

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


From its inception, A.T. Still University (“University”) exemplified a pioneering spirit by including women in its inaugural class, at a time when other medical schools were exclusionary. As the healthcare needs of underserved populations have continued to grow, today’s health professionals require heightened support, training, and knowledge to best serve diverse populations. Culturally proficient healthcare providers are better equipped to serve the diverse populations they will encounter, and campus communities that attract and embrace all forms of difference will be most successful in providing students the tools and knowledge needed to attain cultural proficiency.

The 2011-15 University Strategic Plan, developed by the entire University community, identified diversity as a University priority. The Diversity Initiative Task Force (Task Force) flowed naturally out of the University Strategic Plan and charted a path by which the University could identify and achieve its goals. In November 2012, the Task Force produced a comprehensive report that identified University strengths and challenges and made specific recommendations to enhance the learning environment. The report documented tremendous diversity efforts throughout the University community and recognized the value in consolidating such efforts under a department tasked with developing a comprehensive, data-driven, and mission-specific strategy. In 2013, recognizing the increasing healthcare needs of underserved populations, the University president identified diversity as a core institutional priority. The momentum created by these events led to the hiring of an inaugural director of diversity, the creation of an Advisory Council on Diversity (ACOD), and the development of this Diversity Strategic Plan (DSP).

This DSP provides relevant background information to substantiate the increasing institutional prioritization, defines the University’s overall vision through two strategic initiatives, and identifies goals as strategies to achieve its vision. Every goal has an objective, metric, target, and the person(s) who will work closely with the diversity director to help accomplish the objective. It is anticipated the DSP will incorporate seamlessly into the 2016-20 University Strategic Plan.

DSP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

While diversity-related initiatives have been developed and implemented across the University, this DSP is designed to consolidate and centrally coordinate continuing efforts. The diversity director became familiar with the infrastructure and assessed University culture through a series of individual, department, and group discussions on both campuses. Such an approach recognized the value of efforts to date and set



the tone for diversity to be developed and nurtured institutionally, with a strong emphasis on inclusive aspects of strategy development.

An inclusive atmosphere is vital for long-term success; therefore, this strategic planning process included broad representation from campus constituent groups. This led to the creation of ACOD on Jan. 1, 2014, a body recommended in the Task Force report. Primary objectives of ACOD are to provide University leadership on relevant efforts and serve as adviser to the diversity director. A primary goal for ACOD was to create a University Diversity Strategic Plan, with a final or near-final draft to be presented to the Board of Trustees by the end of 2014. Inclusivity was paramount in the development of ACOD; deans were asked to appoint two faculty members from their schools to serve two-year terms. Permanent representation on ACOD includes president's staff, deans' council, Human Resources, and chairs of Faculty Senate and divisional diversity committees, along with student members identified through the University Student Association and/or Student Government Association.

ACOD meets at least quarterly. The September meeting is a two-day planning retreat; members gather at a central location to participate. The University provides, through the Diversity department, funding to support all costs related to the annual retreat.

ACOD met in January, March, and June of 2014, using video conferencing technology. The purpose of these meetings was to establish structure and take steps toward developing a DSP. Great progress was achieved, including an organizational structure for ACOD, an operational definition of diversity, and thoughtful, collaborative consideration of DSP content. The September 2014 annual retreat of ACOD was designed to make significant progress on the DSP. The meeting was framed by comments by Craig Phelps, DO, president, about the institutional impact of the strategic planning process. Norman Gevitz, PhD, senior vice president-academic affairs, and Michael McManis, PhD, vice president for planning, assessment, and institutional effectiveness, commented about the University-wide strategic planning process and its relationship to the diversity strategic plan. Keith Shaw, vice president for human resources at Turbomeca USA, and Jason Thompson, director of diversity for the USA Olympic Committee, were invited to share valuable insight into a legal case and a business case for diversity, reinforcing ATSU's efforts to strategically plan long-term success for the University's diversity initiative. The social justice case for diversity is marked by the realization that society is quickly becoming a minority majority; to alleviate healthcare disparities, it is paramount more people from historically underrepresented populations are added to the pipeline of health professions education.

The results of ACOD's strategic planning exercises were synthesized, and a draft DSP prepared for review and comment by ACOD, the diversity committee of the Board of Trustees, and the entire University community. The DSP was refined in response to

feedback, and a final draft was presented to the president for his review and approval.

DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY

The following definition of diversity was approved by ACOD:

Diversity encompasses an authentic understanding and appreciation of difference and, at its core, is based upon the value each human being brings to our society and each person's access and opportunities to contribute to our University's cultural proficiency.

DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The following DSP was developed by ACOD under the leadership of the diversity director using the 2011-15 University Strategic Plan as a guide. This DSP is intended to serve as a roadmap to support the diversity priority of the 2016-20 University Strategic Plan, which is currently in the last stages of development. The fundamental question ACOD asked for every proposed initiative was "Does this initiative support the current and developing University Strategic Plan and, if so, how?"

The Diversity Strategic Initiatives under this Plan are:

1. Promote a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible University community that values and encourages diversity; and
2. Promote cultural proficiency throughout the University community.

The Diversity Strategic Initiatives support the 2011-15 University Strategic Plan and are crafted with the expectation of supporting and strengthening the 2016-20 University Strategic Plan.

The Diversity Strategic Initiatives are strengthened by specific goals:

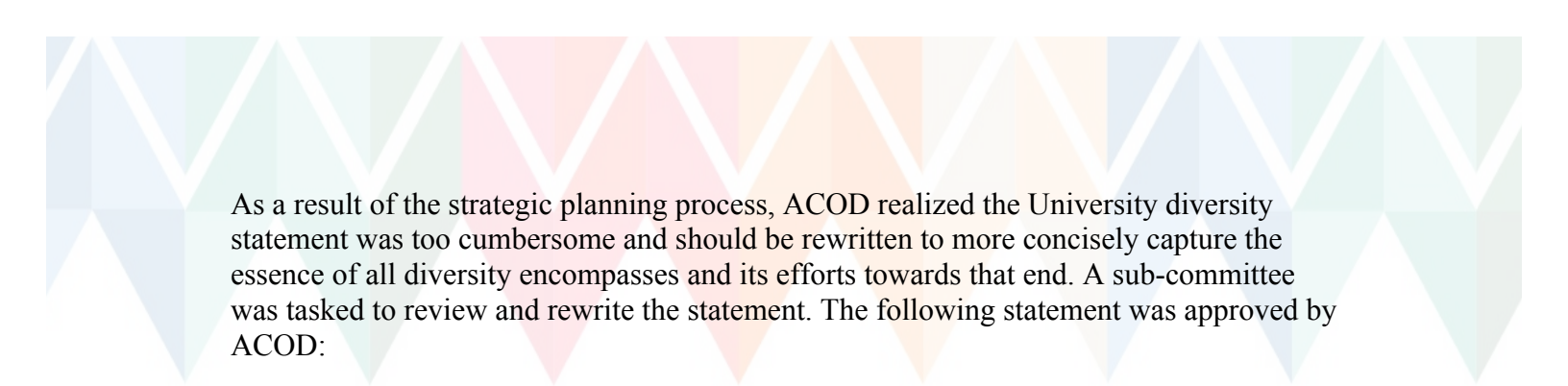
1. Promote a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible University community that values and encourages diversity; and
 - a. Enhance all ATSU virtual and print publications to demonstrate ATSU's commitment to diversity
 - b. Increase ATSU visibility among diverse populations
 - c. Increase diversity of student population to be more reflective of communities served
 - d. Improve physical accessibility on ATSU campuses
 - e. Organize and promote events and programs celebrating diversity
 - f. Promote awareness of campus programs and services for at-risk populations

2. Promote cultural proficiency throughout the University community.
 - a. Develop an Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion
 - b. Unite existing diversity efforts under an overarching diversity committee
 - c. Foster synergy throughout the ATSU community using common language and practices regarding diversity
 - d. Develop learning opportunities to enhance sensitivity to diverse populations
 - e. Implement diversity education to promote a non-biased hiring and student recruitment processes

Each goal is connected to at least one objective and corresponding metrics to assess success. The planning committee noted the importance of having accountability to ensure movement towards goal completion. Each goal has a responsible party. In most cases more than one department is accountable.

During a DSP implementation meeting in June 2015, ACOD developed a framework utilizing an adaptation of the, “Contextually-Responsive Planning and Development and Evaluation Spiral” by Dr. Hazel Symonette, (2006). ACOD developed workgroup chairs for each goal to oversee data collection and reporting. A reporting timeline (below) was established for consistency in the planning process, and to be congruent with the University strategic plan implementation process.

DATE	LOGIC MODEL	TASKS	Work Group #	Due Date
JUNE	BY WHAT	Forward DSP Assessment Reporting forms to supporting parties	All	June 30 th
ROLLING	THE WHO	GPS selections committee applicant reviews	Scholarship committee	-
SEPTEMBER	THE WHAT	Review DSP Assessment Reporting Forms	All	Annual Retreat
SEPTEMBER	THE WHAT	Climate Survey review (possible start July 2016)	Campus Community	TBD
OCTOBER	THE WHAT	Compile Faculty/Staff Demographics for BOT reporting	Diversity Dept.	December 31 st
NOVEMBER	THE WHAT	Compile CHC Demographics for BOT reporting	Diversity Dept.	December 31 st
DECEMBER	THE WHAT	Compile Student Demographics (incl. trajectory data) for BOT reporting	Diversity Dept.	December 31 st
DECEMBER	SO WHAT	Review Assessment Reporting forms	DSP steering committee	December 31 st
DECEMBER	SO WHAT	Review of Assessment Reporting Forms	All	February 28 th
FEBRUARY	SO WHAT	Departmental/Program Review of Reporting Forms	All	March 31 st



As a result of the strategic planning process, ACOD realized the University diversity statement was too cumbersome and should be rewritten to more concisely capture the essence of all diversity encompasses and its efforts towards that end. A sub-committee was tasked to review and rewrite the statement. The following statement was approved by ACOD:

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

ATSU believes excellence requires understanding, affirming and valuing human difference.

ATSU has positioned itself to live up to its vision to be a preeminent University by aligning its DSP process with the University strategic planning process and tying those processes to the budgeting cycle. The work accomplished in the DSP is espoused in six institutional priorities in the University strategic plan:

1. Responsibly Enhance the University System
2. Enhance Financial Resources
3. Launch a University-wide Diversity initiative
4. Develop a comprehensive Marketing and Internet Strategy
5. Adopt a common calendar
6. Complete Campus Facilities Master Plans

These priorities when accomplished will allow the University to continue moving the needle forward towards cultural proficiency.