PREAMBLE

The School of Communication is committed to diversity as a fundamental value in fulfilling its mission. It is important to acknowledge and appreciate the variety of characteristics that make individuals unique in an atmosphere that promotes and embraces individual and collective achievements. The School recognizes the critical importance of educating its students to embrace diversity as an important consideration in their careers and as a means of contributing to society.

Diverse individuals and groups bring varied human characteristics to the School. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, differences in race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, learning style, national origin, socioeconomic status, marital status, religion, veteran status and political thought.

A diverse School provides for a diverse classroom setting, which facilitates exchange among individuals with different perspectives. The School will expose students to alternative viewpoints and will encourage critical thinking related to diversity and to multicultural and global issues. In addition to ensuring that diversity is an emphasis in classes and curriculum, the School will work to ensure that diversity is reflected in student, administrator, faculty and staff recruitment, and in its activities, initiatives, programs and outreach.

All faculty, staff and administrators share responsibility for achieving these diversity goals.

Goal: Climate

The School is committed to a climate in which students, faculty, staff and administrators can freely express themselves and interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds. The School will take active steps to foster a diversity-friendly environment so that individuals from various backgrounds and perspectives will feel included. This plan also is intended to foster mutual respect among those diverse individuals.

In keeping with the diverse culture of the University as a whole, the School promotes openness, acceptance and inclusiveness. The School is firmly committed to fostering free speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Strategies

1) The School actively communicates its commitment to diversity through its publications, recruitment and other materials.

2) The School’s administrators, faculty and staff work to ensure that students are provided with an open and inclusive environment, and will seek diversity in hiring and appointing student workers and members of other groups where opportunities exist to foster a diverse environment.
3) The School will seek to reward and recognize administrators, faculty and staff who have contributed to the advancement of a climate of inclusiveness and acceptance or by nominating them for similar recognition by professional or academic groups.

4) The School encourages administrators, faculty and staff development in areas that will serve to promote a diverse and accepting culture and climate.

Goal: Student Recruitment and Retention

A goal of the recruitment and retention plan of the School is to attract, recruit and retain undergraduate and graduate students to achieve a diverse student body. The School emphasizes and promotes diversity in its outreach and service to professional organizations, the community, high school and college students and teachers, and other groups. In such interactions, administrators, faculty, staff and students encourage positive attitudes toward multiculturalism and showcase the School’s commitment to diversity.

Strategies

1) Continually update design and copy for School of Communication materials that recruit individuals to the undergraduate and graduate programs. This includes such materials as brochures, poster folds, and contact cards that are distributed by the Admissions Office.

2) The School will make scholarship and financial aid information readily available, in addressing recruitment and retention, as a means of achieving diversity goals.

3) The School will seek relationships with professional and academic organizations, programs and/or conferences that promote diversity, as a means of providing additional ways for students to learn about diversity, as well as to network with professionals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

4) The School’s Diversity Committee will serve as a sounding board for ideas from administrators, faculty, staff and students on ways to foster diversity within the School and will provide support for diversity initiatives.

5) The School encourages administrators, faculty, staff and students to engage in Radford University’s Scholar-Citizen initiative, experiential learning endeavors, and service-learning projects in the community that expose students to diversity issues beyond their previous experience.

6) Various social media channels are used to publicize diverse activities and events associated with the School of Communication.

Goal: Administrator, Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Advancement

The School consistently endeavors to recruit, retain and promote administrators, faculty and staff members to facilitate diversity. The School will strive for representation at or above that of the overall University, especially in the hiring of female administrators, faculty and staff, as well as candidates of color, and will encourage them in seeking administrative roles. The School will foster and support research and creative activity that addresses issues of diversity and multiculturalism.
**Strategies**

1) All search advertisements include language that encourages applications from diverse groups, including women and minorities.
2) All search committees include as diverse a membership as possible.
3) The School will seek to have its searches be as broad as possible, utilizing many publication outlets, to have a more diverse and qualified pool of candidates from the increased exposure.
4) Search committees will identify and update venues for reaching female and minority prospects. Members of the search committees will make personal contact with diverse potential applicants, programs and organizations that represent individuals who would add to faculty diversity.
5) The School will participate in conferences and similar meetings to increase its recognition among potential minority administrators, faculty and staff candidates. Administrators, faculty and staff will be encouraged to participate in and attend conferences with diversity themes. Faculty may serve as presenters, discussants and panelists in such conferences and conventions.
6) The School will encourage women and minority members of the faculty, administrators and staff to take part in leadership training, including but not limited to those programs sponsored by the University, academic or professional organizations.
7) The School fosters collaborative faculty research that includes female and minority faculty.
8) Faculty members are encouraged to include diversity issues in their research.

**Goal: Curriculum**

The School will develop and monitor its curriculum to ensure that it addresses issues of multiculturalism and the contributions of minorities and will provide support for extracurricular activities that contribute to multiculturalism. As part of the curriculum, issues such as accuracy and ethics will be stressed to students as important in addressing multiculturalism and other issues of diversity. The School’s curriculum also will address the related topic of globalization as that relates to the understanding of other cultures both at home and abroad.

**Strategies**

1) The School’s faculty will be encouraged to develop course content and assignments on an on-going basis that help students to achieve learning objectives in diversity and multiculturalism. Instructors are encouraged to identify in syllabi and the classroom the content and activities that address diversity and multicultural issues.
2) All undergraduate students are required to take at least two courses in national and international perspectives as a part of their General Education requirements.
3) As a part of an alumni survey, questions will be used to determine introduction and exposure to concepts of diversity and inclusiveness in the curriculum/classroom while a student, as well as experiences with diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace. This should give us a base to assess how we’re promoting diversity in the curriculum and will give us an idea of trends in the industries our students are entering.

4) Faculty of the School strive to support and attend campus and community sponsored events that highlights multicultural and diversity programming.

5) The School will encourage the development and offering of classes emphasizing diversity in both the undergraduate and graduate program. Such classes already include COMS 457 Diversity in Communication and COMS 658 Diversity in the Workplace.

6) The School will propose joint listing such classes as COMS 451 Intercultural and International Communication and COMS 452 International Film and Electronic Media for our undergraduate and graduate students, and encourage students from other programs, such as women’s studies, to enroll in these courses.

7) Through its own programming the School will invite professionals to speak on programs relevant to the diversity dialogue in order to expose students to diversity issues and provide mentorship.

8) All students will be encouraged to participate in national, state and local conferences, programs, lectures and other events that promote diversity.

9) Students are encouraged to participate in Study Abroad programs and international internships such as those offered by the School of Communication.

10) The School will support a variety of initiatives and groups that promote diversity. Those include having representatives from relevant professional organizations visit the School as guest speakers and in other capacities, involving these groups in the School’s internship opportunities and related activities, and incorporating diverse and multicultural speakers and events into Communication Week.

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Communication, April 2013.