

# SSU Diversity Action Plan

May 25, 2010

## I. Relating Across Differences<sup>1</sup>

*Multicultural Competence, Civility, & Crisis Management*

Sonoma State University is committed to creating a welcoming atmosphere by fostering and supporting multicultural competence for faculty, staff, students and administrators; and creating a system of support to address campus and classroom diversity related incidents. We understand multicultural competence as comprising three parts: awareness, knowledge, and skills (see definitions below). We affirm that individuals who possess multicultural competence are better prepared to participate effectively in a globalized world and a diverse society, and are able to engage in civil discourse.

**Goal:** To improve the ability of members of the campus community to relate across differences by raising our multicultural competence, promoting civility in campus discourse, and developing effective crisis management structures and protocols.

### Objectives:

#### A. Multicultural Competence

Multicultural Competence includes:<sup>2</sup>

- *Awareness.* To be aware about how our own attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions, and self-awareness affect the ways we interact with other people, including diverse populations.
- *Knowledge.* To have information and understanding of our own social group memberships, worldviews, experiences, histories, traditions, values, practices, etc. and how they differ or not from those of diverse populations.
- *Skills.* To possess abilities and behaviors that we must use to engage in effective and meaningful interactions with everybody in our own group and with members of diverse populations.

1. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students will enhance their awareness, knowledge and skills about themselves and other people from diverse backgrounds, categories of inquiry would include but are not limited to: Culture, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, social class, age, and disability.
  - a. Provide workshops and support activities aimed at fostering multicultural competence for faculty, staff, administrators; and students. Bottom-up approaches with support from the administration seem to be more effective and yield stronger sense of ownership.

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<sup>1</sup> This strategic area has been developed in greater detail with a view to implementation in the document [PDC area I Relatingasgrid 11 4 09 \(2\).doc](#).

<sup>2</sup> The definitions above were expanded by Elisa Velasquez, using the work of Derald Sue & David Sue (2003), *Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and practice*. 4th Ed, NY, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- b. Encourage Deans and Department Chairs to collaborate in creating venues for their instructors to share their successful experiences and identify needs for further training. For Instance, a "Best Multicultural Practices" event (retreat, festival) can be organized at least once a year and/or be part of regular faculty meetings.
2. SSU community members will adopt and appreciate a new cultural norm about multicultural competence.
  - a. Implement a campus-wide communication campaign to encourage acceptance of a new cultural norm about multicultural competence
  - b. Charge the PDC task groups to work in conjunction with University Affairs to create a communication campaign in coordination with Objective C.
  - c. Initiate the creation of and sustaining of a central place where all information related to diversity can be found. The multicultural center staff would develop and maintain a bulletin board and/or web site of events and pro-actively suggest events to instructors so that they can inform the students. Instructors can even offer extra credit for their classes if students attend the events.
  - d. Encourage The STAR to create a specific section to advertise multicultural events including location, time, and day of the event.
  - e. Charge the multicultural center staff and interns to create and disseminate all diversity programming and distribute it at the Convocation. Instructors can use this pamphlet or brochure to integrate attendance to those events as part of their class assignments. Staff can be made aware of such opportunities for personal development.
  - f. Encourage Clubs (Ethnic/cultural, sororities and fraternities) to create a coordinated programming of events and promote them in different venues (diversity website, STAR).

## **B. Civility**

1. SSU Campus community members will be informed and educated about policies and procedures regarding incidents of discrimination, harassment, etc., so these incidents are prevented or resolved at the earliest possible stage.
  - a. The vice provost and director of employee relations will create a communication campaign to disseminate this objective.
2. Instructors and staff will be able to facilitate effective discussions of controversial issues and "difficult dialogues" in the classroom and civility in the workplace.
  - a. Create regular trainings for instructors and staff.

## **C. Campus & Classroom Crisis Management**

1. Hateful acts directed at any member of the campus community will receive immediate and appropriate response and follow-up.
  - a. Create a task force comprised of the campus Judicial Officer, Director of Residential Life, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Managing

Director of Employee Relations, Deputy Chief of Police and the Associated Student President or designee to develop procedures, including follow-up, for a *Biased Incident Reporting Handbook*.

## **II. Promoting diversity of students, faculty, and staff** *Attracting, Recruiting, & Retaining*

The successful retention of current students, staff and faculty is the foundation for Sonoma State University to be able to recruit and expand to become a more diverse and inclusive community.

**Goal:** Sonoma State University is committed to recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff and students to enhance the educational experience for all students and advance the mission of access and opportunity for all Californians by developing a long-range plan for retaining diverse faculty, staff and students.

**Objective** To create a protocol to support the retention of diverse faculty and staff by fall 2010.

### **A. Retaining Diverse Faculty & Staff**

1. Designate a person (s) to coordinate the University's effort to establish a plan for enhancing retention of diverse faculty.
2. Increase the communication and sharing of information about diversity on campus.
3. Insure that new diverse faculty and staff are assigned an appropriate mentor.
4. Support regular meetings (social and professional) between new and mentor faculty and new and mentor staff.
5. Promote and support the integration of new faculty and staff into the social life of the community during the first year of employment (dinners, social events, night's out, local community events, etc.).
6. Publish a multicultural resource guide.
7. Host a campus-wide diversity retreat each semester for faculty and staff.
8. Create a "Diversity Excellence" award for faculty and staff.
9. Create the opportunity for resident faculty to do a university exchange or short term (2-week) visit to universities that serve a significantly diverse population of students (HBCU's, urban campus, majority Hispanic, etc.).
10. Set targets for such visits with respect to a focus on experience different curricula, pedagogies, and instructional processes as well as community relations.
11. Create a visiting scholars program to support diversity with departments and programs.
12. Develop a support structure for hosting international visiting faculty
13. Conduct exit interviews with each faculty and staff member who is leaving the University. It is crucial to interview faculty and staff who are members

of those categories for which we are trying to increase representation. The exit interviews should attempt to capture information that will help the University understand weaknesses in our retention of diverse community members.

### **B. Recruiting Diverse Faculty and Staff**

1. Educate members of faculty search committees about campus diversity efforts and monitor the effectiveness of these efforts.
2. Educate members of staff search committees about campus diversity efforts and monitor the effectiveness of these efforts.
3. Review the hiring procedures for candidates with respect to emphasizing and clarifying the steps departments and search committee members can take to increase the diversity of the candidate pool.
4. Expand advertisements to publications representing diverse constituencies.
5. Have diverse hiring committees for staff and faculty positions.
6. Gather data from both Sonoma State University and the California State University as to composition of the faculty and staff in various categories and positions.
7. Develop a list of local area resources that provides products, services, and programs that may be culturally specific. This would include religious, service, business, and cultural. This list would be available from the beginning of the search process. Develop long-term relationships with local community organizations and national academic organizations that include caucuses for diverse representation.
8. Target any groups within professional academic associations that are working to mentor doctoral students for a position in academia.
9. Use additional entities that represent diverse academic professional members to recruit diverse faculty (for example, Association of Hispanic Colleges & Universities, National Association of Student Affairs Professionals, National Association of Administrative Professionals).
10. Make it a policy to offer candidates an additional night's stay to meet with any staff or student groups to promote an awareness of the local community.
11. Publicize widely the CSU Forgivable Loan program for Ph.D. programs (also in Student Recruitment Objectives).
12. Recruit international faculty.

**Objective:** To increase the conversion and enrollment of diverse populations by five percent per identified group per year for the next five years.

### **A. Retaining Diverse Students**

1. Develop models to connect diverse students with the University.
2. Utilize group advising sessions for students in a variety of situations.
3. Establish evaluation and performance measures of a department/unit with respect to diversity performance.

4. Incorporate diversity components into student evaluation of faculty.
5. Develop a mentorship program to support the retention of students from diverse backgrounds, especially those who are first generation college students.
6. Support campus-based research by faculty and staff on diversity issues affecting SSU.
7. Develop Partnerships with surrounding communities (Rohnert Park, Cotati, Santa Rosa, etc.) to improve the community climate's supportiveness of diversity.
8. Create service learning opportunities for diverse students in the surrounding communities.
9. Publish a multicultural resource guide.
10. Provide space for a "multicultural living room"
11. Create a "Diversity Excellence" award for students
12. Support co-curricular programming on diversity topics.

**Objective:** To increase the conversion and enrollment of diverse populations by five percent per identified group per year for the next five years.

#### **B. Recruiting Diverse Students**

1. Work with a variety of community organizations, to increase the awareness of the attainability and value of a college education. This need is especially urgent within the Hispanic community located in our five county service area. Articulate an objective to affect positively the college-going rate of minority students (esp. Latinos) and have them come to SSU, working with local-area high schools, and community colleges.
2. Develop a site-based position for a student recruiter at state high schools with populations of diverse students (modeled after SRJC's high school counselor recruiters); refocus part of other recruiting staff's time to outreach to diverse student populations.
3. Use some of the same networking and relationship building activities as those for recruiting faculty (see above). Insure that connections to diverse students interested in SSU are developed and sustained across the recruiting time span (throughout the college decision phase).
4. Develop campus-based mentorship opportunities among diverse faculty and prospective students
5. Develop K-16 partnerships to support mentorship opportunities for diverse students seeking to become teachers.
6. Survey current faculty and staff to determine who multi-lingual and who would be willing to be identified in multiple data bases in order to provide information about SSU in a language other than English.

### **III. Diversity in the Curriculum**

### *Pedagogy, Content, & Development*

Sonoma State University is committed to a sustained effort to offer a curriculum that reflects the diverse world in which we live. We support a curriculum which, through both course content and pedagogy, fosters understanding, appreciation and inclusion across groups to enable all members to attain cultural competence.

**Goal:** To provide information pathways that informs our efforts towards diversifying curriculum content.

#### **Objectives:**

##### **A. Content :**

1. Establish an inventory of how current curriculum relates to multicultural content and other aspects of diversity available to all (students, prospective students, faculty, staff, and administration).
  - a. Motivate Curriculum Committees, department Chairs, and other leaders and faculty to facilitate discussions on diversity in the curriculum.
  - b. Assign responsibilities for capturing and conveying such information to other constituents.
2. Establish a repository for problems, questions, suggestions, contacts, and results of assessments concerning various diversity issues using both technological and non-technological resources.
  - a. Create a website incorporating the repository information that would be managed through Information support below.
  - b. Establish regular means of assessing student learning outcomes related to multicultural competence.

**Goal:** To teach in such a way that allows for discussions of diversity issues and that models multicultural competence and a welcoming community.

#### **Objectives:**

##### **B. Pedagogy:**

1. Identify questions and best practices for teaching with multicultural competence.
  - a. Establish a regular but informal forum for faculty to share issues pertaining to all aspects of diversity
  - b. Encourage faculty to post and use the repository established in A2 above.
  - c. Identify and disseminate best practices for the assessment of multicultural competence and motivate the campus to adopt a “continuous learning” approach to diversity-education efforts.
  - d. Develop means of identifying and officially recognizing “diversity excellence” experts within the teaching faculty.

- e. Support the use of active learning modalities to advance SSU's goals in multicultural competence and competencies embracing other diversity issues.
2. Provide mentorship, support, and professional development for faculty engaged in multicultural competence efforts.
  - a. Work toward ways to recognize and encourage inclusive-excellence pedagogy within the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion processes.
3. Call for proposals for interdisciplinary, thematically linked course groupings and minors (such as an African-American Studies minor) that emphasize the value of diverse points of view and deepen multicultural competence.
4. Establish, support, and promote high quality, reciprocal community-university partnerships that are firmly rooted in the multicultural competency curriculum and that take advantage of diverse ways of looking at the world. These partnerships include service-learning, community-based participatory and action research, "difficult dialogues" discussions, public service, problem-based learning for the common good, and activism.

**Goal:** to provide support for the development of curriculum, programs, and pedagogy that celebrates and values diversity.

**Objectives:**

**C. Development:**

1. Provide grant funding for outcomes-oriented innovation in teaching for multicultural competence and other competencies that embrace diversity.
2. Provide support for pedagogy-related proposals.
3. Encourage the Library to invest in materials (which should be readily available) relating to diversity-enrichment concerns and social issues related to diversity.

#### **IV. Enhance the institutional structure in support of Inclusive Excellence efforts**

Sonoma State University is committed to identifying and developing appropriate structures, processes, resources, and personnel to support ongoing and new activities fostering diversity and inclusive excellence.

**Goal:** Develop a funding plan to support the implementation activities identified in this Diversity Action Plan.

**Objectives:**

- A. Identifying Resources
  - 1. Carry out an inventory of existing diversity resources on campus, compare with institutional best practices in peer universities, and develop a proposal to bring SSU in line with the latter.
  - 2. Request from each division a listing of their existing diversity resources.
  - 3. Undertake a comprehensive survey of all of the efforts underway with a view to improve effectiveness and coordination.
  - 4. Allocate funding to achieve improved effectiveness and coordination.
  
- B. Development
  - 1. Identify permanent funding for a Diversity Coordinator position.
  - 2. Allocate a portion of the Faculty Development Fund for Faculty training and renewal for diversity.
  - 3. Identify additional funding for co-curricular programming for students.