



ACOD 2023-2026 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 that involves all aspects of the institution. The University President and Board of Trustees (BOT) rely on insights from the University's Strategic Plan (USP), which is informed by various sources, including the Diversity Strategic Plan (DSP). As a result, it is highly likely that 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, which ATSU falls under, an annual data report is produced following the award cycle. This report meticulously evaluates the alignment of our student body with the faculty, staff, and administrators. It also examines our university's initiatives, such as HUG student recruitment and retention, HUG faculty recruitment and retention, DEI best practices, and the activities of the diversity council. 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 creation of the Diversity Strategic Plan (DSP) demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting cultural proficiency, diversity, equity, and inclusion within our educational environment. This commitment is closely linked to ATSU's interprofessional education and collaborative practice initiatives. While the university already offers such opportunities, the Advisory Council on Diversity (ACOD) is particularly interested in understanding the impact of these interactions. The committee also emphasizes the consequences of overlooking cultural differences, advocating for cultural proficiency that acknowledges and navigates through these distinctions, in line with Lindsey et al.'s perspective (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 can 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 our 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 the development and supervision of the University Diversity Strategic Plan (DSP). 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:

Nelida Acosta	Grant Coleman	Matt Heeren	Clarissa Rodriguez
Emily Adamson	Ashley Cummings*	Sarah Menzawi	Marlene Salas Provance
Roxana Aguirre	Norine Eitel	Brian Krusniak	Eric Sauers
Marty Allison	Tonya Fitch	Jenna Lau	Kimberly Skinner
LeAnn Allgood	Dana Funderburk	Stephanie McGrew	Shaun Sommerer**
Don Altman	John Gardner	Dwight McLeod	Dougherty Tsalabutie
Robert Behnen	Gillian Gascon	Mary-Katherine McNatt	Kalyn Valentine
Forrest Bollow	Norm Gevitz	Maud Mundava	Caroline VanSickle
Donna Brown*	Ryan Haas	Teri Nguyen-Guo*	Ted Wendel
Ann Lee Burch	Virginia Halterman	Clinton Normore	Margaret Wilson
Samantha Caraway	Wendy Hardina	Sharon Obadia	Sara Wilson
Brian Castillo-Murillo	Nicolette Harris	Sean O'Connor	Robert Trombly
Matthew Chan	Marisa Hastie	Adepitan Owosho**	
Gary Cloud	Lori Haxton	Ppanandurangan Ramaraj	

*Termed out members **Members no longer at ATSU

ACOD holds regular meetings, meeting 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 (DSP). The committee began developing the 2023-2026 DSP 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 2023-2026 DSP consists of three goals, eight objectives, and ten 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 September 21, 2023.

For Strategic Initiative #1, the goal is as follows:

1. Invest in programs to retain HUG faculty.

For Strategic Initiative #2, the goals are as follows:

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 DEI within the University (e.g., quarterly, or bi-annually).

APPENDIX

The 2023-2026 DSP 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 our University's cultural Proficiency.

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

Educationally & Economically Disadvantaged - A student who comes from an environment that has inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skill and abilities required to enroll in and graduate from a health professions or nursing school.

S. M. A. R. T. 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, and 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 member 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.
- D’amour, D. and Oandasan, I., (2005) [Interprofessionality as the field of interprofessional practice and interprofessional education: An emerging concept](#), Journal of Interprofessional Care, 19, pp. 8-20.
- Lindsey, R. B., Robins, K. N., & Terrell, R. D. (2003). *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders 2nd ed.* Corwin Press Inc.
- 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.