Cockrell School of Engineering
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
2020-2021 Annual Report
Executive Summary

The mission of the Cockrell School of Engineering is to: educate leaders who think big and think creatively; pursue innovative solutions through research, industry partnerships and a commitment to fostering entrepreneurship; encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration; and provide a supportive and inclusive environment for all members of our community. The diversity, equity and inclusion efforts of the school are driven by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan, a “living” document with goals specific to the community in the Cockrell School. The DEI plan was born out of initial conversations in 2015, revised into a draft plan in 2017, publicly shared in 2019 and revised and refined during the 2019-2020 academic year.

The current Cockrell School Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan (CSE DEI Plan) is structured around six outcomes and an associated set of cross-cutting efforts. Each of the six outcomes is further associated with a set of concrete implementation strategies associated with metrics. The six outcomes are:

**Outcome 1.** Foster an inclusive school climate that supports and encourages community members and provides a strong sense of value and belonging among all students, faculty, and staff.

**Outcome 2.** Attract diverse applicants for faculty, student, staff, and administrator roles.

**Outcome 3.** Increase diversity and the community’s awareness of diversity among faculty, students, staff, and administrators.

**Outcome 4.** Retain and recognize diverse faculty, staff, and administrators.

**Outcome 5.** Improve student experiences, success, retention, graduation rates, and sense of belonging.

**Outcome 6.** Support the development of the full potential of each member of the community.

This annual report details efforts in 2020-2021 towards addressing the goals and initiatives outlined in the CSE DEI Plan. The report includes data about diversity, equity and inclusion in the Cockrell School, including community demographics, graduation and retention rates for undergraduate and graduate students, and insights from historical climate surveys.

Most of this report is structured in the same way as the CSE DEI Plan, with updates associated with each of the plan’s outcomes as well as with the cross-cutting objectives. In addition, this report also highlights significant efforts in five areas: (1) the delivery of a new (to be annual) climate survey of all members of the Cockrell School community; (2) collaboration with Cockrell School students to address the June 2020 “Demands for Change in the Cockrell School” from the UT Austin Chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE); (3) the creation of a new summer camp in collaboration with UT’s Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDE); (4) the initiation of monthly “DEI Updates” as conversation starters and learning opportunities for the entire Cockrell School community; and (5) updates to the expectations for faculty promotion and tenure to capture the importance of work in the DEI Space.

Nearly every activity during the 2020-2021 academic year was shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, and this hindered efforts in some areas, surprisingly assisted in others as we were able to engage with more audiences remotely, and certainly required adapting almost every activity and interaction. The Cockrell School demonstrated extreme resilience and flexibility, and we close the academic year in a strong position to continue our work on DEI.

Christine Julien, August 2021
Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Cockrell School of Engineering
# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary**  
2

**Table of Contents**  
3

**Overview**  
4  
- History of the CSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan  
4  
- Cockrell School Diversity -- By the Numbers  
5

**Highlighted Activities**  
8  
- Climate Survey  
8  
- Responding to Student Leaders’ Demands from June 2020  
8  
- Longhorn Engineering Summer Camp  
9  
- DEI Monthly Updates  
9  
- ACT Projects for DEI Initiatives  
9  
- Updating Faculty Expectations  
10

**Details in the Context of the CSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan**  
10  
- Cross-Cutting Implementation Strategies  
10  
- Outcome 1 - Fostering an inclusive climate  
11  
- Outcome 2 - Creating diverse pipelines  
12  
- Outcome 3 - Increasing community diversity and awareness  
15  
- Outcome 4 - Retaining and recognizing diverse community members  
16  
- Outcome 5 - Improving the student experience  
16  
- Outcome 6 - Enabling individual and community success  
17

**Plans for 2021-2022**  
19

**Conclusions**  
20

**Appendix A - Cockrell School Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan**  
21

**Appendix B - Data and Charts**  
24

**Appendix C - Graduate Student Recruiting Handout**  
27

**Appendix D - Faculty Recruiting Handout**  
29
Overview

The mission of the Cockrell School of Engineering is to: educate leaders who think big and think creatively; pursue innovative solutions through research, industry partnerships and a commitment to fostering entrepreneurship; encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration; and provide a supportive and inclusive environment for all members of our community.

History of the CSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

Diversity, equity and inclusion impact all facets of the university, from the classroom, to research, to the work environment. A wide range of perspectives and experiences is a key strength of the university, and the campus actively supports a free exchange of ideas alongside thoughtful considerations of differences. UT's University Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (UDIAP), collaboratively developed in 2016-2017 by students, faculty and administrators, is regularly reviewed and updated. Since its adoption in Spring 2017, every college, school and unit has been involved in making changes and embracing best practices to foster open, positive and inclusive environments for everyone. At the University-level, DEI efforts are supported by the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) and the Vice Provost for Diversity. In April 2021, the university approved its first Strategic Plan for Faculty Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity, which has informed and will continue to inform efforts within the Cockrell School of Engineering.

In concert with the broader University efforts, the Cockrell School also developed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan that is specific to both the goals and community in the Cockrell School. The school's DEI Plan is a “living” document, which has a history that predates UT's overarching UDIAP. Explicit DEI efforts in the Cockrell School were initiated in 2015 when a group of Black students approached then-dean Sharon Wood with a set of concerns related to the experiences of students who identify with groups that are historically underrepresented in engineering. As a response, Dean Wood formed the Cockrell School's Underrepresented Minority (URM) Action Team, which ultimately delivered a set of eight recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** The Cockrell School of Engineering should build a diversity action plan and update this plan on a periodic basis.
- **Recommendation 2:** The Cockrell School of Engineering should have a 3rd party design and facilitate a climate survey for students, staff and faculty to gain the necessary information and feedback about our current standing of diversity and inclusion.
- **Recommendation 3:** To increase participation and inclusiveness of underrepresented populations, the Cockrell School of Engineering should create new programs that celebrate cultural awareness and provide rewards and encouragement for faculty who positively participate in activities with students from groups that are historically underrepresented in engineering.
- **Recommendation 4:** The Cockrell School of Engineering should review and update current messaging with inclusiveness and diversity awareness language for New Student and New Faculty Orientation programming.
- **Recommendation 5:** The Cockrell School of Engineering should develop diversity fellowships for graduate students and create an emergency fund for undergraduate students with financial need.
- **Recommendation 6:** The Cockrell School of Engineering should provide training on micro-aggressions and unconscious bias to all faculty, staff and students by partnering with external experts.
- **Recommendation 7:** The Cockrell School of Engineering should continue to support funding opportunities for advancement of members of historically underrepresented groups while including historically underrepresented faculty in these submissions.

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1 [https://utexas.app.box.com/s/g74axpkkhhneunxofchvtopxii7vhy8](https://utexas.app.box.com/s/g74axpkkhhneunxofchvtopxii7vhy8)
Recommendation 8: The Cockrell School of Engineering should create two committees: the Dean's Diversity Advancement Committee for Faculty Affairs and the Dean’s Diversity Advancement Committee for Student Affairs.

In parallel with the school's URM Action Team, the Cockrell School launched the You Belong Here campaign to bring about increased visibility for the importance of diversity in engineering and reinforce a commitment to diversity and inclusion in the school. This moniker is an umbrella for a variety of initiatives, from outreach and yield events for prospective students to programming and professional development for the entire school. In the 2020-2021 academic year, we relaunched the You Belong Here theme, with an updated design and additional resources. Dating back long before these more recent efforts, the Cockrell School’s Women in Engineering Program (WEP), established in 1991, and the Equal Opportunity in Engineering (EOE) Program, established in 1970, have long histories of supporting students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in engineering. Both celebrated significant milestones this academic year, with WEP celebrating its 30th anniversary and EOE celebrating its 50th anniversary.

The Cockrell School’s DEI Plan is a direct result of the URM Action Team’s first recommendation. In 2016, Dean Wood created the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee, consisting of administrators, faculty, staff and students, chaired initially by Enrique Dominguez, director of the Equal Opportunity in Engineering Program, and then by Michele Meyer, Assistant Dean for Engineering Student Services. This committee encompassed several task forces, including the Diversity Action Plan (DAP) Task Force, chaired by professor Raissa Ferron, comprising students, faculty and staff from across the school. The DAP Task Force was charged with developing a diversity action plan compatible with UT’s UDIAP and detailing strategies that are implementable within the Cockrell School at the local level. A draft of this plan was created and shared with the university in April 2017². This plan was used by the D&I Committee to conduct a series of charrettes in 2017-2018, which aimed to engage the community in refining the plan. The result was the first Cockrell School DEI Plan, a true community effort that was made available in Summer 2019. In the 2019-2020 academic year, the D&I committee undertook a significant revision of the DEI plan, resulting in the current version (found in its entirety in Appendix A).

Cockrell School Diversity -- By the Numbers
The charts in Figure 1 show the diversity of the Cockrell School across undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and staff, as of Fall 2020. Generally, efforts to improve diversity, equity and inclusion in the Cockrell school address the needs of community members who identify with groups that are historically underrepresented in engineering. For engineering, these groups include people who identify as women and people who identify as LGBTQ+ as well as those who are underrepresented because of race or ethnicity. Throughout these figures and this report, we use “Native American” to refer to individuals who identify as Native American, Hawaiian Native, Pacific Islander and Alaska Native. The university’s systems currently only allow collection of binary gender data, specifically “male” or “female”, so our information is limited in this respect. The following series of tables provides diversity information across a five-year window; Appendix B provides even more data, tables, and charts. As Table 1 shows, over the past five years, the Cockrell School has made gains in the number of students who identify as women. In addition, the number of undergraduate students identifying as Hispanic also saw a substantial increase this year. Other demographics are relatively flat over this time period, with a concerning recent decline in the percentages of Black students. As points of comparison, among Texas residents aged 18-22, 45.8% are Hispanic, 12.5% are Black, and 48.6% are women. UT Austin is located in the Austin Independent School District, where the 2020-2021 demographics included 55% Hispanic students and 6.6% Black students.

Over a decade ago, UT implemented a campus-wide effort to increase graduation rates. In the Cockrell School, just 32.1% of students who entered in 2007 graduated with an engineering degree in four years, and 61.6%

graduated with an engineering degree in six years. For the same cohort, 41% graduated with some UT Austin degree within four years, while 81% graduated with some UT Austin degree within six years. Historically, these statistics are even starker for students who identify as women and who identify as members of other groups that are historically underrepresented in engineering\(^3\). Table 2 shows how four-year and six-year graduation rates have changed over recent years. These changes are driven by a variety of new student success initiatives both within the Cockrell School and across campus. Notably, the enrollment numbers, retention rates and graduation rates for students who identify as women are high. Further, the retention rates for students from historically underrepresented groups continue to show a significant upward trend (see Appendix B), though they still lag the overall graduation rates.

Table 3 shows data for degrees conferred for both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Across all five years, the rates for various groups are relatively flat and mirror the enrollment rates for each group. These numbers help measure the diversity across various groups in the Cockrell School, but they do not offer sufficient information about inclusion and equity. For these insights, we have historically relied on climate surveys. Prior to this academic year, our most recent survey was conducted in 2016-2017 using the PACE

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\(^3\) The university-level data available for this metric does not disaggregate different races and ethnicities; here, URM includes students identifying as Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and/or Hawaiian native.
Table 1: Demographics of the Cockrell School from Fall 2016 - Fall 2020: F; Female; B; Black; H; Hispanic; N; Native American

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
<th>Fall 2019</th>
<th>Fall 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Tenure Track Faculty</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG Student Enrollment</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Student Enrollment</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Student Enrollment</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 2: 4- and 6-year Graduation Rates from Spring 2016 - Spring 2020: F; Female; URM: Under-represented minority (in aggregate)

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<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UG 4-year Graduation Rate (UT)</td>
<td>All F</td>
<td>URM</td>
<td>All F</td>
<td>URM</td>
<td>All F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG 4-year Graduation Rate (CSE)</td>
<td>All F</td>
<td>URM</td>
<td>All F</td>
<td>URM</td>
<td>All F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UG 6-year Graduation Rate (UT)</td>
<td>All F</td>
<td>URM</td>
<td>All F</td>
<td>URM</td>
<td>All F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>86.3%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG 6-year Graduation Rate (CSE)</td>
<td>All F</td>
<td>URM</td>
<td>All F</td>
<td>URM</td>
<td>All F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65.1%</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Demographics of Degrees Conferrered Spring 2015 - Spring 2019: F; Female; B; Black; H; Hispanic; N; Native American

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degrees Conferrered</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degrees Conferrered</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degrees Conferrered</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Proiect to Assess Climate in Engineering) survey. The survey asked undergraduate engineering students about interactions with professors, perceptions of engineering as a career, satisfaction with the program and the general climate in the Cockrell School. Overall, respondents were positive about interactions with professors: 78.6% selected “Usually” or “All the time” when asked whether “Professors care whether or not you learn the course material” and 89.9% chose “Usually” or “All the time” in response to “Professors treat you with respect.” However, 13.5% of female student respondents felt they had been “singled out unfairly because of gender” and 13.3% of Black student respondents felt they had been “singled out unfairly because of race/ethnicity.” Further, 7.3% of student respondents (20% of Black student respondents) had “heard engineering faculty express racial/ethnic stereotypes,” and 8.2% of student respondents (14.5% of female student respondents) had “heard engineering faculty express sexist stereotypes.” Finally, 19.6% of student respondents reported they “Never” or only “Rarely” feel like “a part of the Cockrell School community.”

In the 2020-2021 academic year, we conducted our own climate survey but invited everyone in the Cockrell School community to respond, adding graduate students, staff, and faculty to the undergraduate students who had been surveyed in the past. In the end, 65% of faculty, 44% of staff, and 16% of graduate students, and 12% of undergraduate students completed the survey. Initial insights from the results were shared with the Cockrell School community in July 2021 and four themes emerged with more insights. Overall, the results showed there was consistent, strong agreement that diversity is important to the success of the Cockrell School. However, it was also clear that there is not a complete consensus within the Cockrell School about the definitions or dimensions of desired diversity and that LGBTQ+ and disability are not emphasized enough. The results also showed that some members of the Cockrell School believe there is too much emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion or that diversity is incompatible with excellence. On average, the respondents to

4 https://depts.washington.edu/paceteam/
5 https://cockrell.utexas.edu/about/diversity-and-inclusion/climate-survey-initial-insights
the climate survey indicated agreement with a sense of belonging in the Cockrell School, though many feel disconnected, overworked and underappreciated. Staff, in particular, feel they are expected to take on more and more responsibilities with fewer resources, rewards or gratitude. The third theme that emerged was around the way in which different members of the Cockrell School community experience the climate. Members of our community are experiencing the climate in very different ways, with many feeling censored or unsupported and others seeing no problem at all. Several comments referenced power differentials and group hierarchies that impact the extent to which individuals have agency in their academic or professional work, and these views also differed across gender identity. Finally, unsurprisingly, COVID-19 was cited throughout the responses as exacerbating pre-existing issues with belonging, welcoming climate and views on diversity, in addition to negatively influencing the overall experiences of Cockrell students, staff and faculty.

Highlighted Activities

The remainder of this report details the diversity-, equity- and inclusion-related activities in the Cockrell School of Engineering during the 2020-2021 academic year. We first provide a few highlighted activities that received extra attention and resources in the past academic year. We then look at activities related to each of the six outcomes highlighted in the DEI Plan.

Climate Survey

This academic year, the Cockrell School's Diversity and Inclusion climate survey subcommittee developed and delivered a new and streamlined climate survey. This subcommittee was co-chaired by Maura Borrego (Professor in Mechanical Engineering), Nikhith Kalkunte (graduate student in Biomedical Engineering) and Michele Meyer (Assistant Dean for Engineering Student Services). All members of the Cockrell School community (not just undergraduate students) were invited to participate. We also hired an external consultant to help us to interpret and present the results, and we shared an initial version of the results with the community in July 2021. The work around the climate survey continues; based on the findings from this survey, we intend to make the climate survey a yearly activity, keeping a corpus of the questions the same so that we can track trends, but adding or modifying some questions to allow exploring themes that emerge from the survey in the previous years. In addition, the Cockrell School will use the results throughout the coming academic year to guide community conversations, starting with questions such as: (1) What are our organization’s, department’s, or unit’s definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion? (2) What types of diversity do we need to focus our efforts on and at what level (undergraduates, graduate students, staff, faculty)? (3) What is the relationship between diversity and excellence? (4) In what ways are people with different backgrounds experiencing the Cockrell School and our organization’s climate in very different ways that lead some in the community to experience a lower sense of belonging? (5) What policies, practices or criteria could our organization change to become more diverse, equitable and inclusive? (6) What might I, as an individual, be doing inadvertently to make the climate less welcoming and more difficult to navigate for certain people?

Responding to Student Leaders’ Demands from June 2020

On June 17, 2020, the UT Austin Chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) sent a statement of “Demands for Change in the Cockrell School” to the Cockrell School leadership. The leadership responded publicly to this statement on June 18, 2020, and Dean Wood, Associate Dean Julien, and Assistant Dean Meyer met with the NSBE leadership on June 23, 2020 to plan actions related to this conversation. Throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, the leadership team of the Cockrell School met several times with the leadership of the UT Austin NSBE chapter to work towards addressing the eight demands listed. Several initiatives within this report align with these demands including (1) increasing the amount of communication

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6 https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XvJn_K5WDzHNLqfRORIMPGAykcCObHyrdATnE/edit
that the Cockrell School does around DEI (including this report itself); (2) expanding outreach activities for Black K-12 youth related to engineering, including the Longhorn Engineering Summer Camp described next; (3) increased collaboration and conversation between the student organizations in the DEI space and the Cockrell School leadership; (4) increasing the number of Black and Hispanic faculty as part of the 2020-2021 recruiting cycle; (5) supporting students’ professional development through conference attendance; (6) supporting the NSBE student leaders in fundraising for student scholarships; (7) increasing trainings and workshops for faculty and staff related to allyship and implicit bias; and (8) creating the new John W. Hargis lounge in the Engineering Education and Research Center (EER) to provide space for historically marginalized voices in the Cockrell School.

**Longhorn Engineering Summer Camp**

Throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, Associate Dean Julien worked with colleagues in the University of Texas’s Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE), in particular within the UT Youth Engagement Centers in Dallas and Houston to create and deliver a (virtual) summer camp designed for rising 8th and 9th grade students from historically marginalized groups. The goal in designing explicitly for these ages was to capture students’ attention and interest at exactly the moment in their education when they are making critical decisions about high school coursework related to math and science. The full-day, week-long summer camp presented both interactive guest speakers and hands-on activities for the students. The summer camp was free for participants, and all supplies needed for the hands-on activities were supplied by the Cockrell School, shipped to the participants in advance. Twenty-five of the Cockrell School’s own undergraduate students were hired as camp counselors. By collaborating with teachers and counselors in historically underserved schools across Texas, LESC recruited 34 students, with the following demographics: 41% female, 35% Black, 38% Hispanic. From the perspective of intersecting and underserved identities in engineering, 18% of the students identified as both female and Hispanic, and 21% of the students identified as both female and Black. Through pre- and post-camp survey of the participants we found that, on average, the camp increased participants’ interest in studying engineering, and 100% of the campers said they would recommend the camp to their friends.

**DEI Monthly Updates**

In 2019-2020, the Cockrell School Diversity and Inclusion Committee recommended that the School develop a monthly “conversation” around some DEI related topic. In the 2020-2021 academic year, this was initiated as a monthly message sent to the entire Cockrell School community from the Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. These monthly updates serve to educate the community but also to help everyone begin to practice learning and talking about diversity, equity and inclusion. These conversation starters are archived on the Cockrell School website and have included topics such as: creating inclusive spaces, the launch of the new You Belong Here campaign, learning the language of inclusion, MLK day of service, celebrating Black History Month, celebrating Pride month, celebrating Hispanic Heritage month, celebrating Texas Girls in STEM day, celebrating our AAPI community, establishing the new John W. Hargis lounge, etc. These conversations will continue and grow.

**ACT Projects for DEI Initiatives**

In 2020-2021 six teams within the Cockrell School received pilot grants to advance DEI activities in our community. These projects, termed Actions that promote Community Transformation or “ACT projects” consist of grants that were collaboratively funded by the Vice Provost for Diversity, the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, and Cockrell School Dean Sharon Wood. Led by teams of faculty and staff, these projects have explored topics that include identifying barriers to faculty and staff participation in DEI initiatives; integrating DEI topics into the curriculum; evaluating our
programs’ support for underrepresented undergraduate students; and expanding EOE offerings for first-year students. This program will be repeated in the 2021-2022 academic year, with a new round of grants including several teams from the Cockrell School of Engineering.

**Updating Faculty Expectations**

In July 2021, Dean Sharon Wood announced updated guidelines for promotion and tenure and comprehensive periodic review of faculty in the Cockrell School. These revisions recognize that efforts by faculty that are related to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion have long been overlooked or seen only as a small fraction of a faculty member’s service contributions (a term that is often used is “hidden service”). This view fails to recognize the different and deep ways that diversity, equity, and inclusion integrate across a faculty member’s varied roles. Going forward, faculty who work in these areas will have the ability for that effort to be recognized and contribute to their evaluations. In this same message, Dean Wood also encouraged the seven Cockrell School departments to consider similarly updating their own annual review guidelines, with a focus not on the quantity of one’s efforts in the DEI space but on their quality and impact.

**Details in the Context of the CSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan**

In this section, we take each of the six outcomes of the 2020-2021 DEI Plan (Appendix A) in turn and describe the efforts within the Cockrell School to address the implementation strategies listed for each outcome. We do not expect to be able to make meaningful progress on every strategy in every year. For completeness, we include all of the strategies here that are listed in the DEI Plan. If no specific activity can be tied to that strategy, we indicate that with “No specific activities in 2020-2021”. Many activities this past year were impacted because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to have any programming in person. Nonetheless, many members of the Cockrell School community were hard at work supporting our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

**Cross-Cutting Implementation Strategies**

*Collect data on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including surveys of staff, faculty, and students on inclusive school climate and the impact of CSE DEI efforts.*

The Cockrell School has historically collected nuanced data related to the demographics of the Cockrell School community, retention and graduation rates of undergraduate and graduate students, and trends in all of these values over time. We continue to collect these data, share them (many examples are available throughout this report) and devise additional ways to look deeper into the data (looking at trends within the departments, etc.). In addition, we have initiated an annual climate survey that goes beyond diversity to look at inclusion, and individual departments have also begun surveying different slices of their populations for different purposes.

*Analyze data on diversity, equity, and inclusion and use the results to inform ongoing revision of the CSE DEI efforts and this DEI plan.*

The Cockrell School DEI Plan recognizes that it is not sufficient merely to collect data about diversity, equity and inclusion -- we must also reflect on what that data means and how it impacts our community and our plans for activities in the future. Within this strategy this academic year, individual departments made strides in collecting their own internal data and creating programs within their departments to address them. In addition, the Cockrell School recognized that, as engineers are not experts in DEI, it is important to seek external expertise to help analyze and report on the data collected. To that end, we hired a consultant to aid with the climate survey analysis, helping to generate the preliminary report with a careful eye towards ensuring anonymization and faithful reporting of the data and in framing reflective questions for the community. While we did not make revisions to the Cockrell School DEI plan in
2020-2021 as a result of this analysis, it remains a “living” document, and some findings from the climate survey and other data analysis will inform changes in the plan in the coming academic year.

Create and disseminate information about diversity and DEI related efforts, initiatives, and successes through publications, websites, and communication campaigns, including an annual report on DEI in the Cockrell School and public recognition of DEI “wins” by individuals and groups.

The 2020-2021 academic year, started with the release of the first Cockrell School DEI Annual report for the prior academic year. We also made a more principled commitment to regular communications with the entire Cockrell School community around DEI related topics, including monthly topical updates from Associate Dean Julien as well as a DEI event calendar. For more outward facing efforts, we updated our messaging around the You Belong Here moniker10. We have also continued to highlight stories related to diversity and equity in the Cockrell School of engineering and in its engineers.

Outcome 1 - Fostering an inclusive climate

Develop and deliver programming around monthly DEI themes for the entire Cockrell School (students, faculty, and staff).

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, a recommendation from the 2019-2020 CSE D&I Committee was to develop monthly DEI themes and to frame conversations and activities within the Cockrell School around these themes. Since the entire 2020-2021 academic year was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and few activities were scheduled in person, the efforts around these themes were limited to monthly emails from the Associate Dean for DEI to the entire Cockrell School community. As we continue this effort into the new academic year, we will broaden the resources available for each theme to include handouts, signage, and resources for faculty meetings, student organizations, and courses.

Create and implement a strategy to broaden the delivery and impact of focused DEI-related workshops (including Bias Busters and leadership workshops).

In 2020-2021, a new subcommittee of the Cockrell School D&I Committee was formed and designated with the specific responsibility of arranging workshops and trainings across the Cockrell School. This subcommittee was co-chaired by An Nguyen (undergraduate student in Electrical and Computer Engineering), Yesenia Roman (Senior Undergraduate Academic Advisor in Electrical and Computer Engineering), and Carlos Torres-Verdin (Professor in Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunities to supply workshops and trainings to the community was limited to what could be done online. This year, the group brought in Skyller Walkes (Assistant Dean of Diversity and Inclusion in the UT College of Pharmacy) for a special lecture for faculty and staff on Engineering Change By Constructing a Community of Belonging. The seminar was attended live by more than 80 CSE faculty and staff and made available to watch asynchronously to those who had a conflict. The Cockrell School also co-sponsored the Fall 2020 Inclusive Teaching and Learning Symposium, hosted by the UT Faculty Innovation Center. All faculty were invited to attend, with the focus of the symposium on interactive workshops to help faculty learn actionable practices they can translate to their classrooms. Finally, the Cockrell School also co-sponsored a screening and associated panel for the Picture a Scientist film. The film was made available to the community to watch, then participants were invited to attend a panel featuring one of the scientists from the film as well as others scientists and engineers from UT Austin. The trainings and workshops subcommittee also initiated conversations with colleagues across campus to find ways to highlight the engineering profession outside of the traditional and expected contexts. The intent is to design an interactive speaker series for undergraduate students that promotes inclusive thinking about engineering. These conversations also influenced the design of the Longhorn Engineering Summer Camp topics and guest speakers.

10 https://cockrell.utexas.edu/you-belong-here
Promote open and regular conversations within Cockrell School communities about DEI-related concerns and initiatives.

The COVID-19 pandemic curtailed plans for many of these (in-person) conversations, but in 2021-2022, we plan to begin to explore this implementation strategy, starting with conversations framed around the monthly themes and the findings of the climate survey.

As part of one of the ACT projects, a team led by Raisa Ferron (Professor in Civil, Architectural, and Environmental Engineering) that also included Patricia Clayton, Enrique Dominguez, and Maura Borrego developed three types of modules for integration with CAEE courses. These included i) image modules that show CAEE professionals, reflecting both the diversity of the field and the professionals themselves; ii) project modules that contain details about a real-world CAEE project (modules will allow students to better understand the real-world applications of the courses they are taking and will reflect the diversity of the field and CAEE alumni; and iii) technical modules (e.g., complex curriculum components such as lecture slides, homework assignments, in-class activities) that guide students to interact with more diverse applications of course content that reflect the role of race and contributions of people of color in CAEE fields. This project serves as a pilot that can be extended to other coursework across the Cockrell School of Engineering.

Continue and extend programming to celebrate diverse cultures in the Cockrell School of Engineering.

The Cockrell School’s Cultural Awareness Committee (CAC) has existed since Spring 2017. This year, the committee was co-chaired by Suzanne Barber (Professor in Electrical and Computer Engineering), Alyson Bodner (Director of Engineering Student Life) and Adelina Hernandez (undergraduate student in Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering). While the CAC has historically held large in person gatherings to celebrate Latinx/Hispanic heritage or Black Excellence in STEM, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from coming together in person for these events this year. Instead the CAC led a variety of social media campaigns around these same events. The team also proposed the idea of the Faces of Engineering campaign\(^1\), which was launched in a purely digital form this year. In the future, the CAC plans to build momentum around the Faces campaign with additional physical displays in the on-campus spaces. As a final activity in this category, in February, the Cockrell School hosted the Celebrating Cockrell’s Black Excellence alumni panel, which welcomed three of the School’s Black alumni to a virtual conversation about their experiences as students in the Cockrell School, and their experiences as engineers since graduating. The panel was moderated by the president of the UT chapter of the National Society for Black Engineers, Alex Tekle.

Outcome 2 - Creating diverse pipelines

Identify and implement ways to increase the pool of diverse undergraduate student applicants to the Cockrell School.

In 2020-2021, the newly reframed Cockrell School Diversity and Inclusion Committee included a Community Outreach and Engagement subcommittee tasked with cataloging existing programs and identifying gaps in our existing outreach and engagement activities. This subcommittee was co-chaired by Vittorio Adeagbo (undergraduate student in Electrical and Computer Engineering and NSBE PCI-TORCH Chair), Tricia Berry (Director of the Women in Engineering Program), Enrique Dominguez (Director of the Equal Opportunity in Engineering Program) and Maša Prodanović (Associate Professor in Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering). Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed many plans for outreach and engagement with the public, and this subcommittee’s activities were therefore also severely hampered.

However, this year, the Cockrell School participated in several admissions events for prospective UT applicants to provide them information about what engineering is like, especially from the student

\(^1\) https://cockrell.utexas.edu/news/faces-of-texas-engineering
perspective. These events were organized by the Office of Admissions, and they were facilitated on the Cockrell School side by Kristen Kessel (director, Ramshorn Scholars Program) and Christine Julien (Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion). The Cockrell School sessions were attended by multiple undergraduate students (largely from the Ramshorn Scholars Program) and faculty members who answered questions from the attendees about engineering experiences at UT Austin.

As described above, a major DEI effort this year was focused on launching the first iteration of the Longhorn Engineering Summer Camp, in collaboration with the Division for Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE). This effort involved 25 Cockrell School undergraduate students as camp designers and camp counselors, and brought hands-on engineering activities to 34 rising 8th and 9th grade students from across Texas. Through pre- and post-camp surveys of the participants we found that, on average, the camp increased participants’ interest in studying engineering, and 100% of the campers said they would recommend the camp to their friends. The camp was free to attend, and participants were recruited using contacts through the DDCE’s Youth Engagement Centers, with the specific aim of engaging students from schools where the Cockrell School’s prior outreach efforts have not traditionally reached. The camp was held synchronously but virtually, with kits of supplies shipped out to participants in advance.

In addition to the new LESC camp, the Women in Engineering Program (WEP) and Equal Opportunity in Engineering (EOE) program continued their efforts in providing summer camps virtually in 2021. The Create@UT and We@UT camps offered rising 11th and 12th grade participants an opportunity to engage with Women Engineers throughout the month of July and join two asynchronous design challenges. The MITE camp provided nearly 50 rising 12th grade students a week-long partially synchronous experience that included engaging with current CSE undergraduate students, learning about engineering majors, and completing a series of hands-on design challenges.

**Create and support pipeline programs with minority-serving institutions to mentor racially diverse students into successful graduate school careers in our School.**

The Graduate Recruitment, Retention and Experience subcommittee was one of the most active subcommittees of the CSE D&I Committee in 2020-2021. This subcommittee was co-chaired by Amy Douglas Stewart (Graduate Program Coordinator in Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering), Tyrone Porter (Professor in Biomedical Engineering), and Edwin Torres Cuevas (graduate student in Chemical Engineering). In the 2020-2021 academic year, this subcommittee started by reviewing the statistics of our graduate programs related to the numbers of applicants, the admissions offers, and matriculations, disaggregated by race and gender. Based on a review of the statistics, the committee identified recruitment as a strategic focus for the academic year. The subcommittee then generated a series of recommendations to implement in the coming years based on the assessment of existing and previous efforts and stated goals. These recommendations include (1) the Cockrell School sponsoring booths and attending diversity organization conferences like SACNAS, NSBE, AISES, SWE, and SHPE; (2) supporting travel grants for faculty to visit minority serving institutions to recruit graduate student applicants; (3) creating a visit program for prospective graduate student applicants (to complement our admitted student visit programs); (4) create an outreach program for rising final year undergraduate students from underrepresented groups and contact them to apply; (5) build on existing models for undergraduate recruitment to contact all female, Black, and Hispanic students admitted to the program are contacted directly after admission; (6) design an exit survey for graduate students to feedback into the programs; (7) allocate funding to cover graduate school application fees for students from underrepresented backgrounds; and (8) consider waiving the GRE requirement for graduate admissions.

Within these recommendations, some have already begun to be addressed. In 2020 and 2021, the Cockrell School has sponsored the O4U Engineering conference, hosting a booth for the purpose of graduate recruiting. Multiple departments in the Cockrell School offered graduate application fee waivers for the Spring 2021 application cycle, and several departments have already applied for permission from
the UT Graduate School to waive the GRE requirement for admissions. In Summer 2021, representatives from all seven Cockrell School of Engineering departments collaborated to construct and deliver a graduate application outreach presentation for the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program hosted by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Based on the resources created for prospective faculty members, the Biomedical Engineering Department created a set of resources for new graduate students (Appendix C), which can easily be adapted by other departments.

**Develop programming to mentor and support diverse undergraduate research participants into graduate school (e.g., through REU programs).**

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the REU Programs, starting from Summer 2020. The Graduates Linked to Undergraduates in Engineering (GLUE) program run by the Women in Engineering Program (WEP) was suspended entirely for the academic year, with plans to restart in 2021-2022. The Texas Research Experience (TREX) Program, run by EOE, provides a unique opportunity for successful upper-division students to enhance their academic experience with undergraduate research, learn about careers in research and the benefits of obtaining a graduate engineering degree, and use the experience to become a competitive graduate school applicant. TREX participants receive a $3,000 research stipend and spend an average of 10-15 hours per week on a research project throughout the fall and spring semesters. Active since 2001, since its inception more than 30% of students participating in TREX have gone on to pursue graduate studies. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 6 students participated in TREX; all of these students were students from groups that are historically underrepresented in engineering.

In addition to these specific programs, several Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) programs are run within the Cockrell School of Engineering. The NASCENT and MRSEC research centers each administer their own program, and several departments and individual faculty also host undergraduate researchers for summer periods. In addition, in 2020-2021, the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department launched the ECE Next program12, including a summer REU component. While these programs are open to all undergraduate students, there is a specific emphasis on recruiting students who identify as women or with groups that are historically underrepresented in engineering. During Summer 2021, the opportunities continued to be more limited because of the COVID-19 situation, but REU programs were significantly more present than in Summer 2020.

**Develop intentional and coordinated outreach efforts to attract a more diverse pool of candidates for post-doctoral positions.**

The Biomedical Engineering Department joined several other units across campus in the inaugural UT Austin Provost’s Early Career Fellowship Program. This program is an intentionally designed three year program centered on the topic of healthcare disparities that provides mentoring across all dimensions of a postdoctoral program, with a goal of preparing the scholars for figure tenure-track assistant professor positions. The scholars in the program have mentors from the Cockrell School and from the Dell Medical School and also include training in proposal writing and course development. The program welcomed two scholars to the program in Summer of 2021.

**Understand, document, and address concerns and challenges related to recruiting diverse staff across different staff communities in the Cockrell School.**

The 2020-2021 CSE D&I Committee had a subcommittee focused on faculty and staff recruitment and retention. This subcommittee was co-chaired by Brian Korgel (Professor in Chemical Engineering), Danny Sanchez (graduate student in Materials Science and Engineering), and Sonya Shaffer (Executive Assistant in Academic Affairs). This committee focused primarily on faculty concerns in this academic year, but they did identify the need to have a more rigorous exit survey process for staff before suggesting new

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12 [https://www.ece.utexas.edu/engage/ece4all/next](https://www.ece.utexas.edu/engage/ece4all/next)
approaches. In addition, the efforts to increase training and workshops related to bias in faculty hiring can also inform our staff hiring processes moving forward.

Collect best practices for diverse faculty recruiting from other institutions and create a faculty recruiting process that facilitates opportunities for faculty applicants from historically marginalized groups.

The 2020-2021 CSE D&I Committee subcommittee for faculty and staff recruitment and retention (co-chaired by Brian Korgel, Danny Sanchez, and Sonya Shaffer) collected data and best practices on our faculty recruiting processes. In 2020-2021, for the first time, all faculty participating in the faculty recruiting process were asked to complete an online implicit bias training module, and all chairs of search committees were asked to complete a (virtual) synchronous training hosted by the UT Provost’s office. 100% of the chairs of Cockrell School search committees completed the training in 2020-2021, and 80% of the committee members completed the online training module. In 2020-2021, we also developed a resource to be shared with all faculty candidate interviewees on resources available campus wide in the DEI space; this handout is included in Appendix D. Finally, in 2020-2021, we also collaborated with the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity to develop a new training that will be required of all search committee chairs and members that includes both an online component and a synchronous component with real scenarios that is designed to be integrated into a search committee’s first meeting to ensure that they build community around talking about equitable faculty searches.

Increasing the diversity of the Cockrell School faculty has been a long endeavor, and one that continues efforts that have developed over the last several years. As an update to the impacts of these efforts, over the last seven years, the percentage of faculty interviewees who are women has increased from 23% of the interviewees seven years ago to 44% in 2020-2021, with women accounting for 42% of the hires in 2020-2021 (up from 25% seven years ago). Faculty interviewees who identify as Hispanic or Black has risen from just 4% seven years ago to 19% this past year, with the percentage hired this year reaching 23% of the new faculty (in comparison to 0% seven years ago). The Cockrell School still has much work to undertake in recruiting a more diverse faculty, but these gains are a testament to the success of the School’s policy shifts and increased training of faculty recruiting committees.

Develop programs and opportunities to prepare diverse mid-career faculty for leadership positions.

In 2020-2021, the Cockrell School continued a history of supporting mid-career faculty in both external and internal workshops and fellowships related to preparation for academic leadership positions. In particular, in 2020-2021, the School supported Lizy John (Professor in Electrical and Computer Engineering) to participate in the ELATES program, hosted by Drexel University. In Fall 2020, the Cockrell School sponsored (along with the Vice Provost for Diversity) two assistant professor faculty members (Jean Anne Incorvia and Evdokia Nikolova, both from Electrical and Computer Engineering) to participate in the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity’s Faculty Success Program, a 12-week coaching program designed to build skills for research productivity and work-life balance.

Outcome 3 - Increasing community diversity and awareness

Train everyone involved in admissions and hiring about biases, including racism and sexism, and develop procedures that explicitly mitigate the disparate and negative impacts of these biases on hiring and admissions.

As mentioned above, in 2020-2021, the Cockrell School of Engineering asked all faculty participating in the faculty recruiting process to take an online training module related to mitigating biases in review processes. This requirement will be extended to a more synchronous workshop taken by a recruiting committee together to build community around constructing equitable searches. We are also investigating how to extend these efforts to graduate student admissions and to staff recruiting.
Create opportunities for continuous feedback and refinement of best procedures and practices for diverse recruiting of faculty, students, staff, and administrators.

At the close of both the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 faculty recruiting seasons, the Cockrell School surveyed the faculty participating in the recruiting process for their insights on improving the process. In 2019-2020, we surveyed all members of the recruiting committees about their views on equity and inclusion in their search processes, practices within their committees that worked well, and concerns that surfaced. These insights were used to update the guidance given to the search committees as they start their processes and to inform and influence the development of the more extensive workshops that will be piloted in 2021-2022. In 2020-2021, we surveyed the search committee chairs for specific scenarios or situations that occurred in their processes related to equity of the searches (both positive and negative). These are actively informing the scenarios that will be part of the new search committee training across the UT campus. Finally, the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity hosted a series of lunch-and-learn events in Spring 2021 to reflect on practices across the colleges and schools at UT. Several engineering faculty search committee chairs participated in these conversations.

Outcome 4 - Retaining and recognizing diverse community members

Develop programs and resources for mentoring diverse faculty, staff, and administrators, including accessible “talking point” guides for mentors.

No specific activities in 2020-2021.

Ensure all staff have access to regular, high quality feedback about actionable steps and timelines for career advancement.

No specific activities in 2020-2021.

Develop strategies and policies to value/recognize DEI efforts and “invisible service”.

Efforts by faculty to promote diversity, equity and inclusion through research, teaching and service have long been hidden or seen only as a small piece of a faculty member’s service contributions, and this view fails to recognize the different and deep ways that diversity, equity, and inclusion integrate across a faculty member’s varied roles. To make contributions to DEI more visible and explicitly recognized, in 2020-2021, we revised the Cockrell School guidelines for promotion and tenure and for comprehensive periodic review. We also encouraged the individual department (and their individual faculty) to include this information in their required annual reports.

Develop a process for both "exit interviews" to survey faculty and staff who leave the Cockrell School about their experiences and decision to leave and “stay interviews” to collect data about faculty and staff who choose to remain in the Cockrell School.

Exit interviews have been identified as an important way to learn about our community members’ experiences in the Cockrell School. In particular, it would seem that exit interviews for faculty, staff, and graduate students should be developed in the near term. In 2020-2021, we conducted informal interviews with former graduate students and used these to start to formulate the nature of these exit interviews. More effort is needed here, though, to realize this goal.

Outcome 5 - Improving the student experience

Continue to support and engage graduate students and faculty on discussions of best-practices in student mentoring; distill lessons in graduate student mentoring into a handbook of best practices.

While we had launched a new grad mentoring lunch series, the efforts in 2020-2021 were significantly stalled by COVID because -- these conversations were very difficult to continue virtually. This should restart when we restart in person activities. However, we spent time instead distilling lessons learned from ChemE first year mentoring program. Led by Lydia Contreras (Professor in Chemical Engineering), this

13 https://utexas.app.box.com/s/hw03lklwsm78umdze9etgvsfe1w36f1
program matched every incoming Chemical Engineering graduate student with a team of peer mentors. Through a series of weekly check-ins and activities, the program was designed to help students transition to graduate school and to start off with a healthy degree of work-life balance and access to needed resources on campus. Starting in August 2021, all seven departments within the Cockrell School are hosting similar first-year launch mentoring programs for incoming graduate students. The programs will provide both faculty and peer mentoring to first year graduate students who opt into the programs and will also include some Cockrell School wide events for participating students.

Finally, recognizing the importance of mentoring and other resources from beyond a graduate student’s or postdoctoral scholar’s faculty advisor, the Cockrell School this year created the Advocacy Network for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows, a small team of faculty from across the Cockrell School who can serve in the role of neutral third party for advice, guidance, and access to resources for all graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in the School. This group will be announced soon to the entire community.

**Foster, support, validate, and engage with existing efforts by students to improve DEI in the community (e.g., through existing student organizations).**

To facilitate the exchange of ideas with student groups, the CSE D&I Committee included a Student DEI board for the first time in 2020-2021. This board was co-chaired by Sam LeBus (undergraduate student in Mechanical Engineering and President of Student Engineering Council) and Pavana Kollipara (graduate student in Mechanical Engineering and Vice-President of Graduate Engineering Council). Because of COVID and the many demands on student time, the meetings of this group were limited in the past year, but the Student DEI board will continue and serve as a valuable resource to the CSE D&I Committee and to the Associate Dean for DEI.

**Recognize outstanding efforts related to retention of undergraduate and graduate students, with particular focus on impact of DEI efforts.**

No specific activities in 2020-2021.

**Outcome 6 - Enabling individual and community success**

**Assess and improve the quality of mentoring of graduate students and faculty.**

The focus in 2020-2021 has been on developing the first year graduate mentoring program described above. In addition, we have designed a small number of mentoring activities planned for 2021-2022 for our second year graduate students as well, since their transition into graduate school was so significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. There were no significant new initiatives related to faculty mentoring within the Cockrell School in 2020-2021, though existing faculty mentoring programs, writing workshops, and proposal mentoring activities continued.

**Identify and remove artificial barriers for undergraduate and graduate students, from curricula to policies to student programming.**

First-generation college students accounted for an average of less than 13% of incoming students for 2015 through 2018. The Cockrell School has developed initiatives for first-generation students, including appointing a dedicated academic advisor and developing specialized programming for families. In 2016, we created the Ramshorn Scholar Program (RSP), a learning community dedicated to helping select undergraduate students persevere through the rigors of the UT engineering curriculum. The program’s goal is simple: to ease the transition from high school to college by supporting each student’s individual needs. In the 2020-2021 academic year, the Cockrell School continued these programs, even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic’s forced virtual instruction. Over 70% of students in RSP are first-generation college students. RSP offers reserved seats in select first-year courses, supplemental instruction, academic coaches, community building events and leadership development. In Fall 2020, first-generation college students accounted for 25% of the incoming class. Many of the third and fourth year students
from the Ramshorn Scholars Program point to their participation in the program as the foundation for their feelings of inclusion in the Cockrell School.

First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs), small cohorts of 15-25 students with common interests, provide a tight-knit community within the larger Cockrell School. FIG members enroll in the same sections of first-year courses and meet weekly for community building and skill-building for student success. One-year retention among FIG participants is roughly 5% higher than non-FIG students. While departments also host their own FIGs that meet in the fall semester, EOE and WEP both offer their own FIGs. In 2020-2021, EOE FIGs served 79 students in the fall semester and 21 students in the spring semester. Of these students, 60% identify with racial and ethnical minority groups, and 23% are women.

Collect and analyze data on fellowship and scholarship awards (for graduate and undergraduate students) with respect to equitable distribution across diverse groups and use this data to support recruiting and retaining individuals from underrepresented groups.

No specific activities in 2020-2021.

Collect and analyze data on faculty, staff, and graduate student service obligations from an equity lens and use this data to develop strategies to balance service across all faculty, staff, and graduate students.

No significant or disciplined data collection was carried out in 2020-2021, but initial information about inequitable focus on service activities, particularly those related to DEI led to the refinement of the promotion and tenure and CPR guidelines.

Collect feedback from diverse faculty, staff, post-docs, and students on impactful professional development programs; use this feedback to guide future community participation on professional development.

A 2020-21 Cockrell School of Engineering ACT project, led by Maša Prodanović (Professor in Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering) with collaborators Raissa Ferron, Diana Marculescu, Mia Markey, Adrianne Rosales, Preston Wilson, and Christine Julien, explored barriers to faculty and staff participation in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) activities and initiatives in engineering community. Through a school-wide survey and a set of follow-up focus groups, the project aimed to identify concrete reasons why Cockrell School faculty and staff opted not to participate in DEI learning opportunities and initiatives available to them during the 2020 calendar year. Anecdotally, women faculty and staff in the Cockrell School are more inclined to participate in these initiatives, and the effort also aimed to identify reasons why. With a response rate of about 20% (which is typical for this type of survey), the survey identified barriers to participation ranging from a lack of awareness of opportunities (14% of respondents), worktime conflicts (24% of responses), workload conflicts (14% of responses), and ideological objections (11% of respondents). From the survey, faculty were half as likely as staff to participate in these opportunities. The survey also confirmed the anecdotal evidence that DEI participation is correlated with gender identity. The survey also identified several actionable activities or learning opportunities that would be of interest across the Cockrell School of engineering, which provides opportunity for framing upcoming events. We will continue these efforts by collecting feedback and other data on the events and opportunities the Cockrell School provides related to DEI.

Regularly assess and evaluate the DEI programs that the school provides to ensure that they meet the needs of their target populations.

While assessing and evaluating efforts is itself a cross-cutting activity, the 2020-2021 CSE D&I Committee had a subcommittee charged with collecting these assessments and considering revisions to the DEI Plan. This subcommittee was co-chaired by Malini Josiam (undergraduate student in Mechanical Engineering), Fernanda Leite (Associate Professor in Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering), and Cindy Wilson (Director of Academic Projects). These efforts are ongoing on a per-program/effort basis as reported above.
Plans for 2021-2022

Many of the activities detailed above for 2020-2021 will continue into the next academic year. In some cases, we are optimistic that a gradual return to in-person activities will allow us to bring back activities that were stalled because of COVID such as the activities of the Cultural Awareness Committee. In addition, in the coming year, we plan to increase focus on the following specific activities:

**Support faculty in integrating DEI initiatives with research activities**

In 2020-2021, several faculty from across the Cockrell School reached out with questions about how to connect their research activities with existing efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Cockrell School. In the coming academic year, the Cockrell School aims to create a program to support faculty in identifying ways that their research activities and the DEI initiatives in the Cockrell School can mutually benefit each other. We plan to create a support structure that will assist faculty in responding to requests from funding agencies to promote DEI and broadening participation in engineering activities. These services will support faculty from the proposal writing stages, through the implementation of the funded activities.

**Expand collaborations for outreach activities for K-12 students**

Building on the successes of existing Cockrell School outreach activities, including summer camps, this coming year we plan to strengthen collaborations with partners (including within the Cockrell School and with those outside, like UT’s Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, the Texas Association of Minorities in Engineering, etc.) to sustain and expand existing programs and to create new opportunities. In particular, we plan to continue and grow the Longhorn Engineering Summer Camp, with an extension to in-person opportunities in Summer 2022. We are also planning a Black Youth Day event in the Spring of 2022, likely as a growth of the existing Equal Opportunity in Engineering program’s World of Engineering. In the near term, the focus of the Cockrell School will be on creating opportunities for late middle school students, with a goal of providing support and information to them and their parents as they transition into high school and the decisions that may impact their preparation for studying engineering in the future.

**Increase support for informal conversations in the Cockrell School community about DEI**

Building on the monthly messages and themes from 2020-2021, this academic year will see increased opportunities for all members of the Cockrell School community to engage in informal conversations around issues related to diversity and inclusion. We will promote the sharing of media and articles that we can all use to educate ourselves, create content that can be shared by instructors in classrooms or within student organizations, and we will challenge the community with questions related to, for example, findings from the climate survey. We are also planning multiple seminars to serve as conversation-seeding events for the entire community.

**Strengthen training for recognizing and mitigating bias and other DEI concerns in hiring**

Already underway for the 2021-2022 academic year is a revision of the training for faculty recruiting committees across the Cockrell School. All faculty participating in these processes will now undergo a more in depth and community-centered training before embarking on a new faculty search process. We also plan to learn from these experiences and develop trainings for students who participate in these processes as well as for faculty and staff making similar decisions in other areas as well (e.g., within staff hiring or graduate student admissions).

**Graduate student mentoring programs**

A final focus for the 2021-2022 academic year will be on rejuvenating the conversations around graduate student mentoring and building more robust graduate student mentoring programs within the Cockrell School. In the coming year, each Cockrell School graduate program will design a first-year graduate
mentoring program that is tailored to the department’s needs. These programs will also collaborate on a handful of Cockrell School wide activities for new graduate students. We will also create new programs to support graduate students and post-doctoral scholars that go beyond the technical research supervisor that each such student or scholar has to provide peer mentoring and additional faculty mentoring beyond the student’s own research lab.

**Conclusions**

Much of the 2020-2021 academic year was defined and dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic and many other challenging events around the world, across the United States, and close to home here in Austin. Through these struggles, the Cockrell School community showed great resilience and an impressive attention to the broad mission of promoting equitable experiences in Texas Engineering, with a focus on building inclusive spaces and celebrating the diversity of our community. The Cockrell School of Engineering remains steadfastly committed to diversity in its many forms, and we aim to promote an inclusive and equitable environment with a strong sense of belonging for all students, faculty and staff. We recognize that individuals from all groups have not historically had the same access to engineering education, in general, and to the Cockrell School, more specifically, and we seek to continue to acknowledge this and work to address it across our mission. We also recognize that the different spaces that community members inhabit may require different approaches to diversity, equity and inclusion. We embrace the differences among us and strive to create learning and working environments enriched by those differences, and we are committed to providing the best education possible for students from all backgrounds, including those who have been marginalized and who come from traditionally underserved communities.
Appendix A - Cockrell School Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

Overview: A Steadfast Commitment

For the engineering profession to fully reach its potential, our academic and industry communities must listen to, engage, include, and encourage people from all segments of society. We must work together — utilizing the broad array of perspectives, backgrounds, and life experiences that come with a truly diverse community — if we wish to develop the creative solutions needed to address the challenges of the future.

In the Cockrell School of Engineering, we are deeply committed to diversity in its many forms. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan is a defined framework and set of initiatives that will guide our future decisions and investments across all departments and communities, including those defined by race, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender and gender expression, socioeconomic background, and first-generation status.

Definitions

We begin our plan by defining key terms:

**Diversity** is the quality of being different or unique at the individual and/or group level including characteristics such as age, disability status, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status. Promoting diversity includes embracing the unique differences and contributions of each individual in our community, including recognizing and supporting individuals’ multiple and intersecting identities.

**Equity** is giving each individual access to the resources they need to learn, perform, work, and thrive. Promoting equity means providing access to resources so that each individual in our community has what they need to succeed — access to opportunity, networks, resources, and support systems — based on where they are and where they want to go.

**Inclusion** is creating an environment that welcomes, embraces, and leverages the diversity that exists in our community to ensure that individuals feel supported, listened to, empowered, and able to do their personal best and contribute fully to the community. Inclusion promotes a sense of belonging and creates a cohesive community.

Goals and Outcomes

Through a sustained effort to strengthen diversity within the Texas Engineering community and through the long-term implementation of the DEI Plan, the Cockrell School aims to achieve the following long-term outcomes.

- **Outcome 1.** Foster an inclusive school climate that supports and encourages community members and provides a strong sense of value and belonging among all students, faculty, and staff.
- **Outcome 2.** Attract diverse applicants for faculty, student, staff, and administrator roles.
- **Outcome 3.** Increase diversity and the community's awareness of diversity among faculty, students, staff, and administrators.
- **Outcome 4.** Retain and recognize diverse faculty, staff, and administrators.
- **Outcome 5.** Improve student experiences, success, retention, graduation rates, and sense of belonging.
- **Outcome 6.** Support the development of the full potential of each member of the community.

Implementation Strategies

In alignment with the Goals and Outcomes listed above, the Cockrell School of Engineering has identified the following short-term implementation strategies. We recognize that the work necessary to realize the DEI Plan
will require substantial effort and resources, and it may not be possible to undertake all of these implementation strategies simultaneously. We also emphasize that this work is the responsibility of the entire community and should not fall solely on the shoulders of the systemically oppressed groups we aim to support.

**Cross-Cutting Implementation Strategies**

1. Collect data on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including surveys of staff, faculty, and students on inclusive school climate and the impact of CSE DEI efforts.
2. Analyze data on diversity, equity, and inclusion and use the results to inform ongoing revision of the CSE DEI efforts and this DEI plan.
3. Create and disseminate information about diversity and DEI related efforts, initiatives, and successes through publications, websites, and communication campaigns, including an annual report on DEI in the Cockrell School and public recognition of DEI “wins” by individuals and groups.

**Implementation Strategies in Support of Outcome 1**

**Fostering an inclusive climate**

1.1 Develop and deliver programming around monthly DEI themes for the entire Cockrell School (students, faculty, and staff).
1.2 Create and implement a strategy to broaden the delivery and impact of focused DEI-related workshops (including Bias Busters and leadership workshops).
1.3 Promote open and regular conversations within Cockrell School communities about DEI-related concerns and initiatives.
1.4 Continue and extend programming to celebrate diverse cultures in the Cockrell School of Engineering.

**Implementation Strategies in Support of Outcome 2**

**Creating diverse pipelines**

2.1 Identify and implement ways to increase the pool of diverse undergraduate student applicants to the Cockrell School.
2.2 Create and support pipeline programs with minority-serving institutions to mentor racially diverse students into successful graduate school careers in our School.
2.3 Develop programming to mentor and support diverse undergraduate research participants into graduate school (e.g., through REU programs).
2.4 Develop intentional and coordinated outreach efforts to attract a more diverse pool of candidates for post-doctoral positions.
2.5 Understand, document, and address concerns and challenges related to recruiting diverse staff across different staff communities in the Cockrell School.
2.6 Collect best practices for diverse faculty recruiting from other institutions and create a faculty recruiting process that facilitates opportunities for faculty applicants from historically marginalized groups.
2.7 Develop programs and opportunities to prepare diverse mid-career faculty for leadership positions.

**Implementation Strategies in Support of Outcome 3**

**Increasing community diversity and awareness**

3.1 Train everyone involved in admissions and hiring about biases, including racism and sexism, and develop procedures that explicitly mitigate the disparate and negative impacts of these biases on hiring and admissions.
3.2 Create opportunities for continuous feedback and refinement of best procedures and practices for diverse recruiting of faculty, students, staff, and administrators.
Implementation Strategies in Support of Outcome 4
Retaining and recognizing diverse community members

4.1 Develop programs and resources for mentoring diverse faculty, staff, and administrators, including accessible “talking point” guides for mentors.
4.2 Ensure all staff have access to regular, high quality feedback about actionable steps and timelines for career advancement.
4.3 Develop strategies and policies to value/recognize DEI efforts and “invisible service”.
4.4 Develop a process for both “exit interviews” to survey faculty and staff who leave the Cockrell School about their experiences and decision to leave and “stay interviews” to collect data about faculty and staff who choose to remain in the Cockrell School.

Implementation Strategies in Support of Outcome 5
Improving the student experience

5.1 Continue to support and engage graduate students and faculty on discussions of best-practices in student mentoring; distill lessons in graduate student mentoring into a handbook of best practices.
5.2 Foster, support, validate, and engage with existing efforts by students to improve DEI in the community (e.g., through existing student organizations).
5.3 Recognize outstanding efforts related to retention of undergraduate and graduate students, with particular focus on impact of DEI efforts.

Implementation Strategies in Support of Outcome 6
Enabling individual and community success

6.1 Assess and improve the quality of mentoring of graduate students and faculty.
6.2 Identify and remove artificial barriers for undergraduate and graduate students, from curricula to policies to student programming.
6.3 Collect and analyze data on fellowship and scholarship awards (for graduate and undergraduate students) with respect to equitable distribution across diverse groups and use this data to support recruiting and retaining individuals from underrepresented groups.
6.4 Collect and analyze data on faculty, staff, and graduate student service obligations from an equity lens and use this data to develop strategies to balance service across all faculty, staff, and graduate students.
6.5 Collect feedback from diverse faculty, staff, post-docs, and students on impactful professional development programs; use this feedback to guide future community participation on professional development.
6.6 Regularly assess and evaluate the DEI programs that the school provides to ensure that they meet the needs of their target populations.

A Clear Path Forward

In the Cockrell School of Engineering, we are committed to diversity in its many forms, and we aim to promote an inclusive and equitable environment with a strong sense of belonging for all students, faculty, and staff. We recognize that individuals from all groups have not historically had the same access to engineering education, in general, and to the Cockrell School, more specifically, and we seek to address this moving forward. We recognize that the different spaces that community members inhabit may require different approaches to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We embrace the differences among us and strive to create learning and working environments enriched by those differences.

For questions or more information about the DEI Plan, contact Christine Julien, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Cockrell School of Engineering, at c.julien@utexas.edu.
Appendix B - Data and Charts

Faculty Five Year Trends
These first two charts show the demographics of the faculty by rank over the past five years.

Student Enrollments Five Year Trends
The next two charts show the demographics of undergraduate and graduate students over the past five years.

Undergraduate Student Graduation Rates
In the following charts, we show four and six year graduation rates both for students who started in CSE and graduated from CSE and for students who started in CSE and graduated from any program at UT. The years listed in the charts indicate the year the students entered the program.
Undergraduate Student Retention Rates

In the following charts, we show one and two year retention rates for students who started in CSE and remain in CSE and for students who started in CSE and remain in any program at UT. The years listed in the charts indicate the year the students entered the program.
Appendix C - Graduate Student Recruiting Handout

Welcome

You Belong Here is not a program or a campaign. There is no start or end date, and there is no sign-up sheet. Rather, it is an unwavering assertion — of a belief, a truth and a promise — that captures and defines our sustained commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. It is a statement of support for all members of our community, no matter who they are, where they’re from or what they look like.

The Cockrell School is committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment, free from all forms of hate, racism and injustice, where students, faculty and staff feel safe and supported. In this handout, you can find some descriptions of resources that are available to graduate students in the Cockrell School and at UT Austin. If you would like to learn more about any of these organizations or resources, we would be happy to coordinate meetings with representatives of the committees or you can contact them directly (contact info provided below).

Cockrell School and BME Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Resources

The role of the Associate Dean for DEI in the Cockrell School is currently filled by Christine Julien, Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. The Cockrell School Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion serves as a general voice and contact point for DEI-related efforts in the Cockrell School and is responsible for the Cockrell School DEI plan. The Associate Dean is also part of UT’s Coalition of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officers. This group collaborates on campus-wide DEI initiatives.

The Cockrell School’s DEI Plan is a living document that includes the school’s current implementation strategies tied to measurable outcomes. It is also associated with a DEI Annual Report that summarizes the previous year’s efforts and outcomes related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Within the Cockrell School, the Standing Committee on Diversity and Inclusion works to identify initiatives and strategies to attract a diverse community, foster an inclusive environment and improve the experiences of students, faculty and staff through program development and financial investment. The committee comprises faculty, staff and students engaged on a range of DEI-related issues. You can contact any of its members directly for more information. The Cockrell School is also home to the Women in Engineering Program (WEP) and the Equal Opportunity in Engineering (EOE) Program, which both support diverse current and prospective students. There are also several student organizations engaging in work related to DEI.

The Department of Biomedical Engineering (BME) is committed to providing an inclusive environment where our entire community can thrive. The BME Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee is currently led by Elizabeth Cosgriff-Hernandez and is composed of BME faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students. The DEI committee is developing a strategic plan to improve our recruitment and support of a diverse BME community, implement equitable processes, foster an inclusive environment, and improve the experiences of our students, faculty, and staff. Part of this effort is to connect the members of our BME community with resources at UT Austin and within the Cockrell School, including student organizations and campus partners that support diverse engineering student populations. Among these are the Graduates for Underrepresented Minorities (GUM), Black Graduate Student Association, Latinx Graduate Student Association at UT Austin, Society of Women Engineers Graduate Committee, Association for Women in Science at UT Austin, and the Queer
Graduate Student Association (QGSA). In addition to these student organizations, there are a number of campus resources to support students including the Gender and Sexuality Center, the University Ombuds Office, the Anxiety and Stress Clinic, the Counseling and Mental Health Center, and the Diversity Counseling and Outreach Specialists. Additionally, the BME DEI committee has spearheaded efforts to increase transparency in the graduate admissions process and created resources for applicants on preparing a strong application.

Inclusive Teaching Resources

Everyone in the Cockrell School has a hand in making our spaces open, accessible, and inclusive of everyone. This is no more evident anywhere than within our classrooms and research spaces. We have assembled a set of inclusive teaching resources for faculty and teaching assistants to learn and adopt inclusive teaching practices. In addition, the University’s Faculty Innovation Center also has a more in depth set of inclusive teaching and learning resources and recommendations available to all faculty on campus.

For more information...

Feel free to reach out and ask about any of these organizations or resources or with any other questions about diversity, equity and inclusion at any time. We encourage you to explore the resources on our BME DEI webpage.

Contacts

- Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Dr. Christine Julien, c.julien@utexas.edu
- Director of the Women in Engineering Program – Tricia Berry, triciaberry@utexas.edu
- Director of the Equal Opportunity in Engineering Program – Enrique Dominguez, enrique.dominguez@austin.utexas.edu
- Chair of the BME DEI Committee – Dr. Elizabeth Cosgriff-Hernandez, cosgriff.hernandez@utexas.edu
- Cockrell School DEI Representative – Dr. Tyrone Porter, tmp6@utexas.edu
- BME Minority Affairs Representative – Dr. Mia Markey, mia.markey@utexas.edu
- BME DEI Graduate Student Representative – Andrew Robinson, ajrobinson@utexas.edu
- BME DEI Undergraduate Student Representative – Destiny Harris, destiny.harris@utexas.edu
- BME DEI Staff Representative – Monique Burney, monique@austin.utexas.edu
Appendix D - Faculty Recruiting Handout

Cockrell School of Engineering

RESOURCES FOR PROSPECTIVE FACULTY

Welcome
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University Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources
At the University level, the office of the Vice Provost for Diversity supports a variety of efforts to recruit and retain a diverse faculty and to support an inclusive climate on campus. In particular, three councils have been established to advance faculty diversity, remove barriers, ensure fairness in university policies and practices, and to generally facilitate an inclusive climate for faculty. These are the Council for Racial and Ethnic Equity and Diversity (CREED), the University Faculty Gender Equity Council (UFGEC), and the Council for LGBTQ+ Access, Equity, and Inclusion (Q+AEI), all of which include representatives from the Cockrell School.

The University of Texas at Austin is also an institutional member of the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, which grants access to many resources free and on-demand to all faculty.
The campus’s Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) cultivates an inclusive campus as well as leading community engagement activities, K-12 initiatives, and academic programs. In addition, DDCE supports a number of University Resource Groups that provide a voice for diverse groups on campus as well as leadership training, professional development, celebrations, and community service opportunities.

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For more information …

Feel free to reach out and ask about any of these organizations or resources or with any other questions about diversity, equity and inclusion at any time.

Contacts

- Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion — Prof. Christine Julien, c.julien@utexas.edu
- Engineering Faculty Women’s Organization — Prof. Lynn Katz, lynn.katz@mail.utexas.edu
- Director of the Women in Engineering Program — Tricia Berry, tricia.berry@utexas.edu
- Director of the Equal Opportunity in Engineering Program — Enrique Dominguez, enrique.dominguez@austin.utexas.edu
- Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity (Executive Director for Diversity) — Prof. Loida Contreras, lcontreras@che.utexas.edu
- CREED (Cockrell School member) — Prof. Raissa Ferron, rferron@mail.utexas.edu
- UFGEC (Cockrell School member and co-chair) — Prof. Lynn Katz, lynn.katz@mail.utexas.edu
- Q+AEI (Cockrell School member) — Prof. Patricia Clayton, clayton@utexas.edu

https://faculty.innovate.utexas.edu/instructional-strategies/inclusive-teaching-and-learning