



Noteworthy Practices – Student Diversity

Appendix

2.B. Student Diversity – University of Pennsylvania

Goal: Increase diversity and inclusivity. This is an area in which PennPlanning has historically been weak, and our lack of faculty and student diversity was noted in our last accreditation review. Perhaps the primary constraint we face is that our program is expensive and we do not offer as much financial assistance as many of our competitor institutions. This results from the university's financial model, in which every school operates as its own entity. Although the university has a very large endowment, PennDesign does not. This is not an excuse, but rather an important part of the context we face.

Many planning programs suffer from a dearth of diverse student and faculty applicants. It is difficult to change those circumstances quickly, but we are pursuing a number of strategies that we believe will make a difference in the medium to long term.

Our dean supports this work and, in 2016, created a schoolwide diversity taskforce that became a permanent committee in 2017. That committee includes members from our faculty, staff, and students.

Objective: Make curriculum more inclusive

We have focused as much on inclusivity as on diversity. It is important for students of color, queer students, and other underrepresented groups to see others from those groups among the faculty and student bodies, but there are other ways to signal the importance of diversity. In order to achieve this objective, we:

- Hosted a teaching roundtable, led by Penn's Center for Teaching and Learning, on how to make our courses more inclusive. We intend to devote two faculty meetings per year going forward to teaching roundtables, with at least one focusing on inclusivity.
- Analyzed the inclusivity of our syllabi. We conducted an analysis of all of our current syllabi to quantify what percentage of readings in each course were by women, men, African-Americans, Latin Americans, and Asians. We found this to be a useful data point and catalyst for conversations about how to integrate diverse perspectives and experiences into our courses. We will conduct the same analysis next year to see whether there has been measurable change. The results of this analysis can be found in the "other evidence" section of this report

Performance Indicators for this objective:

- Number of teaching roundtables held that focus on inclusivity/diversity: 1
- Annual analysis of syllabi.
- Number of convenings of PennDesign faculty to discuss inclusive teaching: 1

Objective: Expose students to more diverse experts and voices. In order to accomplish this objective, we:

- Populated our speaker series with diverse speakers. We hosted four talks this year: all four speakers were people of color, two were women, and one was queer.
- Increased the number of guest speakers, and critics for reviews who come from communities of color and low-income communities and who are queer.

Performance Indicators for this objective:

- Number and percent of speakers in speaker series who come from underrepresented communities: 4

- Number of guest speakers in classes and critics in studios who come from underrepresented communities: We will begin counting this in 2018-2019

Objective: Increase the diversity of faculty and instructors. We:

- Hired a Chinese professor, Zhongjie Lin, to fill our Urban Design position, which is critical given the high number of Asian students in our program.
- Leveraged the university's diversity post-doctoral program and brought in one African American woman, Akira Drake Rodriguez, who is finishing the second year of her three-year postdoc, and who we hope to retain after she completes the postdoc. Akira teaches a course called Race, Poverty and Place that has received high course evaluations and has become an important resource for our students. We are bringing in a second African American postdoc, Matthew Miller, who will start in August 2018. He will also teach a course for us.

Performance Indicators for this objective:

- Number of standing faculty, professors of practice, instructors, and postdocs who come from underrepresented communities. See relevant tables documenting faculty race/gender/ethnicity

Objective: Offer courses that focus explicitly on diversity, inclusivity, and social justice.

New courses since our previous review include:

- Race, Poverty, and Place
- Participatory Community Engagement

Courses that have significantly expanded relevant content include:

- Introduction to Planning History, which has changed substantially, with much more reading, lecture, field trip, and discussion content focused on race, gender, sexuality, indigenous people, mass incarceration, environmental justice, and planning in different parts of the world.
- Metropolitan Food Systems, which expanded its focus on food justice and sovereignty, race, gender, and food system planning and community development around the world.

Performance Indicators for this objective:

- Number of courses that focus on diversity, inclusivity and/or social justice

Objective: Create studios, practica and workshop projects that have a strong equity/social justice component.

Performance Indicators for this objective:

- Number of studios, practica, and workshop projects that have a strong equity/social justice component

Objective: Convert more applicants who are students of color to matriculants. During the admissions season of 2018:

- The chair and at least one other faculty member called every admitted student of color to talk with them about our program and to answer any questions they have.
- We hosted a breakfast for admitted students of color at our Open House for admitted students. Alumni of color and current students of color also attended.

Performance Indicators for this objective:

- Number of events designed to increase matriculation of students of color
- Documentation of other efforts designed to increase the matriculation of students of color

- Number of students of color who matriculate

Objective: Increase the number of applicants from communities of color. We are laying the groundwork for next year's admissions season by:

- Planning visits to select HBCUs from which we have alumni. The chair or another faculty member will visit each of these HBCUs to talk with students, faculty and staff about our program.
- Recruiting from schools in the Philadelphia area, such as Temple University, that have more diverse student bodies than Penn.
- Raising money for scholarships specifically designated for students of color. We believe our PennPlanning Equity Initiative will give us a platform we need to be successful in this area.

Performance Indicators for this objective:

- Number of applicants from communities of color, including underrepresented communities
- Number of visits to HBCUs
- Number of visits to other schools with higher numbers of students from underrepresented communities
- Amount of funding raised to support students of color

Objective: Make it easier for student of color, women, and other underrepresented groups to connect with each other, and to prepare them for the workplace. This past year, we:

- Convened students of color twice to talk informally about issues they're facing in the department and at the university, to discuss workplace challenges that may arise, and anything else that comes up.
- Convened women once to talk about issues in the department and the university, and to discuss workplace challenges they have faced as women.

Performance Indicators for this objective:

- Number of convenings for students from underrepresented groups
- Documentation of other efforts designed to support students from underrepresented groups