

Unit: College of Liberal Arts: College of Liberal Arts (CLLA)  
 Contact Person: Dr. Srividya Ramasubramanian

Date: December 8, 2015  
 Email: srivi@tamu.edu

The College of Liberal Arts (CLLA) consists of 12 departments, 5 interdisciplinary programs, and 6 centers & institutes. We have 7035 undergraduates, 846 graduate students, and award 2143 degrees including master's degrees and doctoral degrees. Our college consists of 473 faculty (including 119 APT and 354 tenured/tenure track faculty) and 187 staff.

Diversity and inclusion are an integral part of CLLA scholarship, teaching, research, service, and community outreach for almost all departments/programs (but especially for programs such as Women & Gender Studies, Hispanic Studies, Latino/a & Mexican American Studies, Africana Studies, International Studies, and Religious Studies). We offer 84 of the International and Cultural Diversity courses for the Core Curriculum. 12% of our majors study abroad, which represents 20% of all TAMU students going abroad. The Assoc. Dean for Climate & Inclusion advises the Dean on matters relating to diversity, climate, and equity. She also chairs the 25 member Climate & Inclusion (C&I) committee with faculty representatives from each of the 12 departments apart from grads, undergrads, postdocs, and staff members.

For us, "Strengthening Democracy" means thinking about inclusion at all levels of planning. Our goal is to include issues of climate and inclusion throughout our strategic planning but one of our four goals explicitly aligns with climate and inclusion: "foster inclusive and welcoming workplaces and learning environments." Another goal: "enrich the intellectual life of our university and the broader community," aims to reach beyond the university to strengthen ties to our diverse communities. The other two goals are "create knowledge through influential research and communicate it in prestigious venues" and "excel in undergraduate and graduate education." These goals are addressed through professional development opportunities and mentoring support for staff and faculty members apart from curricular offerings at the graduate and undergraduate levels that relate to diversity, internationalization, and inclusion.

**PLEASE NOTE: All new initiatives are marked with an asterisk (\*) and listed first in each category.**

### **RECRUITMENT**

**Undergraduates:** \***CLLA Undergrad Recruitment Program:** We are inviting schools from around the state, but especially large city high schools, onto campus for a full-day slate of activities. The Liberal Arts Student Council is fully involved in those activities. The Council also helps departmental advisers, faculty, and staff in sending handwritten letters, sending emails, and making telephone calls to students who have been admitted but have not yet decided to attend. For 2016-2017, we already have a 13% increase in Hispanic students committed to CLLA. We have also diverted all differential tuition monies into scholarships for the neediest of our students. For fall 2015 this number is up by 33.3%. **Regents' Scholars Initiative (RSI):** This is a learning community that includes undergrads, many of whom are racially underrepresented at our university. Last year we had 103 students in the program. There is a weekly class of one hour and a study abroad experience during spring break so that students will learn about the value of international experiences (since many of them have not had this opportunity). This program has been revamped to emphasize academic success skills and to integrate first-generation students into the college and the campus. The program now has a team-leader from the provost's Academic Success Center, and all students were broken into six small groups, each group led by a former RSI student. The group went to Costa Rica for the entire spring break to work on service learning projects (construction of houses and refurbishing a children's center at the Nicaraguan refugee camp, La Carpio). **Targeted Undergrad Recruiting:** Faculty and advisors in the Department of Psychology engage in outreach to improve undergrad recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups (In 2014 up from 6.38% to 10.1% for AA; 31% to 36.6% for Latino).

**Graduates:** **Vision 2020 Graduate Fellowships:** The College created these graduate fellowships to augment Diversity (and Merit) fellowships. Five fellowships for about \$10,000 for 4 years were provided this year. **American Society of Hispanic Economists Conference:** TAMU hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> annual American Society of Hispanic Economists in 2015. 12 prospective Ph.D. students from 6 universities were invited. For the fifth year, TAMU conducted a mock economics experiment, which was well-received. We have had one ASHE-participating student enroll in our PhD program in each of the past three years (2 women, one of whom is Black, and one Hispanic male). Each of those students indicated that the ASHE conference was a key moment in her/his academic career and significantly impacted her/his decision to go on to grad school--and to our Economics doctoral program. **Communicating Diversity Student Conference:** Our annual student conference provides a forum for undergraduate and graduate students to showcase, share, and engage in discussions about scholarship on communication and diversity. The conference has been held annually since 2012, and is now open to students from higher education institutions across Texas. It has grown from 18 speakers (2012) to 35 speakers (2014) from six different schools. In 2015 (April) we had 39 participants from 9 universities across Texas. This initiative has received two IIDEA grants to support the conference.

**Faculty:** **Certification of Faculty Applicant Pool:** The purpose of the program is to increase representation of minority and women scholars in the faculty pool by proactively and aggressively recruiting minority and women faculty.

Department Search Committee contacts scholars (minority and women) to solicit nominations or applications. Applicant pools are required to have representation across variables including race and gender before candidates can be invited for interviews. STRIDE Workshop: 11 faculty participated in the training to review implicit bias literature, discuss best practices for faculty searches, design a 2 hour workshop for search committees, and prepare to facilitate such a workshop. Dept. of Psychology's Diversity Science Cluster: A cluster of 9 faculty and several graduate students from different subfields of psychology with interests in pursuing research on diversity as it relates to a range of dimensions (ethnicity, race, age, language, gender). This initiative led to the department doing a search for an assistant professor in fall 2014 and the search resulted in the hiring of a faculty member whose research is on the social cultural neuroscience of pain.

## **RETENTION**

**Multiple Groups**: **\*Dustin Lance Black Visit**: CLLA supported the visit of Mr. Black, a renowned filmmaker and activist for LGBTQ rights. Three of his films were screened: *Virginia* (73 attendees), *J. Edgar* (82 attendees), and *Milk* (68 attendees). Attendees included students, faculty members and local community members. A faculty panel discussion was included with *Milk*. Black met with 14 students from the Women/Gender Studies and Film Studies programs and granted an interview with the Battalion newspaper. His 45 minute speech in Rudder was attended by 318 individuals. He also met with two classes in the Women/Gender Studies Program. Black has posted positive comments about his visit to A&M on his official Facebook page: "Back 'home' in LA after a truly inspirational trip to Texas A&M University in my home state of #Texas" and on Twitter: "My trip to @TAMU surpassed all expectations! Excellent faculty & staff. Great discussions w/ thoughtful, diverse students. #Aplus." A video interview with Mr. Black where he praised TAMU has aired repeatedly on that public access TV channel and has been watched on YouTube 750 times as of 11/5/15. **\*Climate & Inclusion Website**: CLLA's climate and inclusion website has been recently revamped. It now includes the new strategic plan for the college, the mission statement, funding opportunities, diversity accountability reports, fact-sheet on climate and inclusion, members of the C&I committee, and several resources relating to diversity. The Climate & Inclusion committee provided feedback and guidance on the website, which now includes more student resources. **IIDEA – Innovations in Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accountability Grants**: The objective of this grant is to invigorate our college life with sustainable ideas relating to diversity and climate. About \$15,000 was given away through this grant in 2015 to the following projects: (a) Communicating Diversity conference (b) Lecture/Dialogue Series by faculty from underrepresented groups in Political Science (c) A mentoring forum for women in Hispanic Studies (d) A six-night series of films and panel discussions that speaks to and about underserved and underrepresented minority groups. **Diversity-related Certificates and Courses**: Graduate certificates and minors relating to race/ethnicity include: Africana Studies, Women's & Gender Studies, Cross-Cultural Studies (USA), and Cross-Cultural Studies (International). We offer several certificates relating to diversity. For example, Sociology offers certificates in global sociology, sociology of gender, and sociology of race and ethnicity, Hispanic Studies offers a certificate and a minor in community engagement, and Political Science offers a certificate in Race, Ethnicity, & Gender Politics. We teach 84 of the 1145 approved International & Cultural Diversity requirement of the core curriculum. We have started the new Latino/a & Mexican American Studies Minor that has 7 faculty in the working group, 16 minors enrolled and 5 more interested for spring 2016 in this minor. **Diversity Lecture Series**: Several programs (such as FILM, POLS, HISP, AFST, and PERF) offer diversity lecture/film series regularly that bring in speakers from underrepresented groups. **Bright Horizons (formally SitterCity)**: In response to the 2011 climate survey data, we had initiated this service as several employees mentioned difficulty in work-life balance. However, the enrollment has dropped in the last couple years. We need to revisit the decision to see whether to continue. **Undergraduates: Common Ground Initiative**: This initiative seeks to have first year students in the College of Liberal Arts to all read a common book, and then use that book for learning experiences throughout their first year of college. This is a diversity initiative since the book always has a diversity theme woven into the story that allows the student to consider how difference is perceived, and how they personally work with some of these issues of difference. The 2014 Common Ground book was "The Shadow Factory: The Ultra-Secret NSA from 9/11 to the Eavesdropping on America" by James Bamford. The 2015 book was "The American Way of Eating" by Traci McMillan. This event was attended by 300 students. The speaker came to speak to four CLLA classes, including the RSI class (with 103 students) and the freshman gateway class (100 students) for International Studies. There were opportunities for the RSI (first-generation students) to have personal time with the speaker; the theme was civil liberties and freedom of speech. **\*Women in Energy Field Trip**: 25 current Economics students interacted with 20 women execs in the Electric Power and Energy Industry at Constellation Field in Sugarland, TX to assist networking with successful women in this industry. After attending this event, students are planning a "Women in Economics" organization and an energy conference. **National Hispanic Leadership conference**: CLLA supported the participation of 5 students by funding their registration fees for the National Hispanic Leadership conference. **SCOLA support**: CLLA sponsored 20 liberal arts students to attend the Student Conference on Latino Affairs (SCOLA).

**Graduates**: **\*Grant-Writing Workshop for Advanced Grads**: 43 students participated in this seminar, which is designed to teach new investigators how to write a competitive grant application, a skill that is seldom formally taught to graduate students. Topics included: the review process; early-investigator programs, and how to take advantage of them; what to concentrate on early in one's career that will help maximize competitiveness in the granting arena later. **\*Summertime for**

Advancement in Research (STAR) Awards for Grads: 28 participants took part in the STAR program, which aims to increase retention and encourage earlier completion and timely graduation. Funds supported research assistantships by providing a stipend along with tuition and fee support for three summer months. Professional Development Support Awards for Grads: 63 recipients received awards to support professional development opportunities for students. Awards can include, but are not limited to, attending short courses during the summer or between long semesters at another institution (e.g., ICPSR Summer Methods Program), intensive language courses to develop research skills, and other similar activities. Dissertation Enhancement Awards: 23 recipients received this award, the purpose of which was to facilitate high quality research. Funds may support field research (including travel to archives or collections), data collection (e.g., purchase of data sets or support for survey research), or other research activity directly affecting the quality of the dissertation. Thesis Enhancement Awards: 3 recipients received this award, whose purpose is to facilitate high quality research. Funds may support field research (including travel to archives or collections), data collection (e.g., purchase of data sets or support for survey research), or other substantive material acquisition or research activity directly affecting the quality of the thesis.

**Faculty: ADVANCE**: Several of our faculty members are involved in ADVANCE activities. Associate Dean Patricia Hurley and 2 professors from the college participated as facilitators in the spring 2015 Roadmap Workshop for post-docs and junior professors. 15 faculty participated in the ADVANCE success programs (writing workshops and new moms' workshops). 10 faculty including 1 associate dean and 2 department heads served on the ADVANCE committee, 4 served on the ADVANCE Leadership Team, and 2 (the Dean and a dept. head) served on the internal advisory board.

### **CAMPUS CLIMATE**

**Multiple Groups: \*Diversity Training Institute Sponsorship**: CLLA supported 12 staff and one grad student to attend this three-day workshop in June 2015. It was the first time the college had sponsored employees to participate in such a training. The workshop focused on race, gender, class, ability, religion in terms of privilege, prejudice, and social justice. **Impact**: Participants wrote in great detail in their one page report about how this program was transformative and eye-opening. Comments included: "I was able to see that someone who "looked" like me and had the same gender and race as me, had a very different lifestyle and was brought up in a completely different manner growing up;" "I believe this kind of diversity education should be required for all TAMU staff. Willing and open participation would maximize the benefit of this kind of multi-day event, but even compulsory exposure to a series of shorter trainings might at least start conversations among staff and raise awareness that a person's experience is not the only worthwhile or valid experience" "The Diversity Training Institute was an incredibly eye opening experience. With my increased awareness and knowledge, I will be able to not only better advise my students, but understand them. I hope the College of Liberal Arts will continue to offer scholarships to attend the institute, so that other employees are educated about diversity and inclusion" and "Overall, I thought the Diversity Training Institute was very helpful and informative. It was in no way patronizing, and it did not downplay real issues. I learned a lot, all within a safe space, which is very important." Three staff members who participated in this program shared their experiences to the Climate & Inclusion committee. **\*Title IX/Step-In Stand Up Campaign**: CLLA organized a Title IX informational session by Dr. Blanca Lupiani and Dr. Cynthia Hernandez for faculty, staff, and grad students in the Climate & Inclusion committee. Additionally, all heads and members of the Climate & Inclusion committee received details about the Step In Stand Up campaign. **\*Philosophy for Children**: Half-day summer workshop with 35 teachers from B/CS area and Fall 2015 full-day workshop for 40 teachers by PHIL professors to teach about philosophy for children to educators in the Brazos Valley. **\*Dept. of Sociology's Code of Civility**: Sociology recognizes general principles about civility, ethics, and conduct as central to its mission as an academic and professional community. The goal is to promote a positive, collegial atmosphere among all members of our departmental community, including faculty, staff, and students. **\*Climate Matters Conference Support**: CLLA was one of the co-sponsors of the Climate Matters conference. Several faculty, staff, and students from the college attended the conferences and participated as panelists and poster presenters. **Diversity/Climate & Inclusion Committees**: Within the College of Liberal Arts there are two types of diversity-related committees. The first is at the Dean's level and the second is at the department level. The Dean's climate & inclusion committee is made up of about 25 representatives (faculty members from all 12 departments, staff, grad students, and undergrad students). The CLLA climate & inclusion committee actively participates through monthly meetings and a mailing list on topics relating to climate, equity, and inclusion. All departments have their own diversity or climate & inclusion committees to stimulate programs, share successful strategies, and brainstorm new initiatives at the departmental level. Typically, these committees consist of 5-7 members (faculty, grads, and staff). **White Violence, Black Resistance Project**: White Violence, Black Resistance is a collaborative project between Prairie View Texas A&M University and College of Liberal Arts. The ongoing projects present an activist model grounded in the classroom where undergraduate students are participants in canon expansion. More recently, it has involved members of the Camptown Texas 10 Counties Historical Explorers, a black history group from Brenham. Dr. Amy Earhart from the Department of English has been invited to present this project at Aggie Agora, in the College Station Exploring History group, a senior group in Bryan, and in several universities (U of Kansas, UC-Berkeley, U of Victoria, Texas Tech, Trinity Univ, and Hamilton). **Brazos Valley Reads**: Now in its twelfth year, this community effort organized by the Department of English with extensive support from various groups in the

University and the community, has been highly successful. Each year a featured work and author is selected; the author visits B/CS in the spring, meets with students at TAMU who have read the author's work and local high school students. The author also gives a public reading, accompanied by discussion and a book signing.

***Undergraduates:*** \*Aggie Agora: Aggie Agora's mission is to provide an intellectual and organizational hub through which scholars, students, and the community will engage in discussion and debate on public questions and controversial issues. The Agora is a center for facilitating public discourse and political engagement on campus and in the community. The Agora regularly hosts visiting speakers and public debates addressing important issues or local, national, or international concern. The Agora serves as a facilitation training center and hosts Difficult Dialogues and other events directed at promoting civil discourse, diversity, and inclusion. The Agora organizes Debatewatch and other events designed to bring students into the political process. The Agora supports Texas A&M University's Forensics (Parliamentary Debate and Individual Events), Mock Trial, and Moot Court learns. The Agora coordinates community outreach through Urban Debate programs, Community Difficult Dialogue events, and Prison Education programs.

\*Difficult Dialogues: In this initiative, undergraduate students (open to all majors) are invited to take part in a structured dialogue about a difficult issue pertaining to diversity, climate, and inclusion. Students are given information about the issue and the engage in a debate. Emphasis is placed on the value of civil dialogue as a means to approach controversial issues. We held our first Difficult Dialogue on national security (focusing on Edward Snowden) in the fall of 2014. Our second dialogue, this time on immigration, occurred in March 2015. Both were well attended, with approximately 15-20 people in each. There have been three Difficult Dialogues this fall, all on issues related to politics & elections, but with a significant diversity component (gerrymandering, voter ID laws). Each Difficult Dialogue has had an attendance of about 15-20 students. We also hosted our first ever "Community Dialogue" project with BCS *Be the Bridge* with 60 people signed up to discuss racial issues in B/CS.

***Graduates:*** Grad Ombudsperson: CLLA's climate and inclusion committee invited grad ombudsperson to talk about how graduate students can use this service to consult and get advice on conflict situations that they face.

***Faculty:*** \*Social Hour /Monthly Receptions: Open conversations in informal settings with the Dean. This fall we hosted two such events: one to welcome new faculty and another to give out AFS awards and recognize newly appointed endowed faculty.

***Staff:*** \*Community of Respect Workshop Sponsorship: CLLA sponsored 2 faculty and 2 staff members to attend the \*Community of Respect workshop to learn about intercultural communication in a global context. \*Dean's Office Staff Retreat: Worked closely with EOD to design the first-ever staff retreat for the Dean's office. It was held in summer 2015, included approximately 45 staff members attending. The Dean started with welcome remarks and spoke about the strategic planning process. At the end of the day-long retreat, staff members shared their key ideas and plans with the Dean and other members of the executive staff. Climate, communication, leadership, service, and teamwork emerged as the main topics of interest in terms of professional development. \*Dean's Office Staff Climate Survey: A survey was sent out to staff following the retreat and the results were discussed extensively by college leadership and also with EOD. The college Dean's office has started a Staff Certificate program, a Lunch and Learn Series, and a Conflict Management workshop for staff in response to feedback from survey. \*Staff Diversity & Inclusion Certificate: Two staff members completed this certificate in our college. \*Dean's Weekly Updates to Dean's Office Staff: The Dean is sending out weekly emails to the dean's office faculty, staff, and administrators so that everyone is aware of important projects, issues, and deadlines etc. that the college is involved in. These weekly updates have been greatly appreciated by staff members. FASIT (Faculty-Staff program): 5 departments participated in this ADVANCE program aimed to improve climate. LASDC: Liberal Arts Staff Development Council promotes professional development and staff climate.

***Administrators:*** Department Heads' Retreat: A full-day retreat was conducted by the Dean with all department heads and program directors for visioning and refining strategic priorities. Deans' Retreat: All the Associate/Assistant Deans had a full-day retreat with the Dean to discuss the priorities of the college, better assessment metrics, and best practices to improve the climate for faculty, staff, and students.

## **EQUITY**

***Multiple Groups:*** \*Blackboard Accessibility & Universal Design: Our IT team's Blackboard template has been recognized as the system-wide gold standard for accessibility. As needs are identified, our team updates the template which is shared with all System universities through Cloud-hosted Blackboard.

***Undergraduates:*** \*100% Need-based Undergrad Scholarships: CLLA is offering need-based scholarships to support students from lower income groups who would like to attend college. We see this as an equity effort to provide access to low-income students.

**Graduates:** Grad Merit Supplements: Four fellowships were provided for \$10,000 for students in their second year for one year. Diversity Fellowship Supplements: Starting last year we are providing supplemental scholarships for 4<sup>th</sup> year diversity fellows, and we are supporting several other students as part of retention (merit supplements). Three such fellowship top-ups were awarded \$10,000 for three students in their fourth year.

**Faculty:** \*APT Taskforce: Based on a climate survey conducted with APT faculty in CLLA in 2013, a taskforce was set up to clarify expectations and set clear guidelines for promotion. This committee focused on academic professional faculty to develop a set of guidelines clarifying the criteria for advancement. They recommended specific professional development opportunities for APT faculty. The entire document is approved and on our guidelines and policy page. It has specific promotion criteria and recommended teaching and service loads. \*Faculty of Color Focus Group Discussions: Focused discussions were carried out with faculty members across ranks, departments, genders, races/ethnicities, nationalities to understand how their needs can be addressed more effectively. Feedback and inputs shaped Dean Matthews' Memo on Climate & Inclusion sent to all faculty, which was discussed extensively by the college leadership and has led to important discussions on recognizing structural inequalities and micro-aggressions against faculty of color and ways in which departments and the college can work on addressing them. The Associate Dean for Climate & Inclusion shared this information as part of the best practices series at the Diversity Operations Committee in November 2015. \*National Center for Faculty Diversity Development (NCFDD) resources: Department heads have collated the list of faculty members who are not currently subscribed to the NCFDD resources to ensure they receive the institutional membership benefits. Once or twice a semester, the college sends out an announcement to faculty/grads about upcoming webinars and online writing challenges. Several faculty members have expressed that these resources have been helpful. Departmental Indicators of Success: As an indicator of success, climate and inclusion has been factored into allocations for departments and reviews of department heads since 2003. The indicators of success document the departments' permanent contributions in diversity (e.g. curricular offerings, permanent recruitment programs, climate and inclusion, etc.). Each department has to report on different kinds of initiatives to address the indicator of diversity, including recruiting and mentoring students from under-represented groups, increasing the percentage of minority and women faculty, and having speakers from underrepresented groups for their conferences, etc.

**Staff:** \*CLLA Liberal Arts Staff Executive Council (LASEC) –meets twice a semester and started a mentoring program; includes all admin. assts. (to dept. heads, directors, and deans) related to topics such as P&T processing, faculty hiring processing, office processes, etc. \*Taskforce on Advising Staff: Centralization and standardization in roles, responsibilities, and compensation, including professional development opportunities for advisers was accomplished for greater equity among advising staff. CLASS Awards: The College of Liberal Arts Superior Service (CLASS) Awards Program recognizes staff members who provided outstanding service to the College of Liberal Arts during the 2014/2015 academic year. Individual awards will consist of a \$750 cash award and an engraved plaque. Four awards were given. Staff Recognition & Reclassification: Every year staff members from around the college are appreciated and recognized by the college at the annual staff appreciation luncheon. To help with staff equity, annually a call is sent out to all department heads and supervisors about ensuring staff equity in salaries and in terms of reclassification of their titles. Staff Scholarships: Annually two staff members are supported financially by providing scholarships for professional development for enrolling in higher education degree programs at Texas A&M University.

**Administrators:** \*Best Practices for Supervisors: EOD conducted a one hour workshop on supervisory strategies for employee success. It was attended by all members of the Dean's executive staff. \*Department Heads' Mentoring Program: The Dean pairs new department heads with existing ones as a way of mentoring the incoming heads during their first year as they transition into the new role, often as first-time administrators. This program has been well-received by the heads. \*Discussion of Best Practices: In executive council meeting of department heads and program/center directors, there have been discussions about best practices regarding awards and grants, equity etc. \*Focus Group Discussions with Admins who are Associate Professors: This discussion was held with associate professors in administrative positions to understand how best the college can support them. Results were shared with leadership.

### **FUTURE STRATEGIES, PROJECTS, & IDEAS**

**Staff "Lunch & Learn" Series:** CLLA will be the inaugural college to create a lunch and learn series for staff. 5 staff members from across the college are working on designing a "lunch and learn" series to foster lifetime learning, build community, and share best practices among staff, faculty, and administrators. **Liberal Arts Staff Certificate:** CLLA will be the first college to work with EOD to create a curriculum specifically designed for our staff's professional development based on needs assessment. A 5 member staff team is designing this initiative. **Interdisciplinary Task Force:** The Dean has set up a taskforce to examine several topics including structural equity and fairness in tenure and promotion of joint appointment faculty. **Coordinated Green Dot, Conflict Management, and Aggie Ally Training:** College-wide training on bystander intervention will be offered to faculty and staff. The Department of Anthropology has coordinated a Green Dot training, which was attended by 15 people, mostly faculty members. The College will coordinate Aggie Allies' training for faculty and staff. We will also make conflict management workshops available for staff.