Diversity and Inclusion WT 125 White Paper

Abstract:

This white paper seeks to explicate the importance of Diversity and Inclusion initiatives on campus. In doing so, three key ideas were identified as necessities for WTAMU to grow and prepare for the projected student populations beyond 2017. By focusing on normalizing diversity across the campus, the importance of university support for diversity and inclusion, and the need for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, staff, and administrators, WTAMU can position itself as a known entity that welcomes and actively educates all students.

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Introduction:

The face of higher education in the United States is changing. The fresh out of high school, 18 year old student with no college credits are being replaced with students graduating high school with associate's degrees, students with families, full time jobs, and students who transfer from community colleges to university.

> "According to U.S. Census Bureau, we are now a nation with increased multicultural complexities and nuances—of the nation's approximately 307 million people, 65% are whites/non-Hispanics, 16% are Latinos/Hispanics, 13% are African Americans, 1% reported as American Indians/Alaskan Natives, and 0.2% identified themselves as Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. Note that 1.7% of the population chose to identify themselves as two or more races" (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 7).

Along with this shift in the demographic nature of students, universities are seeing a rise in first-generation college students (FGS). We define first-generation college student as a student whose parents did not complete a degree from a college or university. Though gradual, this change has been consistent over the last 2 decades. In 2001, U.S. census, director Kenneth Prewitt wrote "Not in recorded history has there ever been a nation so demographically complex" (p. 4). Sixteen years later, his words ring true. Today's

students come from a variety of ages, cultural, ethnic, inner city, rural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The diverse nature of this "new student" is pushing universities to be proactive in the ways in which they engage students. Despite the obvious need to expand and support programming for diversity and inclusion (D & I) initiatives that meet students where they are, these programs are often attacked, cut, and marginalized on campuses across the country. "As challenges to diversity in academe persist, scholars speak out about the continued lack of diversity in higher education" (Turner, 2013, p. 155). As academic communities expand their understanding of what D & I means we must address barriers faced by students. "Despite our heritage as a liberal democracy, as a nation we have struggled with conceptions of inclusion and fairness in many social domains. History shows that merely outlawing discrimination neither equalized educational opportunities nor created a just society" (Tienda, 2013, p. 470).

As institutions of higher learning, universities must push to the forefront of D & I initiatives by engaging students in critical thought education that push boundaries and encourages them to become, not just aware, but compassionate of those who are different than themselves. West Texas A&M University has in place an Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which must situate itself in a position to lead the university and its students in this charge. Doing so requires normalizing D & I on campus as a natural behavior, and less like another set of boxes that must be checked. If universities "resist augmenting what they know or are unwilling to move outside of their comfort zone, they also limit the borders of knowledge to which their students are exposed" (Borisoff & Chesebro, 2011, p. 138). This lack of exposure is a hindrance to students who are supposed to be preparing for a "real world" full of people from various backgrounds who must co-exist with each other. It is from this combination of steady growth in student population diversity, lack of diversity in university leadership, faculties, and staff, and continual challenges from outside university perceptions that we develop our positions for this white paper. West Texas A&M University must not only meet students where they are, but it must reflect its student population if it intends to have open doors in 2035.

Normalizing Diversity:

Defining Diversity & Inclusion

In 2010, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* documented a "long standing lack of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity among students, faculty and staff in academe" (Turner, 2013, p. 155). With the changes in student populations happening at such a fast pace,

university administrators must position universities to engage students from all backgrounds. Simmons, Lowery-Hart, Wahl, & McBride (2013) argue that "African-American students' educational opportunities have been affected by university administrators' inability to recognize and address racial tension on campuses" (p. 376). With such diversity in today's student population, it is reasonable to conclude that other students are also affected by these kinds of tensions. Normalizing diversity across the university will require engaging all stakeholders on campus. The normalization process cannot be successful with programming alone. "As a result of non-inclusive pedagogies and ineffective college and university cultural programs, students continue to experience racism, insensitivity, and a lack of intercultural understanding and social support" (Simmons et al, 2013, p. 377). In order to better understand the notion of normalizing D & I, we must have a clear understanding of what Diversity and Inclusion means (Simmons & Wahl, 2016). As these terms have been defined by scholars in multiple ways, through multiple publications, we employ the definition offered by Wolfe & Dilworth (2015) who define diversity as "a driving force, diversity evolves into the practice of valuing all humanity, a means of increasing access and inclusion, a framework for creating a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members, and an individual and collective responsibility for these issues during education, training, and engagement with others" (p. 671). Diversity and Inclusion initiatives promote, develop, encourage, and seek to build an open, inclusive and welcoming campus culture for the benefit of all students. If we seek to truly educate students, fostering an inclusive environment must be a priority, not just while they are on campus, but for students who will become alumni. Brown (2004) extends this need by arguing that creating "a culture of acceptance fosters a sense of belonging among all persons by recognizing and respecting difference, and in doing so, promoting a sense of loyalty to the organization" (p. 29). In building this inclusive environment, it is important to understand the population of students that attend West Texas A&M University. To do so, we take a look at the community in which the university is located and the students who attend.

Diversity in the Panhandle

West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) is located in Canyon, Texas, and sits in the center of a 26-county region surrounded by many rural communities. The largest city closest to WTAMU is Amarillo, TX. The 2016 estimated population of Amarillo is 190,695, and according to the 2010 U.S. Census, 6.6 % of the population is African American, 3.2 % Asian, 28.8 % Hispanic, 77.0 % White. Amarillo is also home to Amarillo Community College and four high schools in the Amarillo Independent School District (AISD).

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According to the WTAMU Office for Institutional Research, in fall 2012, 3,773 students enrolled at WTAMU indicated on their application they were from one of the 26 county regions in the Panhandle. Five years later fall 2017 the number of enrollment increased to 3,969. That is a 5.2% of growth of student enrollment from the Panhandle. In fall 2012, 1,251 of these students identified on their application as either African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, International, Multiple Races, Pacific Islander and unknown. In fall 2015, 1,722 students identified from these same groups, an increase of 37.7%. In fall 2012, 2,522 students from the Panhandle identified as white and in fall 2017 2,247 identified as white indicating a decline of 11.1%. This is an indication that the diverse population in the Panhandle region is increasing and a significant number of those students are choosing to attend WTAMU. See table 1 below for more details.

Table 1.
Change in Undergraduate Enrollment in five years from top 26 counties

	Fall 2012	Fall 2017		% Change
African American	100	114		14%
American Indian	23	17		-26%
Asian	52	90		73%
Hispanic	941	1318		40%
International	11	5		-54%
Multiple Races Reported	67	101		50%
Pacific Islander	4	1		-75%
Unknown	53	76		45%
White	2522	2247		-9.8%

The growth of the Hispanic enrollment has enabled WTAMU to be officially recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). To become a Hispanic Serving Institution or HSI, WTAMU is required to have Academic programs that lead to a degree, must be accredited by an agency or association recognized by the Department of Education , must have high enrollment of students with financial needs, and have at least a 25% Hispanic undergraduate full-time student enrollment.

Virtually every college and university today feels the pressure to prepare students to live and work in a diverse world (Smith & Wolf-Wendel, 2005). There is a significant body of

literature which suggests that serious engagement of diversity in the curriculum, along with linking classroom and out-of-class opportunities, positively affects student's attitudes and awareness about diversity (Smith & Wolf-Wendel, 2005).

In a survey conducted for the *Association of American Colleges and Universities*, more that 60% of employers polled said recent graduates lacked the skills to succeed in a global economy (Fischer, 2007). Specifically, employers believed that students need an understanding of other cultures, economies, and political systems to be successful. *The Committee for Economic Development*, a nonprofit group of business and academic leaders, noted that the demand for graduates with strong international skills was outstripping the supply (Fischer, 2007). Since many students come to campuses from segregated neighborhoods and background (Orfield, Bachmeier, James, & Eitle, 1997), it is important that these institutions have a strong commitment to diversifying the curriculum.

More than 50% of the WTAMU student body is White, which classifies the institution as a predominately White institution (PWI). Campuses that have a primarily white faculty and student population need to find a way to make sure all students are prepared to work in a global world upon graduation.

To promote diverse learning, some institutions are adding a diversity requirement to their curriculums; some are focusing on general education programs, while others are integrating diversity throughout the curriculum. At other institutions faculty are adding diversity content to their individual courses or integrating community service projects where students interact with diverse people or concepts (McTighe, Garcia, Hudgins, Nettles, Sedlacek, & Smith, 1999).

Undergraduate Academics

A longitudinal study of 4,403 college students attending nine public universities, reported that students who have an opportunity to take a diversified curriculum by the second year of college scored higher on 19 of 25 outcomes of the study. The strongest effects of diversity courses were evident on complex thinking skills, retention, cultural awareness, interest in social issues, the importance of creating social awareness, and support for institutional diversity initiatives. Students who participated in an integrated curriculum also were likely to believe that racial inequality is still a problem and less likely to accept that some social inequity is acceptable in society. These students expressed more interest in eliminating poverty, the importance of making a civic contribution, concern for the public good, support for race-based initiatives, and

tolerance for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people. Students who took diversity courses were also more likely to vote in federal or state elections. These results suggest that campus efforts to integrate the curriculum, or adopt a diversity requirement, have far-reaching effects on a host of educational outcomes that prepare students as participants in a diverse democracy (Hurtado, 2005).

Implementing curriculum changes could include curricular models such as Missouri State University's Public Affairs Mission. One pillar of the public affairs mission is "Cultural Competence." Faculty are required to address this pillar of the public affairs mission in coursework as a student learning objective and students are assessed on cultural competence upon completing their degrees. In addition to coursework, university programming is designed to address campus and community efforts to increase levels of cultural competence in order to better prepare students for a global marketplace.

Graduate Academics

As more students are choosing to complete graduate degrees simultaneously or concurrently with their undergraduate degrees, this lends the opportunity for graduate student learners to engage in discourse and problem solving that can be applied to problems they would tackle in the diverse, outside world (Tagg, 2003). The goal is for students to have increased awareness in situations where the students' actions will have significant consequences. The tasks and learning environment are designed to reflect the complexity of the challenges students will face and at the end of the educational experience, and learners should be ready to function as participating and knowledgeable members of a diverse, multicultural world (Savery & Duffy, 2001).

Residential Education Experience

Residence halls present a unique and rich opportunity for fostering the informal diverse peer interaction that promotes this educational excellence (Witt & Hakuta, 2003). As noted by Bowen:

> In a residential college setting, in particular, a great deal of learning occurs informally. It occurs through interactions among students of both sexes; of different races, religions and backgrounds; [...] who are able, directly or indirectly, to learn from their differences and to stimulate one another to reexamine even their most deeply held assumptions (p. 3).

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The residence hall provides a great opportunity to promote diversity. The WTAMU residence hall promotes inclusiveness by hiring staff that mirror the residence who live there. Residence Assistants complete diversity training at the beginning of each semester. The residence halls also encourage staff to create programing for residents to enhance the student's experiences and promote inclusiveness. In the transition from home to college, students have the opportunity to experience interactions across race and ethnicity, which not only promote learning, but may also provide the frequent, sustained residential contact necessary for positive cross-racial interactions to develop (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000).

Unfortunately, merely interacting across race does not guarantee educational benefit or even positive interactions. Trends of students living in today's residence hall include an increase in the number of students claiming no religious affiliation, an increase in the number of students identifying as LGBTQIA, and the political polarization that is occurring as more students label themselves as either liberal or conservative (Guess, 2007). Belief systems such as these, as well as a student's age, college readiness, socioeconomic status, immigration status, as well as many others, contribute to the creation of complex school climates in the residence halls. Opportunities for the residence halls to grow in the future would include, creating living and learning communities to support various students' academic and personal interest.

University Support of Diversity and Inclusion:

Implementing diversity within the university through programs, speakers, films, cultural experiences, experiential learning, conferences, and study abroad are all tools that the university supports, but there must be a monetary commitment from the university to ensure the success of programs that are not under the umbrella of academic colleges. Diversifying the curriculum is important on all campuses, but especially those where there is little student and faculty diversity. Infusing diversity into the curriculum, adding a diversity course requirement, requiring programs such as the math and sciences to add diversity requirements to the degree plan are all important steps toward cultural competence. The university must also encourage departments to designate which courses include a diversity component or will contain content that will discuss cultural differences, cultural awareness, social issues, racial inequality and other diverse topics. Not only will this provide the opportunity for students to develop critical competencies relevant to a wide variety of disciplines, but it will also provide an opportunity to offer incentives such as a Diversity Certificate along with their degree for students who complete a designated number of hours for these courses.

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Investing in diversity and inclusion is paramount to improving employee engagement, serving students more effectively, and increasing institutional innovation. Implementing a Diversity Certificate Program for faculty and staff with objectives to create a culture that values differences and creates an inclusive climate at work and in the community will have an impact on how students are served.

Multicultural Center

Multicultural centers were born out of the Black Cultural Centers (BCCs) that emerged as a result of white administrators resistance to change in the 1960's and 1970s (Patton, 2010). As a result of BCC success, multicultural centers (previously Multicultural Student Services) were created on college campuses in the 1980s as an escalating number of students from different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds enrolled at PWIs (Kupo, 2011). Shuford (2010) described cultural centers of today:

> Cultural centers [. . .] provide support for a variety of multicultural groups and multicultural programming for all constituents within the campus community [. . .] Cultural centers also serve a variety of other functions, including providing academic and counseling resources, electronic resources, leadership training, cultural programming, art exhibits, literary publications, community programs and services, lectures, research, and grand writing (p. 35).

A Multicultural Center at WTAMU would have the potential to serve students, faculty and staff as a resource center for diversity programming and cultural experiences. At WTAMU, it could be a location on campus that is geared for diverse initiatives and student resources such as the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, Gender Studies, International Student Offices, First Year Experience, LGBTQIA, Mentoring Programs and Student Organizations.

Demographic Shifts: Texas, the Panhandle, and WTAMU

When attempting to project demographic shifts at WTAMU through the better part of the next 20 years, it is important to determine how the University is currently situated with regard to the Panhandle and the State of Texas. The primary external data source for this study was the Texas Demographic Center's (TDC) Texas Population Projections by Migration Scenario Data Tool (http://osd.texas.gov/Data/TPEPP/Projections/Tool). These projections include annual county- and state-level population counts from 2010 through 2050 for the following groups: total population, male/female, White, Hispanic/Latinos, Black/African Americans, and Other. Using the 0.5 migration scenario,

a Panhandle-only data set was created for the Top 26 counties of Texas, with aggregation and percentage calculations providing the basis for comparing current and future demographic trends in WTAMU enrollment to Panhandle population data.

The projections for the State of Texas show the overall population to increase from 28 million in 2017 to 35 million in 2035, which represents a 25% overall increase. Hispanics/Latinos are projected to increase by 47% from 11.2 million in 2017 to 16.5 million in 2035. Whites in Texas are expected to increase by less than 1 percentage point from 2017 (11.6 million) to 2035 (11.7 million). Based on these projections, Hispanics/Latinos will comprise 48% of Texas population in 2035 (as compared to 40% in 2017), while the proportion of Whites in Texas will decrease from 42% in 2017 to 34% in 2035.

The Top 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle will see a relatively dramatic shift in demographic profile during the next few decades. (Appendix Table 2) Hispanics/Latinos and Whites are projected to comprise the same percentage (45%) of the population in the Panhandle in 2038. Extending the projections through 2050, the TDC predicts that Hispanics/Latinos will comprise 50% of the Panhandle's population at mid-century, with Whites at approximately 38%, Black/African Americans just below 5%, and the Other category at 7%.

While a number of forecasting methodologies of varying complexity were considered for this analysis, we decided to take a relatively straightforward approach by comparing WTAMU's existing demographic composition to that of the Texas Panhandle. This comparison is reasonable due to WTAMU's close relationship with the people of the Panhandle, as more than half of our undergraduate students hail from one of the Top 26 counties of Texas. For this analysis, only the undergraduate student population at WTAMU was included in the calculations.

Recent trends in demographic composition clearly show the gap narrowing between WTAMU's enrollment and the population across the Texas Panhandle. (Appendix Table 3) the approximately 9 percentage point gap for Whites in 2010 has decreased to 2 percentage points in 2017, while almost 15 percentage point gap for Hispanics/Latinos in 2010 has decreased to just over 5 percentage points in 2017. WTAMU's proportion of Black/African American undergraduates mirrors the percentage in the Panhandle's population, while students in the other race/ethnicity category is slightly above the Panhandle's figure in 2017.

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In order to project enrollment numbers for these demographic categories in 2035, we made the primary assumption that the trend of being closely aligned with the Panhandle demographic percentages would continue in the future. Using the TDC's county-level projections, we calculated the percentages in each demographic group, and then applied those percentages to internal projections of student enrollment in 2035. Based on WTAMU's projection that undergraduate enrollment will be approximately 11,000 students in 2035, we extrapolated enrollment headcount by race/ethnicity group. If the primary assumption mentioned above holds, and WTAMU continues the existing trend of mirroring the Panhandle, WTAMU's undergraduate enrollment in 2035 is projected to be comprised of 47% Whites (5170 students), 43% Hispanic/Latino (4730 students), 4% Black/African American (440 students), and 6% Other (660 students) races/ethnicities.

West Texas A&M University will have to be prepared for the students on the horizon. If current trends continue, WTAMU will also see an influx of students graduating high school with an associate's degree in hand, a larger transfer student population, and an increase in first-generation college students. First-generation college students are a growing demographic. "As colleges and universities face pressure to expand enrollments and provide access to diverse students, they find it difficult to recruit and retain first-generation college students" (Lowery-Hart & Pacheco, 2011, p. 55).

Recruit and Retain Diverse Faculty, Staff, and Administrators:

One of the most important and intellectual resources that any university has are its faculty. West Texas A&M University must actively seek out, hire, and retain the best faculty and staff who represent the student body. This notion that "it's open to anyone who wants to apply" is a misnomer. As the WTAMU campus is situated in a relatively isolated location, it must seek these candidates out and create a reputation for itself as a campus who recruits the best candidates. This is of vital importance to students of color who are not use to seeing the possibilities ahead of them. These students are not accustom to thinking about a future as a professor, researcher, and administrator. "Whereas university classrooms are diverse in a number of ways, it is well established that White, male, heterosexual perspectives dominate classroom landscapes in American educational institutions" (Simmons et al, 2013, p. 377). West Texas A&M University must better foster an environment and culture in which minority faculty feel safe, respected, and valued, and one where students see the possibilities in their futures. It is well documented that the national trend represents a significant shortage of people of color and women in STEM fields (Li & Koedel, 2017), but campus wide, there is an overall shortage of minority faculty and staff. According to the University of Rochester (2016), a

strong faculty is the most important determinant of long-term success for the university and students. The key to maintaining that strength is the diversity of the long-term faculty and the retention of those faculty members. Borisoff & Chesebro (2011) further explicate this mono-cultural experience by noting, "all students are impacted when the norm is defined in a single way...when who they see foreground does not reflect their lived experiences or identity" (p. 138).

Despite the benefits that a diverse faculty, staff, and student body provide to a campus, diversity also presents considerable challenges that must be addressed and overcome. First and specific to WTAMU, recruiting faculty, and staff, to the West Texas region requires incentive because of the location. Once recruited, minority faculty and staff often find themselves over worked in ways their non-minority colleagues don't experience. Students often gravitate towards the faculty who resemble them, administrators push minority faculty to represent their departments on university and college committees to show their departments are "diverse", all on top of the standard work duty responsibilities they were hired to do. A study of minority faculty at universities and colleges in eight Midwestern states showed that faculty of color experience exclusion, isolation, alienation, and racism in predominantly white universities (Turner, 2002; Turner 2000). Actively seeking out and hiring a more representative population would decrease many of these barriers to success that minority faculty and staff face, that many of their peers do not face.

West Texas A&M University is recognized with excellence in all colleges across the university. To continue to attract the top students in the future, there must be an assurance that students will also receive experiences that will prepare them for success in a global world. Because there is no set diversity programming standards, the onus remains with the institutions of higher education and schools within institutions to develop strategies and create systems that facilitate the goal of creating a truly diversified educational community (Brown, 2004).

Conclusion:

Research demonstrates that structured forms of inter-group contact in the form of diversity initiatives are often used to educate people about differences and have been shown to be important for improving school climate (Hurtado, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1996). Extrapolated in this white paper are three key ideas that WTAMU must develop if it hopes to thrive and grow in the projected future that lies ahead. The importance of normalizing D & I initiatives across campuses, supporting those D & I initiatives and actively recruiting & retaining the best, most diverse faculty, staff, and

administrators send a message that WTAMU is dedicated to the present students and to projected future students. It is imperative that WTAMU continue pushing and growing the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to meet the growing demands for diverse populations that lay ahead. Education is intended to be a transformational process; to do so, WTAMU must be willing to transform itself for the students' benefit. It is important that diversity becomes a part of the campus culture. Campus culture exists through historical and symbolic forms and is rooted in the collective assumptions held by faculty, staff and students (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). Diversity must occur as a campus wide initiative to warrant the results of a positive campus climate.

Liard's (2005) study suggested that experiences with increased diversity and a positive campus climate are important influences on the advancement of student learning and self-governing outcomes, including students' academic commitment and drive, as well as citizenship engagement. Where negative school climates exist, higher education institutions have found a correlation between racism on campus, academic performance, and alienation (Muthuswamy, Levine, & Gazel, 2006). This suggests that campuses that work to integrate diversity are more likely to have a positive school climate.

As the diverse population in the 26-county region continues to grow, and WTAMU experiences growth from out-of-state and international students, the focus on diversity, and a positive campus climate must be at the forefront of the university mission. Simmons et al (2013) make a clear argument that noted:

> Institutions of higher education face an important challenge. They must admit that their relationships with African-American students (and all students of color) are in need of attention, and then they must honestly and heartily attempt to develop and maintain better relationships. The struggle is real—both for African-American students and for their universities. Until that struggle in adequately and earnestly addressed, it is unlikely that the struggle will lead to progress (p. 392).

For WTAMU, the potential situation is much more serious. The "new student" projections are expected to be very demographically diverse. If WTAMU chooses not to push to the forefront and prepare itself for these new students, there are many other universities, in more attractive locations, that are and will.

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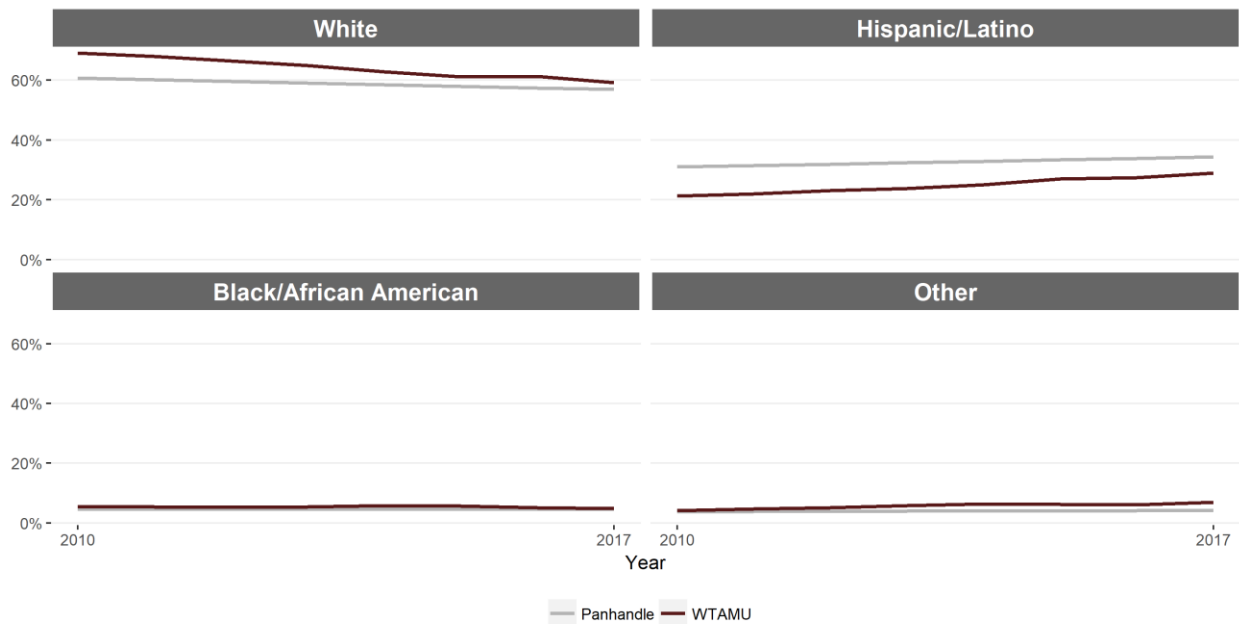
Appendix :

Table 2

Demographic Shifts in Panhandle Population (2010-2050)

Source: Texas Demographic Center (http://osd.texas.gov/Data/TPEPP/Projections/Tool)
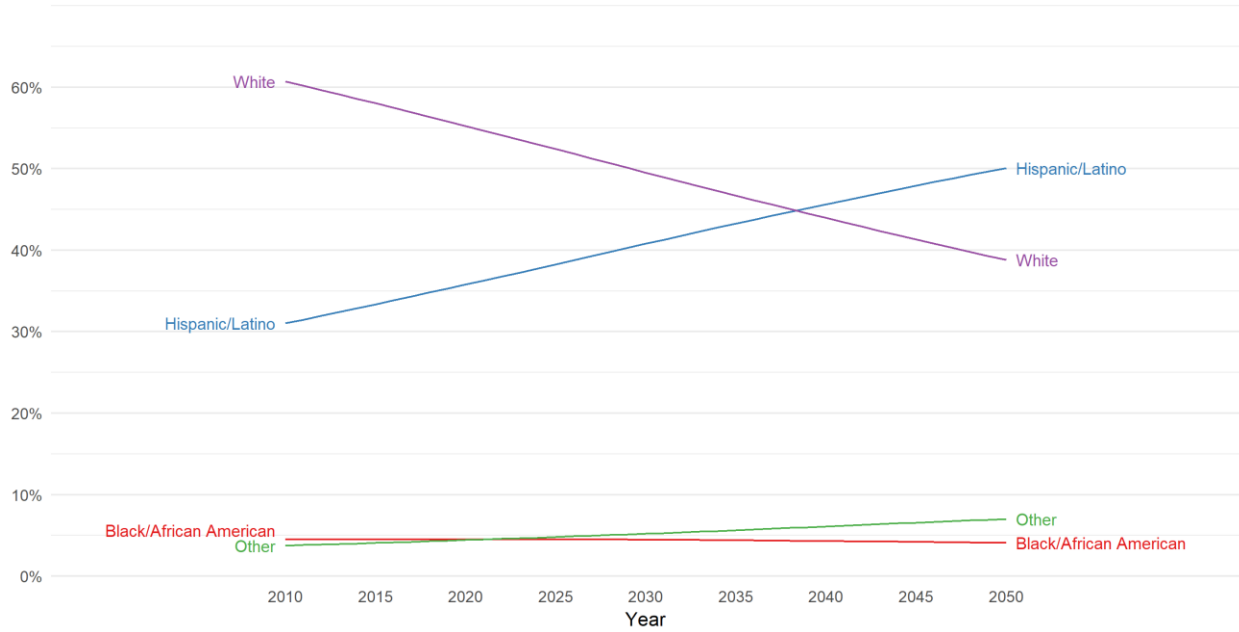
Table 3

The demographic compositions of WTAMU and the Texas Panhandle have become more closely aligned since 2010.

WT 125 White Paper

Formatting Guidance:

- Microsoft Office Word
- Title: Center, Bold, Segoe UI, 14 pt.
- Headings: Left Justify, Bold, Segoe UI, 12 pt.
- Length: 8-10 pages
- Text: Single-Spaced, Left Justify, Not Bold, Segoe UI, 12 pt.
- Margins: 1"
- Tightly written, pithy, and cause readers to reflect

Citations/References:

(utilize APA or any widely acceptable format such as the examples below)

Bernstein, M. (2002). 10 tips on writing the living Web. *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites, 149*. Retrieved from http://www.alistapart.com/articles/writeliving

Cummings, J. N., Butler, B., & Kraut, R. (2002). The quality of online social relationships. *Communications of the ACM, 45*(7), 103-108.

Tables and Figures:

(12pt Segoe UI) Each table and figure should be listed numerically (ex. Table 1), centered on the page, with an associated title (Utilize APA or any widely acceptable format such as the example below):

Table 1

Dogs Scoring Above Average on Intelligence by Breed and Gender

Breed	Male	Female	%
Dachshund	123	234	17.6
Terrier	456	567	31.1
Siberian Husky[a]	789	891	51.3
Totals ($N = 3060$)	1368	1692	

Note. Average score = 150. No animals were harmed during testing.

[a]Three huskies (one male, two female) escaped before testing was completed and are therefore not included in the table