**2018 – 2021 DIVERSITY THREE-YEAR PLAN**

**SECTION 1: MISSION AND VISION**

The Mission Statement for ASU-Mountain Home is

L- Lifelong Learning

E – Enhanced Quality of Life

A – Academic Accessibility, and

D – Diverse Experiences

To align with the campus mission on the macro level, various areas developed departmental or committee mission statements that support the micro-level activities needed to complete the main goals of the institution. The Diversity Committee created the following Mission Statement:

***This committee will support and promote diversity in all its forms by fostering an environment of inclusiveness, respectfulness, and worthiness.***

Additionally, the committee created a vision statement to help with future goal setting initiatives:

***Arkansas State University – Mountain Home will be an inspirational and educational environment, a catalyst for awareness, and a pinnacle of respect for all forms of diversity.***

**SECTION 2: DIVERSITY DEFINED**

In a recent article in *Innovative Higher Education*, Leon and Williams (2016) discussed the challenges faced by diversity committees on university and college campuses. The greatest challenge was the creation of an operational definition of diversity related to the work and goals of their organization and the feeling of frustration that not having an adequate definition caused. This is true for the ASUMH campus where diversity exists, but not necessarily in the same forms as other institutions. In order to foster awareness of the variety of diversity categories, the Diversity Committee has opted to create an operational definition that can be modified through time as more relevant categories present themselves, and as this plan should be renewed every three years.

The simplest definition of the term diversity can be found in the Webster’s Dictionary (Webster’s, 2018):

***the condition of having or being composed of differing elements: variety; especially: the inclusion of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization. For example, programs intended to promote diversity in schools***

Traditionally, diversity initiatives have focused on creating equity between various races/ethnicities and traditional definitions of gender (males/females). While these are still extremely relevant categories at this moment in time, there are other categories that are relevant to the population of the service area of ASU-Mountain Home. Because this organization’s goal is to help students successfully enter the workforce through applied coursework or transferrable degree options, these categories follow the protected categories governed by the EEOC. The committee has identified these areas to be included in the operational definition of diversity groups on the campus:

* **Age:** Protected under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act which states that workers cannot be discriminated against based on age
* **Abilities/Limitations:** Protected under the American’s with Disabilities Act which prohibits discrimination based on a physical abilities/limitations and neurodiverse abilities/limitations that require adequate accommodations be provided within reason.
* **Genetic Information:** Genetic Information is a relatively new category within the Civil Rights/EEOC realm. Protected under the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, organizations cannot discriminate against anyone based on genetic test results like the presence of an inherited trait or disease.
* **National Origin:** Protected under both the Civil Rights Act and the Immigration Reform and Control Act which prohibits discrimination based on an individual’s country of origin, accent, or ethnicity.
* **Pregnancy:** Protected under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, women cannot be discriminated against because of pregnancy, childbirth, or medical conditions related to their pregnancy.
* **Race/Color:** Protected under the Civil Rights Act which prohibits discrimination based on an individual’s color or race.
* **Religion:** Protected under the Civil Rights Act which prohibits discrimination based on an individual’s religious beliefs or lack thereof.
* **Sex:** Protected by the EEOC Title VII, this category prohibits discrimination based on gender identity, including acts against women, men, or transgender or gender nonconforming individuals. It also prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation based on the current LGBTQ+ acronym, which at the time of this document includes the following categories:
  + Lesbian
  + Gay
  + Bisexual
  + Transsexual
  + Queer
  + Questioning
  + Intersex
  + Pansexual
  + 2 Spirit
  + Asexual
  + Allies

In addition to the EEOC categories listed above, the committee has included the following categories in our operational definition:

* **Socioeconomic Status:** Generational poverty is the norm in our region. Discrimination based on class is common in many civilized cultures.
* **Rural Upbringing/Cultural Mindset:** In addition to the generational poverty of rural regions, there is a unique cultural mindset and values system.[**https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/education/edlife/colleges-discover-rural-student.html**](about:blank)
* **Veteran Status:** The EEOC includes Veterans under the Disability category because so many return with a combination of physical and mental injuries due to their service. The committee has chosen to list veteran status as its own category to align with current human resource practices.

**SECTION 3: RECOGNIZING OUR POPULATION**

Currently, the primary categories of diversity on the ASU - Mountain Home campus include:

* **Rural Upbringing/Cultural Mindset**
* **Socioeconomic Status**
* **Age**
* **Abilities/Limitations**
* **Religion**
* **Veteran Status**
* **Pregnancy**
* **Sex**

**SECTION 4: RECOGNIZING WHAT WE DO NOW**

As a whole, the ASUMH community has been committed to enhancing the experiences of all forms of diversity for both our students and community. Examples include:

* **Student Services** – Office of Disability Services, which provides accommodations to students with certain limitations based on a current diagnosis.
* **Student Organizations** – The campus has a variety of student organizations that include competitions and trips that allow students to network and connect with students from other regions. ASUMH also has diversity-based clubs like the Gay-Straight Alliance which promotes inclusion and acceptance across the campus.
* **Performing Arts Series –** The Vada Sheid Community Development Center hosts a series of events that include plays, concerts, and performance focused on creating diverse and culturally enriching experiences for the community.
* **Gaston Lecture Series –** The Vada Sheid Community Development Center also hosts a series of lectures that includes topics that support our diversity initiatives. For example, one season, Tibetan Monks held an event to create a mandala sand painting and openly discussed their culture, lifestyle, and views with students and the community.
* **Academics –** The academic departments are on the front-lines of promoting diversity through curriculum and classroom activities including:
  + **Listen @ Lunch Events:** The Fran Coulter Honor’s Program hosts a monthly lunch session that covers a variety of diversity related topics including celebrations of Black History Month, Women’s History Month, and Transgender awareness initiatives.
  + **Apex Project:** The campus is fortunate to have a number of high quality students who wish to pursue research beyond the curricular requirements of their program. This led to the development of the Apex project which allows students to conduct and present research on a variety of topics. A recent Apex presentation focused on neurodiversity, specifically individuals on the Autism spectrum.
  + **Co-Teaching Across Disciplines:** Currently members of the English department and the Business Department have joined the students of the Leadership courses to demonstrate that working across disciplines can enhance the learning environment by giving students to experience diverse viewpoints and openly discuss topics related to diversity and inclusion in a more meaningful way.
  + **Financial Literacy Initiatives:** While this may seem unrelated to diversity initiatives, the business department currently hosts events aimed at educating the rural population about money and finance. This is an effort to enhance the quality of life within the rural communities that have been faced with generational poverty, which have been identified as two key diversity categories for this campus.

**SECTION 5: GOALS – WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

Based on the information above, and the assessment of the current campus climate, the following goals have been created within the scope of our three-year plan and how each of our goals aligns with one of the strategic planning goals of the campus-at-large.

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| **Diversity Committee Goal** | **Campus Strategic Plan Goal** |
| Survey campus community (faculty, staff, and students) members regarding awareness of diversity categories and how that relates to the populations of both the ASUMH community and the surrounding service area. | 6. Expand educational delivery and cultural experiences throughout the service area and enhance collaborations with area schools, businesses, and communities. (off-campus center; secondary center; internships; workplace trainings; online delivery) |
| Survey faculty to determine current curricular activities regarding defined diversity groups by the end of the 2018-2019 year. | 6. Expand educational delivery and cultural experiences throughout the service area and enhance collaborations with area  schools, businesses, and communities. (off-campus center; secondary center; internships; workplace trainings; online delivery) |
| Create and enhance co-curricular projects and events that bridge various disciplines and enhance the discussion of various diversity-related topics. Such as merging leadership courses to provide both a philosophical and business view of leadership, and projects or courses that promote non-traditional gender roles in career fields (ex. women in STEM careers or men in nursing). | 6. Expand educational delivery and cultural experiences throughout the service area and enhance collaborations with area schools, businesses, and communities. (off-campus center; secondary center; internships; workplace trainings; online delivery) |
| Create and enhance initiatives focused on rural students, generational poverty, and the mindsets that hold these groups back from experiencing diversity and pursuing higher education. | 11. Promote ASUMH programs and expand the awareness of the value of higher education. (alumni association; marketing [direct and image]; internal and external communication; conveying successes; more digital promotion and communication) |
| Create instructor led workshops on diversity related topics like stress management, anger management, time management, household budgeting, and mindfulness. | 6. Expand educational delivery and cultural experiences throughout the service area and enhance collaborations with area schools, businesses, and communities. (off-campus center; secondary center; internships; workplace trainings; online delivery) |
| Provide faculty and staff development and training opportunities focused on the relevant diversity categories. | 6. Expand educational delivery and cultural experiences throughout the service area and enhance collaborations with area  schools, businesses, and communities. (off-campus center; secondary center; internships; workplace trainings; online delivery) |
| Expand student service provisions for identifying highly vulnerable populations and providing resources or assistance as needed. | 7. Provide a broad array of student services, and support.(streamline enrollment services and student center; online communities;  advising; tutoring; testing) |
| Explore ways to improve student notification of accessibility services. Explore ways to better serve impaired students who do not qualify for accommodations. | 7. Provide a broad array of student services, and support.(streamline enrollment services and student center; online communities;  advising; tutoring; testing) |
| Increase visual awareness, discussion opportunities, and engagement with matters of diversity. | 6. Expand educational delivery and cultural experiences throughout the service area and enhance collaborations with area  schools, businesses, and communities. (off-campus center; secondary center; internships; workplace trainings; online delivery) |