

WT 125 White Paper

Diversity and Inclusion

Abstract:

This white paper seeks to explicate the importance of Diversity and Inclusion initiatives at West Texas A&M University (WTAMU). In doing so, three key ideas were identified as necessities for WTAMU to grow and prepare for the projected student populations beyond 2018. By focusing on normalizing diversity across the campus, recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, staff, and administrators, and recognizing the importance of university support for diversity and inclusion, WTAMU can position itself as a known entity that welcomes and actively supports diverse faculty, staff, and administrators and provides a quality education to all students.

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Last Edited: July 2018

Introduction:

The face of higher education in the United States is changing. The fresh out of high school, 18-year-old student with no college credits are being replaced with students graduating high school with associate degrees, students with families, full-time jobs, and students who transfer from community colleges to universities.

“According to U.S. Census Bureau, we are now a nation with increased multicultural complexities and nuances—of the nation’s approximately 307 million people, 65% are whites/non-Hispanics, 16% are Latinos/Hispanics, 13% are African Americans, 1% reported as American Indians/Alaskan Natives, and 0.2% identified themselves as Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Note that 1.7% of the population chose to identify themselves as two or more races” (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 7).

Along with this shift in the demographic nature of students, universities are seeing a rise

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in first-generation college students (FGS). We define first-generation college student as a student whose parents did not complete a degree from a college or university. Though gradual, this change has been consistent over the last 2 decades. In 2001, U.S. census, director Kenneth Prewitt wrote "Not in recorded history has there ever been a nation so demographically complex" (p. 4). Sixteen years later, his words ring true. Today's students come from a variety of ages, cultural, ethnic, inner city, rural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The diverse nature of this "new student" is pushing universities to be proactive in the ways in which they engage students. Despite the obvious need to expand and support programming for diversity and inclusion (D & I) initiatives that meet students where they are, these programs are often attacked, cut, and marginalized on campuses across the country. "As challenges to diversity in academe persist, scholars speak out about the continued lack of diversity in higher education" (Turner, 2013, p. 155). As academic communities expand their understanding of what D & I means we must address barriers faced by students. "Despite our heritage as a liberal democracy, as a nation we have struggled with conceptions of inclusion and fairness in many social domains. History shows that merely outlawing discrimination neither equalized educational opportunities nor created a just society" (Tienda, 2013, p. 470). The university must be intentional in its actions towards developing these equalized educational opportunities. It must actively recruit quality faculty, staff, and administrator of diverse backgrounds, and support diversity and inclusion initiatives across campus.

As institutions of higher learning, universities must push to the forefront of D & I initiatives by engaging students in critical thought education that push boundaries and encourages them to become, not just aware, but compassionate of those who are different than themselves. West Texas A&M University has in place an Office for Diversity and Inclusion, which must situate itself in a position to lead the university and its students in this charge. Doing so requires normalizing D & I on campus as a natural behavior, and less like another set of boxes that must be checked. If universities "resist augmenting what they know or are unwilling to move outside of their comfort zone, they also limit the borders of knowledge to which their students are exposed" (Borisoff & Chesebro, 2011, p. 138). This lack of exposure is a hindrance to students who are supposed to be preparing for a "real world" full of people from various backgrounds who must co-exist with each other. It is from this combination of steady growth in student population diversity, lack of diversity in university leadership, faculties, and staff, and continual challenges from outside university perceptions that we develop our positions for this white paper. The university must not only meet students where they are, but it must reflect its student population if it intends to have open doors in 2035.

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Normalizing Diversity:

Defining Diversity & Inclusion

In 2010, the Chronicle of Higher Education documented a “long standing lack of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity among students, faculty and staff in academe” (Turner, 2013, p. 155). With the changes in student populations happening at such a fast pace, university administrators must position universities to engage students from all backgrounds. Simmons, Lowery-Hart, Wahl, & McBride (2013) argue that “African-American students’ educational opportunities have been affected by university administrators’ inability to recognize and address racial tension on campuses” (p. 376). With such diversity in today’s student population, it is reasonable to conclude that other students are also affected by these kinds of tensions. Normalizing diversity across the university will require engaging all stakeholders on campus. The normalization process cannot be successful with programming alone. “As a result of non-inclusive pedagogies and ineffective college and university cultural programs, students continue to experience racism, insensitivity, and a lack of intercultural understanding and social support” (Simmons et al, 2013, p. 377). Universities must intentionally develop the curriculum and social support structures necessary to recruit and retain these students.

In order to better understand the notion of normalizing D & I, we must have a clear understanding of what Diversity and Inclusion means (Simmons & Wahl, 2016). As these terms have been defined by scholars in multiple ways, through multiple publications, we employ the definition offered by Wolfe & Dilworth (2015) who define diversity as “a driving force, diversity evolves into the practice of valuing all humanity, a means of increasing access” and inclusion as, “a framework for creating a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members, and an individual and collective responsibility for these issues during education, training, and engagement with others” (p. 671). Diversity and Inclusion initiatives promote, develop, encourage, and seek to build an open, inclusive and welcoming campus culture for the benefit of all students.

If we seek to truly educate students, fostering an inclusive environment must be a priority, not just while they are on campus, but for students who will become alumni. Brown (2004) extends this need by arguing that creating “a culture of acceptance fosters a sense of belonging among all persons by recognizing and respecting difference, and in doing so, promoting a sense of loyalty to the organization” (p. 29). In building this inclusive environment, it is important to understand the population of students that attend West Texas A&M University. To do so, we will use the WT 125 Theme groups structured intentionally to look at the community in which the university is located and the students who attend. The following discussion will attempt to address the majority

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of the planning principles as they interface with the goals and strategies supporting diversity and inclusion for WTAMU's future.

Theme Group: The Panhandle and Its Heart – The I-27 Corridor:

Aspiration: Our relationship to our community is critical. Schools, industries, businesses, and cultural activity all play a pivotal role in building a quality place to live and study. This is a mutually reinforcing phenomenon.

West Texas A&M University is located in Canyon, Texas, and sits in the center of a 26-county region of the Texas Panhandle, surrounded by many rural communities. The largest city closest to WTAMU is Amarillo, TX with a 2016 estimated population of Amarillo is 190,695. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 6.6 % of the population is African American, 3.2% Asian, 28.8 % Hispanic, 77.0 % White. Amarillo is also home to Amarillo College and four high schools in the Amarillo Independent School District (AISD).

According to the WTAMU Office for Institutional Research, in fall 2012, 3,773 students enrolled at WTAMU indicated on their application they were from one of the 26 county regions in the Panhandle. Five years later fall 2017 the number of enrollment increased to 3,969. That is a 5.2% of growth of student enrollment from the Panhandle alone. In fall 2012, 1,251 of these students identified on their application as either African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, International, Multiple Races, Pacific Islander and unknown. In fall 2015, 1,722 students identified from these same groups, an increase of 37.7%. In fall 2012, 2,522 students from the Panhandle identified as white and in fall 2017 2,247 identified as white indicating a decline of 11.1%. This is an indication that the diverse population in the Panhandle region is increasing and a significant number of those students are choosing to attend WTAMU for a quality education. See table 1 below for more details.

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Table 1.

Change in Undergraduate Enrollment in five years from top 26 counties

	Fall 2012	Fall 2017	% Change
African American	100	114	14%
American Indian	23	17	-26%
Asian	52	90	73%
Hispanic	941	1318	40%
International	11	5	-54%
Multiple Races Reported	67	101	50%
Pacific Islander	4	1	-75%
Unknown	53	76	45%
White	2522	2247	-9.8%

The growth of the Hispanic enrollment has enabled WTAMU to be officially recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). To become a Hispanic Serving Institution or HSI, WTAMU is required to have academic programs that lead to a degree, must be accredited by an agency or association recognized by the Department of Education, must have high enrollment of students with financial needs, and have at least a 25% Hispanic undergraduate full-time student enrollment.

Virtually every college and university today feels the pressure to prepare students to live and work in a diverse world (Smith & Wolf-Wendel, 2005). There is a significant body of literature which suggests that serious engagement of diversity in the curriculum, along with linking classroom and out-of-class opportunities, positively affects student's attitudes and awareness about diversity (Smith & Wolf-Wendel, 2005). In a survey conducted for the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), more than 60% of employers polled said recent graduates lacked the skills to succeed in a global economy (Fischer, 2007). Specifically, employers believed that students need an understanding of other cultures, economies, and political systems to be successful. The Committee for Economic Development, a nonprofit group of business and academic leaders, noted that the demand for graduates with strong international skills was outstripping the supply (Fischer, 2007). Since many students come to campuses from segregated neighborhoods and background (Orfield, Bachmeier, James, & Eitle, 1997), it is important that these institutions have a strong commitment to diversifying the curriculum.

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More than 50% of the WTAMU student body is White, which classifies the institution as a Predominately White Institution (PWI). Campuses that have a primarily white faculty and student population need to find a way to make sure all students are prepared to work in a global world upon graduation. To promote the importance of diversity and inclusion, some institutions are adding a diversity requirement to their curriculums; some are focusing on general education programs, while others are integrating diversity throughout the curriculum. At other institutions faculty are adding diversity content to their individual courses or integrating community service projects where students interact with diverse people or concepts (McTighe, Garcia, Hudgins, Nettles, Sedlacek, & Smith, 1999). Whatever path WTAMU follows, one thing is certain, the Texas Panhandle has a diverse population and the university must prepare itself for the student population shift that is already happening.

All people deserve the right to participate in an accepting community that promotes the opportunity for individuals to reside, learn, work and play regardless of a disability. Individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities must be provided the support necessary to achieve goals in establishing a sense of self-worth in their personal lives. West Texas A&M University must be purposeful in the ways in which it recruits new faculty, staff, and administrators. The university should be a reflection of its students and of the Texas Panhandle where it thrives.

Theme Group: Research and Infrastructure:

Aspiration: Sustain excellence in research, scholarship and creative activities. Our goal is excellence in research and scholarship to attract the best in human and material resources for WTAMU students.

Theme Group: Financial Resources:

Aspiration: The quality to which we aspire will be achieved with appropriate material support. Resources may not lead to quality, but quality always leads to resources. Quality first.

University administration must show commitment to D & I through financial support for academic and non-academic programming to demonstrate its importance to the university's future and the success of its students.

Additionally, WTAMU is committed to providing resources to support students with diagnosed disabilities who pursue a degree in higher education. West Texas A&M University is dedicated and sensitive to the vast array of learning and physical disabilities

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that students must overcome and will ensure accessibility and necessary accommodations across all course offerings. The university is committed to providing the resources necessary to assist students with a diagnosed disability through a wide range of financial options to make their education as affordable as possible by working with outside support programs that provide assistance and financial opportunities.

Opportunities also exist for undergraduate and graduate students who wish to participate in an approved study abroad program. Students can apply for the International Education Fee Scholarship (IEFS) managed by the Office of Study Abroad. Each year WTAMU students receive this scholarship, with about \$80,000 available for study abroad. Additionally, students who study abroad receive advising and information about scholarships outside of WTAMU for financial assistance. While many scholarships are open to most college students, the Office of Study Abroad identifies scholarships for specific groups and reaches out to students who could be eligible for those opportunities.

Theme Group: Our Relationship to Community Colleges:

Aspiration: We must have a modern notion of WTAMU and understand what the historical imperatives of such an institution are, especially as these imperatives affect our role in serving students through a 2+2 model for undergraduate education as a means to cost effectiveness, and reach into various communities.

As we move toward building relationships and enter into articulation agreements with community colleges, it is imperative to understand who community college students are. According to the PEW Research Center almost half of Hispanic college students attend two-year colleges compared to 30% Whites and 36% blacks (Krogstad, 2016). According to the same study, Hispanics are also less likely to continue beyond the community college. As we move forward in reaching out to community colleges, we must recognize that this is an opportunity to increase our Hispanic enrollments. This is particularly important for WTAMU as we strive to maintain our designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). With this designation, WTAMU is eligible for various funding opportunities that can benefit all students at West Texas A&M University and we must actively seek those opportunities.

For students with diagnosed disabilities, choosing the right college can ultimately impact the overall success of that student. Community colleges play an important role in providing students with disabilities the opportunity to pursue a higher degree education. West Texas A&M University is committed to working with community colleges that offer transition and support programs that define a path to higher

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education in choosing an appropriate degree plan while accommodating specific disabilities in pursuing their career of choice.

Theme Group: Undergraduate Academics:

Aspiration: The quality of our student body, the quality of teaching and advising available to them, and the quality of the faculty who work with undergraduates all contribute to the undergraduate academic experience. The strength of a regional research university is defined in part, by the quality of basic arts and sciences programs offered. While our programs are sound, improvement and strength of identity are needed. The foundation, though, is the quality of the student. We must continue attracting the very best.

"A longitudinal study of 4,403 college students attending nine public universities, reported that students who have an opportunity to take a diversified curriculum by the second year of college scored higher on 19 of 25 outcomes of the study. The strongest effects of diversity courses were evident on complex thinking skills, retention, cultural awareness, interest in social issues, the importance of creating social awareness, and support for institutional diversity initiatives. Students who participated in an integrated curriculum also were likely to believe that racial inequality is still a problem and less likely to accept that some social inequity is acceptable in society. These students expressed more interest in eliminating poverty, the importance of making a civic contribution, concern for the public good, support for race-based initiatives, and tolerance for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. Students who took diversity courses were also more likely to vote in federal or state elections. These results suggest that campus efforts to integrate the curriculum, or adopt a diversity requirement, have far-reaching effects on a host of educational outcomes that prepare students as participants in a diverse democracy" (Hurtado, 2005, pp. 603-605).

One group in particular has experienced tremendous success regarding enrollment in both public and private colleges. In 2016, 3.6 million Hispanics enrolled in public and private colleges and universities – an increase of 180% from 1999 (Gramlich, 2017). While we have experienced such growth, Latinos continue to lag behind other racial and ethnic groups. For example, in 2012, only 9% of Hispanics (ages 25 to 29) obtained a bachelor's degree compared with 69% of whites (Gramlich, 2017). This data suggests that colleges and universities must do all that is needed to attract and retain diverse students in colleges and universities. One way to attract and retain diverse students is to develop a curriculum that is compelling and that underrepresented students can relate to. In addition, as a university, we need to ensure that underrepresented students

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become and remain engaged in organizations, events, and begin to take on leadership positions. One important point along these lines is that universities and colleges examine their underrepresented faculty and administrators. It is necessary that the faculty and administration are a reflection of the local demographics. In order to develop students who will become future faculty, staff, and administrators, these students need to see themselves in these roles. This vision is directly accomplished by universities intentionally recruiting and retaining new faculty and staff members and developing them into administrative positions of leadership.

One area where this need for leadership is most evident is in development of public school teachers and administrators. By 2050, Murdock (2014) anticipates that our state's "elementary and secondary school population will be 65% Hispanic, 9% African American and 12% non-Hispanic Asian or Other" – in other words, 86% of our school population will be other than White non-Hispanic (p. 131). This dramatically changed reality will result in a significantly greater demand for bilingual and English Language Learners education programs, educational programs for economically disadvantaged students, and special education. Likewise, these changing demographics have significant implication for the recruitment and retention of university students particularly students transferring from community colleges and the extracurricular/co-curricular support of these students. Murdock (2014) also states that "demographic change clearly remains a critical factor for Texas elementary, secondary, and higher education." He emphasizes that "the diversification of the elementary and secondary school populations is more extensive than in the general population" (p.114). Murdock predicts that "from 2010 to 2050, the Texas elementary and secondary school population will grow by 93.2 percent and all of the projected increase will be accounted for by minority students" (p.119). As the primary source for certified teachers in the Texas Panhandle, WTAMU must actively develop new curriculum and leadership opportunities for teachers who will enter the workforce with this changing student body.

Implementing these kinds of curriculum changes could include curricular models such as Missouri State University's Public Affairs Mission. One pillar of the public affairs mission is "Cultural Competence." Faculty are required to address this pillar of the public affairs mission in coursework as a student learning objective and students are assessed on cultural competence upon completing their degrees. In addition to coursework, university programming is designed to address campus and community efforts to increase levels of cultural competence in order to better prepare students for a global marketplace.

In response to these implications and the designation of the university as an HSI, a bachelor's degree program in sociology with an emphasis in Latino studies is proposed

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and currently under analysis and development. The proposed degree program will address historic and contemporary cultural and social issues in Central America and South America including politics, education, health, crime, social movements, gender, and family and how these social institutions are created and maintained in Central and South America. In addition, the experience of immigrants and citizens from these diverse groups within the U.S. will be addressed within the curriculum.

To support the recruitment, retention and development of underrepresented students, programs supporting these students should be developed. For example, the COESS Hispanic Leadership Academy (HLA) was instituted in 2017. The HLA was created to support the development of leadership skills and cultural awareness for Hispanic undergraduate students in the college. Each year 10-15 undergraduate Hispanic students are selected through a competitive process to participate in an ongoing leadership training program and service leadership academy. The program is facilitated by a curriculum developed and delivered by WTAMU faculty members. Membership in the Academy continues throughout the student's undergraduate tenure. Academy members receive two weeks of intensive leadership training and cultural immersion at the Hacienda Santa Clara (a private training and research center operated in partnership with The Texas A&M University System (TAMU) in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico), at no cost to the student. Please see <http://www.wtamu.edu/academics/hispanic-leadership-academy.aspx>. Initiatives to expand the Academy more broadly within the university and to other universities in The TAMU System are being developed.

The Collaborative, which has been created through the leadership of WTAMU, represents a partnership between public institutions of higher education, a private study and research center in central Mexico, local, regional and national governmental officials and entities; private citizens, and commercial enterprise. The Collaborative provides opportunities for TAMU System faculty members, undergraduate and graduate students to participate in experiential service leadership, discipline-specific clinical field experience, and meaningful scholarly research in a rural community situated in central Mexico near the city of San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato. These opportunities are made available to faculty members and university students through short-term, faculty-directed study abroad offerings at participating universities. West Texas A&M University is perfectly situated to expand on existing experiential collaboratives with a campus wide effort. These kinds of experiences develop leadership and critical thinking skills, and give students hands on experiential learning opportunities with a diverse and global perspective.

Similar internationalization efforts are present campus-wide and offered to students in most disciplines. Colleges and departments work closely with the Office of Study Abroad

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in developing faculty-led programs to various countries. These programs are specifically designed to fulfill degree requirements and include activities and projects that align with the learning outcomes of the course or courses associated with the study abroad program. Students are able to participate in such programs not only to earn academic credits, but also to develop global competency and cultural sensitivity.

Global competence is a critical component of education in the 21st century and is an essential learning outcome mandated by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Global competence is rooted in the changing reality of our public school classrooms – a reality of dramatically increasing economic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. Strategies under development include curricular enhancements supporting globalization, increased clinical and service leadership opportunities for future educators and social science professionals in culturally, economically and linguistically diverse educational and rural community settings within the region and internationally.

Increased opportunities for student participation in international experiences and study abroad programs are constantly being formulated at West Texas A&M University. The university offers opportunities for direct enrollment in foreign universities, reciprocal/exchange and programs through affiliated providers for students seeking to study abroad in locations or academic terms different from the faculty-led programs. Credit-bearing internships abroad are available to WTAMU students based on their degree plan. Programs offered through the Office of Study Abroad are assessed by the colleges and departments to ensure academic quality. A diverse portfolio of study abroad programs is critical to achieve students' success in the current global marketplace.

Theme Group: Graduate Academics:

Aspiration: Good faculties attract good graduate students. The best universities have the best graduate students and research programs. It is that simple. Our move to doctoral programs must be responsive to the needs of the Texas Panhandle and similar geographic regions.

As more students are choosing to complete graduate degrees simultaneously or concurrently with their undergraduate degrees, this lends the opportunity for graduate student learners to engage in discourse and problem solving that can be applied to problems they would tackle in the diverse, outside world (Tagg, 2003). The goal is for students to have increased awareness in situations where the students' actions will have significant consequences. The tasks and learning environment are designed to reflect the complexity of the challenges students will face, and at the end of the educational

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experience. Learners should be ready to function as participating and knowledgeable members of a diverse, multicultural world (Savery & Duffy, 2001).

Hispanics are less likely than any other group to obtain graduate degrees. In 2013, only 3% of Latino adults had a master's degree compared to 8% whites and 6% African American. To put into perspective, in 2013 141,000 Hispanics had a doctorate as their highest degree obtained, compared to 2.6 million whites and 502,000 African Americans (Santiago & Galdeano, 2015). As the demographics of our nation, state, and community shift, the question arises, are we suited to meet the needs of the Hispanic population?

Theme Group: Residential Education Experience:

Aspiration: Our identification with and capabilities for providing a complete experience that includes leadership development and life skills should never fall below any other priority of the institution.

Residence halls present a unique and rich opportunity for fostering the informal diverse peer interaction that promotes this educational excellence (Witt & Hakuta, 2003). As noted by Bowen:

In a residential college setting, in particular, a great deal of learning occurs informally. It occurs through interactions among students of both sexes; of different races, religions and backgrounds; [...] who are able, directly or indirectly, to learn from their differences and to stimulate one another to reexamine even their most deeply held assumptions (p. 3).

The residence hall provides a great opportunity to promote diversity. The WTAMU residence hall promotes inclusiveness by hiring staff that mirrors the residence who live there. Residence Assistants complete diversity training at the beginning of each semester. The residence halls also encourage staff to create programming for residents to enhance the student's experiences and promote inclusiveness. In the transition from home to college, students have the opportunity to experience interactions across race and ethnicity, which not only promote learning, but may also provide the frequent, sustained residential contact necessary for positive cross-racial interactions to develop (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000).

West Texas A&M University is committed to providing equal access and opportunity for all students who make application for on campus living to ensure that our Residential Living Program is readily accessible to and usable by students with disabilities. In the event that our Residential Program is not readily accessible, WTAMU will make

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reasonable and appropriate efforts to ensure that students with disabilities are able to participate in and receive the benefits of WTAMU Residential programs.

Because WTAMU is a HSI, Latino students must also experience the benefits of staying on campus. We must create initiatives that give our commuting underrepresented students incentives to live on campus. Much of the research on these populations in higher education point to their involvement and integration into the larger university. Students who are engaged as a part of the university are more likely to graduate from that institution.

Unfortunately, merely interacting across race does not guarantee educational benefit or even positive interactions. Trends of students living in today's residence hall include an increase in the number of students claiming no religious affiliation, an increase in the number of students identifying as LGBTQIA, and the political polarization that is occurring as more students label themselves as either liberal or conservative (Guess, 2007). Belief systems such as these, as well as a student's age, college readiness, socioeconomic status, immigration status, contribute to the creation of complex school climates in the residence halls. Opportunities for the residence halls to grow in the future would include, creating living and learning communities to support various students' academic and personal interest.

Theme Group: Intellectual Resources:

Aspiration: The core of the campus, its heart, is the flow of intellectual resources, insight and wisdom. No aspiration of WT 125 will be achieved without substantial commitments in academic research, information technology, the library, the PPHM, and other resources that power the mind and provide insights to students, faculty and the Panhandle community.

Theme Group: Human Capital:

Aspiration: Faculty and staff are an integral part of the University. We must recruit, reward and retain the very best, while being intentional about actively seeking to hire those of diverse backgrounds. The conditio sine qua non of all faculty and staff, at every level, must be teaching and the support thereof in its diverse manifestations of research and service to WTAMU and the community.

According to Santiago & Galdeano (2015), "Latinos represented significantly less of those employed in the highest paying occupations than other groups" (p. 11). Simultaneously, "Latinos were significantly overrepresented in lower paying service

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occupations” (p. 11). Because of WTAMU’s HSI status, we must do a better job developing human capital within our student body for the Panhandle and as future leaders of West Texas A&M University. What is interesting is that despite these lower paying jobs, underrepresented populations still represent a multibillion dollar market of buying power. By intentionally developing this area of human capital, we move a larger portion into the middle class and create an even stronger economic market.

Recruit and Retain Diverse Faculty, Staff, and Administrators:

One of the most important and intellectual resources that any university has are its faculty. West Texas A&M University must actively seek out, hire, and retain the best faculty and staff who represent the student body. This notion that “it’s open to anyone who wants to apply” is a misnomer. West Texas A&M University must seek out diverse candidates and create a reputation for itself as a campus who intentionally recruits quality, diverse candidates. This is of vital importance to underrepresented students who are not used to seeing the possibilities ahead of them. These students are not accustomed to thinking about a future as a professor, researcher, and administrator. West Texas A&M University must better foster an environment and culture in which underrepresented faculties feel safe, respected, and valued, and one where students see the possibilities in their futures.

Despite the benefits that a diverse faculty, staff, and student body provide to a campus, diversity also presents considerable challenges that must be addressed and overcome. For WTAMU, recruiting of diverse faculty, staff, and administrators must be intentional. Once recruited, diverse faculty and staff often find themselves overworked in ways their non-underrepresented colleagues don’t experience. Students often gravitate towards the faculty who resemble them, administrators push underrepresented faculty to represent their departments on university and college committees to show their departments are “diverse”, all on top of the standard work duty responsibilities they were hired to do. A study of underrepresented faculty at universities and colleges in eight Midwestern states showed that faculty of color experience exclusion, isolation, alienation, and racism in predominantly white universities (Turner, 2002; Turner 2000). By being specific and intentional in its recruiting, WTAMU is positioning itself in a position of strength for the future. Our student body is changing, and the university must change with it.

Theme Group: Leadership Governance and Organization:

Aspiration: Great universities exist where there is enlightened leadership. This is true at the state, system and university levels. It is true from within, and from the outside. It

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comes from every rank of university life: staff, faculty and administration. No segment has the corner on the market of innovation and insight, and recognition will make WTAMU better.

In 2011, Hispanic/Latina/os represented 4% of faculty in higher education. (Santiago & Galdeano, 2015). This number shrinks even further as we enter the administrative ranks at the same universities. As an HSI university, WTAMU must actively recruit and develop faculty, staff, and promote high quality Hispanic/Latina/os candidates into administrative leadership positions. Students need to see themselves as professors in the classroom and as administrative leaders of the university.

University Support of Diversity and Inclusion:

Implementing diversity within the university through programs, speakers, films, cultural experiences, experiential learning, conferences, and study abroad are all tools that the university supports, but there must be a monetary commitment from the university to ensure the success of programs that are not under the umbrella of academic colleges. University development officers must also actively seek donor funding for diversity programming and development. Diversifying the curriculum is important on all campuses, but especially those where there is little student and faculty diversity. Infusing diversity into the curriculum, adding a diversity course requirement, requiring programs such as the math and sciences to add diversity requirements to the degree plan are all important steps toward cultural competence. The university must also encourage departments to designate which courses include a diversity component or will contain content that will discuss cultural differences, cultural awareness, social issues, racial inequality and other diverse topics. Not only will this provide the opportunity for students to develop critical competencies relevant to a wide variety of disciplines, but it will also provide an opportunity to offer incentives such as a Diversity Certificate along with their degree for students who complete a designated number of hours for these courses.

Investing in diversity and inclusion is paramount to improving employee engagement, serving students more effectively, and increasing institutional innovation. Implementing a Diversity Certificate Program for faculty and staff with objectives to create a culture that values differences and creates an inclusive climate at work and in the community will have an impact on how students are served.

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Multicultural Center:

Multicultural centers were born out of the Black Cultural Centers (BCCs) that emerged as a result of white administrators resistance to change in the 1960's and 1970s (Patton, 2010). As a result of BCC success, multicultural centers (previously Multicultural Student Services) were created on college campuses in the 1980s as an escalating number of students from different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds enrolled at PWIs (Kupo, 2011). Shuford (2010) described cultural centers of today:

Cultural centers [. . .] provide support for a variety of multicultural groups and multicultural programming for all constituents within the campus community [. . .] Cultural centers also serve a variety of other functions, including providing academic and counseling resources, electronic resources, leadership training, cultural programming, art exhibits, literary publications, community programs and services, lectures, research, and grand writing (p. 35).

A Multicultural Center at WTAMU would have the potential to serve students, faculty and staff as a resource center for diversity programming and cultural experiences. At WTAMU, it could be a location on campus that is geared for diverse initiatives and student resources such as the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, Gender Studies, International Student Offices, First Year Experience, LGBTQIA, Mentoring Programs and Student Organizations.

Demographic Shifts: Texas, the Panhandle, and WTAMU:

When attempting to project demographic shifts at WTAMU through the better part of the next 20 years, it is important to determine how the University is currently situated with regard to the Panhandle and the State of Texas. The primary external data source for this study was the Texas Demographic Center's (TDC) Texas Population Projections by Migration Scenario Data Tool (<http://osd.texas.gov/Data/TPEPP/Projections/Tool>). These projections include annual county- and state-level population counts from 2010 through 2050 for the following groups: total population, male/female, White, Hispanic/Latinos, Black/African Americans, and Other. Using the 0.5 migration scenario, a Panhandle-only data set was created for the Top 26 counties of Texas, with aggregation and percentage calculations providing the basis for comparing current and future demographic trends in WTAMU enrollment to Panhandle population data.

The projections for the State of Texas show the overall population to increase from 28 million in 2017 to 35 million in 2035, which represents a 25% overall increase. Hispanics/Latinos are projected to increase by 47% from 11.2 million in 2017 to 16.5

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million in 2035. Whites in Texas are expected to increase by less than 1 percentage point from 2017 (11.6 million) to 2035 (11.7 million). Based on these projections, Hispanics/Latinos will comprise 48% of Texas population in 2035 (as compared to 40% in 2017), while the proportion of Whites in Texas will decrease from 42% in 2017 to 34% in 2035.

The Top 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle will see a relatively dramatic shift in demographic profile during the next few decades. (Appendix Table 2) Hispanics/Latinos and Whites are projected to comprise the same percentage (45%) of the population in the Panhandle in 2038. Extending the projections through 2050, the TDC predicts that Hispanics/Latinos will comprise 50% of the Panhandle's population at mid-century, with Whites at approximately 38%, Black/African Americans just below 5%, and the Other category at 7%.

While a number of forecasting methodologies of varying complexity were considered for this analysis, we decided to take a relatively straightforward approach by comparing WTAMU's existing demographic composition to that of the Texas Panhandle. This comparison is reasonable due to WTAMU's close relationship with the people of the Panhandle, as more than half of our undergraduate students hail from one of the Top 26 counties of Texas. For this analysis, only the undergraduate student population at WTAMU was included in the calculations.

Recent trends in demographic composition clearly show the gap narrowing between WTAMU's enrollment and the population across the Texas Panhandle. (Appendix Table 3) the approximately 9 percentage point gap for Whites in 2010 has decreased to 2 percentage points in 2017, while almost 15 percentage point gap for Hispanics/Latinos in 2010 has decreased to just over 5 percentage points in 2017. West Texas A&M University's proportion of Black/African American undergraduates mirrors the percentage in the Panhandle's population, while students in the "Other" race/ethnicity category are slightly above the Panhandle's figure in 2017.

In order to project enrollment numbers for these demographic categories in 2035, we made the primary assumption that the trend of being closely aligned with the Panhandle demographic percentages would continue in the future. Using the TDC's county-level projections, we calculated the percentages in each demographic group, and then applied those percentages to internal projections of student enrollment in 2035. Based on WTAMU's projection that undergraduate enrollment will be approximately 11,000 students in 2035, we extrapolated enrollment headcount by race/ethnicity group. If the primary assumption mentioned above holds, and WTAMU continues the existing trend of mirroring the Panhandle, WTAMU's undergraduate

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enrollment in 2035 is projected to be comprised of 47% Whites (5170 students), 43% Hispanic/Latino (4730 students), 4% Black/African American (440 students), and 6% Other (660 students) races/ethnicities.

Additional initiatives are also required to engage more underrepresented groups to study abroad. While these programs are open to all, in reality “minority” students participation is relatively low. For example, between spring 2013 and spring 2018, 34.17% of all study abroad participation was of students other than Caucasian (including: Hispanic/Latinos with 25.18%, African-American with 2.80%, Asian with 2.65%, and others that account for 5.74%). Male students are also considered underrepresented in study abroad; at WTAMU, since the spring of 2013, their participation was 30.49%. In terms of disciplines/field of study, STEM is typically underrepresented too: only 27.59% of participants were STEM majors. West Texas A&M University must understand the needs and challenges that underrepresented students have to be able to offer enticing and attainable opportunities outside of the regular classroom.

West Texas A&M University will have to be prepared for the students on the horizon. If current trends continue, WTAMU will also see an influx of students graduating high school with an associate degree in hand, a larger transfer student population, and an increase in first-generation college students. First-generation college students are a growing demographic. “As colleges and universities face pressure to expand enrollments and provide access to diverse students, they find it difficult to recruit and retain first-generation college students” (Lowery-Hart & Pacheco, 2011, p.55).

Conclusion:

Research demonstrates that structured forms of inter-group contact in the form of diversity initiatives are often used to educate people about differences and have been shown to be important for improving school climate (Hurtado, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1996). Extrapolated in this white paper are three key ideas that WTAMU must develop if it hopes to thrive and grow in the projected future that lies ahead. The importance of normalizing D & I initiatives across campuses, supporting these initiatives and actively recruiting & retaining the best, most diverse faculty, staff, and administrators sends a message that WTAMU is dedicated to the present students and to the projected future students. It is imperative that WTAMU continue pushing and growing the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to meet the growing demands for diverse populations that lay ahead. Education is intended to be a transformational process; to do so, WTAMU must be willing to transform itself for the students’ benefit. It is important that diversity becomes a part of the campus culture. Campus culture exists

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through historical and symbolic forms and is rooted in the collective assumptions held by faculty, staff and students (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). Diversity must occur as a campus wide initiative to warrant the results of a positive campus climate.

Liard's (2005) study suggested that experiences with increased diversity and a positive campus climate are important influences on the advancement of student learning and self-governing outcomes, including students' academic commitment and drive, as well as citizenship engagement. Where negative school climates exist, higher education institutions have found a correlation between racism on campus, academic performance, and alienation (Muthuswamy, Levine, & Gazel, 2006). This suggests that campuses that work to integrate diversity are more likely to have a positive school climate.

As the diverse population in the top 26-county region of the Texas Panhandle continues to grow, and WTAMU experiences growth from out-of-state and international students, the focus on diversity, and a positive campus climate must be at the forefront of the university mission. Simmons et al (2013) make a clear argument that noted:

Institutions of higher education face an important challenge. They must admit that their relationships with African-American students (and all students of color) are in need of attention, and then they must honestly and heartily attempt to develop and maintain better relationships. The struggle is real—both for African- American students and for their universities. Until that struggle is adequately and earnestly addressed, it is unlikely that the struggle will lead to progress (p. 392).

For WTAMU, the potential situation is much more serious. The "new student" projections are expected to be demographically diverse. If WTAMU chooses not to push to the forefront and prepare itself for these new students, there are many other universities that will.

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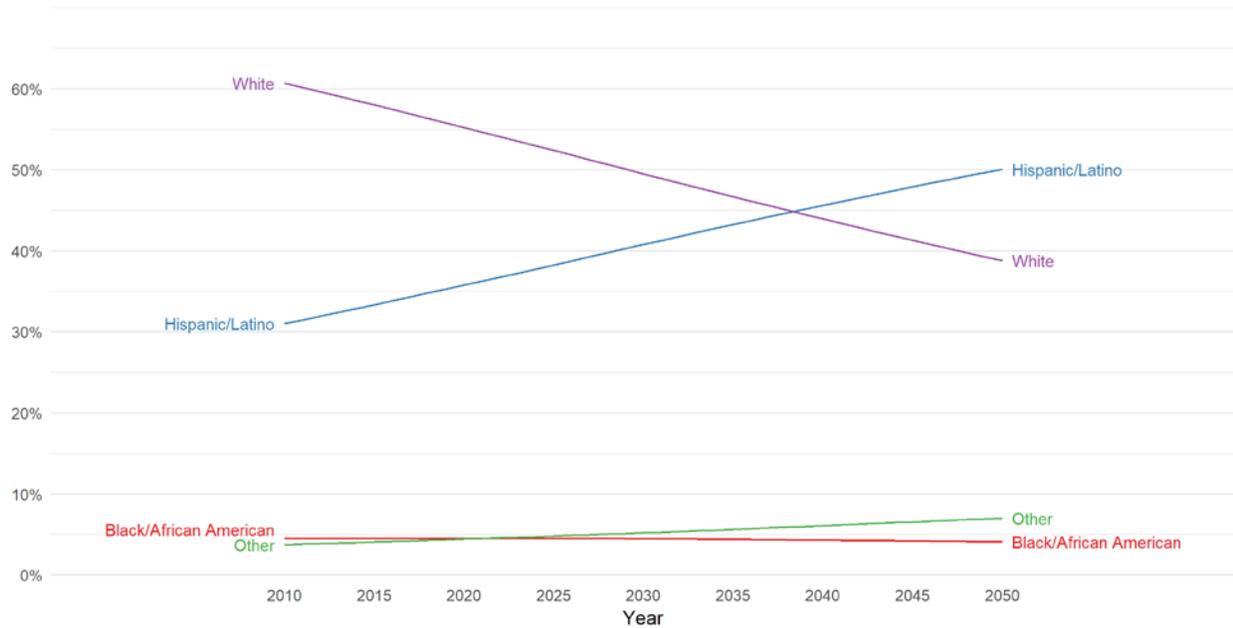
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Appendix :

Table 2

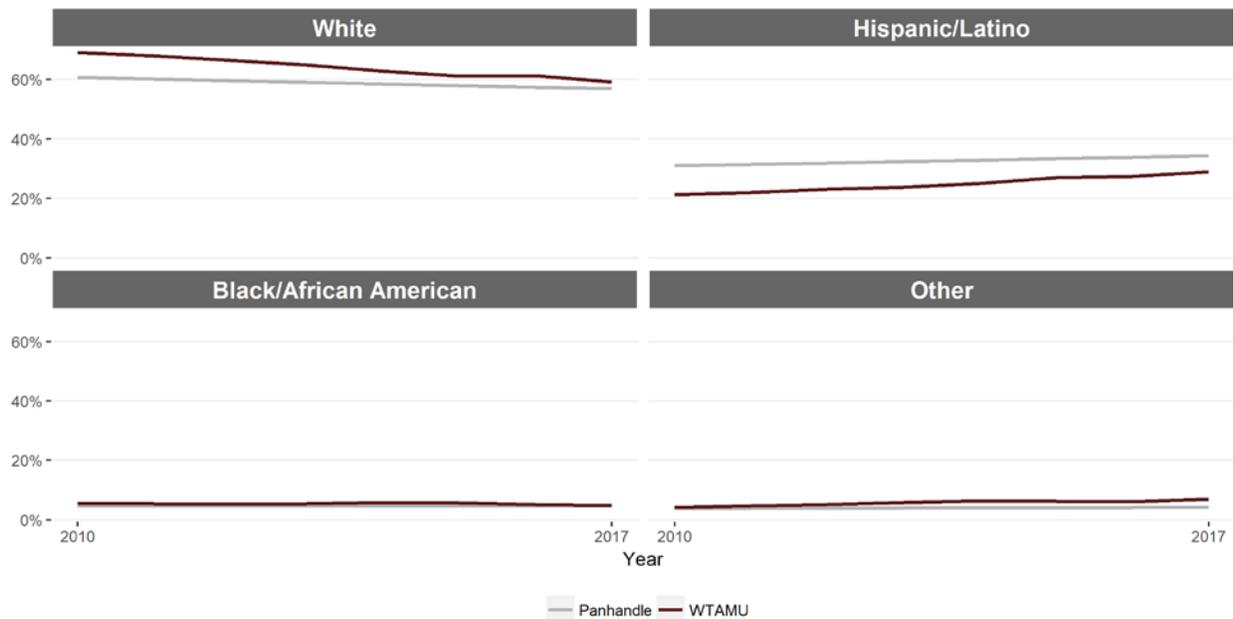
Demographic Shifts in Panhandle Population (2010-2050)



Source: Texas Demographic Center (<http://osd.texas.gov/Data/TPEPP/Projections/Tool>)

Table 3

The demographic compositions of WTAMU and the Texas Panhandle have become more closely aligned since 2010.



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Citations/References:

(utilize APA or any widely acceptable format such as the examples below)

Bernstein, M. (2002). 10 tips on writing the living Web. *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites*, 149. Retrieved from <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>

Cummings, J. N., Butler, B., & Kraut, R. (2002). The quality of online social relationships. *Communications of the ACM*, 45(7), 103-108.

Tables and Figures:

(12pt Segoe UI) Each table and figure should be listed numerically (ex. Table 1), centered on the page, with an associated title (Utilize APA or any widely acceptable format such as the example below):

Breed	Male	Female	%
Dachshund	123	234	17.6
Terrier	456	567	31.1
Siberian Husky ^a	789	891	51.3
Totals (<i>N</i> = 3060)	1368	1692	

Note. Average score = 150. No animals were harmed during testing.

^aThree huskies (one male, two female) escaped before testing was completed and are therefore not included in the table