

Leadership Task Force: Diversity Subcommittee

Executive Summary

I. The Charge:

- A. Determine the needs of the campus, in the area of diversity.
- B. Determine what is behind those needs.
- C. Determine what solutions or actions to take to address those needs.

II. Approach to Task:

- A. The committee struggled to define diversity, and settled on the notion that differences separate all human beings and run the gamut from sexual orientation to race to ability to dietary needs.
- B. Based on preliminary information gathered, however, the committee determined that there are six distinct populations where the greatest concerns appear to exist:
 1. Race/ethnicity
 2. National origin
 3. Ability/disability
 4. Gender
 5. Sexual orientation
 6. Position/rank
- C. Collected a series of resources to determine the exact nature of concerns held by individuals of diverse and/or underrepresented populations.
- D. Viewed programming and offerings from other institutions.
- E. Read comments from the initial Campus Conversation session.
- F. Collected names of organizations/groups designed to address needs of diverse populations.
- G. Perused the recent Campus Climate Survey and the University Fact Book.

III. Findings & Recommendations:

The committee found that often minorities and those who do not consider themselves part of the mainstream culture tend to feel isolated, unheard and left out when it comes to planning, making decisions, and guiding the institution. The committee was unable, in the time allowed, to determine specifically why that sense of isolation occurs.

A. Campus Conversation Feedback

Two major themes emerged:

1. Participants did not want the idea of diversity “watered down.” They believe that if the definition of diversity becomes too broad, issues of power and equality will be ignored.

2. Participants believed it imperative for the University to make some effort, at any level, to bring together people with varying backgrounds, races, abilities, etc. This could be done socially, or through structured workshops and education opportunities.

B. Recommendations

1. Hosting separate focus groups, one for each of the areas named previously.
 - a. Once focus groups are completed, the committee members hope to have gained a full picture of issues facing these populations, and
 - b. Will begin the process of suggesting areas where change might best be facilitated.
2. Looking into the worth of a University ombudsman to address non-EEO/AA issues.
3. An amendment to the exit survey to include questions about diversity experiences.
4. An annual minority caucus or faculty colloquium.
5. Coordination of current diversity efforts on campus.
6. A mentoring program for new faculty and staff.
7. Development of a Diversity Web Page (already underway, via Compliance and Equity Management).
8. Greater/better communication about cultural events, with support/encouragement from “the top” about attending or supporting such events.
9. Easily accessed educational opportunities on varying diversity topics; feedback suggested some of these should take place during orientation, so all employees start “on the same page.”

Members of the Leadership Subcommittee: Diversity

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