**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working 5-year Strategic Plan**

**Department of Communication, University of California Santa Barbara**

*The Department of Communication at UC Santa Barbara strives to foster a community that is proactive and reflexive in the pursuit of an equitable and inclusive working environment. This 5-year plan was designed to guide ongoing work that is needed to facilitate and maintain a departmental culture that centers: inclusivity, a diversity of identities, equitable access to campus resources and social justice for all of its members.[[1]](#footnote-1) Strategy recommendations were designed to be meaningful, clear, and measurable. This plan should be reviewed at the beginning of each academic year by department leadership, including the department chair, the director of graduate studies, the undergraduate committee chair, the colloquia organizer, and the DEI committee. The review should culminate in an annual “report card” audit, led by the DEI Committee, which identifies progress toward goals as well as weaknesses in departmental implementation and opportunities for growth in a subset of key strategies. This annual audit should guide DEI committee initiatives in the subsequent year. The entire document should be revised to include new targets every five years, with a related five-year report published.*

**Key Objectives**

1. Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty & Staff
2. Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Graduate and Undergraduate Students
3. Community Research and Engagement
4. **Objective: Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty & Staff**

*A central goal of the department has been, and continues to be, focused on diversity in our hiring process. Based on a wealth of research outlining strategies for optimizing DEI among Senate and non-Senate faculty, our recommendation is to maximize clarity and consistency across all stages of the hiring process within and, as appropriate, across job searches. Below we outline various strategies for optimizing equitable recruitment and retention practices as a department.*

*Implementation and annual audit of these strategies will be the responsibility of all department members, with special attention from department leadership, the department business officer, search committees, and the DEI committee.*

*Strategy #1: Increase and focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Communication Department’s act of hiring new Senate and non-Senate faculty members.*

1. Hire premier candidates that reflect the diversity of communication interests and experiences represented by those in the field, the region, the campus, and the globe.
2. Strive for maximally diverse representation on hiring committees, within the restrictions reflected in the relevant areas of expertise, and while being cognizant of the burdens on faculty from underrepresented groups.
3. Consistently apply the 2021-22 revised hiring plan, which was designed to optimize an equitable and inclusive hiring experience for faculty and candidates. These changes include, but are not limited to:
   1. Designation of a DEI representative on every hiring committee that is responsible for reviewing, sharing, and encouraging application of university and department DEI recommendations.
   2. Use of a rubric created for evaluating each application to promote greater consistency and equity across job applicants.
   3. Use of a predetermined set of questions that the hiring committee and the DEI committee writes and asks all applicants within a search to better ensure consistency during the interview process. These questions will be shared with candidates in advance.
   4. Use of a faculty voting procedure that is clearly stated for all faculty participants in advance of the voting process.
4. Seek feedback from each new hire during their first year about their interview experience in order to continually improve the experience.

*Strategy #2: Bolster support for existing faculty, particularly those with identities or needs that may make them more vulnerable to marginalization within the campus community (e.g. are first-generation or international faculty, have a disability, come from underrepresented identity groups, etc.)*

1. Assign two faculty mentors- one in and one outside of the faculty research area- that can be a resource when new faculty have questions or concerns.
2. Assign a rotation of 2-4 faculty to reach out to new faculty members to ensure that they are welcomed during the first two quarters of their arrival (e.g. invitations to lunch or coffee, email check ins to support family needs, etc.)
3. Encourage new hire participation in the college mentorship program designed to support new faculty with resources outside of the department.
4. The DEI chair will reach out to each new faculty within the first two quarters on campus in order to provide broad support and specific DEI-related resources (e.g. bias-incident report; department religious holiday calendar; connection to groups of interest across campus).
5. Continue to build a department climate that is warm and welcoming for all faculty, staff and student members through regular community-building social events and semi-regular participation in workshops designed to improve DEI-related climate within the department community.

*Strategy #3: Ensure ongoing support for all members of department administrative staff, particularly those with identities or needs that may make them more vulnerable to marginalization within the campus community (e.g. are first-generation or international faculty, have a disability, come from underrepresented identity groups, etc.)*

1. Ensure that staff are actively invited and encouraged to attend department events, including social events, colloquia, DEI workshops, awards ceremonies, and any other community building opportunity.
2. Pair each staff member with 1-2 faculty buddies each year that are tasked with being a social support and an informal liaison between faculty and staff culture. This is intended to ease information flow and encourage community building.
3. Pair each staff member (excluding the Student Affairs Manager) with 1-2 graduate student buddies each year that are tasked with being a social support and an informal liaison between graduate student and staff culture. This is intended to ease information flow and encourage community building.
4. The DEI chair will reach out to each new staff member within the first quarter of their arrival in the department to provide broad support and specific DEI-related resources (e.g. bias-incident report; department religious holiday calendar; connection to groups of interest across campus).
5. The DEI chair will host at least one informal check-in with all staff during the academic year to provide broad support and remind all staff of specific DEI-related resources (e.g. bias-incident report; department religious holiday calendar; connection to groups of interest across campus).
6. Staff are committed to the success of the department and its members, often working long hours with insufficient compensation. Faculty and students can ease these burdens by being considerate of staff time and efforts, and taking opportunities to actively acknowledge and appreciate this work (e.g. participating in staff appreciation events, advocating for staff resources, including staff at social events, etc.).

**2. Objective: Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Graduate and Undergraduate Students**

*Creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning environment is central to both graduate and undergraduate student success in both research and teaching. Ongoing efforts to understand the student experience and adjust practices as needed is central to accomplishing this goal. Below we outline strategies for optimizing student recruitment and retention practices, improving faculty-grad mentorship experiences, as well as ways to enhance the pedagogical experience of our Communication student body.*

*Implementation and annual audit of these strategies will be the responsibility of all department members, with special attention from department leadership, the graduate committee, the undergraduate committee, and the DEI committee.*

*Strategy #1: Increase the diversity of our graduate student body.*

1. Remove GRE from graduate admissions.
2. Intensify outreach to minority-serving institutions with highly ranked undergraduate Communication programs.
3. Ensure an equitable and transparent division of graduate student resources. This includes, but is not limited to office assignments, TA assignments, and graduate student awards.
4. Express support of graduate students’ varied career paths.
   1. Make explicit that graduate students are not required to go into academia, much less research intensive (“R1”) institutions.
   2. Support multiple research paths and provide ideas for how graduate students can explore those options (e.g., continue to provide, and increase, professionalization panels with former graduate students who are currently in professions outside academia).
   3. Support graduate students who choose to focus on teaching at both RI and private institutions and provide ideas for how students can explore those options.
5. Participate in available workshops to learn techniques for viewing graduate admissions more equitably and holistically on a semi-regular basis.

*Strategy #2: Develop inclusive pedagogy and mentorship practices, and promote a welcoming and supportive environment for graduate students.*

1. Broaden methodological tools by offering courses in quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods.
2. Include a graduate representative on each of our major committees—at faculty meetings, the undergraduate committee meetings, the DEI committee, and some graduate committee meetings.
3. Build relationships with graduate students through multiple social hours per quarter with faculty and graduate students.
4. Communicate transparently with graduate students about changes regarding DEI in order to help grads stay informed and engaged. These exchanges could include but are not limited to: informational emails, open office hours, quarterly newsletters, and/or lunch feedback sessions for discussing concerns.
5. Provide peer supports for graduate students, such as graduate student buddies.
6. Assign each graduate student a faculty mentor from outside their area of interest that is a resource for support and questions about department life or norms during their time at UCSB.
7. Faculty, staff, and graduate students should both participate in available workshops to learn techniques for enhancing equitable and inclusive pedagogy and graduate mentorship.
8. Faculty advisors should meet regularly with students and communicate expectations for advisees with transparency, aided by [graduate mentorship resources](https://www.comm.ucsb.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion-page) available on the department website. Graduate students and/or advisors who encounter problems communicating with one another should seek and receive the support of the chair and graduate advisor to help facilitate open communication.
9. Hire faculty that represent the diversity of our graduate students so that students can see their own experiences modeled by department mentors.

*Strategy #3: Increase support and develop inclusive pedagogy for diverse undergraduate students.*

1. Develop a living document of resources for inclusive pedagogy, mentorship, and research practices.
2. Review the material from the CITRAL/ONDAS Teaching Seminar on Inclusive Teaching and organize resources tailored to our department needs (e.g., Comm-specific, lower/upper div, large class sizes).
3. Gather and share experiences from individual instructors and organize them by course levels and topic areas (e.g., lower division, upper division, graduate, interpersonal, media, organizational).
4. Offer regular training for instructors in collaboration with the UCSB Center for Innovative Teaching, Research, and Learning or our own LPSOE faculty.
5. Incorporate inclusive teaching as a topic in our required pedagogical training graduate seminar.
6. Consider incentivizing and rewarding DEI efforts in teaching.
7. Continue to support the lower division Learning Assistant Program, an undergraduate mentoring program for pre-major students attempting to get into the Communication major.
8. Continue to grow the undergraduate career mentoring for students entering the workforce through the Department of Communication Alumni Council.
9. Showcase grad student DEI related research in classes or other contexts where undergrads can connect and be informed.
10. Continue to build a department climate that is warm and welcoming for all students through regular community-building social events.
11. Hire faculty that represent the diversity of our undergraduate students so that students can see their own experiences modeled by department teachers.

**3. Community Research and Engagement**

*The faculty at the Department of Communication have contributed to diversity, equity, and inclusion through their research activities in various ways. This includes, but is not limited to research that investigates the many barriers that minority communities experience as well as strategies for overcoming those challenges, through novel theoretical and methodological application and development. Most of this research can be used for specific and sustained changes in how minority groups are perceived or treated. Below we outline strategies for broadening the exposure and impact of that research.*

*Implementation and annual audit of these strategies will be the responsibility of all department members, with special attention from department leadership, colloquia organizers, graduate committee, and the DEI committee.*

*Strategy #1: Support diverse communities through research done by the Department of Communication.*

1. Highlight and celebrate research with a focus on external validity that allows for the unbiased representation of minority groups and helps to ensure the relevance of communication theory across demographic groups.
2. Cultivate and incentivize access to difficult to reach communities.
3. Invite high impact scholars conducting DEI conscious research that address novel theories and use novel populations for our colloquia.
4. Create small competitive research grants for DEI research activities and community engagement research activities available to graduate students and/or faculty.
5. Actively recruit URM undergraduate students as research assistants and involve them in high-quality DEI research.

*Strategy #2: Engaging the public with evidenced-based recommendations to make change in the community and beyond.*

1. Translate findings published in academic journal articles into a language that the broader public can understand and re-publish findings in forms and venues that can be easily accessed by the general public (consider writing press articles, animated stories, podcasts, etc.).
2. Actively reach out to hard to reach communities to share relevant findings.

1. We define diversity in reference to the standing UC Regents diversity statement. That statement, which can be read [here](https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/4400.html), defines diversity as, “*the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and geographic region, and more*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)