

Progress on Equity

In the University Honors Program

April 26, 2016

Accomplished in 2015-2016 Academic Year

General

- Entire staff attended Cultural Competency Conferences
- Staff that reads applications participated in an implicit biases training workshop with Emily Gullickson of OMA
- Staff and Faculty Fellows were encouraged to attend OMA events throughout the semester, attend Safe Zone training (if they had not already done so), and add gender pronouns to their email signatures
- Gathered and reviewed data related to diversity and equity to better inform our recruitment, admissions, and advising processes

Recruitment

- Outreach for Incoming Freshmen
 - Calling and emailing high potential students of color to encourage them to apply to Honors
 - Offering essay- and resume-writing workshops in underserved schools to remove barriers to applying (2 so far, working on 5-7 total for coming year)
 - Promote the Honors Program at the Office of Admissions' events like Destination KU and leadership symposiums for first-generation and multicultural students
 - Expanding the number of high schools visited to increase pool of applicants (adding ~7 schools)
- Outreach for Current KU Students/Transfer Students
 - Offering on-campus Info Sessions to current KU students to encourage them to apply
 - Reaching out to Hixon Scholars, MSP students, Kaufmann Scholars, and McNair Scholars at the end of each semester to encourage them to apply
 - Creation of a Faculty Nomination form to be promoted broadly
- Admitted Students
 - Writing personal notes to all admitted students from underrepresented backgrounds encouraging them to come to KU
 - During campus visits, taking students from underrepresented backgrounds out to lunch
- Website
 - Changed language on the home page and admission pages to be less exclusive, less focused on standardized testing and GPA, and more focused on recruiting engaged learners.
 - Revised Apply section of the website to make the application process clearer for current/transfer students

Admissions

- In choosing the 2016 admissions essay questions, we spent a good deal of time choosing three questions that would not be intimidating to applicants and would appeal to students with different interests and talents
- Added a "What else would you like us to know about you?" section to both our incoming freshmen and current/transfer student applications
- Revised the Current KU/Transfer Student Application to elicit more thorough resumes and essays and removed optional ACT/SAT score and high school GPA sections

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Courses

- Special focus on recruiting a more diverse pool of seminar instructors and assistants for Fall 2016
- Diversity and inclusion training was offered for all freshman seminar instructors with the help of OMA, and information for creating inclusive classrooms was included on Faculty section of website
- Diversity and inclusion training offered for Fall 2016 student seminar assistants
- Generated an inclusion statement for Honors faculty to include in their syllabi
- Working with OMA to offer seminars in the Sabatini MRC

Advising

(Most advisors are also Freshman Seminar instructors, so advisors also had access to the training listed above in Courses.)

- Expanding advisor awareness of campus opportunities and resources to better serve first-generation and multicultural students
- Encouraging advisors to take Implicit Bias Tests

Communication with Current Students

- Worked to consistently include OMA and Emily Taylor Center events in the Honors Weekly newsletter and to share them regularly on Twitter
- Initiated a rebranding process to better define our program culture--increasing our focus on engaged learning, intellectual exploration, etc., decreasing focus on prestige

Programming

- Perspectives faculty panel events allowed diverse panels of faculty to discuss equity issues with the larger KU community (Equity in Higher Education in March, Feminism in Pop Music in April)

National Scholarships

- Continuing efforts to distinguish that the Office of National Fellowships & Scholarships' services are available to ALL KU undergraduates
 - Advertising office hours, info sessions, and application deadlines through the KU calendar
 - Hosting info sessions away from Nunemaker Center (Watson Library and Sabatini MRC)
 - Continuing outreach to all KU students regarding programs like Phi Beta Kappa, University Scholars, and Global Scholars
- Reached out to McNair program and the faculty coordinators of the Multicultural Scholars to keep them informed of info sessions, including targeted preview sessions for the new cohort of McNair Scholars this summer

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Planned for Fall 2016

Recruitment

- Working on developing digital means of interacting with prospective students (Skype, webinars, etc.)
- Continue to lobby the Offices of Admission and Financial Aid to get additional resources to fund students from underrepresented groups
- Promoting Faculty Nomination form broadly but specifically to faculty and staff of color
- Developing a series of Honors student profiles for our website to highlight the diversity of interests, majors, activities, and backgrounds of Honors students on campus

Admission

- Continue researching different admissions evaluation criteria (portfolios, interviews, etc.)

Communication with Current Students

- Better connect with student groups on campus to promote public events, particularly with Spectrum, Mosaic, and other groups representing underrepresented populations on campus

Curriculum

- Launch of new curriculum that will fold in cultural competency into its reflection questions AND include a social justice/cultural competency experiential learning option

Programming

- Collaborating with other units (Office of First-Year Experience, Office of Multicultural Affairs, etc.) to create programming around the Common Book
- Working on a program to welcome students to campus one day early, during which we'll include discussions of identity and cultural competency along with community-building exercises
- Collaborating with other units on campus to create more public events to serve the larger KU community