



Advisory Council on Diversity 2023-26 Diversity Strategic Plan narrative

A.T. Still University (ATSU) has embraced a culture that prioritizes data-driven decision-making. Every decision made by the University is the result of a thorough planning process involving all aspects of the institution. ATSU's president and Board of Trustees rely on insights from the University's Strategic Plan, which is informed by various sources, including the Diversity Strategic Plan (DSP). As a result, it is highly likely both plans share common goals and objectives.

ATSU's dedication to diversity has been recognized with the prestigious Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) award from *Insight Into Diversity* for seven consecutive years, starting in 2017. Within the HEED award's Health Professions category, under which ATSU falls, an annual data report is produced following the award cycle. This report meticulously evaluates the alignment of ATSU's student body with faculty, staff, and administrators. It also examines the University's initiatives, including historically underrepresented group (HUG) student recruitment and retention; HUG faculty recruitment and retention; diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices; and Advisory Council on Diversity (ACOD) activities. These efforts are crucial in addressing the changing demographics of society and enhancing workforce diversity, as highlighted by Terregino et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of a more diverse healthcare workforce in reducing health disparities. It is noteworthy that ATSU has consistently increased its HUG student population during its seven-year HEED award journey.

The Diversity Strategic Plan's development demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting cultural proficiency, diversity, equity, and inclusion within the University's educational environment. This commitment is closely linked to ATSU's interprofessional education and collaborative practice initiatives. While the University already offers such opportunities, ACOD is particularly interested in understanding the impact of these interactions. The council also emphasizes the consequences of overlooking cultural differences, advocating for cultural proficiency that acknowledges and navigates through these distinctions, in line with the perspective of Lindsey et al. (2003). Recognizing the value of these differences is fundamental to culturally proficient behavior, as disparities often arise from dismissive or indifferent attitudes, as elucidated by Phelps & Toplin (2004). Such behavior aligns with bias and may lead to microaggressions or outright discrimination. ACOD is committed to enhancing faculty diversity and expanding professional development opportunities for the ATSU community, thereby contributing to the success of its growing HUG student demographic.

ACOD plays a significant role as an officially appointed University committee under the oversight of the vice president for diversity & inclusion, designated by the president. Inclusivity is a central value of ATSU's organizational culture, and ACOD represents all segments of the campus community, including the President's Cabinet, Council of Deans, Human Resources, faculty chairs, and diversity committees within schools and divisions. These dedicated members actively engage in quarterly meetings, with ACOD's primary mission being development and supervision of the University's Diversity Strategic Plan. The President's Cabinet and deans hold permanent positions on the committee, while other members serve two-year terms, nominated by their respective school deans or program vice presidents. Upon receiving a nomination, the president extends a personal invitation to participate.

ACOD membership

Nelli Acosta	Tonya Fitch	Sharon Obadia
Emily Adamson*	Dana Funderburk	Sean O'Connor
Yinka Adekugbe	John Gardner	Adepitan Owosho**
Roxana Aguirre	Gillian Gascon**	Ppanandurangan Ramaraj*
Marty Allison	Norm Gevitz	Clarissa Rodriguez
LeAnn Allgood	Ryan Haas**	Priscilla Phillips
Don Altman	Wendy Hardina	Marlene Salas-Provence
Robert Behnen	Nicolette Harris	Eric Sauers
Forrest Bollow	Marisa Hastie	Kimberly Skinner
Donna Brown*	Lori Haxton	Shaun Sommerer**
Ann Lee Burch	Matt Heeren*	Gaylah Sublette
Catherine Burris	Sarah Hemzawi**	Tessa Tibben
Samantha Caraway	Urvashi Iyer**	Robert Trombly
Brian Castillo-Murillo	Bryan Krusniak	Dougherty Tsalabutie
Melody Chambers	Jenna Lau	Kalyn Valentine
Matthew Chan**	Christina Ledesma	Caroline VanSickle**
Gary Cloud	Stephanie McGrew	Ted Wendel
Grant Coleman**	Dwight McLeod	Margaret Wilson*
Quincy Conley	Mary-Katherine McNatt	Sara Wilson
Ashley Cummings*	Maud Mundava	Roger Wooley**
Radhika Edpuganti**	Teri Nguyen-Guo*	Gabriela Zamora**
Norine Eitel	Clinton Normore	

*Termed out members **Members no longer at ATSU

ACOD holds regular meetings, convening at least quarterly, with a special one-day planning retreat occurring each September. During this retreat, members gather at four campus locations and connect remotely via Zoom. Every ACOD member has access to the institutional shared drive, where all relevant materials are stored. ACOD's primary responsibility is to develop and oversee the Diversity Strategic Plan. The committee began developing the 2023-26 Diversity Strategic Plan on June 30, 2023, conducting a total of eight meetings in-person and over Zoom throughout the planning period. These sessions included virtual exercises to establish goals and primary measures, carrying forward the strategic priorities from the previous plan.

The 2023-26 Diversity Strategic Plan consists of three goals, eight objectives, and 10 primary measures. Each committee member engaged with their respective constituent groups to suggest potential goals, objectives, and primary measures for consideration and committee voting. The goals, objectives, and primary measures were finalized during the annual meeting on Sept. 21, 2023.

Strategic Initiative No. 1 goal

1. Invest in programs to retain HUG faculty.

Strategic Initiative No. 2 goals

1. Create interdisciplinary faculty/staff working groups to discuss strategies for developing inclusive evidence-based curriculum.
2. Collaborate with Human Resources to periodically host Still Healthy webinars promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the University (e.g., quarterly or bi-annually).

2023-26 Diversity Strategic Plan reference document

Diversity Statement – ATSU believes excellence requires understanding, affirming, and valuing human differences.

Mission Statement – The Advisory Council on Diversity (ACOD) will work to cultivate a culturally proficient community, which embraces all forms of difference and perpetuates the University’s mission to enrich learning experiences of students, faculty, and staff in support of serving the underserved.

ATSU diversity definition – ATSU believes diversity is an authentic understanding and appreciation of differences and, at its core, is based upon the value each human being brings to our society and each person’s access and opportunities to contribute to the University’s cultural proficiency.

Historically underrepresented groups (HUGs) – ATSU defines this demographic as those historically underrepresented in medicine. More specifically, this includes American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.

Educationally and economically disadvantaged – A student who comes from an environment that has inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to enroll in and graduate from a health professions or nursing school.

SMART goals – Simple, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely

From where data was retrieved – What source was used to pull the data (e.g., website, institutional resources, data analytics reports, etc.)?

From where did the school/department begin – What was the quantifiable data before current collection point (e.g., previous year data)?

What are the school/department recommendations – Based on the stated goal, objective, and metric, does the school/department recommend the metric is met/not met and/or adjustments to the objective or measure to more accurately assess?

Priority rating/implementation deadline – Who (individual) is accountable for retrieving and passing the data along to ACOD?

Follow up/outcomes – What has been accomplished since the last reporting period? Should be comprehensive and specific to each metric.

Interprofessional education – “Those occasions when members of two or more professions learn with, from, and about one another to improve collaboration and the quality of [service].” ([CAIPE, 2022](#))

Interprofessional collaborative practice – “When multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds work together with patients, families, careers, and communities to deliver the highest quality of care.” (WHO, 2010)

Interprofessionality – An education and practice orientation, an approach to care and education where educators and practitioners collaborate synergistically.” (d’Amour and Oandasan, 2005, p10)

Evidence

- ATSU, [Interprofessional Education](#), (n.d.) A.T. Still University.
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- Oandasan I. and Reeves S., [Key Elements of Interprofessional Education. Part 1: The Learner, the Educator, and the Learning Context](#), *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, May 2005, 1 (suppl): 21-38.
- Oandasan I. and Reeves S., [Key Elements of Interprofessional Education. Part 2: Factors, Processes and Outcomes](#), *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, May 2005, 1 (suppl): 39-48.
- Phelps, C., & Toplin, R. B. (2004). Race – [The power of an illusion](#). *Journal of American History*, 91(3), 1119-1121.
- Terregino, C. A., Saguil, A., Price-Johnson, T., Anachebe, N. F., & Goodell, K. (2020). [The diversity and success of medical school applicants with scores in the middle third of the MCAT Score Scale](#). *Academic medicine: journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*, 95(3), 344-350.