

Final Report Work Group 6 – Professional Development Subcommittee

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The topics of diversity and equity have been with UW-Eau Claire for a long time although the emphasis on the topics within the University community has varied with changes in leadership and with both campus and System initiatives. In each iteration, professional development activities have taken place, and although progress has been made, the culturally systemic nature of the problem means that the issues need to remain within any strategic plan for the constant improvement of the University. It is also safe to assume that voluntary professional development activities have largely “preached to the choir,” while those most in need of development have participated at a lesser rate.

As the University’s Strategic Plan emerges, it will be used to bring focus to a broad array of professional development activities, but those centering on the topic of diversity and equity need to have a primary position. Moreover, the topics of diversity and equity need to be built into professional development activities that may have a different primary focus (e.g., professional development in “Assessment Practices” should include attention to the issues of diversity and equity in assessment of learning—as in the concept of the Equity Scorecard for interpreting assessment data and, then, designing change around that data).

Many entities on campus such as the area of Student Development and Diversity, Affirmative Action, the Arts and Sciences Diversity Advisory Committee (ASDAC), and Chancellor’s Diversity Advisory Commission already have diversity and equity as part of their missions, and these entities need to be consulted and engaged in coordinating diversity and equity professional development as the University Strategic Plan begins to lay out specific issues for attention.

Change will not take place overnight—there is no magic professional development activity that will transform the campus after a single workshop. Therefore, the campus will benefit most from persistent yet evolving professional development to foster a more equitable campus climate that, in turn, can help the University enhance diversity and achieve equity.

Recommended Strategies and Programs

Enhance Orientation Programs

- Strengthen new-hire orientation programs for all employees: such programs will inevitably have more to accomplish than diversity and equity, but this is an ideal and ongoing opportunity to foreground the topic as a central concern of campus culture. Specific strategies include:
 - An interactive orientation for new faculty and instructional academic staff that links equity and diversity training and awareness with curriculum, pedagogy and teaching. This proposal complements the professional development suggestions outlined in Group 2 and should be integrated with a revised, comprehensive orientation process.
 - Relevant portions of the orientation on diversity and equity also would be open to all new employees to avoid duplication of effort and to build community.
 - On-line modules that would provide equity and diversity information and awareness activities, suitable for individuals (classified or unclassified) who join the campus community throughout the year.

Provide Campus-wide Professional Development

In addition to the suggestions below, we recommend a special event, targeted for the fall of 2008, that would engage *all* employees, both new and existing, in a campus-wide focus on diversity and equity. This event—perhaps coordinated with an August orientation or the Blugold Breakfast—could feature a national speaker, study groups, break-out sessions and training opportunities that would inform and engage the entire campus community in a concerted effort on behalf of our equity and diversity commitment.

With the foundation of knowledge and participation such a special event would support, the University can strengthen ongoing professional development that could include:

- Campus-wide development by external facilitators such as ChangeWork and Wiseli to target specific needs or opportunities of individual units. We envision a focused set of workshops and activities led by experts who can use their outside perspectives to guide the campus to a better understanding of itself and where it needs to go.
- We also recommend that the consultants provide training for a cadre of interested faculty and staff who will serve as ongoing facilitators for individual departments and units who want to explore equity issues more extensively.

Continue Existing Activities

- Continue and enhance ongoing professional development activities already in place to address diversity and equity.
 - Current activities include: training events, consciousness-raising workshops, reading groups, and other activities.

- Campus entities involved in current activities include the Peer Diversity Educators, Network for Excellence in Teaching, Affirmative Action Office, and various Student Development and Diversity units, among others.
- Improved use of technology to more effectively reach a larger campus audience.
 - Examples include sessions run with clickers, modules, and web-based exercises.

Identify Coordinating Structure

- Designate an entity to coordinate and promote professional development efforts in the area of equity and diversity. We do not recommend establishing a new position, but identifying an existing entity that can coordinate activities implemented across units.