College Diversity Statement (Adopted April 2021): The College of Communication and Information will build a collaborative environment for creativity, curiosity, and excellence grounded in the core values of diversity, justice, and equity. We are enriched by the diversity of cultures, perspectives, and talents in our community. We thrive together when we work to provide an equitable and welcoming experience that respects and empowers the unique contributions and circumstances of students, faculty, and staff from every race and ethnicity, nationality, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, citizenship status, age, veteran status, pregnancy and parenting status, and disability or health status. We are committed to ensuring every member of our College feels welcomed, well-served, and included. Please join us.

The above statement speaks to who we are as a College and as a community. To carry out the mission to build a collaborative environment for creativity, curiosity, and excellence grounded in the core values of diversity, justice, and equity, this Diversity Plan was drafted as a guide to achieve four stated goals:

- Work to increase the diversity and retention of faculty/staff.
- Work to increase the diversity and retention of students.
- Empower all to build an inclusive community.
- Promote DEI goals across our core missions of teaching, research, and service.

Note: All goals will be regularly assessed, as indicated in each goal below.

This Diversity Plan was drafted by the College’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee in 2020-2021 in keeping with the College’s strategic plan and with UK’s central DEI efforts. Input was sought through a series of listening sessions and focus group discussions conducted with our community throughout 2020.

The implementation of this Diversity Plan involves all members of our College and campus communities. This is our shared responsibility. Support and tools necessary to achieve these goals comes from the Dean’s office, College leadership, the College’s Chief Diversity Officer, and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

The College’s DEI Committee will review the Diversity Plan with the Dean annually and offer amendments as needed to be responsive to events and conditions. This document is meant to be adaptable while holding us accountable. Progress on the goals enumerated in this plan will be regularly assessed, with status updates offered yearly.

This Diversity Plan was adopted by affirmation of the College Assembly on September 15, 2021.
CI Diversity Plan, 2021

Note: Status is noted where work on a strategy has begun, with action steps noted and progress to date.

Goal 1: Work to Increase Diversity & Retention of Faculty/Staff

Objective 1: Ensure that diversity is at the center of all recruitment and hiring processes.

Strategy 1.1: Use the university’s resources for faculty search committees/hiring managers to stress equitable hiring practices,
   a. Ensure that all search committees and hiring managers have completed required training, especially unconscious bias training.
   b. Ensure that all faculty search committees have access to the following toolkit: https://www.uky.edu/hr/employment/faculty-hiring-guide

   Status – both started 2018 and are continuing. Also working to develop college-level resources and support through the college’s Chief Diversity Officer and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Strategy 1.2: Create materials highlighting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts in our College and showcase DEI related research, teaching and service opportunities.

   (Note that all staff hiring is centralized though UK HR, and thus the college cannot tailor ads or do recruitment outside of the central processes. Also, diversity review of pools of applicants is checked by HR before candidates are sent to the college. Therefore, the next four strategies apply to faculty hiring).

Strategy 1.3: For faculty postings, require a written plan from the unit head/search committee chair on steps taken to attracting faculty from underrepresented backgrounds including but not limited to:
   a. Advertising through the URM targeted publications included in the university’s standard job posting service.
   b. Attending conferences to network with faculty and graduate students from URM groups.
   c. Reaching out to HBCUs, HSIs and tribal colleges when appropriate.
   d. Advertising to mailing lists for divisions and interest groups of national organizations that represent the interests of URM groups.

   Status – All of the above formally started Fall 2019; Continuing….

Strategy 1.4: Ensure that all faculty ads reflect the college’s commitment to diversity.
   a. Include a diversity prominently in the ad copy, in addition to the standard legal statements.

   Status – included in all ad templates starting Spring 2021; Continuing.
   b. Explore requiring a diversity statement from all applicants.

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c. Develop resources for search committees on other language that can be included in the job description that encourage faculty/staff from diverse backgrounds to apply.

Strategy 1.5: Ensure that all faculty pools are sufficiently diverse before the committee begins its work for selecting finalists for interviews. If pools are not diverse, charge the committee with re-advertising and reaching out to URM networks.

   Status – formally started for all faculty hires in Spring 2020; Continuing.

Strategy 1.6: Explore opportunities for targeted faculty hires or cluster hires that promote scholarship/teaching in areas related to UK’s DEI strategy.

Objective 2: Increase retention of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups.

Strategy 2.1: Ensure that faculty policies/pay structure are equitable and supportive of diverse groups.
   a. Review tenure and promotion policies and standards of evidence to ensure that these policies support the success of diverse faculty.
   b. Evaluate pay equity within the College by faculty rank and discipline (where appropriate).
   c. Educate those reviewing cases (administrators, P&T committees) about potential bias in teacher course evaluations. Use TCEs as one of several indicators of teaching success.
      Status – all of the above started in 2020 and are continuing.
   d. Conduct labor equity audits around service, advising, and class sizes/support to address equity gaps.
      Status – in the beginning stages in 2021 with new college personnel officer and DOE/Tableau analyses
   e. Continue Central support and review of all parental, medical, and other modified duty plans to ensure equity.

Strategy 2.2: Designate a point person for supporting international faculty, staff and graduate students in dealing with changing immigration rules.

   Status – Starting January 2021 new College Personnel Officer does monthly check-ins with International Services; Continuing

Strategy 2.3: Provide professional development and mentorship opportunities including specific programs for women and under-represented minorities.

   Status – have paid for several faculty to attend the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity’s Faculty Success Program (2019-2021 and continuing); purchased in 2021 a College license for Academic Impressions, which has support for faculty and staff across a variety of topics. Continuing to explore further training.

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Strategy 2.4: Create measures that ensure Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work is rewarded in assessment of faculty and staff.

**Assessment**: Review annually all faculty and staff hires, compared with pools of candidates and finalists interviewed. Discuss plans for next round of hiring. Review workplace statistics annually in regard to gender and race. Conduct exit interviews with all departing faculty and staff.

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**Goal 2: Work to Increase Diversity & Retention of Students**

Objective 1: Work to increase the enrollment of underrepresented student populations.

Strategy 1.1: Identify and address unnecessary barriers to entry for students from underrepresented groups that exist within the College.

a. Remove barriers to undergraduate admissions that disadvantage URM students.
   
   *Status – In 2020, voted to remove APP admission and transfer barriers that affected URM and first gen students disproportionally; monitoring these students.*

b. At all levels, continue discussions about standardized testing as admission criteria.
   
   *Status – In pandemic, all tests were optional at all levels. Will assess throughout the next few academic years to see the effect of this shift.*

Strategy 1.2: Create targeted recruitment strategies working with Undergraduate Admissions and with the Graduate School to recruit more students from underrepresented groups at all levels.

a. Evaluate recruitment strategies and locations to ensure we are recruiting at schools and organizations with diverse students.

b. Engage with students, families and high school guidance counselors at current and ongoing DEI events.

c. Partner with students and college ambassadors for student-led recruitment efforts.

   *Status on all three of the above – Hired a new, full-time recruiter, Fall 2021. Greatly expanded our ambassador program, recruited those students with diversity top of mind. Partnering with central UK admissions on strategies. Associate Dean for Student Success position created, greatly expanding this role to address the above issues.*

d. Develop relationships with community colleges and high schools that enroll significant number of historically underrepresented students.

   *Status – in 2020, began dual enrollment program with our CIS courses to serve high schools in areas with larger numbers of URM and first gen students. These students are taught their composition and public speaking skills by two faculty members in the college through live, virtual instruction. Also launched the Bluegrass Debate Collation to bring debate virtually to schools throughout the commonwealth that may not have the resources for debate activities.*

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Strategy 1.3: Introduce the University Scholars program to students early in their time in the College. Encourage faculty to provide information to students about opportunities for graduate school and professional certifications.

Strategy 1.4: Highlight and make visible the financial support for incoming underrepresented students.

Status – in 2021, the College put all of its scholarships into Scholarship Universe, a new service offered by UK that also identifies scholarships and support programs nationwide that students qualify for. When scholarships target URMs, we have pulled data and sent personalized e-mails to admitted students who fit the criteria to encourage applications. We have had good success with this targeted approach from the dean’s office for our incoming students.

Objective 2: Increase retention and graduation rates of underrepresented student populations.

Strategy 2.1: Publicize and improve visibility of student support services for URM and first gen students at UK.

a. Communicate to students through a variety of channels: Formal classroom instruction, advisors, faculty, peer mentors, administrators.

Status – in addition to conversations with advisors, this content is included in the UK 101 course – and the college has faculty and staff who teach 7 sections for our CI students. We also share these resources through a special advising canvas shell. The New Associate Dean for student success in 2021 started a monthly newsletter for undergraduate and graduate students to share this information.

b. Ensure that all faculty and staff are knowledgeable of available services.

Status – in 2019, started a collegewide newsletter to all instructors, graduate assistants, faculty and staff. New Associate Dean for Student Services and Chief Diversity Office write a message each week. Additionally, these resources were shared in collegewide instructor training videos (rolled out in 2021 to solidify training that was ongoing in each unit prior to the collegewide approach to onboarding).

Strategy 2.2: Form a Students’ Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board, including both undergraduate and graduate students, to work with the College’s DEI Committee and Officer.

Strategy 2.3: Assess and address the primary reasons for non-completion or delayed completion among underrepresented students.

a. Review annually the retention and graduation rates for all groups, with reports also broken out by gender, race, first generation, Pell recipient and other available data. Share with members of the Recruitment and Retention committee for discussion.

Status – The Recruitment and Retention committee has been ongoing for several years, and now the Associate Dean also shares this data directly with the School directors and Department chairs. The newly created

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Director of Retention and Student Engagement (moved into this role in 2021) is tasked with monitoring progress of all students and looking for barriers that stop their progress so that units can address these needs if possible or that other resources could be employed.

b. Develop programs targeting students who might come to college with lower qualifications.

Status – The new Associate Dean for Student Success has developed targeted programs and resources for students admitted through the new alternate criteria for undergraduate admissions, 2021. These include a special UK 101 section co-taught by the Associate Dean for Student Success and the Dean. She’s also created special check-ins with advisors in an unobtrusive way that students feel supported, not singled out.

Strategy 2.4: Provide continuing support to remove financial barriers that harm retention and slow time toward graduation.

a. Highlight and make visible the financial support for continuing underrepresented students.

Status – in 2021, the College put all of its scholarships into Scholarship Universe, a new service offered by UK that also identifies scholarships and support programs nationwide that students qualify for. When scholarships target URMs, we have pulled data and sent personalized e-mails to admitted students who fit the criteria to encourage applications. We have had good success with this targeted approach from the dean’s office for our incoming students.

b. Partner with central resources at UK to address students with unmet need; Identify students to recommend for centrally funded programs.

Status – has been ongoing for several years; we routinely touch base with Student Success to review data for our majors.

c. Create new programs to address financial needs.

Status – in addition to Scholarship Universe and targeted scholarship notifications, the College has three newer programs designed to help URM and first gen students in need. First, the College is piloting a $100,000 retention program to help students with outstanding balances pay off their student bills so they can continue to take classes. This program, funded half by Women in Philanthropy and half by the dean’s office, made its first awards in 2021. We also targeted students who needed funding for internship support (as they often had to relocate or give up a paying position for their internship opportunity) as our “One Day for UK” event in Spring 2021. We funded two interns in Summer 2021. Finally, the College has an ongoing emergency fund, paid for by members of the Dean’s Leadership Council, our external advisory group, to help students in need. These students who have been in need for all three funds, historically, are disproportionately URM or first gen students.

Assessment: Review annually incoming student demographics, retention rates (year 1 to year 2 and beyond), graduation rates, graduation surveys (about plans beyond graduation) with an eye

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to view patterns by race or gender. Track students who have received special intervention or funding through our persistence funds; check for progress toward degree.

**Goal 3: Empower All to Build an Inclusive Community**

**Objective 1:** Increase and formalize support for DEI initiatives in the College

**Strategy 1.1:** Make a formal statement of our shared commitment to diversity

*Status -- Drafted 2020-2021, Adopted Spring 2021 by the College Assembly; will be reviewed annually.*

**Strategy 1.2** Formalize and elevate DEI work within the College

a. Make the College DEI Committee a standing committee with representation from all areas of the College.

*Status – has been functioning well for years; College will vote in Fall 2021 on formally adding it to the College Rules. Bylaws drafted by CDO and DEI committee 2020-2021*

b. Elevate and formalize the role of the Chief Diversity Officer

*Status – CDO for years has been the chair of the DEI committee. Starting Fall 2020, the dean elevated the position to a member of the Leadership Team, to keep these issues front and center at all administrative meetings. Additionally, the CDO has been given a course release to have time to complete this important work, has been offered a summer stipend, and was given a graduate assistant for 10 hours a week to assist in the work and to interface with the student community. All completed 2020-2021 and ongoing.*

c. Create a graduate assistantship or other support for the work of the CDO and the committee.

*Status – Created starting Fall 2020 with a graduate student with a strong interest in student outreach; Continuing with a new GA for Fall 2021.*

d. Offer DEI-related resources and trainings to all departments/schools.

*Status – The CDO met with all departments/schools at the start of the academic year; the CDO provides information in the weekly newsletters to all CI employees; the committee continues its programming for all on various topics.*

**Objective 2:** Work to increase feeling of belonging for students, faculty, staff and alumni.

**Strategy 2.1:** Conduct listening sessions with the community

a. Synthesize feedback from these efforts to share with the community

b. Invite outside review of patterns/trends

*Status – These listening sessions were started in summer 2020. The CDO continued these meetings (with the GA) throughout the academic year. They also held open office hours to receive feedback. Synthesis has started informally.*

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Strategy 2.2: Facilitate and support connections through mentorship or affinity groups within the college as appropriate.
   a. Support and promote events from student organizations within the College, such as the Association of Black Journalists.
   b. Engage with and support campus organizations in student-led DEI efforts.  
      Status – These efforts are ongoing and have been accelerated with the addition of the GA assisting the CDO in 2020-2021.
   c. Develop faculty mentoring programs across units, if desired by newer faculty.

Strategy 2.3: Sponsor and bring in diverse voices for the College.
   a. Encourage faculty to bring diverse voices into their classes. Track diverse speakers annually.
      Status – These efforts are ongoing, especially in the units with external accreditation.
   b. Start an annual DEI talk open to the community.
      Status – Although there were several notable open talks (for example, Wesley Lowery on the Black Lives Matter movement), none were formally billed as the college’s premiere Diversity lecture for the academic year.
   c. Continue to sponsor DEI related speakers and workshops for faculty and staff.
      Status – These efforts are ongoing.

Strategy 2.4: Increase the visibility of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts and information throughout the College.
   a. Use College communications and listservs to raise the visibility of DEI related events, resources, programs and accomplishments.
      Status: Complete and ongoing
   b. Partner with student organizations, college ambassadors and other student leaders to increase the visibility of events.
      Status: In beginning stages with DEI graduate assistant, CDO, Associate Dean for Student Success and Director of Recruitment and Retention working with student leaders.
   c. Create a DEI hub for the college that gathers important information and content and highlights events, resources and accomplishments.
   d. Include DEI information in recruitment and philanthropy materials.

Assessment: Use measures collected in University instruments (Student Engagement Surveys, Graduation Surveys, Work Life Surveys) to regularly track faculty, staff and student experiences of the College climate as it applies to DEI. Use data gathered in listening sessions and feedback on events.

Goal 4: Promote DEI Across Our Core Missions of Teaching, Research and Service

Objective 1: Create and maintain an inclusive curriculum and instructional practices

   Strategy 1.1: Increase the visibility and accessibility of DEI-related courses and content.

This Diversity Plan was adopted by affirmation of the College Assembly on September 15, 2021.
a. Encourage departments/schools to perform regular diversity audits of their course curriculum.
b. Create a list designed to make existing courses with DEI-related content easier for students and advisors to find and identify.
c. Provide resources to support the development of new courses or the revision of existing courses to increase the presence of material related to diversity and cultural competency in the curriculum.

a. Promote and incentivize the revision of existing courses not explicitly about DEI-related subjects to increase the incorporation of material related to diversity and cultural competency across all courses.

Status: in process a pilot project for diversifying syllabus was implemented by the Diversity Committee

Strategy 1.2: Promote and incentivize anti-racist, inclusive pedagogy and cultural competency activities/training

a. Develop or bring in training specifically for the College
b. Advertise and promote available trainings and opportunities at UK and through our training platforms (e.g. Academic Impressions and others) to faculty and staff.
c. Create easily accessible collections of videos and materials related to inclusive pedagogy.
d. Create a DEI certificate for participants who attend multiple trainings.
e. Consistent with other kinds of faculty and staff development, recognize participation in DEI activities and training as development activities in performance evaluations; encourage faculty and staff to report them as part of their review materials.

Objective 2: Promote and reward research related to DEI

Strategy 2.1: Increase the visibility and accessibility of DEI-related research.

a. Identify faculty and student researchers interested in DEI by reviewing the monthly research productivity summaries by the Associate Dean for Research and by asking people to self-report their research interests. Publicize this research.

Status: In progress the Communication Team has begun work on a series to highlight this research and our faculty’s accomplishments.

b. Use University-wide databases and networks to establish networks of potential faculty collaborators outside the college. Gauge interest in creating a DEI research consortium in the College.
c. Circulate information about the University-wide Diversity Research Priority Group and encourage Faculty membership.
d. Work with the Associate Dean of Research to create sessions or events to showcase diversity-related research in the College.

Strategy 2.2: Incentivize and reward DEI-related research

a. Earmark funds in the college and publicize UK funds designed to support

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URM students participating in research.
b. Create an award for researchers engaged in diversity-related research.

Objective 3: Increase outreach to engage diverse communities throughout the Commonwealth and beyond.

Strategy 3.1: Promote and encourage community-based service
   a. Expand diversity-focused service-learning opportunities and internships.
   b. Partner with local organizations, community centers and schools to create a community service pipeline for students, faculty and staff who want to give back.
   c. Provide training and support for scholars to engage in community-based research

Strategy 3.2: Increase engagement with URM alumni, business and community leaders.
   a. Identify and partner with on-campus organizations that continue to engage our alumni.
   b. Identify alumni, business and community leaders and provide opportunities to connect them with our students.

Strategy 3.3: Increase the College’s engagement with the world through study abroad opportunities, international research and teaching partnerships and other internationalization efforts.
   a. Gather, centralize and publicize information about study abroad opportunities.
   b. Provide information and support for faculty interested in study abroad, Fulbright and other international opportunities.
   c. Work with Associate Dean of research to provide trainings and resources for faculty who are interested in doing International research.

Assessment: Intermittently evaluate available unit audits and course lists to track availability of DEI-related courses/content, use measures collected in University instruments and College reports to evaluate involvement in international opportunities and DEI-related research, use data gathered in listening sessions and attendance/feedback at events