Proposed Framework

*Strategic Plan for Diversity*

with

*Diversity Management Structure*

For

Submitted by:

Steve Schulze
Chief Human Resources Officer
Director of Special Projects

Edward W. Romero, Ph.D.
Director of Diversity and Inclusion

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Strategic Plan for Diversity
Texas A&M AgriLife
Summary

AgriLife supports diversity\(^1\), a collective mixture characterized by differences and similarities that are applied in pursuit of organizational objectives. The purpose of this document is to provide a synopsis of diversity principles and justify why Texas A&M AgriLife should have a Diversity Management Structure (page 3) complemented by a Strategic Diversity Management Plan (pages 5-7). Without each, it is believed successful diversity initiatives will be limited and difficult to implement and sustain.

Diversity management\(^2\), a comprehensive organizational and managerial process of planning for, organizing, directing, and supporting a collective mixture in a way that adds a measurable difference to organizational performance, just like any other organizational strategy is part of a larger more complex formula for determining organizational success. It is not consigned to race, ethnicity, and gender but espouses a broader application and is used as such in this document to better understand the holistic approach. While organizations are not required to have a strategic diversity plan nor manage diversity, it is prudent to consider the significance of diversity management capability as one of several factors to guarantee organizational success.

Opportunities for Effectively Managing Diversity

Workplace diversity is an asset to any organization when appropriately governed and fully utilized. Research has shown that organizations which embrace and manage diversity, will demonstrate tremendous strength in their organizations and gain a competitive advantage by improving communication, collaborating productively and ways of doing “business.” This effort advances organizations more quickly, efficiently and surpasses the competition. In addition to becoming more creative and innovative, our organizations can better serve our constituents from different demographic groups and cultural backgrounds. Further, we anticipate increased employee satisfaction as a direct result of a strategic diversity management plan.

It is sometimes assumed, differences of discourse translate to unhappy employees. To the contrary, it is when employees do not understand each other they often become frustrated and dissatisfied. Capitalizing on workplace diversity will help employees learn how to assess differences and better understand others who are different. This translates into productive employees because of increased morale and employee satisfaction.

Not addressing diversity can hinder production but when work teams are trained to leverage uniqueness in each other, they can work through barriers related to prejudice and stereotypes. Different contextual meaning of words, phrases, and behaviors expressed in different cultures can lead to communication gaps. Implementing this plan can close these gaps and strengthen our organization. Another opportunity for benefit is our hiring and promotion practices. Although we try very hard to provide fairness in our dealings, we must always look at our hiring and promotion practices because they can be misconstrued to be related to barriers of discrimination.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service

This proposed strategic diversity management plan and management structure has taken into consideration the efforts made by Texas AgriLife Extension and their Diversity Catalyst Team. The recommended plan was designed to augment their current efforts, while encouraging other sister agencies of the AgriLife family to consider adopting a coordinated effort.


# Types of Diversity

Below are four (4) categories of diversity along with specific elements identified with each. These are typically encountered on a daily basis but we are often unaware of how they influence our lives in the work environment. As such, they must be incorporated into a comprehensive diversity management plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Workforce Diversity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Family Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Economic Background and Status</td>
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<td>Religion</td>
<td>Geographical Background and Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Labor Market Demographics</td>
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<td>Physical Ability</td>
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<tr>
<th>2. Behavioral Diversity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Styles</td>
<td>Aspirations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinking Styles</td>
<td>Beliefs/Value Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Styles</td>
<td>Changes in Attitudes and Expectations of Employee</td>
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<td>Communication Styles</td>
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<th>3. Structural Diversity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interactions Across Functions</td>
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<td>Across Organizational Levels in Hierarchy</td>
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<td>Across Divisions</td>
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<td>Across Organizations Engaged in Strategic Alliances and Cooperative Ventures</td>
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<th>4. Operational (Business) Diversity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expansion and Segmentation of Customer Markets</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Diversification of Products and Services Offered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variety of Operating Environments in Which Organizations Work and Compete</td>
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<tr>
<td>– i.e. legal and regulatory context</td>
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<tr>
<td>– labor markets</td>
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<tr>
<td>– community and societal expectations/relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>– business cultures and norms</td>
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## Diversity Management Structure

A Strategic Diversity Plan without the proper components in place weakens and limits the efficacy of the plan; and will take longer to achieve the desired outcome – if at all. The Diversity Management Structure is meant to provide the infrastructure needed to ensure success of the Strategic Diversity Plan and create a systematic process to communicate effectively throughout Texas A&M AgriLife with matters related to diversity and inclusiveness.

A successful process includes an effective communication plan. Given Texas A&M AgriLife’s structure and complexity, the attached Diversity Management Structure (see Figure 1) is proposed to provide transparency to the process, encourage employee engagement, and ensure all have an opportunity to engage in the change process. It is recommended both frameworks (Vice Chancellor Advisory Council and Diversity Team Leads) be considered when establishing the Strategic Diversity Management Plan.
The Diversity Management Structure is not meant as a reporting hierarchical structure to the Director of Diversity and Inclusion, but rather a means of information flow. With designated contacts in strategic positions within Texas A&M AgriLife (each entity) to assist in carrying out the strategic diversity plan, the proposed diversity management structure, enables information to systematically flow from the “bottom” of an organization (grassroots) to the “top” and vice versa rather easily. As such, information proposed at the grassroots level can make its way to the Chancellor’s Diversity Council.

Under the proposed plan, each organization will have a Diversity Team Lead that reports directly to the Agency Director on diversity matters. This person will be responsible for chairing their respective Diversity Council, made up from Diversity Advocates within each agency. The Team Leads will be selected from within the organization and will report to their current supervisor in addition to the Agency Director. In short, Diversity Team Leads will help lead the critical efforts of diversity and pluralism\(^3\), as an organizational culture that incorporates mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity among people who are diverse in the dimensions of human differences. Team Leads will be committed to organizing, developing, and implementing diversity initiatives, which contribute to the overall mission of the organization.

Diversity Advocates can be individuals within a district or county, research center, or department. This will allow advocates to be at the grassroots level and assist by promoting awareness, education, and appreciation for the diversity management process and activities to the department, center, or region. For a more complete list of duties and responsibilities for each, please see appendix A.

In addition to each agency or college diversity council, the Director of Diversity and Inclusion for Texas A&M AgriLife will chair the Vice Chancellor’s Advisory Council that will include each of the Diversity Team Leads in addition to other members deemed appropriate by the Vice Chancellor and Agency Directors. The purpose of championing the Vice Chancellor’s Advisory Council would be a “central point” of sharing information and addressing or carrying out initiatives that are relevant to the broader Texas A&M AgriLife addressed by Diversity Advocates and identified within each respective Diversity Council. This arrangement will allow the teams to build a cohesive structure, convey a consistent message across Texas A&M AgriLife, and build and sustain synergy by sharing resources. This will also aid Texas A&M AgriLife in developing its diversity management brand, strategy, and platform by using creative and innovative talent found within, and across agency lines, while maintaining a systematic process for sharing information.

*Diversity Management:* A comprehensive organizational and managerial process of planning for, organizing, directing, and supporting a collective mixture in a way that adds a measurable difference to organizational performance.
PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT
Texas A&M AgriLife

Statement of Purpose

Texas A&M AgriLife seeks to create and maintain an inclusive and diverse working and learning environment through the creation of a Strategic Diversity Management Plan, which includes a Diversity Management Structure to assist in recruiting, retaining, and rewarding employees using enhanced communication. The diversity management structure will help all persons feel welcomed, valued, and become their most productive throughout the organization. The ability to address a broad range of diversity issues found in the workplace, while reflecting a strong sensitivity and practice for effectively utilizing a diverse workforce in pursuit of organizational objectives\(^4\) can provide Texas AgriLife a competitive advantage. The diversity management structure will complement, and be aligned with, the organization’s mission and vision of serving a diverse clientele by providing enhanced diversity management capability for faculty, staff, and students.

Goals

1. Create a diversity management process that adds value to the organizations and employees within Texas A&M AgriLife.
2. Provide clarity in defining diversity and its various dimensions.
3. Provide a comprehensive, systematic process to create Texas A&M AgriLife’s diversity management strategy.
4. Create a diversity management process that ensures alignment with organizational and/or agency goals.
5. Garner administrative leadership, support, and commitment (ownership) to begin the next stages of developing the diversity management structure for Texas A&M AgriLife.

Execution Steps

1. Planning
   a. Create a holistic approach to governance and communication infrastructure.
   b. Acknowledge the commitment of needed budget resources to carry out the diversity management structure.
   c. Seek administrative leadership support & commitment (ownership).

2. Leadership
   a. Determine administration’s willingness to commit to the diversity management principles.
   b. Identify administration’s willingness to model desired attitudes, actions, and behaviors.
   c. Identify administration’s willingness to share and communicate the vision for diversity.
   d. Determine administrations leaders’ willingness to encourage employee engagement and accountability.

3. Assessment
   a. Determine cultural and climate environments within each of the organizations.
   b. Determine management and employee competence by using a tool such as the Personal Diversity Paradigm that will help us assess the organizations underlying beliefs about diversity management.
   c. Determine return on investment of diversity management practices by identifying metrics (formative and qualitative) to establish baseline data.

4. **Strategy**
   a. Select diversity team leads and diversity advocates to begin diversity management structure.
   b. Create and establish diversity councils for each organization.
   c. Create a strategic diversity management plan to include the diversity management vision and mission statement.
   d. Create data reporting structure and frequency.
   e. Consider demographics and the changing landscape as we create our strategic diversity management plan.

5. **Implementation**
   
   *Strategic Plans can include, but are not limited to:*
   
   a. Criteria pertaining to talent acquisition (i.e., recruiting, turnover per cost of recruit, hiring practices, promotion).
   b. Criteria and factors related to retention (i.e., turnover/attrition, succession planning, employee behavior, absenteeism, and mentoring).
   c. Additional topical areas for training and implementation will be identified by each diversity council such as cross-organizational functions, constituent groups, work process, etc.

6. **Training**
   
   a. Encourage organizational-wide use of the strengths-based philosophy.
   b. Implement diversity training relevant to organization’s diversity beliefs and values.
   c. Provide cultural awareness training essential to the Community of Respect philosophy.
   d. Provide coaching to employees as needed to carry out the diversity management plan.
   e. Use online modules to assist with training.
   f. Highlight various cultures and showcase their contribution to the organization.
   g. Encourage professional development opportunities to all employees.

7. **Organizational Impact (continued assessment)**
   
   a. Assess effective reporting methods and gather pertinent data to carry out organizational objectives.
   b. Conduct in-depth exit interviews and use data to improve upon company turnover of employees, especially populations from underserved groups.
   c. Establish an auditing system to help the organization’s accountability process.
   d. Promote and market the organization’s comprehensive diversity management efforts and successes.
   e. Ensure supplier relationships are in-line with the organization’s diversity management efforts.

Next Steps

1. Gain approval of the Agency Directors to proceed.
2. Begin to create the diversity management structure.
   a. Hire/select the Diversity Team Leads for each participating agency/organization
   b. Identify/recruit potential diversity advocates within each organization
   c. Establish Diversity Councils
      I. Provide orientation and training for councils.
      II. Anticipate and establish metrics administration may need to carry out the diversity management agenda with legislators and constituents.
      III. Diversity Councils will provide recommendations to respective directors
3. Identify Budget Commitment.
4. Identify types of assessment needed to establish baseline data and information.
References


Proposed Positions for Diversity Management Structure
Strategic Diversity Plan
Texas A&M AgriLife

Diversity Team Leads (Reports to Agency Director/Executive Associate Dean)
Diversity Team Leads help lead critical efforts of diversity and pluralism within an organization. Diversity Team Leads are committed to organizing, developing, and implementing diversity management initiatives, which contribute to the overall mission of the organization.

- Work collaboratively with the Director of Diversity and Inclusion
- Chair their organization’s Diversity Council
- Be an active member of the Vice Chancellor’s Advisory Council
- Report directly to the Directors/Dean of the organization and conveys matters related to diversity
- Be a liaison for the agency/college in diversity related matters, including, but not limited to external diversity councils to further the diversity agenda for the agency/college
- Make recommendations to Directors/Dean to enhance diversity related matters
- Provide recommendations about policy development matters to support the organization’s diversity management agenda
- Design and develop implementation plans to support program delivery
- Stipend: up to $ ______

Diversity Advocates (Department/Centers/District Level)
Advocates are responsible for promoting awareness, education, and appreciation of diversity management and training programs and activities to the department, center, or region.

- Work collaboratively with Diversity Team Leads
- Be the first line of contact by employees with concerns related to diversity issues
- Implement and help carry out activities to promote cultural awareness and education of workforce diversity related efforts
- Assist employees in understanding and utilizing workforce and behavioral diversity
- Be aware of trends, program data, and demographics in order to make recommendations to Diversity Team Leads about improving programming
- Collaborate with stakeholders in the community/centers/regions/departments to convey an inclusiveness in all programming efforts
- Be aware and sensitive to cultural differences and help bridge indifferences and misunderstandings due to workforce and behavioral diversity related matters
- Stipend: up to $ ______
Framework for Strategic Plan – Steps of Execution

PLANNING
- Governance
- Budget
- Diversity Management & Communication Infrastructure
- Administrative Leadership

LEADERSHIP
- Willingness to Commit to Diversity Principles
- Model Desired Attitudes
- Model Desired Actions
- Model Desired Behavior
- Communicate Diversity Vision
- Encourage Employee Engagement
- Accountability

ASSESSMENT
- Cultural & Climate Assessment
- Determine Management & Employee Competence
- Return on Investment
- Metrics (baseline data)
- Personal Diversity Paradigm Tool

STRATEGY
- Diversity Team Leads
- Diversity Advocates
- Diversity Councils
- Create Strategic Diversity Plan
- Diversity Vision & Mission Statements
- Reporting
- Demographics

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANS FOR EACH AGENCY
Strategic Plans can include, but are not limited to:

TALENT ACQUISITION
- Recruiting Plan
- Hiring Practices
- Turnover Per cost of Recruit
- Promotion

RETENTION
- Turnover/Attrition
- Employee Behavior
- Professional Development
- Absenteeism
- Succession Planning
- Mentoring

TRAINING
- Strengths-based Approach
- Diversity Management Training
- Cultural Awareness
- Coaching
- Online Modules
- Highlight Various Cultures

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT
- Reporting
- Exit Interviews
- Demographics
- Auditing
- Promotion and Marketing (PR)
- Supplier Relationships

Continuous Assessment