

**Agricultural Education, Communications, and Technology
Department**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences

February 2020

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS MISSION STATEMENT

The University of Arkansas is determined to build a better world by providing transformational opportunities and skills, promoting an inclusive and diverse culture, nurturing creativity, and solving problems through research and discovery, all in service to Arkansas. Since 1871, our fundamental purpose as a land-grant institution and state flagship remains unchanged — to serve the state of Arkansas as a partner, resource and catalyst by:

- Providing access to a comprehensive and internationally competitive public education, and fostering student success across a wide spectrum of disciplines.
- Utilizing research, discovery and creative activity to improve the quality of life, develop solutions to the challenges we face and drive the state's economy.
- Contributing service and expertise through outreach, engagement and collaboration.

Our mission provides a broad outline of the work required to achieve our vision – that the University of Arkansas represents the best of public higher education, advancing Arkansas while building a better world.

A campus-wide, collaborative effort led by Chancellor Joe Steinmetz resulted in eight Guiding Priorities and measurable goals that provide direction for the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. This roadmap for our future is articulated through unifying themes that describe who we are, what we do and why it matters.

Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Eight Priorities

1. Personalized learning opportunities for faculty, staff and students
2. Opportunities for enhanced engagement with people of diverse backgrounds
3. Efforts to ensure inclusion and diversity as a universal value of campus through active measures
4. A budget that reflects a commitment to inclusion and diversity
5. Access to a network of resources to support an inclusive climate
6. Opportunities to enhance intercultural competency and diversity
7. Efforts to ensure our campus reflects a commitment to inclusion and diversity
8. Commitment to establish and maintain professional practices and conduct reflective of an inclusive University of Arkansas community

DALE BUMPERS COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, FOOD AND LIFE SCIENCES MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences is to improve the quality of life for Arkansans by preparing students for successful careers, conducting impactful research, and sharing knowledge to promote viable food and agricultural systems, sustainable environments, healthy families and vibrant communities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic data from the State of Arkansas shows disparities among races and ethnicities at the University of Arkansas campus-wide level, which become more pronounced at lower levels of administration within the university. The following figures show current racial and ethnic demographics for the State of Arkansas (Figure 1), University of Arkansas (Figure 2), Dale Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food and Life Sciences (Figure 3), and the Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Technology.

Figure 1. *State of Arkansas Racial/Ethnic Demographics*

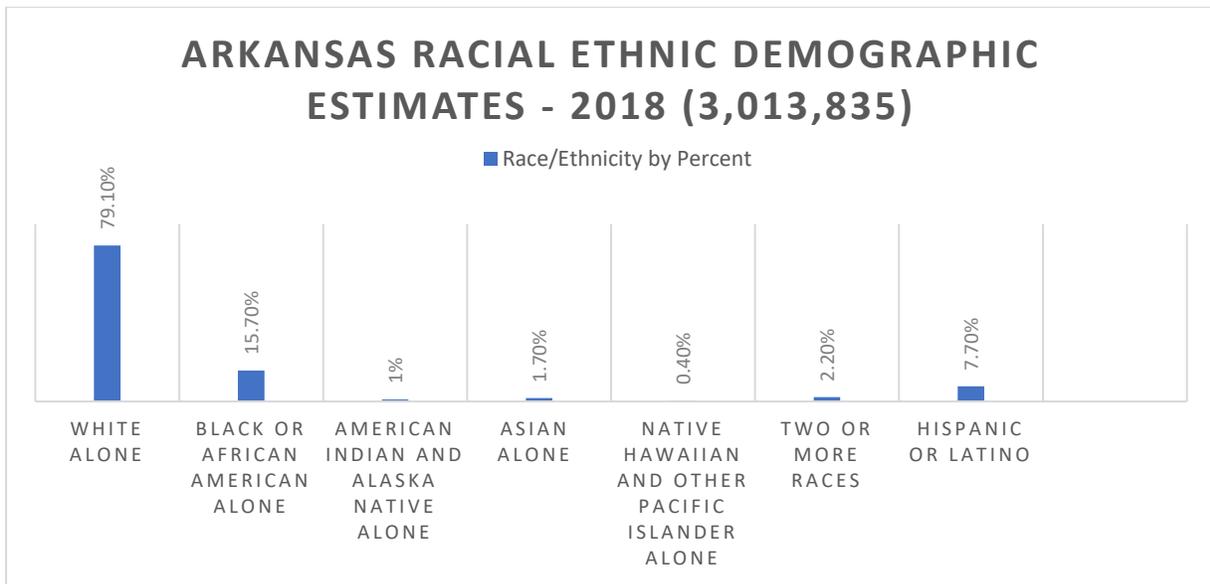


Figure 2. *University of Arkansas Racial/Ethnic Demographics*

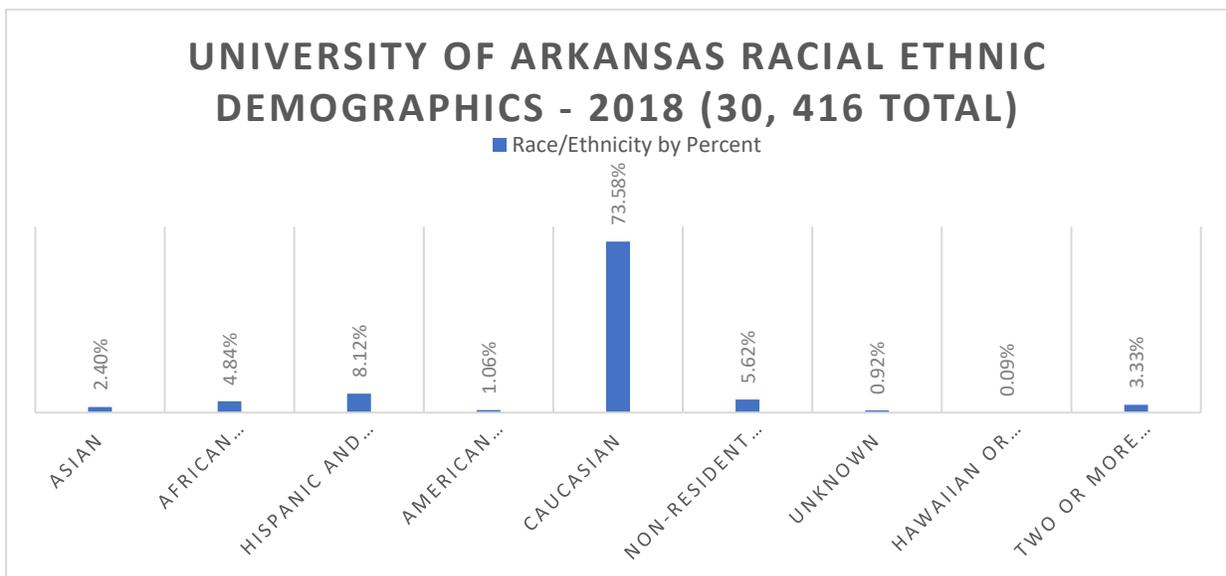


Figure 3. Dale Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food, and Life Sciences Racial/Ethnic Demographics

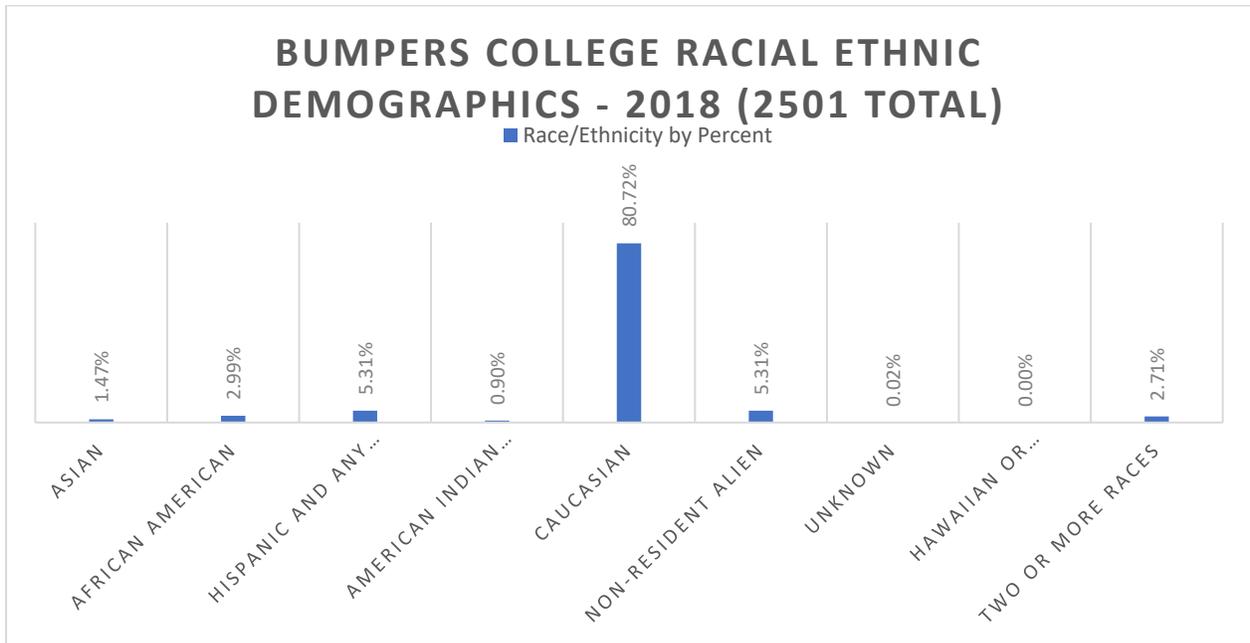
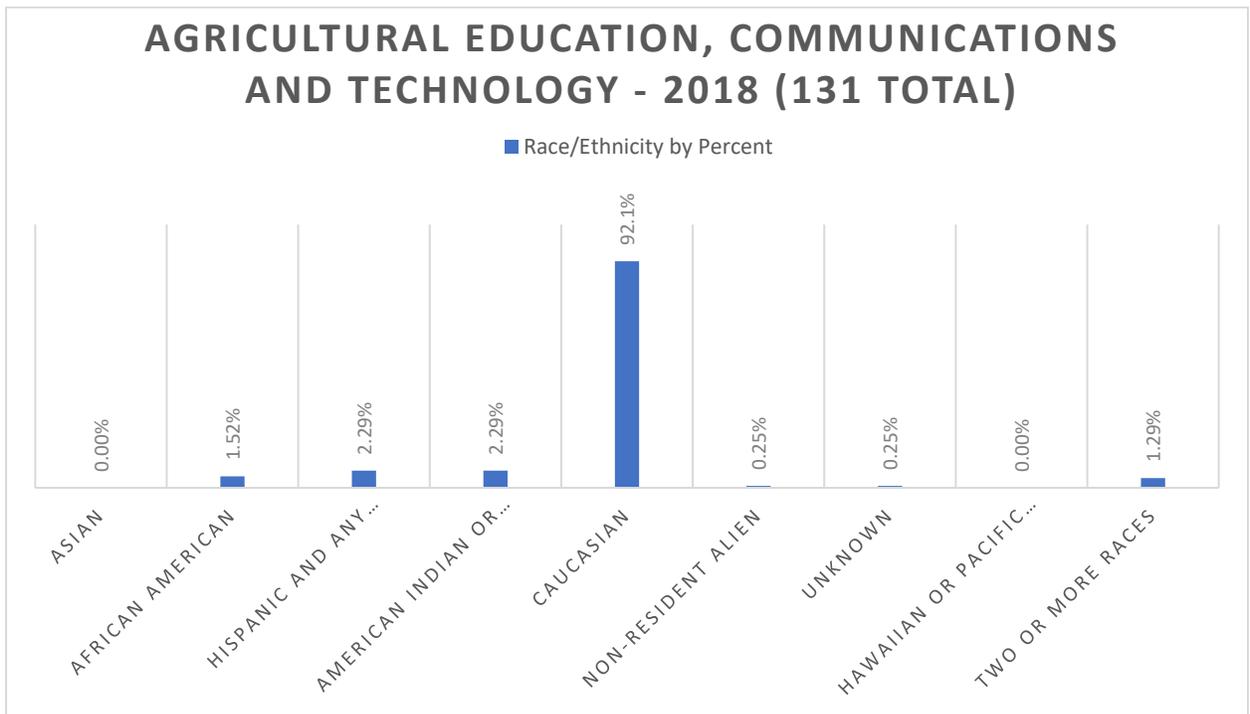


Figure 4. Department of Agricultural Education, Communications, and Technology Racial/Ethnic Demographics



AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION, COMMUNICATIONS, AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The AECT curriculum is designed for students to customize their career pathways and includes a series of core courses that build a solid foundation in agricultural sciences. Students have the opportunity to concentrate their studies in education, communications, leadership, or technology to best match their professional goals. AECT graduates advance agriculture through careers as educators, leaders and innovators of technological change.

Agriculture is a global industry requiring agriculturalists to be well-versed in intercultural competence and diversity. Thus, to fully equip our students to be leaders, educators, and communicators in agriculture, we must prepare them to engage and interact with diverse audiences.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan for the AECT Department is framed by four of the pillars put forward by the Office for Diversity and Inclusion: research and discovery; education, training and support; engagement and outreach; and, inclusive practices. These pillars provide a foundation upon which the AECT Department can establish a more inclusive, equitable environment, thus leading to a greater diversity of peoples within the department.

Each pillar contains goals and action items to be undertaken by the department. When applicable, the goals and action items are time-bound, however, the authors realize this is a living document that can and will change as the department implements this plan.

THE FOUR PILLARS FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION: OUR PLAN

The first pillar is research and discovery. This pillar focuses on the scholarship conducted by faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students within the AECT department. The overarching intent of this pillar is to increase and strengthen AECT's scholarly output regarding DEI.

- Research and Discovery – faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students will:
 - Engage in DEI related inquiry with campus and external partners
 - Encourage faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students to incorporate DEI where appropriate into their individual research agendas and areas of expertise
 - Pursue interdisciplinary collaborations between campus and external partners to conduct DEI related research focusing on student recruitment, student experience, and cultural competence in AECT/agricultural fields
 - Seek extramural funding to support DEI research, development, teaching, and outreach (i.e.: USDA Multicultural Scholars Program)

The second pillar is education, training, and support. The focus of this pillar is improving the knowledge of DEI issues among faculty, graduate students, and staff, as well as, enhancing the DEI aspects of undergraduate education.

- Education, Training, and Support – Faculty, graduate students, and staff will:
 - Participate in DEI education provided by campus experts

- All AECT faculty, staff, and graduate students will attend *Facing Bias* training by May 2021
- Incorporate DEI education into the graduate seminar by partnering with the Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education (CMDE)
- Integrate culturally responsive teaching practices in our classroom teaching
 - As the college develops a uniform DEI education module for all University Perspectives courses, incorporate as available
 - DEI will be addressed across all AECT introductory courses where fitting and in relation to the discipline/subject matter
 - Partner with the departmental curriculum committee representative and AECT faculty to identify concentration specific courses where DEI education can/should be incorporated
- Increase recruitment of diverse graduate students
 - Request assistantship funding from the college to support 1-2 graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds

The third pillar is engagement and outreach. This pillar is intended to provide direction in connecting AECT and its stakeholders regarding DEI.

- Engagement and Outreach – Faculty, graduate students, and staff will:
 - Communicate inclusivity through departmental communications materials
 - AECT newsletter – continue offering a student spotlight
 - AECT Bulletin – advertise campus, college, and departmental DEI related events, activities, and accomplishments
 - Partner with the Arkansas FFA Association to support DEI initiatives with the state’s agricultural educators
 - Identify and establish opportunities to offer professional development for agricultural educators around DEI topics
 - Partner with the Arkansas FFA Association to establish DEI training for incoming state officer teams
 - Explore partnerships with minority serving institutions to increase reach of service
 - Coordinate with the PSRC committee representative to build relationships with faculty, staff, and students at surrounding community colleges with current articulation agreements to develop a pipeline for recruiting undergraduate students into AECT majors

The fourth pillar is inclusive practices. This last pillar focuses on the culture of inclusivity within the AECT Department. The main goal is to promote a climate within the department that values diversity, inclusion, and equity.

- Inclusive Practices – Faculty, graduate students, and staff will:
 - Model inclusive behaviors in AECT to promote retention
 - Utilize culturally responsive teaching practices in the classroom
 - RSO s– engage professionals from underrepresented backgrounds to visit with AECT student organizations to highlight excellence and showcase various career pathways in agricultural fields

- Encourage students/faculty/staff to engage in campus-wide DEI initiatives