

Department of Curriculum & Teaching
Auburn University
Recruitment and Retention Plan for Enhancing Student Diversity

Diversity Statement

The department of Curriculum and Teaching offers teacher preparation programs in thirteen areas plus an endorsement in Middle School Education. Bachelors, Masters, Specialists, and Doctoral programs are offered in most areas.

Diversity of students and faculty has been, and continues to be, a major goal of the Department of Curriculum and Teaching. Considerable improvement has been made in faculty diversity, but the same progress has not been made in student diversity. Through continued efforts, the Department strives to recruit and retain students with exceptionalities and from diverse ethnic, racial, gender, language, socioeconomic, and religious groups.¹

Goals

1. Recruitment – Enhance diversity among undergraduate and graduate students declaring, applying for, and entering all programs in Curriculum & Teaching.
2. Retention – Enhance diversity among students graduating from all C&T programs.
3. Curriculum – Continue to implement and revise course content and lab experiences to nurture a respect for diversity among students and faculty, foster a sensitivity to issues related to diversity, and prepare teachers for success in diverse school settings.
4. Faculty involvement – Increase the number of departmental initiatives that aim toward increasing diversity among faculty and teacher candidates and that provide opportunities for teacher candidates to work with diverse students in P-12 schools.

Assumptions

1. A successful plan needs to consider *pre-program* support—support aimed at equipping AU freshmen and sophomores from diverse groups to meet the criteria for admission into their declared majors and to establish an identity with the program area.
2. A commitment to a diverse student population includes a systematic plan for collecting, analyzing, and responding to data related to student diversity.
3. Successful efforts related to a recruitment and retention plan for enhancing student diversity are dependent on successful efforts in being a group of faculty and students who truly value, seek, and embrace diversity. A true commitment to diversity resonates throughout the conversations, relationships, and ordinary actions of its students, faculty, and administration.

¹ This proposal is particularly aimed at increasing the number of African American teacher candidates. This group comprises a significant percentage of the state's population but is historically underrepresented at Auburn University. Although the percentage of African American teacher candidates in Curriculum and Teaching exceeds the percentage of African American students in the University, it has not reached the desired level.

Examples of Recent and/or Current Actions

1. TEAM-Math - TEAM-Math (Transforming East Alabama Mathematics), a \$9 million grant funded by the National Science Foundation, is a partnership of 12 school districts, Auburn University, and Tuskegee University. A major goal of TEAM-Math is to develop partnerships with schools representing diverse student populations and work collaboratively to increase mathematics achievement for all students. The initiative supports collaboration among faculty, preservice teachers, and classroom teachers.
2. Lab Experiences – Methods courses feature lab experiences that provide teacher candidates opportunities to interact with exceptional students and students from different ethnic, racial, gender, socioeconomic, language, and religious groups. Following are a few examples.
 - Elementary Science and Social Studies - The TNT Interdisciplinary Summer Science Camp for Girls was piloted in Summer 2003. This project responds to national and local needs to increase confidence and knowledge in science among rural, African American elementary and middle school girls. It also strives to improve pre-service teachers' attitudes toward teaching science and to increase knowledge in teaching science to diverse learners.
 - CTMU 3040, a required Music and Related Arts course for Early Childhood and Elementary Majors, includes labs at schools in Macon and Tallapoosa counties, schools with high percentages of low SES students and/or students of color.
 - CTMU 7910, a required course for Music Education majors, requires graduate students to complete a practicum at Loachapoka High School in Lee County, a school with a high percentage of low SES students and students of color.
3. English as a Second Language (ESL) Program – The Department added an ESL program and now offers an elective ESL course for all graduate students (CTES 7410 Language Minority Students in K-12).
4. Persistent Issues in History (PIH) – The PIH Network, with major funding from the National Endowment for Humanities, seeks to develop a national civic learning community of school teachers, teacher educators, and liberal arts scholars who organize the study of history around the fundamental civic issues with which society continually wrestle. The PIH network uses interactive technology to support problem-based inquiry into the diverse perspectives that citizens bring to the challenges of democratic life. The PIH Network offers members a wide range of professional development resources, curriculum content, and student learning activities.
5. Elementary/Rehabilitation and Special Education Collaboration – This collaboration represents a joint effort to expose preservice, inservice, and university faculty to student populations of all exceptionalities. This partnership is in its early stages of development. It supports collaboration between all educators and preservice teachers to share best practices in teaching and learning for all students. The partnership is designed around shared courses and internships. This initiative focuses on understanding and implementing the “inclusive” classroom.

6. Faculty diversity - C&T has successfully enhanced faculty diversity over the past few years.

Proposed Actions

A Student Diversity Committee would be established to help organize, publicize, and support both current and new departmental initiatives related to enhancing student diversity. In addition, this committee would develop and oversee an ongoing plan to systematically assess and report progress toward achieving the goals of this report. Following are proposed actions:

1. Update and publicize our commitment to diversity.
 - Update C&T print and electronic communications as needed to portray the program's diversity as well as its commitment to diversity.
 - Prepare a supplement that delineates scholarship and work-study opportunities aimed at increasing student diversity (e.g., the College of Education's Holmes scholarships, Auburn University's President Graduate Opportunity Program).
 - Coordinate with college and university personnel to contact and work with high school counselors and junior college advisors to ensure distribution of appropriate departmental materials.
2. Seek input from historically underrepresented groups on how to more effectively enhance student diversity.
 - Plan and implement focus group interviews with students from historically underrepresented groups who are currently enrolled in C&T programs.
 - Plan and implement focus group interviews with teachers in the area and/or program graduates from historically underrepresented groups.
3. Develop and implement a plan to provide mentoring and networking opportunities for students from historically underrepresented groups who have declared a C&T major and/or have been accepted into a C&T program.
4. Develop and implement a plan to provide mentoring and networking opportunities for C&T faculty from historically underrepresented groups. (Recruiting and retaining students from diverse groups is contingent on our success in recruiting and retaining faculty from diverse groups.)
5. Seek funding for a teacher-in-residence position. Responsibilities could include teaching undergraduate courses, supervising interns, and supervising the academic and mentoring support for students from historically underrepresented groups.
6. Create a cohort master's program in school districts with high percentages of teachers from historically underrepresented groups; offer some courses at a school site in the district; consider weekend classes.
7. Work with local school systems to create and co-sponsor Future Teachers of America organizations.

8. Encourage faculty to build on recent initiatives and/or spearhead new initiatives for providing opportunities for teacher candidates to interact with peers from diverse groups and to work with diverse students P-12. Following are some possibilities:
 - Develop collaborative seminars with faculty and students from teacher preparation programs in historically black institutions (e.g., Tuskegee, Alabama State).
 - Coordinate lab experiences in the department so that all programs include opportunities to work with diverse students P-12.
 - Build on and/or expand collaborations with school sites representing high percentages of low SES students and/or students of color (e.g., The West Alabama Learning Coalition, TEAM-Math).
 - Create “study sites” in exemplary classrooms/schools with high percentages of low SES students and/or students of color. Include observations and discussions with the teachers and/or principals in appropriate courses (e.g., secondary classroom management course, elementary education seminar).
 - Work to infuse methods courses with current ESL standards.
7. Work with and build on established university initiatives.
 - Office of Multicultural Affairs
 - Summer Bridge Program
8. Provide support for faculty initiatives.
 - Seek to have money distributed from the university or college level so that funding for some initiatives such as those listed in #8 (above) can be allocated at the department level and made “easily accessible” to faculty.
 - When appropriate, designate faculty involvement with approved initiatives as part of a summer workload (e.g., work with Summer Bridge Program).
9. Seek funding for departmental scholarships and/or work-study opportunities for minority undergraduate students.
(Note: Graduate scholarships for minority students are available through university- and college-level funding; however, no undergraduate scholarships are available at this time.)

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