



2019 Diversity Plan Accountability Report

Unit: Division of Student Affairs

Date: October 20, 2019

Contact Person: Dr. Cynthia L. Hernandez

Email: cynthia.hernandez@tamu.edu

Primary Author(s): Dr. Cynthia L. Hernandez, Dr. Tonya Driver

Writing and Review Process

Dr. Tonya Driver, Director of the Department of Multicultural Services, and Dr. Cynthia Hernandez, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs are the co-chairs for the DSA Diversity Committee. They are the main authors of this report. Dr. Ligia Perez, Data Analyst in the Department of Student Life Studies, provided the data analysis used in this report. A draft of the report was sent to the DSA Diversity Committee and senior staff for review and comment. The final report was submitted to Dr. Pugh for review and comment prior to submission.

INTRODUCTION

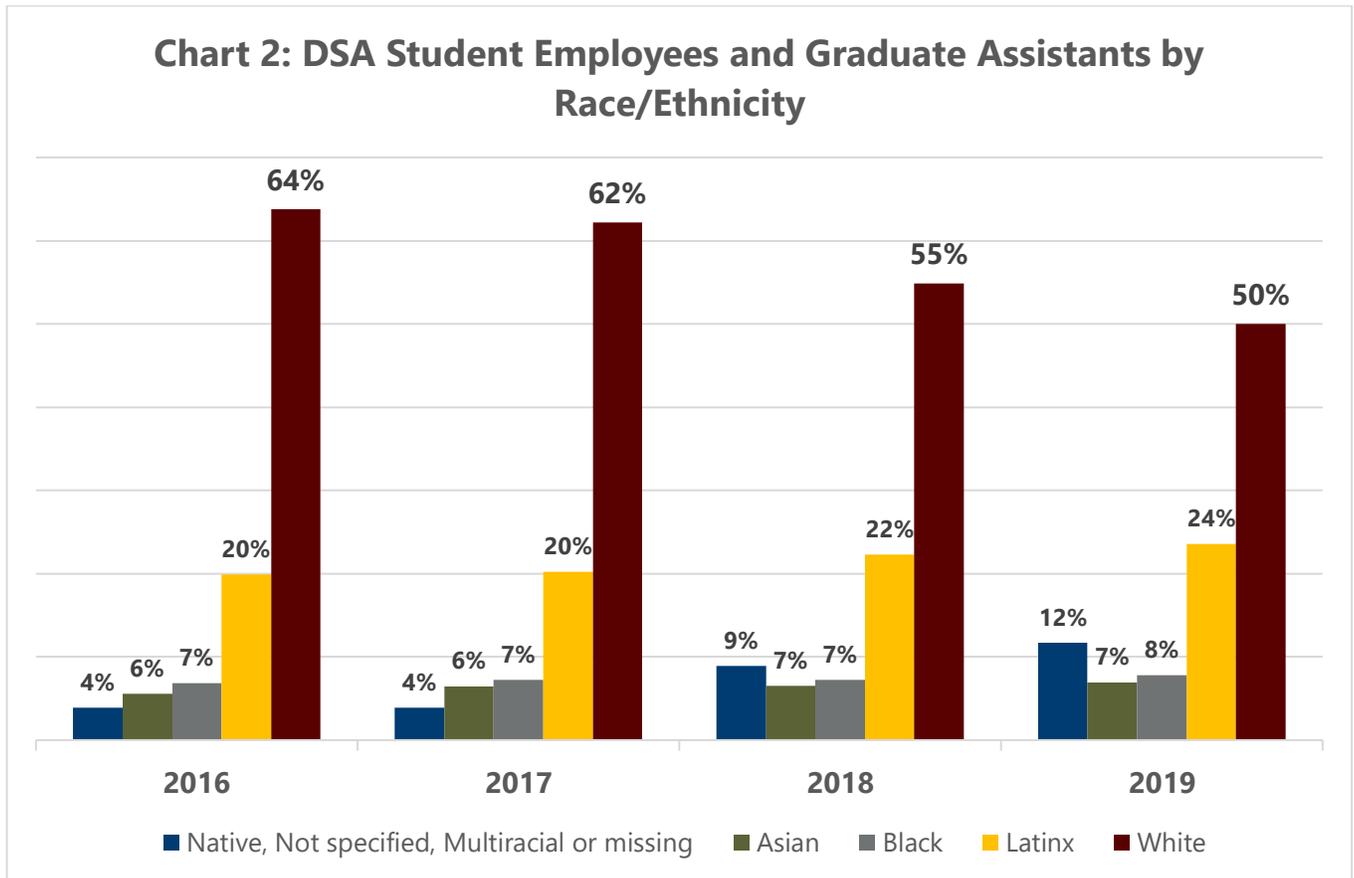
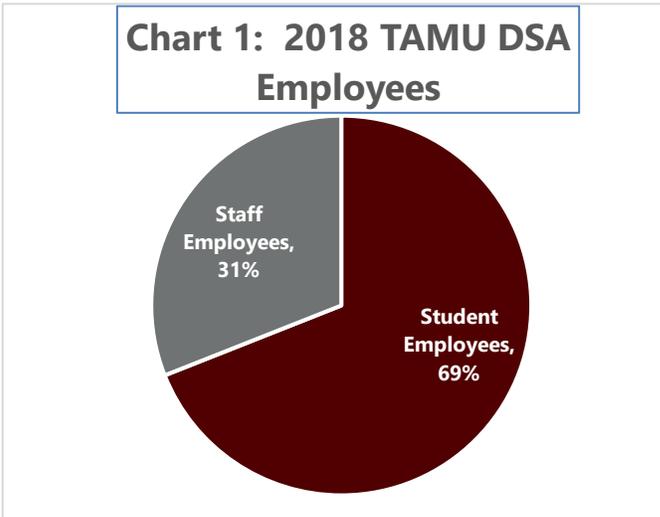
The vision of Texas A&M University's Division of Student Affairs (TAMU DSA) is to be a preeminent, student-centered division that inspires and prepares students for a life of learning, leadership, service, and citizenship in a global society. Led by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA), the division's 17 departments achieve this vision and contribute to student success by cultivating an environment of inclusivity and intellectual curiosity, promoting student health, safety and well-being, strategically leveraging resources for the future, investing in our organization and through advancing our profession.

In support of the Texas A&M University mission, the Division of Student Affairs contributes to student learning and development. We provide exceptional services, facilities, and programs that promote student success, embody the Aggie spirit, and foster a diverse and inclusive campus community to deepen the understanding and individual application of the Aggie core values – Excellence, Integrity, Leadership, Loyalty, Respect, and Selfless Service.

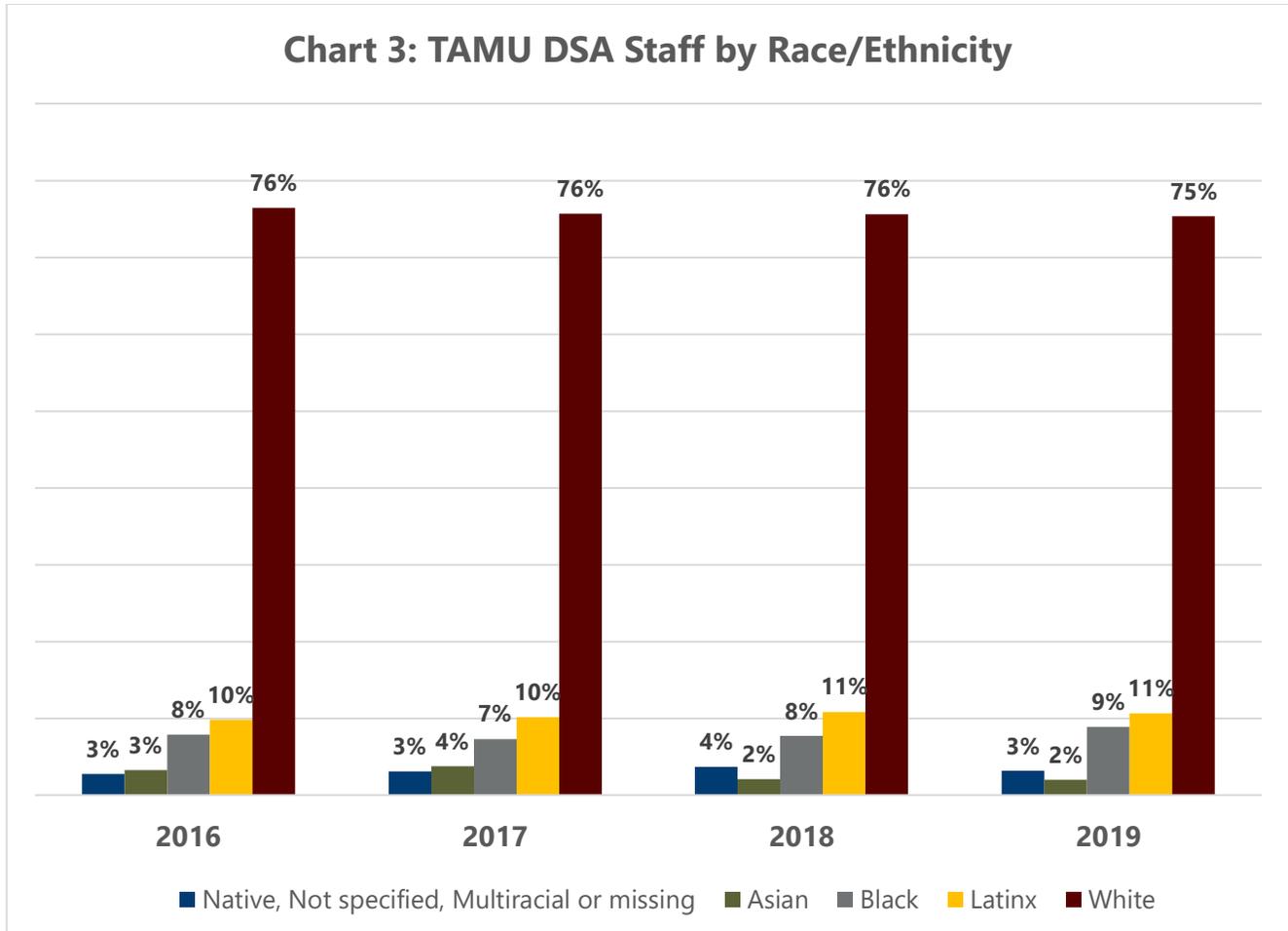
In conjunction with the Aggie Core Values, the division uses the following commitments to guide our practice: responsibility, wellbeing, discovery, and diversity and inclusion. Division staff are committed to cultivating a campus environment where people from all backgrounds and experiences can thrive. We build and model a welcoming environment that promotes a deeper understanding of identities of an increasingly diverse population.

DSA Student and Staff Employee Composition

In 2018, approximately 69% of the 2431 TAMU DSA employees were students and graduate assistants and the remaining 31% were full-time staff (Chart 1). The number of student employees and graduate assistants has increased from 67% in 2016 to 72% in 2019. The Division is committed to providing student employee and paraprofessional positions in the Division to help offset financial costs for students and provide quality transformational learning opportunities through work experiences. In 2018, there were slightly more female (53%, 889) than male (45%, 746) student employees. As illustrated in Chart 2, most student employees identify as white (55%, 920) compared to Latinx (22%, 374), Black (7%, 122), and Asian (7%, 110). These numbers mirror the overall University student demographics on the College Station campus for 2018 (56% White, 22% Latinx, 3% Black, and 7% Asian). Trends show that the number of opportunities for students to be employed by the TAMU DSA continues to grow and the diversity of student employees mirrors or exceeds the University’s student demographics.



The demographic diversity for DSA staff (as measured by gender and race/ethnicity) remains consistent over the past four years. In 2018, of the 755 TAMU DSA full-time staff there were significantly more female (64%, 285) than male (36%, 269) employees. As illustrated in Chart 3, most staff identify as white (76%, 571) compared to Latinx (11%, 82), Black (8%, 58), and Asian (2%, 16).



Peer Institutions

We selected three peer institutions based on Association of American University (AAU) status, comparable student affairs units, size, and mission. For demographic purposes only, we selected an instate peer, the University of Texas at Austin (UT). In addition, we again selected divisions of student affairs at the University of Florida (UF) and Pennsylvania State University (PSU). To gather data from the selected peer institutions, Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Daniel J. Pugh, Sr. contacted the Vice President for Student Affairs at UF and PSU to describe the project and invite them to participate in our peer comparison. The Texas A&M Office of Diversity provided demographic data from the University of Texas.



In addition to collecting quantitative and qualitative data from peer institutions, DSA departments provided content for the report through a survey drafted to capture their efforts on recruitment, retention, campus climate, and equity.

Table 1: 2019 Demographic Composition, TAMU DSA and Benchmark Institutions' Student Affairs Units

	Texas A&M University	Pennsylvania State University	University of Florida	University of Texas
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	0%	<1%	<1%
Asian	2%	2%	5%	4%
Black or African American	9%	8%	15%	17%
Declined to Specify	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Hispanic or Latino	11%	7%	18%	38%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	1%	1%	<1%
Nonresident alien	0%	0%	3%	0%
Race and ethnicity unknown	0%	0%	<1%	0%
Two or more races	1%	3%	3%	1%
White	77%	79%	54%	39%
Female	65%	71%	54%	61%
Male	35%	29%	46%	39%
Total (n)	686	299	2134	1257

Although asked to exclude, as noted by the discrepancy in the total number of staff for each student affairs unit, both UT and UF's data includes full-time staff in service positions (custodial, grounds, maintenance, and food service workers). In terms of racial/ethnic composition, TAMU DSA was most similar to PSU's student affairs unit (Table 1). At UT, 38% of their division staff identified as Hispanic or Latino and 17% identified as Black or African American, which was the greatest among our peer institutions. All peer institutions and TAMU DSA saw an increase in the percentage of staff who identified as Hispanic or Latino since 2016. The proportion of white employees has decreased at both UT (45% to 39%), UF (59% to 54%), and PSU (84% to 79%) and has remained consistent at DSA TAMU (76% to 77%) since the last comparison in 2016. For gender, all student affairs units continue to have more females than males, but PSU (71%) and TAMU DSA (65%) were the most heavily female.

RECRUITMENT

The University of Florida actively shares the UF brand at the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) conference through cards shared by their staff with anyone they are trying to recruit. The card contains the UF student affairs mission, student affairs talent management website (<https://team.ufsa.ufl.edu/>), and information for the UF social held at the conference. UF staff were asked to collect names and contact information and then to share this with the person in charge of

talent management so that they could keep in contact with them as well as share future postings. TAMU DSA currently hosts a “Friends of Texas A&M” reception at the annual NASPA conference. Departments who are recruiting for open positions invite prospects to the reception to introduce them to DSA staff and to hear the Vice President for Student Affairs give an update on things going on in the Division and at the University. The UF website dedicated to talent management is an interesting idea worthy of exploration.

Both UF and PSU have a program that assigns an equity advisor to serve on search committees (for positions of a certain title). As part of the search committee, this equity advisor is chosen from a pool of employees who volunteer to provide guidance to search committees to advance inclusivity, ensuring that job postings are placed in appropriate venues and that efforts are made to target recruitment to diverse applicants. In addition, UF worked this past year to ensure a consistent diversity statement was included in all marketing materials and position postings. A few members of the TAMU DSA Diversity committee participated in the National Inclusive Excellence Leadership Academy (NIXLA) this past summer. As part of this experience, they put together a proposal for a Search Advocacy Initiative to engage staff across the Division in inclusive excellence hiring practices. In addition to training division staff to serve as search advocates, a second component includes a required online training for all search committee members to introduce the concept of implicit bias and how it may appear in search processes. This proposal is being reviewed by the DSA Diversity Committee and, if approved, will go to the senior staff for consideration.

Additional DSA recruitment strategies not referenced by peer institutions include utilizing salary negotiation, hiring adjustment, professional development, and moving expense opportunities and charging division-wide committees to review and communicate best practices to inform diversity policies, practices, and processes. The DSA Diversity Committee implemented a pre-hiring process, which outlined a variety of diverse posting resources and interview question guidance to assist with diversifying applicant pools and communicating the division commitment to diversity. Further, the Staff Development Team provided professional development facilitated by a Texas A&M faculty member in the Department of Sociology, Dr. Mindy Bergman, focused on implicit bias in hiring practices (promotion, recruitment, selection, recruitment, etc.).

RETENTION

PSU focuses on the onboarding and evaluation of employees as a way to communicate and evaluate expectations related to diversity and inclusion. Annual performance evaluations look at staff contributions towards diversity and inclusion initiatives and expectations for, and commitment to, diversity, equity and inclusion are part of the onboarding processes for each new PSU staff member. In an effort to provide a consistent foundation and set common expectations, TAMU DSA staff members are now required to attend a one-day DSA orientation. During this orientation, staff become familiar with our strategic plan including our commitment to diversity and inclusion. In addition, they are introduced to the various DSA committees, including the DSA Diversity Committee.

UF focuses on community building with historically marginalized groups. The VPSA meets with Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ staff twice a year to provide support and insight, discuss issues, and career advice. During these meetings, he communicated to staff that he was also open to meeting with



staff individually. The VPSA also established a weeklong Executive in Residence program. Current and former VPSAs, usually identifying with a historically marginalized group, would spend a week on campus to share their knowledge and insight across a range of functional areas. More importantly, they would meet with affinity groups to support their professional development and community. The TAMU DSA Diversity Committee has been exploring affinity group gathering, open to all who want to attend, but geared toward conversations around issues affecting some of our historically marginalized staff. Currently, DSA staff from these communities who are interested in affiliating with these types of affinity groups are encouraged to explore joining some of the networks offered by the University. Similar to TAMU DSA, UF also conducts exit interviews of staff to ascertain opportunities and issues impacting staff retention; however, UF conducts exit interviews with exiting student employees. This practice varies by TAMU DSA department but we may consider adopting it division-wide.

TAMU DSA utilizes work-life balance business practices such as flexible work schedules and supporting university well-being initiatives. TAMU DSA supports division-wide and department-level community building, including holiday socials, retreats, and team building. For example, Student Life has a Unity Committee that provides opportunities for staff to gather informally through theme lunches, athletic event attendance, department picnics, birthday celebrations, and other social activities. The DSA Staff Wellbeing and Appreciation Committee implemented a Wellness Grant initiative for staff to obtain funding for development opportunities around wellbeing. The DSA Staff Wellbeing and Appreciation Committee also coordinates an annual "Years of Service" ceremony to honor staff longevity and commitment to serving students and staff across the Division. Recognizing that not all staff may stay at the university for their entire careers, the committee honors staff who have met 5, 10, and 15-year milestones at the ceremony. The DSA Staff Development Team provides strategies for the division to address community wellbeing, particularly for marginalized staff members. In February, the team is looking to examine marginalized staff experiences and what it means for staff of color.

CAMPUS CLIMATE

Similar to TAMU DSA, UF and PSU student affairs have representatives on a university-wide diversity committee. In addition, each university has a division-wide diversity committee. The charge of each division-wide diversity committee varies, some focus on looking at systemic policies and practices that may influence DEI, and others have a programming component and are charged with actual skill and competency building through workshops, dialogues, and trainings. UF Student Affairs' Inclusive Excellence Leadership Council directly delivers professional development for their staff. PSU's Diversity and Inclusion staff facilitate campus climate discussions for the entire division or will present department specific sessions. TAMU DSA's diversity committee has historically identified training and education needs and worked in conjunction with the DSA staff development team or another DSA committee to assist with the delivery. Various departments in TAMU DSA have department-level diversity committees to address DEI issues at a local level. PSU student affairs staff are part of a larger university-wide staff climate survey. They intend to use the results to look for areas of improvement in policies and practices.



TAMU DSA departments develop intentional partnerships with student leaders and other departments around climate-related initiatives. Student Activities collaborates to open dialogue and offer services and resources to staff and students, such as collaboration with Multicultural Services and the Memorial Student Center in the development of an inclusive and thought-provoking community statement regarding Halloween costumes and Cultural Appropriation. Further, Multicultural Services collaborates with departments across the division to provide DEI presentations for student leaders of high profile, sponsored, or department student groups, and all student organization members upon invitation.

TAMU DSA supports critical student dialogue and discourse about DEI. Counseling and Psychological Services partners with units across campus to host The Let's Talk program that creates spaces for students and counselors to discuss the psychological impact of social climate on their marginalized and intersecting identities and thereby their academics, identity development, relationships, and overall wellness. The Let's Talk program at Multicultural Services launched in fall 2018, at International Student Services in fall 2019, and plans are underway to launch at the GLBT Resource Center in spring 2019.

Recognizing the “feel” of a campus can influence students’ involvement and engagement on campus, the DSA Marketing and Communications office launched the “[Fearless Leaders](#)” campaign with the intention of highlighting a diverse group of student leaders and organizations that contribute to student life. Each feature included a photo shoot and interview with student leaders that were then pushed out over social media. Many of the features were picked up by the university and pushed out over the TAMU social media accounts to an even larger audience. Examples of groups featured include: Asian Presidents’ Council, MSC Woodson Black Awareness Committee, Multicultural Greek Council, International Student Association, Aggies on the Spectrum, OneLove: An Environmental and Social Justice Club, Aggie Students in Recovery, Peer Leadership & Service Program (focused on first generation students) and MSC SCOLA. Communicators in departments also push out content highlighting the students with diverse experiences and identities.

EQUITY

The peer institutions provided the least detailed information about equity initiatives and strategies, in large part because many strategies related to equity were also tied to recruitment and retention procedures.

Both UF and PSU are committed to ensuring equity in pay and advancement for student affairs staff. UF conducts salary and position type reviews to identify gaps based on gender or race/ethnicity. TAMU DSA employs practices to align salary adjustments and merit increases with annual performance evaluations, balance position titles with position workload, equitably align salaries across position titles, provide educational enhancement raises and provide annual increases to student employee wages based on performance. At PSU, staff partner with others on three presidential commissions --the Commission for Women, the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity, and the LGBT Equity Commission-- to advocate for equitable pay and advancement within the division and



the university. PSU has their development (fundraising) officers participate in diversity and inclusion training to better understand and assist in proactively seeking opportunities to engage alumni in service (giving) to fund opportunities for underrepresented students.

TAMU DSA departments frequently request TAMU salary reports, use equitable performance evaluation processes, and engage the student affairs career ladder to support promotion. In Counseling and Psychological Services, performance evaluations also reflect diversity, equity, inclusion and access values and motivate staff to operationalize these values through their roles, responsibilities, and duties. Creation of the Student Affairs Coordinator (SAC) position within the division has allowed advancement opportunity without the associated compression issues. For example, in the Department of Student Activities, use of the SAC position has provided greater flexibility in awarding promotions to seasoned staff while following the structured pay-plan system, assisted in the recruitment efforts of our mid-level positions by utilizing a more universal and appealing title code within the field, and offered a more consistent and equitable career structure across the division.

REFLECTION

A. Reflect on what you have learned from the peer institutions and describe the similarities and differences in strategies across the peer institutions.

With regard to our peer institutions, TAMU DSA is keeping up with industry standards, and in some areas, we are leaders. We have also identified particular practices, policies and programs from our peer institutions to explore further to determine whether implementing them in TAMU DSA is feasible.

In our 2016 Accountability Report we stated, “We want to shift our strategy with regard to recruiting and hiring new staff. The current method is essentially to cast a wide net, but we will shift our strategy to intentionally recruit and hire *for* diversity.” One of the strategies identified to accomplish this goal was to build diverse hiring committees who are trained in DEI issues. This is one of the significant areas where we lag behind our peer institutions. Both UF and PSU have a version of an equity advisor program to assist with searches. Several institutions in the country have adopted this practice institution-wide, thus not limiting the practice to student affairs searches. As mentioned above, using the NIXLA team’s project as a springboard, the DSA Diversity Committee continues to work on a model that can be adopted division-wide.

B. Describe any similarities and differences between the challenges your unit is facing and those of the peer institutions regarding recruiting, retention, campus climate, and equity. What plans are in place to address the challenges in your unit?

Evaluating the effectiveness of strategies is a challenge. Since 2017, TAMU DSA has adopted a number of strategies to aid in DEI related to DSA staff. These strategies include: incorporating D&I themed questions as part of the hiring process, constructing job ads with diversity in mind and using language to reflect that goal, placing job ads in targeted resources, and increasing our marketing and networking efforts to convey our commitment to diversity. As the pre- and post-hiring forms and DEI questions become standard practice, we will take time this year to gather information on the

effectiveness of these practices and how we use the data to improve, add new, or sunset current practices that are not producing intended outcomes.

As the Hispanic student population continues to grow, TAMU DSA has been dedicating energy and resources to support this population of students ensuring that we are becoming a Hispanic *servicing* institution and not just a Hispanic *enrolling* institution. The MSC elevated the important work of the Student Conference on Latino Affairs (SCOLA) by taking it out from under CAMAC and making it a stand-alone committee. This move also expanded the number of student leader positions focused on Latino programming. Additionally, the VPSA committed \$10,000/year for three years to grow SCOLA to a premiere student-led conference in Texas and the country. Multicultural Services launched Latino Logradores, a freshman program that supports the success of Latino/a/x students. Two new staff positions, funded through the Student Success Initiative, will positively affect this growing population. A full-time counselor will be embedded in DMS to assist with the unique needs of students of color. A new Diversity Collaborative Coordinator will work with campus units to coordinate aspects of diversity and inclusion related education and engagement within first year programs.

C. Describe how funding from the Diversity Plan awards has been used (or will be used) to address challenges and support and advance your unit's recruitment, retention, climate, and/or equity goals. Note: Please see the 2019 award letter for a summary of the funds awarded to your unit.

In FY19, 75% of diversity plan award funding was used to fund initiatives geared towards students and 25% towards staff. A portion of funding (\$27,600) was dedicated to the Diversity & Inclusion Programming Grant (DIP) to assist departments in creating a climate in which students feel welcomed and valued, providing students with opportunities to engage with others different from themselves. The average award was \$3000. The following programs received DIP funding in FY19: Latino Logradores, Aggie Football Culture, United Divine Sistahs, Peer Leadership and Service Program, Elect Her, Transilient Project at TAMU, and LEAD Program.

In addition, the Office of the VPSA used diversity plan award funding to assist other student initiatives including National Pan-Hellenic Council's Black Male Leadership Excursion, Underrepresented Male Programs Initiatives, MSC Woodson Black Awareness Committee's MLK Breakfast, and SCOLA. Funding also assisted TAMU students to attend the Annual National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE). Finally, a portion of funding supported Texas A&M students interested in participating in the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program (NUFP). The goal of the NUFP program is to increase the number of historically disenfranchised and underrepresented professionals in student affairs and/or higher education.

A portion of the funding was used to support initiatives geared towards building competencies and enhancing climate for staff. In spring 2019, the Division collaborated with Mays Business School to bring in Dr. Damon Williams to present on Strategic Diversity Leadership. Dr. Williams also facilitated two breakout sessions for DSA staff on "Understanding the Centennial Generation" and "Accountability Practices" for leadership and departments, recruiting and retaining diverse students/staff, and best and emerging practices around DEI initiatives. Funding was also allocated to the Office of Diversity to assist in the University's support of NCORE. A number of staff initiatives are planned for FY20, as such, our goal will be to elevate the funding dedicated to staff initiatives without decreasing the support to student initiatives.

