

Overview of Xavier University's Strategic Diversity Plan 2006 – 2010

Xavier University's Diversity Vision

As a Catholic Jesuit university, Xavier University is committed to educational excellence, the service of faith and the promotion of justice, and therefore, the dignity of every individual. Xavier University consequently envisions itself as an equitable and inclusive community of learners. In as much as it brings these mission-driven values into focus, our diversity vision is fundamental to the overall mission and vision of the University. Toward those ends:

CAMPUS CLIMATE & INTERGROUP RELATIONS: We are committed to fostering a welcoming campus climate characterized by respect and collaboration.

ACCESS & SUCCESS: We seek to extend institutional access to those who have been underrepresented and to support the success of our students, employees, and the communities we serve without regard to race/ethnicity, gender, class, religion, nationality, disability, sexual identity or other categories of social group membership.

EDUCATION & SCHOLARSHIP: We are dedicated to the pursuit of diverse ideas and viewpoints that enrich the educational experience for all learners.

INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION: Finally, in order to remain vital and viable as an institution, we aspire to institutionalize these commitments in every aspect of our endeavor and to build a culture in which all are accountable for advancing them. In this way, Xavier will be recognized as a national leader of diversity excellence in higher education.

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A Framework to Guide Institutional Engagement with Diversity

Diversity means different things to different people. To many it connotes efforts to recruit more people of color and women into the institution and nothing more. In truth, diversity in higher education describes a far more complex set of concerns, many of which have nothing to do with increasing headcounts. In order to simplify that complexity, Xavier has borrowed its approach to diversity planning from Darryl Smith, a nationally recognized scholar of diversity in higher education, whose helpful framework describes the ways in which the implications of diversity differ across the distinct yet interrelated institutional spheres she calls: **student access and success, education and scholarship, campus climate and intergroup relations, and institutional transformation**. Appropriate attention to diversity in each of these spheres suggests different goals and strategies.

Student access and success refers to the range of specialized strategies institutions employ to broaden educational access and to close the gaps in school achievement for groups with exclusionary histories. Targeted scholarships, recruitment and orientation programs, and advising are just a few of the initiatives common to this realm.

Education and Scholarship involves the credit-bearing activities that take place in the classroom as well as the scholarship and research conducted by the faculty. Common strategies within this domain include the use of content and teaching methods that reflect and invite a multiplicity of ideas, perspectives, and ways of knowing to the benefit of all learners.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations describes the psychological and behavioral environment of the campus. Efforts aimed at improving campus climate and intergroup relations stem from an awareness of how student interactions with the campus environment and with each other can enhance (or hamper) their educational outcomes. It makes a clear distinction between the benefits of representational diversity and the positive outcomes that accrue from spontaneous and facilitated interactions among individuals and social identity groups.

Institutional Transformation encompasses the University's efforts to align its leadership statements, institutional partnerships, employment and purchasing practices, systems of rewards and incentives, and budgeting practices with its diversity objectives in order to institutionalize and sustain its diversity gains. The implementation of a diversity plan that is tied to the University's Strategic Plan is an example of such transformation.

Diversity Plan Structure

The Strategic Diversity Plan for Xavier University spans a four year period, beginning in the fall of 2006 and ending in the spring of 2010. The objectives, are strategic in as much as they directly advance the The Strategic Plan for Xavier University. The nine Diversity Plan objectives are organized within the aforementioned framework as follows:

Student Access and Success

Objective 1: Support the Enrollment of a Diverse Student Body

Objective 2: Support the Retention and Success of a Diverse Student Body

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Objective 3: Foster a Campus Climate that is Welcoming to All

Objective 4: Foster Intercultural Respect, Communication, and Collaboration

Education & Scholarship

Objective 5: Support the Incorporation of Diversity and Inclusion Across the Curriculum

Institutional Transformation

Objective 6: Enhance the Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Objective 7: Demonstrate Institutional Leadership for Community Equity and Empowerment

Objective 8: Develop the Capacity of Our People for Diversity Leadership

Objective 9: Institutionalize a Culture of Diversity Planning and Assessment

The Plan is both outcomes and process driven. Its success will be assessed at both its mid-point (2008) and its conclusion (2010), against a set of outcome measures (see Diversity Plan Scorecard), which track progress across the nine objectives. The success of the Plan will also be measured by the Diversity & Equity Committee (DEC) through an annual evaluation of the degree to which it fosters a culture of strategic planning and assessment and broad support for the advancement of institutional diversity goals. That evaluation will be summarized in the DEC's annual reports to the President.

Accountability for the Plan is shared by all budget units across the campus and each vice-president and dean is responsible for ensuring that his/her division or college contributes at least two diversity strategies, designed to advance one of the nine diversity objectives. Strategies should be submitted to the Vice Provost for Diversity according to the Diversity Planning Timeline and Guidelines for Strategy Submission. Once they have been reviewed and accepted by the Vice Provost for Diversity and the DEC, they will be published on the Portal.

Only through the combination of effective strategic planning and institutionalized buy-in will the gains produced by the Diversity Plan be sustainable. Therefore, in addition to the objective outcome measures contained in the Diversity Plan Scorecard, the Plan will be measured subjectively by the degree to which it fosters broad participation and support at all levels for the advancement of institutional diversity goals. An evaluation of both will be made by the Diversity & Equity Committee in its annual reports to the President.

Timeline for Planning and Evaluation

In mid-October, 2006, the Vice Provost for Diversity will issue a request for strategy development to each dean and division head, with a deadline of November 3, 2006 (See Guidelines for Strategy Submission). The DEC will subsequently announce the availability of IDEA Grants to serve as start-up funds for strategy development.

The Vice Provost and the DEC will review the submitted strategies and may request additional information or clarifications. Once their requests have been satisfied, the strategy plans will be published on the Portal. On April 17, strategy planners will

be asked to submit an annual evaluation of the progress of their strategies. The Vice Provost and the DEC will review the evaluations and issue an annual report to the President in May.