

## **Diversity Plan**

Submitted by Diversity Taskforces

### Initial Plan

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### Revised Plan

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The Department of Mass Communications is committed to offering a diverse and inclusive program that serves and reflects a multicultural society. Accordingly, we commit to the following strategic goals to educate and train socially responsible, responsive, and sensitive communication scholars, practitioners and global citizens.

### **I. Fostering Understanding of Issues & Perspectives Inclusive of Diverse Cultures in a Global Society**

We are committed to offering a curriculum that fosters understanding of mass communications issues and perspectives that are inclusive of diverse cultures within a global society, particularly domestic concerns about gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, as well as concerns in regards to age, disabilities, political affiliation, religion, and socio-economic class.

- a. We will equip students with the multicultural knowledge, values, and skills essential for professional practice across the curriculum focusing on issues of diversity and inclusion. We will offer multiple required and elective courses that address the role of diversity and inclusion. Topics on domestic and global diversity will be addressed in learning outcomes, assignments, and readings of course syllabi.
- b. We will encourage the development of new courses which center on diversity and inclusion. In existing courses, we will continue to make issues of diversity and inclusion salient through more focused class discussions, assignments and/or projects. Finally, we will work to identify courses where diversity and inclusion are not incorporated and incorporate them, understanding that, ideologically, issues of diversity and inclusion are inherent in everything we teach. All course syllabi will include language regarding the rights of and accommodations for students with disabilities.
- c. We will report records and statistics regarding courses that address mass communications issues and perspectives that are inclusive of diverse cultures within a global society; and commit to a plan of action to strengthen the baseline within a three-year time period if data indicate the need.
- d. We will report records and statistics regarding course assignments and activities that address mass communications issues and perspectives that are inclusive of diverse cultures within a global society, e.g., guest speakers, service learning, etc., and commit to a plan of action to strengthen the baseline within a three-year time period if data indicate the need.

- e. We will report records and statistics and support opportunities regarding professional growth and development activities that faculty and staff engage in to foster understanding of mass communications issues and perspectives that are inclusive of diverse cultures within a global society.

## **II. Recruiting, Retaining, and Engaging Diverse Faculty & Professional Staff**

We are committed to practicing effective recruitment of diverse faculty and professional staff, particularly women and domestic minorities, as well as providing an environment that supports their retention, progress, and success.

- a. We will report records and statistics regarding hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and academic and professional expertise of full-time faculty and professional staff; and commit to a plan of action to strengthen the baseline of underrepresented populations relative to the university region or service area within a three-year time period if data indicate the need.
- b. We will report records and statistics regarding gender, race, ethnicity, and academic and professional expertise of part-time faculty and professional staff, visiting faculty, and guest speakers.
- c. We will adhere to department, university, and the University System of Georgia policies, procedures, and training regarding recruitment, retention, progress, and success of diverse faculty and professional staff, particularly in regards to gender, race, and ethnicity, relative to the university region or service area, e.g., diversity sensitivity initiatives/training, equal employment opportunity provisions, immigration regulations, lawful/unlawful interview question guidelines, maternity/paternity leave provisions, strategic search strategies, tenure and promotion guidelines that encourage diverse scholarship and creative works, etc.

## **III. Recruiting, Retaining, and Engaging a Diverse Student Population**

We are committed to effective recruitment of a diverse student population, with special attention to under-represented groups, that reflects the diversity of the population eligible to enroll in the university region or service area, as well as effective retention initiatives, e.g., engaging students in dialogues, experiences, and networking opportunities with diverse scholars and professionals beyond the classroom to foster understanding of mass communications issues and perspectives that are inclusive of diverse cultures within a global society.

- a. We will report RPG statistics by gender, race, and ethnicity, and commit to a plan of action to strengthen the baseline of underrepresented populations relative to the university region or service area within a three-year time period if data indicate the need.
- b. We will assign diverse faculty, staff, and students to serve departmental and university recruitment initiatives to appeal to diverse prospective students, e.g., Preview Day, Transfer Preview Day, and Majors Fair. We will also sponsor, support, and partner with affiliate student organizations and student media to offer recruitment initiatives that appeal to diverse prospective students, particularly those that attend high schools that offer a curriculum related

to the discipline and student media opportunities, e.g., high school visits, student-directed tours, student organization fairs.

- c. We will report gender, race, and ethnicity demographics of affiliate student organization and student media leadership, and conduct diversity sensitivity training for student media staffs to strengthen opportunities for demographics and content to reflect and serve diverse audience needs and interests.
- d. We will sponsor, support, and partner with affiliate student organizations, student media, and campus, community and industry peers to offer opportunities for students to glean from and interact with a diversity of communication scholars and professionals beyond the classroom.
- e. We will actively invite students to attend departmental, affiliate student organization, student media, campus, community, and industry initiatives that offer opportunities for students to glean from and interact with a diversity of communication scholars and professionals beyond the classroom.

\* Note that affiliate student organizations include UWG Film Collective, NBS-AERho and PRSSA. Student media include WUTV, *The West Georgian*, and The WOLF.

#### **IV. Fostering a Climate That Prohibits Discrimination & Harassment**

We are committed to maintaining a supportive, fair and respectful environment for working and learning, particularly promoting a climate free of harassment and discrimination; accommodates the needs of those with disabilities; values the contributions diverse cultures; and fosters faculty, staff, and student retention, progress, and success.

- a. We will adhere to university and the University System of Georgia policies, procedures, and processes for redress regarding provisions that prohibit bias, discrimination, or prejudice based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, etc., e.g., sensitivity initiatives/training, equal employment opportunity provisions, immigration regulations, lawful/unlawful interview question guidelines, maternity/paternity leave provisions, Title VII, Title IX, etc.
- b. We will adhere to university and the University System of Georgia policies, procedures, and processes for redress regarding sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct, e.g., sensitivity initiatives/training, Title VII, Title IX, etc.
- c. We will adhere to university and the University System of Georgia policies, procedures, and processes for redress regarding family leave, maternity/paternity leave, and sick leave.
- d. We will demonstrate sensitivity regarding work/life balance issues by affording flexible scheduling, strategic course scheduling, and telecommuting opportunities.

#### **V. Sustaining Emphasis on Diversity to Satisfy UWG's Aspirational Enrollment Goal**

We are committed to maintaining our considerations with regard to diversity in accordance to the university's growth. Total enrollment of University of West Georgia has increased yearly by 2.4 %

within years 2013-2018. UWG aspires to achieve an enrollment of 15,000 by 2020. Likewise, the Department of Mass Communications continues its 5.8 % growth within years 2013-2018. We acknowledge the responsibility entailed by this growth. We view this expansion as an opportunity to continue enhancing and nuancing the diversity experience for all students.

- a. We will incorporate intentional language in our existing or new student and employee recruiting materials to highlight the diversity of our faculty, student body, and our vision of diversity and inclusion as a strength of our program and something we value. This will include recruiting and advertising in areas and on websites where we will attract diverse applicants.
- b. We will highlight the diversity of exemplary student works at public events and through promotional materials featuring visual and textual evidence of diversity at UWG.
- c. We will utilize the Media Day event as an opportunity to advance and emphasize our continuing diversity and inclusion efforts. Invited media professionals and internship opportunities should reflect our diversity values and represent our diverse community of students.
- d. We will promote international diversity through active participation in university study abroad and exchange. As a long-term plan, we will expand study abroad and exchange partnerships to provide faculty and students opportunities to be exposed to a global media environment.
- e. We will build a partnership with UWG Office of Education Abroad to more actively engage faculty and students on issues of diversity, and more intentionally promote study abroad and exchange programs to our faculty and students. In that way, we utilize existing university resources in more effective ways.
- f. We will seek to build both faculty-student and student-student relationships with international students who are studying on UWG's campus, again utilizing existing opportunities in the university setting.