Texas A&M University College of Dentistry

DENTISTRY
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN

INTRODUCTION:

Texas A & M University College of Dentistry (COD), located in Dallas, Texas, embodies an environment comprised of faculty, staff, students, and patients representing a vast array of cultural backgrounds, preferences, and beliefs. COD identifies diversity and inclusiveness among its core values and is committed to maintaining a welcoming and supportive climate that cultivates a lifelong sense of belonging. Those within the College are expected to show respect for individual differences, seek to understand and value the perspectives of others, and participate in the creation and sustainability of an accessible environment that promotes fairness and equality. Similarly, the College commits to increasing access to dental care and improving the oral health of the diverse community of Texans through the provision of culturally sensitive care for patients within the College and at community sites in the northeast Texas area and throughout the state.

In December 2016, the Committee on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA Committee) was established to foster programs and activities at COD aimed at (1) supporting the vision and core values of the College to promote a diverse, welcoming, supportive, and culturally competent environment that improves access to oral health care; and (2) improving communications and interactions among the diverse faculty, staff, student and patient populations. This committee has lead in the establishment of this plan and is responsible for oversight of the plan and programs and/or activities that address diversity and inclusion.

The College supports the views of Texas A&M University (TAMU) regarding diversity. TAMU resolves that diversity is an indispensable component of academic excellence and a central concept for creating a culture of preeminence. The University further stipulates that we can only achieve optimal academic excellence by paying close attention to and drawing from the richness and strength reflected in the diversity of the people within our state and the nation. Diverse learning environments foster civic learning and engagement and prepare us to live in an increasingly global and complex world.

COD embraces the definition of diversity as the welcoming, inclusion, and support of all individuals, encompassing the various characteristics of persons in our community. These characteristics can include, but are not limited to age, background, cultural identity, citizenship, physical and mental ability, education, ethnicity, nationality, family status, gender, gender identity/expression, geographical location, language, military experience, political and

ideological perspectives, race, religious and spiritual identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and work experience.

Moreover, the College supports TAMU's premise that attention to advancing the representation of traditionally underrepresented groups is an important *quantitative* metric of our progress in diversity; but achievement in this metric alone will not fulfill our imperative for enhancing inclusion. For this aim, we must explore *qualitative* measures such as interactions among faculty, staff, and student groups; the curriculum; academic support for student preparation, retention and success; perceptions of the campus climate; institutional history; policies; cultural spaces; transforming classroom environments; learning outcome goals; intergroup dialogues; and student organizations. In all these areas and others, we must define and refine our goals, propose strategies and indicators to hold ourselves accountable so that progress is continually achieved.

This diversity and inclusion plan is reflective of findings from the March 2017 College of Dentistry Climate Survey and establishes recommendations that are realistic, implementable, and measurable. It is intended to provide overarching strategies and directives that aim to guide decision-makers and other stakeholders in the quest to achieve and maintain a climate of inclusive excellence.

GOALS:

1. Cultivate and monitor an organizational structure and institutional environment that is accountable for diversity and inclusive excellence.
2. Promote a campus climate that welcomes and encourages all individuals and engages, to the best advantage, the varying backgrounds and characteristics of our community.
3. Continue and optimize strategies that demonstrate a commitment to equity in the recruitment and retention of employees, volunteers, and students and the inclusive character of our College.

This plan focuses on three areas of impact - **accountability**, **climate**, and **equity** - to accomplish these goals.

ACCOUNTABILITY
Goal: Cultivate and monitor an organizational structure and institutional environment that is accountable for diversity and inclusive excellence.

The College will establish guidelines, structures, and processes that hold administrative offices, departments, programs, and individuals accountable for demonstrating their current standing, plans, and progress in creating an environment where the diversity and inclusion of individuals and ideas are treated equitably in a climate that fosters success and achievement by all. In accordance with this plan, administrators, faculty, staff, and students are expected to act with honesty and integrity in compliance with professional standards and established guidelines proposed to enhance diversity and promote an environment of inclusiveness. As such, all are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures of the University as they relate to behavior and professionalism, take responsibility for their actions and decisions and follow guidelines and

protocols that are put in place to facilitate the effective resolution of concerns in accordance with their level of authority. To achieve this goal COD will:

1. **Respond to University directives to report annually, or as indicated, on its efforts towards accountability, climate, equity, and other parameters that address diversity and inclusion within the College.** Specific measures involved are identified below:

   - Diversity and inclusive excellence will be linked to guidance practices and documents including the vision; mission; core values; strategic plan; student, staff and faculty codes of conduct; annual evaluations; and curriculum.
   - Metrics and evidence-based indicators of the College's decision-making processes and commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and access for all will be identified, applied, and monitored.
   - Training measures that focus on building and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive environment will be made available to all internal stakeholders.

2. **Amend scorecards to include data reported by administrative offices, departments, and programs on progress toward diversity, inclusion, and success among employees and students.** The annual scorecard assessment process will be amended to allow reporting of recruitment and retention efforts for faculty and staff and rates of success for URM students. Each administrative office, department, and program within the College will participate in the reporting process by reviewing its related diversity and inclusion strategies and actions and submitting such data for inclusion in the aforementioned report.

3. **Establish a college-level Diversity and Inclusion Council to review strategies, initiatives, and recommendations from the IDEA Committee and to report their findings and feedback to the Director of Diversity.** This council will be comprised of corporate and/or civic representatives whose activities reflect their support for the College and for diversity and inclusion in addition to faculty, staff, and student representation. The council will meet at least two times per year.

4. **Set strategic and budgetary priorities to demonstrate commitment of the administration to diversity and inclusion.** A comprehensive approach that includes, but is not limited to, the following initiatives is needed to establish a culture of inclusive excellence:

   - Dedication of resources and other clearly defined means of tangible support for this plan and other measures that address diversity and inclusion;
   - Continued provision of scholarships that assist in recruitment of a diverse student population;
   - Involvement of key administrators in outlining, or providing directions for, recruitment and retention strategies that effectively promote diversity and inclusion among faculty, staff, and students; and
   - Granting release time to facilitate participation of employees and students in onsite training and other diversity enterprises.

5. **Review this plan every three years, or sooner if an issue arises with its interpretation and**

use, and submit proposed changes for approval by the Administrative Council and the University. The IDEA Committee is responsible for reviewing the plan.

CLIMATE
Goal: Promote a campus climate that welcomes and encourages all individuals and engages, to the best advantage, the varying backgrounds and characteristics of our community.

The College of Dentistry commits to lead and actively support initiatives that foster teamwork, collaboration, and communication among people of varying backgrounds; create a climate that accommodates various racial and ethnic constituencies; and fully recognize, value and integrate diversity and inclusion in the pursuit of academic excellence. COD will establish practices and processes listed below to promote a welcoming, inclusive, and outstanding working and learning environment.

1. **Engage faculty, staff, and students in regularly recurring cultural competence training initiatives.** Faculty and Staff training will be provided bi-annually via TrainTraq or other electronic means supported by the University. All current employees will participate in face to face training within the next year with follow-up sessions occurring at least once every five years. Training for new hires will begin within the first year of affiliation and repeated every five years, thereafter. Training will be made available to supervisors on an as needed basis to improve their level of efficiency and effectiveness. Student training will be continued as approved by the Curriculum Committee in collaboration with the Director of Diversity and course directors.

2. **Create regularly scheduled interactive and interdisciplinary encounters that foster a culture of inclusion.** Interactive discussions, workshops and presentations about the positive benefits of achieving a culture of inclusive excellence will be offered. COD will sponsor guest speakers with expertise in promoting inclusiveness, arrange for participation in workshops and presentations available through TAMU such as Advance STRIDES, Aggie Allies (LGBTQ), Difficult Conversations, Generational Differences, Conflict Resolution and other available training. Other possible examples of activities include:
    *   "Lunch Bunch" groups that promote unity and a sense of belonging.
    *   "Cultural chats" led by varying racial/ethnic/nationality groups to help others within the College understand customs and beliefs inherent within their culture.
    *   Encourage group-driven service projects that promote structured "families" such as adopt a school/student initiatives.

3. **Establish a rigorous review process to monitor the climate and progression toward achievement of diversity and inclusion goals.** A climate survey will be administered every three years to administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Diversity and inclusion-related questions will be integrated into scorecards used by department heads and administrative officers for monitoring diversity levels among employees. A graduation survey will be administered to students during their last semester of matriculation.

4. **Collaborate across U.S. and international cultures to foster global engagement and citizenship**. Diversity team leaders and students will be encouraged and supported to participate in select national meetings that focus on diversity, such as the ADEA Diversity Workshop, the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity, National Student Leadership Conference, and the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.

5. **Communicate the College's commitment to excellence at all levels. A** comprehensive diversity website that conveys the diversity and inclusion plan, goals, resources, and other pertinent information will be developed and managed by the IDEA Committee. Signage that describes the College's commitment to diversity and inclusion will be visible via electronic postings and other means. Faculty will be encouraged to lead presentations on topics that focus on diversity and inclusion, particularly following attendance at diversity conferences.

EQUITY
Goal: Continue and optimize strategies that demonstrate a commitment to equity in the recruitment and retention of employees, volunteers, and students and the inclusive character of our College.

COD will ensure inclusion, equal opportunity, and success for all within, with special attention to underrepresented/underserved populations, communities, and community members. The College will maintain assurances within its mission and goals that students, staff, faculty, and patients -regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or other cultural identifiers - are all treated equally. In addition, the following strategies will be implemented:

1. **Establish a multilayered process for conducting searches and assessing candidates and including diversity in onboarding and retention initiatives.** Strategies that enhance the ability to identify and recruit underrepresented minority (URM) faculty and staff will be incorporated into the hiring process. Recruitment efforts will be **e**xpanded to assure diversity among faculty and staff. Advertisements, brochures, and other collaterals that acknowledge COD's commitment to diversity and inclusive excellence among faculty and staff will be produced. In addition, support of initiatives that aim to encourage students from URM and underserved populations to return as faculty is encouraged.

2. **Identify and support measures that address retention of faculty and staff including equity in compensation and advancement opportunities.** The College will adhere to the tenets of the Equal Pay Act to assure that employees be given equal compensation for equal work regardless of individual characteristics including but not limited to gender, race/ethnicity, or other identity. Professional development programs and advancement opportunities to identify, develop and advance managers and leaders from a diverse population will be expanded and regularly assessed. URM faculty will be encouraged to enroll in faculty development programs, such as the Center of Excellence and the Faculty Mentoring and Career Development Program. In addition, a formal process for recognizing the progress and accomplishments of employees in the area of diversity and inclusion that

includes linkage of diversity and inclusion efforts to promotion and tenure will be established. Awards for outstanding achievements toward building and promoting an inclusive environment will be created.

3. **Continue measures that are already in place to recruit and retain a diverse student body.** Continued implementation of the pipeline program, managed by the Office of Student Development is strongly encouraged. The admissions committee will monitor the whole file review process and other components of the admissions protocols to assure continued success in recruiting a diverse student body. Tutoring and other assistance for URM students will also be sustained.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE AND COMPLIANCE

Each member (employees, volunteers, and students) of the College has a role in fostering a climate of welcoming and inclusion within the College. Each member shall be responsible for complying with all guidelines of this plan herewith. Each must refrain from incivility, discrimination or other forms of mistreatment of any kind and on any level of conversation, interaction, and/or learning. This includes rudeness, disparaging remarks, disrespect, exclusion, condescension, and other actions or language that promote hostility and ill-will both within and beyond the confines of the College of Dentistry. Individuals who are the recipient of, or witness to, such behaviors are encouraged to notify the Office of Academic Affairs or Human Resources. These reports will be referred to the appropriate authority for investigation and management per university and COD policies.

Resources:
1. Penn State: Historical Archive of Diversity Strategic Planning. http://equity.psu.edu/historical-archive-diversity-strategic-planning; http://equity.psu.edu/updates/analysis/best-practices (Accessed 08/14/2017)

2. TAMU Diversity Plan. http://diversity.tamu.edu/getattachment/Diversity-Plan/Diversity-Plan-2010.pdf.aspx (Accessed 6/17/2017)

3. UMKC Diversity Plan (provided for review by UMKC administration)

4. The University of Texas at Austin's Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. http://diversity.utexas.edu/diversity-and-inclusion-action-plan/ (Accessed 8/28/2017)

5. What Diversity Metrics are Best Used to Track and Improve Employee Diversity? http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1063&context=student

Diversity Timeline and Action Plan

Target Date	Area of Impact	Action
Every 3 years, Beginning April 1, 2017	Climate	Administer Climate Survey
Sept. 30, 2017	Climate	Begin administration of biennial cultural competency training cycle for faculty and staff via TrainTraq.
October 31, 2017	Accountability	Develop and submit the diversity plan for approval.
Beginning January 4, 2018	Climate	Announce/Introduce the IDEA Committee and promote the Diversity & Inclusion Plan within the College at annual faculty and staff retreats and in a student assembly. • Present the diversity and inclusion plan; • Roll out marketing of and related initiatives, including logo and slogan contest. • Report findings from climate survey.
January 31, 2018	Accountability	Engage administrators and directors in meetings to plan and calibrate their utilization of and adherence to the plan. Introduce modification to score cards.
January 31, 2018	Accountability	Identify a funding stream and prioritize a budget for diversity and inclusion.
March 31, 2018	Accountability	Involve Administrative Offices, Departments, and Program Directors in preparation of data for TAMU Annual Report.
March 31, 2018	Climate	Expand patient awareness / expectation measures. Develop signage, posters and other promotional messages for screens. Review patient rights and responsibilities document for the inclusion of language that addresses diversity and inclusion.
March 31, 2018	Climate	Train at least 10 faculty to lead small group training sessions on Cultural Competence Oral Health Professionals.
Annually	Climate	Continue the process of administering the Graduation Survey to D4 and DH2 students.
June 30, 2018	Equity	Develop and implement a faculty recruitment plan.
June 30, 2018	Climate	Plan a schedule of diversity activities including speakers, lunch bunches, cultural chats and available TAMU training programs, including Advance STRIDES, Aggie Allies (LGBTQ), Difficult Conversations, Generational Differences, and Conflict Resolution.
July 31, 2018	Climate	Conduct face-to-face training for faculty and staff.
Beginning July 31, 2018	Climate	Incorporate cultural competence into the new curriculum plan.
August 31, 2018	Accountability	Develop infrastructure for Diversity and Inclusion Council to include community (outside experts, organized dentistry), departments, and other stakeholders.

Annually, Beginning August 31, 2018	Accountability	Conduct a review of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan and IDEA Committee SOP to update charges and make other noteworthy changes.
Annually, Beginning August 31, 2018	Equity	Assess recruitment efforts, student success, and other metrics.
Dec. 31, 2018	Equity	Review staff recruitment guidelines to assure diversity is considered.
January 31, 2019	Accountability	Link diversity and inclusion strategies to the strategic plan and other policies (APT, Student/ Faculty/Staff Codes of Conduct, Evaluations, etc.)
June 30, 2019	Equity	Develop clearly defined retention strategies for faculty and staff.
Every 3 years Beginning August 31, 2021	Equity	Review climate survey and update as needed.