

Annual Diversity Action Priorities

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.

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2022 Priorities for the College of Veterinary Medicine

1. Review the College's admissions process to identify and reduce candidate barriers which might exist for student admission. Identified barriers and suggested approaches to reduce or eliminate the barriers will be submitted to the College's admission committee no later than December 31, 2022 for consideration and action impacting the 2023-24 admissions cycle.
2. Consider the knowledge, skills, and professional attributes believed important to provide culturally competent veterinary care within a diverse society and suggest improvements to our educational program to meet this objective. Educational improvement suggestions will be submitted to the College's curriculum committee no later than December 31, 2022 for 2023-24 academic year implementation consideration.
3. Assess the college climate and determine whether it is supportive of everyone's professional and personal growth, where all students, staff, and faculty are encouraged to discover new things, to expand their knowledge, to deliver exceptional services, and to enjoy life beyond the educational and work environment. Survey instrument to be created, deployed, and assessed with recommended improvement actions submitted to the College's executive committee no later than December 31, 2022.
4. Complete a second memorandum of understanding with a historically Black college or university to expand our efforts to attract, retain, and graduate professional and graduate degree students from historically underrepresented populations.