

July 20, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: 2010-11 Personnel Diversity Task Force

Dr. Michael Caldwell	Mr. Israel Lara, Jr.
Dr. Karen Carey	Ms. Cynthia Matson
Mr. Adrian Carvajal	Mr. Joshua Mitchell
Dr. Carolyn Coon	Dr. Shane Moreman
Mr. Joseph De los Santos	Dr. Marnel Niles
Dr. Jose Diaz	Ms. Francine Oputa
Mr. Juan Gonzales	Mr. Carlos Perez
Mr. Jim Hendricks	Ms. Christina Roybal
Ms. Teresa Huerta	Dr. David Schecter
Dr. Ellen Junn	Dr. Ted Wendt
Dr. Loretta Kensinger	

FROM: John D. Welty
President

SUBJECT: Task Force Recommendations

Thank you for your conscientious work; it will be an important part of our continuing commitment to celebrating diversity at Fresno State.

I respond to each of your recommendations below. First, however, I provide a correction to the first two paragraphs of your prologue, to ensure that this section corresponds accurately with my stated reasons for appointing the task force, and its charge.

I look forward to 2011-12 as a year of significant progress in many of the areas that your recommendations identify.

Corrected Prologue:

Personnel Diversity Task Force 2010-2011

This task force was appointed by the President in Fall 2010, as a continuation of campus diversity initiatives.

The charge of the committee was to review the University's policies and procedures for recruitment, appointment, and retention of faculty, staff, and administrators, with a focus on our commitment to equity and diversity. The committee (composed of community, administrative, faculty and staff members) first met on November 30, 2010, and continued to meet monthly starting in January 2011 until May 2011. With six meetings, the committee reviewed university data, looked at previous diversity-focused reports, and discussed both the unique needs of the Latina/o regional population, as well as a common set of diversity concerns pertaining to a wider spectrum of underrepresented groups on campus. Here we report our recommendations.

The recommendations concern (a) data, (b) recruitment, (c) retention and promotion, (d) campus climate, and (e) implementation. Each of our recommendations builds upon and relies upon one another.

Responses to Recommendations:

Recommendations

Data

The University administration should provide better knowledge of and availability of tracking data, keeping in mind individual confidentiality.

1. We need to collect data on faculty and staff each year to determine accurate numbers of staff, faculty and administrators who are retained or who leave campus, include follow-up data on reasons for departures (e.g., consider exit interviews), and include data on males and females by race, ethnicity, and sexual identity wherever possible. Currently IRAP maintains aggregate data, however, these data are potentially misleading and erroneously applied. Consider regional number (as opposed to national) to assess the adequacy of the applicant pools whenever possible.

Response: I will consult with the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning, and the Office of Academic Personnel on the best ways to implement this recommendation.

2. A report on diversity data for the campus as a whole should be provided to and reviewed by the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity on an annual basis. A report on diversity data specific to faculty should be provided to and reviewed by Senate Committee for Faculty Equity and Diversity on an annual basis. Both committees should review this data with an eye to our goals of better representing the region's diversity throughout all layers of the university.

Response: This will be implemented for the 2011-2012 Academic year.

3. Wherever possible, data on diversity and campus diversity efforts should be made widely available to the campus and the wider community so all can see our commitment to promotion of diversity and our efforts to improve in this area.

Response: This will be implemented for the 2011-2012 Academic year.

Recruitment

Using their own (improved) data, the University should role model a meaningful commitment to addressing and correcting a homogenous and monocultural working environment.

Response: The assumption that Fresno State is a "homogenous and monocultural working environment" is questionable. In many respects, we are a richly multi-cultural and heterogeneous campus.

1. We encourage careful consideration of bilingual and/or cultural competency skills reflecting the demographics of the area in recruitment and hiring decisions, where possible. This should be part of the training for all hiring committees.

Response: We can do this when applicable to the position under search, and when not prohibited by law or University policy.

2. In areas where we need faculty, staff, and administrators according to data, target and recruit individuals who are in underrepresented groups.

Response: All recruitment at Fresno State seeks a diverse pool of applicants.

3. We recommend the Provost consider a diversity cohort hire to reflect the Central Valley demographic.

Response: I will ask the Provost to explore this further with the School and College Deans.

4. We recommend the Vice President of Student Affairs consider the diversification of leadership roles and policy-making committees to better represent the needs of our heterogeneous student body.

Response: I will refer this to Vice President Oliaro for further consideration.

5. We recommend the Faculty Senate President and Staff Senate President consider the diversification of leadership roles and policy-making committees to better represent the needs of our heterogeneous faculty body and staff body.

Response: Diversity is a regular consideration in these matters.

6. Invest in cultural competency training for all individuals in leadership positions and promote or provide similar opportunities for all faculty and staff. We recommend that the administration and campus leaders acknowledge and correct for the reality that being a person of color does not make one culturally competent for Fresno State's diversity. Tackling homogeneity and monoculturalism requires professional development for all individuals—regardless of one's cultural standing.

Response: I will refer this to the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity for further consideration.

Retention and Promotion

After focusing on improving the diversity of our campus, Fresno State should become a CSU-wide and a national leader in developing and implementing culturally sensitive faculty and staff promotion procedures.

1. We encourage all offices charged with evaluations of staff, administrators and faculty to be sensitive to the ways the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender can and do impact the evaluation process. Data should regularly be collected at the campus level comparing promotions and evaluations by intersectional race, ethnicity, and gender postionalities where aggregate data will not impact the confidentiality of employees, in order to track potential problems in these areas. Also tracked should be potential success models for other campus entities. This data should be reviewed regularly by the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity and Senate Committee for Faculty Equity and Diversity.

Response: I will refer this to the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity, to consider as they develop a comprehensive diversity plan for the campus.

2. We encourage the Provost, Deans, and Department Chairs to monitor the service commitments of faculty and staff of color as well as women for equity. We recognize that underrepresented faculty and staff are often asked to serve on too many committees to fulfill the "diversity" quota and are often asked to mentor more students because students often request mentors and advisors who look like them.

Response: I will refer this to the Provost's Leadership Team for further consideration. I would add that there is no formal or informal "diversity quota" used at Fresno State.

3. Research shows that sex, "accent," and even body type play a role in how students perceive their professors. This type of research is generally believed. The university should strive to get all of its administrators, staff and faculty to believe that a person's cultural identity influences students' perceptions of their professors. Studies also indicate that faculty teaching required courses on diversity (i.e., hot topics, racism, sexual identity, religion, bilingual education) often receive lower teaching evaluations, particularly when faculty teaching such courses are from underrepresented groups. We request that the Provost and Deans offer regular training to make people aware of this research. We also recommend that IRAP collect data on course evaluations focusing on diversity issues and courses by race, ethnicity and gender to determine whether lower teaching evaluations are received by these instructors. These data should be made available to those faculty members teaching these courses and chairs of departments in which such courses are instructed in order that they can write a defense of teaching evaluations.

Response: I will refer this to the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee for further consideration.

4. Departments and search committees should also consider a candidate's demonstrated commitment to issues of social, educational, and economic disadvantages evidenced by the record of teaching and service. For example, campuses may reward faculty who have demonstrated creativity and initiative in engaging in outreach, mentoring, or tutoring for educationally disadvantaged students, or who have exhibited leadership in developing pedagogical techniques designed to accommodate diverse learning styles and promote welcoming classroom environments for students from culturally diverse groups. A department may consider such criteria in its evaluation of current faculty for promotion and advancement, and may provide release time or faculty development funds for faculty who are active in research, teaching, or service that promotes equal access for underrepresented students or increases our understanding of the dynamics of race and gender in our society.

Response: I will refer this to the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee for further consideration.

5. Staff should be given opportunities to participate in the professional development offered on our campus. This development will allow us to promote a staff that is (potentially) hired locally and therefore has or can hone a Central Valley cultural competency. The University should recognize and seek to benefit from a diverse staff that holds special talents developed from and for our region.

Response: This is in place, through the implementation of ongoing staff development programs and initiatives.

Toward a Better and Ever Evolving Cultural Campus Climate

With renewed attention to data, recruitment, retention and development—make meaningful and well-informed demonstrations of our campus commitment to diversity.

1. Include the fact that Fresno State is a Hispanic Serving Institute and a Minority Serving Institution on all promotional and communication materials (including flyers, brochures and websites). Educate the campus on the pride points of such significations.

Response: This is in the process of being implemented, though it should be noted that the designation “minority-serving institution” is a Federal designation that is still pending for Fresno State.

2. Establish a safe place for marginalized faculty and staff to articulate and resolve any hostile situations they encounter without fear of repercussion or without disappointment in ineffective resolution. The process is often overly complicated, resulting in faculty withholding any negative experiences they have. This place should not be under the auspice of any Vice President but rather should have a direct link to the University President.

Response: I will refer this to the President’s Commission on Human Relations and Equity for further consideration, as they develop a comprehensive diversity plan for the campus.

3. Begin to conduct a biyearly qualitative and quantitative “Quality of Campus Life” and/or “Campus Climate” survey to include information regarding race, and ethnicity and gender and to be completed by all faculty, staff, and administrators. This survey should be developed with input from the appropriate faculty and staff committees that deal with diversity issues. The first survey should be developed

with the aide of a national expert on campus-climate chosen from a pool of names provided by the faculty and staff committees that deal with diversity issues.

Response: I will refer this to the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity for further consideration, as they develop a comprehensive diversity plan for the campus.

4. Again, information from these surveys should be made widely available in order to highlight the campus's commitment to creating and building a campus welcoming of all its members. In particular, the Senate Committee for Faculty Equity and Diversity, the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity, and all campus faculty and staff organizations dealing with diversity issues should receive results of these surveys.

Response: I will refer this to the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity for further consideration, as they develop a comprehensive diversity plan for the campus.

5. To show the value the campus puts on diversity, we recommend creation of a regular awards program for staff, faculty, and administrators for excellence in promoting diversity. This could be modeled on the Provost awards for teaching, graduate teaching, mentoring, service, and technology, with the addition of areas appropriate to staff and administrators. In keeping with the Centennial spirit of this year, it would be nice to name these awards after prominent people of color from within the history of the University and obtain input from various appropriate faculty and staff committees that deal with diversity issues on the nomination and evaluation processes.

Response: I will refer this to the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity for further consideration, as they develop a comprehensive diversity plan for the campus.

6. Develop ways to honor cultural diversity as a resource, not a liability. Multilingual, multicultural, international, historical, cutting-edge—cultural diversity should not just be seen as a societal trauma that needs therapeutic adjustment. Honor our rich, complex, and wonderful cultural diversity as a true Fresno State asset. Strive to do so in meaningful and sustaining ways.

Response: The implication here--that Fresno State currently views cultural diversity as a "liability" or a "cultural trauma"--is not true. Our commitment to the value of diversity is and has been clear and unequivocal, and has recently been amplified through the launch of our Diversity Matters web page.

Implementation

Be earnest and persistent in the implementation of these recommendations.

1. We encourage the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity to take these recommendations into account as they develop the University Diversity Strategic Plan.
2. These items should be reviewed and progressed upon by May 2012 by the Senate Committee for Faculty Equity and Diversity. These recommendations and the University Diversity Strategic Plan should be reviewed by the Senate Committee for Faculty Equity and Diversity and the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity every year thereafter in order to assess progress and potential new concerns, until a new strategic plan is implemented.

Response: Implementation will proceed as noted in my responses above.

JDW/WAC/mem