II. STUDENT DIVERSITY

The UT School of Medicine at San Antonio (SOM) offers programs that create and sustain a spirit of diversity and inclusion that will further shape undergraduate medical education by fostering an environment of cultural competency, sensitivity and awareness. All student diversity efforts are fundamentally and comprehensively rooted in intellectual vitality and cross-cultural understanding that allow our student physicians to embrace and celebrate unique perspectives and life experiences that enrich students, faculty and staff in the SOM. Attention to cultural competence and cultural sensitivity throughout medical education both in and out of the classroom has the potential to alleviate or at least ameliorate systemic disparities in access to and quality of health care. All members of the SOM uphold the principles of the SOM Diversity Policy below.

A. SOM Diversity Policy

Based on the growing body of evidence that inclusion of all factors that expand diversity in perspective and action adds to the richness of an academic community and is essential to building and sustaining leadership in academic medicine, and eminence in advancing health and health care, the SOM has established and strives to uphold its Diversity Policy, as follows:

To demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion, it is the SOM policy to...

• Cultivate and ingrain throughout the academic environment a culture that values and respects diversity, thereby demonstrating the profound belief that diversity and inclusion add unique, enduring and motivating value to the pursuit and achievement of each part of the SOM mission

• Support the appointment of Dean(s) and Office(s) for Diversity to address faculty and student diversity and inclusion across all employee and trainee needs in conjunction with institutional leadership and policy guidance

• Support a Diversity Committee, representing faculty, staff, students and trainees; advisory to the Dean of the SOM and the Medical Faculty Assembly

• Maintain representation to the AAMC Group on Diversity and Inclusion, AAMC Group on Faculty Affairs, the AAMC Group on Women in Medicine and Science, and work with the representation from related AAMC entities

• Employ continuous quality improvement methods to assess SOM diversity and inclusion needs over time in order to insure delineation of those specific group whose members the institution seeks to enroll in its student body and trainee classes as well as employ among its faculty and staff because those
specific groups are the source of 'added value' for all participants in our SOM learning environments. Devise and employ a responsive diversity action plan, including feasibility and anticipated outcomes

- Uphold all equity policies and practices for faculty recruitment and non-discrimination, and employ best practices for insuring broad outreach and conducting inclusive searches. Follow the standards detailed in the institution’s Resource Guide for Faculty and Executive Committee Recruitment

- Uphold all equity policies and practices for faculty retention, professional development, advancement, and transitions across the faculty career 'life-span,' incorporating best practices to provide effective mentoring and a respectful, inclusive and supportive environment

- Establish valid and reliable metrics to gauge diversity accomplishments; ensure accuracy of required reports and other data management

- Uphold all UTHSCSA EEO/AA and Human Resources’ policies and practices for non-discrimination in recruitment and employment of any administrative and profession employee, classified staff and other employees, as well as trainees

**B. SOM Diversity Definitions**

Through extensive collaboration and deliberation, the Group on Diversity and Inclusion of the AAMC established the below-listed definitions of Diversity, Inclusion and Health Equity, which have become operable formal definitions at our SOM. In regard to our own faculty, as well as for students and staff, the SOM values diversity that entails mindfulness across the spectrum of human differences, yet is specific to those characteristics that will best serve the needs of South Texas when accomplishing the SOM mission of excellence in teaching, research, service and community engagement.

**Diversity**

- Diversity as a core value embodies inclusiveness, mutual respect, and multiple perspectives and serves as a catalyst for change resulting in health equity. In this context, we are mindful of all aspects of human differences such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, geography, disability and age
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Inclusion
- Inclusion is a core element for successfully achieving diversity. Inclusion is achieved by nurturing the climate and culture of the institution through professional development, education, policy, and practice. The objective is creating a climate that fosters belonging, respect, and value for all and encourages engagement and connection throughout the institution and community.

Health Equity
- Health equity is when everyone has the opportunity to attain his/her full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of his/her social position or other socially determined circumstance.