

## **Academic Units Diversity and Inclusion Plans**

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#### Introduction

Since the late nineties, the University has explored different ways to institutionalize and to frame its diversity and inclusion initiatives under the rubric of Catholic Social Justice; and central to this endeavor to search for a “fit” between the University’s programmatic efforts to increase and accommodate demographic diversity in its learning and living community is also a sustained debate over how resources should be directed to enhance certain diversities over others. Over time, under different leadership, the University expanded its long-time regional focus-and-identity to a national and international one, and the very definition and scope of the concept of diversity began to change. Consistent with the changes on a national level (post Bakke and Michigan Decisions), the University aspires to foster diversity beyond the affirmative inclusion of women and traditionally underrepresented minority groups, and to see success in creating a diverse and inclusive learning and living community as a core benchmark for measuring excellence in education. In addition to its continued effort to close the performance gap between all students, the University of Dayton is currently poised to develop and implement creative and comprehensive ways to integrate a broad range of diversities into its curriculum, co-curriculum, policies and procedures, and campus environment.

#### Vision, Mission and Core Values Informing an Institutional Diversity Plan

In addition to a secular notion of inclusivity and egalitarianism, the Catholic Marianist tradition urges all to seek and discover god’s embodied presence (incarnate) in different cultures and peoples, and through different modes of inquiry, supporting equality and justice, and practicing discipleship through different ways of service, especially to those in need, oppressed, and disenfranchised communities. In particular, “the sacramental spirit of knowledge-seeking in a Catholic University also means that deep value is to be found in the

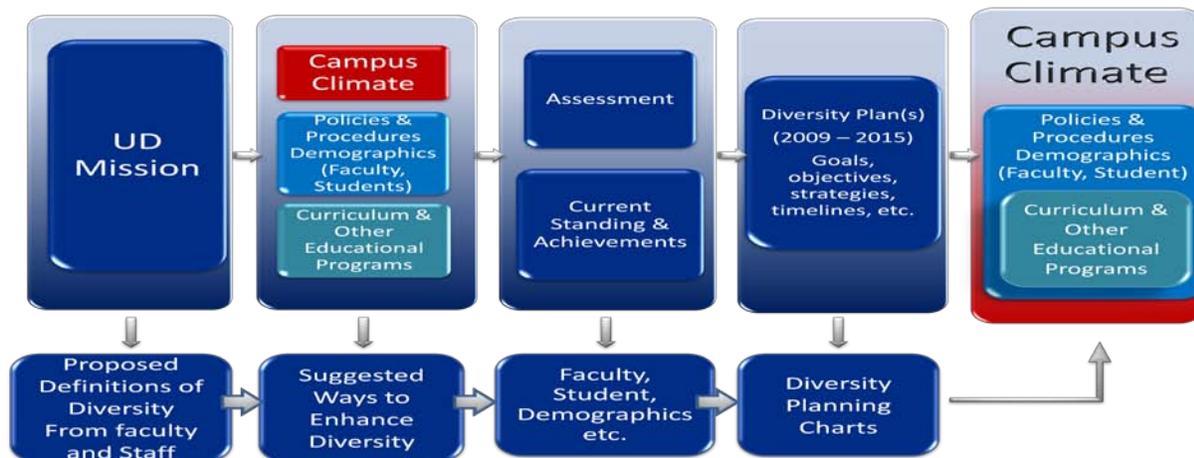
plurality of the world’s people and cultures. A Catholic University commits itself to respect and embraces the individual dignity of all persons, and to welcome the exploration of a multiplicity of perspectives, beliefs, and traditions regarding what is true, beautiful, and good” (J. Heft, SM, *Habits of Inquiry*, 2006).

Thus, as a Catholic and Marianist university, the University of Dayton has special responsibility to educate for service, social justice, and peace-making, with particular emphasis on those living in poverty and other marginalized groups. As a national leader in Catholic higher education, the University must educate its students for responsible citizenship and informed engagement in the multicultural and globally situated societies, institutions, and communities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Therefore, the University aims to foster a diverse faculty, student body, and staff and to create a safe, respectful, and nurturing campus climate; and its curriculum and co-curricular programming are and will continually designed to advance students’ competencies for intellectually informed and critically reflective dialogue and collaboration with others in the midst of difference (*Vision of Diversity at the University of Dayton*, October, 2009).

Diversity and Inclusion Model and Goals

At the University Leadership Retreat (summer, 2009), the newly inaugurated Provost offered a UD mission based diversity and inclusion model for all to begin their discussion:



As the concept of diversity can mean different things to different people, the model *did not* begin with a single definition of what it means. Instead, it presented a collection of definitions obtained from a recent survey of a random sample of faculty and staff members. The intention is to have the leadership group discern how well each definition aligned with the University Mission; and the goal is to arrive at a common understanding of diversity at the University.

Next, based on the core values of the University, several primary domains of interest were identified: *Campus climate, demographics, curriculum and co-curricular offerings, and*

*institutional policies and procedures.* Current assessment data suggested that diversity can be enhanced in each domain.

Some ideas on approaching strategic planning were presented, and a general list of planning variables was discussed in conjunction with charts depicting the dynamics of institutional change that may result in potential interaction(s) between different internal and external components of the university system. These variables are

- Identifying diversity goals and learning outcomes for each academic unit
- Assessing the current status of these diversity goals and learning outcomes
- Establishing the baseline intercultural/diversity competency level(s) of incoming students for the purpose of measuring against said competency level(s) at the point of graduation
- Assessing the intercultural/diversity competency of faculty, administrators and staff for formulating future developmental initiatives
- Identifying which areas in each academic unit (e.g. university wide course requirements,, Major and/or Minor requirements, electives, demographic distribution of faculty, students and staff, hiring, recruitment and retention practices and record, pedagogy, classroom and workplace climate) warrant attention/support in diversity enhancement
- Formulating strategies to enhance diversity in all the identified areas of each unit
- Prioritizing diversity/change initiative and projects for implementation
- Identifying the person(s) who will be held accountable to lead the change initiatives and projects
- Establishing time-line for the accomplishing of change initiatives and projects
- Appointing the person(s) who will be leading in the assessment of change initiatives and projects
- Identifying and distributing appropriate resources to support change initiatives and projects
- Provide real incentive such as merit pay for significant contribution to the development and/or implementation of a diversity and inclusion plan.

From the very beginning, there was acknowledgment that the development of this institutional diversity plan must emerge from the thinking and needs of each academic unit, and not dictated from “the top”. While all heads of academic units are encouraged to pay attention to the domains mentioned above, and to frame their proposed diversity initiatives and project with the common list planning variables\* in mind, the *variability* in the *actual what, how and when* between the plans will be honored as components of the institutional plan. Better put, the institution has a *family of diversity and inclusions plans* that are grounded in the

University's Catholic, Marianist Vision. The development and implementation of this family of diversity plans was suggested to begin in late 2009 and possibly extend into 2015.

### Planning Processes

In order that there will be a *shared understanding of diversity* at the University, the Provost drafted a vision on diversity and inclusion that was based on the University's Mission and meaningfully aligned with definitions of diversity submitted by faculty and staff several weeks earlier; and this vision statement was subsequently shared with the campus, soliciting comments and suggestions that may contribute to the substance and clarity of the diversity message. A final draft was approved by the Provost Council, and adopted as a frame of reference for everyone to use when developing plans, initiatives and projects pertaining to diversity and inclusion. The scope of Diversity at the University would extend beyond (but continue to include) our sustained and affirmative attention to historically underrepresented groups, and actively capture a broad spectrum of similarities and differences that each individual possesses (*Vision of Diversity at the University of Dayton*).

The next step is to establish the *current statue* of diversity in each domain and area of an academic unit. For example, one can *assess* how many courses required of a particular Major has a diversity learning outcome, and whether how many of these courses were designed to assist students develop diversity competencies. One may also want to identify what diversity or diversities are most frequently emphasized or omitted in the curriculum of a specific academic unit. The goal here is to establish a *baseline*. This assessment based approach can be extended to areas beyond the curriculum and the classroom, and may be applied to areas as demographic diversity (faculty, staff, and student) and co-curricular activities that reach beyond the unit. A baseline may also be established in the area of workplace and campus climate, assembling information that can help a unit diversity planning group to identify policy/practices that may have contributed to a less than optimum level of social engagement and performance.

An academic unit (e.g. department, academic discipline, college/school) can/should *establish a motivated and knowledgeable group* of ideally diverse faculty members and administrator(s) to conduct baseline assessment and to provide substantive assistance to faculty colleagues who may have been encouraged to enhance diversity in their course(s). This group may also include/invite student informants or participants, especially when the topic of teaching diversity is concerned. For example, on a predominantly "white" and Catholic UD campus, teaching about racial and religious diversity can be quite challenging for faculty of color or for an atheist/ faculty of another faith. Students from a minority group or from a poor neighborhood may also experience discussions of race, class and ethnicity quite difficult. Feedback from students can inform the diversity assessment and development group about significant aspects of teaching and classroom climate that may be overlooked. Administrators who are knowledgeable about other areas or academic units can provide a more

comprehensive perspective, and can assist in suggesting different sources of collaboration across campus, and in funding outside consultants to help in the enhancement of diversity in the curriculum and classroom. Quite frequently, the group may want to enlist staff members to provide insight into workplace diversity issues, and invite colleagues in Student Admissions to help understand what needs to be done to increase student diversity in a particular unit. Such information can be helpful to the group in the establishing of certain diversity goals and objectives. For example, a realistic goal to increase demographic diversity should be based on actual availability of qualified students, faculty or staff. In addition, an academic unit may establish a goal that involves the diversity in the racial, ethnic, social and religious communities around the University, and a diversity planning group may want to invite members from these communities to participate in some capacity.

In order to assist the unit diversity group plan, the obtained baseline assessment data should indicate a clearer picture of how diversity *plays or does not play a significant/desired role or function* in, at least, the following domains and areas:

- a. Demographic representation in a unit (faculty, student or staff)
- b. Curricular requirements and offerings/learning outcomes
- c. Co-curricular activities/learning outcomes
- d. Student engagement (on social and cognitive levels)
- e. Student interest and competencies
- f. Faculty and/or staff engagement (on social and cognitive levels)
- g. Faculty and/or staff interest and competencies
- h. Unit practices and preferred ways of decision-making (policy/customary procedures)
- i. Unit engagement with other units on campus and/or with off campus communities

A well designed assessment instrument should be able to identify the structural and/or functional status of diversity on multiple levels. For example, in the area of curriculum, data should indicate whether a required cluster of courses in a particular unit included diverse perspectives (different races, religion, genders, political beliefs, economic levels etc.) in content, class discussions, readings or writing assignments, and how significantly the *ability to demonstrate* the strengths and weaknesses on one's view on a topic or issue in light of other perspectives consisted an important learning outcome. In the area of competencies, the instrument should indicate whether cognitive learning of different perspectives changed the student's engagement with differences in thinking and action, and how likely a student would engage in serious conversations with others of different race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, political opinion etc. with an openness that may lead to self-transformation.

An effective diversity plan should target areas where diversity falls short of expectation, and should provide concrete ways to augment the desired changes within a reasonable time frame. It should also assess whether these change efforts were effective. For each domain or area, such a plan should have clear goals and objectives, current baseline data/status, expected goal, method/approach to achieve changes, timeline, person(s) in leadership role, outcome assessment.

Current Planning Status, Example and Initiatives (see attached documents for details)

Academic Units:

- |    |  |              |
|----|--|--------------|
| 1. | College of Arts and Sciences               | (Appendix A) |
| 2. | School of Business Administration          | (Appendix B) |
| 3. | School of Education and Allied Professions | (Appendix C) |
| 4. | School of Engineering                      | (Appendix D) |
| 5. | School of Law                              | (Appendix E) |
| 6. | UD Library                                 | (Appendix F) |

Observations and recommendations:

**The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)**, led by the Dean, and in collaboration with chairs and faculty members representing diverse academic disciplines, developed a diversity and inclusion plan that underscored the critical function of inclusivity of differences in the achieving of excellence in education. This plan articulated specific goals and timeframe for the hiring of faculty members from traditionally under represent groups, and planned to increase the retention of first year students at a measureable rate in a given time period, especially those from traditionally underrepresented groups. It also described clear diversity learning goals for the College, and established both structure and procedures to translate and to implement them on the department and program levels, including an assessment component. Also, acknowledging that faculty members would need to acquire/learn new competencies to successfully implement changes in the Common Academic Program and to the curriculum and co-curriculum, the College, enlisting full collaboration with the UD Learning Teaching Center(LTC), made faculty development an ongoing and necessary component of the Plan. In addition, it recommended a process that connected performance review and merit award to leadership in fostering a positive workplace/campus climate.

Clearly, the current version of the CAS Diversity and inclusion Plan provided a coherent and comprehensive framework for significant changes on different areas and levels of the College. This work involved many members of the College, and the chance for a needed “buy in” is

good. The challenge is always with the *details* in planning and implementation. For example, how will the specific learning goals be translated into concrete and measurable behavioral outcomes, and how will these goals be meaningfully adopted as an integral part of curriculum and co-curriculum on the departmental and programmatic levels? How will assessment be adopted on the course and programmatic levels? Who will facilitate the synergetic and ongoing process of bringing together assessment finding, pedagogy, and course construction? Who will ensure that departments will move forward with the proposed changes in the Plan at a reasonable rate and in appropriate meaningful ways? How will the faculty development initiatives reach those who could most benefit the experience? How will the College and LTC ensure the quality and effectiveness of the development workshops? In sum, who and how will a *meaningful implementation* of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan be *sustained* at a reasonable rate?

**The School of Business Administration (SBA)**, led by the Associate Dean, organized an inclusive diversity Task Force of faculty, staff and Dayton community representatives (Black, Hispanic) to develop a diversity vision that addressed the areas of *demography and campus climate*. After much deliberation, review of institutional data, and consultation with campus resources, the Task Force submitted a report that detailed the School's need to *increase and retain* racial and ethnic diversity in its faculty, staff and students, underscoring the specific area of deficit in the representation of Black and Hispanic students. It also recommended ways to recruit and retain "minority students and faculty", and ideas to improve campus climate, and suggested ways for SBA to participate in diversity activities and communities on campus, and external to SBA and the University. Several closing remarks pertained to ways to augment diversity in the SBA curriculum and to build diversity into research activities.

The document provided a data-based vision for enhancing racial and ethnic diversity at the School, providing a strong framework and beginning point for establishing more *tangible* goals and objectives, and more measurable ways to achieve them. It also opened the way for the assessment of diversity in the SBA curricular and research, thus identifying which specific areas to implement *measurable change*. As ideas for different diversity initiatives and projects can result from the next phase of diversity planning, concrete *timelines* for implementation will need to be established by *persons designated* to shepherd them to fruition.

**The School of Education and Allied Professions (SOEAP)** chose to use an established diversity plan submitted by a unit in Teacher Education as a test case. Based on the results of this project, the School will embark on the next stage of developing similar plans for its other units, including those outside Teacher Education. The current unit plan has articulated a clear matrix that included learning outcomes, course and syllabi assessment and changes, timeline, and other variables necessary for a successful implementation of a diversity plan.

The School, while waiting for results from this test case, can develop a general diversity and inclusion plan based on the Provost's Diversity Model and Vision. This plan can be structurally similar to the one CAS developed. SOEOP can also benefit from the work of the SBA Diversity task Force that looked at issues pertaining to the enhancement of demographical diversity and campus climate.

**School of Engineering (SOE)** is at the beginning stage of developing a diversity plan that would meaningfully complement an already heavily requirement based curriculum. Apparently, much of the intercultural competency based co-curriculum has and will be addressed in the near future; and information on the School's existing multicultural student support structure and program can be included under this rubric.

Again, the School of Engineering can benefit from collaboration with CAS, SOEAP and SBA to develop a comprehensive plan that will provide a rubric for diversity initiatives that pertain to areas of demographic diversity and campus/workplace climate.

**School of Law**

**University Library**

Concluding Observation and Summary