

**Texas A&M University School of Law  
2016 Diversity Plan Accountability Report**

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Texas A&M University School of Law (TAMU Law), through its Diversity Council, submits its 2016 University Diversity Plan Accountability Report.

Of the fifteen Vision 2020 peer institutions with law schools,<sup>1</sup> we chose as our peer aspirants the University of California-Davis, the University of Maryland, and the University of Texas. We chose the first two schools because they have good reputations for diversity, and we chose the third because we are, and will continue to be, competing for many of the same students. To prepare the report, we accessed the other schools' web site materials and publicly available information on salaries, and we spoke to the officials most familiar with diversity efforts at the schools.

**I. ACCOUNTABILITY**

**A. Recruitment**

**1. Student Diversity**

TAMU Law employs two strategies to promote student body diversity: (1) the direct recruitment of diverse students and (2) the development of "pipeline" programs to foster relationships with potential future students.

TAMU Law actively recruits applicants from underrepresented populations. These applicants include women, persons from low socioeconomic status groups, and racial and ethnic minorities. Law school representatives attend recruitment fairs, prelaw association meetings, and events that focus on the development of racial and ethnic minority students and women as leaders. These gatherings take place throughout the primary recruiting region and in national venues. TAMU Law places special emphasis on recruiting events at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and at institutions affiliated with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) that have achieved the designation of Hispanic Serving Institution or Associate Member.

TAMU Law organizes and participates in several "pipeline" programs designed to develop long-term relationships with historically underrepresented, economically disadvantaged, and first-generation college students. At the college level, these programs include the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) prelaw seminars, the Law School Admission Council (LSAC) Discover Law programs (high school and early college), the LSAC Pipeline Diversity Conference, the UT-El Paso Law School Preparation Institute, and the UT-Rio Grande Valley Law School Preparation Institute. TAMU Law is also in the process of establishing pipeline programs with Texas A&M University-Commerce, Texas A&M International University, and Tarrant County College. In addition to these college-level programs, TAMU Law has developed pipeline programs in middle and high schools with the goal of cultivating relationships with future law students at an even earlier stage.

As the tables below show, TAMU Law has had moderate success at diversifying its student body. Of the Vision 2020 schools that have law schools, TAMU Law currently ranks 9th of 16 in its percentage of students from racial and ethnic minority groups. Its minority percentage, 24.8%, is also close to but under the nationwide rate of 27% as reported by the National Association for Law Placement.

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<sup>1</sup> The Vision 2020 peer institutions with law schools are University of California—Berkeley, University of California—Davis, University of California—Los Angeles, University of Florida, University of Illinois, University of Maryland, Michigan State University, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of North Carolina, Ohio State University, Penn State University, University of Texas, University of Washington, and University of Wisconsin.

EVALUATION OF PEER INSTITUTIONS' STUDENT DIVERSITY IN 2015							
	Size	African-American	Hispanic	Asian-American	Multi-racial	Total Minority	Peer Rank
TAMU Law	581	6.2	13.6	2.4	2.1	24.8	9
UT Austin	956	5.5	14.4	7.1	4.8	32.1	5
University of Maryland	645	11.9	7.4	10.9	3.7	34.3	3
UC Davis	494	1.2	11.7	17.8	6.7	37.7	2

EVALUATION OF PEER INSTITUTIONS' STUDENT DIVERSITY IN 2014							
	Size	African-American	Hispanic	Asian-American	Multiracial	Total Minority	Peer Rank
TAMU Law	702	7.3	14.2	3.0	2.6	27.6	8
UT Austin	1031	4.8	15.5	6.9	4.7	32.0	5
University of Maryland	710	11.7	9.2	9.9	4.4	35.4	3
UC Davis	513	1.2	9.7	21.2	5.3	37.4	2

It is important to note that TAMU Law's diversity percentage dropped a small amount between 2014 and 2015, moving TAMU Law from 8th to 9th among its peer institutions. Information from 2016 will cause it to drop again by a small amount (1.2%), to 23.6%. These small drops may be due to competing goals of TAMU Law as a new institution. Specifically, the Law School is rapidly raising the credentials expected for admission to build its reputation. At the same time, the School seeks to become a leader in diversity, but the rise in admission requirements may render it more difficult to matriculate diverse students. Any tension between these goals will require continued attention and outreach.

With respect to gender diversity among its students, TAMU Law fares quite well among its peer institutions. It ranked 5th of 16 in 2014 and 7th of 16 in 2015. In 2016, TAMU Law's percentage of women is just below half, at 49.8%.

EVALUATION OF PEER INSTITUTIONS' STUDENT GENDER DIVERSITY						
	2014			2015		
	Size	% Female students	Peer Rank	Size	% Female students	Peer Rank
TAMU Law	702	48.4	5	581	48.5	7
UT Austin	1031	44.3	11	956	43.5	12
University of Maryland	710	52.6	3	645	49.5	5
UC Davis	513	51.4	2	494	53.4	2

## 2. Faculty Diversity

TAMU Law has had tremendous success in its hiring efforts over the last several years. The primary goal has been to hire faculty who already have great stature in their fields or show great promise in scholarship, but that has been accompanied by an eagerness to diversify the faculty when possible. Thus, the racial/ethnic diversity of TAMU Law's full-time faculty now ranks second only to UC Davis.

EVALUATION OF PEER INSTITUTIONS' FACULTY DIVERSITY BY FULL-TIME FACULTY ONLY								
	Spring 2014 Min %	Peer Rank	Fall 2014 Min %	Peer Rank	Spring 2015 Min %	Peer Rank	Fall 2015 Min %	Peer Rank
TAMU Law	21.43	3 (tie)	23.08	2	21.43	5	30.00	2
UT Austin	10.98	15	10.00	15	10.71	13	11.25	15
University of Maryland	25.0	2	19.6	6	19.15	8	20.41	7
UC Davis	39.02	1	39.13	1	35.71	1	37.21	1

With this said about the full-time faculty, the Law School needs to focus more on diversifying the larger group of teachers, especially the adjunct faculty. In 2014, the School hired 22 adjuncts in the spring and 26 in the fall, and none was a minority. In 2015, the School hired 38 adjuncts in the spring and 28 in the fall, and only one of the spring adjuncts was a minority. This cuts the percentage of minority faculty in half to 15%, and TAMU Law's peer rank drops to 7th. It is important to remember that the students' experience will involve the adjuncts almost as much as the full-time faculty.

TAMU Law should also focus on the gender diversity of its faculty. As the chart below shows, it has ranked poorly among its peers the last two years for gender diversity among the full-time faculty.

EVALUATION OF PEER INSTITUTIONS' GENDER DIVERSITY BY FULL-TIME FACULTY						
	2014			2015		
	Size of Faculty spring/fall	% Female Faculty	Peer Rank	Size of Faculty spring/fall	% Female Faculty	Peer Rank*
TAMU Law	28/26	42.9/34.6	12	28/30	39.3/43.3	11
UT Austin	82/80	39.0/40.0	11	84/80	40.5/41.3	13
University of Maryland	60/51	53.3/52.9	2	47/49	57.5/55.1	1
UC Davis	41/46	41.5/46.7	8	42/43	40.5/41.9	12

The percentage of women among the full-time faculty has increased in 2016 because five of the seven new hires—Lisa Alexander, Luz Herrera, Fatma Marouf, Elizabeth Trujillo, and Vanessa Casado-Perez—are women. Even so, as with the lack of racial and ethnic diversity among the adjuncts, there is a lack of gender diversity among adjuncts as well. In the spring of 2014, women made up 45% of the adjunct hires, but that percentage has crept steadily downward to 21.4% in the fall of 2015.

### 3. Staff Diversity

There are 68 members of the TAMU Law staff. Women make up 73.5%. The racial and ethnic makeup is 75% white, 13.2% African-American, 4.4% Native American, 5.9% Hispanic, and 1.5% multiracial. (Peer institution statistics were not available for staff members.) Given that nearly 19% of the Fort Worth population is African-American and 34% Hispanic, TAMU Law should consider what it can do to diversify staff hiring.

### 4. Peer Institution Initiatives

All of the institutions addressed here participate in diversity rich student-recruiting and pipeline programs. The top institutions, however, have a breadth to their pipeline programs that stands out.

At UC Davis, the law school operates the King Hall Outreach Program, or KHOP. KHOP is an educational program aimed at people underrepresented in the legal profession. The program convenes twice a year for five

Saturdays, and the participants are introduced to lawyering and what it takes to apply to and finance law school. Each session has 10–20 students, and they cannot be current applicants. The program is offered at no cost.

At the University of Maryland, the law school received a Top 10 Diversity Matters Award. This LSAC award recognizes law schools that have demonstrated the highest level of outreach to racially and ethnically diverse potential law students. Maryland’s award was based on its bringing diverse students to campus by hosting six different events, including a mock city council meeting with real Baltimore City Council members.

Officials at both UC Davis and Maryland say that their pipeline programs do not necessarily feed students directly into their law schools. The programs do help diversify the profession at large, however, and most importantly for recruiting, they give the schools a reputation for diversity.

Indeed, UC Davis probably holds the second spot for student diversity among TAMU Law’s peers largely because of the reputation it has gained as the leader in *faculty* diversity. It seems unlikely that leadership with students can exist independent of leadership with faculty.

## **B. Retention**

Retaining diverse students has not been a problem for TAMU Law; their rate of attrition has for several years mirrored their presence in the student population. We attribute this to a robust Academic Support Program, in which each first-year student is assigned a teaching assistant and can attend weekly support sessions. The Law School has also added, just this past fall, a Faculty Advisor program. Under that program, each first-year student is assigned a faculty advisor to help guide him or her. In a testament to the School’s commitment, 35 faculty members volunteered to be advisors.

## **II. CLIMATE**

### **A. TAMU Law**

#### **1. Diversity Council**

Prior to Fall 2015, TAMU Law had a Diversity Committee consisting only of faculty members. We are now in the second year of the Diversity *Council*, which comprises equal numbers of students, staff, and faculty. The change has been very successful in broadening the perspective of the group and allowing the voices of different stakeholders to be heard.

#### **2. The Comprehensive Climate Survey**

Because TAMU Law had never undertaken a climate survey before, the Diversity Council asked the school to hire a consultant to develop and anonymously administer a comprehensive survey. To our great fortune, we were able to work with national expert Dr. Sue Rankin and her firm, Rankin & Associates, to develop a survey perfectly suited to TAMU Law. Several members of the Diversity Council committed to summer sessions at which the survey questions were developed.

The month-long implementation of the survey could not have been more successful. The Diversity Council launched an extensive and enthusiastic campaign for everyone to participate. And although Dr. Rankin reports that participation at schools ordinarily averages 35%, TAMU Law had an 85.6% participation rate among faculty, an 80.6% completion rate among students, and a 100% completion rate for staff!

The results of the survey will be presented in the spring to all stakeholders at once. Dr. Rankin will identify climate issues that require immediate action. From there, it will be the Diversity Council’s and administration’s job to create a strategic plan for addressing any concerns the survey has identified.

#### **3. Diversity Programming**

In July 2015, TAMU Law hired Jack Manhire to serve as its Director of Program Development. In addition to his academic publishing on improved methods of measuring law student diversity, Manhire developed his “Breaking Bias” program, an experiential workshop exploring how unconscious bias affects individuals within an organization and suggesting practical strategies for neutralizing its effects. The workshop has now been presented to faculty, staff, and upper-level students several times and to the TAMU Leadership Institute. From the fall of 2016 forward, all first-year law students will be required to complete a two-hour version of the workshop during orientation week.

## B. Peer Institutions

Diversity and climate issues are handled differently at TAMU Law’s peer institutions. It appears that none of the schools has a diversity-focused committee. At Maryland Law, diversity issues are handled by the Associate Dean of Diversity and Inclusion. At UC Davis Law, the smallest peer, diversity issues are handled by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. At the University of Texas Law, the largest peer, one asking about diversity issues is referred to the Associate Dean for Experiential Education.

As this variety suggests, only Maryland seems to be placing emphasis on climate initiatives. The Associate Dean position there has just been created and filled this fall, but the school has already presented some interesting programs. At orientation, the first-year students attended a talk on implicit bias and broke up into small groups of 20-25 afterward to discuss the issue. Vernā Myers of TED Talk fame was invited to speak on diversity. There has been cultural competence training offered on immigration and on the LGBT community. The school has presented a program on the violence in Baltimore. Most recently, there has been a program designed to support those feeling excluded because of their conservative preferences. The Associate Dean stated that he intended to meet individually with every student group to see what climate issues needed attention.

This focus on Maryland’s positive efforts should not be taken to imply anything negative about the climate at UC Davis. When asked about climate there, the Associate Dean said simply that UC Davis did not need to do much to make diverse students feel comfortable, largely because nearly 40% of the students and faculty at any given time are diverse. She also pointed out that the physical space itself enhances the climate for people of color. The law school is named King Hall after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and there are quotes from Dr. King, as well as a great many images of successful graduates of color, on the walls around the building.

TAMU Law could take cues from both schools in building a comfortably diverse climate. Like Maryland, TAMU Law may want to present more cultural competence training, either as part of the curriculum or on a presentation basis. And like UC Davis, the School should pay close attention to whether the physical space reflects the diversity of the students who attend.

## III. EQUITY

Perhaps because TAMU Law has never conducted a climate survey, the Diversity Council is uncertain whether there are a variety of complaints about equity. Only one—gender differences in faculty salaries—has come to the Council’s attention.

Fortunately, before the Council acted, the Dean realized that there were several discrepancies in salaries and arranged this summer for a TAMU economist to review them. Providing the economist with each person’s demographics and performance on the scorecard, the Dean asked her to make the salaries more equitable. The effort was largely successful, as the following table shows.

EVALUATION OF PEER INSTITUTIONS’ FACULTY SALARIES AND GENDER DIFFERENTIAL				
	Overall Salaries	Men’s Salaries	Women’s Salaries	Differentials
TAMU Law	Avg: \$167,049 Med: \$157,123	Avg: \$172,646 Med: \$157,123	Avg: \$161,218 Med: \$159,750	Avg: -6.6% Med: +1.6%
UT Austin	Avg: \$175,956 Med: \$188,454	Avg: \$193,609 Med: \$205,710	Avg: \$144,511 Med: \$143,370	Avg: -25.4% Med: -30.3%
University of Maryland	Avg: \$204,521 Med: \$199,500	Avg: \$217,136 Med: \$213,500	Avg: \$193,846 Med: \$192,000	Avg: -10.7% Med: -10.1%
UC Davis	Avg: \$172,041 Med: \$173,734	Avg: \$183,586 Med: \$179,653	Avg: \$159,818 Med: \$159,136	Avg: -13% Med: -11.4%