

University of Evansville

Inclusion Committee

Diversity Objectives and Strategies: Next Steps

Preamble

The University of Evansville is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive community for all of its members. Such a commitment is consistent with the University's identity, vision, and core purpose. UE's 2011 strategic plan, *Transforming Tomorrow: Our Students, Our University, Our World*, includes statements of these core principles:

- Identity: The University of Evansville is an independent, academically selective, internationally committed University affiliated with the United Methodist Church that integrates distinctive liberal arts education and dynamic professional programs.
- Vision: To be an innovative institution of global reach and reputation whose students develop the knowledge and skills, vision and wisdom to lead and to serve.
- Core Purpose: To provide students with life transforming educational experiences that prepare them to engage the world as informed, ethical, and productive citizens.

We recognize that students learn better in diverse settings, and institutions with the most racial and ethnic diversity in classrooms and through informal interactions on campus better prepare their students to live and work in a diverse world. In short, diversity is not a goal; it is our reality.

In 1994, The University of Evansville developed *A Plan for Diversity* that was submitted by the **Task Force on Diversity** as an official set of goals for recruitment of minority students, recruitment of international students, and the recruitment of minority faculty with strategies to meet those goals. The original plan was intended to guide and monitor University efforts. No specific time frame was set for achievement of goals stated in the plan.

A number of the key goals in *A Plan for Diversity* were met. For example, the plan stipulated specific goals for annual hiring of minority faculty members at the level of Professor and Associate Professor through the Lilly Endowment Fellowships through a project entitled "*Achieving Campus Pluralism.*" Though the plan succeeded in bringing seven fellows to campus, we have retained only one of those faculty members. This outcome underscores both the potential and the challenge of creating a more diverse community.

In addition, this plan catalyzed a dialogue about diversity throughout the institution, and the ensuing discussion demonstrated that concerted efforts in support of diversity can produce tangible and important outcomes. Key results have included the creation of the Office of Diversity Initiatives in 2006 (headed by the Diversity and Equity Officer), the establishment of a supplier diversity policy, the creation of the Inclusion Committee in 2014 to assist in the further development of goals, strategies, and metrics, and the establishment of a standing Diversity Committee on the Board of Trustees. These efforts will not only nurture a more inclusive campus community, but will heighten accountability for all diversity efforts on campus.

This progress is encouraging, but the Inclusion Committee recognizes that the time has come for development of a new diversity plan for the University. To that end, this updated plan – *Diversity Objectives and Strategies: Next Steps* -- is intended to invigorate our efforts to support diversity and inclusion at the University of Evansville and provide recommendations for goals and strategies for the immediate future.

A Review of Key Objectives

As a prelude to the development of a comprehensive diversity strategic plan, the Inclusion Committee identified a list of areas in which progress toward a more inclusive community must be made as the University moves forward:

- Continue to enhance a supportive environment for diversity including the scholarly dialogue on diversity.
- Implement systematic efforts to retain women and minority faculty members at all levels.
- Continue to recruit, retain and graduate greater numbers of ethnic minority students.
- Continue to work with the local community (i.e., Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties) to promote understanding and effectiveness of diversity, and engage communities throughout Southern Indiana in the dialogue.
- Ensure that accountability for achieving diversity objectives moves beyond the senior administrative level to all areas of the University.
- Incorporate programs designed to move more people from underrepresented groups to administrative leadership positions. There are still many more men than women among the senior professoriate, and there are few minorities in top administrative positions.
- Develop improved strategies for tracking the use of minority vendors, and ensure that all offices of the University are committed to achieving our supplier diversity goals.
- Benchmark for diversity in ways that the University benchmarks for other areas of excellence. Use diversity statistics from peer institutions with the best diversity records as a yardstick by which to measure our diversity efforts.
- Secure sustainable resource support for diversity in any current and future fundraising efforts.
- Incorporate diversity into the strategic planning for each academic and administrative support unit.
- Ensure that the established governance structure of the University embraces diversity by fully supporting the efforts of the Inclusion Committee and utilizing the standing Diversity Committee of the Board of Trustees as an instrument for support and accountability.
- Address the paucity of staff involvement in diversity, especially since staff and administrators outnumber faculty and play a critical role in making students feel at home at the University of Evansville.

Initial Steps

Following review and discussion of these key objectives, the Inclusion Committee identified, as the first steps toward achieving UE's diversity goals, two key objectives.

OBJECTIVE 1. Build a more diverse community. Two specific components of this objective (1a and 1b – highlighted) were identified as high priority goals and thus warrant immediate attention:

- a) **Increase enrollment and retention of minority students**
- b) **Increase number of minority faculty, staff, administrators**
- c) Increase the number of minority members of the Board of Trustees
- d) Increase number of minority students in academic programs
- e) Increase number of minority students on committees or boards

Achieving Objective 1(a): Undergraduate Student Recruitment and Retention

Goal: Increase significantly the number of Black/African American students in 2016-2017, and increase all other numbers of domestic students of color by 20% in 2016-2017. By the Fall 2020 class, minorities should compose roughly 20% of the domestic freshman entering class.

Strategies:

- Develop a Fellows Program for at least 20 students at four high schools in Indiana to bring cohorts of 4-6 students to UE. Following its initial implementation in 2016-2017, the Fellows program should be expanded by sustaining the relationship with the original four high schools and adding additional schools. The schools included in the 2016-2017 Fellows program are:
 - Bosse High School—Evansville
 - Tinley High School—Indianapolis
 - Herron High School—Indianapolis
 - Indianapolis Metropolitan High School—Indianapolis
- Expand recruitment efforts directed at minority students:
 - More intentional efforts with students of color helping in efforts of recruitment. (i.e., messaging, RoadTrip, Visitor Days, Open Houses)
 - Admissions phone calls to targeted students from special population students groups on campus (i.e., Black Student Union, Pride, Spanish Club, Affinity Groups)
 - Develop an internal process to gather information and accolades of our diverse students so current experiences of students can be better shared with prospective students
 - Increased efforts of intentional marketing to specific populations of students by working with alumni groups (UEAAA), student groups, and the Office of Diversity Initiatives.
 - More involvement of the Office of Diversity Initiatives in the recruitment of minority students.

Goal: Increase retention of minority students.

Strategies:

- Develop and implement support programs for new Fellows cohorts.
- Identify campus spaces that better allow domestic students of color to hang-out, study, and dialogue. These spaces should encourage social and wellness experiences and cultural support and education.
- Develop a plan for increased opportunities for a larger number of domestic students of color to travel abroad.
- Further develop efforts to support diversity in support service offices for all campus members with a particular focus on international and domestic minorities.

Achieving Objective 1(b): Recruitment and Retention of Women and Minority Faculty, Staff and Administrators

Goal: Increase recruitment and retention of minority and female faculty, staff, and administrators.

Strategies:

- Recruit, hire, train, and promote persons in all job positions without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability.
- Prevent discrimination in any form at the University of Evansville by ensuring that University policies, rules and actions do not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability.
- Incorporate an opportunity to build a welcome package designed specifically for every new hire to the University of Evansville, which is estimated at 25-30 people per year. (i.e., Global Orientations)
- Include a meeting with the Diversity and Equity Officer as a checkpoint for all new hires.
- Ensure that all new hires receive a copy of the “Let’s Talk Diversity,” handout and that it is accessible on the Human Resources and Office of Diversity Initiatives webpages.
- Design a FAQ (frequently asked questions) handout for all hiring managers and committees.
- Link Human Resources and the Office of Diversity Initiatives web pages in order to show continuity of inclusivity at the University of Evansville.
- Continued efforts for affinity meeting groups. (Black and African American Faculty/Staff/Administrators currently meet once a month)
- Develop a system to get the word out for positions available at the University of Evansville encouraging qualified individuals to apply.
- Develop intentional efforts with large corporations in Southern Indiana to advertise positions for trailing spouses/partners.

OBJECTIVE. 2. Cultivate appreciation of diversity among campus members. Two specific components of this objective (1a and 1C – highlighted) were identified as goals of high priority and thus warrant immediate attention:

- a) **Diversity training in Orientation Week**
- b) Diversity training for all employees
- c) **Diversity talking points to share with campus visitors/campus members**
- d) Increase participation in MLK Jr. Day events
- e) More diversity events/programs

Achieving Objective 2(a): Diversity Training in Welcome Week

Goal: Promote understanding and awareness of diversity and its importance to the UE community

Strategies:

- Review programs and events that could provide an opportunity to learn more about diversity and inclusion for all incoming freshman and current Orientation Leaders, International Orientation Leaders, and Resident Assistants.

- Diversity and inclusion should be included in the planning and implementation of Welcome Week activities.
- Assess the value of incorporating focus groups for all graduating students of color in order to obtain data about their social experiences to use to help increase and administer more intentional programming efforts for students of color in the future. The first focus groups could be formed in the spring semester of 2016
- Take steps to increase attendance at diverse programming events on campus (e.g., MLK Jr. Day, International Bazaar, Christmas Extravaganza, and high profile diverse speakers).

Achieving Objective 2(c): Diversity Talking Points to Share with Campus Visitors (Campus Members)

Goal: Ensure that visitors to campus – prospective students and others – are aware of UE’s commitment to diversity and inclusion:

Strategies:

- Develop diversity talking points to give to all campus members as a resource for visitors and students
- The publication, “Let’s Talk Diversity,” will be given to all new hires and candidates for positions. Develop a version of this document specifically for prospective students who visit campus.
- Ensure that the support staff areas that are the initial touch-point areas for on campus visitors are able to attend diversity training annually.

Assessment and Accountability

To ensure that the University implements these steps and monitors progress for each of these initial strategies, the Inclusion Committee recommends the following:

- Ensure that the Inclusion Committee continues to represent the broad spectrum of the University community and receive consistent and appropriate support from the University.
- The Inclusion Committee, working with all University offices and programs, should recognize its responsibility to promote the visibility of diversity initiatives, and to provide leadership for, and oversight of, UE’s diversity efforts.
- The University should maintain and regularly refresh the established UE diversity website.
- The Diversity and Equity Officer, working with the Inclusion Committee, should report regularly on campus diversity objectives and initiatives. This should include an annual report to the President that assesses progress in achieving each diversity objective by reference to appropriate metrics. In addition, the Diversity and Equity Officer should prepare a quarterly e-newsletter made available to the campus community, interested alumni and friends, and the Board of Trustees.
- The Anti-Bias Team, created in 2014-2015, should partner with the Offices of Diversity Initiatives and Student Affairs to receive, monitor, refer, and, as necessary, coordinate university responses to hate and bias-related incidents that affect the university community. Incidents may involve bias or hate grounded in race, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status. The Anti-Bias Team shall serve an

important long-term role in documenting patterns of incidents and informing appropriate academic and academic support leaders so that policies, practices, and programs may be reviewed and modified to improve response and to reduce or eliminate hate-based behaviors.