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Key Personnel: Dr. Cole Blease Graham Jr., Dr. Domonic A. Bearfield, Dr. Matthew G. Upton, Dr. Holly Kasperbauer, Priscilla Barbour.

Evaluating The Bush School of Government & Public Service's Comprehensive Approach to Achieving Equity in Representation and to Continue Building a Culture of Inclusion.

Summary:

The timing of the DIVERSITY MATTERS Seed Grant is a perfect opportunity for the Bush School to build a thorough evaluative piece into a pilot diversity program. Furthermore, the results of this evaluation will provide insight into how other graduate programs might craft comprehensive strategies to enhance diversity recruitment and encourage an inclusive culture. The DIVERSITY MATTERS Seed Grant Program allows the appropriate funds and timeline to conduct a proper program evaluation of these strategies. Such that, the Bush School will have valuable quantitative and qualitative data to cover two cohorts of students, and further allow for a pre-test/post-test research design in which researchers can compare results from enrollment data, matriculation data, and a second climate survey in the early fall of 2017 to assess the effectiveness of changes in culture.

The Bush School of Government & Public Service identifies, as part of its mission, to be a leader in achieving equity in representation and building a culture of inclusion. As part of this mission, the Bush School constantly seeks resources, strategies, and tools to help achieve this mission. A recent example of this is a pilot program that the Dean's office has funded for \$5,000 to implement a five-prong approach for continuing to enhance our diversity recruitment and inclusive culture.

The five tools that the Bush School is utilizing for this pilot program are the following:

- 1) Yearly attendance at the Thurgood Marshall Leadership Institute;
- 2) Site visits with current students, former students, and faculty to other career fairs and college fairs that specifically recruit attendees from historically underrepresented demographics including, but not limited to black students, hispanic students, and students from varying socioeconomic backgrounds;
- 3) Improving partnerships with organizations that seek to help students from historically underrepresented demographics including, but not limited to TMCF, United Negro College Fund, LULAC, and Universities that predominantly serve students from historically underrepresented demographics;
- 4) Improving Bush School culture with respect to deliberately building a culture of inclusion with strategies that include more involvement from the faculty in promoting cultural awareness in the classroom; Cultural Sensitivity training for students beyond orientation; Revamping Cultural Sensitivity training in orientation; more diverse faculty; diversity promoting events encouraged by SGA; and
- 5) Institutionalization of two Diversity committees: A standing faculty & staff diversity student recruitment committee & a standing student diversity committee.



Jenna Kurten

Program Manager

College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

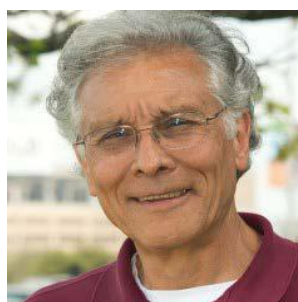
Gender Equity and Family Engagement Roles in Academia.Summary:

Increasing emphasis is being placed on the need for individuals in academic settings to balance work and family outcomes in order to promote gender equity in higher education. Parenting and family engagement present distinct tradeoffs for women and men, alike, as the rigors of tenure and promotion are often concurrent with the heaviest demands of family engagement. This fact is evidenced by the continued gender inequality in higher education and the many popular accounts of parents, particularly women, who find the balance between family and career success unsustainable.

Gender roles are softening in the United States which has helped mediate the demands placed exclusively on women, however, the relics of these gender traditions are still evident among the ranks of faculty where women hold only 16% of Professor positions at Texas A&M University. This study will investigate work-life balance, climate and gender equity for faculty and staff in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences who are juggling careers and family engagement. The study will explore perceptions of climate and the use of policies that are intended to promote work-life balance. It will also explore demands placed on individuals via time allocation studies that will enlighten ways in which the college can more fully support the competing demands placed on faculty and staff. A professional and educational environment that encourages work-life balance, celebrates pursuit of family outcomes, and provides an appropriate level of flexibility is key to recruiting and retaining a diverse group of high-performing individuals that will bring unique skills and perspectives to higher education.



Dr. Eli Borrego
Postdoctoral Research Associate
College of Agriculture & Life Sciences



Dr. Manuel Pina, Jr.
Associate Professor
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Key Personnel – Dr. Chanda Elbert, Dr. Masami Fujiwura

The MANRRS and SACNAS Minority Undergraduate Mentoring Initiative.

Summary:

The MANRRS and SACNAS Minority Undergraduate Mentoring Initiative is a student-led effort addressing the problem of low number of minority students in graduate programs and lack of purposeful efforts to prepare undergraduate and graduate students for the professoriate at Texas A&M University (TAMU). The approach to address this problem is continuous mentoring of sophomores and rising juniors by MANRRS and SACNAS graduate students in their laboratories, fields, and offices over a three-month period in the spring of 2016. Four graduate students will mentor four undergraduate students in conducting research and counseling about graduate studies and exposing them to the rigors of graduate studies and roles of faculty. Evaluation research will be pervasive to assess impact on the undergraduate and graduate students, faculties, and department heads. The intent is to capture lessons learned that can be used for new efforts with extramural funding. Research questions in the short term include: Do perceptions of the undergraduate students change relative to graduate studies? Do perceptions of the undergraduate students change relative to careers in the professoriate? What is the impact on the graduate students? What is the best length of time? How do department heads and other faculty feel about these kinds of efforts? What worked and what needs improvement? What training do mentors need? In the long term, our expectation is to quantify such metrics as: undergraduate students retained through graduation, undergraduate students that apply for and enroll in graduate studies at TAMU or any other university, and has TAMU formalized and offered financial support for continuing this effort in a more expansive and substantive way, i.e., has funding for this kind of effort increased? The budget is \$5,000 to support mentoring activities of the graduate students and travel to local, regional, and national professional association conferences of the undergraduate students.



Dr. Cecilia Giusti

Associate Dean for Outreach and Diversity

College of Architecture

Key Personnel – Maria Paula Perez

Understanding the Gender Gap in terms of salary, promotion, career mentoring, hiring, and promotion opportunities in academia within the fields of architecture, planning, construction and the arts fields represented in the College of Architecture of Texas A&M University.

Summary:

Currently, academia is dominated by men. At TAMU only 35% of the faculty are females and 65% males. The fact that women are less likely than men to be tenure and full time professors is a persistent trend that has also been addressed (National Science Foundation). Usually, unfair treatment in the promotion process (Nelson and Rogers, 2003), marriage (Xie and Shauman, 2003) and children (Ginther and Kahn, 2006) among other, have been argued as being the common causes of such a gap. The college of architecture conducted the first climate survey in 2013 and this helped us unveil some of the most pressing issues facing faculty in the college; on top of the results, the COA-DC conducted workshops with the objective of understand better the numbers from the survey. It is still he case that female faculty are more likely to experience inappropriate behaviors and/or comments regarding gender. This study will explore the reasons behind the gap between male and female faculty, especially in high power positions. To achieve this objective this study will, 1) Expand our gender disparity research beyond our peer institutions as we are interested on searching possible “exemplary” cases that could be lost (or not found) in our small sample;. 2) Explore the main organizations and/or committees that have addressed the gender gap within the academic and professional fields; 3) Identify and interview women that have succeeded in the field focusing on the possible turning points in their careers, and or the people or programs that could have been useful in their paths. 4) Such interviews and data -- should allow us to have a more in depth understanding of the positive and not so positive programs and 5) The study should end with a delineation of feasible proposals to reduce gender bias in the fields within the COA.



Ms. Shawna Fletcher

Director

College of Engineering

Women in Engineering

Key Personnel – Dr. Dilma Da Silva, Dr. Miroslav Begovic, Dr. Andreas Polycarpou,

Advocacy Group for Non-traditional Engineering and Technology Students.

Summary:

The Men's Advocacy Group for Non-traditional Engineering and Technology Students (MAGNETS) program will occur January 2016 through December 2016. Funding is sought to support training retreats and bi-weekly discussion groups to increase advocacy for women and underrepresented groups in engineering and technology. The purpose of the program is to: 1) create awareness for research-based practices and issues that affect women in engineering, 2) encourage the participation of male students to change the culture within engineering departments, 3) assist majority students to create resources for use by peers that provide information and address every-day issues.

The program is a collaborative between the Women in Engineering Program, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Computer Science and Engineering, all departments that are non-traditional career options for women. MAGNETS will consist of two day-long retreat-type events with bi-weekly check-ins, group discussions, and assignments. As a result of the project, participants will create materials and tools to ensure equity and inclusive practices in the classroom and beyond. Project Co-PI's, PI and student participants will be involved in disseminating information, both internally and externally. Department heads will include faculty at departmental meetings and retreats.

This project will serve as a model program to assist with culture change and inclusive practices in non-traditional engineering fields. MAGNETS will add to the body of research that highlights Texas A&M as a national leader, serve to increase inclusive practices within the Dwight Look College of Engineering, and assist with the recruitment and retention of female students. To change the climate in engineering, it is essential that majority students are included in the discussion and the solution.



Dr. Adrienne Carter-Sowell

Assistant Professor

College of Liberal Arts

Department of Psychology and Africana Studies Program

From clicks to consequences: Exploring the visibility of faculty of color as viable members of the TAMU academic community.

Summary:

Jobs as ghost writer and silent partner imply that no negative consequences accompany being present but not accounted for in the workplace. However, research shows being an "invisible" worker matters. The objective of this proposed project is to extend results from a longitudinal study conducted at Texas A & M University, in which faculty of color, compared to their majority faculty peers, indicate more experiences of isolation and less feelings of fit in their home departments or programs. The proposed project involves qualitative and quantitative methodology for data collection. Male and female, tenure/tenure-track, Asian, Black, and Hispanic/Latino faculty of color will be recruited to participate in the project. The anticipated outcomes of the project are 1) providing research experience for undergraduate and graduate student lab staff, 2) disseminating timely information to the University's Office for Diversity regarding retention of faculty of color, and 3) contributing to the published literature regarding social inequities in the workplace.



Frank J. Ortega

College of Liberal Arts

Department of Sociology

Key Personnel – Dr. Kenneth S. Chaplin, Dr. Jose Navarro.

Mentoring Undergraduate Latina/o ProgramSummary:

Mentorship can open doors for these students and help increase the number of Latino students applying, attending and completing degrees in higher education (Zalaquett and Lopez 2006: 349).

This document serves as an addendum to the original mentorship program proposal by including both male and female undergraduate Latina/o students. As the percentage of Latina/o undergraduate college students continue to grow, programs designed to foster this growth remain integral to student attainment and achievement. As the above quote states, mentoring programs in particular have proven to increase the retention rates, graduation rates, and overall educational experiences of Latina/o undergraduate students. Therefore, university-level mentoring programs designed to address the specific educational and professional interests of Latina/o students remain vital to the long-term success of the individual, college, and community (Cox et al. 2014; Phinney et al. 2011; Zalaquett and Lopez 2006; Bordes and Arredono 2005). In fact, the following paragraph highlights some of the education literature that speaks to the benefit of mentoring programs for both Latino and Latina students. Studies investigating mentorship among Latina/o undergraduates underscore the positive impact formal and informal mentorship programs have on the educational experiences of Latina/o students (i.e. transition from high school to college, retention, graduation, and long-term benefits). For example, Zalaquett and Lopez (2006) highlight that “mentoring relationships can provide students with the support they need to make the transition from high school to college and to remain successful as they pursue a higher education” (349). As my own research indicates this transition from the home culture to the university culture is a critical component of the lived experiences of Latina/o undergraduates; according to Zalaquett and Lopez (2006) mentoring can help ease this transition. Researchers have also found that mentoring enhances Latina/o student’s perceptions of the university, particularly among students that were mentored early in their college experience, resulting in their commitment to the university and graduation completion (Phinney et al. 2011; Bordes and Arredono 2005). In other words, students that feel comfortable on campus tend to stay connected to the university and ultimately graduate. Effective mentoring relationships can have impacts beyond the collegiate experience: “Hispanic students greatly benefit from long-term mentoring relationships and these relationships produce strong social networks for Latino protégés,” (Cox et al. 2014: 361; Sanchez, Esparza, Berardi, & Pryce, 2010). Mentoring has the potential to positively influence the mentee’s life long after college. The above research clearly indicates the importance of creating and implementing mentorship program(s) for both Latina and Latino undergraduate students.



Dr. Sahar F. Aziz

Associate Professor

Texas A&M University School of Law



Dr. Shaida Kalbasi

Department of Health and Kinesiology

Texas A&M University

Discrimination Experiences of Muslim American Students at Texas A&M University.

Summary:

Race and anti-discrimination studies have primarily focused on different minority populations, including African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, South Asians, and Middle Eastern Americans. In contrast to other minorities, persons of Middle Eastern and South Asian origin have faced an increase, rather than a decrease, in the level of discrimination they experience. Yet, minimal research has focused on these populations and their experiences with discrimination in various fora, including education. Schools have been reported as one place where Muslim students of various national origins experience discrimination. Teacher, staff, and peer attitudes toward those who wear Islamic clothing or bear other markers of their religious or ethnic identities have been a major part of this discrimination. Seven out of nine discrimination incidents reported by Muslims occurred in school settings and were performed by teachers or classmates (Aroian, 2012). While discriminatory actions toward Muslims have been reported in employment (Ghumman and Jackson 2010) and education settings (Aroian 2012; Shammass 2009), insufficient information is available on the discrimination experiences of this population on college campuses, particularly campuses like Texas A&M that are historically known as white-dominated institutions. Thus, this proposed study will seek to contribute to filling the void in the literature through qualitative research of the discrimination experiences of Middle Eastern and South Asian students who self-identify as Muslim students at Texas A&M University. Negative stereotypes conflate Middle

Easterners and South Asians (national origin identities) with Muslim Americans (religious identity) as the "Terrorist Other." Because perpetrators of discrimination essentialize these otherwise diverse groups into a homogenous target of bias, our research subjects will include Muslim students of Middle Eastern or South Asian origin. The research findings can serve to provide insight and inform future projects and studies about understanding and alleviating discrimination against this population.