

RWS Diversity and Inclusion Plan Final Draft
December 2, 2021

1. Department: Rhetoric and Writing Studies

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4. Roster:

Faculty, Lecturers: Matt Fowler, Cali Linfor, Chelsea Kerford, Celeste Morales, Sarita Tanori, Matt Copeland (AY 20-21), Jill Holslin (AY20-21), Jacob Hubbard (AY 20-21)

Faculty, Tenured/Tenure-Track: Consuelo Salas, Kathryn Valentine, Glen McClish (AY 20-21), Chris Werry (FA 21)

Graduate Student: Alicia Leon (AY 20-21)

Staff: Matthew Gantos (AY 20-21)

5. Diversity and Inclusion Statement: Planning to complete in Spring 2022

6. Assessment of Student Success

Given the small size of our major and graduate program, we focused our analysis of the quantitative data related to student academic success on the large service courses our department teaches: RWS 100, 200, 280, 290, and 305W. Most of these courses enroll students from majors across the campus. However, there are differences between students enrolling in these courses. For example, students in RWS 100 and 200 are placed in the courses during different semesters based on advanced placement credit and/or having been assessed as needing the “stretch” version of RWS 100. RWS 280 and 305W provide an additional example, with students enrolling in RWS 280 having been assessed as in need of an additional writing course prior to enrolling in RWS 305W, while the majority of students place directly into RWS 305W.

We learned that equity gaps for DFWs and GPA for these RWS writing courses are small but persistent between URM students and non-URM students. In terms of an equity gap based on GPA, we again see a small but persistent difference with non-URM student GPA being slightly higher than URM student GPA. Disaggregating the data by ethnicity often reveals more serious issues, however. For the most part, we did not uncover a large problem with DWFs within RWS for URM students; however, the data suggests that students are not thriving equally by ethnicity within these courses, and we seek to address these inequities with several initiatives outlined below.

7. Planned Curricular Changes

In the summer of 2020, the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies committed to fundamentally revising our curriculum, policies, norms, and teaching practices. In order to develop more equity within required undergraduate RWS classes, a number of graduate students and faculty (tenured, tenure track, and lecturer) in the department came together to create an antiracist working group that has met regularly throughout 2020–2021 and will continue to meet

in 2021–2022. This group, which is autonomous from—but working in conjunction with—the department’s mandated diversity committee, is dedicated to helping the department become more equitable in our teaching practices. Several of their initiatives have been to draft a mission statement, to begin to discuss revision of our current SLOs so that they include skills and capacities related to anti-racist rhetorical practice and analysis of arguments with respect to ideologies such as colonialism and other forms of systematic racism, to plan a redesign of assignment types across RWS 100, 200, 290, and 305W, to propose a revision of our assessment practices, and to reimagine a more inclusive pedagogy for students. Additional efforts in 2020–2021 included developing a Pedagogy Speaker series featuring five speakers (five from other academic institutions) on instructionally related topics such as extending the reach of Aristotelian proofs, teaching students about counterstory, helping students understand the power of their family histories and life stories, and developing a keener sense of multilingual students. An NEH Initiatives grant has been submitted to support some of this work, but regardless of the outcome of the grant proposal, the working group is committed to exploring the curricular and pedagogical changes that will assist us in creating a more equitable learning environment for our students. We are also continuing the Pedagogy Seminar series currently in 2021–2022 with two speakers on topics including labor-based grading and anti-racist approaches to writing programs for Fall 2021. Matt Fowler is acting as the diversity coordinator for 2021–2022 and is currently helping both the working group and the official diversity committee with their efforts. Since the specific DFW and GPA equity gaps identified above are now well known to us, we have a clearer sense of where the key reforms and revisions are most needed. For example, a department committee is working on revised outcomes for RWS 290, which focuses on business writing, during Fall 2021 and the outcomes are moving through the department’s approval process. The RWS 290 outcome most relevant to diversity and inclusion work is the following: “Analyze rhetorical situations in business contexts to assess equity within organizational structures based on factors such as gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, and politics.”

8. Planned Strategies and Interventions

GOAL 1: Put structures and processes in place that will allow us to continue to diversify faculty and staff, especially with respect to increasing percentages of URM TT and Lecturer faculty in Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

Hiring Strategies and Interventions

1.1 Search committee members in RWS who conduct faculty tenure-line hiring should complete implicit bias training (required for faculty and recommended for staff).

- Resources: Program funded by the division of Student Affairs and Campus Diversity (SACD); Committee members will need to dedicate about 2 hours to complete training. Assigned time needed for lecturer faculty compensation to participate in trainings.
- Responsibility: Chair of search committee and department chair.
- Assessment: Dean’s office and department chair.

1.2 Tenure-track faculty search committees in RWS will include a certified inclusion representative.

- Resources: Program funded by the Chief Diversity Officer; Search chair or department chair will need to spend time arranging for the representative.
- Responsibility: Chair of search committee and department chair.
- Assessment: The department will submit a report to the College Diversity Council detailing the implementation of this intervention.

1.3 From the Building on Inclusive Excellence (BIE) (<https://diversity.sdsu.edu/cie/bie>) criteria (listed below), RWS will incorporate at least two criteria into their searches for faculty and staff.

- Resources: Program funded by the Division of Student Affairs and Campus Diversity (SACD).
- Responsibility: Chair of search committee and department chair.
- Assessment: The department will submit an annual report to the College Diversity Council detailing implementation of this intervention.

1.4 RWS will seek a broad-based racial, ethnic, gender, and class applicant pool proportional to available representation of underrepresented populations in our society and local communities when hiring.

- Resources needed: The university and CAL should provide hiring committees and individuals with the necessary resources, logistics, and information-sharing to work within and outside of traditional venues, sites, and locations for dissemination of job advertisement in order to encourage and attract a diverse pool of applicants.
- Responsibility: Chair of search committee and department chair.
- Assessment: The department will submit an annual report to the College Diversity Council detailing implementation of this intervention.

1.5 RWS will seek additional ways to create diverse pools of applicants for tenure-line and lecturer positions, such as posting calls for applicants to Interfolio and to Disciplinary Listservs (such as RhetMap, Identity Group Caucus listservs) and Hiring Websites (such as GlassDoor, LinkedIn, EDD).

- Resources needed: None.
- Responsibility: Chair of search committee and department chair.
- Assessment: The chairs will submit an annual report to the department Diversity Committee

1.6 RWS will seek additional ways to streamline hiring for lecturer positions, such as creating documentation that outlines the hiring process.

- Resources needed: None.
- Responsibility: Department chair and Diversity Coordinator
- Assessment: The chair and coordinator will submit a report to the department Diversity Committee when this work is complete

Goal 2 Retain and improve the climate for diverse faculty and staff in Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

Retention and Climate Strategies and Interventions

2.1 Continue to support the diversity coordinator position that will contribute to the department's efforts with diverse and inclusive pedagogy and curriculum, outreach to faculty and staff, and chair the diversity committee.

- Resources: Assigned time funding
- Responsibility: Department Chair
- Assessment: Annual report to the Department Chair

2.2 Establish a Standing Diversity Committee consisting of at least 1 Staff Member, 1 Graduate Student, 1 Lecturer, and 1 Tenure Track or Tenured Professor.

- Resources Needed: None
- Responsibility: Department Chair, Diversity Coordinator
- Assessment: Regular reports to Department Chair, RWS Council

2.3 Share information about and encourage faculty and staff to create and/or join existing groups, networks, and workshops focused on supporting diversity, including but not limited to the following: employee resource groups, Center for Inclusion and Equity programs, RWS Anti-Racism Working Group.

- Resources needed: Programs funded centrally or already in place in the department.
- Responsibility: Diversity Coordinator, Department Chair
- Assessment: Annual report to Diversity Committee

2.4 Support mentoring programs for newer RWS faculty and staff as well as returning teaching associates and encourage participation in the reinstated college wide mentoring programs.

- Resources needed: None needed for college wide program; Avoid cultural taxation by providing adequate assigned time to department faculty engaging in exceptional service through mentoring in the department
- Responsibility: Director of Lower Division Writing, Department Chair, RWS Lecturer's Council
- Assessment: Annual report to RWS Council

2.5 Survey faculty and staff at least every three years to better understand the department climate and what might be needed to support the work of the department, particularly work that creates equitable working conditions and educational experiences for diverse staff, faculty, and students.

- Resources needed: None
- Responsibility: Department Chair, Diversity Coordinator
- Assessment: In years a survey is administered report to Diversity Committee

2.6 Continue to seek ways to balance course offering between spring and fall semesters, with attention to lower division writing courses, in conjunction with other efforts to retain faculty.

- Resources needed: None

- Responsibility: Department Chair, RWS Council
- Assessment: Report to Diversity Coordinator on these efforts

Goal 3: Reduce equity gaps in student outcomes and graduation rates and support diverse students in department programs, including lower division writing classes and the undergraduate and graduate programs.

Student Support Strategies and Interventions

3.1 Continuation of RWS Pedagogy Speaker Series

- Resources Needed: Continued funding for speakers
- Responsibility: Department Diversity Committee
- Assessment: Report to Department Chair, RWS Lecturers Council

3.2 Continue attention to diversity and equity through Fall Pedagogy Conference sessions, including sessions related to neurodiversity, anti-racism and equity, and building inclusive syllabi.

- Resources Needed: No additional funding needed
- Responsibility: Department Chair
- Assessment: Report to Department Diversity Committee

3.3 Address student equity gaps through initiatives such as development and continued support of equitable and inclusive curriculum practices with attention to equitable and inclusive student learning outcomes, that disciplinary national professional organizations' statement, such as the [Statement on White Language Supremacy](#)" (2021) and the Demand for "[Black Linguistic Justice Statement](#)" (2021) from the College Composition and Communication Conference.

- Resources Needed: Assigned time funding for professional development for lecturers and/or class size reductions and/or support for diversity coordinator.
- Responsibility: Department Chair, Diversity Coordinator
- Assessment: Report to Department Diversity Committee

3.4 Address student equity gaps through initiatives such as development and continued support of equitable and inclusive grading policies and assessment practices, including anti-racist assessment and grading practices, disability justice practices, and trauma-informed pedagogy, drawing from national professional organization's statements such as the Writing Program Administration's "[Statement on Anti-Racist Assessment](#)" (2021).

- Resources Needed: None
- Responsibility: Department Chair, Diversity Coordinator, RWS Council

- Assessment: Report to Department Diversity Committee

3.5 Address student equity gaps through initiatives such as continued commitment to nationally recognized optimal class sizes including reducing class sizes to levels that will allow faculty to assess student learning more closely as outlined by the “[Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing](#)” (2015) and the “[Position Statement of Principles and Example Effective Practices for Online Writing Instruction](#)” (2013), each approved by the executive committee of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC).

- Resources needed: Central funding for additional course sections.
- Responsibility: Department Chair, Director of Lower Division Writing
- Assessment: RWS Council

9. Accountability

The RWS Department Chair, Diversity Coordinator, and Diversity Committee will work to ensure progress toward goals and seek to ensure the department is accountable for the work proposed in the plan.