



Plan of Action on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

The UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media's 2022 Plan of Action on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion recognizes that our goals and strategies in this area are rooted in our deep commitment to "train the next generation of media professional and ultimately to ignite public conversation" and to provide "an environment for teaching, learning and research that includes individuals from diverse backgrounds and with differing interests, lived experiences and goals" (Mission, 2016). As a School, we "make diversity and inclusivity efforts an active part of our community, our curriculum and our goals," a "commitment that is rooted in the knowledge that diversity and inclusion benefit all faculty, staff, students, and alumni who engage with and practice these tenets" (Vision, 2016).

And from our strategic plan, *Envisioning Tomorrow*: "We will continue to embrace, discuss, and strengthen our commitment to diversity and inclusion with intentionality, from classroom instruction to scholarly and creative activities, to the procedures and policies of our School. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion extends to age, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic group, geography, religion, thought, philosophy, perspective, disability, and veteran status" (Strategic Plan, 2019).

Albeit driven by those higher ideals and commitments, this Plan of Action recognizes that, more than lofty goals and aspirations, DEI efforts must be concrete and grounded in the real world. They are necessary and urgent and should be constantly driving us to do better and be better. As part of the School's continuing efforts, this plan of action includes both short- and long-term goals and priorities.

General Objectives:

1. Guide the UNC Hussman School's main constituencies (students, faculty, staff, alumni, community, supporters) in the implementation of actions that will widen and deepen our DEI commitment
2. Set the groundwork for achieving organizational and cultural change in DEI for the school
3. Establish parameters for measuring success
4. Respond to concerns raised during reaccreditation, which led to provisional accreditation status

Important Observations:

1. ACEJMC will measure progress in the following areas:
 - Recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and students

- Sense of community and belonging
 - Governance, including transparency and procedures
 - Curricular changes and updates
2. Guiding principles for the plan discussed among Hussman faculty and staff include:
- Create a welcoming, inclusive environment at the school that will make it a place where people want to work and study
 - Increase awareness that our definition of DEI is broad and incorporates aspects such as socioeconomic considerations and different living situations and arrangements related to family care
 - Be transparent, open, and inclusive in the decision making and implementation of the plan—build online DEI presence with resources and narrative showing grassroots nature of plan
 - Celebrate and communicate our accomplishments and our diversity by showcasing our achievements and the milestones reached in the execution of the plan (DEI website and dashboard)

Sections of the Plan:

1. Students
2. Faculty and Staff
3. Belonging and community (internal and external)
4. Curriculum

1. STUDENTS

Goals:

- Foster a sense of community, welcoming, belonging among students
- Diversity numbers among student body that reflects local and state demographics

Strategies:

Top strategies (2022-2023)

- First-year experience—a series of programs and activities directed at new Hussman School students, aimed at fostering a sense of cohort and belonging, while helping to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment (spring 2023 forward)
- Dean’s Student Advisory Council (DSAC)—an inclusive group of student representatives aimed at creating a direct channel between the dean and diverse student groups (fall 2022)
- Dean’s Fellows for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program—an off-shoot of the DSAC, this program is aimed at professional growth and will identify students with leadership potential and create opportunities for them to develop and improve their skills (Target launch date: spring 2023)

- Professional development opportunities for students in the DSAC and Dean’s Fellows program (ongoing)
- Listening sessions with students, moderated by student leaders (spring 2023)

Other important strategies (ongoing)

- Pipeline for application to the Hussman School for community colleges students
- Partnerships with HBCUs aimed at developing programs and initiatives that are mutually beneficial to all institutions
- Pipeline to high schools such as the ones established through the North Carolina Scholastic Media Association
- UNC’s College Advisors Corps
- Career-oriented workshops and training for underrepresented groups
- Robust CABJ, NAHJ and other student leadership opportunities
- Professional development opportunities for graduate students
- Research collaboration opportunities for UG and GR students
- Fundraising and development initiatives focused on students and DEI

Measures of success:

- A record of DEI-related activities and programming directed to students
- Actionable data from the listening sessions with students

2. FACULTY AND STAFF

Goals:

- Increase recruitment, hiring and retention of a diverse and inclusive workforce, in a way that expands our reach into additional areas that are currently underrepresented at the school
- Attract position applicants who are more diverse, inclusive, and representative of larger society

Strategies:

Top strategies (2022-2023)

- Create professional development opportunities for faculty and staff on topics such as leadership, life/career balance, DEI that are focused on concrete strategies for growth and advancement—opportunities should start at the onboarding process and continue through one’s career at the School
- Align faculty and staff recruitment plans with strategic needs of the School in a way that better addresses needs and equity issues
- Create opportunities for staff and faculty to grow within one’s career path, to stimulate retention at the Hussman School—opportunities should start at the onboarding process and continue through one’s career at the School

- Investigate the reasons why some positions fail to attract a more diverse pool of applicants—devise and implement strategies that aim to build more diverse candidate pools
- Be more intentional about connecting and partnering with industry, professional groups, alumni, and community groups that have similar hiring and retention goals

Other important strategies (ongoing)

- Provide information about family care (elder care, childcare) that create more equitable conditions for career advancement
- Be cognizant of all protected categories in hiring, in a way that expands diversity and inclusion at the school (examples include sexual/gender identity, military status, diverse abilities and socioeconomic status)
- Reach out to additional representative professional and community groups during the recruitment process (example, professional and academic groups representing underrepresented minorities and groups)
- Improve our onboarding process
- Explore opportunities and resources for faculty and staff in compensation and benefits that help bridge disparity gaps and help us become a more attractive employer

Measures of success:

- Attendance, participation and engagement data from DEI-related programs and initiatives
- Changes in the recruitment and onboarding of new faculty and staff that allow for more diversity in hiring and retention
- Faculty and staff demographical data
- Faculty and staff retention and promotion data

3. CURRICULUM

Goals:

- Build a more inclusive, equitable and diverse curriculum by developing and making available resources that empower faculty to change their classes
- Make available pedagogical resources that help faculty build more inclusive, welcoming, and equitable classrooms

Strategies:

Top strategies (2022-2023)

- Explore the possibility of a diversity requirement in the undergraduate curriculum—define learning goals for the requirement, open a process for faculty to revise their classes and submit them to meet this requirement

- Bring speakers from diverse backgrounds who can present on a broad range of topics and can be shared by different classes
- Organize workshops focused on diversity, equity and inclusion as applied to pedagogy and the curriculum
- Launch basic course on cultural competency in the media professions
- Conduct regular surveillance of news and resources relevant to DEI in media professions and share information with faculty/staff via databases and other digital resources

Other important strategies (ongoing)

- Organize DEI-focused conferences and symposia on topics shared by the School
- Review foundational courses to embed a DEI perspective
- Set up voluntary syllabus review clinics as part of the assessment program
- Share DEI resources on course content, pedagogy with adjuncts as part of the onboarding process
- Create partnerships between classes and community organizations and non-profits

Measures of success:

- Changes in the curriculum (new classes, new requirements)
- Attendance, participation and engagement data from DEI-related curricular programs, initiatives, and resources

4. COMMUNITY

Goals:

- Strive to build a more welcoming, open, and inclusive environment at the school
- Empower individuals and groups to address DEI issues in their projects and teaching
- Be more intentional about including different stakeholders, including alumni and community members, in our programs and initiatives
- Be more open and transparent as a school, in terms of how decisions are made, and rules are applied

Strategies:

Top strategies (2022-2023)

- Build physical spaces (staff lounge, student lounge) at CMC and Carroll Hall for gathering and celebration
- Empower and elevate ABIDE and its mission; create a more formal structure and office for DEI initiatives—continue to fund ABIDE and its programs
- Create communication channels specific to DEI (web site, dashboard) to keep promoting and publicizing our efforts

Other important strategies (ongoing)

- Review our rules and procedures and other governance mechanisms to make sure they are more equitable and just
- Be more inclusive in graphic design, decoration of spaces, to include a wide array of people and experiences
- Celebrate differences in people and experiences, as well as our uniqueness as a school and community
- Plan activities related to work/life balance to address stress and burnout
- Engage with community groups and bring their experiences to campus
- Support NABJ, NAHJ and other professional groups that bring more diversity and inclusion
- Create opportunities for alumni from diverse backgrounds to feel connected with the school (speaking engagements, class visits, events, capstone projects)
- Identify fundraising opportunities around specific DEI projects to engage alumni and other potential supporters

Measures of success:

- Changes in the structure and range of ABIDE and its initiatives and programs
- Changes in the shared governance structure to account for more equitable and transparent decision-making processes
- Data that show more engagement with and presence of DEI-related initiatives in our communication channels