

Western Kentucky University

School of Media

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PLAN

adopted

October 2015

most recent revision

October 2022

MISSION STATEMENT

The School of Media strives to establish a more diverse community of faculty, staff, and students. We look to shape future leaders in our school who will continue to make covering an increasingly diverse society a priority. The School of Media is committed to welcoming and fostering a faculty and student body that includes all races, religions, gender identities, sexual orientations, and backgrounds. We strive to overcome the challenges from cultural bias and embrace new ideas and concepts that help bring issues important to diverse communities to light.

PURPOSE

The School of Media is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion for its faculty, staff, and students. Every effort is made to ensure that minority populations feel welcome and able to participate in activities, leadership roles, and development opportunities. The School of Media works to improve the lives of those who are overlooked, underrepresented, and marginalized and celebrates individuals with diverse backgrounds.

The SoM in this regard reflects the mission of its parent university: *Western Kentucky University is committed to empowering its campus community to embrace diversity by building equitable and inclusive learning, working, and living environments. At the heart of our mission, we seek to provide holistic education and employment experiences that prepare students, faculty, and staff to become effective scholars, contributors, and leaders in our diverse and evolving communities.*

DEFINITION of DIVERSITY, EQUITY, and INCLUSION

The School of Media defines diversity as a variety of perspectives from different racial, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds collaborating in a common space. The ways in which diversity can be expressed are vast and continue to develop as we grow as a global community. The School of Media defines equity and inclusion as the commitment to ensuring diverse communities receive support to achieve equal footing in order to succeed and are not excluded for reasons relating to their diversity.

Goal 1: Recruit and retain faculty and staff from under-represented groups

Strategies:

- 1) Position announcements will include diversity language and be posted in:
 - a) Accredited journalism/mass communication programs
 - b) Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication along with specific division announcements to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Transgender Interest Group, Commission on the Status of Women, Commission on the Status of Minorities and the Minorities and Communication Divisions.
 - c) Board of directors as well as social media groups for: National Association of Black Journalists, Native American Journalists Association, National Hispanic Journalists Association, Asian American Journalists Association, and National Association of Lesbian Gay Journalists Association.
 - d) Historically black colleges and universities with graduate programs in journalism and broadcasting.
- 2) The Director along with faculty will attend minority/multicultural journalists' conferences when possible as well as national journalism conventions such as BEA and AEJMC to recruit potential speakers as well as faculty members.
- 3) When there are qualified minority/female candidates in the pool of applicants, every effort will be made to include at least one such individual in each list to interview for a position.

Goal 2: Recruit and retain students from under-represented groups

Strategies:

- 1) The School of Media will appoint a faculty mentor each year to oversee the Academic Journey Mentorship Program to support the transition to WKU by students from under-represented groups.
- 2) The School of Media faculty will collaborate with the Dean's Office and Admissions to target under-represented prospective student groups.
- 3) The School of Media faculty and/or the Director will attend recruitment events coordinated by the university, particularly those targeted toward under-represented student groups. Faculty/Director will be accompanied by students from under-represented groups.
- 4) The School of Media will create programming designed to promote retention of students from under-represented groups by featuring student and/or professional work from under-represented groups, like the Women Photojournalists of Washington gallery exhibition hosted by the School of Media and The Fleischaker/Green Award for International Reporting.
- 5) The School of Media will support and grow scholarship opportunities for students from under-represented groups. The Joseph Dear Scholarship supports minority students and the Wilma Howard Klein Scholarship awards women majoring in broadcasting.
- 6) Other scholarships benefitting School of Media students include the Rufus B. Rogers Sports Broadcasting Scholarship (that supports women looking to go into sports broadcasting) and the Alfreda Thompson Memorial Scholarship that supports underrepresented students graduating from Christian County High Schools majoring in broadcasting.

Goal 3: Develop academic opportunities that promote a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion and challenge cultural bias. Embrace new ideas and concepts that help bring issues important to diverse communities to light.

Strategies:

- 1) The Diversity Committee will regularly review academic programs and make recommendations to the faculty and School leadership on areas for improvement in diversity.

- 2) The Diversity Committee will oversee the School's Academic Journey Mentor Program through a faculty mentor, providing guidance for student mentors as well as reporting student feedback to the School's Director and faculty and make recommendations for improvement.
- 3) The Diversity Committee will make recommendations on guest speakers and relevant campus events that offer diverse opportunities for students and/or can be integrated into School classes, events, and speaker series.
- 4) The Diversity Committee will regularly assess and revise the School's Diversity Plan and the measures used to assess success in diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 5) The School of Media will work to create an alumni board centered on diversity that represents all areas of the school. This board will assess how the school is advancing its goals in diversity through the eyes of our alumni/professionals.
- 6) The Diversity Committee will create a speaker series that represents diversity and equity in the media. Speakers would be encouraged to present topics and concepts about diversity and equity as it relates to their professional work.

Goal 4: Regularly assess the success of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives

Strategies:

- 1) The School of Media will measure enrollment and faculty representation of under-represented minority (URM) groups and assess whether the percentages meet or exceed representation in the state population
- 2) The School of Media will measure URM student success rates regularly with consideration to what DEI initiatives students did or did not participate in.
- 3) The Diversity Committee will keep regular logs of guest speakers and their demographic information.
- 4) The School of Media will keep regular logs of Kentucky high school recruiting events and their demographic information.
- 5) The Curriculum Committee will regularly assess course syllabi and provide feedback to faculty on opportunities for implementation of DEI.