

Overview

Diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice must be critical core values of our college, embodied in our teaching, research, and community engagement. The College of Law affirms its commitment to promoting and cultivating diversity, which is expressed in myriad forms, including race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion or belief, spirituality, ethnicity, culture, national origin, citizenship, abilities, age, socio-economic status, veteran status, domicile, life experiences, viewpoints, and philosophy.

Our immediate aim is to foster a more inclusive learning and working environment for our entire community – one that succeeds and thrives because of its diversity.

Our broader aim is to learn, teach, and practice the principles of equity and justice to ensure that all people have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and achieve their aspirations.

We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our college welcomes differences and is a place where different perspectives are heard and every individual feels a sense of belonging.

To insure equity, we also commit to challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination, and to provide equal opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff.

To prepare our students to excel as lawyers and leaders, we also must adapt our curriculum and co-curriculum to equip students with the tools to practice in an increasingly diverse world. This includes:

- (1) creating a diverse and vibrant community of faculty and students with different perspectives and experiences;
- (2) engaging in critical discourse about legal and social issues that are often avoided or suppressed;
- (3) enhancing cross-cultural understanding; and
- (4) encouraging open and respectful communication about our respective experiences, backgrounds, and biases.

We also seek to translate those conversations into strategies and programs that effectively promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice – within our institution, the larger community, the legal profession, and in our justice system.

Goal 1: Create and sustain a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive campus **climate**.

Objectives:

- Incorporate and mainstream the mission of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (“Diversity & Inclusion Mission”) in every aspect of the operation of the College of Law (COL).
- Demonstrate to stakeholders that the Diversity & Inclusion Mission is central to the mission of the College of Law.
- Create support structures for student affinity groups and historically underrepresented groups.
- Provide opportunities for professional development for faculty and staff to promote the Diversity & Inclusion mission.
- Identify obstacles to inclusion and respond to incidents and concerns involving diversity, inclusion, equity and justice; bias; and discrimination.

Goal 2: Attract and retain greater numbers of individuals from historically underrepresented populations into **faculty, staff, and administrative positions** (particularly department heads, directors, deans, and vice chancellors).

Objectives:

- Implement a focused strategy to attract faculty, staff, and administrators from historically underrepresented groups.
- Identify and eliminate obstacles to the retention of historically underrepresented faculty, staff, and administration.

Goal 3: Attract, retain, and graduate increasing numbers of **undergraduate and graduate students** from historically underrepresented populations and international students.

Objectives:

- Pre-admit stage: devote considerable resources to soliciting applications from a broad spectrum of candidates.
- Post-admit stage: continue to devote considerable resources to communicating with admitted students to address their concerns and develop a sense of community.

Goal 4: Develop and strengthen **partnerships with diverse communities** in Tennessee and globally.

Objectives:

- Continue to provide and develop clinical, externship, experiential, and study abroad courses in the curriculum that serve diverse clients and communities in Tennessee and globally
- Continue to support and develop experiential opportunities in co-curriculum that serve or partner with diverse persons and communities.
- Continue to provide assistance to diverse communities in Tennessee and globally.

Goal 5: Ensure that **curricular requirements** include significant intercultural perspectives.

Objectives:

- Assess curriculum (including individual courses) for the inclusion of intercultural perspectives and issues related to social justice, equity, and the elimination of bias in teaching legal doctrine, policy, practice, and theory
- Offer curricular and cocurricular programs that promote the D&I Mission and include intercultural perspectives.
- Support faculty to better integrate intercultural perspectives in the classroom and in pedagogical methods to foster equity and inclusion.