



The Division of Diversity and Engagement

As a member of the Chancellor's Executive Cabinet, the Vice Chancellor for the Division of Diversity and Engagement (DDE) leads the stated university priorities of promoting representation and belonging for all faculty, staff, students, and campus groups. Guided by its newly created Framework for Inclusive Excellence, the DDE approaches its thought leadership believing that each person brings value and has a place at UT.

Creating equitable and inclusive spaces for all, the work of the DDE reaches well beyond the Knoxville campus to include meaningful impact for the people in each one of the 95 counties across the State of Tennessee. To accomplish this mission-driven work, the DDE comprises three areas: the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED), the Office of Community Engagement and Outreach (OCEO), and the Strategic Initiatives Unit (SIU).

Office of Equity and Diversity

The Office of Equity & Diversity (OED) serves UTK, UTIA, IPS, UT Foundation, UT Space Institute, and the UT System. The department fulfills an important compliance function by working with various legal mandates set out by state and federal law and university policies related to civil rights, equal employment, and affirmative action. Members of OED's staff serve as ADA Coordinator, Deputy ADA Coordinator, Deputy Title IX Coordinators, and the Title VI Coordinator. The office ensures compliance with the ADA by recommending accommodations enabling access to university facilities and services for faculty, staff, and visitors.

The office safeguards EEO/AA compliance by granting exemptions from normal search procedures when warranted and monitoring/approving faculty and exempt staff searches. In addition to providing educational and professional development in diversity, equity, and inclusion, the office also manages complaints and investigations of harassment and discrimination against protected classes of people.

Office of Community Engagement and Outreach

The Office of Community Engagement and Outreach (OCEO) provides resources and support to advance and more deeply integrate UT's land-grant mission of teaching, research, and public engagement by partnering with UTIA, IPS, CGE, Alumni Relations, Teaching and Learning Innovation, and other campus-wide units. The office assists the campus community in building and sustaining mutually beneficial partnerships rooted in equity and shared governance.

Advocating for best practices and interactions that optimize the positive visibility of the University and the communities it supports, the office also facilitates hundreds of practical and research connections among faculty, staff, students, and community partners helping solve complex issues, enhance community well-being, and improve quality of life.

Strategic Initiatives Unit

The Strategic Initiatives Unit (SIU) comprises several functional areas within the Division of Diversity Engagement to provide intentional support both internally and externally. As a representative of DDE, SIU liaises with the following divisions at UT: Student Life, Student Success, Enrollment Management, and University Communications. Within the context of DDE, internally, the unit provides administrative support to various members of the DDE team.

Additionally, the unit supports and oversees various DDE initiatives such as the Student Advisory Board (SAB), Staff Fellows program, division-wide professional development, strategic planning processes, and all marketing and communications. Externally, the unit helps to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion work in the following ways:

University-Wide Diversity Action Plans (DAP)

SIU administers the procedures associated with the university-wide diversity action plans. The purpose of this initiative is to provide a framework for deans and vice chancellor units to develop strategies to address barriers and challenges to inclusive excellence in their respective colleges or units, to promote a culture of evaluation and accountability as it pertains to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, and to foster a greater sense of ownership among all members of the campus community in making UT a place in which all Vols matter and belong.

Division of Diversity and Engagement/Chancellor's Commissions and Councils

The unit supports commissions, councils, and committees that work to enhance inclusive excellence on campus. The diversity commissions and council serve the campus under the direction of the Division of Diversity and Engagement (DDE). The commissions and councils exist to ensure that students, staff, and faculty from underrepresented populations have a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive climate on Knoxville's campus.

DDE works in partnership with the commissions and councils to provide additional support and resources to confirm an inclusive culture and climate can be achieved. Together, DDE and the commissions and council work to foster and maintain a climate of equity and inclusion for all Vols.

The Division of Diversity and Engagement provides thought leadership to the campus community to encourage growth in the areas mentioned above, and ultimately to make the campus climate and culture more inclusive for all.