

# **Auburn University at Montgomery Strategic Diversity Plan**

## ***Executive Summary***

Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM), the metropolitan campus of Auburn University, was established by an act of the Alabama Legislature in 1967. Located on a 500-acre campus seven miles east of downtown Montgomery, with a student enrollment of approximately 5,000, AUM offers highly respected, accredited academic programs in a challenging but caring college environment. AUM is committed to meeting the diverse needs of its constituencies: students, faculty, staff, and citizens of the Montgomery community, as well as citizens of Alabama. Diversity is integral to the stated mission, culture, and goals of AUM. It enriches the quality of education for all students and provides AUM students with the skills required to function effectively as human beings across multiple cultural boundaries and communities. In order to fully participate in a global environment and strive for excellence, AUM provides an exceptional learning experience in an academic community where diverse talents and ideas can be shared and advanced. The opportunity to work in a collegial atmosphere where individuals are encouraged to develop and share knowledge and skills that are valuable in a global environment drives and inspires faculty, staff, and students at AUM.

In order to create and maintain a campus climate where all feel welcome, AUM has identified six strategic goals and a plan for achieving these goals through the end of the fiscal year 2009-10. The goals and subsequent activities are monitored on an on-going basis, and the plan is reviewed annually and modified based on changing needs and resources. The goals are as follows:

**Goal 1:** Create an Office of Diversity charged with developing, implementing, and monitoring programs to foster an environment and culture of diversity.

**Goal 2:** Conduct systematic evaluations of the campus climate, program effectiveness, and campus statistics and recommend new programs or modifications to existing programs based on evaluation results.

**Goal 3:** Attract, recruit, and retain a diverse faculty and staff of highly qualified individuals.

**Goal 4:** Develop campus-wide cultural and diversity education programs, events, and communication channels to enhance awareness, appreciation, and accessibility.

**Goal 5:** Develop support systems and programs for underrepresented faculty, staff, and students.

**Goal 6:** Explore new and strengthen existing partnerships with regional communities and industries to enhance diversity within and outside the University.

## ***Background***

Auburn University at Montgomery is keenly interested in the inclusion of individuals of all backgrounds within its student body, staff, faculty, and administration in order to enhance the learning experience, research, and impact on the community.<sup>1</sup> It is essential that Auburn University at Montgomery maintain an open and welcoming environment and a faculty and administration diverse with respect to ideas and backgrounds to ensure its students will receive the experience necessary to meet the challenges of a global environment. This can be accomplished through the following actions:

- Develop an institution-wide focus on diversity and an increase in diversity and diversity awareness;
- Foster an environment that welcomes diversity and encourages inclusiveness;
- Establish goals related to the increase in diversity of faculty and administration and continuously monitor the outcome and modify the activities necessary to meet increasing expectations; and
- Develop partnerships, programs, and events partnering with Auburn University, other institutions, and the community that promote and support diversity.

Auburn University at Montgomery developed its Strategic Diversity Plan during the months of February 2007 through July 2007. In February 2007, the Chancellor established a Diversity Commission comprised of individuals representing students, staff, faculty, and administration from diverse backgrounds and areas of campus. Since that time, the Commission worked together, with the input of individuals from the previous Diversity Committee and Diversity Task Force, to develop a strategic plan that would create and maintain a campus climate where diversity serves to advance the

---

<sup>1</sup> In October 2006, Auburn University entered into a Settlement Agreement with the Knight-Sims Plaintiffs. Among the requirements of this agreement was the development and implementation of a Strategic Diversity Plan. Diversity is critical to meeting our educational obligation to our students and having a significant African American presence on campus is part of our diversity effort.

University's mission through a shared goal of success. The work of the Commission has included:

- research of the diversity plans and practices of other universities,
- discussions with individuals representing various groups on campus,
- review of the excellent work of the AUM Diversity Committee and the AUM Diversity Task Force (from which members agreed to serve on the Commission),
- participation in a diversity workshop with representatives from other universities, and
- considerable review and discussion by the Commission regarding the possibilities for the future of Auburn University at Montgomery.

Working in pursuit of the mission of the Commission, *to foster an environment of learning, research, outreach, and service that welcomes, includes, respects, and appreciates diversity of ideas, backgrounds, talents, cultures, and individuals*, and with input of University constituents, the members of the Commission developed a Strategic Diversity Plan that they believe moves Auburn University at Montgomery toward achieving the vision of the University as *a place of possibility where the talents and ideas of diverse individuals advance a shared goal of success*.

The Diversity Commission members included:

Lakecia Harris, Co-Chair	Staff, Housing and Student Life
Karen Riley, Co-Chair	Faculty, Education
Sharon Brooks	Staff, Career Center
Keyonna Daily	Staff, Disability Services
Neville Duarte	Faculty, Management
Matthew Duke	Staff, Center for Government
Tuval Foguel	Faculty, Mathematics
Orea Gonner	Alumnus, Graduate Student
Kathy Gunter	Staff, Continuing Education
Pia Knigge	Faculty, Political Science & Public
Administration	
Nelya McKenzie	Faculty, Communications
Arlene Morris	Faculty, Nursing
Doris Willis	Staff, Human Resources
Jarrett Williams	Undergraduate Student, SGA President
James Wright	Faculty, Education
Paige Zukowski	Staff, University Outreach

**Katherine Jackson, Ex-Officio Vice Chancellor for Outreach**

**The plan was submitted to the following individuals for their review and input:**

**Department Head Council  
Faculty Senate President  
Staff Council President  
Deans  
Senior Staff  
Chancellor**

**In addition, the plan was made available to review by the entire campus by placing it on the website for a two-week period for input and suggestions for additions or modification. Comments were carefully reviewed by the commission.**

## ***Auburn University at Montgomery's Strategic Diversity Plan***

Just as the mission of Auburn University at Montgomery to *foster and exemplify excellence in education through instruction, research, and service* cannot be accomplished through the efforts of a single individual or department, it will not be accomplished through the limited input of individuals with the same background, perspective, and experiences. Diversity, in its broadest sense, serves to enhance the quality and outcome of the effort and experience. As an educational institution committed to serving its students and the community, it is essential that Auburn University at Montgomery expand the experience it offers its students and the research and services it provides to the community. A diverse staff, faculty, and administration can only strengthen these efforts. We define **diversity** broadly as the acceptance, respect, and inclusion of individuals with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, ideas, ethnicity, gender, religions, race, color, age, and experiences. We believe that creating an environment that supports diversity only serves to strengthen our institution and the experience we offer our students.

As a metropolitan campus, the environment of Auburn University at Montgomery is constantly changing. The opportunities to broaden our experiences and the diversity of our student body and staff are consistently growing with the addition of new businesses in the area. This also increases the opportunities for community partnerships and program development in achieving our diversity goals. However, an increase in diversity of the community does not immediately impact the diversity of the faculty and administration. Increasing diversity of the faculty and administration will take a concerted effort. The goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Diversity Plan identify specific actions to increase diversity in this particular area.

In order to be successful in this mission, it is critical that the student leadership, staff, faculty, and administration of Auburn University at Montgomery demonstrate their full

support behind this plan. It has been reviewed and endorsed by numerous University constituents from all areas, confirming their commitment to diversity and their willingness to work toward the accomplishment of this plan.

Finally, please note that this Strategic Diversity Plan was developed in a five-month period with the input of a number of individuals representing many groups and areas on campus. One of the goals of the plan is to learn more about the perceptions of students, staff, faculty, and administration as it relates to diversity through systematic evaluations of the campus climate (see Goal 2). This will be accomplished through a number of actions including conducting a survey of students, staff, and faculty (see Action 3). It is likely that the Strategic Diversity Plan will continue to be refined, during periodic reviews, using information like the information that results from this survey process. This Strategic Diversity Plan is a fluid document that will change during its life in order to respond to the needs of individuals in an ever-changing environment.

## ***Mission and Vision***

The mission and vision of the Diversity Commission and eventually the Office of Diversity were developed by the Diversity Commission in June 2007.

**Mission:** To foster an environment of learning, research, outreach, and service that welcomes, includes, respects, and appreciates diversity of ideas, backgrounds, talents, cultures, and individuals.

**Vision:** Auburn University at Montgomery is a place of possibility where the talents and ideas of diverse individuals advance a shared goal of success.

## ***Diversity Plan Goals and Actions***

**Goal 1:** Create an Office of Diversity charged with developing, implementing, and monitoring programs to foster an environment and culture of diversity.

**Action 1:** Develop and implement a Diversity Response and Communication Team whose members assist faculty, staff, and students with issues related to diversity.

**Deadline:** October 31, 2007

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Team appointed and trained

**Action 2:** Develop a Communication Strategy to share the purpose of the Office of Diversity and the components of the Strategic Diversity Plan.

**Deadline:** October 31, 2007

**Partners:** University Relations, Student Affairs, Faculty Senate, Staff Council

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Strategy established and communicated to University Relations for consideration of use in Action 4

**Action 3:** Develop an Audience/Stakeholder Analysis.

**Deadline:** November 30, 2007

**Partners:** University Relations, Student Affairs

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Analysis complete and ready for use in Action 4

**Action 4:** Develop and implement Initial Communication Plan.

**Deadline:** December 15, 2007

**Partners:** University Relations

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** (1) All students, staff, faculty, and administration made aware of the Strategic Diversity Plan (2) Each employee receives information regarding his/her role

**Action 5:** Appoint a Diversity Liaison for each academic school and in Student Affairs.

**Deadline:** January 1, 2008

**Partners:** Vice Chancellors, Student Affairs, Deans

**Projected Cost:** \$30,000 annually

**Evaluation:** Liaisons appointed, trained, and given task assignments and expectations

**Action 6:** Develop a physical work site for the Office of Diversity.

**Deadline:** January 1, 2008

**Partners:** Vice Chancellors

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** (1) Physical office established (2) Location communicated throughout campus

**Action 7:** Develop a staffing plan for the Office of Diversity.

**Deadline:** March 15, 2008

**Partners:** Human Resources, Vice Chancellors

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Plan identifying projected personnel and associated costs submitted to Chancellor for consideration in the 2008-09 budget

**Action 8:** Implement staffing plan for the Office of Diversity.

**Deadline:** October 1, 2008

**Partners:** Human Resources, Vice Chancellors

**Projected Cost:** cost to be determined based on outcome of Action 7

**Evaluation:** Approved staff positions filled

---

**Goal 2:** Conduct systematic evaluations of the campus climate, program effectiveness, and campus statistics and recommend new programs or modifications to existing programs based on evaluation results.

**Action 1:** Assess the racial, ethnicity, and gender diversity of the administration, faculty, staff, and student body within departments, schools, and overall.

**Deadline:** November 15, 2007

**Partners:** Human Resources, Student Affairs, Institutional Research

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Reports with designated breakdown prepared

**Action 2:** Establish goals to increase underrepresented groups in the student body, staff, faculty, and administration.

**Deadline:** November 30, 2007

**Partners:** Senior Staff, Student Affairs, Human Resources

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Goals established and added to this plan as an attachment

**Action 3:** Conduct a fact-finding assessment to identify and record all internal and external resources, funds, and programs that have a mission or purpose related to diversity or inclusiveness.

**Deadline:** December 15, 2007

**Partners:** Student Affairs, University Relations, Faculty Senate, Human Resources

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Report of all resources available

**Action 4:** Conduct a survey of students, staff, and faculty to assess the climate of the University regarding diversity and inclusiveness and gather opinions regarding program effectiveness and new programs that should be offered.

**Deadline:** November 30, 2007 (purchase); January 31, 2008 (results)

**Partners:** Institutional Research, University Relations

**Projected Cost:** \$15,000

**Evaluation:** (1) Survey purchased/developed and administration plan established (November) (2) Data analyzed and report prepared and submitted to Senior Staff for review (January)

**Action 5:** Review the diversity programs of other academic institutions to identify best practices and programs that would be beneficial for the University. **Deadline:** December 31, 2007

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Report of best practices and programs prepared

**Action 6:** Update the Strategic Diversity Report containing relevant racial and gender composition of all students, staff, faculty, and administration.

**Deadline:** February 1, 2008 (and annually thereafter)

**Partners:** Institutional Research, University Relations

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Data updated on website and available for review

---

**Goal 3:** Attract, recruit, and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and student body of highly qualified individuals.

**Action 1:** Use results from the assessment (see Goal 2, Action 1) and labor statistics to identify areas where increased recruitment efforts of faculty, staff, or students should be targeted and areas where retention has been a problem. **Deadline:** December 15, 2007

**Partners:** Institutional Research, Human Resources

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Areas of weak retention identified on reports prepared in 2.1

**Action 2:** Review the diversity recruitment programs of other academic institutions to identify key components that would be beneficial for the University.

**Deadline:** December 15, 2007

**Partners:** Human Resources, Vice Chancellors

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Report prepared identifying recruitment programs

**Action 3:** Conduct an assessment of areas identified with retention problems (see Action 1) to determine possible causes and solutions.

**Deadline:** February 15, 2008

**Partners:** Student Affairs, Human Resources, Institutional Research, all Vice Chancellors

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Meeting/focus group minutes identifying potential causes and solutions of retention problems maintained

**Action 4:** Develop targeted retention plans for problem areas.

**Deadline:** March 31, 2008

**Partners:** Student Affairs, Human Resources, Institutional Research, all Vice Chancellors

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Retention plans with plan for implementation prepared

**Action 5:** Develop a Diversity Recruitment Plan with components targeting faculty, staff, and students.

**Deadline:** April 15, 2008

**Partners:** Student Affairs, Human Resources, Institutional Research, Vice Chancellors, University Relations

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Diversity Recruitment Plan with costs and timeline submitted to Senior Staff

**Action 6:** An African-American representative will be asked to serve on all search committees for chancellors and all EEO-1 level administrative positions and, to the extent practicable, on all search committees for faculty.

**Deadline:** October 2007

**Partners:** Human Resources

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Documentation of search committee participants

---

**Goal 4:** Develop campus-wide diversity education programs and events to enhance awareness, appreciation, and accessibility.

**Action 1:** Develop a webpage devoted to identifying diversity events, programs, and initiatives with links to the Strategic Diversity Report, Auburn University's website, and other pertinent information related to Auburn University at Montgomery's commitment to diversity to include a statement from the Chancellor and the mission of the Diversity Commission.

**Deadline:** October 1, 2007

**Partners:** University Relations, Institutional Research

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Webpage available for public access

**Action 2:** Develop a diversity training workshop for student leaders of all registered organizations as part of a leadership training program to encourage them to use pooled resources and cross-planning of student organizations and activities.

**Deadline:** November 15, 2007

**Partners:** Student Affairs

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** (1) Work shop developed (2) Training schedule established

**Action 3:** Develop a diversity session to be included in student orientation beginning with incoming students for Spring Semester 2008.

**Deadline:** December 1, 2007

**Partners:** Student Affairs

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** (1) Session included in orientation (2) All incoming students receive the opportunity for diversity training

**Action 4:** Conduct a diversity training workshop for deans and department heads regarding their responsibility to develop and implement programs and monitor processes for the purposes of documenting and promoting diversity efforts.

**Deadline:** January 15, 2008

**Partners:** Vice Chancellors, Department Head Council, Faculty Senate

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** All deans and department heads invited to participate in workshop

**Action 5:** Conduct a diversity training workshop for all instructors of academic and non-academic programs regarding the most effective strategies for teaching a diverse student body.

**Deadline:** February 15, 2008

**Partners:** Student Affairs, Vice Chancellors, Faculty Senate

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** (1) All instructors invited to participate (2) Workshop materials available for use during new instructor orientation

**Action 6:** Conduct a diversity training workshop for all staff regarding the most effective strategies for assisting and working with employees and students from diverse backgrounds.

**Deadline:** February 15, 2008

**Partners:** Human Resources, Staff Council, Student Affairs

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** (1) All staff invited to participate (2) Workshop materials available for use during new employee orientation

**Action 7:** Conduct a review of all facilities, programs, and events to identify barriers and maximize accessibility and availability for faculty, staff, and students.

**Deadline:** May 15, 2008

**Partners:** Student Affairs, Physical Plant, Human Resources, Library, ADA Task Force

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Report documenting weaknesses prepared

**Action 8:** Evaluate diversity content in existing curricula and recommend curricular changes that will result in more culturally diverse academic offerings for all students.

**Deadline:** June 1, 2008

**Partners:** University Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council, School-level Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Report of prospective changes submitted to the Vice Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs

**Action 9:** Develop a Diversity Grant Award Program to award grants to student organizations to provide culturally diverse student programs.

**Deadline:** January 1, 2009

**Partners:** Student Government Association, Student Affairs

**Projected Cost:** cost TBD during year one

**Evaluation:** Program guidelines established and costs projected

---

**Goal 5:** Develop support systems and programs for underrepresented faculty, staff, and students.

**Action 1:** Evaluate the admissions process to identify potential barriers to students of different cultures or who have physical or other limitations. **Deadline:** March 1, 2008

**Partners:** Student Affairs

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Evaluation report with suggested modifications submitted to Senior Staff for review

**Action 2:** Evaluate existing programs that serve a support function for underrepresented students to determine the effectiveness of those programs and identify potential modifications or expansions.

**Deadline:** July 1, 2008

**Partners:** Student Affairs, Institutional Research

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Evaluation report with suggested modifications submitted to Senior Staff for review

**Action 3:** Establish mentoring programs for new faculty or staff at the school, academic department, and nonacademic unit level.

**Deadline:** November 1, 2008

**Partners:** Faculty Senate, Vice Chancellors, Human Resources

**Projected Cost:** cost TBD in year one as step one of the Action

**Evaluation:** Outline of mentoring program and implementation plan available for review

**Action 4:** Create an evaluation plan for periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of mentorship and the mentoring programs.

**Deadline:** December 1, 2008

**Partners:** Faculty Senate, Vice Chancellors, Human Resources

**Projected Cost:** cost TBD in year one as step one of the Action

**Evaluation:** Evaluation plan developed

---

**Goal 6:** Explore new and strengthen existing partnerships with regional communities and industries to enhance diversity within and outside the University.

**Action 1:** Encourage external promotion and communication of diversity programs, events, and initiatives.

**Deadline:** January 31, 2008

**Partners:** University Relations

**Projected Cost:** none

**Evaluation:** Plan for external promotion completed

**Action 2:** Create opportunities for area organizations and businesses to sponsor informative programs for faculty, staff, and students.

**Deadline:** March 2009

**Partners:** Center for Business, University Relations

**Projected Cost:** cost TBD in year one

**Evaluation:** Schedule of proposed activities and invitation list prepared

**Action 3:** Plan and invite faculty, staff, and student leaders from campuses within the metropolitan area to Auburn University at

Montgomery to participate in activities and conferences focused on relevant issues in diversity and inclusion.

**Deadline:** June 2009

**Partners:** University Relations, Student Government Association, Vice Chancellors, Students Affairs

**Projected Cost:** cost TBD in year one

**Evaluation:** Schedule of proposed activities and invitation list prepared

**Action 4:** Plan and invite lawmakers to the Auburn University at Montgomery campus for an annual conference on diversity issues and public policy.

**Deadline:** October 2009

**Partners:** Center for Government, University Relations

**Projected Cost:** cost TBD in year two

**Evaluation:** Conference will be planned and scheduled and invitation list prepared