BAYLOR UNIVERSITY'S GUIDE TO FORMING EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

"One of the most beautiful aspects of our caring Christian community is the diversity so vividly represented on our campus. Baylor holds an unwavering commitment to fostering and nurturing the diversity of our students, faculty and staff. More than that, we unabashedly celebrate our diversity. Doing so makes us stronger as a community, with each person contributing his or her perspectives and enriching wisdom gained from a unique path through life. The diversity of God's created world is an integral part of its majesty. Likewise, the Baylor Family's diversity lies at the core of our mission to transform lives and serve others. We are called to respect and learn from one another in a manner that reflects God's love for every person. What's more, we are all God's children, created in His image." ~Linda A. Livingstone, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

BACKGROUND

Baylor University seeks to attract, develop, and retain the best talent available, in part, by actively supporting an employment environment valuing diversity and inclusion. Our continued success as a Christian university depends on our employees contributing their diverse skills, experiences, and backgrounds.

To help foster an inclusive environment providing an excellent employee experience while meeting the needs of a more diverse faculty and staff, Baylor University has established a process for creating and supporting the ongoing success of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).

WHAT ARE EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS (ERGs)?

Employee Resource Groups are Baylor-sponsored voluntary networks of employees supporting diversity, inclusiveness, and mutual understanding for faculty and staff from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds and whose goals align with Baylor's mission and diversity goals. ERGs are established and run by and for Baylor employees to create a positive and inclusive employment environment. ERGs also offer opportunities for employees to learn about, better appreciate, and support others whose backgrounds may differ from their own.

TYPES OF ERGs

ERGs can be formed based on the following:

- Race
- Ethnicity and Culture
- Gender
- National Origin
- Disability
- Military Status

OBJECTIVES OF ERGs

By providing faculty and staff with the voluntary opportunity of creating and joining Employee Resource Groups, the University provides additional ways of supporting and enhancing ongoing diversity and inclusion efforts as well as increasing employee's connection to their jobs and the University and providing additional personal and professional growth opportunities.

Employee Resource Groups at Baylor provide:

- An organized method for traditionally underrepresented faculty and staff to meet and support each other, provide insights into their shared work experiences, and support their common needs.

- An additional resource for Baylor leadership to understand and contribute to cultivating an environment that supports diverse needs as well as a way of identifying and developing solutions to obstacles preventing members from achieving their full potential.
- A way of welcoming and including new employees as well as networking opportunities for members.
- An additional sense of family and community at Baylor.
- An excellent employment experience for all faculty and staff within the University.
- An established effort to welcome all faculty and staff as part of the Baylor family.
- An environment where faculty and staff can connect with one another and provide insight concerning shared work experiences.
- An additional resource for search committees or other recruitment or retention activities.

EXAMPLES OF ERG ACTIVITIES

- Welcoming new employees from underrepresented backgrounds
- Assisting with diversity recruiting initiatives
- Hosting informal talks, panels discussions, Q&As, etc. to increase cultural competence
- Hosting formal events with a sponsored speaker
- Coffee or lunch networking events
- Lunch and learns on professional development topics such as mentoring, career development, personal branding, running meetings, etc.
- Tours of different areas, schools, and departments on campus
- Holiday celebration events

OPERATING PRINCIPLES FOR ERGs

ERGs are self-created and self-led with approval and support of an ERG Taskforce comprised of members from Human Resources, the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity & Belonging, and the Special Advisor to the President for Equity and Campus Engagement.

- All ERGs are open to all faculty and staff. Although each ERG focuses on a specific audience, they are not exclusive. Any employee interested in supporting the ERG is welcome to participate.
- Participation in ERGs is voluntary.
- ERGs promote and support diversity, inclusiveness, and mutual understanding with the ultimate goal of helping the group thrive at Baylor.
- ERGs support Baylor's mission and strategic plan by helping attract, include, and retain, highly skilled faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- ERGs align with University goals and adhere to Baylor policies and procedures.

- ERGs help the University identify, create, and offer solutions to obstacles so members can achieve their full potential.
- ERGs may serve as advisors to the President's Diversity Council, either directly or through the Council's leadership.
- ERGs strive to provide professional and personal benefits to participants as well as long-term benefits to the University.
- ERG activities held during regular University operating hours must focus on a professional/business topic to be considered as work hours for participants. Activities outside of operating hours may focus on social connections.
- Participation in ERGs should not interfere or conflict with participants' primary functions for the University.

ERG TASKFORCE

The ERG Taskforce will consist of <u>at least one</u> member from Human Resources as well as the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity & Belonging, and the Special Advisor to the President for Equity and Campus Engagement.

They will provide:

- Information, guidance, and support for successful formation and operation of ERGs.
- Review and approval or feedback on ERG applications.
- Orientation on relevant HR topics (recruiting process, benefits, development opportunities, etc.).
- Assistance in identifying and working with an ERG Mentor, if desired.
- Assistance setting up and launching the ERG.

CREATING AN ERG

Employees who are interested in forming an ERG should consider the following criteria:

1. Submit a completed application to the ERG Taskforce for approval. They will review the application and offer feedback or notify of approval. Notification or approval is usually provided within two weeks.
2. The group should recommend the following on their application:
   a. **Chair or co-chairs**. The chair(s) is the designated leader and should be able to commit to an initial term of at least two (2) years. If possible, it is recommended to have one faculty and one staff member as co-chairs. Chairs are responsible for organizing and running meetings/events and communicating with the ERG Taskforce regularly.
   b. **Treasurer / Secretary.** A new ERG will be provided with initial startup funds and then will need to charge dues or raise money for ongoing expenses.

    c. **ERG Mentor.** If possible, it is recommended that that the ERG have a Mentor to create awareness of the ERG and provide advice and ideas. The Mentor holds the group accountable to problem solving, assisting with diversity and inclusion efforts, as well as adding value and contributing to the group members and the University. The Mentor also vocalizes the goals of the group to other leaders. A Mentor can be recruited by the group, volunteer, or be requested and assigned through HR. Considerations when selecting a mentor include:

        i. Years of service with the University

        ii. Someone who is personally connected with the backgrounds, experiences, and interests of the group

        iii. Holds a senior leadership position or can connect the group to senior leadership

    d. **Other officers as needed.**

3. There is no maximum to the number of members an ERG may have. However, it is required that each ERG have a minimum of five establishing members. It is recommended that each ERG have at least 10 establishing members.

4. Establish a general purpose and mission for the group, which should align with Baylor's mission and ongoing commitment to foster an environment that's inclusive to all.

Once approved, the newly formed ERG will be provided with one-time funding through Human Resources to help launch the group and will be added to the Baylor ERG website.

BAYLOR EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP (ERG) APPLICATION

An Employee Resource Group serves as a resource for members and the University by fostering a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with the institutional mission, vision, goals, business practices, and objectives.

Proposed Employee Resource Group Name: _____

Name, title, and contact information of ERG Organizer: _____

Proposed Chair/Co-Chairs: _____

Proposed Secretary/Treasurer: _____

ERG Mentor: _____

**Purpose or Mission Statement*:*

What is this ERG's purpose or mission? Who are the target members? How will the ERG serve or support the mission of Baylor? What opportunities or needs will the ERG help address? How will the ERG support its group members?

Organizational Structure:

What are the leadership positions, responsibilities, and term length? How will the ERG decide who will be in which role? How will the ERG ensure retention of institutional memory?

Meetings and Events:

How often will the ERG hold meetings and will be the purpose of the meetings? What additional events or activities does the ERG intend to hold?

Membership:

All Baylor ERGs are open to all faculty and staff. Who are the establishing members? What will be the process for an employee join the ERG?

ERG Organizer Signature   **Date**