

Diversity Strategic Plan—Purposes and Approach

Kee Warner, Fall 2006

This outline lays out the basic principles guiding the Diversity Strategic Plan (DSP) and proposes a participatory planning process to be completed during the 2006-2007 academic year.

Purpose and Scope of the DSP

For the DSP to be meaningful, we have to overcome the idea that this is simply a planning exercise that detracts from the real work of the university and will be of little consequence. Our campus has seriously planned for diversity for some years, going back, at least, to the Strategic Plan for Diversity of 1987. Our campus has progressed in some areas, but follow-through has been weak and plans have been lost and/or set aside. The current effort will focus on strategic action and accountability within a broadly conceived diversity strategy. In broad terms the DSP should:

- Provide a framework for action and accountability—The DSP will encompass our responses to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity (BRC) and the full range of diversity initiatives that are underway on our campus. The plan will also identify other areas that need to be addressed within a comprehensive approach.
- Describe the scope and the vision of diversity—To some extent this has been done in the response to the BRC, but it is important that the planning process articulates what we mean by diversity and why it is a value for our institution. Some of the ideas this may include are:
 - Our campus should be broadly inclusive of people of different races, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, economic backgrounds, ages, abilities, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, religious beliefs, and intellectual perspectives.
 - Our campus should make concentrated efforts to incorporate groups that have been historically excluded and underrepresented in higher education.
 - Diversity of thought and of cultural perspective is a quality that produces higher knowledge and improves our effectiveness as an educational enterprise.
 - Creative diversity requires active engagement among all members of the university community, it is not just the concern of one group.
 - Diversity and inclusion are not peripheral issues, but should be central to university planning, decision-making, and development.
 - UCCS should become an exemplar of a diverse and inclusive institution for our community, our region, and our peer institutions.
 - UCCS should develop diversity and inclusion in ways that express and develop the unique character of this institution.
- Describe comprehensive strategies for change
- Propose appropriate, strategic actions
- Provide measures of progress and accountability

Planning Principles

These are planning principles that will be used as touchstones during the DSP process. They address some of the shortcomings of strategic plans we have reviewed from our campus and elsewhere.

- Minimize paperwork, maximize coordinated action
- Describe strategies that are well known and easily understood (transparency, accessibility)
- Identify changes that are needed, how they should take place and who is responsible
- Set ambitious goals with practical strategies
- Actively engage people and organizational units that may not have seen diversity as “their” issue
- Show how diversity and inclusion improve overall institutional quality
- Consistently address diversity and inclusion among students, faculty, staff, administrators & community

Planning Process

The planning process will be organized and carried out in the following phases:

1. Design and Initiation— September
The Director of DSP will lead the DSP Task Force (five faculty and staff members who are staffing the core team) in designing a planning process and convening a DSP Leadership Team. The Chancellor and Vice Chancellors will review these proposals and “lead the charge.”
2. Defining Vision and Organizing Workgroups—October
The DSP Leadership Team will include a cross-section of 24-32 key actors from the ranks of administration, staff, faculty, students, and community identified by the DSP Task Force and asked by the Chancellor to engage in the full planning process. The first task of the DSP Leadership Team will be to discuss the scope and definition of diversity and to divide into working groups. The Director and DSP Task Force will draft a vision statement for the DSP based on these discussions for further consideration and approval.
3. Describing Strategies for Change—(October-November)
Three working groups (described below) will be organized out of the DSP Leadership Team. The DSP Working Groups will be convened and staffed by members of the DSP Task Force. Additional members will be included as needed. The charge for each working group will be to define strategies for change that incorporate and extend current diversity initiatives. These strategies will also respond to the recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity and to system-wide diversity goals. Each working group will be asked to consider the range of university constituencies: students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community.
4. Building Strategy Consensus—(December-January)
The results from each workgroup will be brought back to the DSP Leadership Team to be discussed, refined and approved. This draft of the plan will be communicated to the campus-at-large for responses. A progress report will be prepared for presentation to the CU Regents.

5. Defining Strategic Actions and Accountability—(Feb—Mar)
The DSP working groups will define actions to implement key strategies, propose follow-through and accountability. Proposed actions should:
 - Describe tasks, responsibilities, timelines
 - Build on the specific needs, strengths and opportunities of UCCS
 - Include policy changes that can be measured
 - Design “report cards” and qualitative evaluations to track progress
 - Make the institution accountable for providing needed infrastructure and resources
 - Give units, departments, and individuals the opportunity to engage in efforts to diversify and to make our campus more inclusive.
 - Design organizational structures for sustaining strategic action
6. Communicating and Finalizing the DSP Plan (April)
Strategic action plans will be communicated to the UCCS community and come back to the DSP Leadership group for discussion and approval.

Assigning working groups to Diversity Action Areas

The DSP Task Force has given some thought to how to divide up the DSP Leadership Team to work on strategies for change. We want to be sure that we address diversity and inclusion among all university constituencies (students, faculty, staff, administrators, community), but we want to encourage dialogue among those constituencies rather than separating their concerns and issues into separate working groups. We also want to be sure that the plan is conceptually broad so that it pushes us to think in new ways, but also deals with the specific activities required to work for diversity and inclusion. In the end we propose an approach that is simple but that we have not run across elsewhere, as follows:

Diversity Within—focusing on diverse representation, retention and inclusion within student population, faculty, staff, and administration. This group would also deal with other aspects of diversity of the campus as a place to live, work, and study.

Diversity Without—focusing on the university’s relationship with diverse communities beyond the campus—the local and regional communities, national and international networks. A key concern will be to recruit diverse students, faculty, staff, and administrators for the campus. The other realm of external relations concerns the outputs of the university, such as alumni, community engagement, support for K-12, etc.

Diversity in What We Do—focuses on how diversity transforms the work we do as educators, and researchers, and service-providers. This would include such things as curriculum transformation, diversifying research, and the development of cultural competence among all university constituencies.

An initial scan shows how the BRC recommendations might be developed within these DSP Working Groups as well as identifying areas that are not addressed by the BRC recommendations.

Diversity Within

Retention

Students

BRC 4,5,7

Faculty

BRC 1, 3

Staff

Administrators

Inclusion and Support

BRC 5, 6

Campus Climate

BRC 9

Resolving Conflict and Addressing Discrimination

Diversity Without

Recruitment

Students

BRC 2, 4,8

Faculty

BRC 1,3

Staff

Administrators

Linkages

Community

BRC 10

CU System

BRC 18

Other Educational Institutions

BRC 13

K-12

BRC 17

Industry

BRC 12

Diversity in What We Do

Cultural Competence

BRC 14

Curriculum & Instruction

BRC 1, 15

Research

Community Service

Campus Planning

BRC 16

Business Practices—vendors, contractors

Budgets and Financial Support