

**University of Washington, Tacoma  
2004 Diversity Appraisal**

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**DIVERSITY APPRAISAL**  
**University of Washington, Tacoma**  
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**Introduction**

The University of Washington, Tacoma (UWT) is in its fourteenth year of operation; and since its inception, an awareness of the importance of diversity issues has been foremost. For example, the first academic unit at UWT, Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (IAS), includes in its vision statement, the significance of a "...culturally relevant course of study grounded in a respect for diversity and responsive to the needs and desires of the communities around us." This guiding principle set the tone for the programs that followed as evidenced in the mission statements of both academic and non-academic units on campus.

Within recent years, UWT has adopted two structures to address diversity issues. The first is the Chancellor's Task Force on Human Diversity (Task Force), now in its fourth year. Terms on the Task Force are staggered, and membership includes student, faculty, and staff representatives, appointed by the Chancellor, from across campus. The second structure, also appointed by the Chancellor, is that of a shared directorship of Diversity and Minority Affairs, currently in its third year.

The broad charge of the Task Force is to assure that diversity issues remain visible at UWT and that they be addressed. Also, the Task Force is charged with promoting diversity across campus in positive, constructive ways. Its work is based on a definition of diversity in its broadest sense. The Co-Directors of Diversity and Minority Affairs (Co-Directors) collaborate with the Task Force and serve as a contact point for faculty, staff, or students on concerns and complaints related to diversity. All of these positions are voluntary with the intent to share leadership roles among faculty and staff. For more detailed information, see the home page for "campus diversity" at <http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/>.

These two entities, the Task Force and the shared directorship, grew out of two internal research studies (spring 1999 and November 1999-February 2000) conducted at UWT with the sanction of the Chancellor. A major finding from both studies emphasized the importance of creating and maintaining intentional and shared responsibility across the campus community to nurture human diversities. The nurturance of human diversities was defined as "acts that sustain all human beings whose myriad characteristics, by virtue of birth, changing circumstances, and/or choices are exhibited throughout life." The need for administrative sanction, visibility, and support was noted, along with the requirement that all individuals are accountable for efforts within their spheres of influence.

Given this spirit of shared responsibility, the Co-Directors requested that each campus unit respond to the questions posed in the current diversity appraisal. Academic units include Education, IAS, Nursing, Social Work, Urban Studies, the Milgard School of Business, and Computing and Software Systems within the Institute of Technology. Other units include the Library; Office of Enrollment Services and Student Affairs (OESSA); Information Technology including the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT); Finance and Administration that includes Safety and Security, Facilities, Finance and Human Resources; the Office of Development and Alumni Relations; and the Office of the Chancellor. Each unit presented the Co-Directors with a report responding to the questions raised and to the diversity target areas. UWT's diversity appraisal does not include all of the specifics in each unit's report, but rather attempts to provide a scan of the campus as a whole. Each unit takes seriously its commitment to diversity and implements that commitment in a wide variety of activities, some of which are ongoing and others of which are time or project limited.

### **Visibility of Diversity**

The visibility of the centrality of diversity at UWT is evidenced in its Mission and Vision Statements and is one of its defining characteristics. In addition, UWT's diversity statement is on its Web site and is as follows:

UW Tacoma's commitment to diversity is central to maintaining an atmosphere where students, staff, and faculty and South Sound residents find abundant opportunities for intellectual, personal, and professional growth. *To hold constant a nurturing learning and work environment in the midst of change, each member of our community has the responsibility to build and sustain respectful and supportive relationships, where intolerance, discrimination, and social injustice are confronted and resolved through non-violent behavior.* Diversity at UWT is understood as an inclusive domain of human characteristics which may change over time or remain unchangeable, which may involve choice, or which may result from other life circumstances.

The italicized portion above of UWT's diversity statement is now in poster format and hangs in most classrooms, office areas, and conference rooms across campus (as of autumn quarter 2003). The goal is to have it present in all common spaces. In bookmark form, this statement has been distributed widely.

As one moves about campus, it is clear there are a wide variety of people, some of whom are older, some younger, some who are in wheelchairs, and others who are ethnically and racially diverse. For example, in relation to racial/ethnic diversity among the student population (including African American, Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic), there has been a steady increase since 1991 when 10 percent of the student population was diverse. Autumn 2003 data shows a student population of 21 percent that is racially/ethnically diverse. This includes the following racially/ethnically self-identified students: 118 (5.9 percent) African Americans, 30 (1.5 percent) Native Americans, 212 (10.6 percent) Asian Americans, 62 (3.1 percent) Hispanic, 1224 (61

percent) Caucasian, and 362 (18 percent) Other. While there is room for improvement, especially among certain groups, it is noteworthy that this percentage increase has occurred during years of rapid numerical growth.

Students registered for disability services numbered 76 from July 2002 to July 2003, resulting in 517 face-to-face contacts. There are numerous students with disabilities on campus who have not had the financial means to seek appropriate documentation, or for other reasons have chosen not to seek accommodations for their disabilities.

Routinely, most units on campus engage in ongoing conversations related to diversity issues pertinent to their respective missions. Such dialogues may focus upon the recruitment and retention of diverse students, celebrations of various cultures and their customs, displays that portray diverse peoples, artwork, and writings. The Institute of Technology, which has a specific mission to attract underrepresented populations to the field of computing, funds a Student Development Team with a Diversity Programs Coordinator to perform outreach to underrepresented minority students and women. Bringing such students to the Institute benefits the entire campus. The Education program recently established the Center for the Study of Education and Poverty, which focuses on socioeconomic diversity. The Library developed and implemented in 2003 policies, in consultation with UWT Disability Support Services (DSS), for “Services for UWT Library Users with Disabilities”

(<http://www.acoma.washington.edu/library/special/dssservices.htm>).

OESSA encourages and supports staff to be engaged in minority student issues through attendance at the Faculty and Staff of Color Conference and the Student of Color Conference. Staff members also serve as advisors to student organizations that have included Allies, Black Student Union, Pride Coalition, and Latino Student Organization. The above examples represent a sampling of the efforts to keep diversity visible and active at UWT. While many aspects of diversity are visible, it is important to keep in mind, for example, that the numbers of students registered with Disability Support Services during the 2002-2003 academic year with non-visible disabilities outnumbered those with visible disabilities by 76 percent.

### **Integration of Diversity into Unit’s Mission**

As noted above, diversity is included in the majority of both academic and non-academic units’ mission statements. Most of UWT’s academic programs infuse diversity into the content of courses that do not have diversity as a primary curricular focus, and some offer stand-alone diversity courses as well. IAS, Urban Studies, Nursing, Social Work and Education share a focus on the importance and impact of various aspects of diversity, whether examining the cultural products of diverse populations in the United States and internationally or the impact of poverty upon health care, education, and the delivery of social services. The Milgard School of Business also offers a diversity course and integrates diversity issues into its core classes. Several years ago, a curriculum review was conducted across all academic programs and courses on campus. The results indicated a rich curriculum with a strong emphasis upon diversity. That focal point remains today.

Human Resources has developed a list of Web sites and publications for managers to utilize in recruiting and hiring applicants from a wide range of populations. Resources include those targeted to reach minorities, women, veterans, people with disabilities, and those with various sexual orientations. Recruiting a diverse faculty and staff supports the missions of both the academic programs and support units by providing role models and supports for a diverse population. Also, a variety of trainings are offered to help employees work effectively and professionally in an environment of ever-increasing diversity.

### **Diversity Institutionalized as Criteria for Success**

Different approaches are taken across campus to emphasize the importance of diversity. For example, Information Technology attempts to empower staff members and other UWT employees in decision-making processes related to technology supports. This process results in numerous options as a way to best serve a diverse campus population with a wide range of technology knowledge and skills. The Library is working to develop stronger team management structures that serve to ensure fuller participation by all of its employees. The Social Work program includes in its promotion and tenure criteria the value of mentoring diverse students and faculty members.

Because of the position that UWT has taken related to diversity, there is an expectation across campus that all faculty, staff, and students assume responsibility for maintaining work and learning environments that support all employees and students. The Chancellor's Task Force supports this effort by providing opportunities for the campus community to examine a wide range of issues related to diversity. The Task Force provides regular reports to the Chancellor regarding its activities. The Chancellor then makes a written response to the reports. This written exchange between the Chancellor and the Task Force creates a formal dialog on diversity issues, helps advance and address specifics raised by the Task Force, and reminds the campus to prioritize diversity in the overall administrative process for UWT.

### **Student Access and Opportunities**

Numerous activities occur to reach out to students in a variety of ways. Centralized efforts emanate from OESSA, and others originate from individual academic units. A recent campus event, South Sound College Fair, held on a Saturday brought approximately 1,000 high school, community college, returning students, and community members to campus to learn of different study options available at UWT. OESSA coordinated this event that involved program advisors and faculty from all academic units and support units as well. Other examples include everything from acquiring and implementing a TRIO program (in collaboration with the non-profit Metropolitan Development Council), to the Education Program planning a part-time, evening cohort for its Teacher Certification Program to provide greater access, in particular, for ethnic minority students who work full time as para-educators. Education has also partnered

with IAS to develop an Education minor, anticipating this will increase the number of minority students.

The Institute of Technology raises funds to provide numerous outreach programs targeted toward minority students and women including: ACCESS, Eureka! (a partnership with the YWCA of Pierce County and Tacoma Metro Parks), Expanding Your Horizons, Robotics (a partnership with Metro Parks and the Northwest Leadership Foundation), and others. These efforts are increasing the numbers of both women and ethnically diverse students enrolled in the Institute. However, greater numbers of Asians and Asian-American individuals are in the Computing and Software Systems Program as compared with, for example, African-Americans. The initiatives noted above are targeted to address this challenge.

When reviewing applications for admission, Urban Studies, as well as other academic programs, considers the obstacles people have overcome and the kinds of life experiences they will bring to the program. By their very nature such considerations often serve to increase the diversity of a program. This process has resulted in the Urban Studies program attracting an increasingly diverse group of majors. The same result is occurring in the recently launched undergraduate Social Welfare program that uses a similar admissions process.

OESSA has developed tuition waivers that celebrate diversity. These awards provide a total of approximately \$35,000 to recipients (the number varies), covering all regular undergraduate tuition and fees. The Education program recently completed a three-year Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant, focused on recruiting more minority teachers into the work force. The Social Work program participates in the Child Welfare Training and Advancement Program which provides funding for those graduate students, many of whom are ethnically diverse, who commit to working in public child welfare. The Office of Development and Alumni Relations has been successful in raising money for programs that support the advancement in the area of technology. The Minority Recruitment Working Group wrote an excellent report in August 2003, outlining a campus-wide, coordinated and planned recruitment plan to prioritize minority recruitment and enrollment. The above provide examples of the numerous efforts to increase student access and opportunities at UWT.

### **Student Development and Retention**

Student development and retention is the responsibility of all UWT faculty and staff, and all units and individuals fulfill this in a variety of ways. For example, security staff members hold regular discussions about being respectful toward those on campus and displaying a neutral stance in the midst of confrontation and conflict. Those who work in facilities, as well as those in media services, show ongoing efforts to meet the needs of the entire campus community. The Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology allots longer appointment times for multilingual students and those with self-identified learning disabilities. Information Technology, including the CTLT, collaborates with the Student Counseling Center and DSS to ensure that classes in study

skills and computer classes meet the needs of students. The Library recently hired a student who uses a wheelchair to work in circulation services. The Institute of Technology integrates academic support programs throughout the curriculum to ensure a continuing emphasis on diversity and retention. All faculty members in the Social Work program serve as academic advisers, thus providing ongoing and direct support to all students. All academic programs work with DSS to assist students who have disabilities to find accommodation to increase likelihood for success.

One area that requires ongoing attention and development is the provision of support services for faculty and part-time instructors as they teach increasingly diverse students with a wide range of characteristics and needs. Some faculty members are more comfortable with and experienced in establishing and maintaining positive learning environments for all students. The Co-Directors are increasingly aware of this need as more students and faculty see them as a resource in problem solving when conflict emerges around different students, instructors, course content, and perceived differential treatment.

### **Engagement With the External Community**

UWT has always prided itself on its connections with the external community. These connections remain strong and appear to be growing. Most recently, Urban Studies forged links with community organizations that represent diverse elements of the community. Examples include ties with MLK housing and the Asia Pacific Cultural Center. Specific projects include taking the lead on the interdisciplinary evaluation of the HUD HOPE VI Salishan project and another effort involving Japanese-American heritage in Tacoma. Also recently, the Social Work program developed student internship placements for both baccalaureate and masters students on the Hilltop, an ethnically diverse and impoverished area of Tacoma that borders UWT. For example, sites include Hilltop Christian Center and several sites under the auspices of the TEACH (Tacoma's Enrichment and Academics for Children on the Hilltop) program. In writing its Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant (noted above), the Education program worked with community-based organizations such as the Urban League, Centro Latino, and the Boys & Girls Club. The Institute of Technology collaborates with Saint John Baptist Church, also on the Hilltop, in offering part-time work on campus to a select number of *at risk* youth in the church's summer program. The Office of Enrollment and Student Affairs participates annually in the Tacoma/Pierce County Ethnic Fest and in college information fairs coordinated by faith-based organizations, such as Associated Ministries, in an effort to reach prospective students whose lives place a strong emphasis on spirituality. In order to serve the broader non-profit community, the Library has (with assistance from the United Way of Pierce County) established a Foundation Center's Cooperating Collection. This activity expands the services of the Library to the general public by collecting, organizing, analyzing, and disseminating information on foundations, corporate giving, and related subjects (a mission of the Foundation Center). UWT's Department of Information Technology has been in dialogue with the Boys & Girls Clubs, HOPE VI, and other groups serving disadvantaged individuals, exploring how UWT can offer them opportunities to become familiar with various technologies.

Several units on campus have advisory boards or councils that serve as direct links to their respective communities. UWT also has a Campus Advisory Board that currently has 20 percent of ethnically diverse board members. The board is almost equally divided between men and women. The goal is to increase minority representation to 30 percent, including more Asians and Hispanics.

### **Administrative, Staff and Faculty Diversity**

UWT's administration consists of a Chancellor, two Vice-Chancellors, three Associate Vice-Chancellors, seven academic program directors, three directors of support units, and six additional members of the All Directors group. Composition of this group is racially/ethnically diverse, consisting of Asian American, African American, and Hispanic descent. Given this profile, there is a need to make a concerted effort to increase the racial/ethnic diversity of the campus leadership.

According to data from the U.W. Equal Opportunity Office (January 2004), 23 percent of UWT staff, and 15 percent of faculty are members of racial/ethnic minority groups, with an overall percentage of 19. Given this data, there is a need to increase racial/ethnic diversity among faculty in particular.

### **Curriculum and Research**

As noted above, a rich curriculum that includes diversity content, and teaching/learning processes that support such content, exists across most academic programs at UWT. Likewise, faculty members across programs are engaged in research that either directly addresses issues of diversity or considers them as important variables. Detailed data was not collected at this time.

### **Climate**

Specific data was not collected related to climate. It is accurate to say that many members of the campus community work very hard and intentionally to create and maintain work and learning environments that are supportive of all individuals. At the same time, more coordinated efforts in support of diversity are needed. As noted above, both the members of the Chancellor's Task Force on Human Diversity and the Co-Directors for Diversity and Minority Affairs volunteer to serve in these roles in addition to carrying out their primary responsibilities as faculty, administrators, professional or classified staff. A recommendation was made to the Chancellor in May 2003, based upon input from the entire campus, that some permanent funding, including a staff line, designated office space, and operating budget, be allocated to diversity work. However, given the serious budget constraints faced by UWT, it was not feasible to do so at that time. The need remains and the recommendation stands. In the meantime, diversity work will continue, and every effort will be made to support all students and employees, and to provide support to those who might be marginalized by virtue of their diverse characteristics.

