

Public Administration Program Diversity Plan

Revised October 2011

Valdosta State University's Public Administration Program is committed to the University's goal "to foster an inclusive and diverse environment for all constituents." Diversity is a core component of the Masters in Public Administration (MPA) and Doctorate in Public Administration (DPA) programs and is a central tenet in hiring of faculty and staff, admission of students, development of course curriculum, and day-to-day interactions within the broader community. The Public Administration Program is committed to compliance with all relevant federal and state laws and with policies of the University System of Georgia, Valdosta State University, and the Office of Social Equity.

(See University policies at <http://www.valdosta.edu/ose/facstaffservices/index.shtml>.)

Our belief in the empowering values of democracy guides the department to support efforts to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and to ensure that the diversity of faculty, staff, and students reflect our program's intent to be an inclusive institution that provides equal opportunities. The department is committed to creating a welcoming and supportive environment for populations that have been marginalized or excluded. Diversity goes beyond the individual characteristics that contribute to personal identity such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, age, marital status, physical and mental disability, and military status. We also believe that our program is enriched by diversity in political orientations, national and regional cultures, and a multiplicity of beliefs and ideas. Civil discourse and debate are time-honored traditions on this campus and in on-line classes. Abuse and harassment related to protected status or the civil presentation of one's opinions are not tolerated. All Public Administration faculty members are expected to include a discussion of diversity in the curriculum when appropriate and to demonstrate respect for diverse opinions when appropriately shared in the classroom.

The following diversity plan has been created in keeping with the program's commitment to on-going diversity.

Commitment to Faculty Diversity

The Valdosta State University Public Administration Program is committed to diversity in recruitment and hiring to assure the representation of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. The following strategies are intended to assure diversity.

When faculty openings exist:

- develop a pool of candidates that is inclusive by using a variety of media for outreach, including publications that target minority audiences when sufficient resources are available;
- ask existing faculty to conduct outreach to potential faculty candidates;
- use social media for recruitment, including posting job opportunities on social media “group” boards;
- conduct outreach to institutions with doctoral-degree granting programs to inquire about potential candidates and to ask that job announcements be shared;
- conduct outreach to historically black colleges and universities for new graduates or faculty;
- conduct outreach to current practitioners, who may themselves be eligible for hiring or who may be aware of others who might qualify;
- post announcements on VSU job sites, in the event employees in other departments might qualify;
- work with the VSU Office of Military and Adult Programs to attract potential faculty members from current or retiring military staff;
- seek support from the Office of Social Equity for other avenues of posting job announcements;
- seek qualified part-time instructors to further diversify the faculty, when appropriate and available, including faculty from other institutions; and
- engage women/minority visiting professors, when available and appropriate.

During the screening and hiring process:

- ensure that communication lines are open between potential candidates and the selection committee;
- allow time during the campus visit to introduce the candidate to the campus and the community, including possibilities for housing, child care, spousal employment, and schools, if applicable; and
- provide information on faculty scholarship and research resources.

Once hired, encourage retention by:

- inclusion of new faculty in social events that involve faculty and others in the community;
- appoint a mentor for each new faculty member to help with questions and support;
- encourage new faculty to take advantage of scholarships for course release and other faculty resources;
- share curriculum resources, when appropriate;

- invite new faculty members to participate in professional and civic organizations;
- clarify tenure and promotion guidelines during orientation;
- ensure full participation in orientation activities;
- recognize faculty at meetings for publications, presentations, and other scholarly work.

To ensure ongoing diversity:

- annually conduct a review of all faculty by gender, race, age, and disability;
- maintain applicant list information to determine if applicant pools are adequate to allow for diversity and if advertising needs to be altered for greater impact;
- if a protected/minority candidate rejects an offer, determine the reasons why the offer was not accepted;
- participate in Office of Social Equity diversity training and special events to inculcate diversity throughout the program.

Commitment to Student Diversity

The Valdosta State University Public Administration Program is committed to diversity in recruitment and admission to ensure representation of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. The following strategies are intended to ensure diversity.

During the admissions process:

- promote the Public Administration program among campus programs that are readily linked to Public Administration, (for example, Social Work and Criminal Justice) to attempt to recruit more women and minorities;
- work with the Office of Adult and Military Programs to recruit new minority and women graduates to the MPA/DPA programs;
- work with the Georgia on My Line program to identify and encourage new graduates to enter the on-line MPA program;
- work with the Public Administration Advisory Committee to locate and encourage potential women/minority students;
- work with potential students to locate funding for graduate programs;
- allow a limited number of provisional students into the program who are likely to succeed once given the opportunity;
- recruit current practitioners through professional organizations and through outreach/consulting and community education;
- foster inclusiveness by featuring minority/women students on the Public Administration website and in program literature;

- feature outstanding minority/women alumni on the Public Administration website as examples for others;
- use our MPA/DPA website for easy access to information about programs;
- work with the Accessibility Office for potential students with special needs;
- work with historically black colleges and universities to share information about the MPA/DPA programs;
- use social networking sites to promote MPA/DPA degree programs, including professional network site groups.

Encourage successful completion of the program through the following:

- appoint advisers to serve as mentors for women/minority students;
- encourage student participation in seminars, conferences, and in support of faculty research;
- provide assistantships to financially support women/minority students;
- invite guest speakers who represent minorities to participate in classroom/on-line activities;
- ensure that the curriculum uses materials that are inclusive of under-represented groups;
- ensure that students with disabilities have full access to all course materials by working with Accessibility Office when appropriate;
- ask faculty and Public Administration Advisory Committee members to assist students in gaining worthwhile internships that they might not be able to arrange on their own.

To ensure on-going diversity:

- track and trend graduates by race and gender; and
- change program advertising as necessary if number of minority/women students decreases.

Curriculum and Program Activity

The Valdosta State University Public Administration Program is committed to fostering diversity within the program's curriculum. In furtherance of this core belief, the program is committed to the following:

- discussion of diversity as a public administration value throughout the curriculum;
- use of examples and case studies that demonstrate the meaning and value of diversity in government and non-profit organizations;

- encouraging the support of faculty and the Public Administration Advisory Committee to locate meaningful internships that women and minority students and students with disabilities might be unable to arrange themselves;
- encouraging the support of faculty and staff to introduce minority and non-minority students to opportunities for internships with minority/women/persons with disabilities;
- participation in diversity training and in activities sponsored by the Office of Social Equity;
- inclusion of women and under-represented categories for classroom and on-line speaking engagements;
- continuing to offer “Managing Diversity in the Public Workforce” as a primary vehicle for discussing diversity;
- inclusion of accessibility statements on all syllabi;
- inclusion of guidelines for classroom discourse on all syllabi;
- faculty participation in annual compliance training; and
- participation in campus seminars on diversity.