

AUHS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Introduction

AUHS is committed to fostering a campus environment that values diversity, promotes equity, and ensures inclusion. This commitment is rooted in the belief that a diverse and inclusive community enhances the educational experience for all members and prepares them to thrive in an interconnected world. This Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policy outlines our dedication to creating an environment that respects and celebrates differences, removes barriers to success, and promotes a sense of belonging for every member of our community.

I. Diversity

AUHS recognizes the strength that comes from a diverse community and is committed to promoting diversity in all its forms, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, ability, nationality, religion, and veteran status. We strive to create an inclusive environment that values and leverages the unique perspectives and backgrounds of our students, faculty, staff, and community members.

AUHS promotes diversity and is committed to creating a supportive and accessible educational experience and a learning environment that recognizes cultural competence and diversity as crucial in promoting students' academic excellence. The institution has invested in continuous efforts to create a richer understanding of the collaboration between diversity and health, as well as its commitment to provide students, alumni, staff, and faculty with resources and knowledge to increase awareness about marginalized and vulnerable populations as well as other relevant cultural competence issues that impact student learning and healthcare delivery.

AUHS is committed to implementing inclusive recruitment processes. We will actively seek diverse candidates for faculty and staff positions by leveraging multiple channels, ensuring broad outreach, and mitigating unconscious biases. We will provide training and resources for search committees to recognize and challenge biases, fostering an inclusive and fair evaluation of all applicants. Emphasis will be placed on creating diverse search committees that reflect the composition of our university community.

II. Equity

At AUHS, equity is defined in terms of how the institution views people and allocates learning, teaching, and support materials equally. Equity is foundational to AUHS' commitment to fairness and justice. We are dedicated to identifying and eliminating systemic barriers that may prevent equal access to opportunities and resources.

For AUHS, equity includes infinite intersections and dimensions of identity, including economic profiles, immigration status, gender, age, job description, and religion, among others.

AUHS recognizes power imbalances in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and access to local, national, and global healthcare services.

AUHS acknowledges the need to improve the quality of education, promote civic engagement and readiness capabilities for students, and address prevalent inequalities in healthcare. Ensuring that each student, friend, faculty, and staff is welcomed at the university requires going beyond mere tolerance to fully embracing and respecting equality and equity in all that we do.

III. Inclusion

AUHS defines inclusion as more than just a concept or a core value; it is a consistent and conscious practice through which we strive to ensure all students, faculty, staff, and the community feel a sense of belonging.

Inclusion is central to creating a welcoming and supportive environment where everyone feels valued and respected. AUHS is committed to fostering a culture of inclusion that encourages collaboration, open dialogue, and mutual respect. We will actively seek to create spaces and initiatives that allow every member of our community to participate fully in academic, social, and cultural activities.

AUHS has one clear policy for inclusion: There is no room for exclusion in our community. AUHS supports practices, policies, and education that advocate for social justice and equity for all people. Moreover, AUHS' mission and vision statement recognize the long-standing structural barriers that have limited the human potential to be productive, especially due to the lack of quality healthcare and poor access to healthcare services because of racial disparities.

AUHS, from its inception, has addressed these differences including the incorporation of practices, scholarship, and teaching that are focused on ethical and moral principles as defined by different professional bodies. Moreover, the institution is committed to strengthening and making new alliances with and supporting all communities and individuals vulnerable to marginalization. The institution has also put in place guidelines that mandate all its internal stakeholders, regardless of their positions and roles, to create an inclusive learning environment for every student. Moreover, AUHS requires self-awareness to enable its faculty, staff, and students to realize who they are and, in the process, contribute toward a culture of inclusivity.

IV. Community

AUHS recognizes the importance of engaging with external organizations and communities to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion. Therefore, we actively seek partnerships with organizations that share our commitment to these values. We also endeavor to collaborate with external partners, including industry leaders and organizations, to ensure that our academic programs are aligned with the needs of a diverse and global workforce.

V. Action Steps

To realize our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, AUHS will:

1. **Promote Diversity:** Promote the representation of individuals from diverse backgrounds within AUHS by embracing diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and other characteristics.
2. **Ensure Equity:** Ensure equity and provide access to the same opportunities and resources for everyone by identifying and addressing systemic barriers and biases that may prevent certain groups from fully participating and succeeding.
3. **Foster Inclusion:** Create a culture where all individuals feel valued, respected, and included, eliminating discrimination or exclusionary practices.
4. **Promote Cultural Competence:** Develop cultural competence, understanding, and appreciation of diverse cultures and backgrounds in individuals and organizations.
5. **Measure Progress:** Evaluate the effectiveness of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, by setting specific goals, tracking metrics related to diversity and inclusion, and regularly evaluating progress.
6. **Educate and Raise Awareness:** Raise awareness about the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as educate individuals to address these issues effectively.
7. **Community Engagement:** Engage with the broader community to promote social change and inclusivity on a larger scale.

V. Accountability

AUHS is committed to holding itself accountable for progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. Progress will be annually assessed, and the university community will be kept informed through transparent reporting mechanisms. Feedback from the community will be actively sought and used to refine and enhance our DEI efforts.

This Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy represents a living document that will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect the evolving needs and aspirations of our university community.

Approved by DEI Committee: Via Email Vote February 2024

Approved by Faculty Senate: March 20, 2024

Approved by PAC: June 24, 2024