Graduate College Diversity Report for 2019

The University of Oklahoma Graduate College values the great diversity of our student body and recognizes that the quality of educational experience, research output, and professional preparation is enhanced when our community includes and supports the success of students from all racial and ethnic groups, religious backgrounds, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, and LGBTQ+ identities, as well as international students, military and veteran students, students with disabilities, first-generation students, older students, and pregnant and parenting students.

We undertook the following new diversity and inclusion initiatives in 2019:

1) We changed the criteria for awards and fellowships to promote institutional diversity goals.
2) We realigned the former position of Director of Graduate Student Life to become Director of Graduate Student and Postdoc Retention and Support, with a strong focus on diversity and inclusion competence. We appointed Dr. Rodney Bates, a campus leader in support of students from underrepresented communities, into this position.
3) We undertook a partnership with Dr. Kathleen Shea Smith, Associate Provost for Academic Advising, to expand capacity to provide academic life coaching to graduate students who need support in succeeding academically and thriving while facing life stressors and obstacles.
4) We identified six academic units to pilot a climate survey for graduate students, drafted the survey, and began working with the units on plans to implement the survey in spring 2020.
5) We adopted a practice of considering diversity competence and commitment as a criterion in all hiring decisions in the Graduate College. We built capacity to enhance pursuit of diversity and inclusion goals by streamlining other tasks.
6) We formed a Graduate College Diversity Committee to author a strategic diversity plan for graduate education which we will finalize in 2020.
7) We developed a new intensive orientation program for international students that will be offered in summer 2020.
8) In a collaboration between ETCS, the Department of Communication and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, we developed an intercultural communication program to enhance cultural competence among undergraduate students when dealing with international instructors.
9) We took on administration of the LSAMP and Bridge to the Doctorate programs, which support students from underrepresented groups in pursuing research and graduate education in the STEM disciplines.
10) We offered a new professional development curriculum designed to address the needs of graduate students and postdocs from underrepresented groups.
11) Graduate College representatives served on campus-wide diversity-oriented initiatives including the Bias Response Committee, the Diversity and Inclusivity Council, and the Diversity and Inclusivity Council Executive Committee.
The Graduate College provides the following services to support student success and foster inclusion:

- Our English Training and Certification Service provides workshops and individualized coaching to support international students in improving their English-language skills in both teaching and academic writing.
- We work with academic units to coordinate coaching and mentoring for students who require extra academic support. We connect students to appropriate resources including the Disability Resource Center and the Writing Center.
- Dr. Rodney Bates and the Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate College, Dr. Sherri Irvin (sirvin@ou.edu), serve as a confidential consultants for students who have concerns about their graduate school experience, including concerns about bias or lack of access. They work with students, faculty, staff, administrators and academic units to find effective solutions.
- We work with departments to create a more supportive climate for graduate students.
- We offer workshops on implicit bias and holistic review in graduate admissions, in order to give academic units the tools to effectively recruit and retain graduate students from diverse backgrounds.
- We have made data on graduate student admission and time to degree publicly available so that units can identify and work to rectify gender and racial gaps. ([http://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/about/grad-dashboard](http://www.ou.edu/gradcollege/about/grad-dashboard))
- We offer workshops and programming on topics such as:
  - Career searching, including dedicated sessions on LGBTQ+ and international student issues
  - Gender and salary negotiation
  - Imposter syndrome
  - Stress management and work-life balance
  - Thesis and dissertation writing
  - Handling feedback
  - Establishing positive relationships between students and advisors
  - How faculty can effectively address graduate student mental health issues
- We consult with and support networking among graduate student groups such as the Indigenous Graduate Student Alliance, Black Graduate Student Association, Latinx Graduate Student Association, STEM Inclusion Council, and OutSpace (LGBTQ+).
- We maintain a diverse Graduate Student Life Advisory Council to advise us about graduate student needs and consult about initiatives.
- We administer McNair Graduate Fellowships for incoming doctoral students who were undergraduate McNair Scholars.