

Statement of Purpose

The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees adopted the following statement on diversity on October 23, 2020:

One of the principal missions of The University of Tennessee is to provide quality educational opportunities for the people of this state. One measure of the quality of an educational experience is the extent to which it enables the recipient to compete and be productive in society and contribute to the quality of life. The Board of Trustees recognizes that diversity in the educational environment, including an outstanding and diverse student body, faculty, staff, and alumni, and an environment conducive to learning, adds value to the educational experience and the degree earned. Interacting with people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives augments the curricular experience and affords every student the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be a productive and contributing citizen of this state and nation, capable of competing in a global society. Thus, diversity is fundamental to a sound twenty-first century education. The Board affirms the educational value of a diverse and fully inclusive campus community, one that is enriched by persons of different backgrounds, points of view, cultures, socioeconomic status, and other diverse characteristics. The Board expects the University to engage in a variety of initiatives to advance diversity in all aspects of University life.

Consistent with the Board's statement on diversity, the strategic vision of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville as approved by the Board includes a goal of developing and sustaining a nurturing university culture where diversity and community are enduring sources of strength. We are committed to creating inclusive learning and work environments where civility, accountability, cultural competency, and equitable access are hallmarks of the UT Knoxville community. We value and affirm differences in race, culture, world views, beliefs, identities, and abilities. These efforts are indispensable to attracting and retaining the students, faculty, and staff whose energy and commitment fulfill our mission. The strategic vision goal includes to implement, advance, and evolve diversity action plan goals, sharing progress and continuing to solicit feedback and input. The purpose of our long-term diversity action plan goals, listed below, is to meet the UT Board's expectations and accomplish UT Knoxville's strategic vision.

Long-term diversity action plan goals

- Goal 1: Create and sustain a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive campus climate that allows for respectful interaction and viewpoint diversity.
- 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).
- Goal 3: Attract, retain, and graduate increasing numbers of undergraduate and graduate students from historically underrepresented populations and international students.
- Goal 4: Develop and strengthen partnerships with diverse communities in Tennessee and globally.
- Goal 5: Prepare undergraduate and graduate students to work and to serve in a diverse world by affording them the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be a productive and contributing citizen of this state and nation and capable of competing in a global society.

2022 Priorities for the College of Nursing

1. Recruit and retain a diverse undergraduate student population in the nursing program to prepare our students to serve the diverse patient population of the state of Tennessee and the nation.

Action: Launch a pilot holistic admissions review framework during the second round of admissions offered for traditional BSN undergraduate program in fall of 2022.

Measure: Examine traditional BSN program enrollment data supplied by the Office of Student Services to assess the success in admissions of a more diverse nursing cohort in fall 2023.

2. Ensure that curricular requirements meet national accreditation and nursing education standards, including consideration of intercultural perspectives to achieve inclusive excellence in holistic nursing education that align with 21st century nursing workforce needs.

Action: Integrate intercultural nursing perspectives in both undergraduate and graduate teaching, learning, and student outcomes by fall of 2022.

Measure: Assess integration of intercultural nursing perspectives through the use of an evidence-based rubric by December 2022.

3. Promote the development of a Volunteer Spirit of leadership and service by creating and sustaining a culture of collaboration that supports student needs and success.

Action: Launch a pilot mentorship program for historically underrepresented nursing students designed to enhance authentic transformational leadership and promote resilience in fall 2022.

Measure: Increased participant confidence and self-efficacy for skills including leadership and resiliency assessed through use of reliable and valid assessments and program evaluation surveys.

4. Create an environment that promotes one's ability to be true to one's own personality, spirit, or character among faculty, staff, and students within the CON to enhance a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive college climate.

Action: Host at least one experiential event to increase consideration of one's own skills, knowledge, and awareness of interactions with others, and how to become more effective working and living in diverse environments.

Measure: Participant feedback confirms increased knowledge, skills, and abilities to be more effective working and living in diverse environments.