

# **Department of Public Administration and International Affairs Diversity Plan**

## Overview and Rationale

Syracuse University maintains an inclusive learning environment in which students, faculty, administrators, staff, curriculum, social activities, governance and all other aspects of campus life reflect a diverse, multi-cultural and international worldview. The University community recognizes and values the many similarities and differences among individuals and groups.

At Syracuse, we are committed to preparing students to understand, live among, appreciate, and work in the inherently diverse country and world made up of people with different racial and ethnic backgrounds, military backgrounds, religious and cultural traditions, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientation and gender identity. To do so, we commit ourselves to promoting a community that celebrates and models principles of diversity.

The Department of Public Administration and International Affairs (PAIA) of the Maxwell School supports this broader University mission and extends these efforts at the department level.

## Process

The Diversity Plan was developed as a joint activity of faculty, staff and students in the Department of Public Administration and International Affairs. Faculty were surveyed about current curriculum and course activities related to issues of diversity and inclusion, and ideas, plans and goals for the future. Staff, particularly those working in recruitment and student services, were surveyed about current initiatives to recruit a diverse student body, efforts to help students succeed in the program, and about future plans.

The department chair enlisted a group of MPA students to collect information from current students. Student data collection centered on current successful efforts to include issues related to diversity and inclusion in the curriculum, student life on campus, and to solicit suggestions for improvements and future initiatives. The department chair also worked with the university human resources department to collect information about university programs to attract and retain a diverse faculty, and compiled information about department initiatives.

Information from faculty, staff and students was incorporated into a draft diversity plan that was shared with faculty. Suggestions from students regarding specific courses were shared with faculty teaching those courses. The PAIA Diversity Plan was adopted by the faculty on May 9, 2014.

As a living document the plan has been updated each year by the Association Dean and Chair of Public Administration and International Affairs in consultation with the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid and the Associate Director of Students Services to reflect changes and new developments.

**Objective: Prepare a diverse cadre of leaders for graduate study and careers in the public service arena**

Specific efforts to improve the ethnic, gender and racial diversity of our MPA students are a key component of our recruitment efforts. Each year, the department actively seeks to enroll talented women and people of color from around the world.

**Student recruitment**

Context: Maxwell Department of Public Administration and International Affairs strives for a diverse student body along a number of dimensions including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, international representation, disability, and sexual identity. We have a specific focus on increasing the numbers of applicants, students and graduates of color and from other underrepresented groups in our program.

Strategies:

- 1) The department works in partnership with several programs that support graduate students of color and promoting professional development of young professionals of color. These partnerships include past, active, and on-going recruitment efforts with:
  - APAICS – Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies
  - Capitol Hill - Staff Associations of Color
  - Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship Program
  - Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
  - Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
  - First Alaskans Institute
  - Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
  - National Association of African American Honors Programs
  - Public Policy and International Affairs (PPIA) Fellowship Program
  - Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship Program
  - Thurgood Marshall College Fund (representing public HBCU's)
- 2) The department actively recruits students from the Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions. Maxwell has past, active and on-going recruiting efforts with the following HBCU's and HSI's:

HBCU's:

- Alcorn State University
- Clark-Atlanta University
- Dillard University
- Fisk University
- Florida A&M
- Hampton University
- Howard University

- Morehouse College
- Philander Smith College
- Spelman College
- Tuskegee University
- Xavier University of Louisiana

HSI's:

- Florida International University
- New Mexico Highlands University
- Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico – Mayaguez
- University of Texas - San Antonio
- University of Puerto Rico – Rio Piedras
- University of Puerto Rico – Ponce

### **Student retention and student life**

Context: Syracuse University has made a commitment to create a campus community that is free from discrimination and celebrates the diversity of its various community members. The PAIA department is committed to supporting and promoting the academic achievement, multicultural competence, social development, civic engagement, and retention of students from diverse and historically underrepresented groups at Syracuse University. By building a community that values diversity, students are enriched because they value and learn from the contributions made by the entire campus community.

Strategies:

- 1) Student services: The commitment to student services is a major factor in our ability to recruit and retain graduate students. We offer a rich array of programs and services that provide students with opportunities to practice or develop skills in a healthy environment (Maxwell's Palmer Center for Career Development, Tutoring & Study Center, Counseling Center, Health Center, and Office of Disability Services.)
- 2) Each year the department's graduate student association, Public Administration and International Relations Association (PAIRA), establishes committees and working groups focused on issues of diversity and inclusion. Last year students organized and ran a series of session to discusses issues of diversity and inclusion, including for instance the issue of colorism in many international contexts. In addition, a group to assess the graduate programs coverage of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the curriculum was formed. These activities and groups receives administrative support from the department, and are eligible for funding from the department and the Syracuse University Graduate Student Organization.

- 3) Diversity training – the university provides opportunities for staff to participate in workshops designed to encourage appreciation of differences. This fall professional staff will have the opportunity to participate in training on principles of facilitating dialogue on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion provided by the Interfaith Works El-Hindi Center for Dialogue.
- 4) Future plans:
  - a. Facilitate more interaction with national organizations, such as the National Forum for Black Public Administrators.
  - b. Work to improve communication between PAIA student groups and campus-wide student groups focused on students of color.

**Objective: Recruit and retain an ethnically and racially diverse faculty**

The Department of Public Administration and International Affairs is committed to attracting a faculty with racial, ethnic and gender diversity that reflects the diversity of our student body and the public they will serve. The department is committed to providing the necessary support and mentoring to help junior faculty succeed.

Strategies: Faculty recruitment and hiring

- 1) All faculty and staff search committees include diverse membership by race and gender.
- 2) All faculty search committee members participate in training provided by the University's Office of Faculty Affairs related in generate diverse applicant pools and avoiding implicit bias in faculty searches.
- 3) All faculty positions are advertised in outlets targeting underrepresented groups, including, but not limited to, the National Forum for Black Public Administrators and Hispanic Outlook.
- 4) Prior to each search, faculty members contact leading scholars in the field to alert them to our searches and ask whether they might be interested in applying (for senior searches) or have doctoral students who would be good candidates (for junior positions). The faculty particularly focus on faculty and students of color in order to generate more diverse pools of applicants.
- 5) All position advertisements include an explicit statement describing the university's commitment to diversity and encouraging members of underrepresented groups to apply, such as the following: "The Department of Public Administration and International Affairs seeks candidates whose research, teaching, or service has prepared them to contribute to our commitment to diversity and inclusion in higher education."

- 6) Position descriptions include broad and inclusive statements of areas of interest and specialization to avoid discouraging candidates from underrepresented groups from applying.
- 7) Experience candidates have addressing issues of diversity and how they might contribute to adding to the diversity of perspectives in the faculty are explicit criteria used in evaluating applications.

Strategies: Faculty success and retention

- 1) Junior faculty mentoring committees: All untenured faculty have a three or four person mentoring committee comprised of senior faculty in the department. In the case of junior faculty from other disciplines (for example, political science, anthropology) these committees may include members from other departments. The mentoring committees meet annually with the faculty member to review progress over the year, offer advice on research and teaching strategies, and to ensure that the faculty member is not being overly burdened with service obligations. In the third year and at the tenure review, the mentoring committees also write evaluative reports to the department. The mentoring committees provide critical support for junior faculty to help them achieve research and teaching success and ultimately receive tenure and promotion.
- 2) Access to University resources:
  - a. Syracuse University's Office of Equal Opportunity, Inclusion, and Resolution Services (EOIRS) is dedicated to fostering "a climate of inclusion, access, and opportunity." All faculty have access to the resources and support provided by EOIRS. <https://inclusion.syr.edu/>
  - b. The University's Office of Faculty Development assists junior faculty with their professional development in the areas of teaching and research. The office organizes orientation activities for new faculty and sponsors a series of activities and workshops for faculty in their first three years at the university. The office also provides individual consultation and support upon request.

**Objective: Establish an inclusive learning environment that seeks to improve students' cultural competence and is sensitive to issues of diversity**

Strategies:

- 1) Incorporate alumni and speakers from underrepresented groups into courses: To ensure a welcoming environment, we are mindful to bring in diverse speakers on the alumni panels for our introductory class, Public Affairs Colloquium. This continues throughout the year, and the diversity of our faculty, alumni speakers, and guests is always prominent in our planning of events. We also support and promote a number of speakers, lectures, and panels, on topics of diversity, inclusion and understanding across cultural barriers.

- 2) Regular use of diverse teams in classes. These teams are typically formed to explicitly include diverse membership by race, gender and nationality.
- 3) Incorporate discussions and study of diversity into required core classes. Examples include:
  - a. In recent years, the MPA colloquium has center activities around the case of the I-81 highway in Syracuse. This case requires students to address issues of past racial injustice and think about how to design an inclusive process for deciding how to replace a large, highway viaduct running through the center of Syracuse.
  - b. This 2020-21 colloquium will engage Interfaith Work El-Hindi Center on Dialogue to provide students a full-day training on principles of dialogue and issues of identity and implicit bias. This training will be followed by four small group sessions on policy and management issues related is diversity, equity and inclusion, which will be facilitated by MPA faculty.
  - c. Public Administration and Democracy incorporates a pluralistic discussion of democracy that includes diverse perspectives and histories; and also engages students in a simulation the requires them to role-play and advocate for groups that hold a perspective different than their own.
  - d. Public Organizations and Management uses a real public sector case study to analyze how diversity issues impact organizations when they are not addressed appropriately. It also incorporates additional practical discussions on managing in diverse workplaces, including hiring practices and rules.
  - e. Policy Leadership devotes substantial time to discussion of diversity and inclusive management, facilitated by a trained faculty member. This year Syracuse University's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Keith Alford, led an additional discussion with students.
- 4) Incorporate discussions and study of diversity into elective classes. Examples include:
  - a. Collaborative and Participatory Governance includes material on designing collaborative governance and participatory arrangements that are inclusive and promote diversity.
  - b. Social Policy covers intersections of race, ethnicity, and poverty.
  - c. Classes on international development include a geographical balance of world regions and strive for a balance of topics and authors as regards race, gender, class, and other markers of difference, and discussions of the idea that good scholarship is not correlated with gender or race or any other social marker. Students are encouraged to critically assess where all their information is coming from and to identify and interrogate imbalances that are insupportable.
  - d. Frequent use of cases drawn from outside the United States. The purpose behind this is to both internationalize the course content and expose students to different views, classes of people, and develop sensitivity to a range of diverse cultural, political, social, economic, and development perspectives. These cases also shape student thinking about the context of public policy and management in terms of

managing people, programs, and budgets in organizations. This also assists in identifying leading practices that are not always initially piloted and implemented in the United States.

- 5) Offer opportunities for students to participate in cultural competencies training. The Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC) offers a training on cultural competencies and conflict resolution at least once a year. It is typically attended by 20-40 students.

#### Future plans:

The MPA committee and the Maxwell School's new Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Gladys McCormick, have engaged a group of MPA and MAIR students to review the coverage of diversity, equity, and inclusion in those program's curriculum. The MPA Committee will use the students finding and report as a basis for developing proposals to improve the coverage of these issues in the MPA curriculum. The goal is to begin implementing any changes develop for the 2021-22 academic year.

#### Assessment plan:

The faculty assesses the results of our diversity and inclusion efforts using multiple data sources:

- 1) Pre and post-program student skills self-assessment questions, including questions on conflict resolution and cross-cultural understanding.
- 2) Analysis of PAI 752 MPA Workshop assessments addressing student competency on the learning outcome "students will demonstrate the ability to work productively and collaboratively in diverse teams."
- 3) Ongoing monitoring of trend data on diversity of student applicant pool, accepted student pool, and incoming students.
- 4) Ongoing monitoring of faculty recruitment and retention efforts.