



## MPA DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PLAN (Revised 12/22; Approved 1/23)

### 1. Introduction

Public and nonprofit managers operate in complex settings where individuals from diverse backgrounds work together to solve increasingly complex public problems. Valuing and enhancing such diversity is a core value of our MPA program. An important part of our mission is to prepare students to govern and lead in a dynamic, increasingly interconnected world with emphasis on public service values that promote fair, transparent, and inclusive service to an increasingly diverse public. We recognize that a learning environment that values and exemplifies diversity is essential to this goal.

General Statement on Diversity and Inclusion:

The University of Arizona's definition of diversity is broad, including gender identity, gender expression, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, veteran's status, first-generation status, nationality, citizenship, age and other social identity dimensions that are a critical part of the U of A community. The University acknowledges that the benefits of diversity are *not* automatic and do not simply occur from a diverse campus. Researchers stress that institutions must become *inclusive* places by working in intentional ways to increase educational benefits for students and for the institution.

This Diversity Plan reflects the inputs and values of our faculty members and is consistent with the goals of the University of Arizona and its Strategic Plan as well as the School of Government and Public Policy's (SGPP) Statement on Diversity and Inclusion (<https://sgpp.arizona.edu/diversity-inclusion>.) In general, our program seeks to promote a diverse learning environment in the following ways:

- Proactively recruiting a racially and culturally diverse student body as well as one that embraces both pre-service and in-service students
- Achieving a diverse faculty and staff by proactively recruiting from underrepresented populations following strict University guidelines
- Providing and promoting a climate and community that is welcoming to all
- Providing a curriculum that reflects the value of diversity and prepares graduates to manage and lead in ways that respect diversity
- Providing Core courses where students interact with diverse populations and ideas, which reinforces principles of equity, fairness and sensitivity

- Enhancing the diversity of our environment by strategically recruiting adjunct, practitioner faculty and inviting guest speakers to class who are representative of the public administration profession
- Enhance the diversity of, and student access to, professional networking and service opportunities

In section two, we describe our diversity plans for the next five years. The NASPAA accreditation process has helped us identify important diversity issues and expand our efforts. Many of the performance measures are currently collected and/or are available. Other measures will be collected beginning in spring 2022. Unless otherwise noted, all performance measures will be collected once every two years, including in the All Cohort student survey and a newly developed MPA faculty survey. In addition, while underrepresented populations can be defined across many important dimensions, for the purposes of the performance measures listed below, we define underrepresented populations as based on race, ethnicity, and gender identity, as these data are institutionally collected by the University.

## **2. Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2022 – 2027**

We acknowledge that diversity is an all-inclusive concept that touches every aspect of our program. In order to truly commit to providing a diverse learning environment for our students and stakeholders, we focus our diversity efforts in four areas: the faculty and staff, the student body, curriculum and pedagogy, and nurturing a culture of inclusiveness.

### ***2.1. Faculty and Staff Diversity and Retention***

The University of Arizona values diversity among staff and faculty and considers it paramount to creating a thriving intellectual environment for its students. In order to commit to diverse hiring and employee development, the University has instituted a vigorous plan to ensure that it both hires and advances the careers of veterans, individuals with disabilities, underrepresented minorities, and women and nonbinary individuals.

We aim to promote faculty and staff diversity by proactively recruiting from underrepresented populations by way of following university guidelines for equal opportunity employment. For example, University guidelines require an equal opportunity statement in every employment advertisement, that applicants be given an opportunity to list their gender and ethnic backgrounds, and that we track the number of applicants that are selected for interviews that are from diverse backgrounds. The University also requires that we justify reasons that a person was not chosen for interviews and for offers. In the past, Provosts have required that we invite candidates from diverse backgrounds for an interview or a search will not go forward. In addition to these efforts, the School advertises faculty positions in sites that allow us to target underrepresented populations.

#### *Goals:*

1. Recruit diverse faculty and staff
  - a. In the next three to five years, diversify our faculty to better reflect the diversity of our MPA student body
2. Provide ample support for faculty and staff development and retention

*Strategies:*

- Require that search committee members participate in a training session conducted by the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. The training session provides committee members with tools to increase the diversity of applicant pools
- Ensure gender and racial diversity on search committees when possible
- Contact talented underrepresented candidates before sending out the formal job announcement
- Include suggested language for job ads and position descriptions from the University's Vice President of Faculty Affairs to highlight and emphasize how the University values diversity
- Include a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement as part of the candidate application package for faculty positions
- In evaluating applications for faculty and staff positions, use the candidate's experience with supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion activities as one of the evaluative criteria
- Employ additional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion tools for faculty hiring provided by the University's Office of Faculty Affairs available at <https://searchtoolbox.uawebhost.arizona.edu/> and <https://facultyaffairs.arizona.edu/proactive-recruitment>
- Within the next three years, add one to two additional elective courses to our MPA curriculum and hire one to two additional adjunct faculty members to better reflect the diversity and interests of our MPA student body
- Within the next three to five years, if we pursue an online MPA program modality, hire a full-time MPA nucleus faculty member with special expertise in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to better reflect the diversity and interests of our MPA student body
- As opportunities arise, apply for the University's Strategic Performance Faculty Initiative (SPFI), which allows departments to directly target and hire high quality underrepresented candidates (<https://facultyaffairs.arizona.edu/strategic-priorities-faculty-initiative>)
- Enhance faculty diversity by strategically recruiting adjunct practitioner faculty with diverse backgrounds and interests
- Provide junior faculty members with formal mentors. Mentoring has been shown to be effective in helping new faculty members manage the challenges associated with faculty life
- Require all new faculty and staff members to attend the University and College orientations
- With the financial resource available, commit to providing the necessary resources and benefits to help the faculty members produce cutting edge research and succeed in the classroom
- Advertise diversity and inclusion training opportunities for faculty and staff, in collaboration with the SGPP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and the UA Office of Diversity and Inclusion

*Performance Measures:*

- Percentage of candidates interviewed for faculty and staff positions who are from underrepresented populations<sup>1</sup>
- Percentage of MPA faculty and staff who are from underrepresented populations
- Percentage of faculty who have completed the University of Arizona's Faculty Search Committee Training
- Percentage of faculty and staff who have completed diversity and inclusion trainings in the past five years
- Percentage of faculty and staff who are satisfied with the SGPP environment

**2.2 Student Diversity**

As our mission states, the MPA program aims to recruit, train and prepare students to effectively manage, govern and lead in a dynamic, increasingly interconnected world. Therefore, we strive to recruit a diverse group of students, identifying those with strong undergraduate backgrounds and a strong motivation for public service. Additionally, the MPA faculty also believes that our efforts should include recruiting students with different experiences and backgrounds, including career experiences, as many of our students currently serve in public sector positions and choose our program to further their education in order to advance their current careers.

In order to achieve our goals, we maintain our strong working relationship with campus colleagues, such as the Graduate College and the International Student Services Office. The program works in conjunction with these campus partners to actively seek underrepresented populations and help initiate recruitment and funding efforts.

*Goals:*

1. Recruit and retain students from underrepresented populations
2. Develop an inclusive learning environment that attracts students from diverse backgrounds

*Strategies:*

- Explore funding opportunities for underrepresented applicants from the School of Government and Public Policy and the University of Arizona
- Attract well-qualified students from across the country as well as abroad by utilizing our strong alumni network and encouraging Peace Corps and AmeriCorps volunteers to apply to the program
- Periodically attend Graduate School Fairs at the University of Arizona, Arizona State University and Northern Arizona University
- Provide "Open House" information sessions to prospective students that provides more information on the Master of Public Administration program and the School of Government and Public Policy

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<sup>1</sup> To be collected for each faculty and staff position.

- Target students who reflect the diversity of the southwest region by following the University's strategic plan that emphasizes the need for our student body to reflect the diversity of our region with respect to Hispanic/Latinx and Indigenous representation
- Continually explore opportunities to attract both pre-service and in-service students with diverse intellectual interests

*Performance Measures:*

- Percentage of students admitted to the MPA program who are from underrepresented populations
- Percentage of students from underrepresented populations who graduate from the MPA program
- Percentage of students receiving scholarships or assistantships from the School of Government and Public Policy
- Percentage of full-time students who graduate in 2 years

**2.3 Curricular Diversity and Pedagogy**

The MPA faculty brings a diverse range of theoretical perspectives and substantive issues, which reflects the diverse training, interests, and disciplinary backgrounds of its different members. The MPA faculty strive to provide students with a curriculum that prepares students for public service careers in which they will interact with people from diverse backgrounds in the workplace and provide public services to diverse segments of society. Therefore, we encourage intellectual and topical diversity in our teaching activities. Moreover, we encourage our faculty to utilize a diverse set of teaching materials and pedagogical approaches. MPA faculty should also seek to promote a sense of inclusiveness and courtesy in class discussions in order to create a safe zone where all perspectives are welcomed.

In order to facilitate many of the strategies below, the MPA Director and Program Manager will conduct a survey of the faculty every two years.

*Goals:*

1. To promote intellectual and topical diversity in our MPA classes – with special emphasis on racial, ethnic, and gender diversity as well as social justice
2. To prepare students to interact effectively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds
3. To prepare students for public service careers that meet the needs of diverse segments of society

*Strategies:*

- Invite guest speakers to class and as non-class speakers to represent the diversity of the public administration profession
- Implement team-based projects to help students learn to work with and appreciate diverse intellectual and cultural perspectives

- Add diversity questions to existing All-Cohort student survey, which provides the MPA program with direct student feedback
- Conduct a periodic self-administered syllabus review to encourage diversity in course topic, readings, and pedagogical approaches

*Performance Measures:*

- Percentage of MPA classes that utilize prominent public and nonprofit managers as guest speakers talking to MPA students on diversity issues in the professional world
- Percentage of syllabi, in both core and elective MPA courses, that address issues related to racial bias and/or social justice in the workplace and society
- Percentage of syllabi, in both core and elective MPA courses, that address issues related to gender bias in the workplace and society
- Percentage of syllabi, in both core and elective MPA courses, that incorporate readings from diverse authors
- Percentage of students who agree or strongly agree that the program successfully integrated the public service values of “civility, ethics, accountability, diversity, and social justice” into the curriculum

## ***2.4 Culture of Inclusiveness***

Diversity does not ensure inclusiveness. Moving beyond passive diversity and creating an active culture of inclusiveness is a shared responsibility that requires formal and informal strategies. If SGPP is to achieve this goal, then we must embrace the basic assumption that every member of the SGPP community should feel safe to express his, her or their beliefs both in and out of the classroom. We know that social barriers and bias often break down when individuals from different backgrounds interact with one another. Therefore, we strive to provide more opportunities for social interaction outside the classroom as well as creative learning opportunities that provide students with pathways for expressing their beliefs inside the classroom.

Given our mission, we believe the School of Government and Public Policy should take a leadership position on diversity issues at the University of Arizona. While individual programs, such as the MPA, can provide guidance in this area, we believe the School should formally institutionalize diversity issues within its governance structure. Therefore, the School has created the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to address diversity and inclusiveness issues across all of its programs. By doing so, the School credibly commits to making diversity an active part of faculty governance.

Lastly, Tucson is a diverse community. The School can better serve its needs and foster a culture of inclusiveness by maintaining a diverse advisory board. It is important for us to nurture relationships with community members representing different racial, ethnic and socio-economic populations.

*Goals:*

- Create a culture where students, faculty and staff feel free to share their beliefs without fear of reprisal or alienation
- Formally institutionalize diversity within the governance structure of the School of Government and Public Policy

*Strategies:*

- Implement formal institutions and programs to address diversity issues within the School of Government and Public Policy
- Provide diversity support for faculty, staff, and students. Examples include but are not limited to speaker series, workshops, student conferences, community service projects and fund student organizations
- Create opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to interact socially outside the classroom
- Recruit and maintain a diverse Community Advisory Board (CAB)
- Add questions to our annual All-Cohort Survey that will provide student perspective and opportunities for departmental growth

*Performance Measures:*

- Number of opportunities for faculty-staff-student engagement in a social setting per year
- Percentage of students who agree or strongly agree that “the MPA Program is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion”
- Percentage of students who agree or strongly agree that “I believe my MPA Education has prepared me to address diversity, equity, and inclusion in the work force.”
- The MPA Committee will review the performance measure data in once every two years to look for opportunities to increase diversity and inclusion in the School, College and University