

TO: UW-Eau Claire Strategic Planning Committee

FROM: Charles Vue, Odawa White, Jesse Dixon, Stephanie Zigelboim, Kimamo Wahome, Cheri Snobl, Christine Webster, Margaret Hebring, Office of Multicultural Affairs, GEAR UP and Upward Bound

DATE: February 19, 2008

RE: Re-instating Fostering Equity and Diversity in the Strategic Plan

Thank you for the hard copy of UW-Eau Claire's Strategic Planning Draft and soliciting our comments. After reading this draft we noticed that Goal: # 6, Fostering Equity and Diversity was deleted. At first glance it appears that issues relating to equity and diversity are lumped into Goal #1: Accelerate Global Learning.

Given the goals of the current strategic plan, we suggest the following changes ...

- Add Fostering Equity and Diversity to Goal #1 (page 7 of the draft)

For example, Goal #1 should read
"Fostering Equity and Diversity and Accelerating Global Learning"

Here are some reasons:

On February 8, 2008, all Deans, Chairs, and Directors received Andrew Soll's e-mail addressing Governor Doyle's Budget Management Measures. We need to weigh-in on this issue. In Soll's memo, he stated that before a vacancy is filled, the position must be approved and demonstrated to be essential to the university's mission. What does this mean? Who approves and determines what is essential to the university's mission concerning issues of diversity and equity on our campus? The current draft of the Strategic Plan does not include **equity and diversity** in its vision and main goals. We are concerned that human or financial resources for diversity and equity programming could be eliminated or frozen because **equity and diversity** are not deemed as "essential to the university's mission."

When a budget has to be trimmed it may be easier for the university to ignore its need to address issues of equity and diversity; issues that challenge the current privileged majority. Funding for equity and diversity issues may find its way to the bottom of the university's agenda.

Goals can only be attained if they are identified as being valuable. The 2016 vision on page 4 reads, "Signs written in a score of different languages help the hundreds of international students on campus feel at home..." This vision also sees scholarships and partnerships that make it possible for "almost three out of four of our students to

study internationally or in multicultural settings in the United States.”The 2016 vision does not describe the successful integration of its multicultural student body. Nor does it address having met the needs of its multicultural faculty, staff and students. In 2016 we should expect to see UW-Eau Claire faculty and staff receiving consistent and sufficient support to implement their multicultural curriculum. Our campus will have more advantages for students if we meaningfully embrace and implement strategies that are productive for all students; i.e., international, student of color, disadvantaged and majority.

We should be moving forward with our original plans to include Equity and Diversity as one of our *main* goals. Especially, since it is well- known that the demographics of our country are changing. Now we have an even greater responsibility to prepare our homogenous population to be educated to successfully interact with other underrepresented groups.

UW-Eau Claire’s student body will benefit from opportunities presented by culturally diverse and fairly grounded ways of thinking and doing. Our students will graduate with skills that enable them to work and live in the 21st Century as productive citizens. This will be true because these students have had opportunities to learn from a diverse community of faculty, staff, students and learners and thinkers. The Chronicle of Higher Education’s Almanac (<http://chronicle.com/weekly/almanac/2007/nation/010180.htm>) reported that 64% of new students in the U.S. at 4-year colleges “expect to socialize with someone of another racial or ethnic group” during their years in school.

Summary:

The definition of “Global” education can be interpreted and implemented differently by administrators and policy makers. A “global” education does not necessarily include an education that fosters equity and diversity.

We strongly request that Fostering Equity and Diversity be added to Goal #1 in UW-Eau Claire’s Strategic Plan for the best interest of all students, faculty and staff.