

Leading Through Excellence: Achieving Diversity and Inclusivity

Faculty Leadership Program Report

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Introduction

Celebrating its 90th year, Austin Peay State University (APSU) continues to grow and move forward with its 2015 – 2025 Strategic Plan. The plan articulates five quantifiable goals—enrollment, student success, sustainability, diversity, and communication—all encircling the hub and central theme of “Leading through Excellence.” Surrounding these goals are the University’s core values of globalization, quality, innovation, collaboration, and community; all are tied to the mission and vision. Members of the 2017 Faculty Leadership Program studied the entire plan and APSU operations from a leadership perspective. We pinpointed a pervasive concern and recurring theme: the positive impact that intentional diversity, combined with inclusivity, and equity could, would, and should have on APSU’s success in the attainment and realization of all of its strategic goals. We contend that Goal 4 – Diversity-- underlies all other goals. For this goal to be achieved, it must permeate enrollment, student success, sustainability, and communication.

Why promote greater diversity at APSU?

Diversity is present when multiple cultural groups work within an organization that values the perspectives and contributions of all people, and strives to incorporate the needs and viewpoints of diverse communities into the design and implementation of universal and inclusive programs. Inclusive organizations are, by definition, diverse at all levels (2017, para. 4) . According to a 2011 Forbes *Insight* “Global Diversity and Inclusion: Fostering Innovation through a Diverse Workforce” study of more than 320 corporate executives of multinational corporations, diversity was dubbed as “a formula for success” and found to be a “key driver of innovation.” Many scholarly publications articulate compelling reasons for diversity and inclusion in higher education as students are being prepared for the workforce.

Diversity at all levels is key in fulfilling the APSU vision to create a collaborative, integrative learning community as students gain knowledge, skills and values for life and work in a global society. The APSU mission includes a statement promoting “equal access, diversity, appreciation of all cultures and respect for all persons.” APSU prepares students to be engaged and productive citizens, while recognizing that society and the marketplace require global awareness and continuous learning. Diversity and inclusivity go hand in hand

- to prepare students for life and work in a global society
- to prepare students to live in an integrated, plural society
- to improve community relationships
- to retain and graduate students from increasingly diverse demographic groups
- to increase enrollment and retention of students and benefit from the positive financial impact
- to increase sustainability
- to improve communications by enhancing the APSU brand and messaging
- to provide enhanced opportunities for engagement and multicultural awareness



Diversity Milestones at Austin Peay State University

Austin Peay Normal School was founded “for the purpose of training teachers for the white rural public schools of the state” in April, 1927. The statute legalized the exclusion of racial minorities from the school, a status which conformed with the segregated education widely practiced in America at the time. The 1930 US Census indicated that approximately 22% (more than 575,000) of the 2.6 million citizens of Tennessee were African-Americans. The state’s intentional, systematic failure to address the basic educational needs of one out of every five of its citizens is stunningly repressive, historical context notwithstanding.

While racial diversity was outlawed at Austin Peay’s founding, the school has always included women among its faculty and students (grade school teachers were apparently mainly women in 1927 as now); the inaugural staff of the school was comprised of ten white men and ten white women. Austin Peay Normal School enrolled 425 students in its first year.

The school’s inaugural yearbook was produced in 1946; photos show a staff of 30, among which there are 16 women; a woman was president of the graduating class. A circa 1955 promotional film titled “This Is Your University” shows only white people; the effects of the 1954 Brown vs. Board federal decision outlawing “separate but equal” education had apparently not yet been felt. Wilbur N. Daniel and Hattie Clay Wilhoite were the school’s first African-American students. They enrolled in 1956 and earned their Master’s degrees in Education in 1957.

In 1958, Austin Peay admitted its first “Negro” undergraduates, four individuals who constituted approximately 0.3% of the 1,142-member student body.¹ LM Ellis—an African-American native of Clarksville--broke the color line on both the AP basketball team and in the Ohio Valley Conference in 1963; he was later inducted into Austin Peay’s athletics hall of fame. The College became Austin Peay State University in 1967. In the following year, Rita Sanders Geier, a faculty member at Tennessee State University in Nashville, sued the State of Tennessee for maintaining a segregated higher education system, noting the comparative lack of funding for schools serving African Americans.

In 1969, the University elected to host the Mid-South Classic Invitational Golf Tournament at the Clarksville Country Club, which at the time banned “negroes” from membership. The Black Students Alliance (later known as the Afro-American Alliance) joined the Student Government Association in protest, and the sponsorship was withdrawn. The Afro-American Alliance also advocated the establishment of black history courses and hiring additional African-American faculty members.

In 1970, the Student Government produced a Declaration of University Reform, calling for an end to discrimination against women students and African-Americans. This document stated that “... discrimination against African-American students is a stigma perpetuated not only among

¹ This was the same year that Wilma Rudolph graduated from Burt High School and enrolled at Tennessee State University; she had been recruited by the track coach there. Returning to Clarksville after winning three gold medals in track at the 1960 Rome Olympiad, Rudolph insisted that the celebrations in her honor be fully integrated, marking the first integrated municipal events in the history of Clarksville. She participated in a local civil rights protest that culminated in the desegregation of the city’s restaurants in 1963.

the student body, but most obviously effected by the administration,” specifically mentioning the diverted 1969 golf tournament which was to be held at a whites-only club. Betty Joe Wallace, a white female professor of history, taught courses on African-American History and black political leadership, according to the 1970 yearbook; almost half of the students enrolled in the latter course were of color. In the same year, two African-American men were pictured in a photo of the university’s football team of approximately fifty athletes; and the great soul music artist Ray Charles performed on campus. The graduating class of 268 included 11 African-Americans (4% of the class), judging from yearbook photos; seven of these were women. Total University enrollment was 3,444, with a faculty and staff of 158. The 1970 yearbook portrays Mary Elizabeth Walton among the Education faculty; she may have been the first African-American to serve on Austin Peay’s faculty.

The 1971 *Farewell and Hail* yearbook includes photos showing an African-American tuba player and an integrated lounge. The student tribunal included one African American man, two white women, and six white men. Home economics added Dr. Sanober Qureshi, a woman who had earned her bachelor’s degree in Pakistan, to its faculty.

In 1972, a black woman was listed among the ten most photogenic “coeds” on campus. Black students appeared in plays and on athletic teams. Black men served as the Director of Student Services (Arnold Quarles) and in the Military Science Department (Captain Albert Truesdale). The 1972 graduating class of 242 included 15 black students, accounting for 6% of the total. University Affirmative Action plans began to be produced in 1972. In 1978, Professor Betty Joe Wallace developed Austin Peay’s first Women’s Studies Course. She later helping to found and direct the African American Studies and the Women’s and Gender Studies Programs.

In 1984, the Geier case begun in 1968 resulted in the forced desegregation of Tennessee’s higher education system via a quota system, with compliance overseen by the federal government. In 1991, the Wilbur N. Daniel African-American Cultural Center was established. In 1994, with the support of female Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (DeAnn Campbell), Women’s Studies began offering courses and had a budget (\$1,300, the same amount the Women’s and Gender Studies Program receives today). Joseph Asanbe, the first professor of African and African- American Literature at the university and longtime chair of the Language and Literature Department’s Diversity committee, passed away in 1996. Soon after, the annual Asanbe Diversity Symposium was established in his honor. In 1999 Lou Beasley (a woman) became the first African-American Dean (School of Nursing) at Austin Peay.

The Geier case was brought to a conclusion in 2001, with an agreement signed by State officials and US District Court Judge Thomas Wiseman. The settlement required the state to invest up to \$75 million in Tennessee State University programs over the next 10 years. The settlement also ended quotas and called for court supervision at all 10 of Tennessee's public four-year universities to end within five years.

In 2003, the first African-American members of the Department of Music faculty arrived. Both were hired as full-time temporary faculty with Geier funds, and neither progressed to a tenure-track position. In 2005, the Hispanic Cultural Center was founded; and the first African-American chair of the Department of Music was hired.

The 2010 US Census showed that 17% (1,057,315) of Tennessee’s population of 6,436,105 were African-Americans; Montgomery County citizens were 72.1% White, and 19% (32,982) African-American. In 2012, 23.6% (230,556) of Tennessee’s K-12 public school students were African Americans. The 2014 US population was comprised of 62.2% Whites, 17.4% Hispanics, and 12.4% African-Americans. Minorities accounted for 37.8% of the total US population.

In 2017, a fund honoring Betty Joe Wallace was established.

The inerascable history of racial exclusion is embedded in the foundation and fiber of this institution. Thus, APSU must take deliberate, thoughtful, and extra measures to build relationships with communities previously denied access. The university goals and campus environment must be more than safe, it must be an inviting, welcoming, and supportive environment that values and respects differing communities. The messaging must show that the current goals are more than mere words in response to further legislation.

The building and inclusion of diverse cohorts on all levels must become the goal. Students need faculty mentors who understand and are sensitive to cultural norms. Curricula must be inclusive and welcoming. The financial gain should not overshadow the simple need for justice and equity to be felt and practiced. Quantifiable enrollment growth cannot replace or repair these qualities.

I. Identifying the Problem

Review of current status / demographics

Austin Peay State University is a four year, mid-sized primarily undergraduate institution. We have a student enrollment of 10,399, and 370 full time faculty. Our student demographic numbers over five years reflect increasing trends in minority enrollment.

Ethnic/Racial Identification	5-Year Average	Percentage Increase
American Indian or Alaskan Native	41	.03%
Asian	161	1.5%
Black or African American	1,960	19%
Hispanic	587	5.6%
Native American	25	.02%
Two or more races	518	5.0%
Total	3,292	31.05% N=10,399

Table 1.0: APSU Minority Enrollment Profile Trends Fall 2017-2016

Our enrollment trends for racially/ethnically underrepresented minority (RE-URM) students have demonstrated a 71% increase from 2009 to 2016, but the faculty underrepresented minority numbers have demonstrated a 10% decrease in the same period (Figure 1.0). To further demonstrate the underrepresented racial/ethnic compositions of our APSU faculty, there are a total of 370 full-time faculty of which 16.6% represent RE-URM. These numbers are dissimilar to the number of students enrolled by approximately 50%, as evidenced in Table 1.0. As RE-URM student enrollment numbers at APSU increase the RE-URM, faculty numbers have been

decreasing. Additionally, when compared to national numbers for enrollment of RE-URM we are behind national averages for student enrollment (Figure 1.0). The average percentage of RE-URM students enrolled in college increased 25% between 2009 to 2013, while APSU RE-URM student enrollment increased 50% during the same time frame.

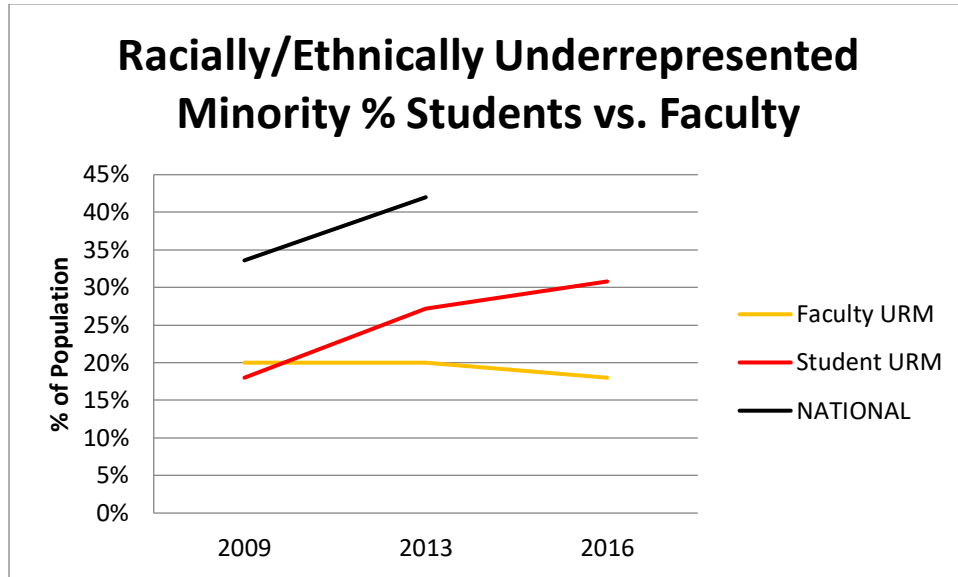


Figure 1.0: Racially/Ethnically Underrepresented Minority Percentages of Students vs. Faculty

We have a total of 44 non-tenured faculty of which 9% represent RE-URM; 126 tenured tracked faculty of which 21% represent RE-URM; 200 tenured faculty of which 20% represent RE-URM. Of the 370 full-time faculty, 54% are tenured, 34% are tenure-track, and 12% are non-tenure track (Figure 2.0).

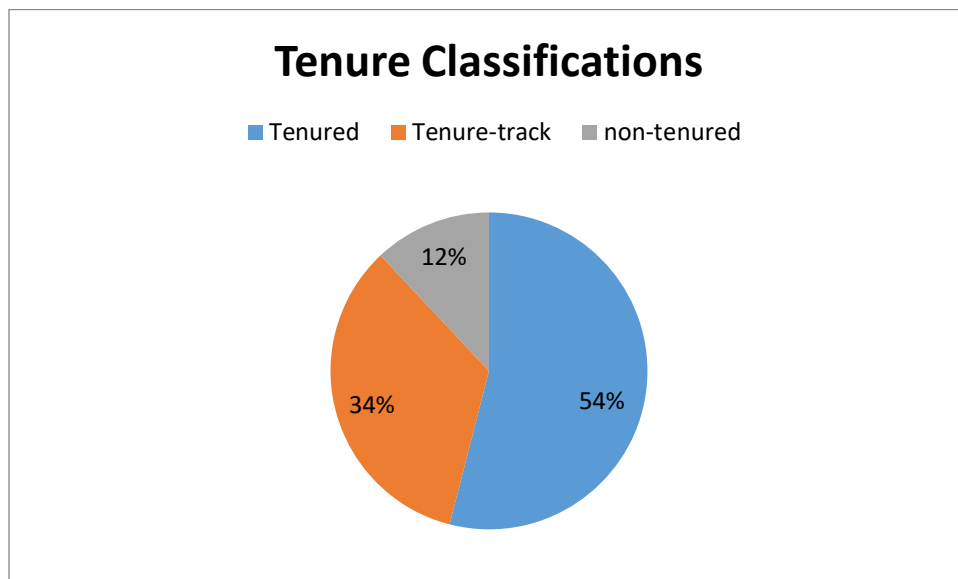


Figure 2.0: Percentages of Tenure Classification in Full-Time Faculty

One-third of our full-time faculty is comprised of individuals who are on tenure-track, yet over half of the full-time faculty is already tenured. These tenure classification numbers may limit the potential opportunities in hiring or faculty growth potential.

Comparison with other institutions

Institution	Location	Carnegie Classification	Enrollment (Fall 2014)
East Tennessee State University	Johnson City	Doctoral University: Moderate Research Activity	14,434
Tennessee Technological University	Cookeville	Doctoral University: Moderate Research Activity	10,111
Austin Peay State University	Clarksville	Master's University: Larger Programs	10,449

Table 2.0: Comparative Institutions based on Enrollment

Two additional institutions similar to our institution are: East Tennessee State University and Tennessee Technological University (Table 2.0). Comparable in enrollment size, but differing in Carnegie classification, Tennessee Tech University and East Tennessee State University have distinctly lower RE-URM numbers than we do. According to each university's fall 2016 personnel employment rates, 11.8% (ETSU) and 10.1% (TNTECH) of the personnel is RE-URM, both of which mirror their total student RE-URM populations as well. National numbers demonstrate that 19.3% of the total professoriate in higher education represents racially/ethnically underrepresented minorities. Of the three institutions, APSU statistically has a greater RE-URM faculty percentage than the national average, but it is the only institution in which the faculty and student underrepresented populations **do not reflect each other**.

Institution	RE-URM %			Enrollment (Fall 2016)
	2009	2013	2016	
East Tennessee State University	8.4%	11.9%	12.4%	13,419
Tennessee Technological University	8.6%	9.7%	11%	10,492
Austin Peay State University	18%	27.2%	31.7%	10,310

Table 3.0: ETSU, TNTech, APSU Fact book data from Institutional Research Units

Best practices presented in research articles

From conceptual framework of Tinto (1993) and the empirical research of Thomas (2002) we have the base for programmatic elements to help retain students. The provision of formal and informal social integration opportunities as well as the opportunities to develop social relationships contributes to student retention. Active recruitment initiatives at APSU have contributed to the increase of culturally diverse students, but the rates of RE-URM student

growth have outpaced growth on the faculty side. This creates a demographic gap between students and faculty. Such gaps can potentially continue an institutional habitus that contributes to non-persistence of diverse populations. Sleeter (2004) provides evidence that most of the white teachers over the course of their studies interpret race, and subsequently the application of multicultural education, through a European ethnic experience. It is only through intentional exposure that teachers are able to change their perceptions. Likewise, years of research support that engagement with diverse populations is beneficial for college students (Chang, Denson, Saenz, & Misa, 2006; Hurtado, 2001). Students who engage with more diverse groups self-report increased “problem solving skills,” and “critical thinking skills” (Pascarella, Martin, Hanson, Trolian, Gillig, & Blaich, 2014). Diversity among students and faculty members contributes to a campus climate that provides enhanced opportunities for engagement and multicultural awareness. Such initiatives to close the demographic gaps between student and faculty ranks could be addressed through the administrative position of a Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion (VPDI).

II. Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion

A Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion would:

- serve on senior leadership team reporting directly to the President
- work cooperatively with the Director of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.
- coordinate executive level efforts to establish diversity and inclusive excellence as core values throughout the University community
- work collaboratively with offices across the campus to promote inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity and inclusion in such areas as recruitment and retention of students, senior administrators, faculty and staff
- coordinate diversity-oriented programs and initiatives, including the development and implementation of the strategic plan goal for diversity
- chair the University Diversity Committee
- maintains strong collaborative working relationships among senior executives, faculty, students, staff and external constituents, and serve as a resource, change agent and team builder
- provide vision, leadership, coordination and strategic planning for the design and implementation of an institutional-wide platform in order to support diversity, equity and respect for all faculty, staff and students.

Qualifications: The selected candidate should:

- have an advanced degree with at least five years of professional experience as a diversity practitioner (experience in a university preferred)
- have held a leadership role directly related to diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice and/or civil rights compliance
- possess current and historical knowledge related to issues of nondiscrimination, access and equity in institutions of higher learning and health care environments

- have demonstrated ability to work collaboratively and effectively across many departments, divisions, and the community
- have demonstrated leadership in the cooperative creation and delivery of organization wide diversity, equity and cultural competency training programs.
- have proven ability to establish effective partnerships with community members, organizations and government entities
- have experience interacting with and incorporating the voices of students and student groups, particularly students of color and other marginalized student groups; have the ability to effectively connect the institution to emerging best practices in increasing diversity and equity as well as support appropriate translation to local circumstances as possible and relevant.
- have grant writing experience
- have excellent written and verbal communication and interpersonal skills, strong organizational skills, and the ability to analyze statistical data for reporting and planning purposes

III. Benefits of a Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion

At APSU, a Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion (VPDI) would be a leader to champion diversity as part of the university's mission and strategic plan. One of the ways the university's mission is to be accomplished is by promoting equal access, diversity, appreciation of all cultures and respect for all persons. A VPDI can embody this by becoming the champion of Goal 4 – Diversity, of the 2015-2025 Strategic Plan.

Goal 4 – Diversity, as outlined in the strategic plan, is comprised of the following initiatives:

- Diverse student recruitment, retention, and graduation
- Diverse faculty & staff recruitment and retention
- Fostering community inclusivity and diversity
- Provision for infrastructure to support diversity
- Campus-wide diversity plan development

Currently the goal champion is Dr. Sherryl Byrd (Vice President, Student Affairs). Recent actions regarding the provision for infrastructure to support diversity included the establishment of a Chief Diversity Officer. The person is to be a liaison and adviser for building support structures and relationships for an inclusive environment. Mr. David Davenport was named APSU's Chief Diversity Officer approximately two years ago. However, he is also the Director of University Recreation and has held that position for many years prior. These co-responsibilities do not allow him to focus all of his efforts on either position.

The members of the Spring 2017 Faculty Leadership Program propose the creation of a VPDI position to champion the elements of diversity regarding the university's mission and to specifically champion Goal 4 of the 2015-2025 Strategic Plan. By having a VPDI, the necessary focus and attention on diversity can be given to the university and its students, staff, faculty, administration, alumni, and stakeholders. Specifically within Goal 4, the VPDI can implement programs and assist the ongoing efforts to obtain greater retention and graduation rates of our

students. In particular, the focus could be on non-white and minority demographics within the student body. In addition, the VPDI could help with recruitment and retention of diversity faculty and staff. A specific initiative the VPDI may undertake is to create a self-evaluation process for every hiring committee on campus to complete prior to the interviewing process so that the hiring department can understand the demographics present in their students as well as within their faculty. In addition, a VPDI can help create a network to recruit diverse faculty.

IV. Financial Impact

The establishment of a Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion (VPDI) to champion the diversity elements of APSU's mission and strategic plan will have a financial impact on the university within a few years. With a fulltime capacity to focus on diversity, especially Goal 4 of the strategic plan, significant progress can be made in improving non-white student retention and graduation. Tennessee's Funding Formula for Universities is partially based upon student retention and graduation rates and not purely upon total enrollment. Research on Tennessee's Funding Formula carried out by Dr. Chad Brooks (Interim Associate Provost, for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies) ascertained different ways a 1% increase in funding could be obtained by APSU. Assuming the formula is fully funded at 100%, this would equate to an increase of \$402,000 per year. This increase can be obtained in the following ways:

- An increase of 1,120 students earning 30 credits.
- An increase of 247 students earning 90 credits.
- An increase of 43 students earning a BS/BS/AS degree.
- An increase of 30 students earning a graduate degree.

Upon reviewing these findings, our current graduation rates, as well as our student body demographics, it becomes clear a VPDI could directly impact our performance in the funding formula by increasing the retention and graduation rates of non-white students. Because 31.7% of APSU's students are non-white, and we currently have a student body of approximately 10,000 students, a small increase of 2-5% in retention and graduation of these students will have a significant impact on APSU's performance in the funding formula.

The financial model presented in Appendix A shows the financial impact a VPDI would have on the university. The model is based upon an annual expense of \$130,000 for salary and benefits for a VPDI and the results of the funding formula analysis by Dr. Chad Brooks. The impact and model assumptions include:

Model Assumptions:

75% formula funding rate

5% Student body growth

The demographics of entire student body (31.7% non-white) are the same in the graduation rate and freshmen class (i.e. 31.7% non-white)

VPDI Impact (Years 1 -5):

Years 1 -5 - retention of non-white students earning 30 credits increased by: 5%

Years 2-5 - non-white students earning an AS degree increased by:	2%
Years 3-5 - non-white students earning a MA degree increased by:	2%
Year 4 - retention of non-white students earning 90 credits increased by:	3%
Year 4 - non-white students earning BA/BS degrees increased by:	1%
Year 5 - non-white students earning BA/BS degrees increased by:	2%

The results of the financial model show that after 4 years with a VPDI, the net financial impact on the university will be positive. In addition, in the prior years the gains in the funding formula will help offset the annual cost associated with the compensation package for the VPDI. The results are summarized in the table below. Lastly, another potential financial impact that could be realized with a VPDI is the award of grants and gifts. These items, although not part of the financial model, would have a positive impact and help offset the costs associated with compensation.

Year	Cost	Projected Enrollment	Awarded Degrees			Impact - Additional Non-White Students Earning					\$ Increase for TN Funding Formula
			BA/BS	AS	MS	30 credit hrs.	90 credit hrs.	BA/BS	AS	MA/MS	
1	\$130,000	10,000	1558	316	314	32	0	0	0	0	\$8,534
2	\$130,000	10,500	1636	332	330	33	0	0	2	0	\$23,710
3	\$130,000	11,025	1718	348	346	35	0	0	2	2	\$46,953
4	\$130,000	11,576	1804	366	363	37	18	6	2	2	\$111,786
5	\$130,000	12,155	1894	384	382	39	19	12	2	2	\$159,467

The most direct and effective means of supporting Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan is the establishment of a Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion. Still, there are other actions that can be taken now, with little or no expenditure, to better support diversity at Austin Peay. For example, existing resources and personnel can be deployed to:

- Raise awareness of diversity “climate” and climate change within all units: keep measures and be aware when diversity erodes or diverse hires/students/staff leave, etc.
- Promote awareness of milestones in diversity in APSU’s history and advocate for improvement and continuance
- Further highlight and examine Diversity goal in strategic plan and closely examine benchmarks, follow-up
- Provide resources and intentionally train all faculty, admin, staff, and students to

Invite and advocate for inclusion and consideration of diverse applicant pools in all hiring decisions

Intentionally provide resources/databases targeting job announcements and advertisements to diverse candidates to all personnel involved in hiring process and follow up to see that they are used

Funding could be allocated to:

- Intentionally target graduates of heavily diverse (especially African-American) community colleges through the AP Promise to come to APSU for Bachelor's degrees
- Intentionally target graduates of TN, KY, etc. HBCUs to enroll in graduate programs
- Intentionally target doctoral graduates of HBCUs or other programs with diversity
- Grow our own minority faculty: pay outstanding students to go to graduate school, earn doctorates and return to APSU to teach
- Conduct a survey to discover why AA or other types of diverse individuals/populations leave APSU

Conclusion

With its inerasable history of racial divide, a strategic, coordinated, thoughtful, strong, and sensitive approach must be devised to transform Austin Peay's campus environment. President Alisa White has quoted Jonathan Swift, noting that "vision is the art of seeing things invisible." We quote President White, "I believe many people see things invisible. The transformation will occur when the potential that is invisible to some becomes visible to all. My goal is to work with you to make it so."

We call on campus leaders as well as the rank and file of faculty, staff, and students to work together to realize the vision of a university community noted for its excellence in diversity and inclusivity.

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