

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

Multicultural Advisory Committee

**University of North Alabama  
Florence, Alabama**

Dr. Grace Zills

Committee Chair

7/31/2025

Date submitted

Submitted to: Dr. Becky Smith  
Chair, Shared Governance Executive Committee

# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

## ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

### I. Executive Summary

The committee successfully collaborated with the Executive of University Priorities and the student government association to address the charge as specified in the Shared Governance Document. The committee accomplished its charge to oversee, review, and select recipients for the President's Diversity Award and the Major Dwayne Williams Memorial Scholarship.

### II. The Committee's Charge (from the Shared Governance Document)

1. To serve as an advisory committee for the examination of issues of campus diversity and multiculturalism
2. To gather and review information on University diversity and multiculturalism and assess University performance in these areas in light of the information obtained
3. To propose changes in campus policies, procedures, and programs related to diversity and multiculturalism
4. To provide oversight, review, and nomination of the minority recipients of the Major Dwayne Williams Memorial Scholarship
5. To provide oversight, review, and nomination of the recipient of the President's Diversity Award to be announced annually at the UNA Awards Gala
6. To work closely with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion regarding diversity issues
7. To handle any proposals the committee may make affecting university policy according to section C.2 "Shared Governance Procedure for Policy Change Recommendations"

### III. The Committee met on the following dates:

1/22/2025, 3/05/2025, 4/30/2025

- IV. What were the Committee's actions and accomplishments this year relative to each of the items of the charge?

The committee reviewed each item of the charge via email with all members, prior to the first meeting in order to discuss recommendations as tasked by SGEC. At the first meeting, each item was evaluated, and the currency and accuracy of each statement was discussed. Overall, the comments revolved around the fact that there is no longer a “DEI” program within the university. New and updated verbiage should read “Intercultural Engagement Initiative (IEI)”. It is also noted that each college has its own IEI director, and the subcommittees within each college should report to their respective director. The committee also discussed whether MAC membership should reflect the IEI membership within the colleges. Other verbiage was updated to include correct titles and positions. Furthermore, the process for student complaints in relation to IEI and how that is no longer a function of this committee to hear those complaints. G. Zills, Chair, sent recommendations on behalf of the committee in the Qualtrics sent by the Shared Governance Committee. Charges one, two, and three that deal with diversity on campus were not addressed by the MAC committee. The committee understood that each college now has a director of IEI that represents and addresses multicultural and diversity activities for each college. These charges seem to be handled by these representatives rather than the MAC committee.

The committee also collaborated with the Executive Director of University Priorities, Dr. Minette Ellis, financial aid, and specific committee members with relevant experience to inform an equitable process in selecting awardees. The committee also formed specific subcommittees to review nominations with selection criteria. The committee successfully identified deserving awardees for the President’s Diversity Award and the Major Dwayne Williams Scholarship.

Action steps for items six and seven included the Executive Director of University Priorities, Dr. Minnette Ellis, providing an overview to the MAC of the UNA Diversity and Equity Initiatives. Mrs. Ellis described some changes to the Intercultural Engagement Initiative according to updated laws in the state of Alabama. The updated initiative works closely with each college and their appointed director of Intercultural Engagement Initiative. Each college is asked to communicate with this director for current efforts towards IEI activities. We worked closely with Dr. Minnette Ellis and were willing to collaborate as needed.

The action step for item eight include preparing this report to submit to the SGEC Chair and the Executive Director of University Priorities. The accomplishments of this item included emailing a copy of this report to Dr. Becky Smith and Dr. Minnette Ellis on 7/31/2025.

V. What were the Committee's formal recommendations?

Formal recommendations were to select recipients for the President's Diversity Award and the Major Dwayne Williams Memorial Scholarship.

VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish?

A. In the coming year?

Vice- Chair will need to be voted on in the Fall of 2025. MAC representation has been adjusted according to the SGEC review of previous recommendations. Instead of 8 faculty members (2 from each college) it will include 4 faculty members and include the IEI director from each college. This now will include Dr. Rachel Winston, the director of IEI for ACONHP and Dr. Melanie Looser the chair of MAC for 2025-2026. I, Grace Zills, was asked to step down for the remainder of my term.

B. In future years?

Plans are to continue to reflect on ways to support intercultural engagement initiatives across the university. Adding the Directors of the Intercultural Engagement Initiative from each college will help MAC facilitate all of their charges.

VII. What are the Committee's weaknesses?

The main weakness was the committee felt the equity needs of the college were unknown. Including the IEI directors from each college will help address this weakness.

A. What can the Shared Governance Committee help you do to address the weaknesses?

The SGEC has already made changes that have addressed the weakness above. I look forward to seeing these changes benefit the University as a whole.

VIII. Comments

Dr. Melanie Looser will assume the role of Chair for the 2025- 2026 academic year. The invitation for vice- chair was extended to the committee at the last meeting, but the committee felt it was important to wait until fall to vote because of the updates to the committee membership. I recommend that the minutes of the final meeting will need to be approved at the first meeting of the 25-26 academic year.  
It was a pleasure to serve as Chair of the MAC this year!