



Department of Communication DEI Committee Directive

2021-2024 Strategic Plan

DEI Committee Members 2021:

Committee Chair: Melody Fisher

Committee Members: Heesook Choi, Terri Hernandez, Melanie Loehwing, Wendy Roussin, Holli Seitz, and Matthew Webb

DEI Committee Members 2023:

Committee Chair: Melody Fisher

Committee Members: Victoria Bailey, Heesook Choi, Meaghan Gordon, Terri Hernandez, John Nicholson, and Wendy Roussin

Drafted: May 6, 2021

Adopted: August 15, 2021- Diversity Statement

Updated: August 22, 2023- Plan

Adopted: September 22, 2023

Diversity Statement

The Department of Communication is committed to fostering an environment that values and affirms diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Diversity is embracing a broad range of characteristics, which include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical ability, neurodiversity, age, socio-economic status, religious beliefs and spirituality, and political affiliation and ideology.

Equity is ensuring fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Inclusion is offering a safe and welcoming environment that empowers all individuals to express themselves through the art and science of communication.

Strategic Priorities

1) *Formalizing the Importance and Role of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within the Department of Communication*

Goal #1: To establish a diversity, equity and inclusion committee with clear bylaws and directives to ensure DEI efforts remain a sustainable focus within the department.

- ❖ Action 1: Establish a baseline of the department's existing DEI strengths and weaknesses via a self-assessment and draft an outline describing the department's current efforts and commitments to DEI *by August 2021 as measured by including this baseline commitment in the ACEJMC accreditation application.* - Completed 10/8/2020
- ❖ Action 2: Establish bylaws for the committee that specifically focus on (1) the time commitment and logistics of rotation of faculty members on the committee, (2) standards regarding representation of all rank and concentration, (3) DEI committee members' charge expectations, and (4) other relevant standards. – Completed 5/6/2021.
- ❖ Action 3: Establish bylaws for the committee that specifically focus on adding student representation to the DEI committee and students' role, commitment, etc. while serving on the committee. Completed November, 2024.
- ❖ Action 4: Establish a regular and systematic way to conduct climate analyses and target audience (i.e., faculty, staff, student, alumni, and advisory board) assessments of the department's DEI efforts *by September, 2024 as measured by the creation and dissemination of a target audience (i.e., faculty, staff, student, alumni, and advisory board) assessment.* - Instruments completed; however, committee agreed to suspend administering survey due to current local and national political climate.

Goal #2: To address and make specific tangible recommendations to improve departmental issues identified in regularly conducted self-assessments of DEI efforts within the department.

- ❖ Action 1: Evaluate and recommend changes to the department's mission statement and core values to be more reflective of the department's commitment to DEI *by May 2023 as measured by the department's adoption of the recommendations via its website and other documents.* - Completed Summer, 2021
- ❖ Action 2: Evaluate and recommend changes to the department's internal and external communication to be more reflective to the department's commitment to DEI (e.g., language, digital accessibility) *by December 2024 as measured by a faculty, staff, student, alumni, and advisory board survey.* **Suspended.**
- ❖ Action 3: Create DEI-focused departmental standards for a variety of procedures; including, but not limited to, curriculum, event planning standards (e.g., , assisted listening devices, accessibility, etc.), ensuring equal student worker/intern representation, establishing fair/equitable allocation standards of department support (e.g., disparities of salary, teaching/research/service funds, travel funding, access to technology, classroom and office space, course releases, scheduling priorities, promotional efforts, etc.), etc. *by December 2024 as measured by the department's adoption of the DEI- focused standards.* **Suspended.**

2) *Diversifying the Faculty/staff and Encouraging an Inclusive and Equitable Faculty Experience*

Goal #1: To create, implement, and consistently evaluate efforts to improve the diversity of the department's faculty/staff.

- ❖ Action 1: Create protocols for all hiring committees to adhere to during the recruitment, interviewing, and hiring process (e.g., including a trained diversity advocate to sit on each search committee, appropriate language to use to ensure appropriate accommodations are met – transportation, hotel, meals, on-campus scheduling, etc., position announcements, rubrics for application, video conferencing, and on-campus assessments, student assessments, interview questions, etc.) *by November 2024 as measured by the department's approval and adoption of this Faculty Hiring Committee Protocols. **Suspended.***
- ❖ Action 2: Create a description of the diversity advocate charge *by August 2024 as measured by the department's approval of this advocate charge description and added to the department's Faculty Hiring Committee Protocols. **Suspended.***
- ❖ Action 3: Create a DEI-focused standard boilerplate describing the expectations for new faculty, which will be required in all new faculty position announcements *by May 2023 as measured by the department's adoption of the boilerplate in its faculty position ads. **Completed Fall 2022.***

Goal #2: To create, implement, and consistently evaluate efforts to improve an inclusive and equitable faculty experience with a specific focus on faculty/staff retention via creating a supportive climate.

- ❖ Action 1: Establish one meeting or session in the opening retreat or in one faculty meeting that is focused on DEI efforts. – *Retreat completed May, 2021. DEI efforts are reported in each faculty meeting.*
- ❖ Action 2: Identify professional development, including grants for DEI efforts (e.g., DEI trainings) incentives; resources to support DEI needs *by December 2023 as measured by the diversity committee compiling a list of internal and external DEI resources.- DEI resources made available September, 2023 and accessible through Teams folder.*
- ❖ Action 3: Assess current faculty climate, perceptions, and experiences relating to DEI to record benchmark information to guide future improvements *by August, 2024 as measured by its dissemination and analysis. **Suspended.***
- ❖ Action 4: Committee members to serve as impartial advocates for colleagues who experience issues of insensitivity, exclusion, and disrespect *by September 15 2024 as measured by the diversity committee receiving training on campus and compiling existing resources and contact information.- Committee will complete Office of Access, Opportunity and Success “Inclusive Excellence Certificate online program” or complete “Inclusive Excellence” on campus series.*
- ❖ Action 5: Review the P&T document to plan revisions that recognize and value DEI-related service, scholarship, and teaching *by May 2024 as measured by the department's formation of a subcommittee to study the existing P&T standards and propose revisions.*

3) Diversifying the Student Body and Encourage an Inclusive and Equitable Student Experience

Goal #1: To create, implement, and consistently evaluate efforts to improve the diversity of the department's student body.

- ❖ Action 1: Make recommendations to departmental recruiting committee to engage students from underrepresented group at community colleges through campus visits and special events *by September 2023 as measured by the submission of a formal report to the recruitment committee. Completed. Sent letter to recruitment committee March, 2023.*
- ❖ Action 2: Make recommendation to the departmental recruiting committee to utilize pre-established student organizations and events (e.g., MSU Speech and Debate Council, MSU summer camps) to engage underrepresented students *by September 2023 as measured by the submission of a formal report to the recruitment committee.- Completed. Sent letter to recruitment committee March, 2023.*
- ❖ Action 3: Make recommendations to departmental recruiting committee to engage high school students from underrepresented groups *by September 2023 as measured by the submission of a formal report to the recruitment committee. – Completed. Sent letter to recruitment committee March, 2023.*

Goal #2: To create, implement, and consistently evaluate efforts to improve an inclusive and equitable student experience with a specific focus on student retention via creating a supportive climate.

- ❖ Action 1: Assess current student climate, perceptions, and experiences relating to DEI to record benchmark information to guide future improvements *by December 2024 as measured by its dissemination and analysis. **Suspended.***
- ❖ Action 2: Identify professional organizations that are targeted towards connecting and empowering underrepresented students within the mass communication profession to connect our students with mentors and contemplate creating a student-led chapter in the department *by December 2024 as measured by the submission of a formal report. **Not completed.***
- ❖ Action 3: Identify funds for student development initiatives, including grants for DEI efforts, incentives toward student support and retention, and resources to support student experiences by October 2023 as measured by the diversity committee compiling a list of internal and external DEI resources. Completed. DEI resources made available September, 2023 and accessible through Teams folder

Appendices

Appendix A- Strategic Priority 1, Goal #1, Action 1- Baseline of Department's existing strengths and weaknesses. Completed Fall, 2020.

Appendix B. Goal #1, Action 2- Committee Bylaws. Completed Spring, 2021

Appendix C. Goal #1, Action 3- Student Committee Involvement, Completed. Fall, 2024.

Appendix- D. Strategic Priority 2, Goal #1, Action 3- DEI Boilerplate, Completed Fall, 2022.

Appendix E. Goal #2, Action 3- Faculty Questionnaire , Completed Fall 2024

Appendix F. Strategic Priority 3, Goal 1, Actions 1-3- Letter to Recruitment Committee. Completed Spring, 2023.

Appendix G. Goal 2, Action 1- Student Questionnaire

SUMMARY SHEET FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT ON EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DIVERSITY

	EXISTING STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES
Vision, Leadership, and Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual Comm. Faculty members are committed to DIE improvement - The university offers resources and professional development dedicated to DEI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department's Mission Statement & core values don't reflect commitment to DEI - DEI values not represented in internal and external communications
Research, Teaching, Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The University encourages innovation that address DEI in our workplace - Individual Comm. Faculty classroom and outreach practices offer all groups the opportunity to fully engage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department does not regularly and systematically analyze data about DEI - Department does not use program assessments and evaluations to be responsive to DEI needs - Department doesn't actively develop resources for supporting DEI needs - Unaware if staff are familiar with our internal data gathering and analysis resources relevant to DEI
Expanding Pathways for Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department actively values and seeks to hire a diverse staff - Members from underrepresented identity groups are proportionally represented in leadership and management positions? - All members have department support to continue their professional growth and career advancement - Department provides mentoring opportunities - Department provides members with community -based learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department managers and staff do not engage in professional development about DEI related issues
Expanding Pathways for Clients (students, faculty, staff, community members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department seeks to support ALL members in our programs and services - Individual faculty engage in dialogue and study with students about DEI related issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct support is not provided to ensure the needs of our clients from all backgrounds are met - Department (somewhat) provide support for critical transitions and track and measure success - Department does not talk regularly with our clients about DEI issues - Department (somewhat) provides members with info on family-friendly practices
Healthy Climate (living/working spaces, classrooms, other campus spaces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a clear culture of respect, collegiality, dialogue and collaboration in the Dept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department does not regularly assess and provide resources to address workplace climate related to all areas of diversity for all members - Department does not regularly assess the degree to which members feel respected, valued, feel included, etc - Department sponsored events are not physically accessible to participants with disabilities - Issues of insensitivity, exclusion & disrespect are not addressed directly and in a timely fashion - All members do not feel comfortable & welcome to be their full selves

Bylaws for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee MSU Department of Communication Last updated: May 6, 2021

The 2020-2021 ad hoc Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee of the Department of Communication recommends the following structure and policy to create a permanent departmental DEI committee.

Committee Formation and Structure

- The committee will be composed of 5-7 members of the permanent faculty, when possible including broad representation from all concentrations and faculty ranks.
- Each spring, the committee will announce upcoming vacancies to the faculty, and invite nominations. If more nominations than open seats are received, the committee will interview all interested nominees and select who will join the committee.
- Committee members must be members of the full-time, permanent faculty, and should be selected by May 15 for the upcoming fall.
- Committee members serve two-year terms that begin on August 15 and run on the academic year, not the calendar year.
 - Except for the first year of the permanent committee's work (beginning August 15, 2021), when half of the representatives will be elected for 1 year, and half of the representatives will be elected for 2 years, to establish a staggered rotation that will ensure that no more than half of the committee is rotating off in any given year. [determine terms in the fall; current committee continues as first formal committee]
- Committee members on sabbatical can be replaced temporarily by a faculty member selected by the committee.
- The committee will select a new chair at the first meeting of each academic year.
- All votes will be determined by a simple majority.

Committee Charge

- The committee will meet a minimum of twice a semester, and as needed after that.
- The committee will be responsible for working to assess and improve diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to elements of departmental climate including, but not limited to:
 - Curriculum
 - Programming
 - Hiring
 - Student mentoring
 - Faculty mentoring
 - Recruitment and retention of students
 - Recruitment and retention of faculty
 - Promotional materials for the department
- The committee will be responsible for organizing periodic programming (for students and faculty professional development) related to DEI issues.

- The committee will be responsible for serving as diversity advocates on all hiring committees for permanent CO faculty and staff positions to ensure best hiring practices are followed and to assess applicants' knowledge of, accomplishments related to, and plans for the promotion of DEI.
- The committee will assess the departmental climate on a regular basis, frequency to be determined.
- The committee will continue to adhere to and consistently evaluate our Diversity and Inclusion Plan, which includes the following: fostering an understanding of diversity issues in a global society, maintaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student population, advancing a climate free from discrimination and harassment, and promoting diversity and inclusiveness in curricula.
- Committee meetings, discussions, and internal communications are considered confidential. Committee members agree to abiding by norms of mutual respect, trust, sensitivity, and confidentiality.
- The committee members will be expected to participate in ongoing trainings and professional development related to DEI during their service on the committee.

Bylaw Review and Development

- The committee will review and revise (if needed) the bylaws at the last meeting of each academic year.

Proposal on Student Involvement: DEI Committee
Department of Communication
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Drafted November 4, 2024

Action: Establish bylaws for the committee that specifically focus on adding student representation to the DEI Committee and the students' role, commitment, etc. While serving on the committee.

Proposal

1. 1-2 students, upcoming juniors or seniors, will be selected by faculty on the DEI committee by May 15 for the upcoming fall semester.
2. Each spring, the committee will announce upcoming vacancies to students and invite nominations. Faculty on the DEI committee will select 1-2 students (undergraduate and graduate) to serve on the committee for a 1-year term. One student must be an undergraduate. Selections will be made based on nomination material agreed on by the faculty on the DEI committee. Nomination materials, submitted by the student, should at least include a paragraph explaining interest in the position.
3. Student representatives on the DEI Committee may not serve for more than 1 term.
4. Student representatives will have the same privileges as full-time faculty members on the committee. This includes the ability to vote on matters pertaining to the DEI committee.

Preferred Qualifications:

The ideal candidate will have a PhD in a communication field, a strong record of scholarly research and/or creative work, and collegiate teaching experience. Specifically, the ideal candidate would have experience teaching public relations courses with some public relations professional practice. Current active involvement with PR professional organizations, such as PRSA/PRSSA, experience working with a student-led media agency, or obtaining the APR credential is also preferred.

The ideal candidate would be familiar with or have some experience with current technology and trends commonly used in the field, such as Adobe products (e.g., Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, Lightroom, Premiere, Express, Rush, Audition, Dreamweaver), social and digital media planning, tracking, and reporting analytics programs (e.g., Meltwater, Sprout, Cision, Google Analytics), podcasting, photography, and/or videography.

Candidates who have experience in, or the potential for building an enriched, equitable, and diverse scholarly environment are strongly encouraged to apply. A demonstrated commitment to working with students of all backgrounds and with students holding a range of worldviews is valued.

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Communication Department Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey

Dear Fellow Communication Department Colleagues,

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee would like to invite all department members to participate in a survey regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within our Department. We are conducting the survey for the purpose of the ACEJMC accreditation.

The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete and the information will help us better understand perceptions, strengths and any challenges within Communication Department with regard to diversity, equity and inclusion. It will also help shape future efforts of the DEI Committee and the department's renewed commitment and action plans related to antiracism.

We realize that some of these questions may feel sensitive in nature. We want to assure you that responses are all anonymous and will not be linked to names or email addresses. Any findings that we share back with all of you will be aggregated. If there is an instance where an item has a small number of respondents or where respondents could become identifiable, we will not share the data.

As a member of the Communication Department, your perspective is invaluable, and we greatly appreciate your time! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact DEI Committee Chair Melody Fisher (mfisher@comm.msstate.edu) and Heesook Choi (hchoi@comm.msstate.edu).

Sincerely,

The Communication Department Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

Departmental Climate Related to Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

1. Diversity is a spectrum that includes many areas and aspects of identity. Listed below are several domains of identity specifically related to diversity and inclusion. Please rate each based on your perception of the OVERALL climate of inclusion in the Communication Department over the last year (You will have an opportunity to share specific examples that inform your rating later in the survey).

(Very supportive/welcoming – Very unsupportive/unwelcoming)

Race/ethnicity

Cultural background

Gender identity

National origin

Disability status

Sexual orientation

Religious/spiritual beliefs

Immigration status

Age

Marital/family status

Other (please specify below)

2. Please list the item you included for 'other' or any categories of diversity that you feel should be included that were not mentioned above.

3. Please rate your perception of the following aspects of the diversity climate within the Communication Department over the last year.

(Strongly agree – Strongly disagree / Don't know)

Open communication on diversity is encouraged

Being culturally competent/sensitive is valued

There is a Department-wide respect for the expression of diverse beliefs and experiences

Diversity principles are well-publicized

Diverse items/materials are presented throughout the department (e.g., posters, research materials, photographs, etc.)

The Department overall is committed to enhancing the climate for faculty, student, and staff diversity

Top leaders are visibly committed to diversity and inclusion

4. Please rate the following statements related to your own personal experience within the Communication Department over the past year.

(Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)

I feel a sense of duty to support diversity in the Department

I generally feel like my comments are valued and respected

I feel comfortable discussing DEI issues in large group meetings

I feel comfortable discussion DEI issues in my smaller team

I have at least one colleague with whom I feel comfortable discussing multicultural issues or concerns

I feel the need to minimize various characteristics of my culture (e.g., language, dress, traditions) in order to fit in

Recruitment, training, and D&I activities/ideas

5. Please rate your perception of the following items related to recruitment of faculty, staff, and students over the past year.

(Strongly agree – Strongly disagree / Not applicable or Don't know)

There is demonstrated commitment/interest in recruiting diverse faculty members

There is demonstrated commitment/interest in recruiting diverse staff

There is demonstrated commitment/interest to recruit diverse students

Recruitment of faculty comes from diverse sources

Recruitment of staff comes from diverse sources

Recruitment of students comes from diverse sources

When recruiting new faculty or staff, I would consider the department's DEI efforts a strength

6. Please rate the following statements related to training on diversity, inclusion and equity topics over the past year.

(Strongly agree – Strongly disagree / Don't know)

The department offers an adequate number of opportunities for training on topics related diversity, equity and inclusion.

I am interested in participating in more training on topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion

I think training in DEI topics should be required for all staff

I think training in DEI topics should be required for all faculty

I think training in DEI topics should be required for students

7. What do you think the Department is doing well with respect to diversity, equity and inclusion? Please provide any specific situations that you may have witnessed/experienced. (Consider adding examples that support your rating in the first questions here).

8. What do you think the Department could do differently to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion in the department? Please give specific ideas/examples if you have them or any specific situations that you may have witnessed/experienced. (Consider adding examples that support your rating in the first question here). Note: given recent momentum and re-commitment to antiracism and DEI issues, please feel free to note if there is anything you would like to see the department address differently now that there is increased attention to these issues.

9. Please rate your own current self-awareness/knowledge related to topics of equity, diversity and inclusion.
(Brand new/beginner to these topics – I have worked in/studied these topics for years and am very familiar (and still learning))

10. How often do you incorporate discussions about race or racism into your work?
(Never – Always / N/A)

11. For those involved in department education efforts: How often do you incorporate discussions about race and racism into your educational work?
(Never – Always / N/A)

12. For those involved in department research efforts: How often do you incorporate discussions about race and racism into your research project discussions/planning?
(Never – Always / N/A)

Demographics

These items will only be used to categorically describe any trends noted (e.g., differences across roles, genders, etc.). All data collected in this survey is de-identified. However, we will NOT share any results if there is a case where an answer could be easily identifiable (e.g., an N=1 group). That said, only the first two questions (role/concentration) are required: all of the following demographic questions are optional, and also include a 'prefer not to say' option. Although it would greatly help us understand the information shared, what you share is completely up to you and based on your own comfort.

13. Please identify your role within the department

Tenured / Tenure-track faculty

Non-tenure-track faculty

Administrative support staff

14. Please mark the Concentration you work within

Broadcast & Digital Journalism

Communication & Media Studies

Print & Digital Journalism

Public Relations

Theatre

15. Faculty members, please identify your current academic rank/track

Assistant Professor – Tenure Track

Associate or Full Professor – Tenure Track

Instructor

Not Applicable

Prefer Not to Say

16. Gender identity

Female

Male

Transgender

Gender non-binary or Gender non-conforming

Two Spirit

Different identity, not listed above

Prefer Not to Say

17. Sexual orientation

Heterosexual or Straight

Gay or Lesbian

Bisexual

Two Spirit

Not listed above

Prefer Not to Say

18. Race/ethnicity (check all that apply)

Asian or Asian American

Hispanic or Latino/a/x

Black or African American

American Indian or Alaska Native

Middle Eastern

Pacific Islander

Mixed Race

Caucasian/White

Something not listed above

Prefer Not to Say

19. Do you identify as someone with a disability or health impairment?

Yes

No

Prefer Not to Say

20. Age

21. Religious affiliation (check all that apply)

Christian

Jewish

Muslim

Buddhism

Hindu

Agnostic

Atheist

Pagan

Spiritual, but not religious

Prefer Not to Say

Other

22. Which of the following most accurately describes your background?

My parents/legal guardians and I was born in the U.S.

I was born in the U.S., one parent/guardian was not

I was born in the U.S., both parents/guardians were not

Foreign-born naturalized citizen

Permanent legal resident

Foreign born on student visa

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) recipient

Refugee status

Prefer Not to Say

23. How do you generally lean in your political views?

Conservative

Somewhat conservative

Moderate

Somewhat liberal

Liberal

Prefer Not to Say

24. Just for fun... are you originally from Mississippi?

Yes

No

No, but I've lived long enough to consider myself a Mississippian

Thank you for your participation! Please email DEI Committee Chair Melody Fisher or Heesook Choi with any additional ideas, questions, comments, or concerns.

Department of Communication Recruitment Committee:

As the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for the Department of Communication, we are dedicated to fostering a more inclusive environment within our department. In line with this commitment, and as identified in our adopted Diversity Plan, we are writing to propose a collaborative effort to actively engage students from underrepresented groups within our local community colleges, existing student organizations, and high schools during our upcoming recruitment cycle.

We firmly believe that a diverse student body enriches the academic and social experience within our department, fosters a more comprehensive learning environment, and prepares our students to thrive in a multicultural society and global workforce. To ensure that we are attracting the most talented and diverse pool of applicants, we are seeking to implement the following initiatives:

- **Community College Outreach:** Partnering with local community colleges to establish connections with students interested in our department's programs. Hosting information sessions, workshops, and campus visits to encourage a smooth transition to our institution.
 - East Mississippi Community College, Starkville Campus and Scooba campuses
 - Itawamba Community College
 - Northeast Community College
- **Collaboration with Student Organizations:** Cultivating relationships with existing student organizations on campus, particularly those representing underrepresented groups, to encourage their members to consider our department for their academic pursuits. Collaborative events, workshops, and networking opportunities can be organized to facilitate this engagement.
 - Student Organizations advised by the Holmes Cultural Diversity Center include the Black Student Association, Black Voices, Fostering LGBTQ+ Advocacy, Resources and Environments (FLARE), IDEAL Woman, Indigenous Students and Allies Association (ISAA), International Student Advisory Board (ISAB), Latino Student Association, Men of Excellence and the NAACP.
- **High School Engagement:** Establishing partnerships with high schools in the region, particularly those with diverse student populations, to provide information sessions, campus tours, and mentorship programs to encourage early interest in our department's offerings.
 - Starkville High School
 - West Point High School
 - New Hope High School
 - Columbus High School
 - Louisville High School

We believe these efforts will bolster the diversity within our department and create a more inclusive and welcoming academic community that values the unique perspectives and experiences of all students.

We invite the members of the recruiting committee to a meeting to discuss the implementation of these initiatives and how we can collaborate to ensure their success.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We are excited about the prospect of working together to enhance diversity and inclusion within our department's student body.

Communication Department Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey

Dear Communication Department Students,

The Communication Department's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee would like to invite all Communication students to participate in a survey regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within our Department. We are conducting the survey for the purpose of the ACEJMC accreditation. ACEJMC is short for Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, which is responsible for the evaluation of professional journalism and mass communication programs in colleges and universities.

The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete and the information will help us better understand perceptions, strengths and any challenges within Communication Department with regard to diversity, equity and inclusion. It will also help shape future efforts of the DEI Committee and the department's renewed commitment and action plans related to antiracism.

We want to assure you that responses are all anonymous and will not be linked to names or email addresses. Any findings that we share will be aggregated.

As a member of the Communication Department, your perspective is invaluable, and we greatly appreciate your time! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Communication Department DEI Committee Chair Melody Fisher (mfisher@comm.msstate.edu) and Heesook Choi (hchoi@comm.msstate.edu).

Participation in this survey is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you can skip questions or stop participating at any time without penalty. Refusal to take part in the survey will not result in any negative consequences.

If you agree to take the survey, please click on the next button.

Thank you.

Demographics

1. What is your current class standing?

First year student

Second year student

Third year student

Fourth year student

Fifth year (or higher) student

Graduate or professional student

2. What is your current student status?

Full time

Part time

3. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

Yes

No

4. What is your race, as you define it? (select all that apply)

American Indian or Alaska native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

Other: (write in)

5. What is your citizenship or residence status?

U.S. citizen

Permanent U.S. resident, not a citizen

Foreign national or on a student visa

Not a citizen and not a legal resident

Prefer not to say

Other

6. What term best describes your current religious affiliation?

Roman Catholic

Protestant (e.g. Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopalian, Baptist, Presbyterian)

Orthodox Christian

Other Christian (e.g. Mormon, Jehovah's Witness)

Buddhist

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

No religious affiliation (including atheist or agnostic)

Other: (write in)

7. What term best describes your gender identity?

Woman

Man

Genderqueer/gender non-conforming/non-binary

Other: (write in)

8. What term best describes your sexual orientation?

Gay

Lesbian

Heterosexual/Straight

Bisexual

Asexual

Pansexual

Questioning

Other: (write in)

9. Do you consider yourself to have a physical disability or long-term physical health condition? These could include for example: diabetes, epilepsy, arthritis, or any physical impairment, some of which may not be readily apparent.

Yes

No

10. Do you consider yourself to have a mental disability or long-term mental health condition? These could include for example: dyslexia, long-term depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), some of which may not be readily apparent.

Yes

No

General Campus Climate

11. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement.
(Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)

I think faculty pre-judge my abilities based on my identity or background.

12. How would you rate the climate on campus for people who are...?
(Very respectful – Very disrespectful / Unsure)

Affected by learning disabilities (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia)

Affected by mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, bipolar disorder, depression)

Affected by physical disabilities

From non-Christian religions

From Christian religions

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, questioning

Transgender

International students

Politically conservative

Politically liberal

Socioeconomically disadvantaged

Experience with Diversity and Inclusion

13. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.
(Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)

Diversity is reflected in the student body.

Diversity is reflected in the faculty.

Diversity is reflected in administrators.

Diversity is fully embraced within the campus culture.

All students feel welcome and supported at this school, regardless of background or identity.

School leaders are visibly committed to fostering respect for diversity on campus.

I feel like I need to hide some aspects of my identity to fit in.

On campus, there are enough opportunities to gain knowledge about my own cultural community.

14. What diversity topics have you learned most about or become aware of since the beginning of the school year? (select all that apply)

Race and ethnicity

Sexual orientation

Socioeconomic status and class

Political views

Religion and spirituality

Gender identity

Disability

Age

15. How have you primarily learned about or become more aware of diversity? () (Assign number 1-7)

Talking with friends

In class

From my family

Living with diverse roommates

Campus events

On-campus job or volunteer experience

Other: (write in)

16. What actions do you think would improve the Department climate? (select all that apply)

Have more multicultural events

Strengthen consequences for acting disrespectfully

Recruit more individuals from underrepresented or minority groups for leadership, faculty and staff positions

Provide opportunities for more inter-group discussion and interaction

Provide diversity education workshops for faculty and staff

Provide diversity education workshops for students

Incorporate issues of diversity and cross-cultural competence more effectively into the curriculum

Other: (write in)

Actions and Attitudes Related to Diversity

17. Since the beginning of the school year (Fall 2024), how often have you had serious conversations with students who differ from you in...?

Race or ethnicity

Nationality (citizen of another country)

Sexual orientation

Religious beliefs

Political beliefs

Socioeconomic background

18. Since the beginning of the school year (Fall 2024), how often have you socialized with students who differ from you in...?

Race or ethnicity

Nationality (citizen of another country)

Sexual orientation

Religious beliefs

Political beliefs

Socioeconomic background

19. Where do you primarily interact with students whose backgrounds and identities differ from your own?

In class

During student organization meetings or events

Other: (write in)

Department Inclusivity

20. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

(Strongly agree – Strong disagree)

Most students at this Department have values and attitudes different from my own.

I feel like my Department provides enough programs that promote meaningful interactions between students from different cultures.

I have access to at least one faculty or staff member who I trust and who can connect me with information or support I may need, regardless of the issue I face.

I feel like my peers at this Department are too politically correct or sensitive.

I feel like faculty and staff at this Department are too politically correct or sensitive.

21. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

(Strongly agree – Strong disagree)

I feel comfortable sharing my own perspectives and experiences in class.

I feel I have to work harder than other students to be perceived as a good student.

I have been singled out in class because of my identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, religious affiliation, etc.).

In class, I have heard faculty express stereotypes based on identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, religious affiliation, etc.).

22. Do you feel that issues of diversity and inclusion are adequately addressed...? (Yes/No)

In the curriculum (e.g., textbooks)

In class

By faculty

By school leadership

In student organizations

In school communication

In the school mission

23. Just for fun... are you originally from Mississippi?

Yes

No

No, but I've lived long enough to consider myself a Mississippian

Thank you for your participation! Please email DEI Committee Chair Melody Fisher or Heesook Choi with any additional ideas, questions, comments, or concerns.