

2016-2019 Diversity Plan Assessment

This document is the assessment of the 2016-2019 Diversity plan for the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. The original plan was created in the early 2000s and amended in Spring 2010. A revised draft was approved in March 2016 and was designed for a three-year period. The focus of the document was to recruit and retain diverse faculty and students and create an environment that embraces and welcomes all forms of diversity in fulfilling the college's three-fold mission of teaching, research and service. The rest of this document elaborates the steps made toward these goals, and areas where CoJMC seeks improvement.

Overview: CoJMC has made significant progress toward its key goals of diversity, equity and inclusion. The university developed new programs and replaced some programs mentioned within this document during the duration of this plan. In addition, a few key items influenced the initial assessment of this plan, including the COVID pandemic and the retirement of the DEI committee chair during the pandemic. The college also had significant administrative changes within CoJMC. An interim dean was in place from 2018-20, followed by the hiring of Dean Shari Veil in July 2020. Since 2020, a new diversity plan has been developed and should be implemented in 2023, as part of Dean Veil's strategic plan. As noted, the college had made improvements in its DEI focus since the strategic plan was approved, and much of our focus here notes those improvements.

Goal 1: Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention

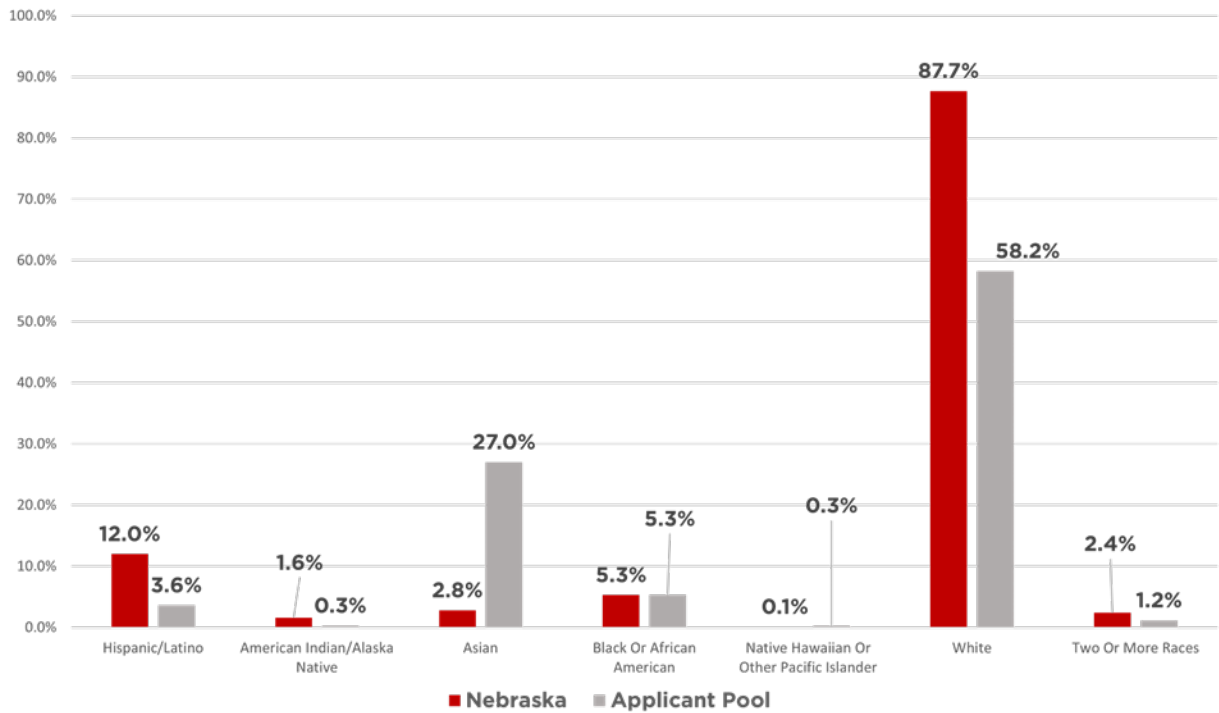
UNL's College of Journalism and Mass Communications has devoted significant time toward developing resources to promote diversity and inclusion for students, staff and faculty. In 2020, the college unveiled its [Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit](#). This toolkit includes guides on campus databases, helpful resources, local dining options and more. It is meant to expand outreach efforts to engage all UNL community members. In addition, UNL has developed a Breakthrough Recruitment for Inclusive Diversity Growth and Excellence program to help facilitate a more diverse and inclusive faculty search process. The [resources](#) are shared across programs to encourage a fair and equitable search process.

Faculty and staff serving on search committees complete the university's required training session, which is renewable every three years. As of Fall 2022, 82 percent of faculty had completed diversity, equity and inclusive training. The college created its own hiring page, participated in the AEJMC Job Hub and posted advertisements widely, including Higher Ed Jobs, Asian American Journalists Association, National Association of Black Journalists and the Association for Women in Communication. All search committee members for Fall 2022 searches completed the training before beginning in that term.

In 2020-2021, the college conducted seven faculty searches resulting in seven hires. In 2021-2022, the college conducted four faculty searches resulting in three hires. The proportion of underrepresented candidates in faculty short lists fell dramatically in 2021-2022. A review of our applicant funnels indicates that we could seek to improve efforts to attract female candidates. While the college is attracting applicants who are racially or ethnically diverse, we may not be

attracting qualified diverse candidates or may be making decisions during the hiring process that present barriers to diverse applicants being selected for shortlists. In fall 2022, the college added Diversity Ambassadors to faculty search committees. Ambassadors are members of the campus community who have received enhanced training in best practices to ensure an inclusive approach to the hiring process.

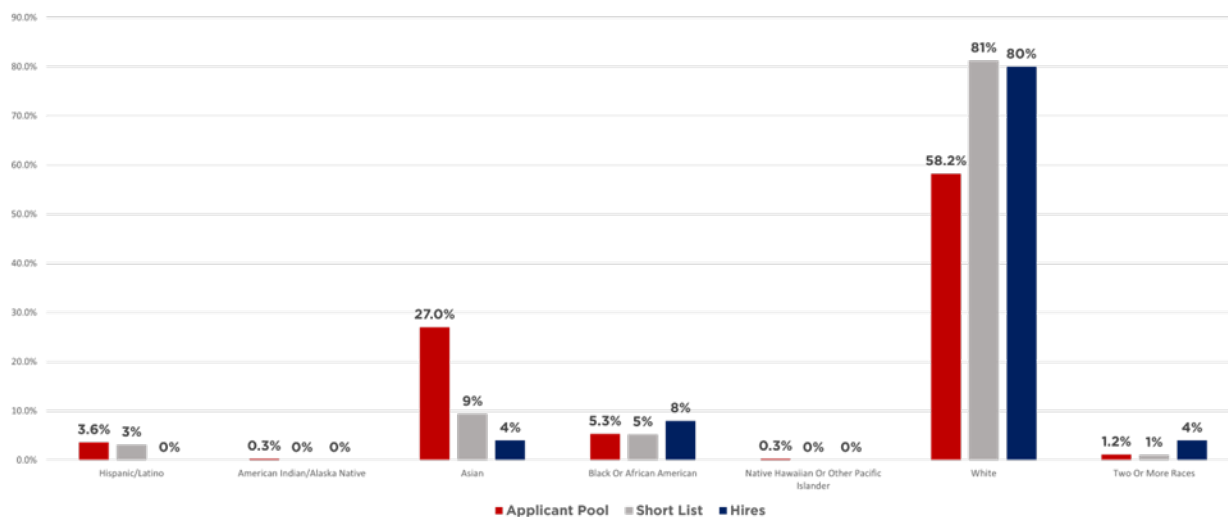
Faculty Applicants by Race/Ethnicity, 2016 to 2021



The data shows that we are doing a good job of recruiting Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander and Two or More Race candidates. **But we could improve our efforts to target Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native candidates.** (Candidates who did not disclose were not included in the chart.)

There has been variability in the diversity of our applicant pools over time. No clear trend toward or away from increased diversity has emerged.

Applicants, Short-List Candidates and Hires by Race/Ethnicity, 2016 to 2021

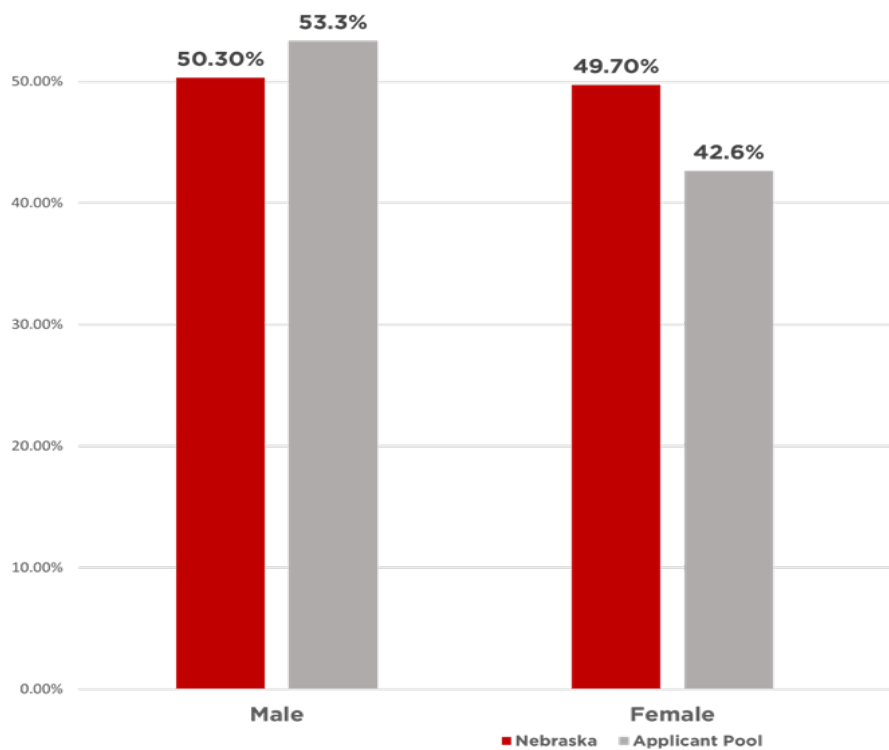


There was a shift in the racial and ethnic composition between the applicant pool and shortlists. While 41.8% of our total applicants were racially or ethnically diverse, only 19% of our shortlist candidates were diverse.

This indicates we may be unintentionally eliminating diverse candidates from consideration during the application review process.

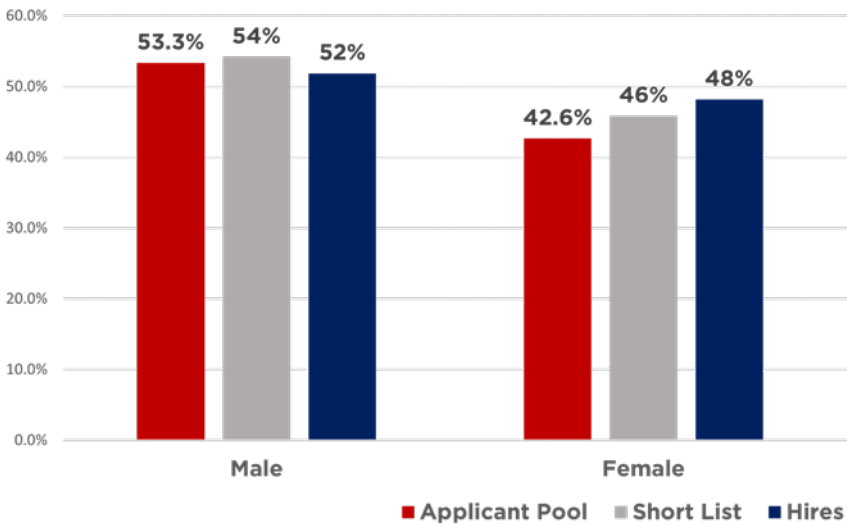
For the fall 2022 faculty searches, the college has requested the addition of diversity ambassadors to the search committees to help guard against bias in our processes. Additionally, we reevaluated our required qualifications to ensure our requirements were necessary for the position and as broadly tailored as possible. We also expanded the number of advertisements we posted for faculty positions and based on faculty suggestions, incorporated some new organizations targeted at diverse candidates.

Applicants by Gender, 2016-2021



Similar to our racial diversity, gender diversity in our applicant pools has varied, but there is no clear trend toward or away from increased representation by female candidates.

Applicants, Short-List Candidates and Hires by Gender, 2016 to 2021



To ensure we continue to promote gender diversity in our faculty search process we must seek ways to increase female representation in our applicant pools and examine our candidate evaluation process to ensure we guard against bias.

In terms of faculty retention, UNL created an [external mentoring program](#) for pre-tenure faculty to support their efforts to earn tenure. The program allows for faculty within their first year to submit a proposal for a faculty member at another institution to serve as their mentor. It provides up to \$2,000 in travel expenses. All six assistant professors hired in Fall 2021 were supported by the program.

In terms of development of a more inclusive culture for faculty and staff, the college launched a diversity book club in Spring 2021. Faculty have read the following books: “White Fragility,” “How to be an Antiracist” and “American Prison: A Reporter’s Undercover Journal into the Business of Punishment.” The Fall 2022 book chosen was “Community as Rebellion: A Syllabus for Surviving Academia as a Woman of Color.” Roughly 10-15 faculty have participated each semester.

Goal 2: Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Students

The college is committed to recruiting and retaining undergraduate and graduate students of diverse backgrounds. We are committed to efforts that engage students to ensure that they can succeed in our college by connecting students with appropriate resources to help them succeed. The college also made efforts to increase the diversity of its student body.

The Summer Media Academy, which was heavily discussed in the original Diversity Plan for 2016-19, was discontinued by the university shortly after this plan was approved. It was deemed labor intensive and cost prohibitive. After COVID-19, the college relaunched its a la carte workshop program which provides faculty-led workshops to high school classes throughout Nebraska. In 2021-2022, the college conducted 44 workshops. The college added four CoJMC Connections recruiting events during the year to provide prospective students increased opportunities to interact with the college in person or over Zoom. The college launched a

partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Lincoln to bring underrepresented students to the UNL campus. The college also hosted a Big Red Summer Camp in partnership with 4-H, to provide high school students with a week-long media experience at CoJMC. The college has participated in the AAF Most Promising Minority Student program, with 11 students participating since 2015.

Dean Shari Veil secured a grant from the Cooper Foundation to pilot a partnership with Bay High, a Lincoln magnet school focused on serving underrepresented students with an interest in media. The partnership established an Experience Lab at Bay High in the fall of 2022, to provide students with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience and earn college credit in the CoJMC program and offer enhanced support to participating students to complete the UNL application process.

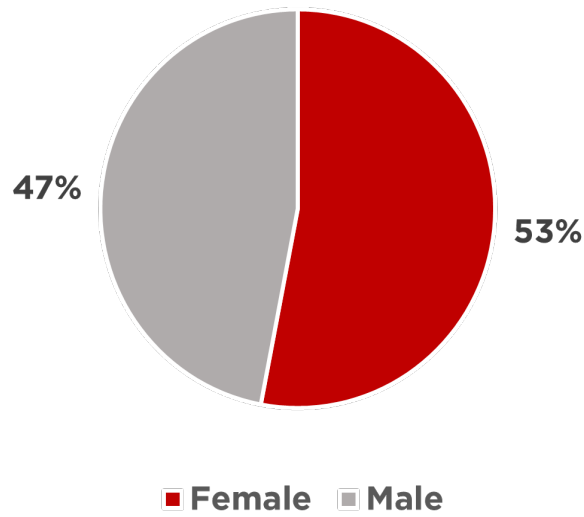
The Nebraska High School Press Association and the college sponsor a fall convention that attracts more than 700 Nebraska students and teachers. In addition to providing a prominent keynote speaker, the event offers 35 break-out sessions on a variety of media-related topics — from sports broadcasting to social media storytelling. Through its connections with the Nebraska High School Press Association, the college also has been asked to help create a summer journalism camp for diverse students in the Omaha Public Schools. The camp is expected to be offered in Summer 2023.

The number of students from underrepresented groups remained flat in 2021-2022. Due to large graduating classes, the overall student enrollment in the college declined from 1,055 to 961. Therefore, the proportion of enrollment from underrepresented groups increased from 20.5% to 22.6%. The college experienced a decline in international student enrollment. This mirrors the overall trend at the university where international enrollment has been declining since 2018. COVID-19 had an amplifying impact on declines in international enrollment due to new restrictions placed upon international travel.

The Husker Power Survey provides a measure of how well first-year students are adjusting to college. In the survey, the number of concerns expressed by both underrepresented and first-generation students increased in 2021-2022. However, the overall number of respondents to the survey also increased due to increased efforts at both the campus and college levels to raise awareness and participation in the survey. In 2020, 107 students completed the survey, with 30.8% of concerns expressed by first-generation students and 34.5% expressed by underrepresented students. In 2021, 205 students completed the survey, with 28.9% of concerns reported by first-generation students and 29% expressed by underrepresented students.

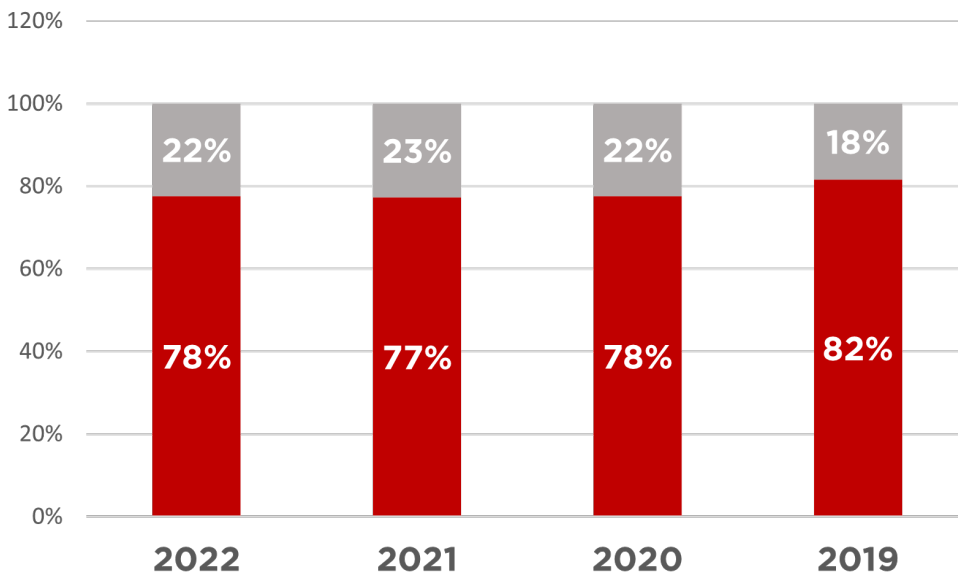
Gender

Enrollment deposits by gender have remained consistent over the past four years. Fifty-three percent of fall 2022 enrollment deposits are from female students and 47% are from males. This matches the overall university gender breakdown. No incoming students selected the new gender nonconforming option.



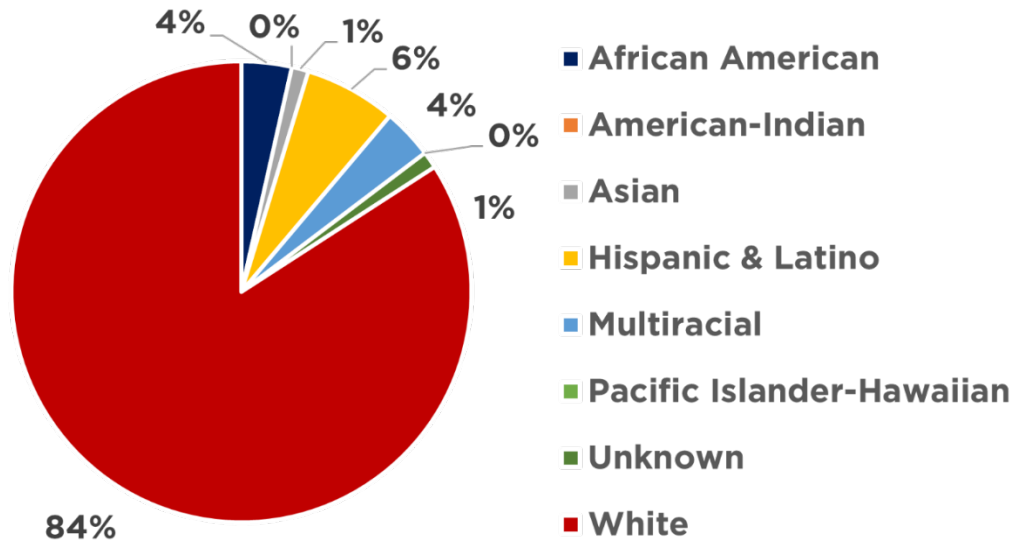
First Generation

First-generation students increased by five or by 15.6% when compared with last year. However, the proportion of our incoming class that are first-generation students remained flat at 21.9%.



Race/Ethnicity

Our underrepresented students decreased by three when compared to 2021. The proportion of our incoming students from underrepresented communities also decreased from 20.6% in 2021 to 16.0% in 2022. This is below the university's proportion of underrepresented students of 23.5% for 2022.

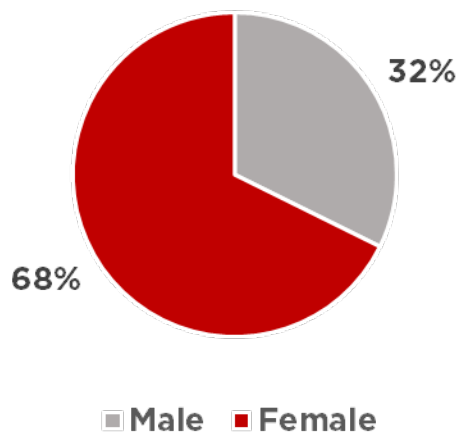


Graduate Education

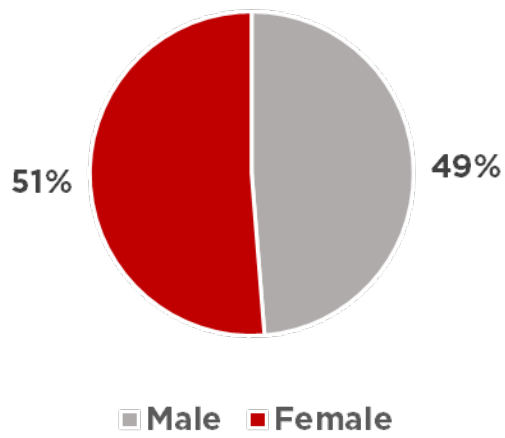
Gender

A majority of CoJMC's graduate students identify as female, 68%. This is much higher than the university at large, where 51% of graduate students identify as female.

CoJMC

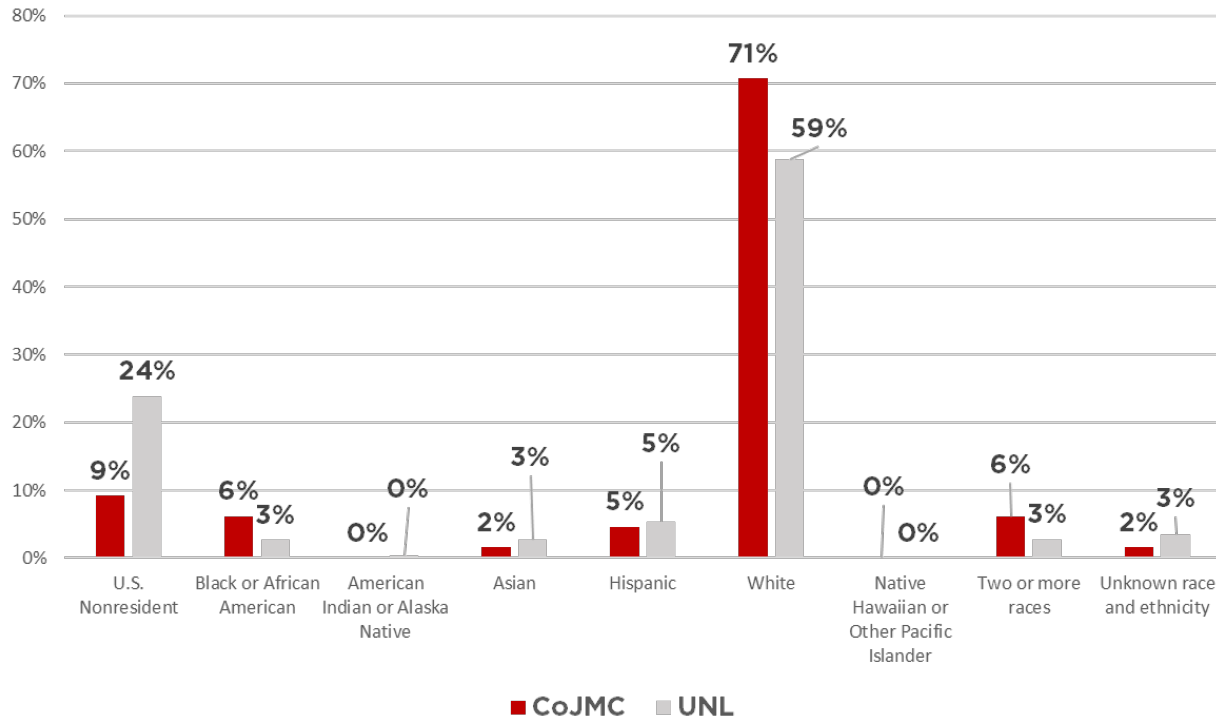


UNL



Race/Ethnicity

Overall, the [college's student population is 81% white](#). We improve on that number in our graduate programs where 71% of our students are white, and 29% are non-white. This figure still lags behind the university's graduate student population, which is 41% non-white.



The college outperforms the university in enrolling black or African American and two or more race students but falls behind in other categories. The college enrolls a smaller proportion (9%) of U.S. nonresident students than the university (24%).

Goal 3: Diversity and Inclusion in all aspects of teaching, research and service

UNL’s College of Journalism and Mass Communications is committed to infusing diversity into all aspects of teaching, research and service. The college promotes teaching strategies that facilitate respect for and sensitivity to diverse perspectives, exposing students to opportunities to interact with professionals who represent diverse perspectives and pursuing research and service opportunities related to diversity.

The college enhanced diversity and inclusion in the curriculum. During 2021-2022, a team of eight faculty, two staff, five students, seven alumni and six campus partners reevaluated the college’s Global Eyewitness program, which provides students with the opportunity to travel internationally to tell stories about global issues in largely underrepresented communities. The evaluation resulted in [this statement](#). The course was then enhanced to include bias training, trauma-informed reporting and solutions journalism into the curriculum with a focus on accountability to the diverse communities covered. Due to COVID-19, the college relaunched the program domestically with a three-week trip to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in May 2022.

The college added a new requirement for all majors to complete JOMC 222 Social Justice, Human Rights and the Media before graduation. The college also hosted its first post-COVID study abroad course for sports media and communication students who traveled to Spain in May 2022.

The college took several steps to enhance support for struggling students and foster student success. The college developed an [emergency assistance plan](#) for students who demonstrate a need. The faculty passed a policy requiring the use of Canvas for course management and grading to create a consistent student experience as part of the college's updated policies and procedures. The college piloted a mid-term grade project aimed at identifying struggling students earlier in the semester and targeting them with academic outreach. The four-member academic advising team increased targeted outreach to first-year students to ensure they meet with an academic adviser in both the fall and spring semesters to assess progress toward their degree. The college's scholarship committee also held a series of scholarship application workshops aimed at helping first-generation students understand the scholarship application process.

The college made efforts to tell more stories about underrepresented communities and enhance the visibility of diversity and inclusion within our community. Since 2010, the college has offered a reporting class called Nebraska Mosaic in which students specifically cover underrepresented communities in Nebraska. The Nebraska News Service launched a new section in their online publication, "Diverse Voices," dedicated to telling underrepresented stories. The first edition of Heartland Webzine focused on telling stories of women entrepreneurs in Nebraska. A spring 2022 depth reporting course focused on reviewing past coverage by the Omaha World-Herald for racism and bias. A 12-part feature series, "Being Black in Lincoln," produced by depth reporting students, won the College Journalism Award at the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights book and Journalism Awards on May 24, 2022. The Spring 2022 JOMC 222 class created a class podcast called "And Still We Rise" where they interviewed 5 women who had been impacted by the Nebraska Prison System.

In May 2021, the College hosted a two-hour training for all faculty called "[Accountability Journalism in the 21st Century: The Questions We Ask Have Consequences.](#)" The workshop discussed the impact of White supremacy on traditional journalism practice and community members, walked participants through how to differentiate between authentically inclusive versus "white savior" approaches to journalism and how to recognize and teach that accountability journalism is an ongoing, evolutionary process requiring humility, transparency and a commit to continuous improvement. Roughly, five faculty attended the workshop.

In spring 2021, a faculty member attended the Poynter Institute's "Diversity Across Curriculum" training program. The four-week course was aimed at examining existing curriculum for oversights and opportunities, applying strategies to develop new materials that emphasize diversity and inclusion and devising ways to infuse inclusion and diversity into teaching. CoJMC has also co-sponsored the LGBTQA+ history dinner for the past two years.

At least two of our faculty members are first-generation college graduates. One previously served on the First Generation Nebraska Advisory Board and one currently serves on the board.

Finally, in terms of research and creative activity, the CoJMC faculty have spent a significant amount of time and effort developing projects related to diversity and inclusion. Since 2016, faculty have tallied 17 journal publications, two books and three book chapters related to DEI topics. In addition, 22 research/creative presentations were given during that time, along with three creative activities and exhibitions.