Comprehensive Diversity Plan
for the Research Division

Introduction

In 1999, Cornell University developed its vision for a diverse and inclusive community, *Open Doors, Open Hearts, and Open Minds: Cornell's Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness*. This vision provides the basis for the development of the Research Division's diversity initiative. The Research Division is committed to diversity, inclusiveness, and a welcoming environment for its faculty, academic and non-academic staff, and students. Achieving diversity and inclusiveness within the Research Division means taking steps to ensure that its community reflects the diversity of our nation's population and that we have cultivated an environment that welcomes the richness of this diversity. The Research Division recruits faculty, researchers, students, and sponsors internationally, so it is imperative that we achieve and maintain cultural competency and diversity.

Ezra Cornell and Andrew Dickson White founded Cornell University on the principles of diversity and inclusiveness. In a letter dated February 17, 1867, to his granddaughter Eunice, Ezra Cornell stated: “I want to have girls educated in the university as well as boys, so that they may have the same opportunity to become wise and useful to society that the boys have.” And, in 1874, in response to an inquiry about the presence of students of color at Cornell, Andrew Dickson White stated “…and if even one [student of color] offered himself and passed the examinations, we should receive him even if all our five hundred white students were to ask for dismissal on that account.”

The Research Division embraces this commitment to diversity and inclusiveness as reflected in its values and programs. Our commitment to diversity and inclusiveness does not depend on legislative mandates and compliance measures, but on resolve, consistent with its mission, to “serve society by educating the leaders of tomorrow and extending the frontiers of knowledge… and by engaging men and women from every segment of society in this quest.”

The Research Division’s mission is to work with the Cornell Community to plan and coordinate research and represent the University in research matters as they relate to external agencies and sponsors. It also supports the activities of technology transfer and economic development. The research being done at Cornell is state of the art and often has never been done before. This level of research requires that we have the best and the brightest minds from all over the world working with the latest scientific technology and machinery to ensure the best possible outcome.
Components of the Research Division’s Comprehensive Diversity Plan

The Research Division’s plan is based on the twelve attributes of diversity that were developed during the 1998 Netter Seminar\(^1\) drawing on the work of the *Workplace Diversity Network: A Joint Project of the National Conference for Community and Justice and Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations*. These attributes are:

1. An established foundation for diversity and inclusiveness
2. A demonstrated commitment, development, and implementation of programs to promote diversity and inclusiveness
3. The accommodation of diverse physical and developmental abilities
4. Access to opportunity/succession planning
5. A holistic view of the Research Division’s community members
6. Shared accountability for the University’s and the Research Division’s mission
7. A commitment to community partnerships
8. A demonstrated commitment to continuous learning
9. Participatory work and learning processes
10. Recognition of the Research Division’s organizational culture and process
11. Communication/information sharing
12. Collaborative conflict resolution processes

1 & 2. Established Foundation for Diversity and Inclusiveness, and Development and Implementation of Programs to Promote Diversity and Inclusiveness

The Research Division commits to adhering to the University’s policies of non-discrimination and religious observance. This will be accomplished through the following strategies:

\(^{1}\) In 1958, the Netter Seminar was instituted by Richard Netter to bring management, labor, education, and government together to develop employment practices that embrace diversity and promote a fair workplace for all individuals. Since that time, there have been regular meetings to address diversity issues. In 1998, the meeting focused on developing the attributes of a diverse and inclusive environment. These attributes have been used by a number of employers to establish their diversity initiatives.
a. Recruitment Strategies
The University’s *Open Doors, Open Hearts, and Open Minds: Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness* incorporates a desire to have a community that reflects a wide representation of attribute diversity \(^2\) (different personal characteristics such as race, sex/gender, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, veteran status, ex-offender status as well as other bases both protected by federal and local law and generally represented in the community external to Cornell).

To carry out its demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, the Research Division Human Resources Director will ensure that the Division employs comprehensive strategies in the areas of recruiting, hiring, and promoting women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans, and works to achieve the annual affirmative action goals for women and minorities by regularly monitoring the progress in achieving these goals consistent with local workforce availability. \(^3\) The Research Division will collaborate with the Recruitment and Employment Center and the Vice Provost for Diversity and Faculty Development in recruiting and hiring diverse staff. This will be accomplished by utilizing recruitment materials and publications that reflect the diversity of our community, establishing relationships with community organizations related to the subject matter of the research within the Division, and developing strategic recruitment plans for all open positions.

In addition, the Research Division will partner with the University’s diversity recruiter, the Dual Career Counselor, and the Diversity Consortium of Tompkins County to identify appropriate talent. In addition, the Division will complete comprehensive search plans for academic positions and submit them through Taleo to the Vice Provost for Diversity and Faculty Development. The Division will also follow the Filling Vacancies policy, including review of non-academic applicant pools to ensure diversity.

The Research Division will implement strategies to address the recruitment and retention of dual career couples, working closely with the Dual Career Consultant to address retention. We will also utilize an exit interview program, which incorporates issues of attribute diversity, to determine why staff and faculty leave voluntarily.

Due to cutting-edge research that is being conducted in our facilities, recruitment is often specialized and international in scope. Many times only a handful of individuals have the knowledge and skills to fulfill the needs of a project, and sometimes there may be only one individual. Therefore, in addition to following established procedures for recruiting and filling academic and non-academic positions, the Research Division will continue its pipeline programs for these research initiatives. This effort will consist of an annual review of current pipeline programs in the Research Division to support diversity issues and ensure a program that is consistent with the division’s needs and organizational culture.

\(^2\) The term “attribute diversity” is used by Roosevelt Thomas in his book, *Building a House for Diversity*, to distinguish between the demographic aspects of individuals and the processes that are developed and implemented to create an inclusive environment.

\(^3\) The Tompkins County 2000 census reports 85.5% of the county population as “white,” 3.6% “black,” 0.3% “Native American,” 7.2% “Asian,” and 3.1% “Hispanic.”
The Research Division’s workforce, as of May 2007, consisted of 608 employees on the Ithaca campus, plus as of May 2006 126 in Arecibo, PR, including academic and non-academic staff. Of these 608 employees in Ithaca, 33.2% are women and 14.5% are minorities.

As of May of 2007, the Research Division’s utilization of women in non-academic job groups exceeded that of the University as a whole in 20 of the job groups in which there are employees and was lower than the University’s in 23 of the job groups. The Research Division commits to making good faith efforts to have racial and gender diversity in every position selection.

b. Compliance Training
The Research Division’s Human Resources Director will ensure that all supervisory staff are trained in the areas of equal opportunity, disability and religious accommodations, and affirmative action on an annual basis. This will be accomplished through University training programs, ongoing Division-wide updates, updates during departmental meetings, and participation in the University’s supervisory training programs. The Division will also create and maintain the information management structures needed to keep supervisory staff informed and updated. This includes training staff for the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico where we have specialized diversity issues.

c. Religious Diversity
The Division is committed to providing an environment that is free from all discrimination prohibited by law, including discrimination on the basis of religion or creed, and one that is sensitive to the religious diversity of its employees. The Division therefore will make good faith efforts to provide a reasonable accommodation of an employee’s sincerely-held religious beliefs. The Division will follow the guidelines established through the University’s religious accommodation policy, which includes not scheduling significant meetings on religious holidays.

d. Complaint Procedures
The Research Division will inform, on an annual basis, all research staff including academic and non-academic staff, postdocs, and graduate students of established complaint procedures for addressing discrimination issues. This will be accomplished by providing a memorandum from the Senior Vice Provost for Research to the Research Division community outlining the expectations for a respectful work and educational environment, including information on the complaint procedures available to the community.

3. Accommodation of Diverse Physical and Developmental Abilities

The Research Division welcomes students, staff, and faculty with diverse physical and developmental abilities, and recognizes that disability status is not to be a factor in the denial of employment. Therefore, we will implement the following strategies:
a. **Disability Accommodation**
   To effectively accommodate the diverse physical and developmental abilities of faculty, staff, and students, the Research Division will utilize the Disability Accommodation Policy for staff and faculty and the services of the Disability Services office.

b. **Accessible Documents**
   For individuals with disabilities, the Research Division will make good faith efforts to use “customer-friendly” documents, such as employment applications, recruitment materials, and other official materials.

4. **Access to Opportunity/Succession Planning**

   The Research Division is committed to creating a professionally nurturing environment in which faculty, staff, and students have access to opportunities for personal and professional growth. It is in the interest of the Division to invest and develop more talent within the research areas in which we work. Often, diversity recruitment is impossible because there are only a few possible applicants due to the unique nature of the research. By nurturing a diverse group of students, staff and faculty, we are investing in a diverse workforce for the future.

   To fulfill the goal of access to opportunity and to encourage succession planning, we will implement three strategies:

   a. **Research Division Orientation**
      The Research Division will commit to meet with each new employee in the Division to provide them with information regarding the Division's vision and ensure they have an understanding of what part they play within the Division and the University.

   b. **Coaching and Mentoring**
      The Research Division will develop and implement a buddy system for its new staff employees to help them learn about the culture of the Division. The program will be monitored annually to determine its success. Each Research Center and Administrative Department will determine how to best implement the system within their environment.

   c. **Performance Dialogues**
      The Research Division will conduct annual performance evaluations for all academic and non-academic staff, utilizing the Skills for Success mode as one possible option. In addition, all individuals with supervisory responsibility will be evaluated on their ability for alignment, performance, achievement, and succession planning within their groups, holding them accountable for the professional development of their employees.
5. Holistic View of the Research Division's Community Members

The Research Division recognizes the benefits of viewing its students, staff and faculty as whole persons with identities and lives that extend beyond the Division. The Division strongly supports the use of the “flex” policy and is committed to addressing work/life and academic pursuit/life issues. As a result, the Division will educate staff on the flex policy; work with appropriate offices to address stress and other issues pertinent to overall well being; provide periodic updates on benefits available to employees to ensure that they are aware of sick leave, accruals, educational benefits, and work/life benefits; and include a discussion of work/life challenges in staff performance dialogues.

6. Shared Accountability and Responsibility for the Research Division’s Mission

Research Division academic and non-academic staff and students must share responsibility for upholding organizational values and achieving clear organizational goals and objectives in a mutually respectful work and educational environment. This will be accomplished through the following strategies:

a. Education of Community Related to Disability Issues
   The Research Division commits to providing information for all new faculty, academic and non-academic staff, students, and individuals employed for more than 30 days to explicitly describe organizational goals and values and describe and define the University’s statement on diversity and inclusiveness. The Division will also continue to provide educational programs to promote better understanding of diverse communities and, as needed, communication modes and language that advance the inclusion of individuals.

b. Communication with Individuals Outside Research Community
   The Division will also make information available from the Office of Workforce Equity Diversity & Life Quality to customers and clients, business partners, vendors, suppliers, subcontractors, visitors, and individuals employed less than 30 days regarding the University’s expectations for a mutually respectful environment.

7. Commitment to Community Partnerships

The Research Division’s commitment to public service by faculty, academic and non-academic staff, and students represents a priority that has been incorporated into our goals. To carry out this commitment, the Division will:

a. Identify strategies to enhance a positive impact
b. Continue our work with existing community service organizations to strengthen community partnerships
c. Support the community involvement of its faculty, staff, and students through provisions such as release time, independent study, and utilization of the University’s volunteer policy
   a. Encourage membership and participation in local and national diversity leadership councils and organizations
   b. Make a good faith effort to utilize diverse vendors and contractors
   c. Work with local schools and organizations to develop strong science programs,
   d. Recruit nationally for REU programs (Research Experience for Undergraduates) and RET programs (Research Experience for Teachers) to ensure a diverse pool of applicants

8. Demonstrated Commitment to Continuous Learning

The Research Division benefits from a flexible organizational culture that prioritizes continuous, collaborative, cross-organizational learning through effective and ongoing formal and informal educational programs for faculty, staff, and students on issues of diversity and inclusiveness, discrimination, harassment, and conflict resolution. Therefore, the Division will:

   a. Encourage and reward continuous education of employees
   b. Encourage, develop and reward top performers
   c. Provide education to managers and supervisors on recognizing, hiring and mentoring top performers
   d. Strengthen the active connections for students between classroom experiences and informal learning opportunities to promote diversity and inclusiveness

9. Participatory Work and Learning Processes

The Research Division strives to provide an environment in which all members who desire to contribute to improving the environment can actively participate in the work and learning processes. To carry out this goal, the Research Division will recognize and value traditional and non-traditional student/employee qualifications and assets, as well as provide a balance between work and learning expectations and opportunities for individuals to develop and contribute their skills, qualities, and interests to support the organization’s mission and goals.

10. Recognition of Organizational Culture and Process

The Research Division encourages organizational norms and practices that support collaboration, learning from differences, and incorporating the synthesis of divergent perspectives in participatory decision-making. Within the field of research, different perspectives on a project are crucial. International eyes are on Cornell, and it is imperative to maintain our superlative record of synergy, interdisciplinary work, inclusion
of outside perspectives, and cross-pollination of ideas. To achieve this goal, the Research Division will:

a. Encourage faculty, academic and non-academic staff, and students to respect and carry out this comprehensive diversity plan through their behaviors and work practices
b. Identify leadership capability and opportunities at all levels to promote and reinforce these expectations
c. Support formal opportunities, such as meetings and informational sessions, to allow all staff and students to learn about and appreciate stated values and expected behaviors as shared in the Code of Conduct and other relevant documents
d. Inform faculty, academic and non-academic staff, and students of organizational culture, processes, and outcomes
e. Promote and encourage networking opportunities with faculty, academic and non-academic staff, and students to engage in mutually beneficial, continuous learning regarding their own identities, worldviews, and life experiences and the impact of these on the culture of the Division

11. Communications/Information Sharing

The Research Division will make good faith efforts to create, support, and utilize formal and informal systems of communication to ensure that information is shared appropriately and equitably. Information will be shared with faculty, staff, and students, in all directions and across all levels of responsibility, about the organizational goals, operating environments, and expected outcomes.

12. Collaborative Conflict Resolution Processes

Cornell University has established progressive conflict resolution procedures that include support services to encourage conflict resolution techniques for students, faculty, and staff at all levels, such as the ombudsman for neutral consultation, peer coaching, and third party facilitation/mediation assistance. There is also an established system for addressing bias activity experienced by students, faculty, staff, and authorized visitors. The University has also established effective, periodic instruction for all students, faculty, and staff in collaborative conflict resolution techniques; all new students and new hires are expected to participate in conflict resolution education as part of their orientation process. The Research Division will:

a. Support and utilize these established conflict resolution procedures which empower students, staff, and faculty to work collaboratively to solve problems, resolve interpersonal conflicts, and achieve mutually satisfying dispute resolutions
b. Ensure that when referrals are made for disciplinary action, the referrals are fair and equitable
c. Make information about the conflict resolution processes widely available