

# The 2016 Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Inventory: Responses

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College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

In October 2016, the IDEA committee asked chairs and directors of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) to fill out a questionnaire to learn how departments, programs, and other units seek to create a more inclusive and diverse campus. The goal was to obtain a snapshot of what is working well and identify areas of improvement across the college.

Twenty-four chairs and directors filled out the inventory. The co-chairs of the IDEA committee read each response and compiled highlights in the present document.

## Curriculum

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### Out of the 24 units that responded,

- 15 units in the college teach ACE 9 courses (“Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue.”)
- 8 units require majors to take a course on socioeconomic class, race, or gender.
- 14 units encourage students to participate in community internships or outreach that allows them to learn about or promote inclusion and/or diversity.
- 12 units offered colloquia or talks specifically related to inclusion and/or diversity in the last academic year.
- 13 units encourage the use of inclusive teaching practices in the classroom.

### Highlights of Initiatives

Math: “All of our pre-calculus courses are taught in an “active learning” environment; i.e., there is no lecturing, and the students work in groups on worksheets during class. We believe this promotes a more “inclusive” learning environment than simply lecturing.”

Computer Science: “We have modified our introductory class offerings to promote diversity and inclusion by (a) incorporating teamwork in lab exercises and (b) designing problems that connect computing concepts to real world problems. Both of these have been shown to attract and retain women and URM students to computing.”

Ethnic Studies: “We offer three paid (\$12/hr, 6 hrs/week) internships each semester at local organizations that focus on race, ethnicity, and social justice, such as the Malone Center, El Centro, the Indian Center, the ACLU, and so on. A private donor funds these. The internships particularly enable economically disadvantaged students, who might otherwise have to work to support themselves, to have valuable professionalization experiences instead.”

English: Our initiative in African Poetics. We now have 6 faculty members who work on Africa, and these colleagues are currently in the process of designing a curriculum in African Poetics (poetics is not to be confused with “poetry”; African poetics includes poetry from the continent but is broader in scope: it’s the study of Africa’s multi-faceted intellectual traditions and how those intersect with artistic and aesthetic expressions. We have already started to promote this new development (brought about through three recent hires that doubled our faculty working on

African Poetics) by creating and disseminating an electronic poster featuring our faculty members. This initiative is connected to other activities in the department spearheaded by Kwame Dawes (the African Poetry Book Fund published by UN Press and run out of the Prairie Schooner office, for example).

Physics: “Heavily advertised in all our classes and in Jorgensen Hall’s hallway electronic signage, students are encourage to register for, or attend without registration, the events in our annual Women in the Physical Sciences conference, which highlights the work of invited nationally prominent women scientists, and attracts 75 undergraduate women engaged in research, reporting (through selected plenary talks and contributions to a large poster session). This is an outreach and recruitment effort, but many instructors give points or written homework designed around the presentations at this conference.”

Sociology: “Students can have a focus area in social inequality in our major or minor.”

## Students

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- 12 units engage in outreach to recruit historically underrepresented undergraduate students.
- 12 units engage in outreach to recruit historically underrepresented graduate students.
- 10 units have initiatives to retain historically underrepresented undergraduate students.
- 9 units have initiatives to retain historically underrepresented graduate students.

## Highlights of Initiatives

Computer Science:

- “We are members of the BRAID initiative (Building Recruiting and Inclusion for Diversity).
- We send 15+ students to the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in IT conference each year.
- We established the “Computing for all” Student Run Organization (SRO) to promote diversity in computing.
- We support student groups who are teaching after school courses in LPS schools with significant underrepresented minority populations.
- We sponsor an NCWIT Aspirations in computing program to recruit female high school students.
- We run several summer camps to expose girls to computing.”

Math:

- “We host a number of events designed to encourage women in mathematics at both the undergraduate and graduate level.
- For instance, we host an annual conference called the Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in Mathematics ([www.math.unl.edu/~ncuwm/19thAnnual/](http://www.math.unl.edu/~ncuwm/19thAnnual/)). This is the preeminent national conference showcasing research in mathematics done by undergraduate women.
- We also host two week-long summer camps, called All Girls/All Math, for high school girls interested in mathematics. See [www.math.unl.edu/programs/agam](http://www.math.unl.edu/programs/agam).

- Finally, we have an undergraduate student organization called the Women's Undergraduate Math Network, which host various events targeting issues related to being a female undergraduate mathematics major."

#### Anthropology:

- "We have attempted to design and outfit classrooms and labs (e.g., Digital Lab) with furniture that accommodates students with mobility issues but our space constraints have made these efforts only partially successful. (Affected students note they have to enter classroom early in order to position wheelchair.)
- We have relationships with local federal agencies such as the National Park Service Midwest Archeological Center and, on an ad hoc basis, seek their help with supplemental employment for students from diverse backgrounds. Several Native American students have been supported in this fashion."

#### Physics:

- "We have pipelines established, through the MRSEC and AMOP PoE summer intern programs with a number of Hispanic-serving undergraduate institutions (UC-San Bernardino, University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez, and University of Puerto Rico-Humacao).
- Our Cosmic Ray Observatory Project (CROP) works with underrepresented second-chance students enrolled in the first generation College preparation program Acceleré in the Omaha inner city, and rural school districts with a sizable immigrant population in ESU 2.
- Our (EPSCoR sponsored) summer internships for high school students include students from all of Lincoln's High Schools, and many of the brightest most passionate applicants include female and underrepresented minorities.
- The earlier mentioned WoPHYS conferences are part of our recruitment efforts to increase the number of female applicants in our graduate student applicant pool."

#### Psychology:

- The graduate clinical program directly solicits applications from the McNair recruitment list

#### Modern Languages:

- "MLL's spring Language Fair routinely attracts more than 1000 high-school students to the UNL campus."

#### Sociology:

- "We have a grant called a "Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) focused on minority health disparities that has successfully recruited many students from historically underrepresented groups. We actively recruit the participants to attend graduate school.
- We seek and foster McNair students in research experiences.
- We brought a speaker to campus who wrote a book on mentoring graduate students with an emphasis on first generation students.
- We are beginning a relationship with an historically black college to encourage students to apply for graduate school.
- We have an early career speaker series in which we invite Ford Foundation Fellows and winners of Minority Fellowships from the American Sociological Association to give colloquiums.

- We have a teaching post doc who is from an historically underrepresented group who teaches our large introductory course and has helped to recruit students to our major.
- We have scholarships and awards focused on recognizing contributions to and enhancing diversity.
  - The *Opportunities Scholarship* for students aligned with the criteria for the Nebraska Preparatory Academy to support students who focus on the area of social inequality in our major or minor.
  - Undergraduate Sociology Student Paper Competition *Award in Race, Class, or Gender to Honor Vanetta Aaron, M.A.* Undergraduate majors in Sociology are invited to submit papers on the topic of race, class, or gender to the annual paper competition. The author of the top paper will be awarded \$100 and their name will be added to a commemorative plaque located in the Sociology Department.
  - *Ed A. Munoz Latina/o Sociology Excellence Award.* Ed A. Munoz is a Department of Sociology Alumni, receiving his Ph.D. in 1995. Recipients must be either an undergraduate or graduate student who demonstrates a focus on Latina/o culture or ethnicity through scholarly work or research. Award is to be used to fund research and/or cover travel expenses associated with research activities or attendance or participation in a conference.

#### Chemistry:

- “For student recruitment purposes, the UNL Chemistry Department typically sends a faculty member to the national meetings of SACNAS (Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science), and/or of AISES (American Indian Science and Engineering Society). The Department Chair (Berkowitz) attended a recent NOBCCChE (National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers) national meeting.”
- Summer research: NSF-funded Research Experience for Undergraduates in Chemical Assembly
- UNL Trio’s Upward Bound Math Science program
- American Chemical Society-funded Project SEED: Every year we host 1 to 3 Project SEED students, who are selected because they are economically disadvantaged and science-interested high school students. In our case, all have also been either female and/or from underrepresented groups. They participate in the same activities as the REU students. All 7 of these students enrolled at UNL – all but one as a science major. One of them is a scholarship-winning chemistry major in his junior year.
- UNL Chemistry-funded Faculty/Student Pair Summer Research Program: Every year we host 1 faculty and student from a college with few research opportunities. The students have all been either female and/or from underrepresented groups.
- Sovereign Native Youth Program, sponsored by the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs

#### English:

- “Our English Freshmen mentoring program is designed to promote success and retention for all new majors in English & Film Studies but especially those first-generation and other historically underrepresented students. The program requires new freshmen to attend 3 events (designed to tackle key issues in retention like peer socialization, professionalization, and timely advising) *and* pairs new students with successful current majors.”
- “We are about to hold our first forum for teachers of color, international students, and/or queer teachers to talk together about the challenges of teaching courses at UNL, particularly when those courses might critically examine texts that invite students to think

and write about social justice and cultural politics. This is a new initiative spearheaded by Stacey Waite, Amelia Montes, and Kwame Dawes and is in response to various issues some of our GTAs have experienced in the last few semesters. The intent is to hold such a forum once each semester.”

Ethnic Studies:

- Particularly related to graduate student retention are our Research Roundtables, at which graduate students and faculty members present work-in-progress in a warm, supportive, informal atmosphere and receive feedback. Graduate students have used these Roundtables as opportunities to trial-run conference papers, for example. We host these Roundtables twice each semester.

## **Staff**

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### **Highlights of Initiatives**

- “Professional staff can apply for up to \$500 support to attend a conference or professional development opportunities. Several staff have participated in such events related to diversity since this program was initiated.” “We do encourage the staff to take part in training and other initiatives that benefit them and we cover the costs.”
- “hiring at low salaries has become an issue. I have successfully argued to increase the wages (within the appropriate guidelines) to hire at the upper end of the scale.”

## **Faculty**

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Note: Numbers may not add up due to units not having lecturers and/or professors of practice.

- 1 unit has formal mentoring for lecturers, 5 units do informal mentoring
- 9 units have formal mentoring for professors of practice, 4 units do informal mentoring
- 15 units have formal mentoring for assistant professors, 4 units do informal mentoring
- 5 units have formal mentoring for associate professors, 10 units have informal mentoring

### **Highlights of Initiatives**

Ethnic Studies:

- funded 3 mid-career faculty members’ participation (\$3,450 each) in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity’s 12-week online Faculty Success Program, the objective of which is to increase research productivity and bolster retention/promotion by mentoring faculty on goal setting and time management

Computer science, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, and Biological Sciences all mentioned that they had increased the number of women faculty in the last five years.

Departments agree that joint hires with Ethnic Studies help increase diversity in the faculty

## **Institutional efforts**

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- 4 units have a diversity and inclusion committee or point person