

Department of Mass Communication Diversity Plan

(Created 2004, Amended 2017, Amended 2021)

Nicholls State University's Mass Communication Department faculty recognizes the value of an education that embraces a wide spectrum of human experience. Such diversity, it is believed, helps develop a broader perspective on issues and facilitates more meaningful social interaction. We strive to create an environment that involves the perspectives of groups that have been historically marginalized based on characteristics including culture, gender, gender identity, physical differences or race. This includes not only recruiting and retaining a diverse population of faculty, staff and students, but also creating course content and other learning opportunities for addressing media issues relevant to these groups.

Faculty/Staff

The Unit will make a special effort to attract qualified female and minority applicants for open positions, thereby increasing the likelihood that females and minorities will hold representative percentages of positions.

As staff positions are held by civil service employees, the Unit must rely on University recruitment procedures to generate applicant pools. There are University-wide policies designed to ensure adequate numbers of female and minority applicants.

The Unit is largely responsible for soliciting applications for vacant full-time faculty positions. Therefore, the Unit will ensure that whenever it is afforded the opportunity to purchase advertising space for an open faculty position, it will place announcements in the *Insight into Diversity* online magazine. In addition, special notice will be sent by phone to the state's historically black universities, including Grambling State University and Southern University. Both universities have mass communication undergraduate programs, and Grambling offers a master's degree. All notices will include statements urging application by females and minority-group members.

The Department seldom uses adjunct instructors. When it has the opportunity to do so, it will strive to find qualified applicants for the posts through its contacts with area professionals, alumni and colleagues at sister institutions.

As with all junior faculty, the Department will lend whatever assistance it can with scheduling and support services to provide the best possible opportunity for advancement in an effort to retain these faculty. It will also promote an atmosphere of inclusion.

The Department will each year host an event designed to foster faculty understanding of diversity issues.

Assessment:

For each open position, the Department will keep a record of the demographic profile of the applicant pool, the demographic profile of those who receive offers and the

demographic profile of those who accept positions. In this way, the Unit can evaluate the effectiveness of recruiting efforts. It will keep a record of diversity-training activities.

Students

The Unit will make a special effort to attract and retain qualified female and minority students. In order to attract these students, the Unit will continue to offer scholarships intended for women and minorities. Its digital media sites will continue to serve as platforms for sharing the stories of student success, places where under-represented populations can see the faces of those who look like themselves achieving personal and professional goals. The Department's website will report enrollment and retention demographics.

In order to retain these students, the faculty will continue efforts to ensure that there are learning opportunities both within and without the curriculum with relevance for all students, including females and members of minority groups.

For more than 25 years, the Department's minority enrollment (shaped by existing Diversity plans) has exceeded University averages and compared favorably with area demographics. However, the faculty sees opportunity for improvement.

The Department will set one measurable annual goal aimed at increasing recruiting students of Asian descent or who are member of local indigenous nations, toward a goal of doubling the percentage of enrolled students within those groups within five years (Number of students by AY-2026: Asian – Five; Hispanic – 20. **Note:** As this document is under preparation, the state and nation remain in the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the Department is setting a conservative goal for the number of new students, as the effects of the pandemic on enrollment overall remain to be seen.)

The overall objective of these efforts will be to maintain a student population within the Department which exceeds University minority representation by at least 10 percent.

Assessment:

Each fall semester the Unit will examine enrollment statistics to determine the demographic profile of its student population.

Curriculum

Curriculum, as used here, is broadly defined to encompass formal course material, as well as extracurricular activities of an educational nature. The Unit will offer classes specifically geared toward addressing diversity issues and will make every effort to include diversity issues in each course where appropriate. The Unit will also strive to ensure representative selection of guest speakers both in and out of class.

Each year the Department will sponsor at least one extra-curricular event, such as special lectures, that addresses diversity issues. This in addition to its existing activities as part of the University's Black History Month program.

The Department will set a student learning goal of having 90 percent of seniors score at least an 80 percent in the diversity area of the Unit's Pre-/Post-Test assessment instrument.

Assessment:

Course syllabi will be examined for the inclusion of diversity issues. Each member of the faculty will keep records of guest speakers and special events. At the Unit's annual assessment meeting each spring, the faculty will examine various records and review syllabi in an effort to evaluate the curriculum's strength in this area.