President’s Institutional Diversity Council
June 2008 Report

Introduction

The President’s Institutional Diversity Council’s Charge was:
- to consider the evolving impact of diversity on and within the Fairfield University culture, and to recommend programs, colloquia, or forums in which University community members (students, faculty, and staff) can participate and engage in discussions about how diversity impacts and what diversity requires of them. I do not expect the council will organize and sponsor such activities but rather seek input and recommend groups to do so in the coming year.

Summary

The President’s Institutional Diversity Council convened in late March and began with a review of the President’s charge. After reading and discussing the charge, the council thought it best to evaluate the current campus climate with respect to the notion of diversity. In an effort to reach as many people as possible, the council scheduled two forums which were composed of a random selection of about 150 non-exempt employees. On two separate occasions the participants were asked to respond to and discuss a set of four questions.

- Question 1 What did you expect diversity to be about when you entered Fairfield University?
- Question 2 How would you describe the campus climate today?
- Question 3 What would you like to see happen next in regards to campus climate and diversity?
- Question 4 What are you willing to do to make it happen?

In the interest of time, the Council compiled a set of themes for each group (refer to Appendix 1 and 2) and then together compiled a list of common themes from the two forums (refer to Appendix 3). Following a review of the forum results, and further deliberation, the Council working groups developed the next steps for implementation of the President’s Charge.

The Next Steps for Implementation of the President’s Charge

Working Groups

- Diversity Forum (All members)
  - Report
    - Purpose
      To provide a forum to launch a community discussion/dialog on the topic of diversity as it relates and is encompassed in the strategic goals.
    - Implementation Strategy
      (a) Plan a 2 day workshop/Conference to include a keynote address and a series of presentations by students, administrators, faculty, and others.
      (b) Organize and schedule facilitator training orientation workshops.
      (c) Schedule and recruit participants for small group learning circles
  - Assessment
The assessment strategy for the diversity forum will include a pre-post questionnaire focusing on participants’ knowledge and attitudes toward diversity and community. In addition, a process evaluation will follow each session. We will consult with the Office of Institutional Research and the Center for Academic Excellence to develop a tool to assess the overall progress of this effort (to possibly include a focus group comprised of members from the four learning circles).

- **Resources Needed**
  Fees for speakers, audio-visual, room set-up, food, and marketing, general budget $20,000

- **Marketing**
  o James Estrada, Larri Mazon, Karen Pellegrino
  o Report

- **Student Groups**
  o William Johnson, Karen Donoghue, Chrystie Cruz
  o Report

- **Purpose**
  To provide an opportunity to work with the student community in a dialog to discuss diversity in a non-traditional setting.

- **Implementation Strategy**
  A. In the summer, there will be three formal focus groups: Tour Guides, summer RA staff, and
  B. To continue gathering data, the Diversity Council Student Working Group will organize focus groups by randomly selecting students from all resident halls.
  C. Using the four questions the President Diversity Council developed, the Diversity Council Student Working Group will gather the themes that the students provide in order to further create future focus groups.
  D. The Diversity Council Student Working Group will also recommend that the RA’s use the focus group as a resident hall program

- **Assessment**
  After receiving feedback from the students, the student working group will create action steps that would allow the students to continue to discuss what they want to do about diversity.

- **Recommendations:**
  A. The Diversity Council Student Working Group recommends that the President’s Council invite a student to participate at the meetings.
  B. The Diversity Council Student Working Group suggests that we create a sub-committee of a group of students to further discuss the goals of the Council from the student’s perspective. At each meeting a representative of the Diversity Council Student Working Group will be present.

- **Resources Needed**
The financial resources needed are to provide students with motivation to participate in the focus groups. The motivation can come in two forms: stag bucks or free food at the focus group gatherings. $1000

- **Learning Circles**
  - Larri Mazon, Edna Wilson, Betsy Gardner, Carl Scheraga, Jocelyn Boryczka
  - Report
    - **Definition of Learning Circles**
      A learning circle is a collaborative and educational approach to engage people from across the campus community to participate in a democratic dialogue which often results in problem solving activities.

A small group of five to seven people with two trained facilitators. In these small group face-to-face meetings campus community members address common concerns bringing the wisdom of ordinary people to bear on complex issues.

All viewpoints are taken seriously and each participant has an equal opportunity to participate. In learning circles, the process is as important as the content.

A critical element is the ability to bond as a safe environment that encourages openness and allows for honest exchange of opinions and ideas.

- **Implementation Strategy**
  Goal: Include a total of 56 participants drawn from the four segments of the campus community (students, faculty staff and administration).
  - We will train a sufficient number of facilitators to accommodate the number of learning circles. We hope to recruit and train 16 facilitators at two training sessions in early October.
  - We will randomly select participants drawn from the four campus populations. We hope to recruit 56 participants.
  - Each semester beginning in fall 2008 four learning circles will be implemented.
  - Each learning circle will meet for 2.5 hours once-a-week for five weeks.

- **Assessment**
  The assessment strategy for the learning circles will include a pre-post questionnaire focusing on participants’ knowledge and attitudes toward diversity and community. In addition, a process evaluation will follow each session. We will consult with the Office of Institutional Research and the Center for Academic Excellence to develop a tool to assess the overall progress of this effort (to possibly include a focus group comprised of members from the four learning circles).

- **Resources Needed**
  Materials, Copying, Food, Books/Reading Material, Release Time, Operating Budget
$3000.00 per semester

- **Assessment**
  - Ann Stehney, Susan Franzosa, Roben Torosyan
  - Diversity Assessment Data from Institutional Surveys June 2008
    - **Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA**
      CIRP Freshman Survey, administered each year to full-time freshmen before classes begin.
      Your First College Year (YFCY), administered in most years to second-semester freshmen. Coordinated with the CIRP Freshman Survey, it seeks to measure changes during the first college year.
      College Senior Survey (CSS, previously College Student Survey), administered in most years to graduating seniors and to sophomores in the Ignatian Residential College. Also coordinated with the CIRP Freshman Survey, providing longitudinal data on the experiences and attitudes of full-time students during their college years.
      HERI Faculty Survey, administered to full-time faculty members in 2005 and 2008.
      *Some of the standard items and additional Fairfield questions on these national surveys touch on diversity. The 2008 Faculty Survey included an open-ended question about efforts to increase the diversity of the University community.*

- **Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University Bloomington**
  The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered to freshmen, IRC sophomores, and graduating seniors in the spring semesters, 2004, 2005, and 2008.
  *The NSSE survey measures factors associated with an effective learning environment, including campus diversity.*

- **Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education**
  Fairfield joined the prestigious Wabash National Study in 2007. Some 200+ members of the Class of 2011 completed an extensive array of surveys and questionnaires in September 2007 and April 2008; the protocol calls for them to complete the same instruments in Spring 2011.
  *Like NSSE, the Wabash National Study focuses on teaching practices and institutional conditions that appear to be influencing student growth, including moral and ethical growth.*

- **Fairfield Surveys**
  NEASC Self-Study: Survey about Mission and Identity, 2006 (Respondents: 77 administrators, 177 faculty members, 241 students)
  Junior Class Survey on the Core Curriculum, 2008 (Respondents: 272 members of the Class of 2009).
In preparation: Sophomore Class Survey

- **Data from peer institutions may be available through these sources:**
  - Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU)
  - Catholic Higher Education Research (CHERC) Cooperative
  - Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium
  - HERI’s national peer groups

- **What does campus assessment of diversity mean?**
  For the faculty, we need to assess to what degree our culture promotes diversity and social justice for not only students but faculty and staff colleagues. That is, we need to assess at least the following three dimensions:\(^1\):
  a) access and success of individuals (tenure, promotion, retention rates, etc.)
  b) campus climate and intergroup relations (levels of interaction among groups, use of activities, offices, resources, etc.)
  c) education and scholarship (inclusion of diversity issues in courses not necessarily designated as such, centrality of diversity in scholarship/research, etc.), and

- **What are next steps to make such assessment happen?**
  Building on the past several years of work by the President’s Institutional Diversity Council, we recommend a team of key personnel be charged with the following, and given resources to support the work:
  a) Mine existing data, through Office of Institutional Research
  b) Revisit and clarify exactly what we want to achieve by surveying
  c) Reach out to key faculty leadership and constituencies to plan holding faculty focus groups, on the same model of four simple questions used in May 2008 with staff.
  d) Vet the survey instrument (recommended in 2007) with faculty, without requiring approval or vote, but simply to solicit as much active input and suggestions as possible.
  e) Once survey is finalized, have faculty complete it at the same time as staff and students do, once redundancy is eliminated between it and other surveys.
  f) Charge administrative and academic units alike with using results of the survey to guide annual strategic planning, conflict management (through the emerging campus Conflict Resolution Consortium begun by Lucy Katz), professional development (through the Center for Academic Excellence) and other creative innovations or projects as appropriate.
  g) Close the loop by using further assessment results to continuously adjust plans and activities in the coming years.

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h) Make all of the above not an addition to existing workloads of individuals but integrated with existing tasks and goals. That is, find dovetailing interests so that diversity work complements what people are already doing, whether it helps the established professor teach students to work in teams, or helps a new faculty member contribute peer-reviewed scholarship by taking a diversity lens on issues.

- **World Citizen, Spiritual Activist, and Boyer**
  - Renee White, Rev. James Bowler, S.J., Elizabeth Boquet
  - Report

  - One way to think of globalization is as the flow of human and natural resources within and across national boundaries (both real and virtual). People consume the material, cultural, and knowledge-based goods produced outside of their national boundaries. Thus, we have become more interconnected and interdependent on an international level—the world has become smaller. Social policy, economic choices, cultural shifts have become more meaningful on the global stage. Decisions and actions—whether at the individual, community, or national level—have residual effects (both positive and negative) that emanate beyond our personal lives. Therefore, global citizens are those who understand the impact of globalization on culture, politics, economics, environments and human interaction. Global citizens recognize the need to connect the causes and consequences of globalization with questions of social justice and equality.

Recognizing the impact of globalization is important because it provides insight into the changing purpose, influence, and relevance of the university. University of Toronto professor Jane Knight explores the relevance of internationalization on higher education. She argues that the internationalization of educational institutions can be understood as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.” Universities are directly or implicitly affected by globalization. For example, the numbers of international faculty and students continue to increase, students get to examine international themes in historical and contemporary contexts, they engage in study abroad programs or international service learning opportunities, and many universities are located in regions facing an influx of immigrant residents. If they are to train students in global citizenship effectively, it is imperative that universities model global citizenship in their institutional and organizational responses to these trends, as the climate students experience in their local (i.e., campus) communities correlates to their experiences with and responses to the challenges and possibilities of global citizenship. Jesuit universities are especially well-positioned to educate their members to participate in a global community. Efforts to educate global citizens parallel the steps of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, with global citizens having knowledge of the world and of themselves as actors in the
world, as engaged participants who reflect on issues of global importances and on the consequences of individual and collective action, and as discerning moral beings who evaluate the impacts and effects of action.

Broad areas where we might focus attention on global citizenship:
- Recruitment and Retention: Students, Faculty, and Staff
- Pedagogical Initiatives: Curricular and Co-Curricular; Disciplinary and Cross-Disciplinary
- Community-Based Initiatives: Campus and Beyond Campus; National and International
- Institutional Commitments: International Partnerships; Globalization of Fairfield (Campus) Community; Support for research and scholarly activity with global connections

- **HR/University Community**
  - Mark Guglielmoni and Larri Mazon
  - Report

**Recommendation:**

In the course of our discussions and findings, the President’s Institutional Diversity Council has decided that the following recommendations are necessary steps to successfully implement the charge given by the President:

- Faculty Development Workshops
- Student Workshops
- Diversity Forum
- Learning Circles
- Campus Climate Survey

**Schedule for Academic Year 2008-2009**

**President’s Institutional Diversity Council**

**Schedule for Academic Year 2008-2009**

**September:**

**September 17 or 24** Presentation to Directors, Deans, Vice Presidents
Launch Facilitator training sessions

**October:**

Faculty Development Workshops (Center for Academic Excellence and Institutional Diversity Initiatives Office)*
Continue facilitator trainings
Student Workshops*

**November:**

Continue facilitator trainings
December:  Continue facilitator trainings
Preparation to launch Campus Climate Survey

January:  Launch Campus Climate Survey
Develop and launch Study Dialog Groups

February:  Continue Study Guide Groups
Continue Campus Climate Survey

March:  Develop and Finalize Report

April:  Report to the President

May:  Meet with Senior Management Team to discuss report recommendations

* Must occur in 4 sessions and each session must follow a 4-step process:
Knowledge/Information, Understanding, Skills, and Action Plan

Timeline for Institutional Transformation Process

The timeline for Institutional Transformation Process is intended to be a Five Year Plan (refer to Appendix 4).
Appendix 1

Diversity Focus Groups
05/06/2008
Themes from Debrief of Facilitators

1. **What did you expect diversity to be about when you entered Fairfield University?**:
   - Not sure what diversity means
   - Expected lack of religious diversity among students and staff alike
   - Expected male-dominance, after seeing that at another Jesuit university
   - Surprising that at an academic institution, the best and brightest have to talk about this; of all places, we should be accepting

2. **How would you describe the campus climate today?**
   - Polite but repressed, passive acceptance of diversity
   - Students & parents choose Fairfield *because* of lack of diversity (safe and comfortable)
   - Like in high school, cliques stick with cliques: rich, jocks, beautiful people; mold of white male wearing cap, cargo shorts and polo shirt, female wearing uggs (students leaving say they don’t feel they fit in to our conformist culture)
   - We assume diversity is politically correct, or only about race, class, gender, when it’s also about disability, sexual preference, age, personality, work styles, learning styles
   - Yet staff does not feel male-dominated, in at least a few departments
   - Parents and students are hostile to diversity discussions (at orientation, for ex.)

3. **What would you like to see happen next in regards to campus climate and diversity?**
   - We’ve created some tolerance; need to *welcome* and *retain* people better
   - Not just about students; recruit and *retain* diverse faculty and staff too
   - Take advantage of students back from study abroad, how they see things differently
   - Change a lot of the symbols that don’t help, like rich beach life, pricey cars on campus
   - Improve ability to communicate among students, staff and faculty alike; but not training and development as “We know better” and more like how we’re all learning
   - As Fairfield professionalizes, be sure not to lose our caring culture; balance both
   - Avoid hypocrisy: not just words and rhetoric, but *real* buy-in of people in power
   - Move from polite to tougher conversations, share their stories
   - For us (PIDC) to be ambassadors, we need to talk ourselves

4. **What are you willing to do to make it happen?**
   - Help with freshmen orientation
   - Muster up the courage to actually get 360 feedback on how coworkers see me
   - Help run training and development needed
   - Learn more; not have diversity remain in the classroom; offer brown bags for staff & students, on interesting aspects of various cultures (one-day university model)
   - Also offer more intensive longer-term learning, with readings and assignments
   - Sit ourselves with people we wouldn’t naturally sit with
Appendix 2

Diversity Focus Groups
5/20/2008
Themes from Debrief of Facilitators

1. What did you expect diversity to be about when you entered Fairfield University?
   - “Never thought about it; I was just applying for a job”
   - The faith community here appealed to some people, while others were made nervous by the prospect of it, expecting only a handful of the same faith (or agnostic or atheist)
   - A regional university, missing international students
   - Some expected diversity workshops and training to already be in place, for students, staff and faculty alike
   - Expected more female participation on budget and other committees

2. How would you describe the campus climate today?
   - We’re considered a “lily white” campus, with a lack of diversity among students, staff and faculty alike
   - We’re making some progress with diversity:
     - Fall 2008, we have 17 students from several Bridgeport schools (a record) vs. 8 from same 2 schools
     - “Physically diversity on campus is good compared to others”
   - AHANA & international students, staff and faculty feel they’re brought out to represent, tokenism of “you serve a purpose” vs. what they get out of it
   - Common to blame students, “If only they’d change or be represented differently”
   - People’s spirituality is closely linked to their identity; celebrants beyond Catholic tradition at functions, help people function meaningfully at Catholic functions if not Catholic; at communion, for ex., can go up and cross hands up the shoulders
   - The dominant American business model of agenda, notes, etc. dominates, but maybe people need to learn from diverse styles of running meetings too, because some offices have less structured time, and the gain is more community and trust; work out ways to get the benefits of multiple such styles

3. What would you like to see happen next?
   - Initiate the conversations about how we need to change culture
   - Jail & bail brought people together: Have diversity discussions more regularly, using such fun activities
   - Campus luncheons: Rather than those who work together, sit together; sit with others
   - Have a sacred space, free of specific religious identification
   - Include training and development in how to run meetings, how to evaluate performance with diversity criterion, but also set people up to succeed before they’re evaluated (prep top leaders on down in behaviors that help)
   - Website: “make more visible our commitment to diversity” (on the homepage)
   - Draw more from community colleges for students of diverse backgrounds
   - “I’d like administration to question itself: “What does religious diversity mean? What space on campus can we create for others?”
4. **What are you willing to do to make it happen?**

- Be a mentor to a student, in a formal program, with some structure (several volunteered);
  could also help *develop* such a structured program, with staff and faculty resumes or bios, so
  students get to choose who they match up with rather than just be assigned
- Help develop training, based on my last job, in all kinds of diversity, including how to run
  meetings
- Could help with budget (Mike Tortora volunteered!)
- Have people to my house for dinner, if had a small budget, or go out to the movies (Bob
  Russo and Roben Torosyan volunteered)
Appendix 3

Themes from Both Diversity Focus Groups
5/29/2008

In all, 90 non-exempt professional staff participated from across the campus.

1. What did you expect diversity to be about when you entered Fairfield University?
   - “Never thought about it; I was just applying for a job”
   - Expected diversity workshops and training to already be in place, for students, staff and faculty alike
   - Expected more female participation on budget and other committees
   - The faith community here appealed to some people, while others were made nervous by the prospect of it, expecting only a handful of the same faith (or agnostic or atheist)

2. How would you describe the campus climate today?
   - University has made progress with student diversity grants, as those projects really get students talking; also for Fall 2008, we have 17 students from several Bridgeport schools (a record) vs. 8 from same 2 schools
   - It’s like high school here, cliques stick with cliques: rich, jocks, beautiful people; mold of white male wearing cap, cargo shorts and polo shirt, female wearing uggs (students leaving say they don’t feel they fit in to our conformist culture)
   - Common to blame students, “If only they’d change or be represented differently”
   - Many of us here are polite but repressed, with a passive acceptance of diversity
   - We often assume diversity is politically correct, or only about race, class, gender, when it’s also about disability, sexual preference, age, personality, work styles, learning styles

3. What would you like to see happen next?
   - “Creative and fun group mentoring, gather small groups of diverse students, with one person not just faculty advisor; meet and go to the movies, come to my house for dinner”
   - Engage with not just Bridgeport but Fairfield local community:
     o “Student swap program, match wealthier with needier student, spend a weekend with each other’s family’s home, understand where each other comes from”
     o Create community activities, invite local Fielderers to student presentations, etc.
   - As Fairfield professionalizes, be sure not to lose our caring culture; balance both business and people; for example, discuss meeting styles, to see what can be gained by more diverse modes than “business as usual;” if less agenda-driven, sometimes more trust and community; how to get the best of multiple modes
   - Avoid hypocrisy: not just words and rhetoric, but real buy-in of people in power
   - Move from polite to tougher conversations; share stories and listen

4. What are you willing to do to make it happen?
   - Sit ourselves with people we wouldn’t naturally sit with
   - Muster up the courage to actually get 360 feedback on how coworkers see me
   - Could help with budget (Mike Tortora volunteered!)
• Offer brown bag lunches for staff & students, on interesting aspects of various cultures (one-day university model)
• Be a mentor to a student, and help develop a structured program to do this, with staff and faculty resumes or bios, so students get to choose who they match up with rather than just be assigned

Next Steps Campus-Wide:

Strategic Plan:
• Diversity is one of five goals for the entire Fairfield Community

Communication:
- Web presence in fall 2008: diversity plan, focus group responses, blog with comments
- Campus-wide publication in spring 2009
- Contact info is diversity@mail.fairfield.edu
Appendix 4