

**JMC Diversity Plan**  
**2016-2017 Progress Report**  
**May 2017**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) at Kent State University continues its commitment to diversity and inclusion as evident by the roles of the Diversity and Globalization Committee (DGC), the Student Voice Team (SVT) and the faculty and staff of JMC in creating, supporting and executing strategic initiatives within the school. In addition, JMC's collaboration with the CCI Diversity Team and the new CCI Office of Academic Diversity Outreach have helped support diversity programs and actions throughout the entire college.

Lack of diversity is an ongoing issue across multiple media and public communication industry platforms.

In US. newsrooms last year, African-American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American journalists combined comprised only 17 percent of the total workforce (American Society of Newspaper Editors, 2016). Twenty-eight percent of news organizations reported having at least one minority journalist among their top three editors and 77 percent reported having at least one woman in a top-three position.

Gender inequities are also evident in the public relations industry. While women make up more than 60 percent of the workforce, men hold the majority of leadership positions. Racial minorities are also underrepresented in the industry, across all levels. Racial diversity remains lower in proportion to the US population (Mundy, 2016).

Diversity issues are reflected in fictional representations as well. A report on inclusion in fictional films, TV shows, and digital series distributed by 10 major media companies revealed that one third of speaking characters were women, 28 percent were from minority groups, and only two percent were identified as LGBT (University of Southern California Annenberg Report on Diversity, 2016).

That same study demonstrated a concern behind the camera as well. For every one female screenwriter there were 2.5 male screenwriters, and that that "out of the 407 directors evaluated, 13 percent were from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups...only two of the 53 underrepresented directors in film and television/digital series were Black women." (University of Southern California Annenberg Report on Diversity, 2016, pp. 9-10).

**The mission of JMC's Diversity and Globalization Committee** is four-fold. It focuses on **Institutional Climate, Culture and Community Relationships; Student Access, Recruitment, and Success; Education and Scholarship; and Institutional Accountability.** We believe these strategic, coordinated efforts will help JMC provide a culture and environment in which students of all backgrounds and who represent all facets of diversity can be successful and thrive despite the larger narrative outside the walls of Kent State University.

The School's diversity activities this year continue to evolve with new forms of student dialogue and engagement, as well as events and continued faculty research and outreach.

**Objective #1: Institutional Climate, Culture and Community Relationships.**

**Understand the perspectives and needs of the School's community and create supportive environments by way of building community, trust and credibility for all groups, to include internal and external collaborative partners of JMC.**

- The committee updated the Diversity Plan and the 2015-2016 Progress Report, both of which were presented to and approved by the FAC in September 2016.
- JMC's commitment to diversity was an inspiration at the college level and was used in part as a model on which the CCI Office of Academic Diversity Outreach was based. Several JMC D&G Committee members also serve on the CCI Diversity Committee to support diversity programs and actions throughout the entire college.
- JMC hosted numerous events that align with these issues, including
  - Poynter KSU Media Ethics Workshop examined social justice with:
    - Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas,
    - A panel on the Flint, Mich., water crisis with Lindsey Smith, of Michigan Radio, the state's leading public radio service, which earned recognition from the Associated Press, the Society of Professional Journalists and the Edward R. Murrow Awards, for coverage of the crisis.
    - A panel on the June 12 attack at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando and the July 7 police shooting in Dallas (featuring local reporters and gun violence experts)
    - Social Movements on Social Media
    - Safe Spaces on College Campuses
  - JMC and the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, honored Paula Madison, former NBC journalist and executive, with the 2016 Robert G. McGruder Distinguished Award for her accomplishments in media diversity, Sept. 29.
  - Cleveland Plain Dealer columnist Phillip Morris was recognized on Sept. 29 with the Diversity in Media Distinguished Leadership Award.

- “The Craft of Global Storytelling,” Friday, Sept. 30, 2016, with Mike Cerre, an Emmy-award winning producer and correspondent
- “The Effects of Heroin: A JMC Conversation,” Thursday, Oct 20, 2016. Stephanie Smith, a JMC assistant professor and previous Senior Intelligence Service executive in the CIA, moderated the discussion, featuring panelists:
  - Greg McNeil, a father who lost his son to a heroin overdose and founder of Cover2 Resources, an educational foundation that provides alternative options to opioid pain relievers
  - Jennifer Kulics, dean of students for the Division of Student Affairs
  - Maureen Keating, chemical dependency counselor, University Health Services
  - Jarrod Pyle, a young adult in recovery from heroin addiction and Treatment Counselor for Oriana House
- “Journalism’s Way Forward,” January 26, 2017 including Reflections on coverage of Election 2016 and the changing and unprecedented relationship between the media and the White House. WKYC anchor and managing editor of evening news Russ Mitchell moderated the discussion, featuring panelists:
  - Henry Gomez, political reporter at cleveland.com
  - Cheryl Ann Lambert, Ph.D., JMC assistant professor (public relations)
  - Jacqueline Marino, JMC associate professor (journalism)
  - Connie Schultz, JMC professional-in-residence and nationally syndicated columnist
  - Chance York, Ph.D., JMC assistant professor
- “Breaking Down Barriers: How Is Diversity Represented in the Media? A JMC Conversation,” April 20, 2017. Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and Black United Students (BUS) partnered to offer insight and perspective, moderated by Traci Williams, JMC senior lecturer, with panelists
  - Amanda Leu, coordinator of the College of Communication and Information’s Office of Academic Diversity Outreach;
  - Shanice Dunning, M.A. ’14, reporter at Cleveland 19 (WOIO); and
  - Lorriane Schuchart, APR, founder and CEO of Prosper for Purpose.
- JMC Director Thor Wasbotten conducted the Q&A discussion during the university’s 15th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration on Jan. 26 with keynote speaker David Anderson, D.Phil, following his “Testament of Hope: Past, Present and Future of Diversity” presentation.
- JMC added a Diversity in Media Distinguished Leadership Award plaque with all the past recipients next to McGruder plaque in the JMC office.
- CCI Diversity Week - D&G and SVT helped plan and execute several events in collaboration with CCI’s Office of Academic Diversity Outreach. The events of the week

included the construction, promotion and demolition of a “Wall of Oppression.” Another event was a “Diversi-Polloza” event that brought together student organizations and the Kent Community in a meet-and-greet atmosphere in the KSU library.

- JMC’s diversity statement continues to be required in the syllabi for all JMC courses. The FAC is discussing how to add the new CCI Diversity statement.
- Like most universities, information regarding sexual assault was buried within the Kent State website. The university home page had no reference.



Professors Idsvoog and Shelton sent a direct recommendation to President Warren pointing out that deficiency and urging the university to place a sexual assault tab on the both the top menu of the home page and on the top screen of the Kent State Mobile app.

The Diversity Committee as a whole made a recommendation to have a tab on the homepage, sending the following letter to President Warren:

Dear President Warren, Dr. Little, and Dr. Kulics,

Sexual assault constitutes a clear and present danger for all of us and especially for our students. To live by our “Students First” priority, we must do more to provide access to resources related to sexual assault. The site is full of resources, but they must be as easy to find as a map of campus or what sports we have or how to “Give to Kent State.”

As such, and in light of your leadership through your first priority of the Strategic Roadmap, the members of the JMC Diversity and Globalization committee encourage bold action at all levels of the university to provide responsive resources for those in our community affected first hand by sexual assault. **We ask the university to add a “sexual assault help” link on the main navigation of the homepage and in the app.**

While the University provides multiple resources in advocating for awareness around this issue and helping victims of sexual assault, more can and should be done to bring attention to this issue with the goal of reducing or eliminating sexual assaults. For example, on the KSUMobile app, it is still far easier for our students to hear the KSU fight song and or take a walking tour of campus than it is to find help after being date

raped. This week, phone numbers were added to the app, and we applaud the effort, but the information is still not easy to find”.

Victims need help; they need it quickly whether it’s a mental health issue or a rape, and they need it at all hours of the day. They are not in the proper state of mind to navigate a website or think clearly about Title IX – if they even know what that means. There are stigmas around mental health, addiction or sexual assault issues. It’s hard enough to ask for help, but to make victims search for it is irresponsible.

On the Kent State website, the Get Help page for victims of sexual assault or harassment is three clicks deep – if you find the Emergency Information link at the bottom, it is still two clicks. This information should be a top-level resource. In addition, the link to the “Resource Brochure” on the Get Help page is broken, leaving sexual assault victims with a “Page Not Found” error. Plus, the search function on the website is woefully inadequate, pulling in images and old pages far more often than recent, relevant content.

We understand the website is growing and changing, so there are bound to be errors, but it is a more grievous error to leave our students without valuable resources when they are at their most vulnerable. **Adding a “sexual assault help” link on the homepage and in the app could change all of that.**

This is a topic many institutions of higher education would prefer to side-step or to deal with as quietly as possible. As members of a committee committed to inclusion, equity and diversity, we believe dealing with sexual assault openly and aggressively is the best way to ensure an inclusive environment. As a university when we can be honest and transparent about our own shortcomings, we can become leaders in providing an “inclusive and engaged living-learning environment where all students thrive.”

### **Examples**

Our committee has looked at dozens of peer and private institution websites. Very little is being done, as far as we can tell, on a homepage level to put students’ safety and wellness first. We have **an opportunity to lead** in this space. Some examples of schools with something to add:

College of Wooster – a “Get Help” link in the secondary nav on the Students page provides resources similar to what we’re suggesting.

<https://www.wooster.edu/students/get-help/>

Michigan State University – One click down on the “Students” link is an interesting header “Sexual assault and awareness” that provides the university’s anti-harassment and non-discrimination statement, but no ready resources.

<https://msu.edu/students/>

Slippery Rock University – Three clicks down is its Sexual Violence Information.

<https://www.sru.edu/life-at-sru/safety/sexual-violence-and-stalking>

Virginia Commonwealth University – Off the homepage is an “Alerts” link that has FlashAlert similar information and links, but nothing specific to sexual assault or mental health.

<http://alert.vcu.edu/>

UCLA – Found three clicks off the homepage, buried in a field of links. Good content.

<http://www.sexualviolence.ucla.edu/Get-Help>

Call it “Help Me.” Call it “Get Help.” But add a **link on the homepage and in the app** to provide several, easy-to-use sexual assault and mental health resources. Make it easy. Putting this information under “Students” or “Campus Life” is not intuitive and the problem goes beyond students to faculty and staff who are victims or who are trying to help victims.

Sexual assault continues as a main topic in our national discourse. This open wound on our collective national body has made itself known again and again through the current presidential campaign and various lawsuits and scandals at our some of our finest institutes of higher education. We can become leaders in providing an “inclusive and engaged living-learning environment where all students thrive.” In doing so, **we set the example** of leadership nationwide around this issue, but more importantly we turn back the sexual harassment tide and give our students the safe and inclusive environment they deserve.

Sincerely,

These Members of The School of Journalism and Mass Communication Diversity and Globalization Committee:

Eugene Shelton, co-chair; Luke Armour, co-chair; Kevin Dilley; Traci Easley Williams; Cheryl Ann Lambert; Suzanne Smith; Aliyana Pena, Student Voice Team representative

The committee was notified by Heather Adams that our request was being addressed. Shortly after, President Warren mentioned a new safety tab coming to the homepage in a student media meeting. When the homepage relaunched in January, the top menu included a link for “Campus Safety” that links directly to information regarding sexual assault. The committee was told our letter directly influenced the administration’s decision to move forward with this.



## CAMPUS SAFETY OVERVIEW

### I NEED HELP ...

Sexual Assault Resources,  
call 330-672-8016

Emergencies, call 9-1-1

Threatline, non-urgent  
anonymous reporting, call  
330-672-7233

Police, non-emergency,  
call 330-672-2212

### SERVICES

Security Aides & Escorts

Sexual Assault &  
Relationship Violence  
Support Resources

Step Up Speak Out

University Stewards

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### **Objective #2: Student Access, Recruitment, and Success.**

**Increase engagement of underrepresented and underserved student groups to provide stronger bonds that will enhance academic goals within JMC. The main area of focus for this dimension is recruitment and retention to intentionally aid underrepresented students to enter, persist and graduate from the University.**

- At the National PRSSA Conference in Indianapolis in 2016, PRSSA Kent won the Dr. F.H. Teahan Chapter Award for Chapter Diversity. A Teahan is the highest national honor for

a PRSSA Chapter. The Diversity Chapter Award recognizes PRSSA Kent's efforts to promote, generate awareness and encourage diversity within its Chapter. This is the first time PRSSA Kent received a Teahan for the Diversity category – our Kent State Chapter was the only university chosen for this award in the nation. In the past ten years, PRSSA Kent has won eight Teahan awards.

- The Diversity and Globalization Committee created the Robert G. McGruder Student Award for Diversity. With the continued outstanding support of Mrs. McGruder, we were able to provide \$500 to one winner. A private donation funded a second winner. The 2016 winners:
  - [Life in a refugee camp](#) by Eslah Attar
  - [The Year of Being Unapologetically Black](#) by Ile-Ife Okantah in Spring 2016
- Professor Gene Shelton, co-chair of the DGC, has been instrumental in re-launching a Kent State chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. It is a recognized student group and successfully completed its first academic year in action.
- JMC Director Thor Wasbotten and Professor Gene Shelton have fostered a partnership with Daniel E. Morgan Middle School. In the Fall semester, JMC hosted a half-day workshop simulating the college classroom experience. In addition to JMC Director Thor Wasbotten and Professor Gene Shelton, faculty participants included Student Media Director Kevin Dilley, Senior Lecturer Traci Williams, Media Specialist Tracy Baughman, and Assistant Professor Cheryl Ann Lambert. In the Spring, Professor Gene Shelton hosted an after-school journalism workshop at the Cleveland-based school. The focus thus far has been on grammar, punctuation, journalism writing styles and interview training. The students are very committed. Most attend every session. The school principal and teachers have been very dedicated in their support for the workshop.
- Shelton is currently drafting a proposal and budget at the request of former Ohio State Senator and Congressman Pat Sweeney and former U.S. Representative Mary Rose Oakar. Each believes state funding for the workshop in this inner-city school is available. The overall proposal calls for weekly workshops during the spring semester that prepares students for a two-week summer stay at KSU. During the two weeks, these middle school students will create a Web-based newspaper and digital media news or talk program.
- Student Voice Team (SVT) increased its membership to 22 members this year. Members met once a week to discuss the on-going climate in JMC and to make plans to better promote diversity inclusion within the school. SVT worked in partnership with JMC to bring several school-wide conversations, including "The Effects of Heroin," "Journalism's Way Forward" and "Navigating the Noise: How Communicators Serve in Fractious Times." SVT also worked with CCI's new diversity office to create the Social Justice Fence, in promotion of the JMC Ethics conference, and the Wall of Oppression, in promotion of CCI Diversity week. The group also attended a couple of social events --

including a Cleveland Cavaliers game and a meditation class -- and had guest speaker Amanda Singleton from Townhall II Kent talk to members about sexual assault prevention on-campus and what they could do to volunteer.

- Safe Space Allies. According to the LGBTQ Student Center, “an ally is a member of the dominant/majority group who takes a stand against social injustice directed at a target group(s). For example, white people who speak out against racism, or heterosexual individuals who speak out against heterosexism or homophobia. An ally works to be an agent of social change rather than an agent of oppression.” JMC is proud to have six trained Safe Spaces allies in Franklin Hall.
  - Thor Wasbotten, Director
  - Erin Burke, Academic Advisor in JMC
  - Mark Goodman, Professor and Knight Chair
  - Jan Leach, Associate Professor
  - Kevin Dilley, Director of Student Media
  - Chris Venable Schaeffbauer, Academic Advisor in JMC
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Responder training is provided at no cost by The Center for Public Policy and Health. According to their website “The primary objective of Project AWARE Kent is to teach MHFA courses to students, faculty, and staff. Similar to traditional First Aid and CPR, MHFA is help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a crisis until professional treatment is obtained or the crisis resolves.” <https://www.kent.edu/MHFA> Mental health can include depression and/or anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, suicidal thoughts and behaviors, eating disorders, panic attacks, aggressive behaviors, or the effects of a traumatic event (physical/sexual assault, robbery, domestic violence). Once the course is completed you are certified as a MHFA Responder for three years. JMC has five trained MHFA Responders.
  - Samantha Antoine, Academic Advisor in JMC
  - Jessica Cordier, Administrative Clerk
  - Beth Lattimer, Administrative Clerk in JMC
  - Chris Venable Schaeffbauer, Academic Advisor in JMC
  - Amy Wilkens, Assistant Director, Academic Advising in JMC
- The University Stewards Program is intended to identify faculty and staff who will serve as points of support, resource and referral for students. The role of a Steward is to serve as informal and neutral resources for students. This effort coordinated between Student Affairs; Diversity, Equity and inclusion; and is designed to offer personalized support to students who experience issues related to climate on campus. JMC Director Thor Wasbotten serves in this role.
- Assistant Professor Cheryl Ann Lambert and Associate Professor Michele Ewing attended the Oscar Ritchie Memorial Scholarship orientation session on September

2016. This Panel discussion with College of Communication & Information Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaison Amanda Leu featured opportunities for new JMC students to stay connected to the campus community.

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### **Objective #3: Education and Scholarship**

**Broaden the curriculum to emphasize cross-cultural knowledge by providing diversity-teaching resources and by assisting faculty with global outreach education and by providing teaching and learning strategies focused on multicultural competencies.**

- International Storytelling - Associate Professor Mitch McKenney and adjunct Tiffany Alexander co-led, with Assistant Professor Suzy D'Enbeau of Communication Studies, the seventh year of the college's International Storytelling short-term study-abroad course. With Ghana as this year's destination, 22 students met with faculty from Kent State's Department of Pan-African Studies, including Associate Professor Mwatabu Okantah and Assistant Professor Felix Kumah-Abiwu. Also, former Center for Pan-African Studies Director Dr. David Whitaker joined with the class for several of its pre-trip sessions and for our post-trip debrief in Oscar Ritchie Hall. A key part of the course was a horrifying tour of historic Elmina Castle near the Cape Coast, where hundreds of thousands were held before being put on boats to be sent across the Atlantic and sold as slaves.
- Global Ad and PR - In March 2017, 18 Kent State students, accompanied by JMC associate professors Stefanie Moore and Evan Bailey, toured advertising and public relations agencies throughout London for the study abroad course
- Black Images - Fall and Spring - For the past several years, Senior Lecturer Traci Williams has co-facilitated this two-day bus trip to African-American-themed museums with the School of Pan-African Studies. Attendees learn about historical images of African-American citizens by visiting the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, the Motown Museum, and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History. As of this Spring, nearly every member of the Diversity and Globalization committee has attended.
- JMC continues to support specific diversity scholarships
  - Albert E. Fitzpatrick Endowed Scholarship
  - Robert G. McGruder Minority Scholarship
- Under the guidance of Associate Lecturer Tim Roberts, two teams competed in the PRSSA National Bateman Case Study Competition that tasked students to create public relations campaigns focused on mental health on behalf of Campaign to Change Direction. Both Kent State teams received honorable mentions, a record for JMC.

- Associate Professor Mitch McKenney's Reporting course concludes with a day near the end of the semester where we quantify source diversity, including a good discussion about, among other things, how story selection can affect the numbers, as well as what difference it makes when the university's key leadership changes. McKenney also shows them the university student and faculty numbers for comparison to see if student media is reflecting the community it covers.
- Associate Professor Michele Ewing's fall Public Relations Campaigns class focused its semester-long client-funded PR campaign on the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion's Student Multicultural Center, examining communication issues and presenting solutions through in-depth analysis and research.
- The spring Public Relations Campaigns class examined international, internal communication issues with the Global Internal Communications team at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.
- Assistant Professor Luke Armour's Public Relations Case Studies class spent spring '17 working with the Williamson House, SRVSS office, and Women's Center Activism and Leadership as clients for a 12-week PR case study to solve real communications issues these organizations face.
- D&G members Assistant Professor Luke Armour and Assistant Professor Cheryl Ann Lambert are working to enhance the repository of resources with a new page on the JMC website for specific diversity assignments, relevant articles, lesson plans and links to training resources
- Professor Karl Idsvoog continued his work with Radio Free Asia conducting training sessions for the Tibetan Service, Cambodian Service, and this summer will be working with the Vietnamese Service. Prof. Idsvoog helped arrange an internship for a Kent State student with RFA's Cambodian Bureau in Phnom Penh, and is currently discussing the possibility of internship and faculty exchanges with the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

**Objective #4: Institutional Accountability.**

**Increase the recruitment and success of a diverse faculty and staff.**

- JMC welcomed Miao Liu as the new Business Manager. Miao holds a Masters in Accounting and a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. Her primary area of focus is business support for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, and she also supports some international initiatives in the college.
- By attending the National Black Public Relations Society conference for the first time in October, 2016, Assistant Professor Cheryl Ann Lambert gained valuable professional

development and networking opportunities, thereby increasing her likelihood of success as a new diverse faculty member. Entitled “Power PR: Playing to win,” this conference featured panel discussions about the role of Black PR professionals when media portray Black communities in their coverage, police-community engagement, and turning issues into global public relations opportunities. Presenters included long-time White House correspondent April Ryan, the Chairman of Golin Fred Cook, and Northwestern University’s Chief Diversity Officer Jabbar R. Bennett. The committee can build upon this initial connection through guest speakers, student recruiting, and sponsorship opportunities.

- As a result of attending the Black Images trip, Assistant Professor Cheryl Ann Lambert published the blog post “Silencing Stereotypes” about the years-long propaganda campaign to shape the images of African-American citizens. The column was posted on her PRDepiction blog. As a form of creative scholarship, this blog post helped raise her social media profile, aiding her ability to succeed as a diverse faculty member.