

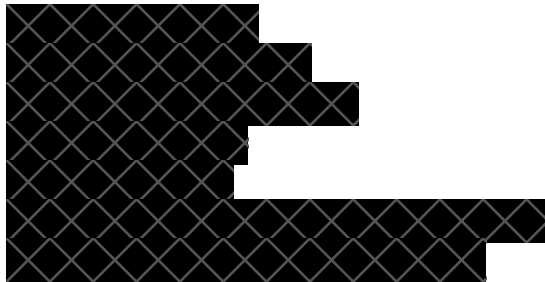
TO: All members of Arts & Sciences  
FROM: The A&S Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CDEI)  
RE: Report on our Review of Diversity Plans  
DATE: February 18, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

The A&S Committee on DEI was elected in Fall 2020 and charged to "...promote and support efforts by the Faculty of Arts & Sciences to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community in all facets of work and life at William & Mary." Toward that end, we have carried out a full review of all the available diversity plans submitted by departments and programs and currently on file with the Dean's Office. This report summarizes our findings.

Comments and feedback are welcome. Please use our email: [as-cdei@wm.edu](mailto:as-cdei@wm.edu).

Respectfully submitted,  
The A&S CDEI



### **Diversity Plan Review 2017-2020**

We note that 2017 and 2018 were the two years when most Departments and Programs submitted their plans. A few never submitted a plan for any of the four years. The number of diversity plans submitted decreased in 2019 and decreased further in 2020. Most programs put a lot of effort into their reports in the first year and many had insightful updates and additional information in later years but the reports for 2017 were the most informative.

**Uneven quality:** The diversity plans submitted for the last few years have been embraced with varying degrees of seriousness across departments and programs. The information provided was not consistent across departments and programs with some providing data and detailed outline on plans to recruit and retain students and faculty, but others providing very little such information. We noticed that some plans were more or less the same from year to year, beginning in 2017 to present, with perhaps minor updates to the document to reflect an increase in the percentage of women on the faculty. At least one plan consisted only of a tabular summary of data, without any narrative or 'plan'. Other plans, though they used descriptive and inclusive language in their commitment to diversity, often tracked only gender diversity and representation in their programs. Very few had statistics on other aspects of underrepresentation. They tended to not have robust action plans for how to improve diversity

in their programs, to promote equity and inclusion, nor did they have descriptions of how effective the plans have been. Many carried out formalized surveys to assess climate, or focus groups, but many did not, instead relying upon more anecdotal sources of information. Very few departments explored implicit bias training, workshops, reviews of evaluation methods, or other types of education efforts for faculty, staff, and students to acquire knowledge and cultural competency around DEI topics.

We believe the diversity plans were developed in good faith, but without a sense that the work could be used as a source of creative energy. Some few departments and programs found the development of their plans as a chance to promote more dialogue and collaboration and approached this work as an opportunity to innovate in recruitment, the development of pipelines, curriculum development, faculty and staff development, etc.

**COLL 350:** Many plans overlooked including any mention of how they intended to contribute to the new COLL 350 requirement (formerly denoted COLL 199). In the September 2019 Report of the Ad Hoc COLL 199 Implementation Committee, we note the following recommendations (p. 33):

- “7. We recommend that participation in COLL 199 be embedded within departments/programs. Currently every A&S department/program has developed an individual plan for diversity. We propose that each of these plans be required to include a statement and action plan regarding:
- a) The ways in which the department/program will contribute to offering COLL 199 courses, including refocusing existing courses on COLL 199 priorities, and making ability to teach COLL 199 courses a priority in plans for hiring.
  - b) The types of diversity knowledge that will best prepare their majors for their eventual careers, including COLL 199 courses or other courses within or outside the major.
  - c) The language to be included in future job posting advising applicants of the COLL 199 requirement and asking them to discuss possible courses they are interested in or prepared to teach in their teaching and diversity statements.”

The CDEI strongly endorses the inclusion of these topics in all future diversity plans.

**Notable innovations:** Some ideas that we found innovative were funding for faculty and students to attend conferences to meet diverse graduates in the field of study; reading or discussion groups; exploring opportunities to recruit diverse postdocs or to set up pipelines; determining the climate through graduating-student focus groups or surveys.

**Best practices:** The more impressive plans that we reviewed tended to be useful living documents that showed a great deal of thought had gone into the design, and they included all members of the department or program -- faculty, students, and staff -- in the plan. The structure of these plans outlined the problems they saw in their program around diversity (tending to focus on faculty makeup and retention, as well as student climate), followed by an action plan for addressing these concerns, with addendums for each year with a descriptive report on which action items worked, what didn't, and how they might adjust their goals for the

next year. These plans included surveys and focus groups with students, faculty, and staff to identify those things that needed work, plans for faculty and staff hires, and ways to increase the number of outside guest speakers they could bring in from various backgrounds. We'd like to highlight a few plans we thought were exemplary. The Government Department plan was well-designed and well-structured, with very detailed data analysis. We note that they were also among the most successful in hiring faculty of color during the years of the report. Other plans we would like to point to as particularly good examples are the plans from Modern Languages and Literatures, and Biology. We are now working with the Dean's Office to make these reports more widely available.

**Suggested actions:**

1. We believe it would help for our committee to provide a framework for reports, along with examples of what we consider good models, so they can be standardized and reviewed across departments and programs with the same standards and criteria. This would promote a greater sense that this is an A&S-wide effort we undertake together, and not simply located in departments and programs. The hiring of the new Dean for DEI can be potentially transformative in this regard.
2. Given the amount of effort that goes into the design and implementation of these plans, we suggest making the plans 3-year plans, submitted every 3 years with only annual forms to fill out for updates and to track progress.
3. We recommend requiring implicit bias training for new faculty and staff, and ongoing training for a percentage of all faculty and staff annually.

In conclusion, we question the utility of diversity plans as currently constituted, because they are largely process- not outcome-driven. But the goal to create these plans was an important step for moving us forward as an institution. If departments and programs are given examples of what constitutes a useful diversity plan and if our new A&S diversity dean is the point person for reviewing them for feedback, we think the accountability of knowing they will be reviewed may increase the thought and the quality of effort expended on them. And we also believe that creating such plans and the actions they prompt are vitally important to this institution and individual departments and programs; these plans could be a means to create new/revise old infrastructures that are foundational to W&M so as to enable ALL members of our community to thrive.