Message from Dr. Vincent

“A robust strategic plan is the foundation for our future.”

Dear University Community and Friends:

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement has reached an historic milestone by completing our first-ever strategic plan. This process has been deliberate and inclusive, spanning nearly two years since its initial conception, and has laid a strong foundation for the efforts and priorities of the division for the next five years and beyond. Thanks to the hard work of all who were involved in the process, DDCE now boasts not only a mission statement, but also an ambitious vision, seven values we hold in common, and four strategic goal areas to focus our work.

The work of DDCE is central to the mission of The University of Texas at Austin. When President William Powers Jr. created the division in 2007, he cited the importance of academic diversity and campus diversity to effective teaching and learning. Copious research demonstrates that interactions with diverse peers and perspectives through curricular and co-curricular activities can positively affect student educational outcomes, identity development, critical thinking, and leadership skills. President Powers also expressed his support for the service ethic of the university—reflected in the university’s mission—which highlights the need to connect the university’s intellectual resources with the people of Texas.

This is the work that DDCE lives and breathes each day. The strategic plan provides focus and alignment to guide us in four goal areas: contributing to an inclusive campus culture, engaging with the community in innovative partnerships, promoting the academic success of underrepresented students, and conducting and sharing research. Though the university, as well as our state and nation, faces unprecedented challenges in the coming years, I am confident that our planning process has made our division stronger and better prepared to meet the obstacles ahead. I invite you to read the plan and share your thoughts with me. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Gregory J. Vincent

Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement

W. K. Kellogg Professor in Community College Leadership

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When he became president of The University of Texas at Austin in 2006, President William Powers Jr. established diversity as one of the four strategic initiatives for the university. The following year, he aligned diversity and community engagement initiatives across the university and placed them under the auspices of a dynamic, newly created division, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, led by Dr. Gregory J. Vincent. In doing so, President Powers created an exemplar in higher education and a model for other universities to follow.

Now in its fifth year, the division has expanded in critical areas and developed new initiatives to support the core purpose of the university to transform lives for the benefit of society. As the division continues to pursue its crucial work, the strategic plan provides a vision for the future and a blueprint to ensure that DDCE is working thoughtfully and collaboratively to achieve its strategic goals. This plan will guide the division and lead to a future of continued innovation and success.

The foundation for this process, led by Associate Vice President Dr. Sherri L. Sanders, began in February 2010 when a Steering Team composed of senior staff developed the purpose, outcomes, and guiding principles for the process and selected Strategic Planning Team members who would be integral to the development of the strategic plan.

Over the course of 25 scheduled meetings, the Strategic Planning Team led key components of the process, implementing the strategic planning principles in an inclusive manner with on-going division-wide feedback and updates via multiple venues.

The Strategic Planning Team divided into subteams focused on values identification, horizon scan process, and communication. The Values subteam administered two division-wide surveys to first identify the division’s values and then to develop value statements for the division’s seven core values. Using results of five focus groups with 40 DDCE staff members representing every unit and 23 interviews with external stakeholders, the Horizon Scan subteam was able to identify opportunities and threats that could potentially impact the division. The Communications subteam coordinated a division-wide Vision Summit, attended by 75 DDCE staff who shared ideas and provided input about the division’s vision statement.

The Strategic Planning Team’s synthesis of research also became the basis for the vision statement, used to develop the five strategic goals for the division: Campus Culture, Community Engagement, DDCE Internal, Education Pipeline, and Research. In March 2011, 33 members of the Strategy Teams—selected from across the division based on their interest and knowledge of the specific goal subject matter—convened to compose plans for each goal.

By April 2011, the five Strategy Teams had developed objectives, objective implementation plans, methods, instruments, and criteria for each of the division’s strategic goals. At that time, the decision was made to prioritize the work of the DDCE Internal goal of maximizing internal innovation, communication, and collaboration toward increased efficiency and effectiveness. To this end, the work of the DDCE Internal goal was transferred to a newly created Operations Taskforce, led by the Office of the Chief of Staff.

In May 2011, the four remaining Strategy Teams presented their objectives and implementation plans to senior staff and unit directors. Following this presentation, senior staff members obtained feedback from staff within their individual portfolios. This valuable feedback from staff across the division was reviewed by the Strategic Planning Team and addressed by Strategy Teams in subsequent versions of the plan. During the summer of 2011, Strategic Planning Team members reviewed and finalized a plan that was submitted to the Steering Team in September 2011.

Truly a division-wide effort, this bold new plan will guide the division’s staff in the pursuit of their highest aspirations toward achieving academic diversity, campus diversity, and engagement with the community at The University of Texas at Austin.
DDCE Strategic Plan 2011–2016

Mission
The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement advances socially just learning and working environments that foster a culture of excellence through diverse people, ideas, and perspectives. We engage in dynamic community-university partnerships designed to transform our lives.

Vision
The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, as a national model, will strengthen the university’s academic and engagement mission by fostering a culture of excellence and social justice for the success of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community.

Value Statements

DIVERSITY
Demonstrating respect for all individuals and valuing each perspective and experience.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Learning and working collaboratively with community members and organizations to achieve positive change.

INCLUSION
Breaking down barriers to meaningful participation and fostering a sense of belonging.

INTEGRITY
Setting high standards of professional ethics and being consistent in principles, expectations, and actions.

LEADERSHIP
Guiding and inspiring people and organizations toward excellence.

PARTNERSHIPS
Cultivating mutually beneficial internal and external relationships built upon trust, cooperation, and shared responsibility.

SOCIAL JUSTICE
Challenging injustice and working toward an equitable society in which all enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

Strategic Goals

CAMPUS CULTURE
Advance efforts to create an inclusive, accessible, and welcoming culture on campus.

RATIONALE: DDCE cultivates an inclusive campus culture that actively and intentionally engages diverse people, ideas, and perspectives to create a vibrant learning and working environment. DDCE accomplishes this by sustaining and advancing efforts to develop a pervasive culture of inclusion in all facets of life at The University of Texas at Austin. By breaking down barriers and challenging injustices, DDCE transforms campus culture to one in which all individuals draw strength from the university’s collective diversity. This transformation fosters success and a greater sense of belonging and respect.

OBJECTIVE 1: DDCE will have increased workforce and student body access to knowledge of and appreciation for the intention, purpose and reason for implementing current laws and policies regarding inclusion, equity, and accessibility.

• Review federal, state, and local laws and university policies that establish the university’s responsibilities regarding inclusion, equity and accessibility so as to understand the spirit and intent of these laws and policies.
• Review best practices employed by other universities to promote a culture of compliance and inclusion.
• Develop content for existing workforce trainings and orientations, which will work to foster a culture of inclusion and accessibility.
• Provide educational opportunities that convey the intention behind laws and policies.

OBJECTIVE 2: DDCE will have increased diversity initiatives across campus that promote an inclusive, accessible and welcoming culture at UT.

• Implement a comprehensive campus climate assessment system to regularly evaluate the climate at UT Austin as experienced by all sectors (including but not limited to, people of color, women, LGBT communities, people with disabilities,
and people from disadvantaged socio-economic status, working families and non-traditional students) of the campus community.

- Identify and catalog all diversity initiatives and collaborations currently on campus; and, develop Internet portal to display diversity initiatives on campus.
- Engage a campus-wide committee in the development, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive plan that advances university-wide diversity initiatives.
- Establish long-term sustainable mechanisms for institutionalizing cross-community building opportunities that enhance the likelihood of individual development beyond tolerance and acceptance to inclusion and social justice advocacy.
- Provide educational opportunities that promote a greater understanding of social justice issues to the campus community.
- Utilize Campus Climate Response Team (CCRT) as a mechanism that develops, tracks and implements responses to campus climate incidents that impact the UT Austin community and promotes the importance of a more inclusive, accessible and welcoming community (i.e. cultivating a zero-tolerance for bias culture at UT).

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

_Cultivate mutually beneficial community-university partnerships that further the mission of the university to serve Texas and beyond with an emphasis on historically and currently underserved communities._

**RATIONALE:** The University of Texas at Austin fulfills its core mission of serving the people of Texas as a catalyst for positive social change. DDCE works to accomplish this goal by leveraging the university’s intellectual resources to cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships that address significant issues in Texas communities. DDCE reaches beyond the campus walls and contributes to a synergy among community engagement initiatives that extend from the academic colleges, schools, and administrative units to community members and organizations. The resulting collaborative partnerships lead to dynamic community-university initiatives that promote equity, access and social justice.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** DDCE will be the major portal of information for campus-wide community engagement initiatives.

- Convene workgroup to continue the efforts initiated with the launch of the community engagement web portal.
- Develop relationship management system in which information collected from university colleges, schools, and units (CSUs) (including, but not limited to, community engagement initiative information, staff contact for initiative, geographic area or population served, number of community members served) is housed.
- Develop protocol for ongoing transfer of information, including catalog of all vice presidential and unit partnerships and collaborations, from relationship management system to community engagement portal site.
- Implement quality control systems to ensure that community engagement initiative information and community engagement web portal content are updated and reliable.
- Coordinate with University Communications to develop additional web portal attributes and to enhance existing tracking system on the community engagement web portal to capture internal and external inquiries.
- Develop communications plan for community engagement web portal.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** DDCE will strengthen and increase the number and scope of mutually enriching community-university partnerships that provide opportunities for connections between the intellectual resources of the university and the priorities of the community.

- Convene a Community Engagement Taskforce (CET), including representatives from each DDCE unit, to define, inventory, and expand community and university partnerships.
- Establish guidelines for partnership evaluation and stewardship system that is best able to measure the effectiveness or mutual benefit of the partnership as well as the roles of individual units in each partnership.
- Create process for receiving and making recommendations for future community engagement partnerships, to be used to develop and implement an outreach plan for potential partners.
- Develop a print and an online application form for formalizing a partnership request with community engagement portfolio.
- Analyze changes in partnerships to recommend continued growth if appropriate.
• Implement newly developed community engagement partnership plan division-wide including review, documentation, evaluation/assessment, outreach plans and implementation, and stewardship processes.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** DDCE will have a comprehensive community relations program.

- Reaffirm university commitment to repairing fragmented relationships with historically and currently underserved communities.
- Administer questionnaire to community partners and other community members to assess current sentiment about the university.
- Seek recommendations from the DDCE Austin Community Advisory Council on ways to improve community access to university resources and assess perceived barriers to access.
- Use feedback to create an action plan for making university resources more accessible to the community.
- Develop a “Good Neighbor” subcommittee within the DDCE Austin Community Advisory Council consisting of students, local residents and business owners in campus communities to help improve communication between these groups.
- Hold open forums in the community to discuss community-university relations.
- Hold quarterly events in the Austin community to foster positive relationships.
- Use data collected from community partnerships to develop a statewide model for community-university partnerships.

**EDUCATION PIPELINE**

*Create a successful pathway for first-generation and underrepresented students as they progress from pre-K through graduate and professional school.*

**RATIONALE:** The growing number of children from underrepresented groups who are entering the Texas educational pipeline deserve both the opportunity to enroll in college and the chance to thrive there. To this end, DDCE is committed to increasing the success of students throughout the pre-K-graduate/professional school pipeline. DDCE’s pre-college initiatives reach communities statewide to foster a culture of academic success for students from first-generation or low-income families or who attend high schools that are underrepresented in higher education. Some initiatives offer incentives and support for academic success, while others provide dual high school and college credit, tutoring, mentoring and interactive conversations with families about what it takes for students to be ready for college. Once these students are enrolled in The University of Texas at Austin, DDCE programs offer the academic support, mentoring and tutoring they need to succeed at a tier-one university, obtain research experience, and gain exposure to graduate school. Together these aligned initiatives provide a continuous pathway for students to achieve their highest postsecondary goals.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** DDCE will have alignment of services among the division’s pre-college and college units.

- Create a workgroup, the DDCE Pipeline Council, to identify and align all pre-college and college units in the division.
- Leverage support across programs and manage overlap/duplication of services through partnerships that include but are not limited to Office of Admissions, Sanger Learning Center, UT Counseling and Mental Health Center, College of Natural Sciences, and participating school districts.
- Create an annual pipeline day-long retreat to design the alignment process for all pre-college and college units in the division.
- Create criteria to establish benchmarks for alignment.
- Develop a research-based conceptual model to illustrate the process of serving students through transitional points within the DDCE pipeline to ensure alignment.
- Expand the middle school component to bridge the existing gap between elementary and secondary pre-college units in the division.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** DDCE will solidify a pipeline to continuously serve eligible students within the division’s full continuum of pre-college and college success programs and opportunities.

- Develop a coordinated recruitment plan through the DDCE Pipeline Council, based on the capacity of the division’s pre-college and college units.
- Create an annual pipeline day-long retreat to enhance staff knowledge of best practices among programs serving first-generation and low-income college students.
- Create or purchase an automatic admission and tracking system for eligible students to matriculate through pre-college and college units.
OBJECTIVE 3: DDCE will increase the retention rate of eligible students who participate in the division’s pipeline programs, with an emphasis on matriculation to and enrollment at The University of Texas at Austin.

- Develop a coordinated retention plan through the DDCE Pipeline Council.
- Engage pre-college and college unit staff with student participants and appropriate school partners on a consistent basis.
- Provide university campus opportunities to encourage first-generation/underrepresented students’ matriculation through higher education.

RESEARCH

Serve as a national model for the creation of knowledge about and best practices for diversity and community engagement through innovative scholarship, teaching, policy development, programs, and services.

RATIONALE: Expanding knowledge and inspiring discovery are at the heart of The University of Texas at Austin, which leads the nation in producing intrepid researchers and innovative scholars whose impact resonates through Texas and beyond. DDCE advances the university’s excellence in research by collecting and disseminating vast knowledge about the value of academic and campus diversity and community engagement. DDCE also supports engaged scholarship with community roots, encourages research in campus and community learning and working environments, and implements best practices toward achieving academic and campus diversity. By sharing its knowledge—whether by publishing in journals and books, engaging in policy discussions, or presenting findings to local groups or audiences far and wide—DDCE provides solutions to critical issues in higher education and exerts a positive impact on students, faculty, staff, policymakers and communities everywhere.

OBJECTIVE 1: There will be an increase in research-related activities across all DDCE units and departments.

- Appoint one-year planning committee consisting of DDCE faculty and staff who have expertise in research, methodologies, policy, scholarship, instructional design, and programming that collects existing data regarding innovative scholarship, teaching, policy development, programs, and services (“research”).
- Articulate functions of a sustainable research committee/positions to support division-wide research efforts as consultants.
- Establish strategic plan per unit for research activities, mindful of each unit’s work.
- Establish complete working research agenda per unit.
- Determine core data to be gathered from all units to demonstrate units’ effectiveness and develop publications of these data in various formats, including, but not limited to, peer reviewed articles, book chapters, technical papers or reports, policy briefs, foundation papers, and letters of inquiry to potential funders, for relevant audiences affected by units’ work.
- Support data collection and analysis conducted within each DDCE unit and creation of research documents for audiences chosen by unit.
- Create database of potential internal and external outlets for research.
- Create annual report on DDCE unit research-related efforts.
- Undertake self-assessments regarding consultations and services provided.

OBJECTIVE 2: Each DDCE unit/program will increase the sharing of research-related knowledge both internally and externally.

- Identify completed research within each DDCE unit.
- Identify audiences and outlets that research seeks to reach.
- Establish a new entity or expand the capacity of an existing unit to serve as a clearinghouse that stores, tracks, and publicly distributes DDCE research in an accessible manner.
- Make efforts to align the resources stored in clearinghouse so that DDCE staff can easily utilize the data shared across all units.
- Disseminate core unit data to relevant audiences affected by units’ work.
- Disseminate chosen unit data to other relevant audiences.
- Identify members in each DDCE unit that will be responsible for updating and making research accessible through the clearinghouse.
Thank you to the staff members who served on the following teams during the strategic planning process.

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Access the full Strategic Plan at:  
ddce.utexas.edu/2016

Visit the DDCE at:  
www.utexas.edu/diversity/

OCT 2012

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
DIVISION OF DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT