



COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON

MASTER OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION

MPA PROGRAM DIVERSITY PLAN

June 2020

Our Commitment to Anti-Racism and Social Justice

In the wake of the horrific death of George Floyd and the hundreds of Black lives that have been unnecessarily lost to unchecked and unquestioned structural racism, the MPA Program at the College of Charleston reaffirms its commitment to explore aspects of underlying institutional racism and unconscious bias, and to do so with intent to dismantle systems of oppression and policies that perpetuate injustice. Our colleagues in the Department of Religious Studies reminded us that we study and teach in the “Holy City”, a city with a history of violence as well as a history of resistance and resilience. They called out that we study and teach in a port city where almost half of all enslaved Africans brought to British North America first arrived; a city governed by apartheid until just half a century ago. And they specifically named that we study and teach in a city where racial disparity and segregation continue to define education, transportation, housing, and policing for all who live here. Consequently, they reminded us of our obligation to:

- ◆ *Responsibly and continuously learn about and disrupt the role of policy and bureaucratic decision making in reinforcing systems of white supremacy and oppression that dehumanize people of color, and Black people in particular.*
- ◆ *Understand how race has shaped and continues to shape decision making, as well as our obligation to integrate the study of racialization into our scholarship, our curriculum, and our training of students.*
- ◆ *Develop new courses and revise existing courses in ways that deliberately attack and dismantle systems of cultural, ethnic, and racial oppression.*
- ◆ *Revise our core curriculum to include a class that will expose students to the rich and complex history of the intersections of race, class, and power that are foundational to the field of public administration.*
- ◆ *Lift up the work of Black scholars of public administration and related fields in our courses and, when possible to do so, commit to inviting Black scholars as well as practitioners and public sector leaders to campus as guest speakers.*
- ◆ *Cultivate anti-racist and feminist classrooms where we invite our students and pledge ourselves to think critically about our own identities, power, and the ways both shape the production of knowledge within and outside the classroom.*
- ◆ *Contribute to efforts on campus and in the Charleston community to illuminate and work to dismantle our College, and our department's, complicity in enslavement, segregation, and the persistence of white supremacy in the Lowcountry and in the broader field of public administration.*

This is a living document that will continue to evolve as, together, we take intentional action and continually engage in learning and dialog with our community on issues of racial justice and equity.



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Mission Statement:

Our mission is to prepare public service leaders. Upon graduation, our students will have the ability to think critically and creatively about public issues, the dedication and capacity to serve a diverse community and the skills to enter a professional position in a public organization. To accomplish our mission, our program provides the following:

- A rigorous core curriculum that combines applied learning with an examination of the theoretical underpinnings of public service and provides concentrated areas of study in arts management, environmental policy, nonprofit management, and urban and regional planning
- An environment that nurtures a commitment to public service;
- Opportunities to support collaboration and the creation of partnerships among communities and public service organiza-

Diversity in the MPA Program:

The MPA Program is committed to creating and promoting a supportive environment for all students, staff, and faculty. We are focused on creating meaningful and inclusive diversity initiatives that support our underrepresented students, faculty, staff, and community partners; our work in the area of diversity and inclusion will center on changing the balance of power between people and institutions, opening up possibilities for true transformative change. In this way, not only are we challenging the status quo, we are creating the conditions under which those who have been historically marginalized have indispensable agency in their relationship with the program, the college, and all who serve as advocates. The MPA program's location in Charleston, South Carolina provides a unique context to achieve goals related to increasing the number of racial and ethnic minorities in the program. Our program will recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students; foster an inclusive learning and working environment and provide the support necessary for their success; and effectively incorporate diversity matters into experiential learning opportunities and program-level activities.

MPA PROGRAM DIVERSITY GOALS:

Recruiting and Retention

Goal 1: Recruit and retain greater numbers of qualified racially/ethnically diverse students and faculty

Initiatives:

- ◆ Expand recruitment efforts to include more Black undergraduates students
- ◆ Visit undergraduate classes at CofC and neighboring colleges and universities that attract Black students and focus on social and racial justice
- ◆ Advertise MPA program to mid-level working professionals of color in the public administration field
- ◆ Ensure students of color have employment opportunities through and beyond program completion
- ◆ Create a climate where students of color can be authentic
- ◆ Assure faculty job postings explicitly state the program's desire to seek diverse faculty
- ◆ Actively search for Black Ph.D. candidates with backgrounds in diversity and social justice
- ◆ Develop programming and promotional activities that highlight faculty research and public sector engagement

Assessment:

1. Analyze the diversity of applicant and admission pools in partnership with the campus partners
2. Monitor the interactions of postings with job banks that target racially and ethnically diverse faculty
3. Use current exit survey for graduating students to gather job opportunity information
4. Conduct a program climate survey

Curriculum, Experiential Opportunities, and Programming

Goal 2: Integrate diversity into the curriculum, in program activities, and in experiential learning opportunities

Initiatives:

- ◆ Encourage faculty to include authors who write from the perspective of the topics and issues being explored in class (i.e., those authors from marginalized identities)
- ◆ Share materials for faculty to use in the classroom that will engage students in diversity and social justice discussions
- ◆ Offer one diversity and/or social justice related elective course annually
- ◆ Host annual community conversations that focus on diversity and social justice
- ◆ Organize and advertise diversity and social justice opportunities to students and faculty members each semester
- ◆ Invite diverse alumni and public administrators as speakers and mentors
- ◆ Work with undergraduate groups that represent diverse communities and co-sponsor activities that promote diversity

Assessment:

1. Implement a diversity audit
2. Review internship placements and project development topics
3. Evaluate the number of program-sponsored diversity-related events
4. Review student feedback regarding their attendance at professional conferences and other professional development opportunities

Inclusive Environment

Goal 3: Nurture a positive and supportive environment for women and those from diverse racial, ethnic, and marginalized identity groups

Initiatives:

- ◆ Highlight Black public administrators, students, faculty, an alumni in our biweekly newsletter
- ◆ Elicit the meaningful participation of faculty and staff who have professional backgrounds and expertise in topics of diversity, inclusion, and access
- ◆ Develop a mentoring or buddy system for 1st and 2nd year students, and create programming that allows pre-service students opportunities to interact with our in-service Executive MPA students
- ◆ Encourage faculty to engage students participation and co-authorship in research and publications
- ◆ Engage departments and programs focused on racial justice to interact with underrepresented students in the MPA program
- ◆ Advertise professional development opportunities and job opportunities that have an expressed commitment to the development of women and minorities for students, alumni, faculty and staff

Assessment:

1. Analyze the number and demographics of participants in conferences and events (refer to travel authorization documents)
2. Monitor posts, newsletters, and blogs for consistent publishing of diversity topics

MPA PROGRAM DIVERSITY GOALS:

Goal 1: Recruit and retain greater numbers of qualified racially/ethnically diverse students and faculty

Action Step 1: Recruit qualified racially and ethnically diverse students

Action Step 2: Retain qualified racially and ethnically diverse students

Action Step 3: Recruit qualified racially and ethnically diverse faculty

Action Step 4: Retain qualified racially and ethnically diverse faculty

Initiatives for Implementation

- ◆ Expand the scope of recruitment to include more undergraduate students who represent racial and ethnic marginalized identity groups by visiting and recruiting with colleges that graduate predominately African-American, Latino, and Native American students
- ◆ Set up classroom visits in undergraduate courses at CofC and neighboring colleges and universities that attract Black students and focus on racial and social justice, (e.g., African American studies) to advertise and recruit for the MPA Program
- ◆ Advertise MPA program and Executive Format to mid-level working professionals of color in the public administration field by connecting with local government administrators and non-profit organizations to engage in job fairs or information sessions, or direct outreach to employees
- ◆ Maintain close contact with the Graduate School about scholarship opportunities, and ensure students of color have employment opportunities through and beyond program completion by connecting students with organizations and agencies that hire minorities and serve marginalized communities
- ◆ Create a climate where students of color can be authentic and encouraged by engaging their voices in programmatic decisions through annual community conversations and workshops
- ◆ Assure faculty job postings explicitly state the program's desire to seek faculty with "the skills necessary to teach and develop courses that incorporate issues of equity and justice, ethnic diversity, and race for both the undergraduate and graduate programs"
- ◆ All faculty positions will be posted with job banks that target racially and ethnically diverse faculty and at conferences, in magazines, and on websites that have an explicitly racially diverse audience
- ◆ Actively and intentionally search for PhD candidates that represent a diverse background and have expressed research interests in social justice issues, diversity matters, and have a demonstrated commitment to improving access to higher education for students who represent historically oppressed and marginalized identities with targeted outreach to institutions that have graduated African American, Latino, and Native American candidates
- ◆ Develop programmatic and promotional activities that highlight faculty research and public sector engagement (e.g., Brown Bags or Newsletter Spotlights)
- ◆ Invite faculty to make topics of personal identity a regular part of faculty meetings
- ◆ Organize and implement an annual social event that brings faculty and students together outside of the classroom to engage with public administration professionals of color
- ◆ Create and encourage professional development opportunities for faculty members by supporting opportunities to join professional organizations, attend and present at conferences, and offer trainings and workshops

MPA PROGRAM DIVERSITY GOALS:

Goal 2: Integrate diversity into the curriculum, in program activities, and in experiential learning opportunities

Action Step 1: Integrate diversity into the curriculum of the program

Action Step 2: Integrate diversity into program activities

Action Step 3: Integrate diversity into experiential learning opportunities

Initiatives for Implementation

- ◆ Encourage faculty to include authors who write from the perspective of the topics and issues being explored in class (i.e., those authors from marginalized identities) and share materials that explore topics of racial and social justice
- ◆ Share materials for faculty to use in the classroom that will engage students in diversity and social justice activities and discussions
- ◆ Offer one diversity and/or social justice related elective course annually
- ◆ Assure time is dedicated to faculty discussion about weaving the topics of diversity and social justice throughout the core courses during the 2020-2021 academic year

- ◆ Host annual community conversations that focus on diversity and social justice to elicit ideas and suggestions from faculty and students on programmatic innovation
- ◆ Organize and advertise diversity and social justice opportunities (e.g., conferences, workshops, training sessions, information sessions, open positions) to the students and faculty members each semester
- ◆ Invite diverse alumni and public administrators as speakers and mentors.
- ◆ Work more closely with undergraduate groups that represent diverse communities to co-sponsor activities and speakers that feature the promotion of diversity
- ◆ Host events that encourage students to share their experiences (e.g., internships, project work) with the rest of the student body

- ◆ Seek out internships for students that will encourage a focus on issues related to diversity in the public, nonprofit and private sectors.
- ◆ Develop relationships with organization and city agencies that serve underrepresented communities to create projects for the MPA Community Assistance Program
- ◆ Engage graduate students in projects and programming that focuses on marginalized communities in Charleston (e.g., Habitat Build, Food Pantry sorting)

MPA PROGRAM DIVERSITY GOALS:

Goal 3: Nurture a positive and supportive environment for women and those from diverse racial, ethnic, and marginalized identity groups

Action Step 1: Nurture a positive environment through inclusive policies, practices, and recognition for women and those from diverse racial, ethnic, and marginalized identity groups

Action Step 2: Nurture a supportive and engaging environment that gives agency and voice to women and those from diverse racial, ethnic, and marginalized identity groups

Initiatives for Implementation

- ◆ Highlight Black public administrators, students, faculty, and alumni in our biweekly newsletter
- ◆ Continue to recruit diverse Advisory Committee Members
- ◆ Elicit the meaningful participation of faculty and staff who have a professional background and expertise in topics of diversity, inclusion, and access
- ◆ Organize diversity trainings for MPA faculty, staff, and students

- ◆ Develop a mentoring or buddy system for 1st and 2nd year students
- ◆ Create programming that allows pre-service students opportunities to interact with our in-service Executive MPA students
- ◆ Encourage faculty to engage student participation and co-authorship in research and publications
- ◆ Engage departments and programs focused on racial justice to interact with underrepresented students in the MPA program
- ◆ Advertise professional development opportunities and job opportunities that have an expressed commitment to the development of women and minorities for students, alumni, faculty and staff