AUBURN UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

AUBURN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL DEI STRATEGY OVERVIEW

NAVIGATING AUBURN'S DEI STRATEGY ECOSYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

As a land-grant institution, Auburn University is dedicated to improving the lives of the people of Alabama, the nation, and the world through forward-thinking education, life-enhancing research and scholarship, and selfless service. As such, we must never lose sight of our important educational, research, and service responsibilities. The responsibility to build moral character and inculcate active social responsibility is a notable quality that distinguishes the overall experience at Auburn University.

Continuously learning, listening, and evolving, Auburn supports, builds upon, and leverages the expertise of our faculty, students, and partners to discover, innovate, and create new knowledge, new science, new technologies, and new applications and methodologies that tangibly improve our world. To achieve our goals and realize our responsibility, inclusion and diversity are integral to our commitment.

Each academic and administrative unit of the university is charged with executing a diversity action plan informed by, and laddering up to, the University's Strategic Plan which includes a mission, a vision, and goals that are woven together by strategic themes and institutional values, while supporting the Presidential Task Force For Opportunity and Equity, all of which is informed by the University's vision and mission. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is an ongoing journey and Auburn is committed to embedding diversity into the fabric of the University.

Taffye Benson Clayton
Vice President and Associate Provost
for Inclusion and Diversity

OUR DEI MISSION STATEMENT

Auburn University recognizes the importance of promoting an inclusive and diverse environment that supports the growth and success of all. We believe that the contributions of diverse cultures, ideas, and life experiences combine to create an enriched and engaged campus community for the Auburn Family.

AUBURN'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Auburn is on a journey. As a land-grant institution, Auburn has a responsibility to serve the people of Alabama, the country, and the world and create an inclusive campus where people can thrive. Auburn is taking important steps to assess our impact and where we need to improve by delivering actionable progress and providing updates. We celebrate our progress and embrace the opportunity of continuous improvement as a campus, community, and the Auburn Family at large.

We embarked on an effort of discovery. In 2015, the President and Provost established a committee of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and administrators to access the university's climate in terms of DEI. After considering input from almost 3,500 members of the Auburn Family, the committee crafted 17 core recommendations, which have all seen significant progress or have been completed. In the years since, these recommendations led to key advancements for Auburn University, some of which include the expansion and reestablishment of the Cross Cultural Center for Excellence (CCCE) and the formalization of the inaugural Associate Provost and Vice President for Inclusion and Diversity role. This effort also provided key learning opportunities around redefining DEI as core institutional values, the importance of a culture of unity and the need to review existing policies, practices, and organizational structures to ensure an inclusive culture.

In 2020, the world changed in ways that no one could ever imagine. People across the world and within our own communities were confronted with an unprecedented health crisis alongside a tipping point on racial equity and social justice. Auburn recommitted to advancing equity by redefining our focus on equity and inclusion, addressing racial injustices on our campus and in our state, and implementing a plan to support a community where everyone feels they belong.

Auburn further invested in advancing DEI with the creation of the Presidential Task Force for Opportunity and Equity. While the Presidential Task Force was created to prioritize Auburn's efforts to address racial inequality, the focus of the Taskforce is to reinforce DEI as core values on its campus.

Leaders across Auburn are part of our ongoing efforts. The administration and leaders from across colleges, schools, units, departments, and our entire university are collaborating to ensure accountability and transparency. We're further cultivating a community in which individuals demonstrate respect toward one another. We're coming together to support the Auburn Family to ensure that Auburn is an equitable and inclusive environment, through a variety of educational engagements, policy updates, renaming buildings, and each college working on identified goals and strategies to advance inclusion and diversity.

Though much work has been done, there is still more to do. Despite some progress, daily reminders tell us there is more work to be done to continue upholding the institution's most cherished values. Work that requires humility, empathy, resilience, and engagement.

TERMINOLOGY & KEY CONCEPTS

DIVERSITY*: Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, national origin, ethnicity, political, cultural, or other affiliations).

EQUITY: The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff in every stage of education and career development, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of marginalized groups.

INCLUSION: Inclusion puts the concept and practice of diversity into action by creating an environment of involvement, respect, belonging, and connection. Inclusion involves harnessing and leveraging diversity in a manner that strengthens the organization, provides it with a competitive advantage, and, in the case of an academic institution, provides educational and solution-oriented benefits.

UNIT PLANNING TEAM: Unit-specific thought leaders tasked by the lead Unit Administrator with contemplating unit-based diversity and inclusion related needs and opportunities for improvement, spearheading diversity and inclusion strategy development and implementation, and connecting with professionals throughout the unit to promote the diversity action planning process as a shared endeavor. These individuals are responsible for conceptualizing, developing, and finalizing the unit plan for submission to OID.

*Definition provides representative list of aspects of diversity. While representative, this list is not exhaustive.

LOOKING ACROSS AUBURN: DEI STRATEGY IN ACTION

Across the campus community, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and administrative leaders have been spearheading efforts to create and execute against clear strategies to advance DEI at Auburn. There are four guiding entities driving this work and making meaningful contributions to progress on an institutional level:

1. Auburn University 2019-2024 Strategic Plan
2. The Office of Inclusion and Diversity
3. The Presidential Task Force for Opportunity and Equity
4. Institutional Diversity Action Plans

Auburn University 2019-2024 Strategic Plan

Auburn University recognizes and values the considerable educational benefits of diversity as we prepare our students for life and leadership in a multicultural world. Cultural competency is important. Students who interact with and learn about people from various backgrounds are more apt to understand, appreciate, and excel in the communities they inhabit.

The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan identifies inclusion and diversity as one of seven key themes that are impacted by our goals. These themes address foundational elements that are essential to accomplishing our mission and achieving our vision. Inclusion and Diversity underpins, and is deeply integrated within, the six core goals of the strategic plan:

1. Elevated Auburn Experience
2. Transformative Research
3. Impactful Service
4. Exceptional and Engaged Faculty and Staff
5. Strategic Enrollment
6. Operational Excellence

The Office of Inclusion and Diversity drives efforts across the campus community to advance DEI and deliver against the University's strategic plan. The following goals guide the Office of Inclusion and Diversity:

- Create, promote, and encourage a supportive and friendly campus environment that is welcoming and attractive to people of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, and those with disabilities.
- Assist Auburn University in recruiting and retaining minority and women faculty, students, and staff at all levels.
- Develop and strengthen alliances with external communities to support diversity in and outside of Auburn University.
- Develop efforts that enhance external support for diversity programs and scholarships.
- Foster a community that values diversity through educational programs.
- Regularly monitor and assess Auburn University's diversity efforts for effectiveness, identify new and better "best practices" for success, and publish reports for dissemination.

Presidential Task Force for Opportunity and Equity

Following the events of 2020 that reinvigorated a national movement to advance DEI – Auburn University President Jay Gogue established the Presidential Task Force for Opportunity and Equity. The Task Force is a representative team invested in developing an equitable and inclusive Auburn University. The priority of the Task Force is to examine racial inequality and to recommend strategies for addressing disparities.

To date, four Task Force subcommittees tasked with outlining key institutional DEI priorities have researched and examined these areas, resulting in a set of recommended actions.

1. DEI Education
2. Student Recruitment and Retention
3. Faculty Recruitment and Retention
4. Staff Recruitment and Retention

The four Task Force subcommittees have completed their work and provided recommendations to address disparities in recruitment and retention and the implementation of a campus-wide DEI Education program. Read more about progress here.

Translating Strategic Plans into Measurable Progress

Auburn's academic departments and administrative units are integral in implementing the goals, strategies, and recommendations outlined by the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan and Presidential Task Force for Opportunity and Equity. Planning teams in academic and administrative units have created a **Diversity Action Plan (DAP)** to outline goals with measurable action steps.

Through diversity action planning, colleges, schools, and administrative units examine programs, operations, services, and the working, living, and learning environments within which they occur to ensure coordination and alignment with the University's strategic priorities. These plans serve as a tool to initiate a campus-wide practice of identifying and prioritizing unit-based needs and establish a process for diversity goal setting, strategy development, management, and monitoring designed to build a culture of continuous improvement.
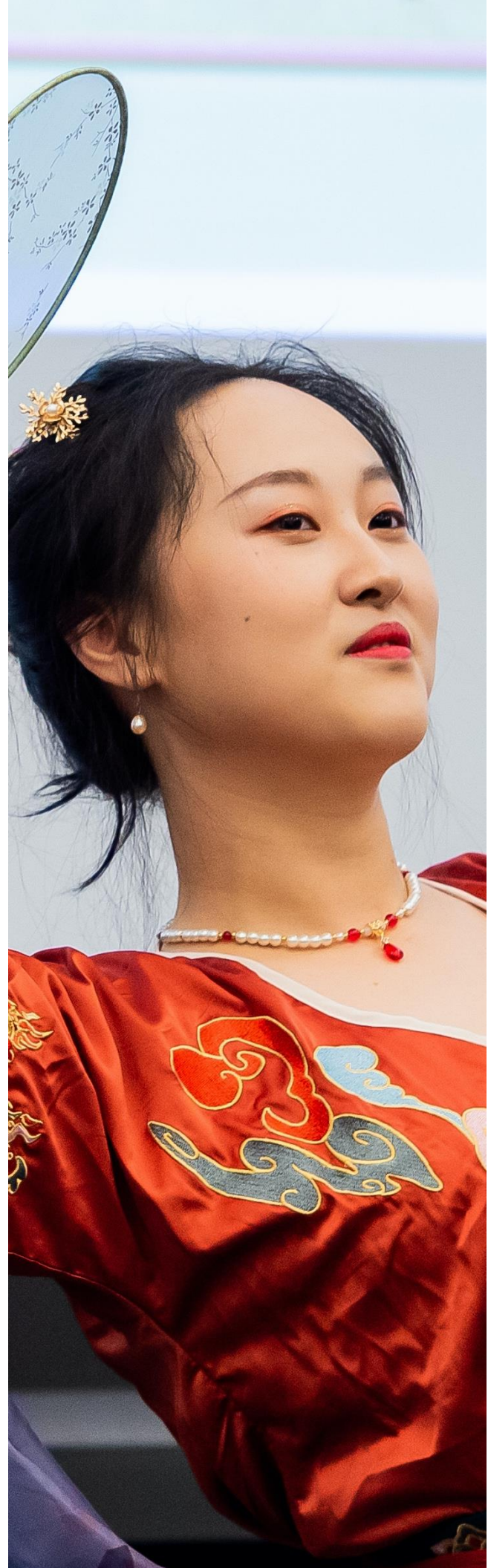
DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

PROCESS AT-A-GLANCE

1. **In 2020, each college, administrative, and leadership group identified and designated a planning team** to manage the planning process alongside the Auburn University Office of Inclusion and Diversity (OID).

2. The **planning teams gathered and analyzed departmental data** to identify DEI strengths, weaknesses, and gaps.

3. **OID facilitated an in-depth action planning process** to articulate aspirations, vision, and goals for the development of **a 3-to-5-year diversity action plan with specific goals, strategies, and metrics**.

4. **All planning teams submitted initial draft plans to OID** for review and outlined opportunities for partnerships and institutional support.

5. Each planning team then **developed a final plan** and reported out to institutional leadership. Each plan includes benchmarks, deliverables, timetables for completion, and identified clear owners and individuals responsible for implementation.

OID will serve as a consultative resource throughout implementation, regularly providing resources and assessing progress towards goals.

DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN SNAPSHOT

The following chart provides a topline overview of the specific goals each college and school has identified as strategic DEI priorities. These goals reflect the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan's Inclusion and Diversity theme and recommendations of the Presidential Task Force for Opportunity and Equity. The Diversity Action Plan approach ensures that each college and school facilitated a reflective process to yield goals that will contribute to measurable progress along our journey towards a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus community.

As an initial focus, this plan includes college and school diversity action plan goals. This document will be updated to include goals from Auburn University administrative units.

Academic Colleges and Schools

College of Agriculture	• Increase the perception of an inclusive environment within the College among faculty, students, and staff. • Improve diversity among new faculty and staff hires by increasing historically underrepresented presence in applicant pools. • Broaden outreach and focus recruitment strategies toward creating a more diverse student body in the College.
Raymond J. Harbert College of Business	• Create a Harbert College of Business Office of Diversity and Inclusion. • Increase emphasis on recruitment and retention, engagement, and inclusion of underrepresented groups (student/faculty/staff). • Create programs focused on diversity integration and inclusion throughout the HCOB culture (faculty/staff/students).
College of Education	• Recruit, support, and retain faculty, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds. • Enhance diversity and inclusion through impactful leadership, professional service, and engagement. • Promote and foster a culture that exemplifies inclusive excellence. • Develop and enhance curriculum and training focused on diversity and inclusion for the college and broader communities.
Samuel Ginn College of Engineering	• Foster an inclusive learning environment where all students are welcomed, valued, respected, and engaged. • Increase the number of enrolled, retained, and graduated engineering students of diverse backgrounds. • Attract diverse and highly talented faculty and staff.

College of Human Sciences	- Increase diversity among our student population through strategic recruitment efforts. - Support student success and retention through innovative and comprehensive support services. - Support faculty and staff success by offering professional growth opportunities and diversity and inclusion training. - Continue transformative research that improves the quality of life for all people across diverse populations. - Enhance service to diverse communities through our sustainable outreach and engaged scholarship programs.
College of Liberal Arts	- Support interdisciplinary and collaborative programs and research that advance an understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusion. - Increase emphasis on cultivating global and multicultural perspectives for students, faculty, and staff. - Support recruitment and retention efforts to increase the diversity of student, faculty, and staff in the college and to include an increase of annual giving for student scholarships and cultural experiences.
College of Sciences and Mathematics	- Increase the number of faculty and staff from traditionally underrepresented groups in STEM. - Develop a climate of inclusion and collaboration among COSAM faculty, staff, and students. - Recruit historically excluded students in STEM, which reflect the demographics of the state, at all levels (undergraduate and graduate).
College of Veterinary Medicine	- Support the student VOICE chapter in expanding its membership and activities. - Collaborate more closely with HBCUs having veterinary or veterinary technician education programs. - Increase engagement of the college's employees, students, and colleagues to promote diversity and inclusion.
School of Nursing	- Recruit and retain a more diverse student population. - Recruit and retain faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. - Promote cultural competence in classroom/clinical and curricular/co-curricular settings.
School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences	- Increase perceptions of inclusion within the College of Forestry and Wildlife to enhance the perceptions of inclusion within the discipline. - Expand recruitment activities to reach a more diverse audience. - Promote a more inclusive culture of diversity within the School.

Harrison School of Pharmacy	• Increase awareness, education, and training of Diversity and Inclusion for administrators, faculty, staff, and students. • Integrate diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence into the HSOP Professional Curriculum. • Recruit and retain a diverse, multicultural, and culturally aware HSOP team of administrators, faculty, and staff.
College of Architecture, Design & Construction	• Identify and recruit diverse faculty, staff, and administrator candidates for positions in the College. • Identify, attract, recruit, retain, and support diverse students.
Graduate School	• Foster a climate of support for inclusion and diversity among our staff and toward our students, faculty, and colleagues. • Foster a climate of diversity and inclusion in the university community and the Auburn community. Increase the number of students from under-represented groups enrolling in Auburn's graduate programs. Be deliberate and encourage interactions among students and between students, faculty, and staff.
Honors College	• Increase diverse student representation in the Honors College to reflect the representation of diverse students in the broader university. • Better connect with historically underrepresented students. • Create a welcoming climate for underrepresented students.

ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY

Auburn leadership and the Office of Inclusion and Diversity are committed to ensuring transparency and accountability toward the DEI goals set forth.

The Office of Inclusion and Diversity is further formalizing annual DEI reporting and review processes. Additionally, the office collaborates with academic and administrative units to provide guidance and support in measuring and reporting progress.

In April 2022, the Office of Inclusion and Diversity will spearhead the development of the first annual Auburn University DEI report and host a State of Inclusion and Diversity event to reflect on Auburn's DEI efforts as a campus.