COUNCIL ON CLIMATE AND DIVERSITY: BRIEFING SHEET

DENTISTRY
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

BACKGROUND

The Texas A&M University College of Dentistry (COD), located in Dallas, is committed to improving the oral health of a diverse community. Specifically, the College aims to increase access to dental care through cultural competence, diversity, and the provision of community-based services. Further, TAMU COD addresses this mission by embracing an environment which includes faculty, staff, students and patients who represent a vast array of cultural backgrounds, preferences and beliefs.

COD HIGHLIGHTS

STUDENTS:

Texas A&M University College of Dentistry admits the **most diverse racial/ethnic group of students among non-minority dental schools in the U. S.** This is due largely to the whole file review admissions process and the "Bridge to Dentistry" pipeline program which begins the process of attracting students to the dental profession from as early as Pre-K.

Current: DDS + DH	#	%
Asian	108	20.3
Black *	50	9.4
Hispanic *	122	22.9
Multiple	3	0.6
Native American *	6	1.1
Unreported	7	1.2
White	237	44.5

***URM 33.4% (total)**

FACULTY:

Funded by Health Resources and Services Administration, the Center of Excellence (COE) Grant allows COD to **recruit new URM faculty** using the "grow-your-own" approach by which students are provided a stipend to help with dental school expenses for 2 years in exchange for teaching in a dental school for 2 years. Over the last 5 years:

- Six dental students were selected to participate
- Two students have completed the Masters in Education for Health Professionals.
- One student received the prestigious Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program award and will become full-time faculty at COD beginning this spring.
- The other student is now working toward a start date in the fall.

The COE program also **focuses on the success of minority faculty**. The program facilitates the success of current junior faculty from URM backgrounds by their participation in a mentoring initiative. The training and progress of five individuals are guided and monitored by their department chairs and the Director of Faculty Development. Within the past two years:

- One faculty has been successful in the quest for promotion.
- Two others are currently in the review process.

Unit Data on Accountability, Climate, and Equity: Lessons Learned

Significant Changes Made/In Progress:

- The ***Committee on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access*** (IDEA) was approved Dec. 16, 2016. The purpose of the IDEA Committee is to foster programs and activities that create a welcoming and supportive environment that cultivates a lifelong sense of belonging; improve communications and interactions among the diverse faculty, staff, student, and patient populations; and support the vision of the College for cultural competence, diversity, and increased access to oral health care. The IDEA Committee will develop the infrastructure to address and support diversity at the College.
- A **Director of Diversity** position has been established to lead the IDEA Committee in its efforts to embrace diversity in all aspects of the college environment.
- The **climate survey** developed by the TAMU ADVANCE team for the Dean of Faculties will be administered to faculty, staff, and students early in Spring 2017.
- A **mandatory cultural competence training** protocol for faculty & staff is under review.

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Lessons Learned from Peer Institutions:

- Peer institutions have the **infrastructure** in place, including senior-level administrators, to support diversity initiatives that address recruitment of diverse cohorts of students, faculty, and staff.
- Peer institutions have **formal plans** for addressing climate and fostering inclusiveness.
- Peer institutions **extend initiatives and support for diversity into the community.** Whenever possible their efforts involve groups, such as minority organizations, women's organizations, community action groups, and community service agencies.

Structural Changes Needed to Become a National Leader in Diversity:

The College of Dentistry must:

- In concert with the University, identify and dedicate resources and personnel to develop the **infrastructure** to effectively address equity. This includes support for training for leaders, faculty, and staff through various vehicles.
- Develop **diversity-related policies** and practices in and for the college in general to foster a climate of inclusion and equal access to education, employment and healthcare. This includes policies affecting the recruitment and fair treatment of a diverse population of faculty, staff, and students.
- Link diversity-related policies to the Strategic Plan to assure **regular monitoring** for effectiveness.
- Cultivate and/or expand and maintain **partnerships with external sources** to maximize resources and increase the scope of programming. These partners include but are not limited to alumni, organized dentistry, faith-based and community-based organizations, and cultural affinity groups.

ASPIRANT PEERS

- The University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston
- The University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry
- The University of Missouri - Kansas City School of Dentistry