HIGHLIGHTS OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS’ EFFORTS TO ADVANCE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Office of the Provost Report

2016-17 Academic Year

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INTRODUCTION

Diversity, inclusion and community engagement are essential cornerstones of Vanderbilt’s commitment to equity and trans-institutional discovery and learning. The challenges and opportunities presented by the communities and countries embedded in our global landscape necessitate leveraging diverse perspectives through interdisciplinary endeavors. Whether it is in solving societal problems or discovering new and disruptive knowledge and technologies that fundamentally shift our human endeavor, the diversity of thought that we seek demands that we engage faculty and students from a broad array of backgrounds and experiences. The potency of our institutional legacy rests upon our success in doing so.

This is the second annual report on equity, diversity and inclusivity produced by the Office of the Provost. This report highlights many of the efforts produced across Academic Affairs. This is not an exhaustive list of all activities but highlights the visions and direction embraced across campus in areas reporting to the Provost’s Office. The report focuses on both new and on-going initiatives, administrative changes, committees, approaches and outcomes across all 10 schools and colleges as well as the Academic Affairs administration. In all, the university continues to institutionalize change that encourages a lasting positive effect on equity, diversity, inclusion and community engagement at Vanderbilt.

During the 2016-17 academic year, tensions, fear for safety and concern across campus were heightened as the Vanderbilt community and world became more aware of violent attacks against the unarmed in the U.S. and abroad, socially divisive language and actions emerged from the U.S. Presidential campaign and election, and the U.S. federally imposed international travel ban increased anxiety among students, faculty and staff. These events led some groups and individuals to question whether their place in our community was valued. A number of initiatives at Vanderbilt were spawned to provide support to marginalized groups, educate the broader community and re-articulate Vanderbilt’s values. Post-election panel discussions and open houses provided opportunities for free-flowing dialogue regarding the election outcome. Additionally, some students organized and demanded the university declare itself a “sanctuary campus.”

The Provost’s November newsletter sent a clear message that the university not only appreciates diversity but considers it critical to our mission. The recurrent message across numerous Academic Affairs communications emphasized that bringing together community members from diverse backgrounds and with unique viewpoints allows for the exchange of ideas that is at the core of learning. In addition, distributed communications clarified the university’s commitment to protecting individuals in our community and outlined resources available to all students and for international students in particular.
Additional efforts were launched this year in response to recommendations made in the report issued by the Chancellor’s Committee on Diversity, Inclusion and Community. The university’s first Vice Provost for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Melissa Thomas-Hunt, was successfully recruited, and unconscious bias workshops for faculty search committees were offered. We continue to make great strides in increasing faculty diversity to better mirror our increasingly diverse student body.

**Defining Diversity & Inclusion**

To make progress on advancing diversity, as an institution we must be clear on what we mean. Individuals self-identify along a number of lines ranging from race, gender and ethnicity to disability, sexuality, religion and political preferences. Each identity is significant in its own right but a high degree of intersectionality exists among them. We must create an environment where all feel valued and welcome, with special attention to groups that have been marginalized. This broad definition of diversity, which encompasses all of these differentiators, is considered in all of our efforts. Each acting office, department or organization considers to what extent these various identifiers should be considered in efforts to advance, diversity, equity and inclusion. Our data tracking efforts are limited, however, to race, gender and ethnicity.

- **URM – Underrepresented minority** – For the purpose of this report, the data capturing “URM” refers to African-American or black, Hispanic and Native American. While these specific groups are considered URM university-wide, the groups that are underrepresented vary by school/college and department.

- **Minority** (also referred to as “person of color”) – For the purpose this report, the data capturing “minority” refers to African American, Hispanic, Asians, international of color, and two or more races.

- **Gender** – Gender is classified as either men or women. To date, we do not have gender identity data.

**ADMINISTRATION**

This year, Provost Office initiatives ranged from charging a committee to recruit the university’s first Vice Provost for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to launching an ambitious post-doctoral program to increase the pipeline of URM faculty. Additionally, the office continued to advance the university’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion through Academic Strategic Plan initiatives including Trans-Institutional Program and University Course awards.

To summarize:

- Melissa Thomas-Hunt of the University of Virginia was successfully recruited by a cross-campus committee of students and faculty to be the university’s first Vice Provost for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The new vice provost will have broad responsibilities for supporting students and faculty. She will also be responsible for ensuring that efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion are incorporated across all key strategic initiatives in academic affairs.
• The Faculty Committee on Campus Planning Consultation on Building Art Initiatives was established by the Office of the Provost to explore themes and, by extension, images that will resonate, facilitate and reflect inclusiveness and provide opportunities to index a wide range of disciplines.

• Academic Pathways: An Initiative for Academic Diversity was launched (see sidebar). This program, administered by the Graduate School, represents an ambitious postdoctoral training initiative designed to prepare recently graduated doctorates for competitive academic careers with a particular focus on recruiting recent graduates who come from diverse racial, ethnic and other backgrounds. Each recruit is awarded a competitive stipend for a post-doctoral fellowship. Like traditional postdoctoral programs, the Academic Pathways Postdoctoral Fellowship will emphasize academic research and scholarship, but will also include enhanced professional and leadership development training and robust mentoring. The initiative is designed to provide fellows with important opportunities to develop the teaching, mentoring and service experience that will make them highly competitive candidates for academic positions. The program is funded in part by a National Science Foundation AGEP grant (Arts & Science and Engineering) in addition to support from the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Chancellor.

• Funding was awarded for the development of two new multicultural University Courses: 1) Race, Place and Power and 2) Rhythm of Change: African Music and African Politics. University Courses, an initiative established by the Academic Strategic Plan, was launched in 2015 to provide funding to faculty for courses either taught outside of their home department/school or for courses co-taught by faculty from different schools/colleges. These courses leverage the natural synergies across Vanderbilt’s 10 schools and colleges, reaching beyond departmental boundaries to tackle important subjects. A special call was made for course proposals that specifically address topics tied to diversity, equity and inclusion, race and ethnicity, identity literacy and/or cultural competency within an interdisciplinary setting.

The Inaugural Cohort of Academic Pathways Post-Doctoral Fellows

• Lillian Brady, who earned a Ph.D. in cell, molecular and developmental biology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Brady will join the lab of Heidi Hamm, who holds the Aileen M. Lange and Annie Mary Lyle Chair in the Department of Pharmacology.

• Kyndra Cleveland, who earned a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of California — Irvine. Cleveland will be mentored by Judy Garber, professor of psychology and human development, and Jennifer Trueblood, assistant professor of psychology.

• Diego Mesa, who earned a Ph.D. in bioengineering from the University of California – San Diego. Mesa will work with Tom Lasko, assistant professor of biomedical informatics, and Eugene Vorobeychik, assistant professor of computer science and computer engineering.

• Rashanique Quarrels, who earned a Ph.D. in chemistry from Louisiana State University. Quarrels will join the lab of Jeffrey Johnston, the Stevenson Professor of Chemistry.

• Monica Ridgeway, who earned a Ph.D. in instruction and the science of learning from the University of Buffalo. Ridgeway’s mentors are Ebony McGee, assistant professor of diversity and STEM education, and William Robinson, associate professor of electrical engineering and computer engineering.

• Dean Stolworthy, who earned a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Brigham Young University. Stolworthy will work with Karl Zelik, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, and Michael Goldfarb, H. Fort Flowers Professor of mechanical engineering.

• Joy Garnett, who earned a Ph.D. in physics from Vanderbilt. Garnett will be working at NSF AGEP partner school Fisk University with Arnold Burger, professor of physics.
• A number of trans-institutional centers that advance research and awareness of race, ethnicity and culture were given support including The Center for Research on Men’s Health, Vocations in Racial Justice and the Divinity School Public Theology and Racial Justice Collaborative. Vocations in Racial Justice won funding through Trans-Institutional Programs (TIPs), an initiative of the Academic Strategic Plan. The program is working to develop a curriculum for training vocational activists and scholars to prepare future leaders with a broad-based competency across disparate disciplines. The Center for Men’s Health is a university-wide research center with a two-pronged mission aimed at promoting men’s health and reducing health disparities. The center’s first projects focus on African American and Latino males. The Luce Foundation awarded a $1 million grant to the Divinity School Public Theology and Racial Justice Collaborative to create a hub to train theologians to develop local and national strategies to break down racial barriers that impede advancing a more just society.

• Ifeoma Nwankwo was appointed the Associate Provost for Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships. She is charged with ensuring broad participation in campus strategic initiatives and in further developing partnerships with regional Historically-Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other area schools.

• University Librarian Valerie Hotchkiss is supporting Nashville Mayor Megan Barry’s Opportunity Now program which serves to place young people in jobs and internships during the summer and after school. Three Nashville teens are working in the special collections library.

**FACULTY RECRUITMENT**

Changes in our recruiting and faculty search processes over the last two years have yielded dividends in the recruitment of excellent and diverse faculty, and we continue to make gains in increasing faculty diversity to better mirror our increasingly diverse student body.

• Of the 61 offers extended this academic year, 45 were accepted. Nearly one third of those accepted are URM (29%), 33% are minority and 58% are female. *See table below.*

• Significant gains were made in hiring mid-career and senior-level URM faculty, a critical need area as they serve as mentors to junior faculty. A search for the John L. Siegenthaler Chair in America History led to the successful recruitment of Professor Rhonda Williams from Case Western. The College of Arts & Science anticipates confirming the first holder of the Dorothy J. Phillips Chancellor Faculty Fellow to Support Diversity in STEM in the coming days, and Peabody College successfully recruited Professor Richard Milner back to Vanderbilt from the University of Pittsburgh. Melissa Thomas-Hunt, newly appointed Vice Provost for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, will join the faculty of the Owen Graduate School of Management.

• More than 50 faculty members attended one of two unconscious bias workshops offered by the Office of the Provost for faculty search committees. The sessions were led by Professor Efren Perez, an expert in the area.
New Faculty Hires | 2013-14 | 2015-16 | 2016-17
---|---|---|---
% Women | 48% | 49% | 58%
% Minority/Of Color (African American, Hispanic, Asians, International of color, and 2 or more races) | 14% | 41% | 33%
% URM (African American, Hispanic and Native American) | 7% | 35% | 29%

**Faculty Retention and Development**

Given the national dialogue around the need for increased URM faculty, Vanderbilt’s peer institutions are implementing aggressive and innovative recruiting tactics. Competition to keep our best faculty remains strong. Our overall retention rate was 80%. For this year (from August 2016 through May 2017), as outlined in the table below, our retention rates were not the same across all demographic groups with the lowest retention rate being among women faculty. As we continue to collect data on retention we will be able to better determine patterns over time. The Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs continues to expand efforts that support faculty professional development and increase the likelihood of successful retention. Programs like Chancellor Faculty Fellows and Provost Research Studios are infusing resources and funding to faculty at critical career junctions. These programs benefit all faculty and URM faculty in particular.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Retention</th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cases</td>
<td>Retained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31 (82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15 (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URM (African American, Hispanic and Native American)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority/Of Color (African American, Hispanic, Asians, International of color, and 2 or more races)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12 (80%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The **Faculty Development and Diversity** website was expanded to better promote funding opportunities, faculty awards and numerous professional development tools and trainings.
- **Provost Research Studios** were launched as an innovative program for junior faculty designed to advance mentoring by providing funding for faculty to invite senior scholars from outside Vanderbilt to campus for advice and timely input on research, scholarship and networking. This is a particularly important tool for URM faculty looking to expand their search for mentors beyond campus.
- In spring 2016, Vanderbilt had one of the highest response rates to date for any university that has participated in the **COACHE faculty satisfaction survey**. To capitalize on the
findings and to ensure the analysis remains faculty driven, in fall 2016, the Provost and Chief Diversity Officer George Hill appointed a faculty working group to analyze the results. The group identified trends among demographic groups. For instance, faculty of color and URM faculty were more likely to give lower ratings on questions than white (non-Hispanic) faculty. The findings will form the basis for university-wide recommendations to address concerns. A deans’ working group was also formed to develop school-based action plans.

- Peabody College developed a year-long mentoring program for URM faculty members.

**SCHOOL AND COLLEGE-BASED ACTIVITIES**

Lecture series across all schools and colleges are serving to advance conversations surrounding race and ethnicity. Series are also being implemented to bring together URM faculty for research talks and performances as these faculty members often become targets for future hires. Graduate and professional schools continue to refine and innovate recruitment strategies to increase URM enrollment, and new student organizations and leadership programs provide additional support, resources and opportunities for URM, minority and international students.

- The **Graduate School** continues to expand efforts in the recruitment and retention of students from underrepresented backgrounds. Efforts to foster greater community and engagement among graduates students include professional development events and a Dean’s reading series. The chosen reading, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman, engaged students in discussions about multi-disciplinary approaches. Next year’s reading, *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly, centers on three African-American women mathematicians and the challenges they overcame.

- This year, 25% of **Peabody College**’s current PhD commitments are from underrepresented minorities. To continue advancing dialogue around the experiences of minorities, Peabody hosted five major EDI-based events and launched a new organization for international students.

- The **School of Nursing** is in the process of establishing a partnership with Morehouse School of Medicine to host undergraduate students from Atlanta-based HBCUs for research internships related to nursing. The school also launched the Dean’s Diversity Lecture Series, hosting three lectures by nurse leaders from diverse backgrounds.

- The **School of Engineering** continued its lecture series, Emerging Scholars in Engineering, which targets young, promising graduate students and post-doctoral fellows from underrepresented groups in STEM fields. In addition, Associate Dean William Robinson presented at more than half a dozen meet meetings and conferences on the topic of underrepresented groups in STEM. The school continues to excel in the percentage of female undergraduates.

- The **Owen Graduate School of Management** expanded participation in Management Leadership for Tomorrow, Forte, ROMBA, by sending students to related conferences. The school continues developing student feeder partnerships that target underrepresented groups. The school also established orientation sessions on diversity for incoming
students; integrated diversity content, including new software tool into a fall MBA core class; and started “Humans of Owen” modeled after the “Humans of New York” photography series that uses story telling techniques to share backgrounds and personal stories.

- The Blair School of Music hosted 16 performances by a diverse group of faculty, composers and guest artists. The effort, which began two years ago, promotes the cultural diversity of music in society. In addition the Blair School added a course titled, “Music, Art and Disability,” to their curriculum further expanding students’ opportunity to consider the importance of diversity and inclusion.

- The Divinity School hosted an EDI Emerging Scholar Lecture in April and has planned for all major lectures to feature minority individuals during the 2017-18 academic year. This year, 22 of the 75 Divinity School admitted students are underrepresented minorities.

- Through continued targeted efforts including attending minority admissions fairs, aggressive recruiting and competitive scholarship support, the Law School continues to rank first among the nation’s top 20 law schools in African-American student representation.

- The School of Medicine Basic Sciences is preparing URM Ph.D. students for faculty careers through a new collaboration with the Owen School, which will provide training in skills development essential to leadership.

- The College of Arts and Science’s signature graduate diversity programs—including our “bridge” programs with Fisk and TSU that have made Vanderbilt a leading producer of underrepresented minority Ph.Ds in the sciences—were cemented with dedicated lines for incoming doctoral students and professional development funding support.

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT LIFE**

Since the introduction of Opportunity Vanderbilt in 2008, Vanderbilt has made significant strides in increasing the diversity of its student body. Vanderbilt remains a leader among AAU institutions with respect to the percentage of African-American students enrolled, and University Enrollment Affairs continues to expand its efforts to recruit underrepresented minorities with new strategies aimed at increasing access and targeting first-generation students. The Dean of the Martha Rivers Ingram Commons is adding more avenues for introducing equity, diversity and inclusion programming into the first-year experience. The Dean of Students (DOS) continues to expand services and staff to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. In addition, the DOS reorganized certain offices in innovative ways to increase synergies across services provided to URM students.

**Enrollment**

- Total undergraduate first-year minority population increased from 38.8% in 2015 to 41.2% in 2016, not including international students.

- Total undergraduate first-year URM population increased from 20.1% in 2015 to 21.7% in 2016, not including international students.

- Total minority undergraduate student population increased from 33.5% in 2015 to 36.3% in 2016, not including international students.
Total undergraduate URM student population increased from 14.4% in 2015 to 15.5% in 2016, not including international students.

Martha Rivers Ingram Commons
- The Martha River Ingram Commons’ Faculty Heads of House selected *Strong Inside: Perry Wallace and the Collision of Race and Sports in the South* as the 2016-17 Commons Reading.
- Vanderbilt Visions (mentor-led, first-year group meetings) included modules on resiliency, identity and differences that use *Strong Inside* as a basis for launching conversations among diverse groups of students.
- The 10th Annual Lawson Lecture, held to complement the 1st year reading, featured Perry Wallace, *Strong Inside* author Andrew Maraniss and Godfrey Dillard, a prominent subject in the book.
- Two “rolling seminars” took students to sites around Nashville to learn about Perry Wallace’s Nashville as well as the city’s role in the Civil Rights Movement.
- The student organization VUcept expanded its commitment to diversity, engagement and inclusion for all students. Evidence of success included a more diverse applicant pool among student VUceptors and a parallel increase in both the diversity and the number of applicants for faculty VUceptors.
- Teaming up with Vanderbilt’s nationally-ranked Debate Team, the Commons hosted viewing events around each one of the presidential debates, followed by small-group discussions facilitated by student and faculty partners to talk about each debate during the historic 2016 election season.

Dean of Students
- The Social Justice and Identity division of the Dean of Students was created in 2016 and serves to educate students on pertinent issues of social justice, identity and advocacy. The division oversees several offices including The Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center (BCC), University Chaplain and Religious Life, Inclusion Initiatives and Cultural Competence, LGBTQI Life. This year, the division expanded its staff by hiring an Assistant Dean and Director of the BCC, Assistant Directors in the BCC, Religious Life, and International Students and Scholar Services (ISSS) and Program Coordinators in LGBTQI Life and the Women’s Center. Activities among the various offices include the following:
  - The BCC expanded the BCC Ambassa’Dores program, which provides black undergraduates with intense mentoring and personal development.
  - The University Chaplain and Religious Life Office officially recognized Vanderbilt’s first Imam (as an affiliated chaplain), who supports Muslim students.
  - The Inclusion Initiatives and Cultural Competence office launched six Signature Trainings attended by 180 individuals, providing students with skills to engage in intergroup dialogue.
  - Last fall, LGBTQI Life facilitated 27 educational sessions for nearly 1,300 students, faculty and staff to raise campus awareness of LGBTQI issues. The office also hosted the OUT in Front LGBTQQA+ Conference, welcoming 225 students and presenters from six states, 22 universities and 12 local Nashville LGBTQ+ community organizations.
ISSS launched a restructured orientation for 500+ international students and unveiled the iLead orientation initiative with 522 student participants, which provides new international students with international mentors.

Transition Programs began planning for an expansion of first generation student services to launch summer 2017.

- Student Leadership Development redefined the Vanderbilt Awards for Leadership Excellence (VALE) to highlight awards like Best Diversity & Inclusion Program and Best Interfaith Program.
- The Greek Member Experience program is designed to encourage engagement across the university for all Greek members. To date, 90% of all fraternity and sorority members have participated in one or more engagement opportunity in the Diversity & Inclusion track.
- In partnership with Vanderbilt Student Government, the Dean of Students launched Experience Vanderbilt, a program designed to break down monetary barriers between undergraduates and co-curricular programs that help define the Vanderbilt experience (i.e. participating in student organizations, club sports, art and cultural experiences, etc.). The program distributed funds to 225 students this year and worked to increase funding and budget allocations to double distributions in the 2017-18 academic year.
- The IMPerfection Project doubled membership over the past year with support from university administrators. The project was established at Vanderbilt in February 2016 to create a campus community where students share their stories of imperfection and aims to bring awareness to setbacks and failure as a healthy part of the college experience.
- The Center for Student Wellbeing opened in August 2016 to help students thrive within the Vanderbilt community and maintain lifelong wellness practices with a particular focus on the needs of minority students. During this academic year, the center hosted more than 1,000 individual appointments with students and 80 presentations to faculty, staff and students.
- In partnership with the Chancellor, a mental health and well-being campaign titled “GO THERE: Break the Silence, Break the Stigma,” was launched. A component of the campaign included a healthy minds survey of all students to identify trends in coping and resiliency, as well as prevalence of mental health illness and use of resources. Patterns across demographic groups are being analyzed in order to inform future efforts in meeting student needs.
- Several projects related to our physical spaces were launched or completed that serve to meet the needs of a diverse student body and our numerous multicultural groups. Efforts also serve to advance access and inclusivity. They include the following:
  - Plans to create a Social Justice and Identity Center in Sarratt are underway. The center will provide dedicated meeting space for multi-cultural organizations and related offices.
  - DOS inventoried available gender neutral bathrooms across campus and will publish a detailed list and map for the campus community by fall 2017.
  - Three Contemplation Rooms are under construction in Sarratt, Stevenson, and the Commons (to be opened fall 2017). These Contemplation Rooms will allow for silent prayer, meditation, and reflection for our diverse student body.
  - In two student centers (Sarratt and the Commons) DOS has implemented fully accessible bathrooms (i.e., bump rails for wheelchair access).
  - Several offices have improved accessibility across campus. Housing Operations installed card readers and listening modules in many laundry facilities for hearing
impaired students, and Arts and Campus Events created an area for persons with disabilities to watch the Rites of Spring music festival.