2017 Assessment of the 2010 University Diversity Plan: Progress and Engagement Opportunities
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Executive Summary

To assess the impact of the 2010 Diversity Plan, the Office for Diversity compared characteristics of the institution from 2010 to 2016; reviewed institutional and unit-level efforts to impact recruiting, retention, campus climate, and equity; and identified areas where there is a need for more accountability. In this assessment exploring the impact of the 2010 Diversity Plan, we are not implying causal inferences about the impact of the plan.

1) At the university-level, we can point to meaningful, substantive progress such as:

- **Undergraduate student recruitment** -- Texas A&M has seen increases in numbers of undergraduate Hispanic students and first-time in college undergraduate African American students. Texas A&M has increased the numbers of schools targeted for undergraduate recruiting in Houston and Dallas from 40 schools after the Hopwood decision to 100 schools.

- **Student learning outcomes** -- Student learning outcomes state that students who graduate from Texas A&M University with baccalaureate degrees will have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to demonstrate social, cultural, and global competence. Graduate student learning outcomes have integrated diversity, inclusion and equity by stating that masters and doctoral students will be able to: Use a variety of sources and evaluate multiple points of view to analyze and integrate information and to conduct critical, reasoned arguments; communicate effectively; and choose ethical courses of action in research and practice.

- **Support for historically underrepresented groups** -- Resources and services include, but are not limited to: Tell Somebody, StopHate, the Department of Multicultural Services, the GLBT Resource Center, the Women’s Resource Center, the Veteran’s Resource Center, affinity groups, and the ADVANCE Center. Furthermore, in 2015, the institution extended benefits to same-sex partners of employees.

2) Specific indicators of institutional progress towards 2010 Diversity Plan goals include:

- **1st in Texas in student 4, 5, and 6-year graduation rates** -- Both overall and for historically underrepresented students from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Source: [http://www.tamu.edu/about/at-a-glance.html](http://www.tamu.edu/about/at-a-glance.html))

- **2nd in the nation in the Best Colleges for Veterans category** – *USA Today’s 2016 College Guide (powered by College Factual)* (Source: [https://accountability.tamu.edu/Recognitions?ga=2.25578171.726429632.1496675846-1008390669](https://accountability.tamu.edu/Recognitions?ga=2.25578171.726429632.1496675846-1008390669))

- **40th in the nation as one of the best colleges and universities for women by College Choice** (Retrieved 03/02/17 from [http://www.collegechoice.net/rankings/best-colleges-and-universities-for-women/](http://www.collegechoice.net/rankings/best-colleges-and-universities-for-women/)).

• All of the deans of the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) colleges, Engineering, Sciences, and Geosciences, are women in 2016.

While Texas A&M looks similar to, and sometimes better than, our peer institutions, we need to be cognizant of how we compare to our internal metrics, such as the State of Texas and the communities we serve. In spite of the increases in the numbers of some historically underrepresented groups, the numbers of historically underrepresented students, faculty and staff are small, and not representative of the demographics of the State of Texas. Furthermore, higher education, in general, has numbers of historically underrepresented groups that are not representative of the population of our communities.

3. Areas of concern that need to be addressed:

• **Gaps in student success** -- We need to close the gaps in our student success rate so that academic success and graduation are realistic goals for every student.

• **Campus climate** -- The campus climate continues to be challenging for many of our students, faculty, and staff. People from historically underrepresented groups may experience isolation, alienation, invisibility, tokenization, silence, and marginalization on campus and in the community.

• **Lack of transparency around merit and promotion** -- Transparency around merit, promotion and tenure decisions may encourage progress in climate and equity.

• **Marketing diversity and inclusion** -- Showing the institution’s commitment to diversity needs to be authentic. We can evolve beyond pictures of posed multiracial/ethnic groups to sharing personal experiences and stories, so people can see “someone like me is finding their way through A&M”.

• **Engage in more dialogue** -- Campus incidents reveal concern and confusion about whether a campus that values diversity and inclusion can also protect academic freedom, expressive activity, religious freedom, and free speech.

In summary, for long-term progress, an administrator described the need for “building a culture of inclusiveness, the foundation that will translate to success - Not a cookie-cutter approach, but one that recognizes the challenges of diversity for each discipline, not the one-size fits all diversity program.” Since the Diversity Plan was formally introduced in 2010, efforts to implement the goals of the plan have been wide-ranging, and in many cases, have accomplished a discernible change in the institution’s culture for diversity, inclusion, and equity.
Introduction
In 2010, Texas A&M University embarked on an ambitious diversity plan. Superseding a previous plan in 2006, the 2010 Diversity Plan had three key goals:

1. **Accountability**: Establish structures, processes, and policies that hold all units accountable, and reward units and individuals for demonstrating their current standing, plans, and progress in creating an environment where individuals are treated equitably in a climate that fosters success and achievement.

2. **Climate**: Promote a positive and supportive climate by identifying aspects in the climate of individual units and the University, which either foster or impede a working and learning environment that fully recognizes, values, and integrates diversity in the pursuit of academic excellence.

3. **Equity**: Articulate procedures to ensure that students, staff, and faculty (tenure and non-tenure track), regardless of identity, are treated equitably.

Consistent with the research literature in higher education, the Diversity Plan acknowledged that individuals in the university community differ across a range of social and cultural identity characteristics. These characteristics can include, but are not limited to: age; cultural identity; gender identity or expression; nationality; physical and mental ability; political and ideological perspectives; racial and ethnic identity; religious and spiritual identity; sexual orientation; and social and economic status (Hurtado, Dey, Gurin, & Gurin, 2003; Stanley, 2006; Tierney, 1987).

According to Bensimon, Polkinghorne, and Bauman (2003), institutions of higher education often do not produce annual reports on measures of equity nor do they have equity-oriented benchmarks on progress. Furthermore, very few institutions hold their campus accountable for diversity and inclusion efforts. In order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of diversity and inclusion efforts, the 2010 Diversity Plan established the expectation that academic and administrative units would submit annual accountability reports.

The purpose of this report is to assess the institutional efforts and to communicate what we are learning since the implementation of the 2010 Diversity Plan. While the primary intended audience of this report is Texas A&M University stakeholders, the report may also be read as a case study of how a large, research-intensive, public university has implemented a comprehensive diversity plan.

**Assessment Approach and Guiding Questions**
The assessment approach taken was to compare 2010 to 2016 campus characteristics using institutional data, campus climate survey data, and institutional and unit document analyses.

Additionally, interviews were conducted with student, faculty, and staff leadership to document changes and identify gaps that need to be addressed in the future. Throughout this report, quotes from the interviews are used to supplement quantitative institutional data. The three guiding questions for this assessment were:

1. How do we know that we are making meaningful, substantive changes in establishing a working and learning environment that fully recognizes, values, and integrates diversity
in pursuit of academic excellence?

2. How do we know that the Diversity Plan is making a difference or having an organizational impact on the campus culture? How are we changing ourselves?

3. What gaps need to be addressed in the future? What is the Diversity Plan in its current form not sufficiently addressing?

Prior research indicates that organizational change efforts are influenced by institutional history; the community; local and national issues; university stakeholders; current and former faculty, students, and staff; and a myriad of other factors. In addition, change efforts are often met with resistance, fear, protection of current practices, and conflict (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Kezar & Eckel, 2000; Kotter, 1995; Stanley, 2016).

In assessing the impact of the 2010 Diversity Plan, we sought to take a broad view, considering a range of sources of data. However, it would be irresponsible to draw causal inferences about the impact of the Diversity Plan. This report explores the strategies that Texas A&M University has initiated to effect change and identifies areas where there is need for more accountability in the future.

**Conceptual Framework**

Kotter’s 1995 model for organizational change provides a useful conceptual framework for analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data used to assess the Diversity Plan. The model outlines eight stages for framing organizational change. While the steps outlined by Kotter’s 1995 model seem linear and sequential, they need not be interpreted in this way. Figure 1 shows how Kotter’s stages have been more interdependent in the context of Texas A&M’s organizational change.

For example, strategic planning documents helped create a vision and also established a sense of urgency. Changing a university’s diversity culture is a collective undertaking and one that requires steady work, reflection, and accountability. A college campus is a microcosm of our larger society and world. Addressing issues that are historically and systemically rooted in the campus culture requires constant monitoring, commitment, resources, assessment, and ownership.
Establish a Sense of Urgency
The first step toward leading organizational change is establishing a sense of urgency. A *sense of urgency* is “examining competitive realities and identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities” (Kotter, 1995; p. 3). Institutional mission, goals, and data are used to provide examples of the evidence that contributed to a sense of urgency to address the Diversity Plan goals of accountability, climate, and equity.

**Institutional Mission and Vision**
Founded in 1871, Texas A&M is a land-grant university. Fulfilling the institution’s land-grant mission contributes to a sense of urgency by identifying the need to create opportunities to improve access to higher education to groups that have historically been excluded, such as people of color and women. The university’s mission and vision statement identifies the purpose of a public research university and the goal of preparing graduates to be successful in an increasingly competitive, diverse, and global economy. Texas A&M University’s mission statement explicitly states:

*Texas A&M University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication, and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields. Its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research and creativity. It prepares*
students to assume roles in leadership, responsibility and service to society. Texas A&M assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. It welcomes and seeks to serve persons of all racial, ethnic and geographic groups as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and a global economy. In the 21st century, Texas A&M University seeks to assume a place of preeminence among public universities while respecting its history and traditions. (Retrieved 02/27/17 from http://www.tamu.edu/statements/mission.html)

In addition to the mission statement, an imperative of Texas A&M’s Vision 2020 document explains why diversity is integral to academic excellence:

*The time has passed when the isolation of the Texas A&M University campus served a compelling utilitarian function. Information, communication, and travel technology have produced a highly connected global society. The ability to survive, much less succeed, is increasingly linked to the development of a more pluralistic, diverse, and globally aware populace. It is essential that the faculty, students, and larger campus community embrace this more cosmopolitan environment. The university's traditional core values will give us guidance and distinctiveness, while preparing us to interact with all people of the globe. Texas A&M University must attract and nurture a more ethnically, culturally, and geographically diverse faculty, staff, and student body. (Retrieved 04/6/17 from http://vision2020.tamu.edu/the-twelve-imperatives)*

Texas A&M University combines the principles of education and outreach that are legacies of its land, sea, and space grant designations with the advanced research mission expected of an Association of American Universities (AAU) institution. The institution has been recognized in many different ways for its combination of excellence, affordability, and ability to develop leaders of character who have an impact on the state, nation, and world.

**Texas A&M Core Values**

Embedded within the institution’s history and traditions are six core values: Excellence, Integrity, Leadership, Loyalty, Respect, and Selfless Service. President Michael K. Young’s November, 2016 statement to the university community describes the relationship between A&M’s core values and an environment where individual identities and ideas are treated equitably in a climate that fosters success and achievement by all:

*Our core values—especially those of respect and leadership—ask of us to rise above our differences, allow for a variety of voices in the conversation, and recognize that genuine respect for one another is essential not just for our personal lives but for our ability to work together effectively. No one in our university community should ever feel disrespected. Let us be the model for active and constructive dialogue. Aggies must lead the way. Teamwork, no matter the size of the team, is hard work. Though the path to cooperation may not always be smooth, we must listen to each other, value each other’s perspectives, and above all respect each other with dignity and honor. (Retrieved 02/27/17, http://president.tamu.edu/messages/living-our-core-values.html)*

Diversity is a logical imperative derived from our core values, which remind us that, for the
institution to accomplish the *Diversity Plan* goals of accountability, climate, and equity, there must be a sense of urgency that directly connects to the institution’s history and traditions.

**Campus Climate Studies**
Campus climate is a key indicator of how faculty, staff, and students experience a campus environment. Studies of campus climate illustrated the need for a comprehensive diversity plan.

From 1997-1998, Dr. Sylvia Hurtado led a research team from the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education to conduct a study titled *Perspectives on the Climate for Diversity: Findings and Suggested Recommendations for the Texas A&M University Campus Community*. This study included undergraduate and graduate students, as well as staff and faculty. Data were collected through paper survey forms and focus groups. This study found the following:

- First-generation college students have a number of issues including financial difficulties, time management and adjustment to academic expectations, and social isolation. The report recommended campus resources to ease financial difficulties and campus programming to develop time management skills, adjustment to academic expectations, and social interaction (p. 35).

- Students of color have high rates of interaction across race/ethnicity and substantial interaction with White/Anglo students. White/Anglo students tend to have mostly or all White/Anglo friends, but value more contact with students of color. Increasing the representation of diverse groups on campus remains key in providing for interactions across different racial/ethnic groups (p. 35).

- “Most of the discrimination or stereotyping that is reported by groups typically comes from other students rather than faculty, staff, or administrators” (p. 35).

- “Most students (90%) state that diversity is good for Texas A&M and should be actively promoted” (p. 36).

- African Americans tend to report the least satisfaction and a significantly lower sense of belonging on campus. They are more likely to report negative experiences but also many positive experiences with faculty in discussions about racial issues. They are the most skeptical, however, about institutional commitment to diversity. Hispanics and African Americans are more likely to report financial difficulties during college.

- Asian Americans have the most difficulty acclimating to the social environment at Texas A&M and are less likely (along with African Americans) to feel that the town meets their needs” (p. 37).

Hurtado et al.’s (1998) study contributed to a sense of urgency to develop a university diversity plan by affirming the need to continue to diversify the Texas A&M community. For example, the first general recommendation was to:
Clarify the importance of diversity among top institutional priorities and adopt a plan for monitoring progress. Subsequent reports to the community assist in keeping everyone informed about the direction and progress in achieving diversity goals. Many campuses produce regular reports to the campus community about the important areas of progress and areas that require more concerted effort to achieve diversity goals. Such reports make institutional priorities clear to campus members. (Hurtado et al., 1998, p. 308)

Therefore, the 2010 University Diversity Plan calls for units to use the results from the faculty, staff, and student climate assessments to understand the impact of climate on student, faculty, and staff recruitment and retention and report their findings in annual unit-level accountability reports.

Institutional-level campus climate assessments are conducted, on average, every three years. Units use University-level campus climate data as it applies to their areas. However, when the University data does not reflect the individual unit climate, they are advised to assess and ensure their own unit-level climate is well understood.

The 2013 Undergraduate Campus Climate Assessment revealed that 66% of respondents indicated that diversity among the campus population benefitted them personally and 82% indicated that diversity benefits the institution. Students from historically underrepresented groups did not think the University environment was generally supportive of students of color, international students, women, or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) students. Historically underrepresented students reported experiencing or observing inappropriate comments or behaviors on campus more frequently than non-historically underrepresented students. Persistent challenges from the undergraduate student campus climate assessments include:

- What can we do about the persistent finding that the campus is friendly on the surface, but can also be intolerant of differences?
- How can we identify and/or alleviate issues in the campus climate that contribute to students feeling the need to minimize characteristics of their identities (e.g. language, dress, beliefs, etc.) to fit in with student organizations and with classmates?
- How can we encourage the involvement of all undergraduates in student organizations, traditions, and high-impact learning practices?
- How can we teach the personal and institutional benefits of diversity to the undergraduate student body?

In the 2012 Graduate and Professional Student Campus Climate Survey, graduate students shared that a diverse student body, open communication among faculty and students, and welcoming colleges/departments contributed to a positive campus climate. Historically underrepresented graduate students reported experiencing the campus climate as less welcoming than do other groups. Graduate students also reported experiencing or observing inappropriate comments or behaviors related to race/ethnicity/nationality, language proficiency, political/religious beliefs, and sexual orientation, mostly from fellow students.

Challenges that emerge from the graduate student campus climate assessment include:
• What can the University do to help graduate students engage in respectful interactions? Tensions and cliques are prevalent on campus relating to: University traditions, undergraduate and graduate students, race/ethnicity, and political and religious beliefs.

• How can we address quality of life concerns? Graduate students report concerns related to: balancing home, coursework, employment, and research; managing transportation challenges; and dealing with stress related to the campus environment and financial situations.

In the 2013 Faculty Climate Survey, African American and Hispanic faculty members reported significantly less favorable experiences with climate than those reported by white faculty. Thirty percent of non-white faculty respondents reported experiencing job-related racial discrimination in the previous 12 months. The most common type of discrimination reported was discrimination in salary, followed by discrimination in collegiality.

Persistent challenges from the faculty campus climate assessment include:

• Faculty composition: What can we do to continue to increase the numbers of people who are historically underrepresented in some disciplines?

• Declining job satisfaction: What can we do to improve job satisfaction for faculty?

• Turnover intentions: What can we do to address retention and promotion concerns in all faculty ranks?

The 2013 Staff Campus Climate Assessment revealed that compared to other groups, African American respondents reported somewhat lower satisfaction with promotion opportunities, experiences with organizational support, and organizational commitment. These respondents also report a somewhat greater tendency to search to find a new job. Additionally, there are differences in experiences with campus climate by age, with employees over the age of 40 reporting lower levels of organizational commitment and higher turnover intent and job search activity.

Persistent challenges emerging from the staff campus climate assessments include:

• How can we support and encourage staff during times of institutional change?

• How can we identify and/or alleviate the issues in the campus climate that contribute to lower job satisfaction?

• What steps can be taken to encourage and reinforce an inclusive environment?

• What steps can be taken to encourage political/religious acceptance?

Campus climate issues contribute to a sense of urgency for institutional change because they not only influence student, faculty, and staff recruitment and retention, they are also explicitly and implicitly embedded within the institution’s mission, vision, and core values. As such, campus climate continues to be a concern. Furthermore, factors affecting campus climate are not limited to
institutional characteristics and events — we have also seen several national issues and events, such as presidential elections, Supreme Court decisions, and current events, impact campus climate.

Hurtado et al. (1998) noted, “… one important step toward improving the campus climate for diversity is to increase the representation of people of color on campus” (pg. 287). They argue, along with several other scholars, that the responsibility to increase diversity on college and university campuses does not fall solely on the shoulders of historically underrepresented individuals—the institution is also partially responsible for increasing diversity and improving the overall campus climate (see also Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora, 2000; Johnson et al., 2007).

Together, campus climate studies have and continue to remind us of the importance of moving forward with the 2010 Diversity Plan.

**Student, Faculty, and Staff Recruitment and Retention**

In addition to campus climate issues, local and national events have contributed to a sense of urgency to address recruitment and retention efforts at Texas A&M University. For example, *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996) overturned race-based admissions policies at public universities in Texas. There continues to be a sense of urgency regarding student recruiting and retention. In *Fisher v. University of Texas* (2013), the Supreme Court ruled that strict scrutiny should be applied to determine the constitutionality of a race-sensitive admissions policy. In 2016, the Supreme Court ruled that the University of Texas's use of race in their admissions policy passes the constitutional muster.

In summary, at Texas A&M, several institution-wide initiatives contributed to establishing a sense of urgency in order to accomplish the goals set by the current *Diversity Plan*. These initiatives, which include campus climate studies with faculty, students, and staff, institutional data, and the 2006 Campus Diversity Plan, have been embedded within the University’s mission, vision, and values statements and are based in our origins as a public land-grant research university.

**Form a Powerful Guiding Coalition**

The second step of Kotter’s (1995) model for institutional change is to form a powerful guiding coalition by assembling groups of people “with enough power to lead the change effort and encourage the group to work together as a team” (p. 3). Over the years, Texas A&M has formed coalitions across colleges and administrative units, comprised of faculty, staff, community members, students, and former students. The president, provost, deans, vice presidents, Diversity Leaders Group (DLG), academic and administrative diversity committees and councils, the President’s Council on Climate and Diversity (CCD), and the Diversity Operations Committee (DOC) are examples of powerful guiding coalitions leading the organizational change necessary to accomplish the *Diversity Plan* goals of accountability, climate, and equity.

**Diversity Leaders Group**

At the college-level, the Diversity Leaders Group (DLG) is comprised of the diversity-titled leaders in the colleges who hold positions such as Assistant Deans, Associate Deans, and Director. As of Spring 2017, 13 of the 16 academic colleges have appointed diversity deans who have a seat at the leadership team of the college: The Bush School of Government and Public Service, Mays Business
School, College of Architecture, College of Dentistry, College of Education and Human Development, College of Engineering, College of Geosciences, School of Law, College of Liberal Arts, College of Medicine, School of Public Health, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, and University Libraries. During an interview, one individual remarked, “In the past year or so, some colleges have an individual in every department being held accountable for progress towards diversity, possibly that will make some progress now that it is someone’s responsibility, now that someone is being held accountable.”

In addition, an increasing number of administrative units have formed similar committees and councils as well, such as the Division of Academic Affairs (Academic Affairs Climate and Diversity Committee) and Division of Student Affairs (Diversity 2.0 Committee). The 2016 accountability reports show that other units have expressed the need to have these groups for monitoring and accountability purposes, such as the Office of the President’s Team of Five reporting units (Athletics, Government Relations, Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness, Marketing and Communication, President’s Office) and the Division of Finance and Administration.

**Unit-Level Diversity Committees**

Diversity councils within the units are another example of guiding coalitions within the University. As of 2017, many of the units have established diversity councils. During an interview, one administrator commented on the impact of the unit’s diversity council:

> The [council] has made a major impact with data usage. People used to talk about what they felt/saw/heard about. Now we can point to actual reports with collected data and debunk myths while sharing facts. People have learned about hiring practices, university rules, how other units reward people, climate data, etc.

Units across the University have built coalitions between and within the units in order to encourage and lead diversity-related change efforts. The unit-level diversity committees are composed of students, staff, and administrators from within the unit, and often staff and faculty from other units. For example, both the College of Architecture and the College of Liberal Arts include a staff member from the Department of Multicultural Services on their unit-level diversity committees.

**Council on Climate and Diversity (CCD)**

At the institutional level, two major groups aid in the planning, implementation, assessment, and evaluation of institutional and unit-level progress in accomplishing the goals set up by the *Diversity Plan*: A reconstituted Council on Climate and Diversity (CCD) and the newly created Diversity Operations Committee (DOC).

In 2007, the Council on Climate and Diversity (CCD) was formed and charged with providing counsel to the President and the Provost on practices for attracting and retaining diverse students, faculty, and staff at Texas A&M University, and to strengthen, sustain, and promote diversity efforts that support *Vision 2020* goals. In 2010, the CCD’s charge was expanded to include an additional responsibility: To aid the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity (VPAPD) in planning appropriate assessment and evaluation of units.
The CCD is composed of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members, who represent different constituencies in the campus university and also the broader Bryan/College Station community. The CCD assists in the assessment and evaluation of accountability, climate, and equity activities that strengthen, sustain, and promote diversity efforts in support of institutional goals. **One million dollars are set aside each year** to reward units and it is based on a rubric that includes ratings for progress across and within multiple areas of the *Diversity Plan* (e.g., recruitment, retention, climate, and equity efforts), and size of the unit.

The CCD also provides individualized feedback to the units for improvement of future diversity and inclusion strategies and efforts. For example, suggestions have focused on: encouraging units to gather data from aspirant institutional peers and expand recruitment efforts to obtain a more diverse faculty; encouraging units to focus more on strategic change within the unit’s culture in addition to tactical efforts driven by events and activities; enhancing faculty, staff, and student cultural competency skills; expanding understanding of equity beyond salaries; implementing assessment plans and goals; and enhancing staff and supervisor skill sets.

**Diversity Operations Committee (DOC)**

The Diversity Operations Committee (DOC) provides feedback on processes for collection of equity and climate data, as well as procedures and practices for the implementation of all aspects of the *Diversity Plan*. The DOC is charged with:

- Ensuring that all existing and planned policies, operations, procedures, and all major plans for organizational change are pursued with careful attention to their impact on our diversity goals;
- Ensuring strategic coordination of University-wide, diversity-related activities;
- Collecting and reporting equity and climate data, diversity initiatives, as well as recruitment and retention strategies and outcomes; and
- Enhancing the effectiveness of our collective diversity initiatives, taking into account current practices and the distinctive cultures of our various units.

The DOC is chaired by the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity and is comprised of representatives from each unit, the University Staff Council, and student liaisons. The DOC has also been an influential guiding coalition. During an interview, one individual stated: “The DOC has been a useful thing to get buy-in and discussion - a good part for me was seeing what was occurring in the colleges and different Vice President areas- having senior people participate is important, people that can make decisions.”

Texas A&M has formed several guiding coalitions at both the institutional-level and unit-level which have played pivotal roles in leading organizational changes necessary to accomplish the goals established by the Diversity Plan.
Create a Vision

The third step in Kotter’s (1995) model for organizational change is to “create a vision to help direct the change effort [and] develop strategies for achieving that vision” (p. 3). By embedding the goals of accountability, climate, and equity within academic success and institutional excellence, the Diversity Plan provided a vision for accomplishing these goals:

\[
\text{Diversity at Texas A&M University is an indispensable component of academic excellence. It is not an isolated concept that is separate to creating a culture of preeminence as was envisioned in Vision 2020 or the Academic Master Plan. We simply cannot achieve academic excellence without paying attention to and drawing from the richness and strength reflected in the diversity in our state and nation. (p.1)}
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The Diversity Plan provide the institution with a vision where diversity is integral to academic excellence. Integrating diversity-related goals into the institution’s established culture of assessment contributed to creating a vision, directing the change efforts, and developing strategies for achieving the vision.

A Culture of Assessment

Prior to the implementation of the Diversity Plan, the institution integrated diversity-related goals with institutional goals by establishing an imperative “to diversify and globalize the campus community” (Texas A&M University 1999; p. 44). This imperative addressed student, faculty, and staff recruiting and retention activities.

At the institutional level, diversity-related assessment and goals are integrated with accreditation and industry standards. For example, student learning outcomes established that all students be able to “demonstrate social, cultural, and global competence and communicate effectively” (Texas A&M University, p. 35). At the college level, recruiting, retention, and cultural competency are all addressed by accreditation standards. For example, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) requires that a college of medicine “ensures that its medical education program … recognizes the benefits of diversity, and promotes students’ attainment of competencies required of future physicians … to achieve mission-appropriate diversity outcomes among its students, faculty, senior administrative staff, and other relevant members of its academic community” (LCME, 2015; p. 4).

At the program level, the American Psychological Association (APA), for example, requires doctoral graduate programs, internship programs, and postdoctoral residency programs to engage “in actions that indicate respect for and understanding of cultural and individual diversity… reflected in the program’s policies for the recruitment, retention, and development of faculty and students, and in its curriculum and field placements,” with the APA program review providing guidelines for assessing student and faculty diversity and demographics (APA, 2013; p. 6).

At the industry level, for example, the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) also provide their own diversity standards. The ALA’s standards address cultural competency for academic libraries by advocating for cultural awareness and cross-cultural competence in service delivery and leadership (ALA, 2012). Similarly, AASHE’s assessment report, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS®) is not only intended to measure sustainability performance but also
addresses diversity-related goals in the context of equity, affordability, support for historically underrepresented groups, and support for future faculty diversity.

In 2007, Texas A&M committed to using WEAVEonline as a central repository for program assessment documentation. Degree-granting programs, student support services, and administrative units are required to use WEAVEonline to document assessment processes and program improvement. In 2014, the Diversity Plan goals were added to WEAVEonline to encourage units to align program and learning outcomes with Diversity Plan goals – accountability, climate, and equity. In the 2014-2015 cycle, 33% of the units who submitted Diversity Plan Accountability Reports (7 out of 21) had outcomes in WEAVEonline associated with diversity plan goals. In the 2016-2017 cycle, 30% of the units who submitted Diversity Plan Accountability Reports (7 out of 23) had outcomes in WEAVEonline associated with diversity plan goals. Across the years, the diversity-related outcomes address student recruiting, culture competence, communication skills, and transformative learning such as study abroad programs.

Integrating the Diversity Plan into the institution’s culture of assessment has been one of the key elements to creating a vision necessary to accomplish the goals of accountability, climate, and equity. Diversity-related goals addressing recruitment, retention, campus climate, and equity have been integrated into the institution’s strategic plans; mission, vision, and goals; and accreditation. For example, the effectiveness of the Diversity Plan can be directly tied to its integration within the institution’s strategic plan which ensured “a sustained financial commitment to the Diversity Plan” and the implementation of accountability at every level within the institution.

Communicate the Vision

The fourth stage of Kotter’s (1995) organizational change model is communicating the vision using “every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies [and] teach new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition” (p. 3). Unit-level strategic plans, diversity-related websites, and addressing diversity and inclusion on committee meeting agendas, are instrumental in communicating the vision and modeling commitment to diversity.

Strategic Plans

In Fall, 2016, Office for Diversity staff reviewed 16 of the 23 units’ 2010-2015 strategic plans developed in 2009 from the following units: Academic Services; Bush School of Government and Public Service; College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; College of Architecture; College of Education and Human Development; College of Liberal Arts; College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences; College of Science; Division of Finance; Division of Marketing and Communications; Division of Student Affairs; College of Engineering; College of Geosciences; Division of Information Technology; Mays Business School; and University Libraries.

Please note: University Libraries and the Qatar campus of Texas A&M developed their own unit-level Diversity Plans and they were included in the analysis of unit-level strategic plans to get a better understanding of the vision and strategies for diversity and inclusion.

During the fall semester of 2009, then-Interim Provost, Karan Watson, provided initial strategic planning guidance to the colleges, units, divisions, and branch campuses of Texas A&M University. Provost Watson directed university entities to work with the faculty, staff, students, and other
stakeholders to assess mission, goals, and strategies and to align with Vision 2020, the Academic Master Plan, the work of various task forces, and other planning resources.

Goals and objectives addressing the recruitment of historically underrepresented students, faculty, and occasionally staff, were evident in all 16 of the 2010-2015 strategic plans developed in 2009.

For example, the 2010 strategic plan of the **College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences** explicitly acknowledged the *Diversity Plan*, stating:

> Threaded through programmatic college priorities is a deep commitment to diversity. Our diversity initiatives revolving around recruitment and retention have resulted in substantial increases in underrepresented minorities and women within our student population and faculty ranks. We’ve also pressed further by addressing the overall climate within our college. Our current Dean, the first female Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, was asked and accepted to be the Chair of the Texas A&M Council on Climate and Diversity. Our college strategic plan will include a specific diversity plan, which will complement and enrich the recently approved Texas A&M Diversity Plan. (p. 2)

The *Diversity Plan* has been influential in creating a vision, and developing strategies to achieve a culture of respect for diversity, as evident throughout the institution’s strategic plans, university goals, and accreditation standards.

Similarly, the **College of Geosciences** has a goal addressing the “Recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from underserved populations increases significantly and/or is higher than that found at aspirant institutions.” Also, the **Bush School of Government and Public Service** developed the objective to “Redouble diversity recruitment initiatives for students, faculty, and staff; expand student diversity recruitment contacts and make effective use of minority Listservs; ensure diverse faculty recruitment pools through additional advertisements and pool review at the interview stage; make special use of minority alumni as mentors and prospective student recruiters.”

The results of the review indicated that all 16 of the units reviewed address campus climate issues in their strategic plans. For example, the **College of Education and Human Development** developed a goal to “Create a climate that fosters and supports the development of students, faculty, and staff of diverse backgrounds through research and instruction. The **Division of Finance and Administration**, a non-academic unit, had an imperative to “Promote an inclusive work environment that enhances the quality of work life … of all employees in the division.” The prominence of goals addressing campus climate in the 2009 strategic plans may reflect the impact of Hurtado’s (1998) campus climate study and the subsequent campus climate studies completed for faculty, staff, and students prior to 2010. Furthermore, the influence of campus climate on recruitment may further explain the prevalence of the campus climate goals and objectives throughout the plans.

With a few exceptions, equity and retention were not very evident in the early strategic plans: only six out of sixteen units addressed equity issues in their 2010-2015 strategic plans. For example, the **College of Agriculture and Life Sciences** identified an objective to “Seek faculty salary parity within Texas A&M and with peer colleges through competitive salaries and position structures.” The **University Libraries** addressed equity by fostering an “an environment that meets the university’s diversity plan in which success and advancement are based on equitable standards and metrics.” Retention was addressed by 8 of the 16 units. For example, the **College of Liberal Arts**
developed an objective to “Create a position at the dean or director level for career services, mentoring, and retention for all students, including post-docs.”

Frequently, recruitment and retention were linked together in the unit-level strategic plans, which may explain why retention appears to be overlooked in the early strategic plans. For example, Academic Affairs identified an objective to “Partner with other departments and colleges to attract and retain diverse body of freshmen, transfer students, graduate students, and veterans.” The College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences provides another example of linking recruitment and retention in strategic planning: “Threaded through programmatic college priorities is a deep commitment to diversity. Our diversity initiatives revolving around recruitment and retention have resulted in substantial increases in underrepresented minorities and women within our student population and faculty ranks.”

In addition to the review of the early 2010-2015 strategic submitted in 2009, Office for Diversity staff reviewed 2015-2020 strategic plans from nine units: Division of Student Affairs 2015-2020; College of Medicine August 2014; College of Engineering 2012-2017; Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy 2014-2019; School of Public Health 2014-2018; School of Nursing; College of Agriculture and Life Sciences 2015-2020; College of Geosciences 2015-2020; and College of Liberal Arts 2012-2020.

All nine of the current strategic plans of these units addressed campus climate. For example, the 2015-2020 strategic plan for the Division of Student Affairs created a vision for a “campus environment where people from all backgrounds and experiences can thrive. We build and model a welcoming environment that promotes a deeper understanding of identities of an increasingly diverse population.”

Similarly, the 2015-2020 strategic plan for the School of Public Health developed a mission and vision that explained that, “Social justice is also a core value of public health. We are committed to fairness and diversity in the broadest sense, pledging to create an inclusive and respectful environment that welcomes everyone and promoting a society that both values and understands human rights and the dignity of every human being.” The academic colleges and administrative units created visions for creating a climate of respect for diversity in their strategic plans.

Eight of nine current strategic plans addressed recruitment. The College of Medicine even framed its recruitment outcomes using the Fisher case:

The recent court decision in Fisher v. University of Texas reinforced that affirmative action must be strictly reviewed, however, it did not outlaw the use of race, ethnicity and programs of affirmative action. We will need to work concertedly to meet the test of “strict scrutiny.” Under this test, our use of race-conscious admissions will be constitutional only if it is “narrowly tailored.” In other words, we have to demonstrate unarguably that the use of race is “necessary;” and, that there are no other realistic alternatives, which would effectively create a diverse student body.

The College of Medicine’s 2014 strategic plan is an example of how social and legal issues contributed to a sense urgency about student recruitment and creating a diverse student body. As in the earlier strategic plans, recruitment and retention were linked together frequently. For example, the 2012-2017 strategic plan for the College of Engineering proposes to “Recruit and retain a
diverse student population.” On the other hand, the **College of Pharmacy** plans to “Recruit and retain outstanding and motivated faculty and staff.” Of the nine current strategic plans reviewed, only the College of Geosciences explicitly addressed equity, specifically salary equity.

In our review of strategic plan documents across the university, the Office for Diversity sought to develop a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which the academic and administrative units have incorporated the *Diversity Plan* into their strategic planning. Campus climate and faculty and student recruitment were evident throughout the strategic plans. In some instances, units linked recruitment and retention together, contributing to a perception that retention may be overlooked.

Throughout the analysis of unit strategic plans, it became increasingly clear that we need to pay attention to text discourse analysis, particularly when you consider that institutional documents can convey, unintentional and prevailing prototypic and stereotypic perceptions about student academic preparation and abilities. For example, using discourse terminology such as “underachieving,” “at-risk,” “meritocracy,” and “qualified minority” when describing ethnic minority student, faculty, and staff populations. Researchers have illustrated that “treatment of the cause, not symptoms,” attention to reducing “stereotype threat,” and “debunking myths” can lead to positive learning outcome and sense of belonging goals (Smith, 1996; Steele and Aronson, 1995; Valencia, Valenzuela, Sloan, and Foley, 2001). Institutions are discourse-producing organizations, so how we use language in texts and contexts is important when developing key documents like strategic plans or institutional change.

In addition to focusing on the service we provide for the student body and faculty, we should also strive to be more self-reflective and inclusive of staff development efforts in strategic plans. There are several implications for being more intentional about staff development. For example, we reinforce the importance of an inclusive work environment, and communicate more visionary and action-oriented methods and plans for recruitment and retention of a more diverse staff that are representative of the local region and state demographics.

Aligning strategic planning, university goals, accreditation, and the intuition’s culture of assessment with the expectations from the *Diversity Plan* demonstrates Texas A&M’s engagement and progression with Kotter’s (1995) third step of creating a vision. These activities are intentional, reflective, and strategic for deeper engagement of diversity-related goals in the *Diversity Plan*.

**Diversity Websites**

In April 2016, the Office for Diversity conducted a content analysis of the websites of the 23 academic and administrative units being held accountable in the Diversity Plan, to determine the extent to which diversity related materials or statements are represented. We found that the following academic and administrative units developed web-based content on diversity and inclusion: College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; College of Architecture; College of Education and Human Development; College of Engineering; The Bush School of Government and Public Service; College of Liberal Arts; College of Medicine; Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy; College of Science; College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences; Division of Academic Affairs Council on Climate and Diversity (AACDC); Division of Student Affairs; Division of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness; Mays Business School; School of Public Health; Texas A&M University at Galveston; and University Libraries. On these websites, units provided diversity statements; initiatives and efforts to address campus climate issues; commitment
statements; and links to current news, conferences, and events related to diversity. Furthermore, some of the units published their annual Diversity Plan accountability reports on their websites.

During the interviews, one individual explained the impact of communicating the institution’s commitment to diversity on websites: “We have an image of LGBT student groups on our website – a current student told us that image was what encouraged her to apply to our college.” Another administrator explained: “We’ve been more strategic about how we market and brand Texas A&M - Before 2010 all of the imagery and branding was homogenous - white, male, crew-cut and the Corps. White women were present sometimes, next to or behind, in supporting roles. Now, nationally we have been intentional about showing diversity in all of its human forms.”

In 2016, the university led by example by elevating “Diversity & Inclusion” as a quick link in the footer of Texas A&M’s home page. Figure 2 is a screenshot of the institution’s homepage illustrating the Diversity & Inclusion link. Giving “Diversity & Inclusion” a prominent position on the institution’s website communicates the importance modeling the expectations of the Diversity Plan goals.
Leadership Meeting Agendas

Academic and administrative units are increasingly communicating the vision and modeling commitment to diversity by addressing diversity and inclusion on meeting agendas. For example, in December, 2016, prior to attending the University president’s retreat for deans and vice presidents, individuals were asked to respond to several questions, including the following: What does it mean to be the best public university in the country? A content analysis of the 29 responses indicated that 12 individuals addressed inclusion, equity, and/or access in their descriptions of university excellence.

For example, one individual explained that the best public universities have “strong and healthy diversity – diversity in their intellectual presence, cultural environment and student population.” In a 2016 interview, one individual remarked, “it used to be disheartening that it [diversity] would never make the list and now it always makes the list” of priorities and/or agenda items. Similarly, at subsequent retreat meetings with the President’s cabinet and the deans, the university leadership team has identified four priority areas for the university: diversity, raising the bar for excellence, marketing and communication, and multidisciplinary research.

The Diversity Operations Committee (DOC) has evolved into an important vehicle to communicate vision and strategies across academic and administrative units. Units are committed to sharing and learning from best practices and their progress at the DOC meetings. In a 2016 interview, one individual explained the development of the DOC from “basic to today – an action group sharing details and ideas.”
**Campus-Wide Campus Climate Sessions**

The *Diversity Plan* calls for units to explore data from faculty, staff, and student surveys that can enhance understanding of how University and unit climates are affecting recruitment and retention. The University-wide assessments are conducted in three-year cycles. To communicate the vision and strategies the institution has undertaken to accomplish the goals of accountability, climate, and equity. The Office for Diversity initiated conversations with institutional leaders to present campus climate findings in public forums for the campus community.

In 2011 and 2014, the Office for Diversity collaborated with the Division of Student Affairs, Office of the Dean of Faculties, Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, and the Division of Human Resources & Organizational Effectiveness to present campus climate survey results to the community. The purpose of the sessions were to:

- Create space for awareness of campus climate data (faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students).
- Share successes and progress across units.
- Draw on our collective wisdom as a campus community to tackle the challenges from the data and offer recommendations.

The President, Provost, Deans, and Vice Presidents attended the sessions and provided introductions, data, and participated in the small group activities. Approximately 90 participants (faculty, staff, and students) worked in small groups to generate recommendations for challenges from faculty, staff, undergraduate, and LGBTQ assessment data. One Dean remarked, “*this is one of the best and most useful campus dialogues that I have ever attended, of all the institutions where I have worked.*”

The third campus-wide, campus climate session was held on April 20, 2017. Approximately 180 students, faculty and staff attended the 2017 campus climate forum. The session was an opportunity to engage the results of the 2016 faculty, undergraduate, graduate and professional students, and staff campus climate assessments with the University community. This was an opportunity for the campus community to come together to review the results of the institutional-level campus climate studies, which is made possible in collaboration with the Division of Human Resources and Organizational Effectives, Office of the Dean of Faculties, Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, and the Division of Student Affairs.
Campus climate forums that engage students, faculty, and staff, are also vehicles for communicating the vision and strategies intended to accomplish the accountability, climate, and equity goals of the Diversity Plan. Additionally, these forums provide opportunity for leaders to model transparency with climate assessment data, engage in campus climate improvement, and participate in critical dialogues about diversity and inclusion.

Institutional and unit-level websites and campus-wide forums are examples of the ways in which the institution has been communicating the vision, strategies, and modeling commitment to the Diversity Plan goals.

**Engaged Leadership**

On February 29, 2016, the Office for Diversity hosted Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, President Emerita of Spelman College to campus as part of the annual Enhancing Diversity Seminar Series. This Seminar Series began in 2010. Dr. Tatum was asked to engage the campus community on the topic, “Can We Talk about Race? A Conversation with Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum on Critical Learning Dialogues.”

Texas A&M President Michael K. Young joined Dr. Tatum on stage in a moderated dialogue with Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity, Dr. Christine A. Stanley. During this dialogue, conversations ranged from racial identity development experiences growing up to leadership in the college and university setting.
For example, President Young, Dr. Tatum, and Dr. Stanley explained that universities have a responsibility “to provide students opportunities to participate in open dialogues about race, become culturally competent, and engage positively with others who are different than they are” (Retrieved 03/02/17 from http://today.tamu.edu/2016/02/29/texas-am-asks-can-we-talk-about-race/).

Dr. Tatum added that she recommends to her staff to follow “the ABCs”: Affirming identity, Building community, and Cultivating leadership. “Acknowledge who people are and how they are different from one another… build a shared community that everyone can be involved in…and cultivate leaders who can lead the way in a diverse environment” (Retrieved 03/02/17 from http://today.tamu.edu/2016/02/29/texas-am-asks-can-we-talk-about-race/).

Feedback from the 440 faculty, staff, and student participants about the event and dialogue describe the impact the session had on the campus community:

- *I feel this session showed great diversity not only within Texas A&M but a country as a whole. I also learned valuable ways to communicate and address diversity in a very positive way.*

- *Having both the president of the university and a leading scholar on issues of diversity sit together and talk was exciting. I do believe Dr. Tatum took our president to school and she handled it with such great care, concern and at the same time challenge. I only hope that he got the difference between his examples and hers (his were more global and told from a position of privilege, while hers were more "domestic" and from a position of advocacy). They modeled how the challenges can be met with integrity and scholarship while also demonstrating the passion that is important to the conversations.*

- *This presentation expressed the importance of conversations related to issues of diversity and addressed why they might be difficult conversations to have.*
In this racially divisive climate, any positive opportunity to dialogue and present information is a plus. I also was pleased that our TAMU President was there to present his viewpoints.

The content analysis of the seminar evaluations provides another source of evidence that the university community appreciated the engagement of university leadership around issues of diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, 86% of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed on a Likert Scale that it represented an important topic for Texas A&M University to address.

Empower Others to Act on the Vision

The fifth stage of Kotter’s (1995) model is to empower others to act on the vision. Empowering others is characterized by working to “get rid of obstacles to change, change systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision, encourage risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions” (p. 3). At the institutional and unit-levels, Texas A&M has empowered students, faculty, and staff by engaging them in councils, changing the conflict culture, and providing grants for research and professional development. Furthermore, the Office for Diversity has evolved to support, assist, and empower units to engage and address issues related to diversity and inclusion.

Unit Diversity Councils

Several of the administrative and academic units have developed diversity councils that are charged with implementing the goals and strategies of the 2010 University Diversity Plan. The councils are empowering to campus community members because they are composed of people from across the campus community. Council members are engaged in developing strategies and making recommendations to unit-level administration and frequently, they see the results of the implemented recommendations.

For example, the Academic Affairs Climate and Diversity Committee (AACDC) are responsible for division-wide diversity and climate initiatives in the Division of Academic Affairs. One of the larger responsibilities of the group is completing division-level climate assessments. To fulfill this responsibility, people in the Division are invited to participate on a Climate Survey Subcommittee to create and implement the survey; draft the report and recommendations; and to assess previous reports and best practices for possible changes in next iteration of the survey. Additionally, volunteers are solicited from Division staff to participate in the data analyses of open-ended responses on the climate surveys.

Staff and students participating in the unit-level diversity council, the climate survey subcommittee, and the data analyses groups are empowered to engage in the goals of the Diversity Plan because they participate in the assessment process and make recommendations to leadership. During a 2016 interview, two individuals remarked that all of the recommendations provided by the diversity council members were accepted and implemented by leadership! One administrator explained:

Mid-level managers know that there is a plan and are working on elements of it. Most know about the climate survey results. They are attending the supervisor meetings in large numbers and participating in strategies/talking about strategies/etc. They are carrying out division level training efforts, and seem genuinely interested in making progress on strategic goals of the division. Most I talk to actually know: 1) there is a diversity plan, 2)
there is a division-level diversity committee, 3) they can get money (mini-grants) to pursue efforts to create better workplaces and send people to conferences, and, 4) that there are problems we need to work on.

In addition to engaging members of the campus community, some of the unit diversity councils are empowering members of the campus community to pursue professional development opportunities by funding grant programs. They have funded requests to attend national conferences on race, ethnicity, and social justice and to bring speakers and programs to campus.

The mini-grant programs have been awarded to groups and individuals to “empower all division staff to be inclusive, welcoming, and supportive of all persons in our community” (AACDC Mini-Grant Application retrieved 03/01/17 from http://provost.tamu.edu/initiatives/councils-task-forces-folder/aacd-committee-folder/AACDC%20mini-grant-folder/councils-task-forces-folder/aacd-committee-folder/GrantApplicationgroupform.pdf)

The DIVERSITY MATTERS Seed Grant Program

The DIVERSITY MATTERS Seed Grant program was launched in the fall of 2015. It invites faculty, students, and staff to submit applications for creative research initiatives that accelerate progress in achieving equity in representation and professional recognition of underrepresented groups at Texas A&M University. Through these research efforts, we hope to foster relevant insights for discussions and debates about diversity in institutions of higher education.

In the first cycle of the program, nine grants were awarded. Award recipients include faculty, graduate students, and staff, with research topics ranging from religious discrimination; and equity in race/ethnic representation, gender, and salary; to student and faculty mentoring. A second round of the grant program was implemented in 2016-2017 and 12 awards were made. In Summer 2018, a seminar is planned where recipients of this grant program can present their finding to the campus community

Plan for and Create Short-Term Wins

The sixth stage of Kotter’s (1995) model is to plan for and create short-term wins. Creating short-term wins is characterized by “planning for visible performance improvements, creating improvements, and recognizing and rewarding employees involved in the improvements” (p. 3). Texas A&M has created and experienced short-term wins made evident by distinguishing hallmarks such as institutional rankings and recognition, leadership representation from historically underrepresented groups, and administrative responses to incidents of intolerance.

Rankings and Recognitions

In the last few years, Texas A&M has been recognized for its combination of excellence, affordability, and ability to develop leaders of character who have an impact on the state, nation, and world. Some of those distinguishing hallmarks include:

- 1st in the nation of colleges that combine the best outcomes for low-income students with accessible admission rates – Priceconomics.com, 2015, “Ranking the Best (and Worst) Colleges for Low Income Students.”

• 2nd in the nation in the Best Colleges for Veterans category – USA Today's 2016 College Guide (powered by College Factual).

• 1st in Texas and 3rd in the nation in “Contribution to the Public Good” poll among public and private universities (Washington Monthly, 2015).

• 1st in Texas in student 4, 5, and 6-year graduation rates -- both overall and for historically underrepresented students-- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Source: Recognitions – Distinguishing Hallmarks of Texas A&M University
Retrieved 03/01/17 from https://accountability.tamu.edu/recognitions

• In 2016, Texas A&M was ranked 40th in the nation as one of the best colleges and universities for women by College Choice (Retrieved 03/02/17 from http://www.collegechoice.net/rankings/best-colleges-and-universities-for-women/).

• In Fall 2016, 25% of the freshman class was first-generation college students; 21% of the Corps of Cadets identify as Hispanic; over 6,600 international students are enrolled from 124 countries; and enrollment of Hispanic and African American students has increased.

• In 2014, our campus celebrated the 50-year anniversary of then-president General James Earl Rudder’s 1963 decision to admit African Americans and women.

• In 2015, the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives acquired the Don Kelly Research Collection of Gay Literature and Culture.

• In 2016, Texas A&M was no longer listed on the Princeton Review’s “Top 20 Least LGBTQ+ Friendly Universities”. (Retrieved on 03/02/17 from https://www.facebook.com/TAMUGLBTRESOURCERCENTER/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)

• Mays Business School leads in the numbers of Hispanic students in the executive MBA program and has a greater proportion of women, African American, and Hispanic faculty than many of its aspirant peers.

• College of Dentistry is the most diverse dental school in the U.S. The 2015 entering class is composed of 33% underrepresented minorities, 31% Asian, and 36% White students.
• **College of Engineering**’s Fall 2015 freshman class experienced a 43% increase in the number of African American students and a 21% increase in the number of Hispanic students.

• In 2014, Texas A&M celebrated the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with Texas A&M faculty and advocates from around the nation coming together to discuss strides made and work yet to be done at the conference, *Global Citizens and Equality: Fifty Years After the 1964 Civil Rights Act*.

Figure 5. Dr. Phia Slater, Dr. Rogelio Saenz, Cedric Merlin Powell, and Lynn Rambo were panelists at Texas A&M’s 2014 Civil Rights Symposium

While we celebrate our accomplishments, we need to be mindful to ensure that all members of our university community feel a sense of belonging for what they bring to the educational community. However, institutional rankings and recognition of Texas A&M’s history of inclusion are opportunities to reflect on and celebrate progress towards the goals of accountability, climate, and equity.
In recent years, several of Texas A&M key student and university administrative leadership positions were held by people from historically underrepresented groups. For example, for the first time in the institution’s history:

In 2013, Marquis Alexander was selected as Corps Commander — the first African-American and the first veteran to serve in that position.

Marquis Alexander
Class of 2013 Commander Texas A&M Corps of Cadets
(Source: Retrieved 05/02/17 from http://today.tamu.edu/2012/04/06/new-leader-of-corps-of-cadets-has-marine-corps-experience/)

In 2016, women held all of the top student leadership positions at Texas A&M:
Hannah Wimberly, Student Body President
Cecille Sorio, Commander of the Corps of Cadets
Claire Wimberly, President of the Senior Class
(Source: Retrieved 05/02/17 from http://president.tamu.edu/messages/celebrating-our-student-leaders.html)

Dr. Karan L. Watson, P.E.
Provost and Executive Vice President

Dr. Watson was appointed Provost in 2011. She is the first woman, and first lesbian, to hold the position at Texas A&M. Since joining the faculty in 1983, Watson has always had a deep commitment to keeping campus diversity at the forefront of the institution. She is a Regents Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering.
Additionally, in 2016, for the first time, all of the deans of the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) colleges (Engineering, Sciences, and Geosciences) are women. And, in 2015, Eli Jones was appointed as dean of Mays Business School: Dr. Jones is the first African American dean of Mays.

Dean M. Katherine Banks, College of Engineering  
Interim Dean Debbie Thomas, College of Geosciences  
Dean Meigan C. Aronson, College of Science  
Dean Eli Jones, Mays Business School

Administrative Responses to Incidents
In February 2016, Texas A&M experienced a racist incident that occurred with a group of visiting high school students, which resulted in both local and national media attention. Institutional leaders responded to the incidents by reaffirming the institution’s mission, vision, and Aggie Core Values.

For example, on February 11, 2016, the Student Body President, Joseph Benigno '16, addressed this incident and called on the student body to confront racism and microaggressions and embrace Texas A&M’s core values. The Student Government Association published the address on YouTube, making it widely available. Below is an excerpt from the statement:

“It is time that we embrace the attitude that our silence does an extraordinary disservice to Texas A&M. Our silence fosters hate. Our silence enables the hateful to feel comfortable and welcome.

Now is the time to reflect on our attitude about these kinds of things. We need to make it known that hate has no place in the Aggie Family. These comments may have been made by students here, but they were not made by Aggies. An Aggie never stands for hate. An Aggie defends the marginalized and stands for truth.

Next time you hear someone make a comment, or attempt to make a joke, remind them that those attitudes have no place here. That kind of ignorance is untenable in a modern society and hate is completely incompatible with the Aggie Spirit.”

Excerpt from the 02/11/16 statement from Student Body President, Joseph Benigno ’16  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo9sZ1mdzBU&feature=youtu.be

Furthermore, President, Michael Young, engaged university leaders, community leaders, students, faculty, and staff in a “call to action” to “review current initiatives and measures and to propose new ones, in areas such as recruitment, retention, climate assessment and course and curricular
change” (Texas A&M Diversity & Inclusion Response: Results of Investigations Regarding Racial Incident on Feb. 9, 2016; http://www.tamu.edu/incident-response/index.html). President Young, with input from students, made the following recommendations:

- Moving our STOPHATE desktop website to a mobile platform;
- Making the diversity-related session, “Community of Respect,” mandatory at New Student Conference;
- Soliciting ideas for responding to in-class incidents and making the required International and Cultural Diversity classes more applicable and purposeful;
- Creating permanent funding for Aggies to Aggies Diversity Peer Education Program; and
- Creating a mandatory Effective Communication Module for student organization officers to assist them in conducting effective dialogues and meaningful conflict resolution.
- Convening a “Call to Action Task Force” for all unit leaders to recommit to efforts of the Diversity Plan and report specific action plans for addressing accountability and climate issues.

Texas A&M administrators and President Young were recognized by the regional office of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) for promptly responding to the 02/09/16 incident (Kuhlmann, 2016). It is important to note, and President Young acknowledged, that many of the activities in the Call to Action were already in progress prior to the incident, are ongoing, and were crafted not solely in reaction to the February incident.

“As we all reflect on the various events on our campus, and those around the country over the past few months, it is impossible to ignore the importance of the principles of inclusion and diversity. But despite all the headlines, it is sometimes easy to lose sight of just why it’s so important to all of us here at Texas A&M.

As a leading institution of higher education, we are the vanguard in affecting positive change in the attitudes and actions of future generations. We are called upon to lead our communities and make a difference because the consequences of such acts are intolerable. This change is essential in our ability to thrive and grow as our world diversifies. We are launching our students into a world where they will need to work with everyone to be successful in addressing the great societal challenges that we, as a country, face.”

Excerpt from the 03/02/16 statement from Michael K. Young, University President
http://president.tamu.edu/messages/results-of-investigations-regarding-racial-incident-on-feb-9-2016.html
Another example of Texas A&M’s responsive leadership was evident in December 2016. Administration and student leaders organized a rally, “Aggies United”, to oppose Richard Spencer, a known alt-right advocate invited by a private citizen who rented space on campus. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) recognized “Aggies United” as 1st on their list of top 10 most inspirational moments of 2016, explaining that “the rally gave those who wanted to counter Spencer’s hateful message an opportunity to promote respect, dignity and inclusion, and to send a message to the world that Texas A&M does not sanction hatred or racism” (Retrieved 03/02/17 from http://www.adl.org/press-center/press-releases/miscellaneous/adl-top-10-most-inspirational-moments-2016.html#.WG0kelMrKUk).

The institution’s leadership has provided examples and modeled responding to incidents of intolerance by invoking Texas A&M’s mission and core values. President Young explained:

*Go back to first principles a little bit, about what we stand for, about what is acceptable and unacceptable. If you base your response on the university’s core values, even if it doesn’t play out the way the Twitter world initially thinks it should, you never have to back away or apologize for that.* (Retrieved 03/02/17 from http://www.chronicle.com/article/How-Presidents-Try-to-Stay/238019)

In an article from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, dated October 9th, 2016, (Gardner, 2016), Teresa Valerio Parrot, principal of TVP Communications, a company that counsels colleges and universities, praised President Young for not getting mired in a discussion of free speech and setting an expectation for behavior and respect.

**Consolidate Improvements and Produce Still More Change**

The seventh stage of Kotter’s (1995) model is to consolidate improvements and produce still more change. The seventh stage is characterized by “using increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies that don’t fit the vision; hiring, promoting, and developing employees who can implement the vision; [and] reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents” (p. 3). Longitudinal data comparing student, faculty, and staff data from 2016 to 2016 illustrate where the institution has shown improvement and where we need to produce still more change. The institution’s progress towards accomplishing the *Diversity Plan* developed increased credibility through the growth of the ADVANCE Scholar Program, annual *Diversity Plan* accountability reports, the Office for Diversity’s metric to evaluate the reports, and the Council on Climate and Diversity (CCD) awards.
**Longitudinal Comparisons**

Texas A&M University’s origins as a predominantly white university are evident in the demographic profiles of faculty, students, and staff. From 2010 to 2016, Texas A&M’s student enrollment has increased with the addition, in 2013, of the School of Law and the Health Science Center.

Additionally, the growth in enrollment shows increases in the Hispanic new students, and Asian new students, and decreases in white-only new students. The changes in the student body led one administrator to say: “**In admissions, in terms of new numbers of Hispanic students, we’ve surpassed UT – this could be attributed to the work of the university or the demographics working for us.**” Figure 6 compares the 2010 new admits to the 2016 new admits.

Figure 6. Comparing 2010 New Admits to 2016 New Admits (Professional, graduate, and undergraduate) from All Campuses (Galveston, Qatar, Law, and Health Sciences Center, and College Station)

![Figure 6](image)

Data source: Texas A&M student data are from the institution’s Accountability website - Applied, Admitted, Enrolled Fall 2015 metric.

Adopted in 1999, *Vision 2020: Creating a Culture of Excellence* articulates Texas A&M’s plan to be one of the ten best public universities in the nation by 2020. Texas A&M “must be a leader in promoting diversity in its student body, faculty, staff, and intellectual viewpoints. Affording opportunity to all racial and ethnic groups is critical to the future of Texas.” *(Vision 2020: Creating a Culture of Excellence*, p. 43).
By examining the competitive realities for public universities in an increasingly diverse and complicated world, Vision 2020 also contributed to a sense of urgency. Vision 2020 did so by establishing a performance measure to “Attain a 95 percent freshman retention rate and an 80 percent six year graduation rate—levels consistent with the best institutions” (Vision 2020, p. 28). Figure 7 provides the 2010-2014 retention and graduation data for undergraduate students.

Figure 7. 2010-2014 Retention and Graduation Data for Undergraduate Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Fall Cohort</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year retention</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>90.6%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 year graduation</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 year graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American (+1 for students)</td>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year retention</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 year graduation</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 year graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>3,107</td>
<td>2,869</td>
<td>2,281</td>
<td>2,035</td>
<td>1,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year retention</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 year graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 year graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>6,646</td>
<td>6,465</td>
<td>5,704</td>
<td>6,059</td>
<td>6,107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year retention</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 year graduation</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 year graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>6,886</td>
<td>6,443</td>
<td>5,579</td>
<td>5,393</td>
<td>5,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year retention</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 year graduation</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 year graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>6,958</td>
<td>6,545</td>
<td>5,611</td>
<td>5,798</td>
<td>5,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year retention</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 year graduation</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 year graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Headcount</td>
<td>13,844</td>
<td>12,988</td>
<td>11,190</td>
<td>11,191</td>
<td>10,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year retention</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
<td>90.6%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 year graduation</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 year graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Texas A&M student retention and graduation data are from the Accountability website.
One evident challenge is the need to address the disparities in progression toward degree completion among and between all racial/ethnic groups, regardless of how small or significant the gap. The gaps in our student success rate provide a sense of urgency because persistence and graduation need to be realistic goals for every student. Our goal is to help students achieve their academic potential. The university has responded to issues that emerge in our student climate assessment studies that are impacting student retention and success.

Racial/ethnic diversity of faculty and staff has changed at a slower pace than the changes evident among the student body. Staff hiring was impeded by a hiring freeze that went into effect on May 9, 2014. However, on September 24, 2014, a modified process was implemented and is still in effect and requiring justification and approval for all non-faculty positions that are not paid from restricted funds nor budgeted in academic departments. Figures 8 and 12 show that Texas A&M has achieved some small increases in the percentages of women faculty and Hispanic faculty and staff, while the percentages of African American and Asian faculty and staff remained steady.

Figure 8. Faculty New Hires from Fiscal Year 2013 - Fiscal Year 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY13</th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty – total new hires overall</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Texas A&M University, Business Objects Warehouse retrieved on 08/22/16 using the position action universe with occupation code NH.
Figure 9. Staff New Hires from Fiscal Year 2013 - Fiscal Year 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY13</th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff – total new hires overall</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>1,075</td>
<td>1,332</td>
<td>1,539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: Texas A&M University, Business Objects Warehouse retrieved on 08/22/16 using the position action universe with occupation code NH.

The recruiting efforts of the academic and administrative units have the potential to change the demographic composition of faculty and staff in the long run, further providing a sense of urgency to recruit and retain a diverse and representative faculty and staff.

Existing literature demonstrates that increasing the demographic diversity of predominantly white universities is an important step toward improving the overall campus climate. Not only is it seen as a tangible representation of the level of institutional commitment to diversity, it has also been shown to directly influence a sense of belonging among historically underrepresented students, faculty, and staff (Hernandez and Lopez, 2004; Johnson et al., 2007). It has also been shown to influence the professional success of historically underrepresented faculty and staff, and the academic success of historically underrepresented graduate and undergraduate students (DeCastro et al., 2013; Driscoll et al., 2009; Hurtado et al., 1998; Helm, Sedlacek, and Priet, 1998; Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood, 2009).

Furthermore, as the numbers of historically underrepresented students on predominantly white university campuses increase, faculty members play a crucial role in the academic and personal student success. The positive impacts of consistent student-faculty interactions and faculty mentorship have been well documented and include higher likelihood of graduation, higher levels of academic achievement, and higher levels of involvement in campus groups and activities. These impacts are particularly pronounced among demographically similar faculty and students—i.e. racial and ethnic minority faculty and students and female faculty and students (Canes and Rosen, 1995; Hernandez and Lopez, 2004; Mayo, Murgua, and Padilla, 1995; Padilla and Pavel, 1994; Johnson et al., 2007).
ADVANCE Scholar Program
Launched in 2011, the ADVANCE Scholar Program is one of the activities of the ADVANCE Center. The purpose and goal of the ADVANCE Scholar Program is to promote and advance the success of Texas A&M University women faculty of color in STEM through mentoring with eminent scholars in their fields.

In 2015, the program expanded to include women from non-STEM fields. The mentoring program matches women faculty of color at the university with an internal advocate who is a senior faculty member at the university and an external mentor who is an eminent scholar of their choosing in their field.

The internal advocates comprise the Scholar Program Advisory Committee and meet to discuss best practices for mentoring and advancing their Scholars. The internal advocates also meet with their respective Scholars and serve to broaden the Scholars’ circle of contacts within the university and to establish a sustainable professional network for them. Since the first cohort in 2011, 40 women faculty of color at Texas A&M have participated in the program. The 2016 cohort is the largest cohort including both pre-tenured and tenured faculty, representing STEM and non-STEM disciplines.

Figure 10. 2016 ADVANCE Scholar Faculty Retreat

Source: Office for Diversity photo

Diversity Plan Accountability Reports
The Diversity Plan established the foundation for academic and administrative units to submit annual reports for monitoring and evaluating progress toward the institution’s diversity imperatives. The annual unit-level accountability reports provide quantitative and qualitative data from institutional data; peer institutions regarding student, faculty, and staff demographics; institutional and unit-level campus climate; recruiting and retention efforts; and equity (salary, resources, training, etc.).

In 2016, in order to obtain a more sophisticated understanding of the systemic challenges shared by institutions of higher education, the Office for Diversity recommended that units elevate the unit-level peer comparisons beyond demographic information. For example:

- At the department-level: Soliciting ideas from our peers and sharing best practices when responding to in-class incidents of prejudice, intolerance, or discrimination; and identifying
student, faculty, and staff recruiting and retention strategies.

- **At the institution-level**: Reviewing how results from campus climate surveys are being used at peer institutions; collecting incidents of prejudice or intolerance and the institutional response from peer institutions; and exploring assessments of sexual assault and violence and strategies for reducing violence on campus.

These unit-level accountability reports are the primary source of data for assessing institutional progress on diversity-related goals. In a 2016 interview, one individual explained:

> We have a plan for what we want and how to get there, it might not work, everyone might not buy in, but prior to 2010 we did lots of talking, had task forces, and conversation – it’s different now, we have the accountability report, at least we’re having a conversation we know where our gaps are now.

Strategies from the unit-level accountability reports from both the academic and support units provide some examples of how different units approach undergraduate and graduate student recruiting and retention and the extent to which the units have changed systems, structures, and policies to implement the institutional vision and goals of the *Diversity Plan*. Below are some examples:

- **The College of Architecture** held Camp Arch, a summer program; 10 targeted high school students received scholarships to attend the camp. 1 current freshman within the College previously attended Camp Arch; 3 of the 5 senior campers have been admitted to the College, and these applicants are being advised to ensure the completion of their applications.

- **The Division of Academic Affairs** developed a partnership with the Posse Foundation, an organization that identifies, recruits, and trains youth with exceptional leadership and academic potential and sends them to select institutions of higher education in multicultural teams.

- In 2013, the **College of Engineering** had over 611 first-year engineering students residing in the Engineering Living and Learning Community (ELLC). The students in the ELLC program obtained 81% first year retention overall, 76% for women, and 78% for Hispanic and African American students.

- **The College of Dentistry** (BCD), of the Health Sciences Center, received a $3.4 million grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services’ Centers of Excellence program to advance student and faculty diversity. By linking with the Dallas Independent School District, 3 undergraduate institutions, and community-based entities, this program strengthens and expands efforts to enhance academic performance of underrepresented dental students at BCD.

- **The College of Medicine (COM)** also has multiple pipeline programs that serve students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board recently funded a $150,000 grant to create a program called the Aggie Doctor
Initiative which creates two new pipeline programs for African American and Hispanic students from Texas A&M into the COM (as well as a pre-matriculation program discussed under retention).

Staff hiring was impeded by a hiring freeze that went into effect on May 9, 2014. On September 24, 2014, a modified process was implemented and is still in effect which requires justification and approval for all non-faculty positions that are not paid from restricted funds nor budgeted in academic departments. In spite of the challenges resulting from the hiring freeze, units implemented strategies designed to impact faculty and staff recruiting and retention. For example:

- **University Libraries** developed training practices to improve faculty interviewing and hosting practices. As of November 17th, 2014, 65 staff and 67 faculty members have completed the training. The unit is seeing more diverse candidates; better representation in the makeup of the profession; and is inviting more diverse, underrepresented minorities and military veterans for interviews in recent years.

- **The Division of Finance and Administration** entered into a collaborative agreement with other higher education institutions to form a regional Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC). The mission of HERC is to recruit and retain outstanding and diverse faculty and staff.

Characteristics of the campus climate are influential in student, faculty, and staff recruitment and retention. Therefore, units need to continuously engage and reflect on campus climate data for their units as well as the institution. From the unit-level accountability reports, the units have engaged in the following strategies to ameliorate campus climate for students, faculty, and staff:

- **The College of Architecture** organized a Dialogo on the U.S.-Mexico Border, an open engagement effort dealing with ways to improve our communities, especially communities of marginalized populations. The college chose a border city (Brownsville, Texas) as the location of this initiative, in order to call the attention of our students and faculty about the ways in which people in the state are marginalized while discussing ways to better plan for more inclusive cities. The presence of the border wall and its meaning in the city, immigration issues, and poverty and economic opportunities, were some of the many topics discussed at the Dialogo event.

- **The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS)** developed a new strategic plan goal “to create and nurture an office climate that leads to excellent performance and collegiality among staff, which is facilitated by a climate and diversity committee.” A target was set for all full time staff to attend one activity each year that focuses on climate and diversity.

- Prior to Fall 2015, the **School of Law** had a diversity committee composed exclusively of faculty members. This semester, the School created a diversity council, which includes staff and students, in addition to faculty.

- **The Division of Marketing & Communications** brought a prominent expert to campus, with proven success in addressing diversity in marketing and communications organizations, to conduct a diversity seminar-workshop for the division, as well as others on
campus.

- In the **College of Liberal Arts**, the Department of Sociology developed a Code of Civility, which recognizes general principles about civility, ethics, and conduct as central to its mission as an academic and professional community. The goal is to promote a positive, collegial atmosphere among all members of the departmental community, including faculty, staff, and students.

Unit strategies designed to address campus climate issues range from developing diversity councils; to conducting unit-level and/or discipline-specific campus climate assessments; promoting training and staff development opportunities; and integrating diversity-related goals within strategic planning.

**Addressing Equity**

One persistent challenge in assessing equity has been in expanding the scope of equity beyond issues of faculty and staff salaries. Accountability reports from the 2015 cycle prompted units to address a range of equity issues, including advancement, promotion, professional development, salary, staff training and development, student leadership development, start-up packages, leadership succession planning, and professional visibility. For example, Vaid and Geraci (2016) undertook a detailed analysis of women’s professional visibility in psychology and found that inequity in markers of visibility are evident, particularly in the senior faculty ranks. Bazner, Vaid, and Stanley (2017) have examined how race is marked in the social construction of named awards of professional societies in higher education.

An example of expanding equity beyond salaries is the work being done in the **Division of Academic Affairs**. Division leadership approved an Equity Matrix developed by the Academic Affairs Climate & Diversity Committee (AACDC). The Equity Matrix, available on the AACDC website (http://provost.tamu.edu/initiatives/councils-task-forces-folder/aacd-committee-folder/EquityMatrixupdateFeb2016.pdf), contains nine questions addressing: Career ladders, performance evaluations, applicant pools, perceptions of inequity in hiring, and evidence of the institution’s commitment to diversity in job postings.

In the 2015 accountability reports, other units also addressed equity issues in students, faculty, and staff. For example:

- **The College of Liberal Arts** is offering 100% need-based scholarships to undergraduate students to support students from lower income groups who would like to attend college. We see this as an equity effort that provides educational access to low-income students.

- **Texas A&M at Galveston (TAMUG)** completed a study of student debt for TAMUG graduates (N= 1,429) from the past five years (2010-2015).

- Student Business Services, in the **Division of Academic Affairs**, began offering a series of Financial Literacy classes to help students understand the psychology of money and to offer long-term insight into financial decisions that can be made today to assist in obtaining future goals.
• The **College of Science** includes graduate students as members of departmental committees such as graduate admissions and programs committees. Student office space is evaluated to make sure there are no unintentional inequities. Graduate student leadership organizations in each department are provided funding for their activities. Biology added a student representative to monthly faculty meetings. Finally, in findings from campus climate research, graduate students reported high stress related to finances and a desire for professional/leadership development. All PhD students in the college receive a monthly stipend.

• The **College of Geosciences** made a decision to provide equity increases to existing faculty members instead of hiring new faculty. While the college has significant equity issues across all faculty ranks, limited resources necessitate addressing equity issues over time. Over the past three years, efforts were taken to redistribute over $574,000 to faculty members.

• In FY15, the **Division of Research** awarded nearly nine-times more administrative leave than it did in FY14. Additionally, the Division of Research Staff Excellence Award Program continues to be successful. In FY16, due to the growth of the DOR, the program will be expanded to include two additional recipients.

• **University Libraries** have been actively addressing equity for staff through a redesign of the library career ladder, which was approved and implemented over the past year. The new career ladder, developed with the assistance of a consultant, allows for parallel paths of technical expertise and supervisory responsibilities for individuals or operations, with salaries adjusted appropriately. It also focuses on development of generic benchmarks that will allow individuals to move between operational areas more easily, which is expected to improve recruitment and retention.
Office for Diversity’s Accountability Scale
In 2015, in order to quantify institutional progress on the Diversity Plan goals, the Office for Diversity developed and implemented a scale to assess the impact of diversity-related activities described in the annual unit-level accountability reports.

The scale was developed using the values and standards described in the university’s strategic plan, a review of institutional change literature, and practices that emerged from the accountability reports themselves. Figure 11 illustrates the hierarchical order of the scale.

Figure 11. Scale for Assessing Diversity Plan Accountability Reports

0 = No evidence, strategies or initiatives

1 = Implements strategies, initiatives, programs without engaging data or measures; data reported in overall terms without considering demographics

2 = Links strategies to data or measures; reports impact of strategies (e.g., progress, changing demographics, numbers of participants, etc.)

3 = Implements strategies with institutional or community collaboration; Documents impact of strategies in accreditation or institutional assessment reports; Integrates strategies in assessment, financial, and strategic planning

4 = Shares impact of strategies in conferences, task forces, or scholarly contributions; Strategies or leadership acknowledged by institutional, national, discipline-specific awards, grants, funding, or recognition
The scale was intentionally designed to provide and assess the institution’s progress towards realizing a culture of respect for diversity. Designing the scale around respect for diversity provided the four dimensions of recruitment, retention, campus climate, and equity, which parallel the Diversity Plan goals of accountability, climate, and equity, and were used to structure the 2015 unit-level accountability reports. Additionally, the accountability scale provides a measure of how integrated the 2010 University Diversity Plan goals are within the units and institution. The scale measures the volume and quality of diversity-related strategies. Figure 12 shows the following trends:

- Diversity-related activities have increased since the Diversity Plan was implemented in 2010.

- Activities addressing campus climate issues and recruiting have garnered wide attention among the various units while retention and equity have not.

- While the number of activities has increased over the years and across the dimensions, the level of integration has increased; however, on average, the units are not usually engaging data and linking their strategies to measurable outcomes.

Developing the accountability scale provided the Office for Diversity a measure for quantifying progress towards fulfilling the goals of the Diversity Plan. Furthermore, a score of 3 or 4 on the scale is roughly related to the following steps from Kotter’s 1995 organizational change model: Empowering others, planning for short-term wins, consolidating improvements, and institutionalizing changes. Using the scale confirmed the anecdotal sentiment that while there is a lot of activity on campus regarding diversity-related strategies, the level of impact and integration may be superficial.
Figure 12. 2011-2015 Scores by Recruiting, Retention, Campus Climate, and Equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting</td>
<td>1 = Implements strategies without engaging data</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Links strategies to data and/or measures</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Implements strategies with institutional and/or community collaboration</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Shares impact of strategies in scholarship</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average score</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall count</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>1 = Implements strategies without engaging data</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Links strategies to data and/or measures</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Implements strategies with institutional and/or community collaboration</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Shares impact of strategies in scholarship</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average score</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Climate</td>
<td>1 = Implements strategies without engaging data</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Links strategies to data and/or measures</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Implements strategies with institutional and/or community collaboration</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Shares impact of strategies in scholarship</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average score</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>1 = Implements strategies without engaging data</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Links strategies to data and/or measures</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Implements strategies with institutional and/or community collaboration</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Shares impact of strategies in scholarship</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average score</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Council on Climate and Diversity (CCD) Awards
The accountability reports are reviewed by the President’s Council on Climate and Diversity (CCD), a group that also advises the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity. The CCD is comprised of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members representing different constituencies in the university and in the broader community. The Council assists in the assessment and evaluation of university units regarding diversity-related strategies to strengthen, sustain, and promote diversity efforts in support of institutional goals. Funding is awarded to units that excel in multiple areas of the 2010 Diversity Plan (recruitment, retention, campus climate, and equity efforts).

These awards represent a noteworthy indicator of institutional progress. For example, in 2012, 52% of the units were awarded funding compared to 78% of the units receiving funding in 2017. In addition to awarding funds, the CCD provides individualized suggestions for improvements to the units. Figure 13 illustrates the percentage of units awarded CCD money from 2012-2017.

Figure 13. Percentage of Units Awarded CCD Funding from 2012-2017

In addition to awarding funds, the CCD provides scores and rankings of the units. The CCD scores and rankings provide increased credibility to efforts to evaluate and assess change. For example, anecdotally, overall the units have become more sophisticated and effective at presenting and describing their units’ diversity-related visions and strategies. From 2014-2016, the CCD ratings weighted for each category were Excellent = x1, Above Average = x2, Average = x3, Below Average = x4, and Poor = x5; therefore, lower scores reflect higher quality reports from the units.
The average score for the 20 units in 2014 was 48.65. In 2015, the average score was 50.71 for 21 units, and in 2016, 41.52 for 21 units. The change in scores over from 2014 through 2016 seems to indicate an improvement in the overall quality of the unit-level accountability reports.

Institutionalize Change

The eighth stage of Kotter’s 1995 model is to institutionalize change by “articulating the connections between the new behaviors and institutional success and developing the means to ensure leadership development and succession” (p. 3). Benefits for same-sex partners, StopHate reporting, performance metrics, learning outcomes, faculty salary equity studies, and critical dialogues in the campus community are all examples of how Texas A&M University is institutionalizing change.

Benefits for Same-Sex Partners

The United States Supreme Court ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges (2015), which guarantees the constitutional right to marry to same-sex couples, has allowed for the extension of benefits to same-sex partners of Texas A&M University employees.

StopHate Reporting

Founded in 2004, StopHate was implemented to provide the campus community with the opportunity to report hate/bias incidents. Using an online report form, StopHate reports may be submitted anonymously or with as much information as the reporting individual wishes to provide. Once a report is submitted, it is disseminated for review and action to a team of staff and administrators from the Division of Student Affairs, Division of Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness, the Office of the Dean of Faculties, and the Office for Diversity.

StopHate reports provide a window into campus incidents impacting campus climate. For example, a content analysis of reports submitted from 2012 through 2016, indicated that of the 103 StopHate reports submitted: 34 of the reports were submitted in 2016. The most common types of incidents reported are related to race and racism, microaggression, and campus events. This is not surprising given the incidents occurring at that time. Our multi-avenue assessment of campus climate also demonstrated that local events and institutional characteristics significantly affect campus climate in a variety of ways. Notably, our analysis of StopHate reports submitted between 2012 and 2016 provided a more nuanced understanding of how incidents of bias and hate affect campus climate for students, faculty, and staff.

The content analysis of the StopHate reports demonstrated that while students, faculty, and staff are keenly aware of Texas A&M’s commitment to diversity, the occurrence of on-campus incidents directly conflicts with this commitment. Incidents concerning race and racism, microaggression incidents between different campus constituents, and public on-campus events were the most commonly sites of bias and hate incidents.

- **Race and Racism**: People reported issues such as concern for an inclusive environment for students of color, concern for harassment from students against staff of color, and concerns about protecting white students and white privilege on campus.
Microaggressions: Microaggressions are subtle verbal and nonverbal insults directed at marginalized and historically underrepresented peoples, often automatically or unconsciously; layered insults based on one’s race, race-gender, class, sexual orientation, language, immigration status, accent, or surname, among others; and cumulative insults that cause unnecessary stress for individuals.

Campus Incidents: Reports pertaining to campus incidents referenced particular events or actions that were reported as being unsatisfactory or unacceptable in light of the Aggie core value of respect and/or Texas A&M’s commitment to diversity.

Throughout the StopHate reports, Texas A&M’s commitment to diversity and core values was referenced when incidents at odds with the Texas A&M’s goals and core values were reported. Furthermore, the campus incidents reported through StopHate reflect the concerns about whether an inclusive campus that values diversity can also protect academic freedom, expressive activities, religious freedom, and free speech.

Performance Metrics
An increasing number of units have made diversity a part of annual performance evaluation metrics. Diversity in performance appraisals not only increases accountability, it places the unit and the university at a competitive advantage for recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students. Metrics should be clear, including being specific and measurable. For example, the 2015-2016 Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering’s Annual Faculty Progress Report asks faculty members to respond to the following:

Engagement in Diversity Initiatives—as with internationalization, continued and enhanced leadership in diversity initiatives is encouraged and valued. List activities that focus on enhancing students’ knowledge of disparities and differences experienced by diverse groups and skills in working among diverse cultures. Examples may be engagement in funded projects, recruitment and retention, workshops, seminars or courses presented or taken, and participation in publication projects or creative activities that enhance understanding of diversity issues in higher education or disciplinary fields.

Faculty Salary Studies
Since 2012, the Office of the Dean of Faculties and the ADVANCE Center has sponsored annual faculty salary studies. The purpose of the studies is to determine salary differences between male and female tenured and tenure-track faculty. Variables such as rank/title, age, race/ethnicity, and years of service are included in the studies. The salary equity studies have been used to determine “whether or not there were any systematic differences by race/ethnicity or national origin, and to identify individuals whose actual salaries were unusually high or unusually low, given the predictions of the salary model” (Taylor and Froyd, 2015; https://advance.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Salary-Study-2015.pdf).

While several colleges and departments report making salary equity adjustments, merit raises and other issues complicate how salary equity studies are being addressed across the academic colleges and departments. However, to better understand the prevalence of how the salary equity studies are being used, further assessment efforts are being planned that will include contacting departments and asking specific questions about how they are using the findings of the faculty salary studies.
The accountability reports provide evidence that the colleges and divisions are making sound progress in addressing equity. For example, units are exploring equity issues that impact students, faculty, and staff that extend beyond salary.

Additionally, through the DIVERSITY MATTER Seed Grant program, the Office for Diversity funded Dr. Cecilia Giusti, Associate Dean for Outreach and Diversity in the College of Architecture, to undertake the following research: *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.*

**Campus Diversity Initiatives Database**

Texas A&M University offers a variety of programs and activities that engage students, faculty, and staff in support of a diverse and inclusive community where all are welcome and encouraged to thrive. The Campus Diversity Initiatives Database (http://diversity.tamu.edu/Campus-Resources/Campus-Diversity-Collections) is a web-based resource for identifying coordination/collaboration opportunities and for generating ideas for planning, executing, and assessing ongoing diversity initiatives.

In February 2015, through phone interviews and a web-based survey, 128 initiatives were revised, updated, and added to the current Campus Diversity Initiatives Database. Furthermore, the Office for Diversity now provides a link to a web-based form to encourage contributions and facilitate revisions to the Database, which has resulted in increased attention and traffic to the site.

**Changing the Conflict Culture: Critical Dialogues in Higher Education**

A strategy that frequently emerges from the unit-level diversity accountability reports is helping students, faculty, and staff develop skills to engage in civil, productive dialogue around challenging issues like racism, discrimination, and political and religious beliefs. Faculty and staff report engagement in skill-building opportunities through intervention methods such as mediation. In 2012, the Critical Dialogues in Higher Education Program in the Office for Diversity was launched with aims to:

- Build capacity for engaging in effective communication
- Encourage productive conflict management
- Support a skill set for handling difficult dialogues with a focus on intact work groups

Throughout the year, there is a variety of course training opportunities, including the 40-hour Basic Training for Mediators recommended by the State Bar of Texas. The program objectives are to:

- Create a cadre of dialogue facilitators to model and support effective dialogues at the University
- Increase skill sets and preparedness of administrators, faculty, and students to encounter critical dialogues constructively both within their classroom, the university environment, and the larger community
- Engage their community in dialogue around sensitive topics and issues
- Facilitate recognition by individuals that their experiences, mental models, thoughts, and fears can impact dialogue
Increasingly, several units have worked to engage faculty, staff, and students in conflict management through mediation courses and critical dialogues. Examples of units include the Bush School of Government and Public Service, College of Education and Human Development, College of Engineering, University Libraries, College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, the School of Law, Office of the President, Texas A&M University at Galveston, Texas A&M University at Qatar, and the Division of Student Affairs.

To assess the influence of Difficult Dialogues, mediation, or conflict management training in enhancing the campus climate, the staff in the Office for Diversity administered a web-based survey in December 2014 to 48 faculty members, staff, and administrators who participated in Difficult Dialogues, mediation, and/or conflict management training(s) from 2008 to 2014: 28 people returned the survey. Many respondents reported that they developed and applied skills such as active listening and guiding others through strategies for discussing conflict; and disclosed increased self-awareness, personal growth, and self-confidence in the workplace and in their personal lives (Stanley, Reyes, & Varela, 2015).

**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**

After reviewing institutional data from strategic plans, websites, accountability reports, demographics, meeting agendas, and a myriad of other sources, themes that emerged from the analyses can be condensed into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Additionally, data from the 2016 interviews with administrators are used to describe and provide examples that frame the strengths and challenges facing the institution as we strive for the *Diversity Plan*’s goals of accountability, climate, and equity.

**Strengths**

Engaged leadership has been one of the institution’s greatest strengths in modeling the goals of the *Diversity Plan*. One of the individuals explained in the interview that university leaders “*seem to believe it, see it, understand it, they sense that the Provost has held their feet to the fire, and the President too, so that’s a good thing.*” Because of leadership, another interview participant explained:

> Texas A&M is no longer seeing diversity as a deficit. It is an added benefit for students, faculty, and staff. Diversity used to be the “d-word” a bad word, now we’re owning and valuing it... I think that’s because of the Diversity Plan and leadership in that area.

Leadership has been present and visible in meetings and sessions. From the President and Provost attending unit presentations, to the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity having one-on-one meetings with deans and vice presidents, university leaders have provided feedback to encourage engagement in the goals of the *University Diversity Plan*. In the 2016 interviews, one individual explained: “*The Council and the senior members and the feedback and the meetings with [the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity] are effective to create buy-in.*”

Institutional leadership, from the University’s president to the student body president, have provided examples of responding to incidents of racism and incivility with candidness and commitment to Texas A&M’s core values. The examples provided by leadership may be permeating throughout the institution. One individual explained that the examples from leadership
encourage “the faculty to shut [incivility] down at the grassroots level, because each person is given the freedom to intervene.”

Student Learning Outcomes
Student learning outcomes articulate the knowledge and skills we expect students to gain during their educational experiences. Our student learning outcomes express that a student who graduates from Texas A&M University with a baccalaureate degree will have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to demonstrate social, cultural, and global competence, including the ability to:

- Live and work effectively in a diverse and global society.
- Articulate the value of a diverse and global perspective.
- Recognize diverse economic, political, cultural, and religious opinions and practices.

Graduate student learning outcomes have integrated diversity, inclusion and equity by stating that masters and doctoral students will be able to:

- Use a variety of sources and evaluate multiple points of view to analyze and integrate information and to conduct critical, reasoned arguments.
- Communicate effectively.
- Choose ethical courses of action in research and practice.

What we have accomplished, and are working to achieve even more with the accountability, climate, and equity goals of the Diversity Plan, influences our ability to effect the learning outcome goals for students in each of these areas. (Retrieved 03/01/17 http://catalog.tamu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/student-learning-outcomes/)

Diversity Accountability Report Metric Ratings Using National Peers
When reviewing peer comparison data, rankings, and ratings, Texas A&M looks similar to, and sometimes better than, our peer institutions. However, we should be cognizant of how we compare to our internal metrics, for example, the State of Texas and the communities we serve. Higher education, in general, has numbers of historically underrepresented groups that are not representative of the populations we serve. Therefore, it is imperative that we monitor initiatives addressing access to higher education, student success, grow-your-own and pipeline programs, faculty demographics representative of the student body, mentoring programs, and the like as we continue to reflect and move forward.

In addition to the annual unit-level reporting embedded in the Diversity Plan, one individual described the change in the conversations about diversity: “The conversation has broadened from finding fault with the university to unit-level accountability.”

Undergraduate student recruiting has accomplished some progress in changing the institution. One individual explained, “In admissions, we have new numbers of Hispanics, we’ve surpassed the University of Texas, Austin now, and the number of Regents scholars coming from the valley are substantially different now than they were five or six years ago.” It is also important to acknowledge the awareness expressed by this individual that the changes could be “contribution to the work of the university or the demographics of the State of Texas working for us.”
Texas A&M has seen increases in numbers of undergraduate Hispanic students and first-time in college undergraduate African American students. Texas A&M has increased the numbers of schools targeted in Houston and Dallas from 40 schools after the Hopwood decision to 100 schools. Furthermore, the jargon surrounding financial aid and college admissions has improved. One individual explained, “by looking at marketing, we are making sure that what we think is important, we are saying in ways that are easy to understand.”

Support for historically underrepresented groups is present and visible on campus. One individual explained, “we have Tell Somebody, StopHate, the Department of Multicultural Services is visible (not in the basement of the Memorial Student Center), the GLBT Resources center is present and supported, the Women’s Resource Center is visible and supported, the Veteran’s Resource Center is also present and supported.” In addition to centers and resources for reporting incidents of intolerance, in 2015, the institution has extended benefits to same-sex partners of Texas A&M University employees.

**Weaknesses**

From the 2016 interviews, it is evident that the one-time funds awarded to the units demonstrating progress towards the Diversity Plan goals have mixed reviews. Some believe that units should have budgeted funds for diversity, to reflect the institution’s commitment, while others maintain that the one-time funds demonstrate that diversity is integrated into excellence and not a separate area that needs dedicated funding.

The campus climate continues to be challenging for many of our historically underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. One individual explained, “We have the scholarships, PSCs (Prospective Student Centers), we, have all the things in place, but there’s a disconnect when they come here— is the ‘welcoming environment’ false, not genuine, or they don’t see anyone like them? If they spend a day here, their reality becomes real.”

One of the student leaders interviewed explained: “A&M is created for white people to be happy, everyone else is welcome if they fit – people of color are sometimes invisible on campus, people from class don’t speak outside of class, or hyper-visible, professors watching the black student to see if they are cheating…” Another individual stated, “The reality is the climate, the climate is difficult.” And another student said, “Incidents of incivility in the classroom seem to be glossed over, like the faculty don’t have the skills to deal with the issues.”

People from historically underrepresented groups may experience isolation, alienation, invisibility, tokenization, silence, and marginalization on campus and in the community. In spite of the increase in numbers of some historically underrepresented groups, the numbers of historically underrepresented students, faculty and staff are small, and not representative of the demographics of the State of Texas.

We need to close the gaps in our student success rate so that persistence and graduation are realistic goals for every student. Our goal is to improve using focused interventions to help students achieve their highest possible academic potential. We will also respond to issues that emerge in our student climate assessment studies that are impacting student retention and success.

Another weakness is a lack of transparency around merit and promotion. One individual explained, “Unit processes aren’t transparent, administrative leave, one time merit, the processes aren’t
transparent. If you can be more transparent you can address issues of bias and perceptions of bias in the process.” Transparency around merit, promotion and tenure decisions may encourage progress in the climate and equity goals.

Throughout the assessment of progress towards the Diversity Plan goals, people struggled to provide evidence or proof of progress. One individual stated, “we have made significant progress but it’s hard to see if you haven’t been here.” Another individual asked during the interview, “How do we know we moved the needle?” The demographics are changing slowly, if at all for some groups, there is a lot of activity, surveys, initiatives, and conversations going on at the institution, but how do we know that we are changing? Another individual asked, “What are we expecting to see and how long until we see it? What’s the next set of questions? We need to ask ourselves harder questions.”

Perceptions from undergraduate student leaders revealed a sensitivity to distinguish between administrative responses reacting to incidents, as opposed to proactive messages and activities about diversity, inclusion, and equity. For example, one student leader asked, “Is Aggie’s United going to be continued or was it just a reaction to the Spencer incident?”

Opportunities
Assessing the Diversity Plan elevated the opportunity to develop ways to measure progress towards the goals of accountability, climate, and equity. For example, the review of unit strategic plans revealed how embedded recruitment is within the units’ values. By integrating the goals of the strategic plans with the annual accountability reports, accountability, climate and equity goal and deliverables will be integrated into the operations of the institutions.

Furthermore, there are a plethora of disciplinary and organizational associations that call for recruiting and retaining historically underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. For example, several academic programs have accreditation requirements that could be integrated into the annual unit-level accountability reports, further providing substantive evidence of progress towards accomplishing the goals of the Diversity Plan.

Another opportunity for progress is the maturation of Texas A&M’s vision for diversity. One individual explained, “Diversity is not a strategy. Diversity is a culture ‘beyond race/gender’ that is really about wellness, mental illness and equity, the things that help the climate and support success.” The opportunity to develop the vision of diversity beyond demographics and initiatives is to integrate the value of difference into the culture and climate of the institution.

For our students, there are opportunities in and out of the classroom to prepare them to be successful in an increasingly diverse and complex global society. One individual explained:

*We need to do a better job of educating them to be global citizens all four years; we need to be strategic and intentional about finding, activities and speakers that support and challenges their worldview. We’re doing it in pockets, in colleges but not systematically ... we can galvanize the students around football, Big Event, why can’t we galvanize them around global issues, diversity, and inclusion?*

Texas A&M has an opportunity to develop students through student organization involvement, faculty and staff interactions, and core curriculum classes engaging cultural discourse.
Additionally, Texas A&M’s marketing about diversity and inclusion needs to be candid and transparent. One undergraduate student explained: “A&M needs to market diversity authentically – fewer pictures of posed multiracial/ethnic groups and more basis on personal experiences, so people can see “someone like me” is finding their way through A&M.”

**Threats**

In 2017, Texas A&M is facing leadership succession. During the 2016 interviews, one individual explained, “I’m really interested in the provost search, we need the right person with the right heart – [diversity] is an easy one to give lip service to, and we need leadership with the courage to stand up.” In addition to the provost search, the institution is looking for a new Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity. Because leadership has been so important to the institution’s commitment to the Diversity Plan, while new leadership may be an opportunity for new progress, there are concerns that new leadership may compromise the institution’s progress and commitment.

During the 2016 administrator interviews, the current political environment was identified as a potential threat to institutional change and progress. One individual explained, “I think we will have to be much more subtle in the current political environment. I expect us to have more incidents ... we’ll see protest ramp up. How much push back can [the institution’s commitment to diversity] withstand?”

While our progress in rankings over the past six years may show improvement in some noteworthy areas, campus incidents and campus climate assessment data reveal concern and confusion about whether a campus that values diversity and inclusion can also protect academic freedom, expressive activity, religious freedom, and free speech. We need to engage in more dialogue about this apparent confusion when a commonly held viewpoint is that academic freedom and freedom of speech appear to be incongruent with institutional values and a community of respect.

Another threat to the institution’s progress towards accomplishing the Diversity Plan goals is identifying the next big questions. How do we keep the conversation current and relevant? One individual explained that scholarships, training, short-term strategies helped “for a short period of time.” For long-term progress, an administrator described the need for “building a culture of inclusiveness, the foundation that will translate to success - Not a cookie-cutter approach, but one that recognizes the challenges of diversity for each discipline, not the one-size fits all diversity program.” Failing to adapt methods and strategies for individual disciplines and groups and implementing one-time strategies or programs may be a threat to continued progress towards accomplishing the goals of accountability, climate, and equity.

**Looking Towards the Future**

Diversity Plans and similar crafted diversity strategic planning documents in higher education share strengths and weaknesses. They are not perfect, and are visionary and action planning in nature. The 2010 Texas A&M Diversity Plan is no exception. Still, many of these documents lack clarity on assessment and documentation of organizational change efforts at the institution. Organizational change efforts, and specifically, changing the university’s diversity culture “requires learning to work effectively with the guardians of its culture” (Stanley, 2016). Texas A&M University, similar to many college and university campuses and aspirant peers, is an institution steeped in culture,
history, and spirit of traditions. Many of these, when examined through a variety of lenses, are often perceived to be at odds with institutional growth, vision, and progression.

Yet, we must remember that for an institution that opened its doors in 1876, and later to women and African Americans in the 1960s, we have moved from an all-male military campus to an institution that has grown, and is continually challenged to live up to the espoused values of a public, pre-eminent, world class research university with land, sea, and space grant designations. Diversity and inclusion are integral to our stature of excellence. Guardians of the culture include, our current and former students, faculty, and staff. Texas A&M University is not the same institution as it was in 1876, in 1976, and in 2016—and it should not be—when you consider the evolving nature of higher education and that we live in an increasingly diverse, global society, and world. This is the essence of what we espouse in our mission and values statement, and Vision 2020. Therefore, the 2010 Diversity Plan remains a viable vehicle and opportunity to monitor our progress.

A public university, in terms of how members of the campus community identify themselves, is a microcosm of our society and world, and is not limited to individuals being defined only by gender, race and ethnicity, but rather, along many human dimensions, that are often interlocking and fluid—age, culture, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, nationality, political ideology, physical and mental ability, religious and spiritual identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status—Aggies are socially and culturally diverse.

This assessment, using Kotter’s model of organizational change illustrates that we are beginning to develop an institutional culture of accountability, which will position us to be the benchmark for public research universities of the future. Any departure from this culture change would be a threat to the land-grant values that we hold dear, as well as to the people of the state of Texas. As Vision 2020 articulates, “the need for the intellectual vitality that diversity produces is real. …Texas is one of the most diverse states in the union and its diversity is increasing. Texas A&M University must be a leader in promoting diversity in its student body, faculty, staff, and intellectual viewpoints” (Vision 2020, p. 43).

While many argue that our campus should be more representative of the changing demographics of Texas, the higher education literature tells us that while enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates are important, we must continue to assess individual attitudes, perceptions or observations that campus constituents have about the campus climate. Research shows that individual attitudes and perceptions tend to be more malleable and, as a result, can be differentiated from the more stable institutional norms and beliefs that are used to characterize an organization’s culture (Milem, Chang & Antonio, 2005). In the framework offered by Hurtado and colleagues, climate is not limited to perceptions and attitudes (what they term the “psychological climate”), but also includes the institution’s structure and history as well as people’s interactions across differences (Hurtado, 1998, 1999).

Organizational change efforts, as this assessment shows, entail that we must continue to challenge ways of knowing and acting that fosters a “culture of silence” and comfort level with the status quo for students, faculty, and staff who still experience racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and bigotry on our campus. The Aggie Core Values of Excellence, Integrity, Leadership, Loyalty, Respect, and Selfless Service can serve as the foundation to foster a sense of belonging culture on our campus. We all contribute to the climate at Texas A&M University. Any encounter with hate is one too many. We must stand with each other for perspective taking when
we hear about these encounters and understand that an injustice to one Aggie, is an injustice to all Aggies. This is another way of interpreting the first two lines in the Spirit of Aggieland, “We are the Aggies, the Aggies are we. True to each other, as Aggies can be…” “Fighting for Maroon and White” should foster a sense of pride in that we “Fight for all Aggies.”

**Conclusion**

The assessment of the institution’s progress towards accomplishing the *Diversity Plan* goals has been framed by three guiding questions:

1. **How do we know that we are making meaningful, substantive changes in establishing a working and learning environment that fully recognizes, values, and integrates diversity in pursuit of academic excellence?**
2. **How do we know that the *Diversity Plan* is making a difference or having an organizational impact on the campus culture? How are we changing ourselves?**
3. **Where are the gaps that need to be addressed in the future? What is the *Diversity Plan* not addressing?**

1. **We can point to meaningful, substantive change through data gathered from a variety of institutional and unit sources:**
   a. Institutional and unit climate assessment surveys (undergraduate, graduate and professional students, faculty, and staff)
   b. Institutional recruitment, retention, and graduation data
   c. Diversity accountability report metrics and scorecards
   d. Academic and administrative diversity database initiatives
   e. Academic and unit program reviews
   f. Accreditation reviews
   g. Aspirant peer benchmarking comparison data – SERU participation
   h. Council on Climate and Diversity (CCD) unit
   i. National reports and rankings
   j. Changes in unit processes, policies, and procedures (e.g., annual performance evaluations for unit leaders) for faculty, staff, students, and administrators
   k. Graduation surveys and job placements

2. **We know that the *Diversity Plan* is making a difference, having an organizational impact on the campus culture, that we are changing when we review the following:**
   a. Institutional leadership has provided the campus with examples of how to address acts of intolerance by using the Aggie Core Values.
   b. Marketing has been used to impact recruiting and to change the perceptions of Texas A&M’s campus climate.
   c. Accountability for diversity is permeating throughout the unit and department levels.
   d. The value and significance of diversity has been embedded in the institution’s mission and vision statements, strategic planning, student development, and measures of institutional excellence.
e. The numbers of students, faculty, and staff from some historically underrepresented groups have increased.
f. Campus climate surveys are being conducted, their results are being discussed at the unit and campus-community level, and recommendations are being implemented in several units.
g. Campus dialogues
h. Diversity-related measures and goals being embedded in institutional assessment

3. The gaps that need to be addressed in the future and what the Diversity Plan has not been addressing include the following:

   a. Gaps in student graduation success
   b. Faculty and staff equity and retention
   c. Managing leadership and staff transitions and institutional reorganization
   d. Challenges from the campus climate and the community
   e. Keeping the “conversation” relevant and fresh
   f. Closing the loop between strategic plans and accountability reports

In summary, Texas A&M University has undertaken a serious initiative with its articulation of a comprehensive Diversity Plan, with the three pillars of accountability, climate, and equity. As this Report has shown, efforts to implement the goals of the Plan have been wide-ranging and in many cases have already suggested a discernible change since the plan was formally introduced in 2010. The Report has also outlined areas where future efforts need to be directed.
References


