

DIVERSITY PLAN

A. University Goals for Diversity and Inclusion

Among Santa Clara University's fundamental values is a commitment to diversity and inclusion:

Community and Diversity: *We cherish our diverse and inclusive community of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni, a community that is enriched by people of different backgrounds, respectful of the dignity of all its members, enlivened by open communication, and caring and just toward others.*¹

In committing to this value, the University explicitly identified a diversity goal and objectives within Santa Clara 2020, the University's Integrated Strategic Plan.

Santa Clara University will recruit and graduate a broadly diverse community of highly talented students while striving to make a Santa Clara education more affordable.²

Objectives:

- *Increase the enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of students from underrepresented or underserved populations.*
- *Provide sufficient financial assistance to ensure that low-income students and students from middle-class families can afford the costs of a holistic Santa Clara University education.*
- *Efficiently deploy resources to effectively execute Santa Clara's programs and operations while minimizing future tuition increases.*
- *Recruit and retain outstanding faculty members whose teaching, research, and life experience enrich the diversity of Santa Clara's academic community with respect to race, ethnicity, and gender.*

Rationale:

Santa Clara University plays a key role in forming the next generation of citizens and leaders, particularly in Silicon Valley – one of the most racially and ethnically diverse regions in the country.

The shifting demographics of college-bound students call the University to two courses of action – affordably educating a more diverse population of students and preparing all students to participate in an increasingly diverse culture and workforce.

Aspiring for excellence through inclusion, Santa Clara will enhance recruitment, retention, and the success of a highly diverse and talented academic community.

¹ <https://www.scu.edu/santaclara2020/vision/>

² <https://www.scu.edu/santaclara2020/elements/elaborated/goal-5/>

University Provost Dennis Jacobs created the Council on Inclusive Excellence to guide the University's efforts in this area. The Council identified a set of definitions and principles adopted herein.³

***Diversity** involves both the individual and group differences that are engaged in the service of learning. Diversity can include personality, learning style, life experience, race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability, as well as cultural, political, religious or other affiliations or perspectives.*

***Inclusion** involves the active, intentional, respectful engagement with diversity among our students, faculty, and staff, as well as in the curriculum and co-curriculum. Inclusion builds a sense of community, a practice of engaged learning, and a commitment to a just, humane, and sustainable world.*

Guiding Principles:

- *Nurture a diverse University community rooted in mutual understanding and respect.*
- *Educate students, staff, and faculty about the importance of a diverse community.*
- *Continue promoting social justice as a cornerstone of the mission of this institution both on and off campus.*
- *Support innovation in approaches to enhance access and retention of underrepresented students, staff and faculty.*
- *Seek connections among different reference groups by fostering a climate of inter-group dialogue.*

It is within this larger context that Law School's Diversity Plan was created.

B. Law School Diversity Vision Statement

The Santa Clara University School of Law commits to building an academic and professional community that reflects and celebrates the broad diversity of Silicon Valley and California. Diversity and inclusion are critical core values of our institution, and drive our teaching, research, and community engagement. We seek to educate students to become lawyers of competence, conscience, and compassion.

C. Law School Diversity Goals

Student Body Diversity:

Our plan begins with specific objectives to recruit and support students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. This seems to have been a central focus of the Law School's past diversity efforts, but there continues to be a clear and pressing need to do more work in this area and to reaffirm our commitment to these students.

³ <https://www.scu.edu/diversity/council-on-inclusive-excellence/guiding-principles/>

The Committee believes that the changing national and campus conversation around race and other issues of diversity tells an important story. That story aligns with what our own students have shared about their struggles on this campus.

For a law school that has prided itself on creating and supporting diversity within its student body, the perspective of our students is a call to action. We must redouble our efforts in this area, and commit to increase and support the diversity of our student body in a meaningful way by strengthening the recruitment, retention, and representation of diverse students within our Law School.

Objectives:

- 1) Understand the current student climate in terms of sense of inclusion, exposure to diversity, and fair treatment. Regularly conduct a climate survey of all current students, and compare to other student data sources, such as LSSSE.
- 2) Analyze, improve, and intensify Law School recruiting practices for qualified and interested racial and ethnic minority applicants. Engage potential applicants through early outreach programs at colleges, high schools, afterschool programs, and community organizations. Engage in strategic recruitment programming at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic-Service Institutions. Capitalize on the 2+2+3 partnership as a strategic recruitment tool. Reexamine offering a Summer Bridge-type program for new admits with higher academic and/or acculturation needs to smooth their transition to Santa Clara.
- 3) Evaluate and update admissions and financial aid criteria for underrepresented racial minority applicants, and implement appropriate, legally-defensible affirmative action practices. Aim to create a critical mass of African-American, Latino, and Native American students within the entering class.
- 4) Strengthen Law School efforts to retain underrepresented students, and support their academic success, Bar Exam passage, and career success. Evaluate academic programs, experiential learning opportunities, and extracurricular offerings to make sure that they are open and welcoming to all students.
- 5) Engage diverse alumni in efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented students, and to build a lasting community of support for the Law School community.
- 6) Analyze student persistence data to evaluate the impact of tuition, fees, and other costs and financial aid on underrepresented student completion rates. Consistently monitor the financial impacts of academic, career, and student life programming to ensure accessibility for all students.
- 7) Evaluate the unique needs of international law students. Coordinate with the University's Global Engagement Office to better serve their unique needs. Explore providing

specialized support for students with limited English abilities. Purposefully integrate international students into the larger Law School community.

- 8) Evaluate the impacts of faculty diversity and cultural competence on student academic achievement and campus climate. Task the Faculty Development Committee with creating opportunities to strengthen all faculty members' understanding of diversity issues within our student body. Develop and strengthen faculty mentoring competencies, and implement targeted mentoring for underrepresented students.
- 9) Integrate cultural competence, diversity issues, and the Law School's values of inclusion and social justice into the core academic curriculum. Specifically tie these values to the Law School's adopted competency model. Develop modules addressing diversity and inclusion issues that can be integrated into doctrinal and experiential courses.
- 10) Address the specific issues identified during this strategic planning progress with regards to the needs of first-generation law students, access for disabled students, and political diversity in the classroom, all discussed below.

Faculty and Staff Diversity:

It's essential to note the central role that faculty and staff play in serving and supporting a diverse student body. Having a diverse workforce is key to creating an environment that welcomes diverse students, that presents an array of viewpoints in the classroom, and engages majority students in new areas of inquiry that they may never have encountered before. Diverse faculty members were themselves diverse law students, and likely faced similar issues of identity and belonging in their educational and professional careers. These faculty members play an important role as advisors and mentors for our diverse students.

But it does a disservice to diverse faculty and staff members to place the responsibility of being the advocates for diverse students solely on their shoulders.⁴ It is essential that all Law School employees serve as allies and catalysts in addressing diversity issues in the classroom and across the Law School community. And all faculty and staff must be supported in developing their competencies in this area. We must seek to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff through conscious recruitment, hiring, and advancement policies and practices.

Objectives:

- 1) Understand the current climate for faculty and staff in terms of sense of inclusion, exposure to diversity, fair treatment, and opportunities to advance. Regularly conduct a climate survey of all faculty and staff.
- 2) Analyze, improve, and intensify Law School recruiting practices for qualified and interested faculty and staff applicants from underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups, women, and LGBT individuals. Identify and implement best practices for recruiting diverse applicants. Include students on hiring committees in an appropriate

⁴ <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Invisible-Labor-of/234098>

manner. Develop and implement cultural competence training for all hiring committee members.

- 3) Make efforts to retain underrepresented faculty and staff members, particularly early in their careers. Evaluate compensation strategies that take account of the high cost of living in the Silicon Valley, the relative debt loads of more recent law school graduates, and the contributions of faculty and staff to the culture of diversity and inclusion within the Law School community. Prioritize retention as highly as recruitment.
- 4) Recognize the unique experience of staff members within the Law School community, particularly their relative lack of power within our hierarchical decision-making processes. Leverage the Dean's Staff Advisory Committee (DSAC) as a safe space to collect staff concerns and feedback, and relay them to the deans and faculty.
- 5) Create opportunities and encourage faculty and staff to advance their careers within the Law School and the University as a whole. Provide formalized mentoring for all junior faculty and staff members. Provide ongoing training opportunities for faculty and staff members to develop their career paths and support their individual growth.
- 6) Provide learning opportunities for faculty and staff to improve their cultural competence, and understanding of diversity issues and the Law School's values of inclusion and social justice.

Additional Diversity Goals:

In surveying the Law School about the climate of our community, three areas for additional attention stood out to the Committee: the needs of first-generation law students; access for disabled students; and issues of political diversity within the classroom.

1) *First-Generation Law Students:* Among the most important Jesuit values is making higher education open to all. This is a cornerstone value for Santa Clara, and was specifically identified in the University's Integrated Strategic Plan which speaks to increasing enrollment and retention of underserved and underrepresented students, particularly those from low-income and middle-class backgrounds.⁵ The University has committed to this goal through the support of the LEAD Scholars Program which serves first-generation college students,⁶ and the Young Scholars Program, a summer enrichment program for high school students.⁷ Through these programs, the University has drawn significant numbers of students who are the first in their families to attend college.

Objectives:

⁵ <https://www.scu.edu/santaclara2020/elements/elaborated/goal-5/>

⁶ <https://www.scu.edu/lead/>

⁷ <https://www.scu.edu/summer/young-scholars-program/>

- 1) Support creation of a First Generation Professionals Program to provide students with the opportunity to support each other, address the isolation of being first-generation, and celebrate their achievements.⁸ Incorporate aspects of academic, professional, financial, and social support, as well as addressing the intersectional identity issues presented by low-income, first-generation students.
- 2) Reexamine offering a Summer Bridge-type program for new admits with higher academic and/or acculturation needs to smooth their transition to Santa Clara.⁹ Engage faculty, alumni, and upper-division students as mentors for incoming first-generation students.
- 3) Create a culture of sensitivity to the issues facing low-income, first-generation students. Coach faculty, staff, and student organization sponsors on designing events and programs that are inclusive for people with modest means.

2) ***Access for Students with Disabilities:*** In the Law School’s climate survey, 8% of respondents identified themselves as having a disability. This is mostly in line with our most recent ABA Self-Study where we reported 46 accommodated students or 7% of the student body in fall 2015.¹⁰ The range of disabilities within our community include some typical mobility and sensory issues (e.g., using a wheelchair or hearing aids), as well as significant number of invisible disabilities (e.g., psychiatric conditions, autism and other learning disabilities, chronic pain and fatigue.)

Objectives:

- 1) Promote a broad culture of full inclusion of people with disabilities within the Law School community. Ensure that all facilities, programs, and services are intentionally designed to serve people with disabilities.
- 2) Make inclusion of accommodations a regular practice in Law School community events and programs. Coach faculty, staff, and student organization sponsors on designing events that are inclusive of people with disabilities. Identify best practices for designing inclusive and accessible events.

⁸ <http://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-usc-first-generation-20151227-story.html>

⁹ This objective is also included in the general Diversity Goals above as many first-generation students are also underrepresented in other aspects of their identity. One model for this type of Summer Bridge program is offered through the University of Michigan School of Law’s Michigan Access Program.

<http://www.law.umich.edu/currentstudents/studentservices/Pages/peersupportsvcs.aspx>

<http://www.law.umich.edu/currentstudents/studentservices/Pages/mapproreorientation.aspx>

¹⁰ ABA Standard 207 requires the Law School accommodate students with disabilities and ensure “equality of opportunity” for those students.

- 3) Bring transparency to the disability accommodations process. Reduce the effort and cost involved in accessing accommodations, and ensure that accommodations are of high quality. Educate the Law School community about the purpose behind and process to access accommodations. Train faculty on their legal and ethical obligations with regards to accommodating students. Educate Disability Resources staff about the nature of law school exams and the reasons behind our specific practices.
- 4) Designate the chair of the Student Affairs Committee as the ombudsperson for disabled student complaints about accommodations and interfacing with Disability Resources, Law Administrative Services, and Law Student Services.

3) ***Political Diversity:*** A shared norm within the Law School is that we aim to foster an environment in which all respectful viewpoints on contested issues, no matter how conservative or liberal, are welcomed and encouraged. The Law School understands that the robust exchange of competing views on controversial issues enhances the intellectual growth of all in the community, and is invaluable to the training of future lawyers. Academic freedom, for faculty and students alike, lies at the heart of the University's mission. At some level, this is what it means to be a university.

It is foundational to the academic enterprise that the Law School cultivate an environment in which all respectful ideas and viewpoints can be voiced, where no one is shamed for expressing politically unpopular views, and where the robust exchange of differing perspectives on controversial topics is celebrated rather than avoided. The diversity of viewpoints, especially on difficult issues, is essential to the enterprise of teaching and learning.

The Law School's objective is to create and preserve such an environment. Further, we aim to actively ensure that students are exposed to and intellectually challenged by a range of political perspectives during their time in law school – to better hone their skills as advocates, to improve their skills as listeners, to appreciate that helpful ideas can emerge from a variety of perspectives, and to cultivate open-mindedness and empathy.

Objectives:

- 1) Intentionally engage with political and intellectual diversity when making faculty hiring decisions. Do not create quotas for individual hires, but seek to reflect a broad array of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives within the tenure-track faculty, renewable-term faculty, and lecturer pool.
- 2) In classroom discussions, faculty should rigorously separate methodologies and critiques of reasoning from political positions or ends. Professors should elicit and/or provide multiple sides of an argument, and employ techniques to safely allow students to share dissenting viewpoints. Provide training for faculty on facilitating difficult discussions.

Student groups should be actively engaged in building a community that engages with difficult dialogues and complex political and social issues with respect and compassion. Student Life programming should thoughtfully bring together groups with opposing stances for respectful dialogue in the interests of our Jesuit educational mission.

D. Committing to Diversity and Inclusion:

For this plan to be more than just a list of goals and objectives, we must hold ourselves accountable, and communicate our efforts to the broader Law School and University communities.

Objectives:

- 1) Communicate our values, stories, and successes to an array of audiences. Tell stories of Santa Clara's diversity through print and online media. Use Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to create a personal and professional network for students and alumni committed to our diversity values, who will ultimately circle-back to support the Law School and these efforts if the institution demonstrates an honest and meaningful commitment to them.
- 2) Designate a leadership structure responsible for carrying out these goals. Make explicit that this Plan is owned by the entire Law School community. Charge the Executive Faculty, senior deans, and other institutional leaders with prioritizing our values of diversity and inclusion, and advancing these goals and this plan.
- 3) Create a regular assessment plan for these goals and objectives. Continue to survey the Law School community at reasonable intervals about the climate for diversity and inclusion. Incorporate the perspectives of the Law School's differing academic and professional interest groups into the analysis of the climate survey results. Maintain and make public the findings of that assessment. Benchmark our performance against available data from peer institutions. Communicate our progress to the community through published reports and self-evaluations online and in print, and provide opportunities for reflection and dialogue about our progress.

E. Proposed Diversity Leadership Structure

To execute this plan, the Dean should appoint a full-time member of the faculty to serve as the Law School's Director of Diversity and Inclusion. The Director role should be viewed as an essential member of the Law School administration, and play a central role in all decisions that affect the recruitment and retention of the student body, the hiring and promotion of faculty and staff, and the overall community climate within the Law School.

The Director should work closely with the Senior Assistant Dean for Student Services with regards to diversity initiatives impacting the student body, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Assistant Dean for Admissions and Financial Aid with regards to student admissions.

The Committee for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) should serve as an advisory body to the Director, and have responsibility for assessing progress on this Diversity Plan. The Director should serve as an ex-officio member of CDI, as well as the Admissions Committee, the Student Affairs Committee, the Tenure and Rank Committees, and all hiring, review, and promotion committees for tenure-track and renewable-term faculty members, and consult on all staff hiring processes.