



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-SAN ANTONIO

President's Commission on Equity
and Inclusive Excellence



**FRAMEWORK
REPORT 2019-2021**



**NOT EVERYTHING
THAT IS FACED CAN
BE CHANGED.
BUT NOTHING CAN
BE CHANGED UNTIL
IT IS FACED.**



*—James Baldwin
American novelist, poet, and activist*

Dr. Cynthia Teniente-Matson, Texas A&M University-San Antonio President, established the President's Commission on Equity and Inclusive Excellence (PCOE²) in 2017 to provide a campus-wide representative body that facilitates and advises on matters relative to inclusive excellence.¹

¹ Suggested citation: Gritten, T., Baker, J., Murakami, E., & Hinojosa, T. (2021). The President's Commission on Equity and Inclusive Excellence: Framework Report 2019–2021. Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE



Dear Members of the University Community,

As a University that is proud of being a Hispanic-Serving and Military Embracing institution, we share a responsibility to be stewards of a place accessible to all people in our region and state. Amidst the recent racial and cultural unrest across America, we continue to strive for freedom and equity for all citizens.

Disparities in social and digital equity, as well as public health – particularly across racial and ethnic groups – have been aggravated by the global health pandemic. These events demanded preemptive action to reinforce an institutional culture of fairness and inclusion.

It is, however, equally important to recognize the historical legacy of inequity within our own region and across the nation. From the American Indians at the Spanish colonial missions to the African-American slaves who found their final resting place here – all these past and present events bring meaning to the University's commitment to seek equity across our diverse communities and across generations.

Our values are not static or separate from our practices. We are responsive to national and local challenges, and we lead with a shared purpose of seeking equity for all within and beyond our A&M-San Antonio community. Valuing the "diversity within diversity" is at the heart of the University's philosophy of inclusion and respect for one another. We connect our experiences, values, and practices by leading with a mutual focus on transformative advocacy.

To this end, the President's Commission on Equity and Inclusive Excellence (PCOE²) has committed to working together to foster an equity-minded environment that exemplifies our core values and our pledge to support student success.

The PCOE² promotes intentional and productive conversations about equity and essential historical narratives so that we can be more objective about listening, learning, and engaging in these necessary conversations. Through the Commission, A&M-San Antonio community members can be better equipped to advance the cause of equity – even when these conversations are uncomfortable.

This framework report reflects the activities of PCOE² from 2019 to 2021, during which time Commission members engaged in dialogue about the complex, long-standing inequities rooted in racism, income gaps, and social injustice within our dynamic, diverse, and growing region. Each of us bears a responsibility to lead toward shared equity in an environment that includes everyone's values and practices. Our success depends upon the commitment of every member of the University to lead toward shared equity in an environment that includes inclusive values and practices.

If we are to fulfill our vision of serving this community through social and digital challenges, we must learn to trust and guide one another. To help us navigate these tumultuous times, the PCOE² framework serves as an essential resource for our community. I invite you to become "shared-equity leaders," generating knowledge and research, and advocating for members of our campus, city, and region as social catalysts as we move forward on this new phase of our journey.

Warm regards,

Dr. Cynthia Teniente-Matson, President

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE



Since 2019 we have experienced unprecedented circumstances amidst a global pandemic that continues to disproportionately impact communities of color. From long food pantry lines to the uneven access to technology and digital connection needed by students to continue learning remotely, subsequent events of 2020 and 2021 have had an undeniable impact on San Antonio and the Texas A&M University-San Antonio community. We likewise witnessed a rise in social unrest nationally and locally – most evident in the Black Lives Matter protests in response to anti-Black racist violence and the impacts of stalled immigration policy. In one bright spot, we witnessed the U.S. Supreme Court's positive decision to protect LGBTQ+ employees and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

To ensure we are always learning how to be a more inclusive university, the President's Commission on Equity and Inclusive Excellence (PCOE²) builds on the historical work drawn from our support of south Bexar County. Within A&M-San Antonio's context as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, the PCOE² serves as a platform to support the University's efforts to become a national model for student and academic success for all students. Particularly for the first-generation and underrepresented students within our diverse and heritage-rich south San Antonio community, the efforts of the PCOE² inform our strategic plan and our core values, inspiring our community to be equity-minded, inclusive, and respectful.

This framework report provides the historical and sociopolitical context of A&M-San Antonio's founding in south San Antonio and its commitment to equity in education and service. The report provides definitions of key terminology used in the Commission's work; includes the short-, medium-, and long-term objectives and outcomes identified by the Commission as worthy of pursuit; and outlines the mechanisms by which the Commission plans to help the University community achieve these results.



CORE VALUES

Texas A&M University-San Antonio's core values are continually informed by the lessons we learn and the experiences we share as a community. One example of a core value directly aligned with the work of PCOE² is this:

We are equity-minded, inclusive, and respectful. We embrace individual and cultural differences as a strength of our diverse community, and we share in the responsibility to create a positive culture in which each member is accepted, valued, and safe and in which each member can thrive.



THE PCOE² CHARGE

Twelve faculty and staff members were selected to represent the University's three academic colleges (Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education and Human Development) as well as functional areas within student success and engagement (Admissions and Disability Support Services), academic affairs (University Library) and business affairs (Title IX). Additional faculty and staff members were selected at large. When the Commission was first established in 2017, President Teniente-Matson charged the PCOE² with the following:

1. Advise the President about proactive support for the broadest forms of equity, the intersectionality of various forms of identities, and social relations in our campus community.
2. Review relevant support services needed by students, faculty, and staff.
3. Bolster our efforts at professional development.
4. Examine campus communication methods to educate and inform our community about excellence in an equitable environment.

PCOE² GOALS

As the University has grown, faculty, staff, and students have chosen to address difficult issues that at times divide us, to confront barriers, and to create opportunities for our students to close the achievement gaps in academic success and excellence. We value individual differences and unique life experiences, and we embrace cultural differences found within and among diverse races, ethnicities, socioeconomic classes, sexual orientations, and nationalities because we know these differences contribute to the University's mission of learning for all. Four goals have been identified by Commission members for PCOE²'s work:

1. Invest in continual learning, education, and training at all levels.
2. Develop outwardly visible signs of inclusion (e.g., art, grounds, banners, printed materials, etc.).
3. Provide activities and co-curricular support to all communities.
4. Recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff.

The PCOE² has established a common language, fostered thought-provoking programming, and supported community-wide events that expand our knowledge and institutional capacity to support diversity, equity, and inclusion. The PCOE² began this task by looking at A&M-San Antonio's mission, vision, and strategic goals. To continue to foster an equity-minded University community, the PCOE² routinely reviews, and assesses student success and other measures to identify and address inequities. A consistent examination of the University's policies, procedures, and practices helps ensure they are equitable.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT HELPS FRAME THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE'S ACTIVITIES

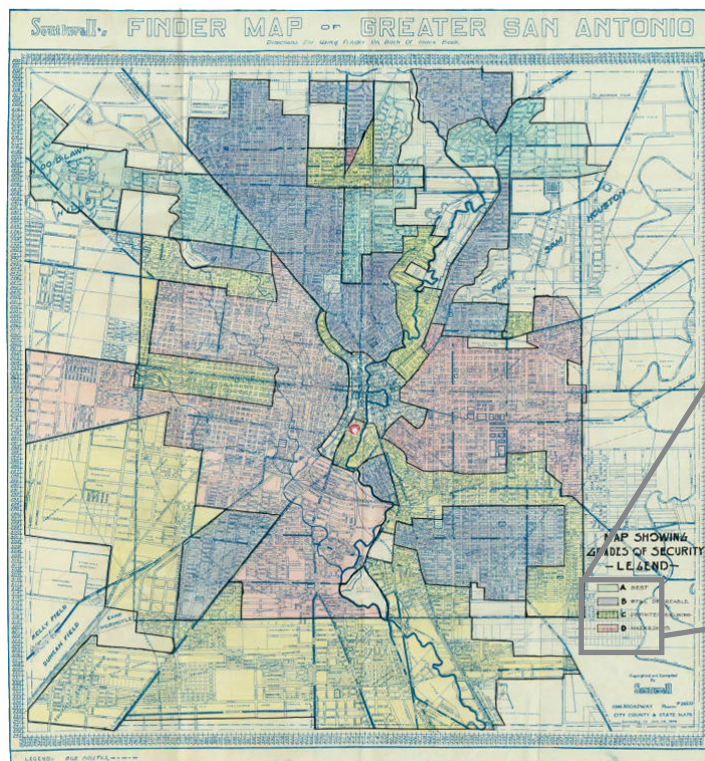


Texas A&M University-San Antonio is located on the land that once provided a home to the original indigenous Coahuiltecan, where vaqueros drove their cattle, and where African-American slaves and their descendants found a final resting place. The Texas Legislature established the University as a standalone upper-division institution in 2009 to provide a pathway to a baccalaureate or graduate education in an area historically underserved in terms of higher education. Yet, the inequities that led to this disparity are deeply rooted in American society as a whole.

HISTORICAL REDLINING PRACTICES



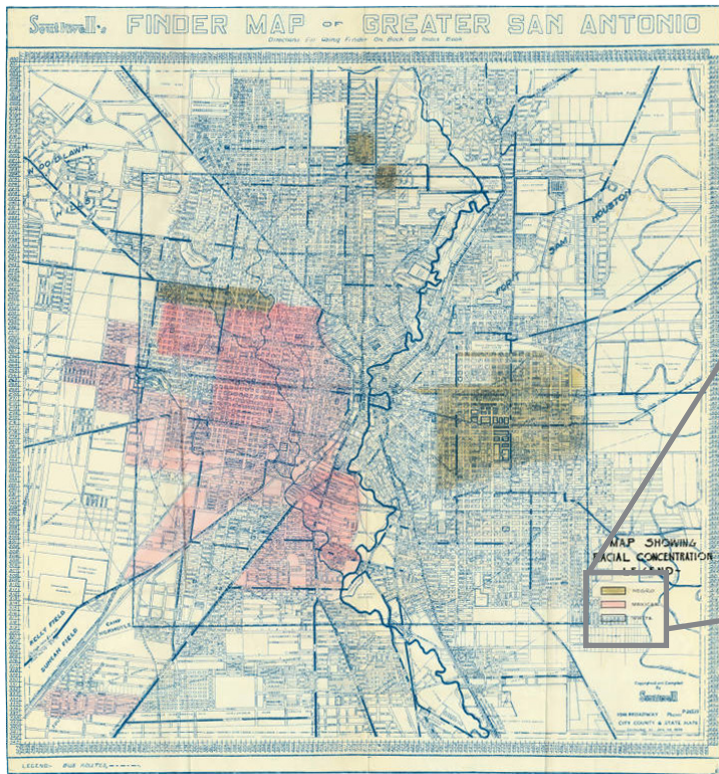
In the 1930s, the United States Government formed the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), which worked with real estate agents and banks to draw red lines on maps to identify neighborhoods that were more likely to default on mortgages. Additionally, red lines were used to identify communities with significant numbers of African Americans and Hispanics. Banks were less likely to invest or loan money to property owners within the red lines. The evidence of redlining in San Antonio is apparent in two maps the HOLC created.



Map Showing Grades of Security

- A. Best
- B. Still Desirable
- C. Definitely Declining
- D. Hazardous

Source: HOLC San Antonio City Survey Report 1 Exhibit A: Grades of Security. Federal Home Loan Bank Board. Home Owners' Loan Corporation. 1933-7/1/1939. Available at: <https://lib.utsa.edu/specialcollections/reproductions/copyright>



Map Showing Racial Concentration

- Negro
- Mexican
- White

The map on the left shows how HOLC identified neighborhoods that were more “likely to default on mortgages in San Antonio.” The yellow color represented areas designated as “definitely declining.” These areas included working-class and first-generation immigrants. The red color in the left map represented “hazardous” security. These areas tended to be closer to industrial areas and have older housing.

The map above shows how HOLC identified the racial/ethnic composition of neighborhoods. The red and yellow colors in the right map represent “Mexican” and “Negro,” respectively.

As a result of banks choosing not to invest in the communities behind the red lines, a racial wealth gap developed. Even though the practice has been outlawed, the legacy remains. African Americans and Latinos who cannot access conventional loans often turn to predatory lenders with higher rates of interest. This leads to increased foreclosures, decreased home values, decreased credit scores, and reduced access to higher education. For example, social, economic, health, and other inequities, particularly across racial and ethnic groups, can be traced back to redlining.

Source: HOLC San Antonio City Survey Report 1 Exhibit B: Racial Concentrations. Federal Home Loan Bank Board. Home Owners’ Loan Corporation. 1933-7/1/1939.
 Available at: <https://digital.utsa.edu/digital/collection/p16018coll12/id/78/rec/3>

THE CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATION



Redlining, inadequate investment in communities, and hiring biases have consequences. Unfortunately, San Antonio is among the most income-segregated metros in national reports.ⁱ The A&M-San Antonio campus is situated in the heart of an income-segregated community.

Despite legal reforms, disparities remain that continue to perpetuate social, economic, health, and other inequities, particularly across racial and ethnic groups. According to a recent Pew survey, four in 10 Latinos say they have experienced discrimination in the previous year alone, such as being criticized for speaking Spanish or being told to go back to their home country.ⁱⁱ A separate Pew survey reported that 58 percent of all Americans say race relations in this country are bad. Yet, the details of the survey show great variation. Eighty-two percent of black people indicated that they are treated less fairly in hiring decisions, while only 44 percent of white people believed black people suffer such discrimination.ⁱⁱⁱ

Multiple academic studies have reported that resumes with minority racial cues, such as a distinctly African-American name, lead to 30 percent to 50 percent fewer callbacks than resumes without those cues. One such report was evocatively titled: “Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination.”^{iv}

African Americans and Hispanics are typically offered fewer opportunities at their local schools, prone to struggle in their secondary schools, and tend to experience reduced access to higher education. Hispanics have a lower level of academic attainment than Asians, blacks, or non-Hispanic whites.^v Almost one-quarter of Hispanic children live in poverty.^{vi} As a result, more than 50 percent of students who attend high-poverty high schools are Hispanic, and these schools are less likely to offer the math and science course sequences that public four-year colleges require.^{vii}

ⁱ <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/08/01/the-rise-of-residential-segregation-by-income/>; <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/HumanServices/FaithBased/2019PovertyReport.pdf>; and, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-03-18/the-u-s-cities-with-the-highest-levels-of-income-segregation>.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2018/10/25/latinos-and-discrimination/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.uml.edu/docs/2020-Nat-Survey-RJ-Highlights_tcm18-330169.pdf.

^{iv} <https://www.nber.org/papers/w9873>; see also <http://www-2.rotman.utoronto.ca/facbios/file/Whitening%20MS%20R2%20Accepted.pdf>.

^v <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/28/5-facts-about-latinos-and-education/>.

^{vi} National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019. A roadmap to reducing child poverty. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25246>.

^{vii} U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2018, October). K-12 education public high schools with more students in poverty and smaller schools provide fewer academic offerings to prepare for college (Publication No. GAO-19-8) <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/694961.pdf>.

WHY ARE PEOPLE VIEWING THE SAME SOCIETY SO DIFFERENTLY?



Nolan Cabreraⁱ describes this contradiction as “white immunity.” The idea of racism is morally repugnant to almost everyone, yet white people struggle to comprehend the experiences of black people. For example, white customers do not expect to be followed in a store and are rarely asked to speak on behalf of their entire race.

Many white people may state authoritatively that their poor background did not offer them any advantages. Unfortunately, economic class is another category of division – of separating the “us” from the “them.” Aspects of society tend to exaggerate this effect. For example, Americans are more likely to get their news from organizations that strengthen their beliefs and their resolve against people who disagree with them. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that groups of like-minded individuals are likely to develop opinions that are more extreme than those the individuals initially believed.

Humans fundamentally prioritize security over everything else. If we don’t feel safe, we are unlikely to enjoy our work, our community, or even our homes. In the same way that people need safety to survive and thrive physically, students need security to learn. Students who live or grow up in marginalized communities – for instance, those who have experienced harassment or who have been followed around a store merely because of the color of their skin – have a particular need for these safe or “brave” spaces. They need a location where they can feel like their true selves, and where they do not have to pass as or pretend to be someone else. The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators has promoted five main elements of brave spaces: controversy with civility, owning intentions and impacts, challenge by choice, respect, and “no attacks.”ⁱⁱ



FIVE MAIN ELEMENTS OF BRAVE SPACES:

1. Controversy with civility
2. Owning intentions and impacts
3. Challenge by choice
4. Respect
5. No attacks



ⁱ See recommended readings for Nolan Cabrera’s book.

ⁱⁱ https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Policy_and_Practice_No_2_Safe_Brave_Spaces.pdf



In the summer of 2019, the members of PCOE² outlined outcomes the Commission should pursue. These include long-term shifts in conditions, intermediate shifts in action, and short-term shifts in learning:

As a recognized Hispanic-Serving Institution, Texas A&M University-San Antonio conducts its daily affairs consistent with equity-minded principles.

- A&M-San Antonio is known as a leader in experiential learning and the production of scholarly research pertaining to issues of equity affecting disadvantaged groups in South Texas.
 - Students, faculty, and staff utilize PCOE²'s funding opportunities for experiential learning and scholarly research.
- A&M-San Antonio launches a sponsored lecture series that includes equity targets across the entire campus and in south Bexar County.
 - Students, faculty, and staff recognize the historic inequity in south Bexar County.
 - Faculty and staff identify the specific barriers to student success by population (e.g., race, gender identity, age).



Faculty, staff, and students display attitudes and skills that acknowledge cultural differences and address these differences when working with people from diverse cultures.

- Faculty, staff, and student leaders effectively respond to bias and lead productive conversations about equity on campus.
 - Students, faculty, and staff can express a shared framework for the relationships between equity, inclusion, and the University's mission.
 - Members of the campus community will see outwardly visible signs of commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The composition of the faculty and staff reflects that of the student body.
 - Faculty and staff are aware of the resources and support available to them to advance equity in their work as part of their leadership development.



Texas A&M University-San Antonio contributes its efforts as a Hispanic-Serving Institution to assist underrepresented groups with increased economic development opportunities through effective partnerships with civic and governmental groups in San Antonio and Bexar County.

- Students achieve academic success through graduation equally across populations (e.g., race, gender identity, age).
 - Students, faculty, staff, parents, and guardians are aware of the University and community resources available to help students succeed.
- A&M-San Antonio produces graduates whose equity-mindedness permeates the South Texas community.
 - All undergraduate students will be required to complete at least six hours of courses with an inclusion/equity designation.
 - The University inspires learning that respects diversity of identity (e.g., race, gender, age) and thought.
- A&M-San Antonio provides students in the College of Education and Human Development with placement opportunities in south Bexar County school districts to learn collaboratively about instruction and simultaneously improve preK-12 student success.
- Historically underrepresented groups within south Bexar County will overcome the current digital divide that is pervasive in the community.
 - Students can identify and utilize the appropriate technology for the task at hand.
 - Students can perform work in teams and collaborate in online platforms.





BLACK SUMMER



By: La-Tieka Sims '20

You know the goal is always to
Turn up
Be in my bag
And kick it with somebody's son
Ohhh hold up baby
come talk to me
don't run
No but for real don't run,
or they'll chase you down with guns like you stole
something
And broadcast it
to prove that they were justified
RIP Ahmaud Arbery

But you know it's been hot girl summer
Ain't no netflix and chill
We tryna get out and stay gone
And we dont wanna kick it at home
It's not like we'll be safer there anyway
Like if we stay in our house
We can avoid the possibility of
our hot summer ending in hot bullets
Because we were in the wrong place
at the wrong time
in our...own...damn...home
RIP Breonna Taylor

The summer is still young though and
I'm tryna make sure these fits is on point
So when I pull up to the spot
They wont be ready for how my foot
gonna be on they necks
But I wont keep the pressure on em
I wanna make sure they can catch their breath
And I can't let myself be on my knees
while they can't breathe
And hear their last words be...
Ugh everything hurts!
My stomach hurts,
my neck hurts,
I need water or something please officer
I...can't...breathe!
RIP George Floyd

I'm just tryna enjoy being black this summer
I'm tryna come through every kickback
And get turnt at every turnup
I'm tryna vibe wit my girls
And capture every golden hour
Cause we don't know when it will be my last hour
Because THEY thought I committed a crime or
THEY had the wrong address or
THEY just...wouldn't...listen
And then THEY
will have you
saying RIP
to me

CAMPUS INITIATIVES AND EFFORTS



During the pandemic, the PCOE² continued its work through virtual and hybrid connections. The PCOE² engaged in conversations in the summer of 2020 reflective of the current state of affairs, including the uncertainties and realities of the disparate COVID-19 impacts within communities of color. The PCOE² developed strategies to stay connected and engaged as related to access to technology. Following are campus initiatives representing the PCOE²'s philosophy:

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND SOLIDARITY



The PCOE² facilitated and engaged in a broader discussion as events impacted the campus culture. In June 2020, led by the Student Government Association (SGA), several student clubs hosted critical conversations about race and the Black Lives Matter movement. Such conversations culminated in a solidarity rally to protest the killing of George Floyd. Former SGA President, La-Tieka Sims, penned the haunting poem "Black Summer," which inspired the development of a Student Reflections space in our Classroom Hall. Another important initiative was the Rainbow Pride At Work and School (PAWS) Ally training, which fosters understanding about how to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive campus for LGBTQ+ individuals. The PCOE² generated visual signs of inclusion such as a sidewalk representative of LGBTQ+ support and a gallery exhibit showcasing African-American artists in the Science and Technology building.



Gallery owner Maria Willams is the curator sharing the African American artists' work displayed in the Science Building.

BUILDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES



Campus departments focused on the unmet or unrecognized needs that can impede success. In response, the campus community intentionally integrated support programs aimed at addressing the entirety of a student's experience. For instance, members of the campus worked together to identify those who might benefit from tailored support and services, such as foster youth, undocumented, and military-affiliated students, to name a few.

Based on student focus groups, the PCOE² Digital Equity Committee created proposals in Spring 2021 focused on Technology and Digital Equity and Diversity and the Campus Environment. The PCOE² also supported the A&M-San Antonio Library's Human Library Project. Another effort being supported by PCOE² is an investigation related to the effects of COVID-19 on food insecurity, stress, diet, and activity levels among the University's students. (This research is being led by Drs. Vicky Elias, Shannon Shen, and Sukho Lee.)

The PCOE² continues to focus on creating brave spaces within classrooms and across campus life venues. Within these spaces, individuals can contextualize information from different perspectives while maintaining the humility and mutual respect of meeting people where they are. By embracing "diversity within diversity," we can impact our campus culture and generate culturally responsive education – a key component leading to successful student outcomes.



Dr. Vicky Elias



Dr. Shannon Shen



Dr. Sukho Lee

ASPIRE—A&M-SAN ANTONIO & SOUTH BEXAR COUNTY ISDs PARTNERSHIP TO IMPACT REGIONAL EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE



A&M-San Antonio commissioned the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) to document the current state of education in south Bexar County. In September 2019, IDRA compiled a profile of public, independent school districts in Bexar County. The report suggested that south Bexar County school districts represent areas with significant barriers to academic and social advancement for the people living within them.

In response, in late 2019 the University launched the A&M-San Antonio & South Bexar County ISDs Partnership to Impact Regional Equity and Excellence (ASPIRE) to collaboratively advance equitable opportunities across these south Bexar County districts. Through discussions with superintendents, we learned many opportunities are available to solve everyday challenges, collectively create impact, and leverage our assets. As one superintendent succinctly stated: "Individually we are doing great things, but none of us are moving the needle. Together we strengthen our voice and can change the outcomes."

Today the ASPIRE network continues its work to enhance college readiness and further support guided pathways. The larger collective goal of ASPIRE is to work in unison to resolve challenges, embrace opportunities, and create social mobility, income growth, and career readiness for students and families in south Bexar County.

BUILDING A CAMPUS CULTURE THROUGH SPONSORSHIP FUNDS



Shortly after the 2017 Fall Convocation, the Office of the President committed an annual budget to support initiatives designed to strengthen a campus culture of excellence that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion. Each semester the PCOE² also provides sponsorship funding of up to \$2,500 for academic activities and/or co-curricular events that contribute to the equity-mindedness of the A&M-San Antonio campus and the broader community. The Commission also provides special one-time event funding of \$500 with an expedited application process for activities or events that need to be scheduled within a shorter planning period.

Proposed activities and events must be open to University-wide interest and accessibility. In addition, it should be directly aligned with the University's strategic plan values by being (1) student-centered; (2) equity-minded, inclusive, and respectful; (3) committed to excellence; (4) visionary; and (5) a catalyst for opportunity.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EVENTS



As part of its goal to expand awareness of equity and equity-mindedness among faculty, staff, and students, PCOE² presents renowned speakers, hosts diversity forums, and facilitates diversity-themed conversations at campus-wide events. Past topics included an overview of San Antonio's history of economic segregation and social inequality; an assessment of San Antonio's digital divide; a review of gender, race, and class in the women's suffrage movement; accessibility and equity experiences during the global pandemic; and Asian American and Pacific Islander identity. The Henry G. Cisneros Institute for Emerging Leaders *Real Talk* and other conversation series supported by PCOE² facilitated dialogue that organized diversity topics into manageable frameworks to encourage cultural competency and respectful discussion.

The frameworks remind each of us of simple guidelines that apply to any difficult topic:

1. Listen actively and with an ear to understanding the views of others.
2. When listening, focus on the idea and not the individual.
3. What we say in here, stays in here.
4. Participate to the extent that you are comfortable.
5. Be kind.
6. Commit to learning, not debating.

BUILDING SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SPACES



The Campus Art and Ground Aesthetics Committee, launched by the President in 2020, established a campus interpretative history plan. Among other important initiatives to support student needs, the University opened its residence hall during the pandemic for students who otherwise lack Internet connectivity.





PCOE² MEMBERS 2019–2021



The members of the PCOE² are nominated and include representatives from each college and from academic and institutional divisions as well as student representatives who serve for a two-year period.

CHAIRS

Tim Gritten, *Executive Director, Library and Special Collections*
Dr. Cynthia Teniente-Matson, *President*

CO-CHAIR

Dr. Amy C. Lewis, *Associate Dean and Associate Professor, Management*

ACADEMIC COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dr. Daniel Delgado, *Assistant Professor, Sociology*
Dr. Blake Erickson, *Assistant Professor, Psychology*
Dr. Lizbett Tinoco, *Assistant Professor, English*

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Dr. Gilbert Barrera, *Clinical Assistant Professor*
Dr. Amy C. Lewis

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Tamara Hinojosa, *Associate Professor, Counseling*

STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

Joni Baker, *Title IX Coordinator*
Dr. Edwin Blanton, *Executive Director, Mays Center for Experiential Learning and Community Engagement*
Cristina Dominguez, *Assistant Director P11*
Julie Eddards, *Executive Director, Campus Life and Immersion*
Dr. Mari Fuentes-Martin, *Vice President, Student Success and Engagement*
Martha Gonzalez, *Chief Human Resources Officer*
Sha Johnson, *Manager, Instructional Design*
Tasha Martinez, *Diversity Resident Librarian*
Vanessa Quiroga, *Director, Community Partnerships and Campus Visit Experience*

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Allyssa Atkinson, *Student Body President*
Valeria Rodriguez, *Campus Activities Board Representative*

FACULTY SENATE REPRESENTATIVE

Dr. James Finley, *Associate Professor and Undergraduate Program Coordinator, English, College of Arts and Sciences*

COMMISSION CHAIRS



Tim Gritten



Dr. Cynthia
Teniente-Matson



Dr. Amy C. Lewis
(Co-Chair)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRS



Dr. Tamara Hinojosa



Dr. Mari Fuentes-Martin



Dr. Lizbett Tinoco



Dr. Gilbert Barrera

INCOMING MEMBERS

Elena Aguinaga, *Student Government Association Representative*

Dr. Stephanie Black, *Assistant Professor, Management, College of Business*

Hugo Cantero, *Academic Success Coach II*

Erica Costenbader, *Communications Manager*

Craig Elmore, *Controller*

Maira Jorge, *Academic Advisor I*

William "Clint" Kingsbery, *Student Assessment Coordinator*

Seth Maldonado, *Student Representative*

Elias McCullen, *Coordinator for Programs and Partnerships*

Elizabeth Murakami, *Special Assistant to the President on Equity and Inclusive Excellence*

Anthony Perez, *Director of Admissions Processing*

Dr. Joseph Pickering, *Director of Student Activities*

Dr. Jeffrey Sattler, *Clinical Assistant Professor, College of Business*

Dr. Reba Sims, *Coordinator, Family Student Engagement*

Amanda Trybula, *Office of Academic Advising*

Blaire Wyatt, *Head Athletic Trainer*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the following individuals who served on the PCOE² Executive Committee in 2020-2021 as committee chairs:

EVENTS COMMITTEE

Dr. Mari Fuentes-Martin

SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE

Tim Gritten

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

Dr. Lizbett Tinoco

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND KNOWLEDGE COMMITTEE

Dr. Tamara Hinojosa

DIGITAL EQUITY COMMITTEE

Dr. Gilbert Barrera

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE



Issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion cannot be solved without first acknowledging them. Psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum has noted that, as a society, we are not so much color blind as color silent. The historical legacy of disparities are based on legal and social structures, which must be deliberately dismantled. Bigotry and prejudice, and their effects, reside deep in our subconscious, but they can be rooted out and addressed through deliberate and thought-provoking questioning, discussion, and action against incidents of racism, sexism, and other unequal and/or inequitable treatment.

A vibrant campus is a safe location for engagement – not exclusion – with a focus on learning about ourselves and others. As PCOE’s work on diversity, equity, equity-mindedness, and inclusion continues to evolve, and as new societal challenges arise, the Commission will continue to focus each year on specific goals in alignment with the University’s strategic plan. Our commitment is to listen intently with respect and to learn from each other.

FOR FURTHER READING



- A&M-San Antonio’s library has a living collection of racial justice and anti-racist resources. Visit <https://libguides.tamusa.edu/blm>.
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by the acclaimed civil rights lawyer and author Michelle Alexander. Visit <https://newjimcrow.com/>.
- *White Guys on Campus: Racism, White Immunity, and the Myth of “Post-Racial” Higher Education* by Nolan L. Cabrera includes interviews with 29 white male students in higher education between 2007 and 2008. Visit <https://www.speakoutnow.org/speaker/nolan-cabrera>.
- *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari states that “Homo sapiens rule the world because it is the only animal that can believe in things that exist purely in its own imagination, such as gods, states, money and human rights.” Visit Harari’s website at <https://www.ynharari.com/book/sapiens-2/>.
- *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi reflects the story of anti-Black racist ideas and their power over the course of American history. Visit <https://www.ibramxkendi.com/stamped>.
- *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* by Beverly Daniel Tatum focuses on the psychology of racism. Visit <https://www.beverlydanieltatum.com/published-works/>.



COMMONLY ACCEPTED CAMPUS LANGUAGE AND DEFINITIONS



Members of the PCOE² used various methodologies and outreach to formulate the Commission's initial Statement on Equity. The campus adopted, with slight modifications, definitions of the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) for diversity, inclusion, equity, and equity-mindedness. The Commission focused on a common language for understanding inclusive excellence within the campus community and currently has identified seven particularly relevant terms.

Diversity: Valuing individual differences (e.g., personality, learning preferences, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, color, sex, economic status, national origin, age, genetic information, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, country of origin, disability, and veteran/military status as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations) that can be used in the service of learning for all.

Inclusion: Active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity – in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, and geographical) with which individuals might connect – in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within and change systems and institutions.

Equity: Creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion.

Equity-mindedness: Awareness of and willingness to address equity issues among institutional leaders and staff. (Source: Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California.)

Cultural knowledge and understanding: Attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals and organizations to acknowledge cultural differences and incorporate these differences when working with people from diverse cultures.

Advocacy: Promoting the interests or cause of someone or a group of people; influencing public attitudes, policies, and laws to create a more socially just society guided by the vision of human rights; and/or helping people find their voice. (Source: West Virginia University's Center for Excellence in Disabilities and Penn State University's Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity.)

Equality: Evenly distributed access to resources and opportunities necessary for a safe and healthy life and/or uniform distribution of access that may or may not result in equitable outcomes. (Source: University of Houston's Center for Diversity and Inclusion.)

Inside cover art: Katrina Gorman, *In the Day*, Fabric on Canvas.
In The Eye of The Beholder Art Gallery & Studio, Home of The Art of Four.

PCOE² STATEMENT ON EQUITY



Texas A&M University-San Antonio values the rich diversity and heritage of the community it serves. To support this work, President Matson created the President's Commission on Equity and Inclusive Excellence and charged it with leadership to build "a culture of excellence that values equity and inclusion." This statement describes why equity is important to our A&M-San Antonio family and how creating an equitable environment will help the University meet its strategic goals.

- Equity means creating opportunities for all members of the University community to have equal access to and participation in educational programs as well as professional and leadership development, including placement. An anti-racist approach discourages oppression and a sense of superiority over other races and promotes racial tolerance. It creates brave spaces to encourage individuals to contextualize information from different perspectives while maintaining the humility and mutual respect of meeting people where they are.
- Our path to equity-mindedness contemplates digital equity and minimizing, if not eliminating, the digital divide. This is especially important for those from groups whose access to success has been and continues to be limited. Through these learning opportunities, we can bridge the historical educational gap and reduce the differences in student success and graduation rates and inequities in the broader University community.
- When we are equity-minded, we are aware of differences and inequalities and are willing to discuss them so we can act to resolve them. Differences and inequalities might refer to race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, country of origin, or other characteristics. However, they might also be related to whether or not a student is working, has children, or served in the military. In an inclusive campus, we must all meet each other as we are and work toward a common goal. Equity applies to a broad range of characteristics, and equity-mindedness means that we must be willing to examine and honor all of them.
- Adopting an equity-minded approach ensures that each member of the A&M-San Antonio family has an opportunity to succeed. It creates an environment that empowers students to advocate for themselves. It provides students the opportunity to learn leadership skills to become transformative leaders within their families, professional environments, and the larger community. It strengthens ties between A&M-San Antonio and the communities we serve and enhances our unique standing among state and national universities.



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-SAN ANTONIO
**President's Commission on Equity
and Inclusive Excellence**

tamusa.edu/pcoe
equity@tamusa.edu