INTRODUCTION

The Diversity Plan was developed in conjunction with the TTI Strategic Plan’s imperative to “Attract and retain exceptional staff”. As a precursor to the development of the Diversity Plan, the Council, with the support of the Mays School of Business, conducted a climate assessment survey in the spring of 2008. The Climate Assessment Survey was provided to all TTI staff to examine employee and management attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about the working environment at TTI with a special emphasis on issues around diversity management. The survey was followed in the summer of 2009 by a Focus Group study (also conducted by the Mays School researchers) to further evaluate some of the issues identified in the survey.

Based on the results of the climate assessment survey and focus group study, a set of baseline criteria was identified from which diversity improvements may be measured. The results also provided information used to develop goals and measurable objectives for the Diversity Plan.

It should be noted that the climate assessment survey and focus group study address overall agency effectiveness – workforce diversity is just one component. The issues raised affect all TTI staff, and the actions suggested will improve the workplace environment for all TTI employees, not just underrepresented groups. While an improved climate for diversity is the primary goal of this plan, accomplishing its goals and objectives will result in a better workplace for all, regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, or age.

Accomplishments and Future Goals:

• Document existing programs that improve diversity
• Outline activities and target dates for activity
• Collect information necessary to set evaluation metrics
• Use of focus groups to examine in more detail the factors that help facilitate a positive and engaging workplace environment at TTI with particular attention to diversity management practices and policies.
• Reassess climate and compare data results to previous survey to measure improvements.
VISION

Our vision is to be a premier higher-education-affiliated transportation research institute sought out by organizations from all over the world to solve transportation problems.

As a premier university based transportation organization, TTI is uniquely positioned to transform the landscape of transportation professionals in the state of Texas, nationally and internationally. Our mission is to solve transportation problems through research, to transfer technology, and to develop diverse human resources to meet the transportation challenges of tomorrow. It is in the spirit of TTI’s mission “to develop diverse human resources” that the agency will develop and implement its diversity plan. Diversity at TTI should be approached in a holistic manner in order to see lasting and systemic change. TTI is committed to building and maintaining a diverse community of researchers, staff, and administrators that reflects the broad range of racial/ethnic groups, cultures, perspectives, and gender of our state and nation. To this end, we propose an institutionalized strategic diversity plan that: identifies accountability on institutional, departmental and individual levels; provides evidence of measurable progress over the long term; and ensures sustained engagement at all levels.

DIVERSITY CORE VALUES

The TTI Strategic Plan makes the following values statement:

The Texas Transportation Institute is guided by a fundamental philosophy that values integrity, service to our sponsors, innovation in our research endeavors, responsible stewardship of public resources and a strong respect for the rights and values of individuals.

The proposed Diversity Plan sets forth the following values consistent with our corporate values:

- Welcome, value and promote diversity among staff, students and our community
- Cultivate a respectful, inclusive and accessible working and learning environment
- Work effectively in different cultural contexts to serve the needs of a diverse community
- Develop capacity to understand issues of difference, power and privilege
OBJECTIVE STATEMENTS AND ACTION STEPS

This section of the TTI Diversity Plan establishes specific objectives to be undertaken to address the needs of the Institute to achieve specific Goal(s) identified in the TTI Strategic Plan. The Objectives have been prioritized based on importance and general impact on the overriding accomplishment of goals identified within the TTI Strategic Plan. Priorities are identified in terms of numerical order and date of completion.

Objective 1: Diversify the candidate pool to allow the agency to recruit, hire and maintain a diverse workforce that reflects a broad range of racial/ethnic groups, cultures, perspectives, and gender.

Rationale: As a national leader in transportation research, TTI must remain relevant. Diversifying our workforce to be reflective of the population of Texas will enhance our ability to expand our research portfolio to meet the needs of our citizens, sponsors, decision makers, and employees. To sustain our reputation as a premier transportation research institute, TTI must continually seek to identify and attract the best minds and skills to support the Institute’s mission. We will be deliberate in our efforts to develop candidate pools which reflect the population of Texas and represent the brightest minds and skills to fulfill the mission of the Institute. TTI has established through its Strategic Plan (Goal 2.3) that TTI will excel in staffing diversity by ranking in the upper half of the members of The Texas A&M University System agencies with headquarters in College Station.

1.A Support and educate program managers and division heads to expand applicant pools through effective recruitment strategies to increase the number of underrepresented groups within the Institute.

1.B Identify practices or policies that may have negative impact or create barriers for particular populations; develop coordinated strategies for addressing any issues identified.

1.C Engage staff members of diverse backgrounds in successful recruitment and professional development activities to aid in attracting and retaining a diverse workforce.

1.D Extend staff recruitment efforts by building partnerships and enhancing communication with nontraditional networks to diversify the pool of potential candidates.

1.D.1 Utilize resources that have relationships with diverse organizations, including services as Monster.com.

1.D.2 Develop recruitment resources such as creating a web page depicting various recruiting tools that can be used to support hiring supervisors; engage in targeted mailings and ad placements; participate in career fairs; and develop direct communication with prospective applicants and search committees.

1.D.3 Ensure that the importance of diversity is discussed when interviewing prospective employees.

1.D.4 Reevaluate all marketing materials which represent TTI as an institution dedicated to excellence and diversity.
1.E Enhance outreach activities and develop partnerships to increase the number of staff from underrepresented groups who enter the field of transportation by fostering relationships with various minority professional organizations.

**Responsible Parties:** Human Resources, TTI Workforce (employees, supervisors, program managers, division heads, etc.), TTI Leadership Team

**Complete By:** Fall 2010

**Objective 2:** Commit to an environment of inclusion, knowledge and understanding in which TTI staff and students learn to value diversity and respect the individual differences that enrich TTI.

**Rational:** TTI is committed to building a work environment which respects individual differences and diverse cultures. Our ability to provide quality research to a broad constituency of sponsors suggests we must create an environment that values diversity which is inclusive, safe and respectful for all.

2.A Build and maintain an environment that values diversity which is inclusive, safe and respectful for all.

2.A.1 Develop a comprehensive On-boarding program (new employee orientation program) which provides an introduction to TTI as an organization. The On-boarding program will address key areas such as cultural norms, climate, organization structure, programs, and activities; organization values and culture; employee benefits and services - to assist new employees ‘entrance into the organization and provide them the tools to be successful.

2.A.2. Develop professional development program and provide training programs to employees as educational tools for improving organizational climate and for gaining knowledge and understanding of the unique history and perspectives of underrepresented groups. This will result in the education of the workforce on the advantages of achieving and valuing diversity. [TTI Strategic Plan 2.2.1].

2.A.3 Insure that TTI employees at all levels from underrepresented groups get the necessary internal and external exposure that will have a positive impact on TTI and aid in their career advancement opportunities.

**Responsible Parties:** Human Resources

**Complete By:** Fall 2010

2.B Connect new employees and their families with others from similar backgrounds in order to facilitate information exchange, enhance support and provide a sense of community.

2.B.1 Encourage participation in network groups on campus (i.e. Women’s Network, African-American Professional Organization, Mexican-American-Latino-Faculty Association
(MALFA), and Professional Hispanic Network (PHN). Develop internal TTI networks (Young Professionals).

2.B.2 Expand information available on TTINet as relates to diversity initiatives and opportunities.

**Responsible Parties:** Human Resources, Diversity Council

**Complete By:** Fall 2011

2.C Encourage exposure to diversity-related activities on and off campus.

2.C.1 Publish calendar of events on campus and throughout communities.

2.C.2 Encourage TTI employees to attend events as a group.

2.C.3 Create diversity web pages on both the TTI inter and intranet.

**Responsible Parties:** Human Resources, Diversity Council

**Complete By:** Fall 2011

2.D Provide an outlet for employees to share their concerns about the organizational environment.

2.D.1 Create a mechanism by which employee concerns regarding diversity can be heard and addressed appropriately including the appointment of a HR contact to whom all equity, justice and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issues and grievances can be safely and confidentially directed.

2.D.2 Formally develop and document grievance procedures and ensure that they meet staff and student needs.

**Responsible Parties:** Human Resources, Diversity Council

**Complete By:** Fall 2011

**Objective 3:** Develop, expand and improve mentoring and/or professional and career development programs for researchers, administrators, and staff.

**Rationale:** TTI values its employees. Our employees are the backbone of the Institute. Our ability to produce quality research and maintain our premier transportation research leadership role is dependent on our ability to develop our employee’s capabilities. We will invest in our employees through the development of appropriate professional development programs and peer mentoring programs to promote both professional and personal development.

3.A Develop a professional development program centered on agency core and job competencies and provide training programs as educational tools to provide opportunities for career success and advancement. [TTI Strategic Plan Goal 2.2 Strategy 2.2.1]
3.B Recognize and reward employee efforts to enhance organization workforce diversity.

3.C Develop a mentoring program to ensure that new researchers, staff and graduate students receive ongoing mentoring and career advice within their departments or units.

3.D Develop succession strategies to improve career advancement across the organization; provide release time and resources for staff to participate in committee work and other TTI and community events.

3.E Revise exit interview process to identify opportunities for improved retention of staff, in addition to identifying other pertinent issues.

3.F Develop, review and publish criteria by which TTI managers will be evaluated and rewarded for their improvements in promoting and increasing workforce diversity.

**Responsible Parties**: Human Resources, TTI Leadership Team

**Complete By**: Fall 2012

**Objective 4**: Review, assess and expand existing school, university and community partnerships that create a pipeline of students from underrepresented groups to transportation fields and to TTI. As needed, develop new “pipeline” initiatives.

**Rationale**: Our success as the premier transportation research Institute is heavily dependent upon our ability to forge partnerships with various partners and institutions within our region and community. We will use our strong partnerships to identify potential employees, students, and researchers from underrepresented groups who may have interest in transportation research.

4.A. Create a pipeline of students from underrepresented groups that can potentially join TTI as undergraduate and graduate student employees through the development of a system for strengthening, interacting and collaborating with organizations that give support to underrepresented student populations.

4.A.1 Expand and support outreach activities and develop partnerships to increase the number of undergraduate students from underrepresented groups who enter the field of transportation. Connect with programs within the community and at local elementary, middle and high schools to develop early interest in TTI and associated educational and career and opportunities at TAMU.

4.A.2 Work with the TAMU chapters of National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Society of Women Engineers (SWE), Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) and Mexican-American Engineering Society (MAES) to develop a working relationship that will serve as a means of recruiting students and encouraging students to pursue graduate degrees in the field of transportation.
4.A.3 Review, revamp and expand existing summer programs and create internships, co-op and graduate assistantships within TTI to provide employment opportunities.

4.A.4 Apply for the many federal grants available that support efforts to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in science and engineering.

4.B Enhance relationships with selected Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Universities, professional and student organizations around the country to encourage faculty and students at these universities to become involved in transportation and consider TTI as a possible employer.

4.B.1 Partner with Civil Engineering, other departments within Texas A&M University, other universities, and components of the Texas A&M University System to identify individuals from underrepresented groups to become involved in transportation.

4.B.2 Identify existing staff to assist in recruitment opportunities at conferences and other venues.

**Responsible Parties:** Bill Stockton & Juan Villa

**Complete By:** Ongoing

**Objective 5:** Implement monitoring activities of the diversity plan to evaluate effectiveness and access climate impact on a continuous basis.

**Rationale:** We are committed to examining the effectiveness of our strategies and goals related to diversity. On an annual basis, we will evaluate our success while identifying corrective actions necessary to ensure our ranking in the upper half of the members of The Texas A&M University System agencies with headquarters in College Station.

5.A Outcomes of the diversity plan will be reviewed annually, with broad internal and external input to determine levels of progress.

5.B A Diversity Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing implementation of and reporting progress on key strategies in the diversity plan.

5.C The diversity plan itself will be reviewed annually and updated regularly.

**Responsible Parties:** Diversity Council, Human Resources, TTI Leadership Team

**Complete By:** Initial evaluation Spring 2011; annually thereafter
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We will be guided by key principles to promote diversity in our workforce while maintaining our commitment to hire and retain the best and brightest to fulfill the mission of TTI.

1. A clear vision and mission that underscore the bottom-line necessity of a strong, diverse workplace community and emphasizes involvement and ownership of the work on diversity by all members of the organization;

2. A clear, cohesive, long-term strategic plan for creating a more diverse hospitable climate; this plan should be tied to the organization’s strategic plan and communicated to all employees and ensure that all managers and employees are held accountable for its success;

3. Clear communication with all members of the organization about how to be successful in the institution-its formal and informal rules, its decision-making processes, what it rewards, how it responds to change to ensure that everyone has an equitable opportunity to be successful;

4. A commitment to the professional development of all employees through a wide variety of training opportunities with a focus on establishing, leading, maintaining, coaching and working with a diverse workforce, recruitment, on-boarding, mentoring, and succession programs to move all under-represented groups into all levels of the organization.

5. A willingness and commitment to address complicated issues, such as racial, ethnic, cultural, and gender conflict, and to deal with the resistance and discomfort that is bound to occur within the organization as work on diversity is carried out;

6. Achieve and evidence an environment where success and advancement are based on equitable standards and metrics that demonstrate advancement of the mission of the Institute and where a prominent underlying assumption is that the inclusion of participants with diverse identities is essential to excellence in any effort; and

7. Achieve and evidence progress in the ranks of our researchers, staff, students and administrators to demonstrate that we are a Texas A&M University System leader in diversity by collecting Federal and State mandated data on race, ethnicity, and sex.
TTI DIVERSITY COUNCIL

The TTI Diversity Council was established in 2008 with Kassandra Agee-Letton serving as Chair and Juan Villa serving as co-chair. Council Members were appointed from a broad cross-section of TTI employees and included:

- Kassandra Agee-Letton, Chief Information Officer & Director of Information Systems
- Juan Villa, Program Manager
- Richard Badillo, Program Manager
- Rob Benz, Research Engineer, Houston
- Don Bugh, Executive Associate Agency Director
- Ginger Goodin, Senior Research Engineer, Austin
- Debbie Jasek, Associate Research Specialist
- Beverly Kuhn, Senior Research Engineer
- Lupe Ramos, Office Associate, El Paso
- Karen Smith, Manager, Events Management & Planning
- Melissa Tooley, Center Director
- David Trejo, Assistant Research Engineer
- Shanna Yates, Coordinator of Special Projects
- Terry L. Childers, Assistant Agency Director
- Linda Edge, Director of Human Resources