

**Due Thursday, 11/05/20 by 12:00 pm**

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**Unit:** College of Liberal Arts**Date:** 11-4-20**Contact Person:** Leroy G. Dorsey**Email:** [l-dorsey@tamu.edu](mailto:l-dorsey@tamu.edu)**Primary Author(s):** Leroy G. Dorsey

**Preface:** As our Texas A&M community adapts to this new environment of learning, teaching, working, and connecting virtually, it is imperative that our *Diversity Plan* goals of *accountability*, *campus climate*, and *equity* remain at the forefront of all our decisions. To put a finer point on the issue, particularly in times of crisis, we must ensure that all existing and planned policies, operations, procedures, and major plans for organizational change continue to be pursued with careful attention to their impact on our diversity, inclusion, and accessibility goals.

For the *2020-2021 Diversity Plan Accountability Report*, the Office for Diversity is balancing the need to track and collect longitudinal data and narratives with the need to understand current, and sometimes unique, challenges and strategies presented by social distancing and the pandemic. Please use the *2020-2021 Diversity Plan Accountability Report* as a tool to document and share your unit's strategies, plans, challenges, and successes advancing diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in 2020.

**Instructions:** The purpose of this report is to assess the continuing progress towards diversity and inclusion at the college and division-level. Please review your unit's strategic plans, diversity plans, and assessment plans for goals, data-informed actions, and strategies addressing diversity, recruitment, retention, campus climate, and equity. Where appropriate, use specific examples from individual departments in your unit to provide evidence for your narrative regarding progress towards Texas A&M University's *Diversity Plan* goals: *Accountability*, *Campus Climate*, and *Equity*.

**Formatting:** Use portrait orientation and 12-point font or larger for the narrative, tables, and figures. Word limits are provided for each of the six sections. Please note: References, graphics, footnotes, and tables for demographic data are not included in the word count.

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**1. Introduction (200-word limit):** Describe your unit (campus location, 2019 demographics of students/faculty/staff, departments, etc.) and its general mission. Describe the writing and review process for this report: For example, was your unit's diversity council included in the writing or review? Was this report reviewed by unit leadership? How has your unit shared, or plan to share, the *Diversity Plan* accountability reports across your unit?

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) is the second largest college on the Texas A&M University (TAMU) College Station main campus. It has the second most faculty and undergraduate students (next to Engineering).

The CLA contains 12 departments: Anthropology (ANTH), Communication (COMM), Economics (ECON), English (ENGL), Hispanic Studies (HISP), History (HIST), International Studies (INTS), Performance Studies (PERF), Philosophy (PHIL), Political Science (POLS), Psychological and Brain Sciences (PBSI), and Sociology (SOCI).

The CLA houses the Interdisciplinary Critical Studies (ICS) unit that is now comprised of 4 programs, including Africana Studies (AFST), Latino/a and Mexican American Studies (LMAS), Religious Studies (RELS), and Women's and Gender Studies (WGST). Film Studies (FILM) had been the fifth program in ICS but it recently moved into the department of Performance Studies.

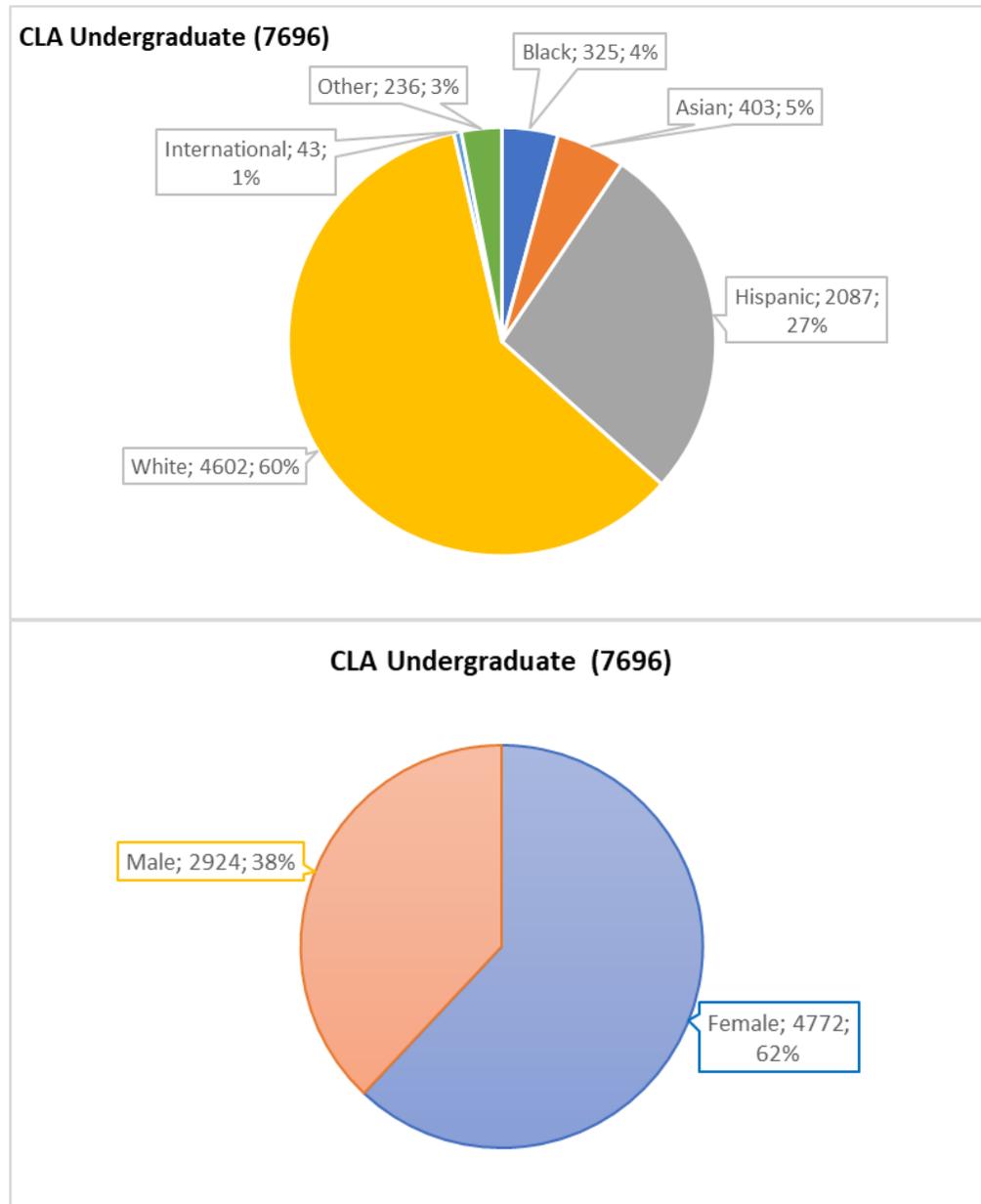
The CLA contains 7 centers and institutes spread across more than 10 buildings on main campus, west campus, and the RELLIS Campus: Census Research Data Center, Center for Maritime Archaeology and Conservation, Center for the Study of First Americans, Glasscock Center for Humanities Research, Center of Digital Humanities Research, Public Policy Research Institute, and the Race and Ethnic Studies Institute.

The College mission is to serve the students of Texas by educating them to think critically in a rapidly changing world, and to instill in students a desire for lifelong learning. Central to that goal is to support faculty in their quest to make their scholarship nationally and internationally distinguished, to cultivate innovative and inspirational teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels, and to foster in staff, faculty, and students the need for dedicated service locally and globally. All CLA endeavors and activities occur within the context of the arts, humanities, and social and behavioral sciences.

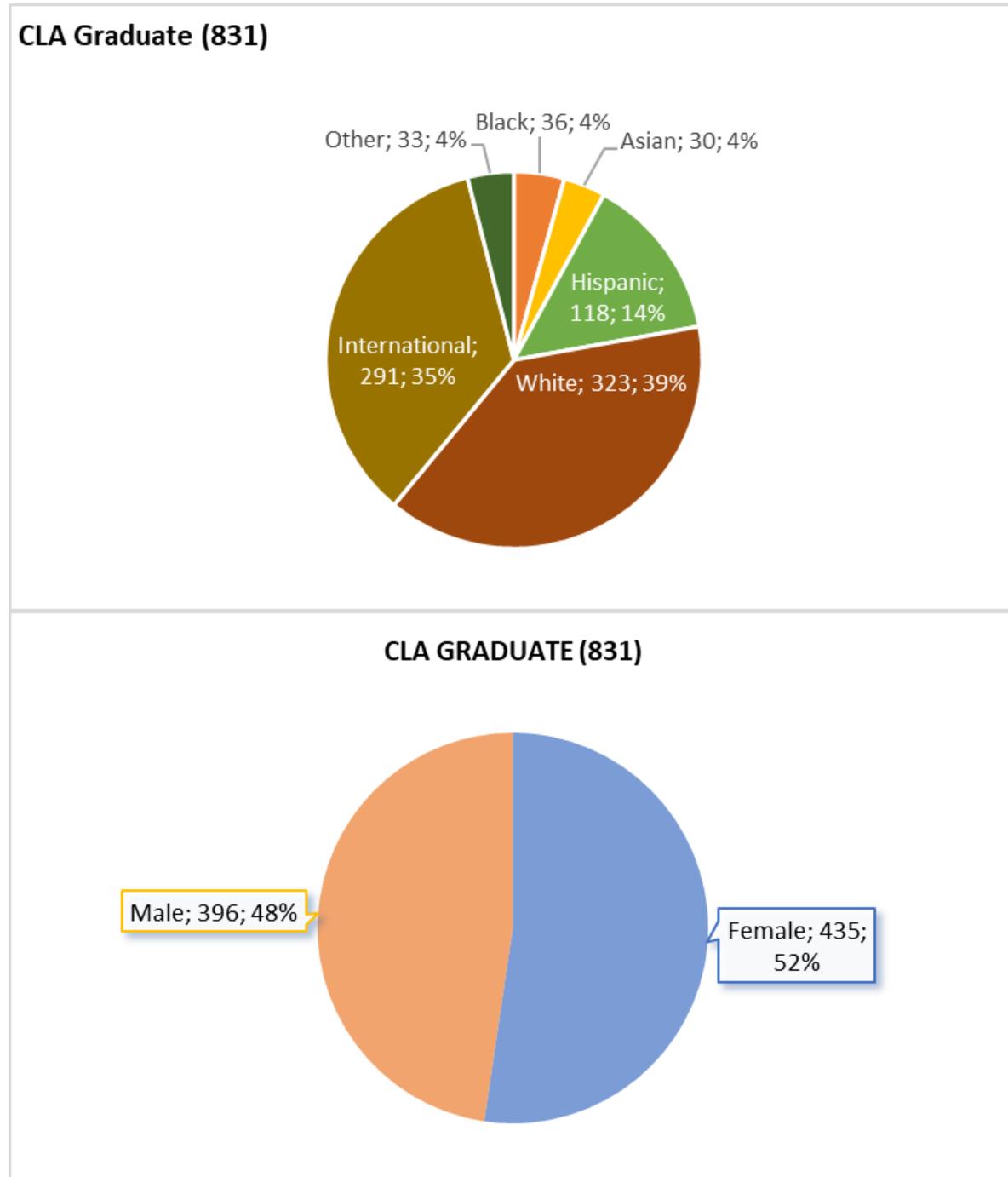
Regarding the writing and review process for this report, the CLA Associate Dean for Inclusive Excellence and Strategic Initiatives collected data from departments and other critical units. The initial draft was written by this Associate Dean/primary author. That draft was then provided to the CLA administrative leadership (associate and assistant deans), department heads, departmental representatives to the CLA Climate and Inclusion committee, as well as departmental undergraduate program coordinators for review. Any input provided was incorporated into the final report. Once this report is submitted to the Office for Diversity, it will be distributed again to associate deans, dept. heads, and departmental representatives, discussed in upcoming meetings between the dean and the department heads, and it will be posted on the college website.

College demographic data on students, faculty, and staff commences below. Please note that the demographic identification terms used on the charts and throughout this report reflect the terms used by TAMU.

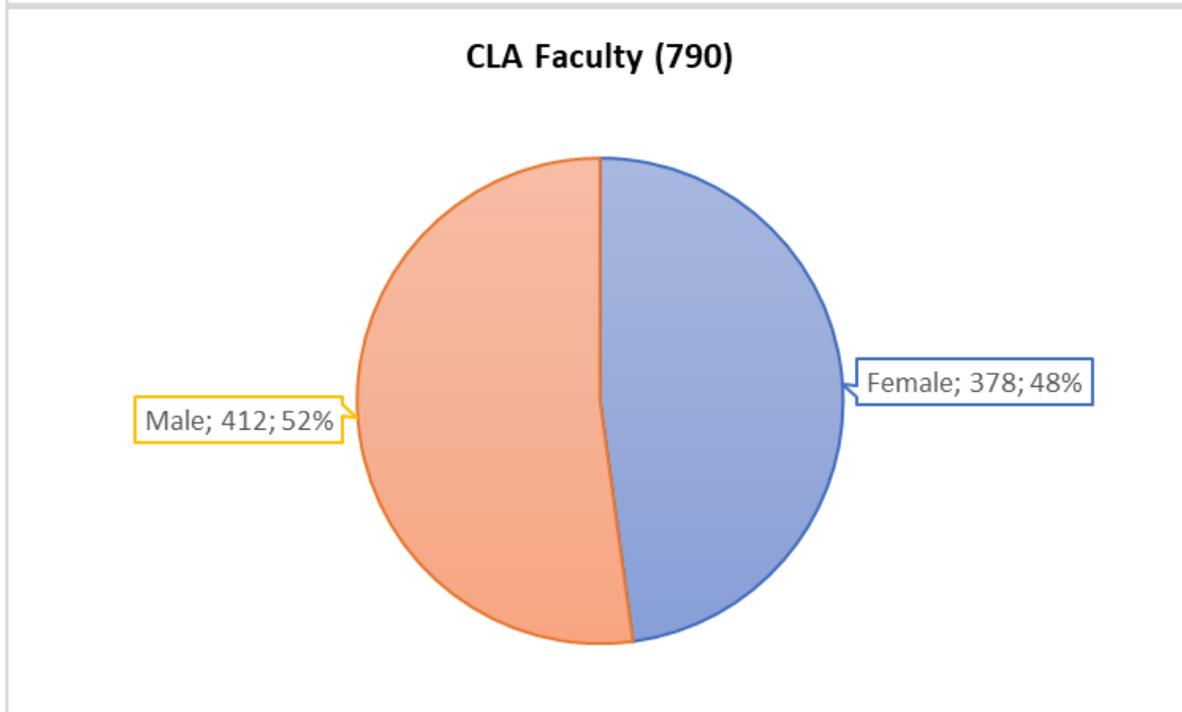
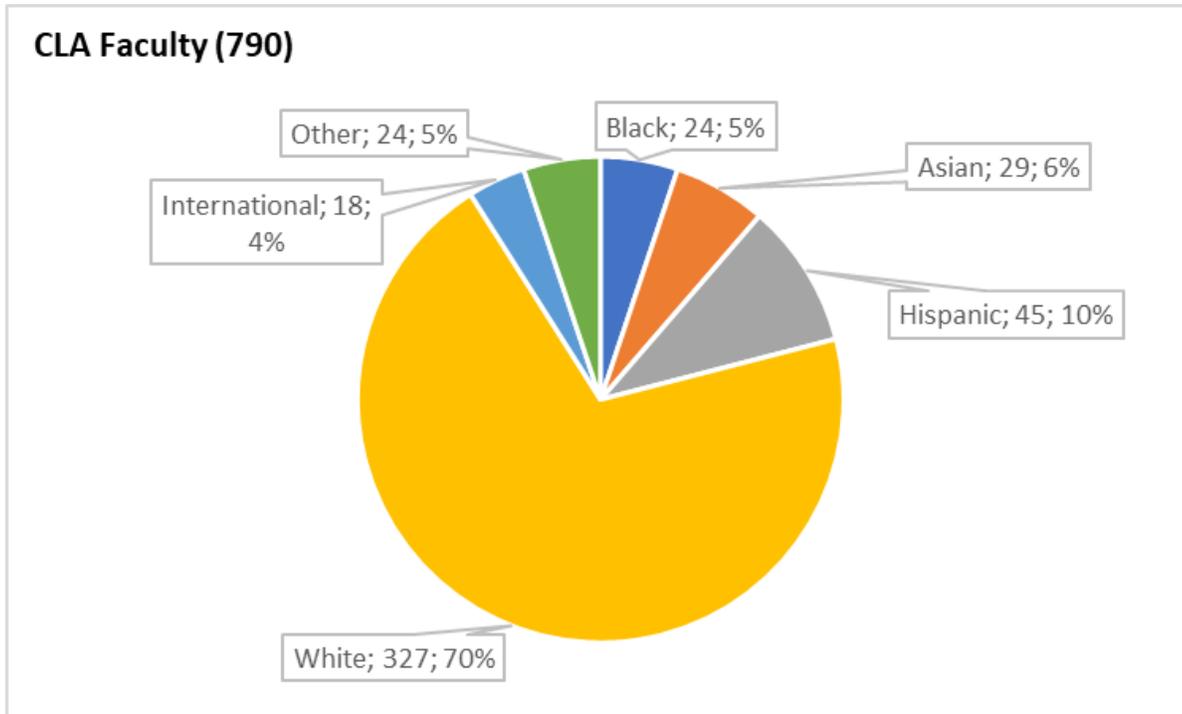
College of Liberal Arts (CLA) undergraduate students' demographic data for 2019.



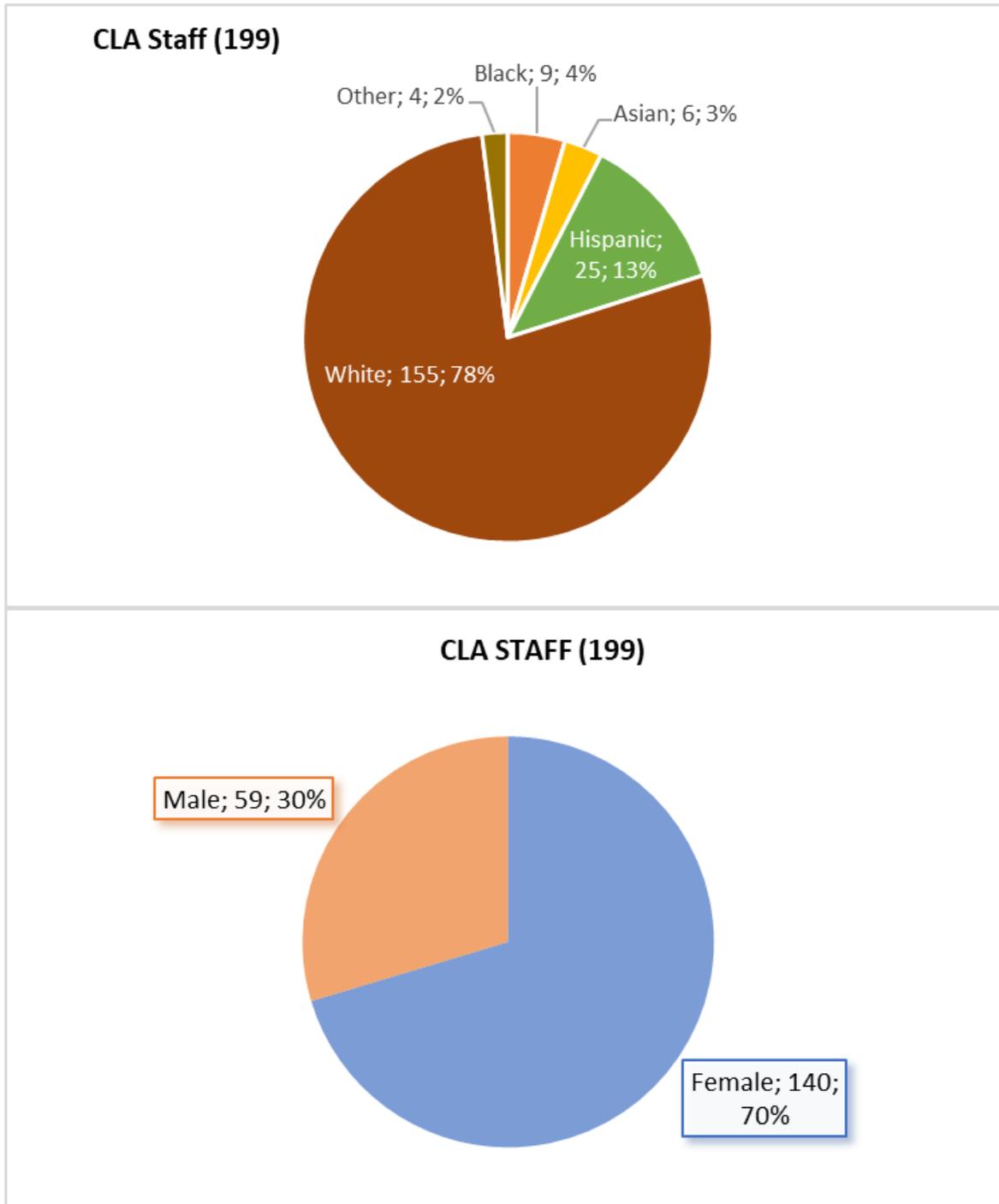
College of Liberal Arts (CLA) graduate students' demographic data for 2019:



College of Liberal Arts (CLA) faculty demographic data for 2019:



College of Liberal Arts (CLA) staff demographic data for 2019:



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**2. Recruitment (500-word limit):** As informed by one or more years of your unit's practices and/or assessment data, describe your unit's goals, measures, data-informed actions, strategies, challenges, and progress on student/faculty/staff recruitment. If goals, measures, or data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess goals for student/faculty/staff recruitment.

### **Undergraduate**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline that will reflect increased numbers of Black and Hispanic undergraduate students. College-level efforts through the Undergraduate Program Office (UPO) have seen success in their efforts to recruit Hispanic students. For example, Hispanic student enrollment has increased about 13% from 2019-2020:

- Fall 2019: Hispanic First Time in College-265
- Fall 2020: Hispanic First Time in College-301

Despite this increase in the numbers of Hispanic students, we have also seen Black student numbers tick downward from 5% to 4%, unfortunately mirroring the University's declining trend for this population.

Strategies and programs the college, and dept. level, have adopted or will adopt, include:

- UPO held off-campus recruiting sessions in Laredo and San Antonio, with follow-up emails with financial aid and FAFSA information; and engaged the Liberal Arts Student Council in writing handwritten letters to potential students. Result data will be collected next year.
- Departments such as Performance Studies reached out to the first time-in-college and transfer students to inform them of new courses being added to its curriculum that revolve around social activism, gender and sexuality, and racism. Result data will be collected next year.
- Other departments such as Communication will embark on an ambitious recruitment drive for Latinx students beginning with a detailed data-gathering mission to explore how their lower-level and mid-level gateway courses could recruit such students at higher rates.
- Political Science (POLS) began to distribute recorded presentations on the benefits of their BS degree. This is part of its ongoing experiment to diversify the BS degree track and quantitative social science more broadly. Positive trends of this experiment reveal that women of color in particular seem to be showing more interest in gaining quantitative skills and engaging in thesis research. This year, POLS has 14 thesis students, 10 of whom are women and 6 of whom are from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.
- The Undergraduate Program Office (UPO) will turn its attention to Black transfer students, recognizing that there was a 25% drop in that population category since last year (there were 44 admitted Black transfer students, but more than half did not accept admission).

The CLA's goal will be to increase Black first-time-in-college students by 20%, and work toward a 50% increase in Black transfers within the next two years (barring the continued impact of COVID-19), focusing in targeted areas of Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth and from 1A and 2A schools.

One of the CLA's signature programs is the Freshman Innovation Group (FIG) for first-generation students. This program began in 2017 to provide incoming first-gen freshmen a learning community involving a small network of faculty, advisors, and administrators in partnership with students. The program links four, seminar-sized courses that allows two sets of 25 students to move together as a

cohort through their first year. Materials about the program have been sent to potential applicants, including informational brochures and letters that have been in English on one side and in Spanish on the other. The target population also includes parents/guardians of first-gen students whose family income is above \$40,000. In 2017, the FIG program enrolled 34 students (14% Black and 33% Hispanic), and in 2018 it enrolled 45 students (6% Black and 31% Hispanic), which exceeded CLA-wide numbers for Black and Hispanic students during that time period. In 2019, it enrolled 44 students (2% Black and 30% Hispanic), and in 2020, FIG enrolled 42 students (5% Black and 46% Hispanic). Fall 2020 data are not available for the University but given the growth rate from 2018-2019 was only 3.3% in Hispanic students, FIG may be outperforming university recruiting of students from this population in 2020. Recognizing that FIG numbers are small, plans are currently in the works to scale up the program and, once the pandemic ends, to add a study abroad component to it.

### **Graduate**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline that will reflect increased numbers of Black and Hispanic graduate students. From 2015 to 2019, Hispanic graduate students have increased from 13% to 14%, while Black students in this group have stayed the same at 4%. Primarily, the college and departments have focused their outreach on Hispanic populations given the forthcoming Hispanic-serving status that the university will achieve.

The CLA engaged in a number of recruiting initiatives:

- Programs such as Philosophy received matching money from the college to support their program advertising at a conference in Mexico (the pandemic interrupted data collection). Political Science also received financial support to bring 6 Puerto Rican students to campus to participate in the Data Science Workshop which the department held in January. In total 40% of their participants were Latino/Hispanic and 20% were Black/African American.
- College discussions with multiple graduate programs have led to their formally applying for and receiving permission to waive GRE scores permanently given the concern that there is systematic bias in the test against students from underrepresented backgrounds, thus skewing admission results.
- The CLA reset its criteria for the Merit Fellowship, which is the highest paying/most prestigious graduate fellowship awarded to graduate students. The college criteria assigned 30% weight to academic achievement; 30% to high impact experiential learning; 20% to letters of recommendation; and the remaining 20% to demonstrated engagement and contribution to College diversity. This has resulted in some overlap in the Merit Fellows and the Diversity Excellence Fellowships.

Several departments engaged in very personalized outreach. For example, History (HIST) generated a number of Hispanic and women graduate applicants from the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) conference where they conducted one-on-one recruiting; HIST also sponsored graduate student-heavy panels at last year's TSHA just before the pandemic hit. As part of its two-year plan, HIST will engage again this year at TSHA with virtual recruiting by sponsoring other events such as online mixers and networking gatherings for graduate students. (SOCl) focused on historically Black colleges and universities and Hispanic serving institutions last year by sending its director of graduate studies to visit half a dozen campuses. Those visits garnered an applicant pool of nearly 50% students of color, with over 50% currently being enrolled in the program. The visits will continue virtually this year, along with the department's decision to eliminate the GRE test requirement for applying to its program.

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Hispanic Studies (HISP) paired diversity candidates with individual faculty via Zoom, telephone calls, emails, and on-campus visits (pre-pandemic). HISP achieved a high yield rate with six of eight accepting the offer of admission, with the grad students representing multiple demographic groups.

Moving forward, the College of Liberal Arts will work with departments, like HISP, to determine why some applicants did not accept their offers despite Diversity or Merit packages. For Black graduate students, CLA will work with departments to set up these productive one-on-one pairings between faculty and applicants; in fact, consideration for how to foster these one-on-one pairings well before recruiting season begins would communicate the long-term relationship our college wants to have with graduate students from underrepresented populations. Results of this initiative will be reported in subsequent years of the Diversity Accountability Report.

### **Faculty**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline that will reflect increased numbers of faculty from underrepresented populations. From 2015-2019, Black faculty stayed stable at 5% of CLA faculty, while Hispanic faculty increased from 8% to 10%. Furthermore, female faculty increased from 43% to 48% during that time period. The success with the latter demographic can, in part, be attributed to the CLA's involvement with the Office for Diversity's Accountability, Climate, Equity, and Scholarship (ACES) Fellows program, and the Provost's Faculty Investment Program (FIP).

- CLA was the first college to participate in the ACES' program in 2018 when it hired four young faculty—two Black and two Hispanic visiting assistant professors. The CLA again participated in the program in 2019 and successfully hired another faculty cohort of three from diverse populations and backgrounds, who focused on issues of race, ethnicity and sexual orientation. CLA will participate again in 2020 but, given budget concerns, it will only be able to hire two faculty this time. The CLA will consider redirecting funds so that it can add more additional ACES Fellows' lines the following year.
- The FIP is designed to target increased diversity at the faculty mid-career level. To this end, the CLA encouraged departments to tailor their recruitment emphases and strategies to meet these goals. Three departments have successfully hired under FIP:
  - ♦ Communication/Associate Professor, of Hispanic origin, works in critical race and politics theories, Latino/a/x studies and Puerto Rican Rhetoric;
  - ♦ Philosophy/Associate Professor, of Hispanic origin, researches Latin American and Indigenous Philosophy;
  - ♦ Psychological and Brain Sciences/Professor, Black, researches African American youths and their encounters with challenges of stressors and the coping strategies devised to deal with the challenges.

Psychological and Brain Sciences has significantly recruited underrepresented faculty. For two academic years (AY) 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, it has successfully completed targeted search committees for faculty of color at all ranks. The result of this strategic recruitment is an unprecedented cohort of newly-hired faculty members, including four tenured or tenure-track faculty of color, all joining the department simultaneously and affiliated in a wide range of research areas.

Departments continue to engage in activities that set more productive foundations for recruiting diverse groups of faculty members. Some target their advertising into more specialized outlets, while others ask applicants to provide a diversity statement with their materials. The CLA plans to lead a discussion this

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year with departments regarding standardizing some of these aforementioned practices across units. Results will be reported in subsequent Diversity Accountability Reports.

### **Staff**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline that will reflect increased numbers of staff from underrepresented groups. Our goal is to reach university benchmarks which identify Black and Hispanic staff in 2019 at 7% and 13%, respectively. As you can see from the numbers above, the CLA currently sits at 4% and 13%, respectively, for Black and Hispanic staff. Since 2015, Black staff have increased 1% while Hispanic staff has stayed flat.

The CLA engages a number of strategies now revolving around IDEA—inclusion, diversity, equity, and accountability. To that end, candidates have begun being asked to include a statement reflecting on IDEA and hiring committees will begin employing a hiring matrix which will include a column related to IDEA. In addition, during the course of candidates' interviews and reference check processes, applicants and their professional references answer questions related to the College's commitment to IDEA. CLA has begun monitoring these efforts and will have data to support their efficacy in the upcoming years. Furthermore, CLA will begin discussions with HR to determine the extent to which staff recruiting can be enhanced within TAMU guidelines.

- 3. Retention (500-word limit):** As informed by one or more years of your unit’s practices and/or assessment data, describe your unit’s goals, measures, data-informed actions, strategies, challenges, and progress on student/faculty/staff retention. If data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess goals for student/faculty/staff retention.

### **Undergraduate**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline for increased numbers of Black, Hispanic, and first-generation students being retained. Unfortunately, given the pandemic occurring in mid-spring, accurate results regarding retention of these populations are not guaranteed. For example, the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) reports that it cannot be ascertained whether a student did not graduate because of pandemic-affected processes in the College or because they were unable to complete their coursework successfully. According to the survey commissioned by the provost and conducted by Hanover Research, 75% of undergraduate students indicated in spring 2020 that the initial transition to online-only “would have a negative effect on them.” It is unclear if a student did not come back to A&M this fall because of online course experiences or other related reasons (e.g., severe impact on family finances due to the virus).

The CLA, though, has created specialized programming regarding retention for new students through the UPO.

- Dr. Bari Brookins, who was hired in the summer of 2018, helped every department develop a first-semester course for engaging students in the major and plugging them into on-campus resources. In fact, the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) created first-semester programming four years before the university operationalized the Hullabaloo First-Year Experience.
- The CLA also created a transfer student first-semester experience course in each department, something that the university has yet to engage.
- Moreover, UPO continued improvement of programming for first-generation students by adding more training of peer mentors for the Regents Scholars Initiative program, and it paid from its budget for a field trip to Costa Rica (pre-pandemic) to provide an opportunity for experiential learning within the context of study abroad.
- In the interests of active advising, this past year the UPO decided to place a preregistration hold on any student who did not respond to a request to meet and discuss their midterm grades (grades posted at 2.2 or lower GPA). The hold was lifted after the student met with a college adviser.
- The UPO also continued its new 2018–2019 policy of dismissing no first-semester student after their initial set of final grades. Students are now given a second-semester success plan or are moved into Transitional Academic Programs.

The Freshman Innovation Group (FIG) program also added mentors to its program to facilitate retention two years before Hullabaloo U came into existence. The program’s one-year retention rate during its first year was less than the university’s, but now in the start of its 4th year, the FIG program performs a few percentage points better than the university in terms of how many students leave the university:

- FIG-Fall 2017: 11/32 (34.38%)
- FIG-Fall 2018: 7/45 (15.56%)
- FIG-Fall 2019: 2/44 (4.55%)

Some CLA departments are initiating innovative actions related to retaining underrepresented students. For example, the Political Science department's initiative to diversify their BS track (mentioned above in the Recruiting section), led to these retention gains: out of 11 successful theses last year, 10 were completed by women, 7 of whom were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. The department of Anthropology (ANTH) is currently planning its "Cultural Capital Campaign," which is a multi-layered, department-wide mentorship plan. The goal is to develop the kind of "cultural capital" that makes students feel invested in their degrees and their departments, and that provides a personalized support network that lets students know that they have a home and people that care about their well-being and success. All of ANTH's undergrads will be included in the plan. However, since BIPOC and Hispanic (and 1st generation) students are disproportionately more likely to drop out of the university, the program will provide the extra support that they need to remain enrolled.

### **Graduate**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline for increased numbers of Black and Hispanic graduate students being retained. From 2015 to 2019, Black grads have remained stable at 4%, while Hispanic grad numbers have increased 1% (from 13% to 14%). While that increase speaks to recruiting successes, the fact that the total number of the latter group has increased reflects efforts to retain that demographic. Still, more work is needed. For example, Sociology (SOCI) emphasizes the need to create a safe and welcoming space for graduate students of color, especially for women of color Teaching Assistants (TAs) in the classroom. This department recognizes that young, female teachers of color many times face difficult experiences involving abusive classroom behaviors. To address this problem, SOCI proposes a 3-year plan that will involve several components: the development of an addition to syllabi about classroom civility; additional teacher training, supervision and mentoring for all new instructors; and department-wide conversations about strategies for dealing with disruptions in the classroom that disproportionately happen in classes taught by TAs of color. Increased observation of TA classes is also more easily accomplished with Zoom technology.

### **Faculty**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline that will reflect stability for faculty retention, particularly for Black and Hispanic faculty. In the past couple of years, though, the CLA has lost several Black and Hispanic faculty members for a number of reasons, including salary issues (counter offers and prestigious university-level awards were made but faculty still departed), as well as a lack of clear university-prescribed remedies for such faculty facing hostile climates in their undergraduate classrooms. However, there were some successes. Pertinent to gender diversity and specifically to the support of female faculty, the CLA was able to present a successful retention package to an associate professor who had been selected as a finalist for a faculty position at another institution. The CLA also supported and processed the faculty member's transfer to another department more appropriate for her qualifications, scholarly interests, and future plans.

In sum, between 2015 and 2019, Black faculty numbers stayed stable at 5%, and Hispanic faculty numbers increased 2%, from 8% to 10%. As mentioned above, the CLA's participation in the Office for Diversity's ACES program has benefitted the college.

Psychological and Brain Sciences (PBSI) has begun an innovative initiative directed at retention. PBSI built on its mentoring plan with the creation of the first Associate Head (AH) for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI), who has joined the department's leadership team for a temporary, two-year term. The

DEI AH oversees a Core Committee of faculty members, each one representing a major research area in the department. The DEI Associate Head also works in tandem with the members of the department's Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Committee to develop strategic plans related to faculty retention. As this AH position began on 9/1/20, there are no data available yet.

The stability of the CLA retaining faculty also attests to the mentoring programs at the college-level, with most departments having mentoring plans in place. For example, the College conducts an orientation session for ACES fellows to introduce them to the college, to acquaint them with mentoring and other resources, to begin to work with them on the best strategies for developing a sense of belonging to CLA, and to prepare them for reclassification to enter the tenure-track stream. Departmental programs pair senior faculty with new faculty to acclimate the latter to the realities of research productivity and work/life balance. Philosophy, for example, is utilizing its Climate and Inclusion committee to start development of an official mentoring plan that will adopt the best practices to align with those of the CLA and TAMU plans.

The College will develop and implement a plan, starting with an exit interview/survey (rather than solely rely on the Dean of Faculties to provide that information), to study why we were not able to retain the faculty members who left, and how we might be more successful with counter offers and retention plans.

### **Staff**

The College of Liberal Arts' goal involves ensuring stability in staff retention, particularly among underrepresented groups. From 2015 to the numbers shown above, CLA's gender breakdown has stayed around 70% women, with Hispanic and Black staff holding steady as well. In fact, from 2015 to 2019, Hispanic staff stayed at 13% while Black staff actually increased from 3% to 4%. We recognize that the stability of those numbers does not obscure the fact that those percentages need to increase.

However, the stability of those staff numbers undoubtedly results from the attention that staff retention has been given. CLA annually reviews all staff responsibilities to determine changes in duties that could trigger reclassification and makes 100% of those adjustments each year. For example, in 2019, 11 of 14 reclassifications were successfully approved. Two of the unapproved requests were for staff who had not been in the position long enough; and the other one did not include significant changes to the position that would warrant a reclassification.

When CLA loses staff, it cannot compete with opportunities at other Colleges for much higher staff salaries, despite hiring at the top end salary range as set by the TAMU system. The CLA asks again for TAMU to assess how differently sized units/colleges can offer better salaries, so that staff will more likely be retained.

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- 4. Climate (500-word limit):** As informed by one or more years of your unit’s practices and/or assessment data, describe your unit’s goals, measures, data-informed actions, strategies, challenges, and progress on unit/campus climate issues. If data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess climate-related goals.

### **Undergraduate**

The College of Liberal Arts’ (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline that will indicate an increased perception of an inclusive environment for all students, and particularly for underrepresented undergraduate students. The CLA recognizes the difficulty in influencing climate and, more important, the difficulty in measuring climate changes at a departmental level. Departments do not have formal climate-measuring methods given the limited demographic populations in play. College-level data can provide broad strokes that allow targeted initiatives. Specifically, the CLA will now use benchmarks from the New Aggies Student Survey, and the Graduating Senior Survey, from which to pivot.

For example, in 2019 the New Aggies Student Survey for the “Belongingness and Commitment” category, contained this prompt, “I feel valued as an individual at Texas A&M.” The CLA data revealed that 22% (9 Black students) disagreed with that prompt, as did 8.5% (59 Hispanic students). Because Black and Hispanic student numbers might be considered too small to be used as benchmark starting points, until the 2021 New Aggies Student Survey is conducted, the CLA will use University results for those populations with that prompt as the benchmark to decrease—10% disagreed (51 Black students) and 11% disagreed (517 Hispanic students).

Likewise, the CLA will use the Graduating Senior Survey for climate benchmarks. Specifically, CLA will use the last two instances of the survey, AY17-19 and AY19-20, for the “Inclusive & Welcoming” category, and the prompt, “Do you feel that the majority of Liberal Arts faculty created an inclusive and welcoming classroom?” The “no” answers to that question provides mixed results given the small number of respondents:

- AY17-19: Blacks 5% (61 students); Hispanic 4% (336 students)
- AY19-20: Blacks 11% (18 students); Hispanic 4% (135 students)

The CLA has put or is putting into place several initiatives to address climate for underrepresented populations:

- International Studies (INTS) made a recent hire specifically to offer courses that enhance the Black and African component to its curriculum, such as one that will bring in international experts on the Rwandan genocide to speak to students. INTS is also enhancing the visibility of faculty in African studies and the topic of Africa itself in department-sponsored publications to demonstrate its commitment to helping students explore the lived experiences of non-white populations.
- The Freshman Innovation Group program infuses its curriculum with assignments and lectures that allow Black and Hispanic students to explore their identities in a scholarly context. For first-generation students who might question their abilities, and even who they are in an academic setting, providing an academically welcoming climate for identity exploration is critical to their feeling of belonging.
- The Undergraduate Programs Office will begin revising the Diversity Certificate it shares with the Multicultural Services unit for next year. The new goal is to ensure the academic component

actually engages issues of diversity by focusing more course hours from Cultural Discourse (CD) classes (the current version of this Certificate does not do that). CD courses are small courses that focus on exploring different points of view, fostering civil dialogue, and engaging with the literature on how to live and work in a diverse society. These courses will be assessed using the Global Perspective Inventory, among other assessment tools.

The CLA will need the results from the next university climate survey (spring 2021) to determine best practices in its attempts to push the trendline down for negative perceptions of climate.

### **Graduate**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline that will indicate an increased perception of an inclusive climate for graduate students, particularly for underrepresented graduate students. The “Doctoral Exit Survey” for CLA Black grads, from 2015-2017, showed that about 75% appeared to be “overall satisfied” with their graduate experience. That same survey for Hispanic grads showed that about 90% seemed to be “overall satisfied.” (Previous years’ data showed no change for Hispanic grads, while data for Black grads were not available).

These relatively high numbers might be connected to the college’s commitment. For example, one college-level program in 2019 involved a summer dissertation fellowship:

- The summer dissertation fellowship provided one student in each department with a \$6,000 stipend in exchange for which they were to not work as a teaching or research assistant, but instead focus on their dissertation.
- Each department selected one candidate.
- Initial and concluding sessions paired students together so they could have peer accountability.
- The majority of participants – including those from STEM departments – were female.

While climate is a difficult aspect to assess accurately, one of the fellowship’s anecdotal results revealed an improvement in the sense of connectedness and belonging students felt by having a partner who was at the same place on the dissertation, but not in their department. Despite the limitations with in-person meetings given the pandemic conditions, the program helped students build a sense of comradery, and, as exit surveys after the dissertations are completed will reveal in the next two to three years, the impact of this initiative on climate and thus likelihood of completing the dissertation for those students. If so, the program’s goal will be to expand the fellowship program so that departments can field more than one candidate. Other departments, such as Political Science, has also institutionalized social events for female students and faculty; one event per semester is held to bring together women in the department.

### **Faculty**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves maintaining a positive and inclusive environment for faculty advancement, particularly for faculty from underrepresented populations. As mentioned earlier, climate is complex to assess, especially the myriad dimensions that it entails for faculty—classroom experience, merit evaluation, departmental relationships, promotion decisions, service loads, etc.

Multiple avenues are engaged in fostering an inclusive climate. Sociology communicated to its faculty that it considered their interpersonal comfort in the classroom as paramount. To that end, it developed an addition to everyone’s syllabus about classroom civility and strategies for dealing with disruptions that disproportionately happen in classrooms with teaching assistants of color. Also, it coordinated

additional teacher training, supervision, and mentoring for all new instructors. International Studies (INTS) used the ACES program to hire a faculty member whose course offerings speak directly to the lived experiences of several underrepresented demographics, thereby signaling those groups' importance to the curricular and climate aspects of their unit. In fact, that hire is only part of a multi-pronged approach INTS is taking to promote an inclusive environment. For example, a number of their courses are being revamped to enhance their Black and African components, such as bringing in via Zoom international experts who will speak on the Rwandan genocide.

Finally, for the third year in a row, the CLA will be funding the "Achievements in Climate and Inclusion" (ACI) awards for faculty. This award recognizes those faculty who regularly engage in service activities designed to encourage and facilitate a more inclusive and welcoming climate. One faculty member could be nominated by each department to receive a \$750 bursary, and then two of those nominees noted for their exemplary commitment could receive an additional \$2,000 bursary. To date, 14 faculty have received an ACI award. This award clearly indicates the College's commitment to enhancing its climate and to recognize those who endeavor to enhance it. The CLA hopes to parse the university-wide climate survey next year to determine the impact of this award.

### **Staff**

The CLA's goal involves creating a positive trendline that will reflect critical numbers of staff members from underrepresented groups reporting positively on the inclusive nature of their working environment. Climate represents the hardest to address as the university measurement of it is somewhat regular (the last climate survey reported was 2016), but imprecise at a granular or unit level. Units struggle with climate measurement as sample sizes among staff in a particular unit would not guarantee anonymity.

The 2016 Staff Climate Survey, with College of Liberal Arts (CLA) results, identified that 65%-74% agree that the college works at making diversity and climate foundational to the work. That favorable result stems from a number of activities CLA promotes/purchases for staff, such as: Staff Appreciation logo wear or other branded items; recognition events and activities; professional development; and the CLA Lunch and Learn series. Another form of staff recognition is the College of Liberal Arts Superior Service Awards which are presented to winners during the Annual Staff Appreciation Luncheon. The CLA also provides scholarship opportunities to staff employees who choose to further their education while maintaining employment with the college. In all transparency, though, those activities pertain to all staff—they are not keyed specifically to underrepresented populations.

Thus, the CLA is embarking on a new initiative to address staff climate. In fall 2020, the CLA will announce the "Achievements in Climate and Inclusion" (ACI) award for staff. Like the faculty version of this award, the staff ACI award recognizes those staff members who regularly engage in the types of service activities designed to encourage and facilitate a more inclusive and welcoming climate for all, but particularly for people from underrepresented populations. Staff nominees for this award are being recognized for doing the everyday, hands-on, and advocacy work that is often overlooked and/or rendered invisible, to assist individuals from underrepresented and marginalized populations in navigating an environment that many of them see as problematic for their identity. This individual, and team award, brings with them monetary rewards as well. The CLA will assess the effect on climate of this staff recognition after the University's 2021 climate survey.

- 5. Equity (500-word limit):** As informed by one or more years of your unit's practices and/or assessment data, describe your unit's goals, measures, data-informed actions, strategies, challenges, and progress on equity-related goals (e.g., advancement, promotion, development, salaries, graduation rates, etc.) If data are not available, describe plans to develop and assess equity-related goals.

### **Undergraduate**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves increasing the numbers of undergraduate students who find more financially equitable footing. Obviously, more funding for student scholarships and to defray costs of study abroad, class materials, tuition, and even food and lodgings, could quickly address inequities in financial means across students. As that sort of financial largesse is not on the horizon, the CLA have promoted other means to provide equitable accommodations for undergraduates.

- The Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) graduation advisers give each student a "90-hour checkup" and review their degree plan to ensure that each student is on course for a timely and financially efficient graduation. Each adviser also meets with every student at least once a year, preferably every semester, in order to discuss their coursework and anything that may be a concern. To meet that increased demand, UPO carried out the following: 1) restructured the advising of the college to meet shifting numbers of majors by moving advising lines from departments with dropping enrollments to departments experiencing high growth; 2) hired another advisor using provost funding; 3) hired two new Hispanic advisers, and one was designated for outreach to underrepresented students; 4) transferred advisors from departments and placed them under the supervision of UPO's Dr. Steve Oberhelman to ensure consistency in job performance and expectations; and 5) addressed inequities in staff salaries to improve climate.
- Anthropology, concerned with ever-increasing costs to students, switched many of its classes to open-access textbooks. It will assess the effectiveness in subsequent years.
- English (ENGL) is piloting one of its core curricula courses in fall 2020 to use textbook rentals rather than book purchasing. Estimates project a saving of almost \$30,000. Reducing cost and making texts available online removes financial barriers to student retention and class completion. This gives all students a more level playing field regarding course costs. Demographic data suggest that this is particularly relevant for low-income, first-generation Hispanic students. ENGL will report on this endeavor in subsequent diversity reports.

The college is supportive of open-education initiatives. But without an infusion of new resources, units must continue to look for innovative opportunities to provide an equitable environment for students.

### **Graduate**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves increasing the numbers of graduate students who find more financially equitable footing as they pursue their advanced degrees. One key strategy involves aggressive application to the Diversity Excellence Fellowships offered by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS).

This past year, the CLA accounted for 31% of doctoral fellowship offers and 3% of masters offers (up a few percentage points on the doctoral fellowships from the previous year). Of the 45 Diversity Excellence Fellowships recipients who enrolled at TAMU – 33% (15 students) were from Liberal Arts. The yield on these (58% accepted) was good but was also uneven across departments. For example,

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Political Science had only 1 of their 3 offers accepted, while Sociology had 6 of their 8 offers accepted. Almost all departments in the college now nominate students for consideration.

The pandemic played havoc with notions of equity for graduate students, as the university was slow in addressing their concerns and preferences for teaching this academic year. The college and its departments kept their messaging frequent and transparent to allay graduate student teachers' fears as much as possible. The measurement of success will be determined with the results from the spring 2021 university-wide climate survey.

### **Faculty**

The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal is to ensure the stability of equitable treatment across all faculty ranks, particularly for those ranks that include people from underrepresented demographics. The most direct avenue involves salary adjustments. Last year, CLA made 18 such equity adjustments, balancing them across tenure track, tenured, and APT faculty lines. Without new sources of funding, the CLA can only make a limited number of equity adjustments each year. Furthermore, most CLA departments have annual assessments related to equity pay in their units, engage in formal and informal mentoring to help support faculty promotions, and should provide faculty across ranks an opportunity to voice their opinions in faculty meetings.

### **Staff**

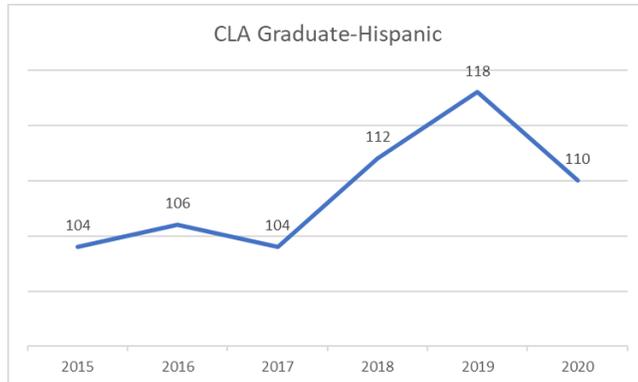
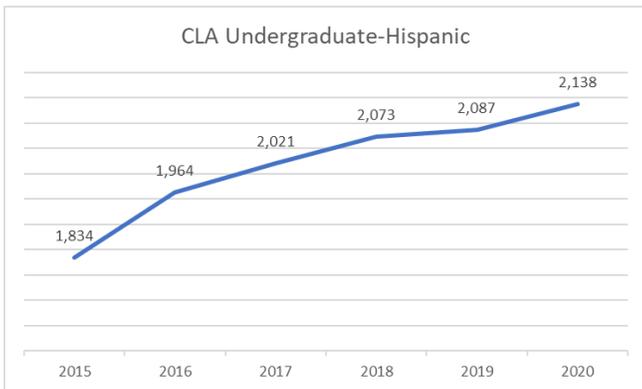
The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) goal involves creating a positive trendline of staff reporting equitable compensation. At the very least, the CLA wants to provide an environment where staff believe their concerns about working conditions and compensation are heard and addressed by college administration. To that end, the CLA annually reviews all staff salaries to ensure consistent payment across university mandated salary ranges that would trigger equity increase requests and ensures that 100% of those adjustments are made each year. For example, for 2019-20, seven of seven staff equity increases were approved. The CLA will continue to maintain 100% results with staff equity adjustments moving forward.

With the pandemic, work conditions were even more important to consider than usual. The CLA worked closely with staff to ensure their safe conditions with work-from-home accommodations, rotating office schedules, and limiting access but still providing face-to-face interaction with students when needed. As the pandemic situation evolves, the CLA will continue to treat staff safety as important as that of faculty and student.

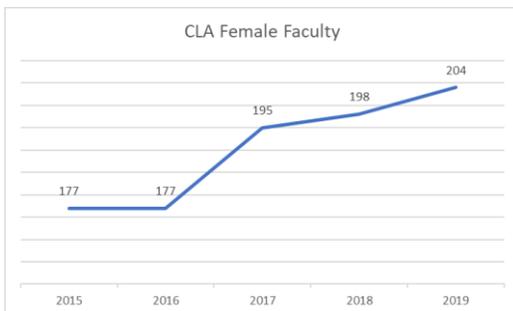
**6. Reflection (800-word limit):** This section provides you with an opportunity to outline your unit’s 2021 presentation for the President’s Council on Climate and Diversity (PCCD). Related to diversity, accountability, recruitment, retention, campus climate, and equity:

- a) Describe how your unit is “moving the needle” (e.g., changing numbers/composition, awards, recognition, grants, funding, etc.).
- b) Describe goals and strategies that have the greatest impact on, or the potential to impact, student, faculty and/or staff recruitment, retention, campus climate, and/or equity. Describe how strategies implemented in your unit might be useful to other units.
- c) What challenges has your unit faced? Specifically, acknowledge the impact of the responses to COVID-19 on your unit’s diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
- d) Describe how funding from the Diversity Plan awards has been used (or will be used) to support and advance your unit’s recruitment, retention, climate, and/or equity goals.

A) The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) takes its commitment to “moving the needle” regarding the recruitment of marginalized or underrepresented groups seriously. To that end, the CLA has demonstrated the will and dedication to push the trendline up for several demographic groups.



As the above charts show, the CLA has done well in its efforts to recruit Hispanic students, with both undergraduate and graduate numbers generally trending upward for the last several years. (The decline in Hispanic graduate students from 2019 to 2020 could be related to the pandemic.) In other words, the CLA has worked hard to align with the University’s goal of becoming a Hispanic-serving institution. These successes come from the diligence of outreach efforts by the college’s Undergraduate Programs Office, and some of the departmental programs.



The CLA has made competent strides to address the number of female faculty in the college. From 2015-2019, female faculty have increased 5%. As noted above, Texas’ gender distribution is 50/50. With the gains the CLA has made, it has pushed the gender distribution closer to that of Texas, with female faculty now representing 48% in the college.

**B) Recruitment Goals and Strategies:** The College of Liberal Arts appreciated President Young's June 15, 2020 email that stated, we want to "recruit more underrepresented students" so as to "match our state demographics." While he was referring to undergraduate students, it also sets a goal for recruiting overall for grads, faculty, and staff. For undergraduate students, that means reaching Texas' demographics of 13% Black and 40% Hispanic populations, respectively. The CLA will continue conversations as to how it can set realizable goals over a five-year period for undergraduate student recruitment. What would actually be helpful is if the University provided colleges with high school graduation rates for Black and Hispanic students so as to allow us to calibrate better and more realistically our yearly goals for recruiting those groups. The best strategies to date have been the following: the Undergraduate Programs Office's assignment of one of its advisors to do outreach to targeted populations, and for CLA's support of programming for first-generation students—many of whom are Hispanic—through its year-long Freshman Innovation Group (FIG) program. For graduate students, the recent shift from requiring the GRE exam to abolishing it as a requirement for consideration in a graduate program has sent a message to potential applicants that the CLA looks more broadly at a student's background and their lived experiences. For faculty, the CLA wants to continue participating in the Office for Diversity's Accountability, Climate, Equity, and Scholarship (ACES) Fellows program, which has assisted the college in hiring more diverse faculty. For staff, the CLA's recent turn to engaging IDEA—inclusion, diversity, equity, and accountability—has potential for recruiting a more diverse staff. With candidates having to include a statement reflecting on IDEA, and the hiring committee employing a hiring matrix which needs to include a column related to IDEA, the hope is that potential applicants will recognize the CLA as a unit concerned with diversity and inclusion and apply, while the search committee embeds the importance of IDEA in the selection process itself.

**Retention Goals and Strategies:** Retention numbers for each group have been largely stable in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA). In other words, the CLA has done a fairly reasonable job at retaining its folks. The college continues to work to improve those retention numbers. For undergraduate students, the CLA has recognized that students might need more hands-on monitoring to ensure steady progress toward the degree. To that end, students with low midterm grades are required to meet with a college advisor so that we can find out what's going on and then to help them better navigate their academic experience. In addition, changing the college's policy so that first-semester students will not be dismissed after their initial set of poor final grades now provides another opportunity to help students develop a plan for their success in their second semester. For both graduate students and faculty, departments such as Sociology (SOC) have looked closer at the problematic experiences that young female instructors and instructors of color sometimes encounter in the courses they teach, and now provide departmental support to address those problems. A workshop addressing this issue has been created by Dr. Perry (Political Science) and the Center for Teaching Excellence for all faculty to learn innovative methods to address incivility and promote inclusivity in the classroom. Notably, Psychological and Brain Sciences inaugurated a new departmental administrator, an Associate Head for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI), who will provide an elevated significance to the department's DEI work. For staff, the college's diligence in proactively watching for reclassification opportunities, helping staff reach needed levels of administrative expertise, and making those happen expeditiously, communicates to that group of its importance in the college.

**Campus Climate Goals and Strategies:** As mentioned above, changes in unit-level climate is difficult to measure and address given the small numbers of people in a particular unit. One goal is to address diversity and inclusion concerns as they emerge at the curricular level. One important aspect of climate

for undergraduate students is to design and offer them curricula that reflect the lived experiences of a diverse group of people. College-level first-year programs, as well as some departments, and the Interdisciplinary Critical Studies (ICS) unit offer just such curricula. For example, Performance Studies' (PERF) new certificate in "Performing Social Justice," includes new and existing courses, along with a service-learning component that allows students to explore identity, Black philosophies, racism, ethics, and propaganda. These efforts can communicate the inclusive nature of the college. Next year's university-level climate survey might offer some indication of the climate success of such programs. For graduate students and faculty, mentoring represents a fundamental instrument for the college to address climate. Along with their faculty mentors, graduate students are formally connected with partners/peers in small groups to foster a sense of camaraderie and support. Assistant and associate professors are assigned senior faculty mentors to help them navigate their research/teaching/service responsibilities.

Equity Goals and Strategies: The goal across demographic groups is to ensure that all decisions made revolve around equity, and the processes to operationalize those decisions with that key component in mind. For both undergraduate and graduate students, costs for their education weigh heavily on them and their families. That's why several departments have found ways to reduce undergraduate costs through using open-access textbooks to save students that outlay, while the college has pushed aggressively so that all departments with doctoral programs now nominate students for the Diversity Excellence Fellowships through the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. In the case of faculty and staff, the college sets aside funds each year that allows it to adjust those groups' salaries to bring them into closer alignment with their respective peers.

C) There are two fundamental challenges that have impacted the College of Liberal Arts' (CLA) forward momentum. First, the university's persona has taken a huge hit with this past summer's racial and social reckoning occurring across the United States, which sparked the nation-wide trending of *#RacismAtTAMUFeelsLike*, and coincided with the ongoing concern about the meaning and impact of the Sul Ross statue for students who are not white. With the University's somewhat tarnished image in the media regarding its commitment to race and ethnicity, anecdotal data suggests the difficulty in recruiting potential underrepresented students, and in maintaining a positive climate with anxieties frequently communicated by students, faculty, and staff of color about the importance of their lived experiences to the university's mission. Second, COVID-19 has, without a doubt, blunted the CLA's efforts across a myriad of dimensions. For undergraduate programs designed for retaining first-gen students and students from underrepresented backgrounds, substantively losing the full scope of face-to-face interactions and social events may reveal a hit to the success of these programs, as well as a less reliable assessment given the introduction of the overwhelming pandemic variable. For graduate students who were looking to be treated equitably regarding their teaching assignments, many reported that didn't happen. An initial slow response from the university for how graduate student instructors would be assigned to their classes, and the lack of reassurances the college could make until that information was known, probably affected climate negatively, and called into question the supposed sense of equity between various constituencies. Likewise, for those faculty and staff who questioned the rationale for their "front-line" assignments and continued interaction with a possibly infected student body or their peers, the sense of climate, equity, and inclusion got roiled. College and departmental leadership have begun discussing how to alleviate these concerns moving forward, and such discussions will continue when leadership meets to discuss the challenges identified in this report for recruiting, retention, climate, and equity.

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D) The College of Liberal Arts has put the Diversity Plan money it was awarded last year—and-more of its own funds—to multiple uses. We were awarded \$90,000 in 2020 and spent \$13,789 more to support climate and inclusion efforts for faculty, staff, and students (particularly first-generation students). A breakdown of these efforts is presented in the table below.

Climate & Inclusion Budget	29,390	ACT grants and co-sponsoring events/lectures, professional dev
FIG Program	57,232	FIG Program
Staff Climate/LALEC	4,683	Lunch & Learn, Staff Winter Social, Staff Appreciation, Logo Wear
Grad Diversity Support	7,500	Research Bursaries for Grad Diversity Fellows
Leadership Support	4,984	Purchased <i>Faculty Incivility: The Rise of the Academic Bully Culture and What to Do About It</i> , and Leadership conference
Total	103,789	

Funding supported the following: the first-generation students in the Freshman Innovation Group (FIG) program for first-generation freshman, as well as first time-in-college student events (pre-pandemic); staff development and appreciation events; bursaries for graduate student diversity fellows; materials for department heads to help their departments more aggressively and successfully recruit diverse faculty; and the “Advancing Climate Together” (ACT) grant. The objective of the ACT grant is to invigorate our college life with programmatic, structural, and sustainable actions (as distinct from one-time events) that will measurably advance college and university goals. Specifically, ACT grants fund department or unit-level efforts that involve recruitment, retention, and/or graduation rate of students from underrepresented undergraduate or graduate populations; efforts that can help our College address issues of racism; and/or efforts fostering faculty development as it engages issues of cultural competence and inclusion. One example of the ACT grant’s use resulted in the “Somos Texas A&M” project (<https://www.somostejustamu.com/>). This project collected digital narratives of Hispanic faculty and students in 2019. The website presents a multimedia collection of their descriptions of what it was like to be an Aggie. Furthermore, the college also funds the “Achievements in Climate and Inclusion” (ACI) awards for faculty who have demonstrated substantive and frequent commitments—known as “invisible labor” in the literature—to helping faculty, students, and staff from underrepresented groups navigate what they perceive as a sometimes hostile climate on campus. The staff version of the ACI awards will be offered for the first time in fall, 2020.