members of same minority population
- Concern that "fit" is inappropriately utilized as a criterion for hiring or promotion - subjective qualification used as performance measure
- Inconsistent understanding of expectations across departments as they related to DEI policies and practices
- Lack of cross-disciplinary training - reliance on individual staff members or departments as sole keepers of DEI knowledge for specific minority communities

Recommendations

Number	Area	Details
1	Hiring and Recruitment	Identify a list of minority recruitment resources (listservs, newsletters, websites, etc.) to which staff positions may be posted
2	Hiring and Recruitment	Write a short statement of divisional values, supplemental to EEOC statement, to be included in all job postings
3	Hiring and Recruitment	Create divisional guide for hiring managers that emphasizes: • Building a plan for the recruitment of underrepresented populations; • Asking appropriate interview questions to identify DEI competencies; • Having diverse representation across multiple dimensions of identity on hiring committees (greater division-wide participation of staff in hiring process); • Creating departmental-specific onboarding/orientation processes that address the unique DEI needs of different operational units;
4	Hiring and Recruitment	Create a list of suggested questions that will assist hiring managers in evaluating DEI competencies as part of the interview process.
5	Training and Orientation	Identify a self-assessment instrument to be completed by all new staff members during first week of employment
6	Training and Orientation	Create a customizable template for hiring managers and/or department directors to utilize as an introduction to DEI in individual departments during the first month of employment
7	Training and Orientation	Create of a bi-monthly or quarterly divisional orientation required for all new staff members, with the goals of transmitting divisional values and identifying internal sources of professional development
8	Job Descriptions and Feedback	Include minimum competency in areas of DEI as a hiring criteria and include in all division job descriptions
9	Job Descriptions and Feedback	Create divisional supplement to the HR performance review forms to address staff competency in areas of DEI

Number	Area	Details
11	Professional Development	Provide additional support for existing divisional Professional Development Committee ● Build upon the framework developed by the Professional Development Recognition Initiative and enhance awareness across the division; ● Develop a version of the Professional Development Recognition Initiative framework mandatory to ensure that all staff members are actively pursuing professional development. ● Provide clear and direct charge and scope of responsibilities for each employee type; ● Provide committee members consistent access to divisional leadership and include in strategic planning ● Charge an AVP with responsibility for DEI initiatives, including oversight and support of Professional Development committee; and ● All staff levels should participate in DEI professional development on an on-going basis including setting annual goals.
12	Professional Development	Establish brown bag lunch series for staff to present back to the division knowledge gained through participation in conferences
13	Professional Development	Establish a Social Justice Ally Training program that coordinates the efforts of existing training programs (e.g. Safe Zones and Harbor Training) to promote quarterly opportunities to participate in each program
14	Professional Development	Coordinate with Human Resources to develop a comprehensive list of all trainings available through Skillport, instructor-led workshops, Spark Online Learning, and other resources
15	Resources	Allocate a pool of divisional financial resources to support postings in sources identified in Recommendation 1
16	Resources	Allocate divisional financial resources to support increased departmental programming for activities identified in Recommendation 13
17	Resources	Establish a minimum departmental requirement for allocation of departmental financial resources for professional development associated with each staff line
18	Divisional Climate	Create a stand-alone statement of divisional values related to DEI that expands on the "inclusive community" indicated in our vision
19	Other	Recognize the importance of including all staff members, including those at the director and AVP, in professional development opportunities and accountability to minimum competencies, regardless of length of service at The University of Alabama or in the field
20	Other	In meetings with directors, a desire for transparency was consistently shared. Consequently, we recommend that these findings and the next steps are shared across the division and with the Campus-Wide Diversity Mapping Consultants.

Frameworks for Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The work group recommends a framework for assessment of staff competencies that relies on the feedback from supervisors to employees as part of the annual review process. The proposed framework (Appendix A) is based in part on information presented in, 1) Universal Competencies from the University of Iowa's Department of Human Resources (Appendix B), and 2) "Cultural Competency for Social Justice," (Appendix C) Diane J. Goodman, Ed.D. (2013). Modified versions of these two frameworks are listed immediately following proposed framework.

Departments may continue to use their choice of either the short or long annual review forms provided by Human Resources, but the following form must be used to supplement the annual review process for all employees. These forms will be utilized to assess staff DEI competencies, document behaviors over time, and recommend or require professional development activities.

It is not intended for this form to be used as a stand-alone resource, but in conjunction with materials (such as Appendices B and C) that define clearly the competency areas and provide a rubric for supervisors to evaluate the proficiency of individual staff members with respect to DEI competencies.

Additionally, in order to provide a baseline and subsequent assessment of staff development in these competencies, it is recommended that these forms be used for confidential reporting of data to a divisional representative as a parallel to the annual review process. These data will not be tied to individual employees; rather they will provide a division-wide view of progress on the collective development of division employees.

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Proposed Framework- Draft Supplement to Annual Review Process for Division of Student Affairs

The Division of Student Affairs at The University of Alabama includes as part of its vision a commitment to "a community that cultivates inclusiveness." In order to ensure that staff members are prepared to fulfill this commitment, the Division incorporates a core competency related to diversity, equity, and inclusion into all job descriptions, regardless of classification.

As a condition of hiring and continued employment, staff members must demonstrate the ability to work with a variety of individuals and groups in a constructive and civil manner while appreciating the unique contribution of individuals from varied cultures, race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression, marital status, military/veteran status. This competency is assessed by supervisors as part of the annual review process and findings contribute to the professional development and goals of employees.

Competency Areas	Proficiency Level				
	Deficient	Basic	Working	Extensive	Leader
Demonstrating Self-Awareness:					
Comments:					
Understanding and Valuing Others:					
Comments:					
Demonstrating Knowledge of Social Inequalities:					
Comments:					
Interacting Effectively with a Diversity of People:					
Comments:					
Fostering Equity and Inclusion:					
Comments:					

Recommendations for Professional
Development:_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix B
Universal Competencies from the University of Iowa

Ability to work with a variety of individuals and groups in a constructive and civil manner while appreciating the unique contribution of individuals from varied cultures, race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Proficiency Level			
Basic	Working	Extensive	Expert/Leader
● Demonstrates civil and respectful behaviors valued within the organization. ● Provides and accepts ideas and suggestions in a constructive and helpful manner. ● Exhibits good teamwork: is approachable, cooperative, and contributes to an overall positive and productive work/team environment. ● Works effectively with individuals from all backgrounds.	● Shares appropriate information/feedback openly, professionally, and respectfully. ● Models open, respectful, accepting, and supportive behaviors with team members. ● Maintains productive work relationships while considering multiple perspectives and using effective conflict resolution practices. ● Uses sensitivity in communicating with individuals of diverse backgrounds.	● Establishes and maintains positive and productive working relationships within and outside of own area and background. ● Identifies and resolves disagreements/conflicts in early stages. ● Promotes a safe, equitable, respectful environment in which concerns can be addressed effectively. ● Recommends changes to work practices and policies to promote transparency and approachability.	● Creates and champions initiatives that foster respectful communication, learning, and a spirit of cooperation. ● Regularly shares information and effectively influences to gain common commitment in achieving objectives. ● Shapes unit/department, college/division, or university governance so as to reinforce collaboration, accountability, and responsibility. ● Promotes collaborative climate that recognizes, celebrates, and rewards diversity.

Appendix C
"Cultural Competency for Social Justice," Diane J. Goodman, Ed.D. (2013)

- **Demonstrating Self-Awareness**: Self-awareness is the consciousness of our social identities, cultures, biases, and perspectives. It entails the ability to understand who we are and what we bring to relationships and situations. There are numerous competencies to this component, including:

  - Awareness of our social identities and their cultural influences and how they intersect.
  - Awareness of our prejudices, stereotypes, and biases.
  - Awareness of our internalized superiority and internalized inferiority—how we have internalized (often unconsciously) notions of the superiority of our dominant/privileged social identity groups (internalized dominance) and the inferiority of our subordinated/marginalized social identity groups (internalized oppression).

- **Understanding and Valuing Others:** Not only is self-knowledge and awareness needed to enact cultural competence for social justice, so is knowledge and appreciation of the social identities, cultures, and worldviews of other people Many of these competencies mirror the ones in self-awareness which include:

  - Knowledge of the social identities of other people, their cultural influences, and how they intersect.
  - Ability to value and appreciate ways of being, doing, and thinking other than our own.
  - Ability to recognize how other people express internalized superiority and internalized inferiority.

- **Demonstrating Knowledge of Social Inequalities:** We cannot understand ourselves or other people, or create greater equity without considering the larger socio-political and historical context of which we are part. We need to have a grasp of different forms of privilege and oppression and how these they affect people's experiences, opportunities, and access to social power. It is also critical to appreciate the interlocking nature of different types of inequality and how they intersect in people's lives. Some key competencies include:

  - Knowledge of the history, ideology, and current manifestations of systemic inequalities and how they reinforce each other.
  - Understanding of how different forms of oppression operate on interpersonal, cultural, institutional, and structural levels.
  - Understanding of the impact of societal inequalities on our own and others' experiences of advantage/disadvantage and lived realities.

- **Interacting Effectively with a Diversity of People:** In addition to understanding self, others, and society, we need the ability to adapt to and work collaboratively with diverse people in a range of situations. People's social identities affect their interpersonal, communication and work styles, as well as their views of conflict, notions of leadership and sense of time (among many other things). Some competencies of this component of the model include the ability to:

- o Embrace, integrate, and adapt to different cultural styles.
- o Deal with conflict due to cultural differences and the dynamics of inequality.
- o Engage in dialogue about social identities, diversity, and oppression issues.

- **Fostering Equity and Inclusion:** Cultural competence for social justice requires more than just understanding the impact of social inequality. It entails being able to identify and address inequities and choose appropriate interventions to create environments, policies, and practices to ensure diversity and fairness. Competencies for creating change are needed at various levels such as:

  - o Skills for continual *self-development*, including for self-education, self-reflection, and personal change.
  - o Skills to address *interpersonal and group issues*; for example, responding to biased comments, addressing inequitable group dynamics, and creating culturally inclusive work and learning groups.
  - o Skills to transform *institutions* such as being able to create, critically analyze, implement, or advocate for organizational norms, policies, and practices that are equitable and inclusive.
  - o Skills for creating *societal* change by being able to work collaboratively with others to foster social justice.