

Office of the President
University of Washington

Diversity Appraisal

I. Introduction

The President sets the direction for the University, and one vital element is clearly and unequivocally to foster diversity. In calling for a University-wide Institutional Self-Study of Diversity (Diversity Appraisal) in December, 2003, President Lee Huntsman requested an examination of how the University, through the richness of its diversity, can pursue its full potential as an institution of learning, of inquiry and of intellectual community. To achieve this potential, the University must set an agenda for institutional transformation, embracing practices of inclusiveness in its programs, activities and policies that allows each member of the community to prosper and excel. The Diversity Appraisal will guide this new blueprint for change.

A representative steering committee of faculty, staff, students, and administrators were charged with overseeing the self-study developing recommendations to strengthen diversity at the University of Washington. The work of the steering committee seems especially relevant in light of the recommendations provided by the 2003 Decennial Accreditation Committee that "the UW undertake additional efforts to increase the number of faculty and students from underrepresented groups." The Diversity Appraisal also builds on the University's Diversity Compact, as explained in section III below. The implementation of an appraisal resonates strongly with the Regents' expectations of a comprehensive review of existing efforts that support diversity at the University of Washington and a planning document to strengthen and guide future efforts.

Issues of diversity are important and complex. By asking each unit address *in their own terms* how diversity is a visible and active part of the unit, integrated into mission and programs, and a criterion for success, the Diversity Appraisal will yield analysis of progress and challenges, best practices, and recommendations to strengthen diversity, inclusiveness and excellence in the coming years.

II. Diversity as a Visible and Integral Part of the President's Office

It is the leadership from the President that ensures that the University's mission, goals and plan for diversity are implemented and assessed. The President's Office takes a dual approach to fulfilling the mission and goals of diversity at the three campuses of University of Washington, at once focusing on diversity as a core value and operational goal, and also encouraging the integration of diversity throughout the University's programs, policies and activities. Present in numerous speeches, articles, letters and resolutions of this university is the President's firm commitment to creating and fostering, furthering and emphasizing, the need for diversity to achieve excellence in teaching, research and service. The President has endorsed diversity as a central aspect of

the University's capital campaign so that resources will be available to expand and strengthen diversity in future years.

Diversity is also a central component of the University administration. The University of Washington addresses diversity at the level of the President's Cabinet. Vice President Rusty Barceló is Vice President and Vice Provost for Diversity and reports to both the President and the Provost. As such, she is directly charged with advancing diversity at all levels of the University. Diversity efforts are discussed and promoted regularly at Cabinet meetings and retreats. The President's Office has collaborated with the Office of the Provost in 2003-2004 to offer a series of senior administrators' workshops on campus to discuss best practices and effective strategies for addressing current diversity concerns and issues.

The President, the Vice President for Diversity and other Cabinet members regularly and very frequently attend events in the local and regional community that foster communication with and recognition of diverse communities. The President expects nationally visible leadership from all senior staff on issues of diversity relevant to their areas.

II. How Diversity is Integrated into the Mission of the Office

The President seeks advice and counsel on diversity from a broad and representative group of constituencies. The President's Office established and charged the President's Commission on the Status of Women, the President's Staff Forum, the Minority Community Advisory Committee, and the President's Student Forum.

The establishment of a university-wide Diversity Council, reporting to the President and chaired by the Vice President and Vice Provost for Diversity, ensures collaboration and cooperation among diversity initiatives, as well as analysis of issues and needs. Diversity Council membership includes staff, faculty and students as well as members of the community with a particular interest in the health and well being of diversity efforts at University of Washington campuses in Seattle, Tacoma and Bothell. The Council advises the Vice President and President on (1) increasing access to the University of Washington for a diverse population of students; (2) reaching the highest possible retention and graduation rates for diverse students; (3) improving the climate for diversity on campus. The structure of the Diversity Council builds on blueprints for such a group proposed by the Multicultural Alumni Partnership (MAP) and the Multicultural Organization of Students Actively Involved in Change (MOSAIC).

The Diversity Council tackles diversity topics in four broad areas: curriculum; outreach and recruitment; retention; and staff. These categories also denote the committees, titled Working Groups, the work of which guides recommendations to the president of the University of Washington. Committees also at work on diversity topics include groups focused on disabilities; gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender; staff and graduate education.

The Diversity Council meets as a body at least once each academic quarter and an annual report reflecting the work accomplished and recommendations for change with regard to diversity is presented to the President of the University of Washington every spring.

In addition, the President's Office sponsors or co-sponsors fund-raising events to generate scholarship dollars for student support and cultural and academic events that enhance knowledge of diversity.

III. Institutionalization of Diversity as a Criterion for Success

The Office of the President has institutionalized diversity as a criterion for success by building accountability for diversity into program implementation, evaluation and reporting. In October 2000, in the wake of the passage of I-200, the Diversity Council of the University of Washington signed into action the first University of Washington Diversity Compact. Noting the University's commitment to diversity as a core value, the document outlined goals in areas of outreach and recruitment to bring new students, faculty, staff and community members to campus; retention; and climate to make the University of Washington as welcoming as possible to its students, faculty and staff. Each year between 2000 and 2003, the University reviewed the strategic actions of the Compact and their outcomes. (See reports on the University's Diversity Homepage)

The Diversity Compact has been supplanted by the Diversity Appraisal, which will generate a new set of recommendations for next steps in realizing the vision of diversity at the University of Washington.