

## **Recommendations from the Diversity Task Force Spring 2007**

### **I. Summary of Diversity Task Force Discussions**

The Diversity Task Force began meeting in spring 2006. Our charge included consideration of whether it might be timely for us to use a recent publication from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges as a basis for rededicating our university to its goals for a positive and welcoming environment for individuals from all walks of life. As we discussed *Now Is The Time: Meeting the Challenge for a Diverse Academy*, it became evident that the group appreciated the discussion and context provided in the booklet, and found the issues and questions presented to be provocative. However, we did not use the question templates or reflective processes described within the booklet as the means to evaluate and consider the university's diversity, preferring instead to tailor a process that appears to better fit our campus environment.

The Diversity Task Force met regularly from April of 2006 through May 2007. Some of our meetings were discussions of "renewing our commitment to the diversity mission of higher education," as stated in *Now is the Time*. Some of our discussions focused on challenges experienced and observed by our members on our campus. As a result of these discussions, in early fall 2006 we established four subgroups to consider and report on the following areas:

1. **Review of Past Initiatives**  
Convened by Brian Tsukimuru, this group's charge was to review previous commissions, task forces, senate subcommittees, and reports related to diversity. The group was to identify previous activities and to consider how these activities might influence our work.
2. **Review of Current Initiatives**  
Convened by Loretta Kensinger, this group was charged to review existing groups, commissions, or senate subcommittees whose work touches upon diversity and how our group might collaborate and/or support those efforts.
3. **Data Review**  
Convened by Tina Leimer, this group was charged to focus on overall trends in ethnicity among our various university populations. It was also charged to compare our data with similar information on our community and with other institutions. The group was also asked to identify possible follow up action items for the task force.
4. **Web Presence**  
Convened by Roxanne Hinds, this group was charged to examine existing web sites with an eye toward determining whether the task force should establish a Diversity Web presence for the university.

During mid to late fall 2006, each of the subgroups reported on their findings and the challenges they experienced in compiling the information related to their charges. The following primary documents were reviewed, considered and discussed during this reporting period.

- First Year Retention Rates by Race and Ethnicity;
- Sixth Year Graduation Rates by Race and Ethnicity;
- 2005 National Survey on Student Engagement Results;
- Fresno County Demographics on Population and Workers from the 2000 Census;
- Educational Attainment of Fresno County Population, 2000 Census;
- California State University, Fresno Demographics by Vice Presidential Organization, August 2005;
- California State University, Fresno Equal Employment and Educational Opportunity Plan;
- Charge of the Commission on Human Relations and Equity (March 2003) at California State University, Fresno

## **II. Emerging Themes, Directions and Recommendations**

Perhaps the most significant realization we have had during this period of review is that we are indeed a diverse university. Whereas many modern universities find themselves seeking to expand the numbers and percentages of diverse cultural, ethnic and lifestyle groups among their students, faculty and staff, Fresno State appears to have achieved a robust level of overall diversity among its constituents. Instead of focusing on increasing our numbers from various diverse populations, we recommend that our focus be threefold:

- create a welcoming environment for all groups and individuals within our university community;
- improve the retention of students, faculty and staff from all groups;
- target the expansion of outreach to certain populations and ethnic groups who are present in our service area but less likely to attend Fresno State or work here, particularly African Americans and Native Americans.

In order to address these three broad goal areas, all members of the university will need to recommit to the recruitment and retention of diversity as a primary goal for the academy and for the future of society into which our students graduate and our employees participate. Members of our university community should be called upon to concentrate intention and attention on the following areas:

1. Greater recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff. All divisions within the university will be asked annually to consider and present their recruitment processes for ensuring outreach to diverse populations, retention of those populations, and to plan for improvement of those processes. We recommend that each Division be mindful of the demographic levels for all groups as found in our service region and among our student populations, and give particular attention to data concerning those populations which we do not match, such as African Americans and Native Americans. We recommend that

the Office of Academic Personnel also take into consideration the demographics reported in *Doctoral Recipients from United States Universities Summary Report* annually (SED) to give appropriate consideration to the pool of new doctorates.

We firmly believe that improvements in the retention and recruitment of African American and Native American faculty, staff and student populations will contribute to awareness regarding all diverse populations and to their recruitment and retention. As old sailors and poets have been given to claim, “A rising tide lifts all boats.” It should also be noted that focusing attention and intention on African American and Native American recruitment and retention is the result of realizing that the university is most divergent from regional and national trends in these two populations. It is not to say that recruitment and retention of other groups is not desired.

We envision that the Diversity Task Force members, or our successors, will review the university’s progress on each of the demographic reports mentioned above on all faculty, staff and student populations and offer suggestions to the president or his designees annually. We also envision that as our internal or on-campus demographics come more closely into alignment for the two populations we have noted, the Task Force will shift its focus to other groups. The Offices of Human Resources and Academic Personnel will play a lead role in charting our course toward improvement and the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning will provide support for this effort.

2. Recruitment, retention and graduation of diverse student populations. Similar to our first recommendation, we encourage the University to focus on students from groups whose recruitment, retention, and graduation levels are not paralleling those of the greater student population and of our service area. We would ask that the Division of Student Affairs set and report on annual enrollment targets. The primary work in this area rests with the Student Success Task Force and the Division of Student Affairs. However, all the divisions of the University must play a supportive role in realizing an increase in retention and graduation rates.

Among the strategies, for recruitment of a diverse student population, to be considered are the following:

- Have recruitment events and conferences to expose students to Fresno State and higher education (i.e. Gates Millennium workshop targeting American Indian students, Roosevelt High School Southeast Asian Conference, Chicano Youth Conference, African American Recruitment Conference for middle school students, etc.)
- Special outreach to parents
- Targeted school visits in service areas with high African American, Latino, American Indian, and Asian/Southeast Asian populations
- Targeted tele-counseling to reach diverse populations via phone

Among the strategies, for increasing student retention, to be considered are the following:

- Targeted mentoring programs utilizing faculty, staff, and successful upper class peers
- Collaboration with EOP on academic support, Early Warning System, and Supplemental Instructional programs
- Encouragement to multi-cultural student populations to participate in a Learning Communities program during their first semester
- Exit interviews and tele-counseling with students who leave Fresno State prior to the completion of their degree
- Work with student clubs and organizations with a high concentration of diverse students to identify issues and obstacles to academic achievement and degree completion

The recent introduction of a Retention Oversight Group, to explore factors related to student attrition, as well as the ongoing work of the Student Success Task Force, should be instrumental in increasing the retention/graduation rates for diverse student populations.

3. Clarification and potential reorganization of related university groups. There are numerous university entities whose activities, goals and aspirations touch upon or interact with the goal of increased recruitment and retention of diverse population on our campus. Examples include: the Commission on Human Relations and Equity (CHRE), the Central Valley Cultural Heritage Institute, the President's Commission on Disabilities, the Student Success Task Force, the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Academic Personnel, and the Office of Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning.

Our group has had some discussion of the role of CHRE, which has as one of its charges the annual review of population demographics on our campus. Because the Diversity Task Force is calling for regular reporting from various divisions, we recommend that President Welty consider reinforcing the charge of the CHRE as described in Sections III and IV of this document.

4. Encouraging a positive campus climate. We recommend that the members of the President's Cabinet be charged to discover and develop activities, policies and practices that encourage or contribute to a positive campus climate for all and, similarly, avoid activities that can serve as barriers. Strategies for accomplishing this goal can be found in Section VI of this document. Improving campus climate is a complex process and involves all members of the university. In order for our efforts to be successful, they must involve the entire university and must be ongoing to be effective.

### III. Specific Recommendations for Action

Related to the observations and topics listed in Section II, we are recommending that the university:

1. Adopt, disseminate, and publicize the Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, and Diversity Plan among all managers. Ensure that the Plan's reporting format provides data in a format that will assist us in evaluating progress in appropriate categories. This would include, for example, data on faculty demographics by department and College.
2. Establish as a goal for the university of matching employee demographics with Fresno County demographics and for instructional staffing to match or exceed NORC demographics as described in the SED or other relevant publications.
3. Adopt our version of an all-university inclusion statement as listed in Section V of this document.
4. Develop a communication style and practice of embracing all aspects of diversity in all employee and student communications.
4. Commit to training employees about the creation of a culturally and ethnically sensitive working and learning environment for all employees and students.
5. Establish an administrative structure that supports the goals listed above in the following manner:
  - a. Ask each Division administrator to create Affirmative Action Plans and submit them to President Welty by December 1, 2007.
  - b. Ask each Division administrator to submit an Affirmative Action Report summarizing activities and progress to President Welty annually on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. Each Division administrator will use the format suggested in Section V.
  - c. President Welty will delegate responsibility to the Director of Human Resources and the Associate Vice President for Academic Personnel to review each Division report in conjunction with the university's annual Affirmative Action report and prepare an executive summary for review by Cabinet in early fall.
  - d. The executive summary will also be presented each fall to the President's Commission on Human Relations and Equity and other appropriate university groups.

6. Acknowledge and thank the following members of the Diversity Task Force with a letter from co-chairs Oliaro and Echeverria

Jose Diaz	Paul Oliaro
Jeri Echeverria	Jan Parten
Daryl Fitzgerald	Richard Salsgiver
Maria Hernandez	Esmeralda Santos
Roxanne Hinds	Analuz Torres
Loretta Kensinger	Brian Tsukimura
Christina Leimer	Tom Uribes
Terry Lewis	James Walton
Janice Loo	Janette Redd Williams
Syreeta Martinez	Mark Younger

#### IV. University Inclusion Statement

Decades ago, the concept of diversity emerged from a social consciousness that embraced (and continues to embrace) justice and cultural harmony. In the organizational setting, these concepts have evolved into a commitment to inclusion in its broadest sense. The Diversity Task Force supports creating an organizational culture of inclusion on the Fresno State campus. Inclusion supports the changing demographics within the university and in the Central Valley. The *United States Census* reported that, during the next ten years, new immigration will represent half of the total population growth in the United States. Valuing and understanding individual differences in ideas, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age and socioeconomic status is core to developing a respectful campus community.

Members of the Diversity Task Force concur with work conducted at Cornell University in recent years, asserting that institutionalizing inclusion at the organizational level consists of three major components:

- ***Diversity Management*** – creating and managing access to ensure diversity is represented and respected at all levels of the organization;
- ***Openness to Multiple Perspectives*** – recognizing and valuing multiple perspectives to create an openness for learning from diversity;
- ***Opportunity for Influence and Participation*** – generating opportunities for participation and influence to leverage diversity for superior performance.<sup>1</sup>

The Diversity Task Force challenges the university and, in particular, the President’s Cabinet to generate ideas to work with all employees to institutionalize the three components as identified above. Action items could include those listed in Section V of this document. If undertaken by each Division in a significant and systematic manner, improvement and accomplishments in the area of Diversity are certain.

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<sup>1</sup> Cornell University ILR website, “Framework of Organizational Inclusion,” 1-2.

## V. Proposed Reporting Format for Affirmative Action Plan with Possible Strategies

### Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, and Diversity Recruitment Strategies For Division of \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Please list and briefly describe initiatives, activities, and strategies implemented toward improved recruitment and retention in your Division this year. Some possible strategies might include:**

- Developing and/or revising a one or multi-year recruitment and retention plan for the fulfillment of the university's goals as stated in Section III of this document.
- Reviewing recruitment practices to ensure that vacancy announcements reach as many potential applicants as possible, including women, minorities, covered veterans and those who are disabled. Ensuring the position announcement is aligned with the commitment to diversify the campus. Ensuring job announcements and ads reflect job-related requirements and should label qualifications as "preferred," instead of "required." Ensuring vacancy announcements highlight an inviting, inclusive atmosphere for minority and women applicants.
- Advertising in help-wanted sections of minority and women's interest media in addition to mainstream media outlets.
- Advertising on Web sites specifically targeting women and minority audiences in addition to non-minority or gender specific web sites.
- In addition to standard recruitment sources, identifying recruiting sources that may be of particular interest to minorities and women. Advertising job openings in local/regional minority and women's magazines, newspaper, trade and professional journals.
- Personally contacting colleagues at other institutions to seek nominations of student nearing graduation, recipients of fellowships and awards or others interested in moving laterally.
- Making personal contacts with minorities and women at professional conferences and invite them to apply or consider application.
- Consulting with minority administrators/faculty/staff on campus on other outreach strategies.
- Considering cluster hires or spousal hires.
- Informing candidates of the organization's commitment to diversity.
- Informing candidates about support groups and/or cultural networks on campus or in our community to help diverse employees have a successful interview experience.

**Please list and briefly describe all training, professional development and awareness activities and strategies implemented in your Division this year. Some possible strategies might include:**

- Developing a diversity resource guide for all employees.
- Providing assistance to hiring authorities including the development of recruiting strategies, interview questions, and appropriate advertising consistent with relevant laws, regulations and policy.
- Conducting an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity update and offering training session for managers and supervisors to increase their awareness of the underutilization of protected groups and to enlist their ideas and assistance in increasing hires from these groups.
- Initiating community relations and community involvement activities to enhance the employer's image in minority communities.
- Encouraging all employees to attend diversity workshops.
- Seeking and utilizing the assistance of the Human Resources Department and the Office of Academic Personnel to create consistent interview and reference checking policies and practices.
- Offering incentives and rewards for departments who facilitate or assisting in the achievement of Equity Accountability and Affirmative Action goals.
- Utilizing the information we are currently gathering in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and through the university's annual Affirmative Action report to determine factors within the current campus culture that either promote or serve as barriers to creating the kind of "welcoming campus climate" for all groups that we hope to achieve.
- Sponsoring job fairs in minority communities.
- Developing a web presence for diversity on Division and departmental web pages and/or establishing a Diversity Page on Fresno State News.com to promote ethnic and cultural activities.
- Continuing to track annual collection of data on student retention and graduation rates; faculty, staff and administrative hiring and retention rates, with specific attention to those groups less likely to attend the university.

**Please list and briefly describe other activities and strategies that are unique to your Division or areas targeted to specific issues in your Division. Some examples might be:**

- Working with management in Plant Operations to promote trainee positions that would attract women to positions in skilled crafts.
- Working with a specific dean to recruit and retain faculty of American Indian ancestry.
- Identifying and supporting future leadership among minority or female faculty and discussing professional development opportunities with them.