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Rise to Excellence

Letter from PCHRE Chair Cynthia Teniente-Matson

It is a pleasure to introduce the Rise to Excellence newsletter as a communications medium to share information about a variety of initiatives and efforts related to the Strategic Plan for Excellence IV. This issue is focused on Diversity and Equity at Fresno State.

The Presidents Commission on Human Relations and Equity was created to accomplish a number of important activities, two of the critical areas are:

- Affirming the President's Diversity Statement by creating a Diversity Plan that aligns with the University Strategic Plan.
- Leading the creation of a diversity plan that shall be dynamic and reflect the rich human diversity of experiences, values, world views and cultures that make up the fabric of the Central Valley. The plan shall include specific goals, strategies and indicators.

The PCHRE committee was launched in August 2011 and led by Dr. Ellen Junn until her recent departure, Cynthia Teniente-Matson was recently appointed as the committee chair. The Association of American Colleges and University (AAC&U 2007) monograph entitled Making a Real Difference with Diversity, A Guide to Institutional Change is based on research obtained from the Campus Diversity Initiative (CDI), funded by the Irvine Foundation, to strategically improve campus diversity at 28 colleges and universities in California. This comprehensive study provides the diversity framework that has been adopted by the PCHRE in its efforts to create a plan that integrates the four dimensions of diversity: 1) institutional viability and vitality, 2) access and success, 3) education and scholarship and 4) climate and intergroup relations. This framework offers a broad conceptualization of diversity work on campuses. As the committee progresses through its efforts to create the plan, a broad effort will be made to communicate, collaborate, and coordinate with the many individuals, campus groups and the community at large to ensure that all voices are heard and varying perspectives are reflected in the diversity plan. Please visit the PCHRE website or communicate with the members of the committee to contribute to the dialogue.

PCHRE Membership

1. Chair, PCHRE, Vice President for Administrative Services – Cynthia Teniente-Matson
2. Associate Vice President for Academic Personnel – Ted Wendt
3. Vice President Student Affairs – Paul Oliaro or designee
4. Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness – Tina Leimer
5. Associate Vice President, Human Resources – Jan Parten
6. Student-Athlete Services – Natalie Nakic
7. Director, Cultural Heritage Institute – Francine Oputa
8. Director, Services to Students with Disabilities – Janice Brown
9. Dean, appointed by Provost - two-year term – Ram Nunna (ending June 2013)

Two staff: One serving a two-year term, and one serving a three-year term

10. Ambar Alvarez-Soto – two-year term (ending June 2013)
11. Elizabeth Potter – three-year term (ending June 2014)

Five faculty, including the Chair of the Senate Faculty Equity & Diversity Subcommittee (CFED), and two faculty serving two-year terms, and two faculty serving three-year terms

12. Chair, CFED – Carlos Perez
13. Faculty – two-year term – Teresa Huerta (ending June 2013)
14. Faculty – two-year term – Vongsavanh Mouanoutoua (ending June 2013)
15. Faculty – three-year term – Jenelle Pitt (ending June 2014)
16. Senate, Vice Chair– Dawn Lewis (ending June 2014)

Two student representatives:

17. Undergraduate, ASI President one-year term – Selena Farnesi (ending June 2012)
18. Graduate student representative, appointed by President for a one-year term – Juanita Florence-Muniz (ending June 2012)

Two 'At-Large' appointments, serving two and three year staggered terms

19. Faculty, Juan Carlos Gonzalez – three year term, ending June 2014
20. Staff, Juanita Aguilar – two year term, ending June 2013

One 'At-Large' Provost's appointment, serving a two-year term

21. Special Assistant to the Provost, Alex Espinoza – two year term, ending June 2013

Ten community members:

22. Kamal Abu-Shamsieh
23. Arakel Arisian
24. Joe De Los Santos
25. Tamala Fields
26. Dale Ideda
27. Israel Lara
28. Jeff Robinson
29. Marilyn Wilburn
30. Rick Winer
31. Maika Yang

'Respect for difference' - a core value of the Strategic Plan for Excellence IV

President Welty's Diversity Statement

Diversity is an integral part of the fabric of California's past, present and future, and therefore an essential element of academic excellence at Fresno State. We are committed to promoting the success of all, and working to address and reduce barriers to success related to differences in areas such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture, religion, linguistic diversity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, geographical region, and more. For example, Fresno State is proud of the majority number of students who are the first in their families to attend college and who continue to make significant contributions in their professions and in their communities.

With this commitment, our faculty, staff and administrators are engaged in initiatives and projects that represent the community of differences that defines our 21st Century world. As the New California's premier engaged University, we focus on broadening students' intellectual horizons, fostering lifelong learning skills, developing the leaders of tomorrow, promoting community involvement, and instilling an appreciation of the world of arts and cultures. In sum, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, faculty and staff and welcome the participation of all.

As President, I am fully committed to the principles of maintaining a learning and working environment that is characterized by integrity, civility, respect for others, and ethical behavior on the part of its faculty, staff, administrators and students. The University must be safe and inclusive, and we do not tolerate any form of harassment, discrimination, or intimidation, as prohibited by University policy and state and federal civil rights laws. Our efforts require an abiding commitment from all members of the University community. It is everyone's responsibility to uphold these principles as a core objective while working and learning at California State University, Fresno.

John D. Welty, President

Strategic Plan for Excellence IV

2011-2015

Core Values

- Student success that leads to lifelong learning and rewarding careers.
- Respect for difference.
- Solutions-oriented engagement with Central California challenges.
- Ethical citizenship and stewardship.
- Responsible and open inquiry, dialogue, and expression.
- Integrity-based leadership.

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Brief Progress Reports from the PCHRE Task Force Groups

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Our group is focused on understanding the link between diversity and the university's history, mission, and culture. One of our objectives will be to reduce the fears and concerns that sometimes motivate resistance to change. We also want, via our contributions to the Diversity Strategic Plan, to develop leadership for diversity work throughout the university, and move us away from isolated projects to comprehensive, coordinated action.

Our work to date (already consuming many hours of rewarding effort) has consisted of integrating the excellent efforts that have preceded us (e.g., the university's Strategic Plan) into a series of goals we hope will become an important section of the Diversity Strategic Plan. Besides prioritizing these goals in terms of what we can accomplish sooner rather than later, we are anxious to develop the strategies and practices which we think will be the most promising and effective. Despite Ellen Junn's admonitions to "stay on task," some of the more imaginative members of our group (that's you, Israel!) have already come up with some very intriguing proposals. Meanwhile, we've already agreed that Job #1 for all of us will be to adopt, disseminate, and publicize all of the important policies and plans that will guide the university's many diversity efforts for years to come. Thus, we're very happy to be contributing to this newsletter, and its effort to keep you, the reader, fully informed about our progress.

Members of our group are: Elizabeth Potter (Procurement and Support Services), Jenelle Pitt (Kremen School of Education), Juanita Aguilar (Human Resources), and Israel Lara (Community Member). The group's co-facilitators are Jan Parten (Human Resources) and Ted Wendt (Academic Personnel).

Education and Scholarship

The Education and Scholarship group is charged with examining ways in which human relations and equity is and could be further incorporated into California State University, Fresno's teaching, scholarship and creative activities that will improve our students' competence to be exemplary members of our regional, state and global societies and prepare them for a diverse workplace. Our discussions focused on 1) increasing the level of faculty expertise/competencies on diversity-related matters, and increasing the number, level and breadth of faculty practicing in diversity efforts on campus and in the broader community, 2) examining the current availability and placement of courses that include diversity issues, and encouraging the redesign of current courses and development of new courses related to current topics and issues in our local and global societies, and 3) assessing the quality and substance of student learning about diversity. Strategies the Education and Scholarship group discussed included but were not limited to faculty engagement in diversity and transformational scholarship, university support and promotion of interdisciplinary/diversity related research and creative activities that engage faculty and students, and effective pedagogy, and use of instructional technology. The group's discussions also included the roles and responsibilities of faculty, administrators and staff with particular attention placed on whom would be responsible for facilitating strategies and providing resources.

Members of our group are: Carlos Perez (Chicano and Latin American Studies), Vongsavanh Mouanoutoua (Linguistics), Juanita Muniz, and Ram Nunna (Lyles College of Engineering). Ellen Junn (Associate Provost) served as the group's facilitator until December 2011. The group's current facilitator is Dawn Lewis (Kinesiology).

Access and Success

The Access and Success group was responsible for developing goals to improve the way our values of promoting diversity and inclusion are demonstrated in our university's access and success mission and in our Strategic Plan and Diversity statement. After identifying what access and success meant to each member of our group, we decided our goals should be few and focused and include existing successful practices, using data driven information.

The general areas on which our goals should be focused include: monitoring outreach and recruitment efforts to ensure the demographics of our student population continue to reflect our diverse service region, while increasing our out of state and international student enrollment; we also believe we must strive to increase the retention and graduation rates of all underrepresented minorities on our campus; we must also try to identify both the obstacles and best practices that affect access of all students, especially underrepresented minorities, to campus services and programs; and we need to use metrics that help to indicate our progress in all of these areas.

After we finalize our goals, we will develop strategies and initiatives to accomplish our goals, as well as the indicators of success to hold us accountable for achievement of our goals.

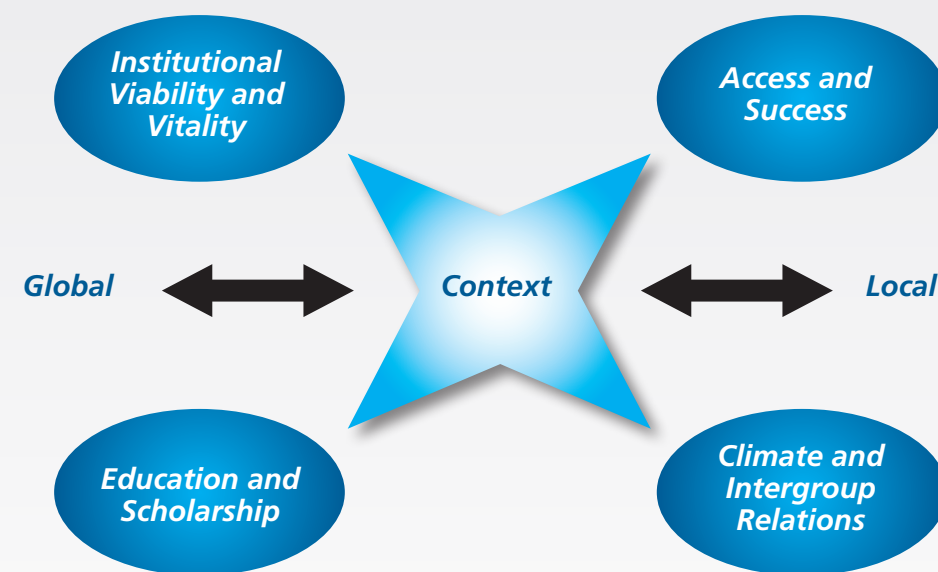
Members of our group are: Paul Oliaro (Student Affairs), Teresa Huerta (Literacy and Early Education), Selena Farnesi (ASI), Ambar Alvarez Soto (Evaluations). The group's facilitator is Tina Leimer (Institutional Effectiveness).

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

The subcommittee charged with reviewing campus climate and intergroup relations, started its work by closely reviewing all the PCHRE materials. We selected a working committee name entitled "the interweaving sphere" to reflect the multi-dimensional, interrelated areas of campus climate, culture and the all-encompassing inclusive relationships within the university community. The information received from various campus planning documents were condensed into areas that had a logical affinity. Extensive dialogue occurred within the subcommittee to reach a common understanding of what or how an inclusive environment might manifest itself in physical appearance, attitudes, perceptions, and overall campus climate and culture. The discussions have centered on creating a realistic approach to enhancing the continual evolution of a welcoming, inclusive campus culture that respects all people and their contributions.

The committee's work included several hours of extensive efforts to create strategies, goals, action steps and indicators that reflect our collective thoughts about an aspirational future state. We recognize Fresno State is advantaged by a wealth of diverse individuals in our student body, faculty, staff and community. We have outlined a series of six broad goals that incorporate: 1) campus facility attributes, 2) promoting cultural and social experiences of other cultures, 3) expanding international scholarship for the university community, 4) embracing cultural diversity in the arts, 5) an outwardly visible campus commitment to diversity and inclusion and 6) encouraging professional development that increases multicultural competencies and acceptance of diverse people. Our aspiration is to regularly measure attitudes and perceptions about campus culture and intergroup relations that embraces our rich diversity in an effort to ascertain where positive change has occurred and where change is needed. From time to time our committee has grappled with the hopes and aspirations that we wish to embed into our documents with realistic action steps and timelines. We recognize it will take time to achieve our ambitious; therefore, we have been diligent and thoughtful in our planning efforts. We look forward to sharing our final goals and strategies with the university community.

Members of our group are: Janice Brown (Services for Students with Disabilities); Joe De Los Santos (Community Member), Juan Carlos González (Kremen School of Education), and Francine Oputa (Central Valley Cultural Heritage Center). The group's facilitator is Cynthia Matson (Administration).



Source: Clayton-Pedersen, Alma R. *Making a Real Difference with Diversity: A Guide to Institutional Change*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007.