



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

March 7, 2006

Dear Colleagues:

I write to transmit a copy of the comment draft of the University of Oregon Diversity Plan, just completed by the Executive Diversity Working Group. Much work remains, but I am certain that we – faculty, staff, and students – can achieve our goal of a diverse, inclusive, and equitable institution.

I appointed the Executive Diversity Working Group in June of 2005, with the support of the University Senate and a number of other campus constituencies, to review carefully and refine our initial diversity plan, which was released in May of 2005. The new Working Group intentionally included members with a range of opinions about and viewpoints that had not been included in the initial draft. It was charged with discussing the plan's major themes, considering additions and revisions that would address concerns and problems with the first version, and developing a new draft plan.

In November 2005, the Working Group provided me a draft and recommended it be discussed with a number of campus leadership groups, including faculty, staff and students. The opinions of these groups were provided to the Working Group for its consideration; the group revised the document. That revision is a comment draft of A Diversity Plan for the University of Oregon, attached.

This comment draft does not reflect any one individual's or group's view. You may find elements with which you agree and areas in which you think the plan to be in error. I want everyone to be able to voice his or her concerns in the next few weeks. To help gather these comments, I have called for nominations for a new Diversity Advisory Committee. The committee will include faculty, staff, students, and external community members. It will disseminate information about the plan, solicit and receive feedback, and prepare a report for me, including specific recommendations for changes. The responsibility for making final revisions before we present it to the University Senate for endorsement is mine. I acknowledge that virtually every reader is likely to have some disagreement with the final proposal.

Even after adoption, this plan will evolve over time. It will be reviewed and revised every five years, as will the plans for each college, school, and unit described within it.

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An equal opportunity, affirmative

action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

Too often in these endeavors the availability or lack of resources dilutes our vision or defines our reach. We cannot fall into that trap in this effort. There is no doubt that availability of resources will be critical but so too will be our resolve to use our existing collective capacities. We must address the objectives of this plan through a combination of prioritizing existing resources and, to the extent possible, allocating new resources as they are available.

The comment draft plan places responsibility for planning and action at the college, school, and unit level. Each of these groups is required to develop a strategic plan that identifies its challenges, the actions that will address them, and the plans for how progress will be measured. Deans and unit leaders will provide status reports to the senior vice president and provost and the vice provost for institutional equity and diversity. The provost will include these plans in a report to the university community each year.

The comment draft will be presented to the University Senate on March 8. I will appoint the Diversity Advisory Committee this month; it will solicit and receive community feedback through April and make its recommendation to me in early May. I will make final revisions in May and anticipate formal adoption of the plan by the end of that month. The college, school, and unit strategic plans described in the attached comment draft plan are to be submitted to the provost before spring break 2007; these plans are to be revised and adopted in spring term 2007; and the first annual reports from the colleges, schools, and units are due and will be presented to the University Senate in spring term 2008.

We all owe an enormous debt of gratitude to those who have given of their time to help this university move forward in this vital effort. This work has at times been controversial and that likely will continue. But we must all stay engaged in this process to ensure that the University of Oregon achieves its goals of being a diverse and inclusive institution that prepares its graduates to live and work in today's world.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave".

Dave Frohnmayer
President

COMMENT DRAFT
MARCH 6, 2006

Diversity Plan for the University of Oregon

March 6, 2006

**Prepared by
Executive Diversity Working Group**

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University of Oregon Mission Statement

The University of Oregon is a comprehensive research university that serves its students and the people of Oregon, the nation, and the world through the creation and transfer of knowledge in the liberal arts, the natural and social sciences, and the professions. It is the Association of American Universities flagship institution of the Oregon University System.

The university is a community of scholars dedicated to the highest standards of academic inquiry, learning, and service. Recognizing that knowledge is the fundamental wealth of civilization, the university strives to enrich the public that sustains it through

a commitment to undergraduate education, with a goal of helping the individual learn to question critically, think logically, communicate clearly, act creatively, and live ethically

a commitment to graduate education to develop creators and innovators who will generate new knowledge and shape experience for the benefit of humanity

a recognition that research, both basic and applied, is essential to the intellectual health of the university, as well as to the enrichment of the lives of Oregonians, by energizing the state's economic, cultural, and political structure

the establishment of a framework for lifelong learning that leads to productive careers and to the enduring joy of inquiry

the integration of teaching, research, and service as mutually enriching enterprises that together accomplish the university's mission and support its spirit of community

the acceptance of the challenge of an evolving social, political, and technological environment by welcoming and guiding change rather than reacting to it

- a dedication to the principles of equality of opportunity and freedom from unfair discrimination for all members of the university community and an acceptance of true diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community
- a commitment to international awareness and understanding, and to the development of a faculty and student body that are capable of participating effectively in a global society

the conviction that freedom of thought and expression is the bedrock principle on which university activity is based

the cultivation of an attitude toward citizenship that fosters a caring, supportive atmosphere on campus and the wise exercise of civic responsibilities and individual judgment throughout life

a continuing commitment to affordable public higher education

Diversity Plan for the University of Oregon March 6, 2006

VISION

Equality, opportunity, and pluralism are core values that the University of Oregon (the "University") embraces as an institution dedicated to the creation and dissemination of knowledge in an ever-changing, increasingly diverse world. Equality, opportunity, and pluralism are also ideals that we struggle to meet, both as a University community and within broader society. This Diversity Plan reflects the need for direction in our continuing efforts to meet these ideals.

The University is a place where people from different cultures and experiences learn together; understanding and respecting these differences are critical for the University to be a place of open-minded inquiry where, in challenging the boundaries of knowledge, we include and value all members of our community.

We therefore affirm, in the words of the University Mission Statement, "the principles of equality of opportunity and freedom from unfair discrimination for all members of the university community and an acceptance of true diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community." We affirm the University's commitment to equity, to diversity, and to the development of faculty, students, officers of administration, and staff who will participate effectively in a global society.

A university that values diversity respects diversity of opinion. As the Mission Statement avows, "freedom of thought and expression is the bedrock principle on which university activity is based." The exercise of that freedom also carries responsibilities. Intellectual honesty asks us to acknowledge the right of others to examine our assumptions, facts, and conclusions. Intellectual rigor asks that we assess the grounds on which we base our opinions and remain open to alternative analysis. Ethics and evenhandedness commits us to consider the effects of what we say on others.

As members of the University community, we take it upon ourselves to protect and enhance all intellectual discourse and to discharge the obligations such investigation requires of us. To that end, we should constantly work to make ourselves more adept at understanding how the differences of race, ethnicity,

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international origin or citizenship, gender, religious affiliation or background, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic class, political affiliation or belief, and ability or disability affect the way we live and learn, so that we are better able to respond to intolerance and prejudice, which violate our purpose and mission.

As the University Mission Statement says, we live in a global society. We therefore affirm that we should develop "international awareness and understanding." And we affirm that we should, in all we do, work collectively to create and promote "a caring, supportive atmosphere on campus and the wise exercise of civic responsibilities and individual judgment throughout life."

NEED FOR A DIVERSITY PLAN

The University's Mission Statement emphasizes many of the issues addressed in this Diversity Plan. The Diversity Plan will assist the University in carrying out its Mission Statement.

Many current University programs focus on the nature of diversity on campus, on creating greater diversity at the University, on improving the ability of faculty, students, officers of administration, and staff to interact respectfully and effectively with each other, and on helping the University community address diversity-related conflicts. Although many programs exist, coordination has been haphazard.

In an effort to coordinate and support diversity efforts, in 2002 the University created the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity ("OIED"), headed by a Vice Provost of Institutional Equity and Diversity. The charge given to OIED and the Vice Provost was to provide central leadership for campus diversity efforts, to coordinate and support existing diversity initiatives, to rethink the administrative structure of existing offices to ensure the most efficient use of administrative time and to ensure the benefits of coordination, and to help the University develop new initiatives in the most cost-effective and productive ways possible. Through OIED the University sought to fulfill its commitment to its mission, as articulated in the University's Mission Statement.

An initial project of the Vice Provost of OIED was to convene a Work Group on Diversity (the "Work Group"), bringing together persons from around campus who work on diversity-related matters. The Work Group developed six points as a structure for thinking about diversity at the University and then generated ideas about new diversity initiatives and programs that the University might consider. Their goal was to create a Diversity Plan for the University. The reasons for the creation of a Diversity Plan for the University included:

Recognition that top-tier research universities have diverse faculties, students, officers of administration, and staff and that increasing diversity at the University will improve the University's ability to attract intelligent, productive, and successful faculty, students, officers of administration, and staff.

Recognition that more specific ideas and initiatives were needed to further the University's mission.

Recognition that some members of the University community do not feel included, respected, and safe.

Recognition that changing demographics will bring challenges to the University.

The Work Group issued a draft Diversity Plan in May 2005 (the “May Draft”) that generated much comment from members of the University community. Following a recommendation from the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, the President appointed an Executive Diversity Working Group (“EDWG”) to review the May Draft and to develop a second draft. EDWG developed a second draft, this March Comment Draft, building on the work done by the original Work Group.

Neither the initial Work Group nor EDWG has undertaken a systematic review of current diversity efforts at the University. This sort of planning – the review and analysis of existing programs to determine how to improve those programs and how best to develop new programs – falls squarely within the charge to OIED and should be an important part of the work of that office. In addition, each unit will engage in this planning as the unit develops its own strategic action plan as detailed in this Diversity Plan.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Conditions facing the University and the state of Oregon help explain the need for a Diversity Plan. Although limited in some respects, available data provide interesting information.

The University has committed a large set of resources to promote diversity, enhance inclusiveness, and strengthen the presence of underrepresented groups on campus. While there is much to be proud of in these current and past efforts, it is also clear that there is much work to be done for the University in realizing its diversity goals. Despite concern that the University has insufficient financial resources to address the host of advances that must take place, substantial existing human capacity within the University can be brought to bear on these issues.

What do the University and Oregon state data tell us? An initial caveat is that the University and state sociodemographic data are limited insufficient to permit full examination of diversity as we broadly define it. Data regarding sexual orientation, social economic status, religious affiliation, language, and other factors are not widely available for University students, staff, and faculty, nor is such information widely available from the Oregon state demographic data. In terms of race/ethnicity, however, there are sufficient data to examine important issues. Some key points, summarized from the available data from the University, U.S. Census, and Oregon Department of Education are as follows:

Oregon State Data:

- Between the '90-'91 and '02-'03 school year, the Latino population in Oregon public K-12 schools grew 219%.
- During that same period of time there was also strong growth among African American students (44%), American Indian students (52%), and Asian/Pacific Islander students (68%).
- Meanwhile, the growth rate for white students in Oregon K-12 schools during this same period of time was less than 1%.
- Between the '04-'05 school year and the current '05-'06 school year alone, the Latino population in Oregon schools grew 10%.

Mapping State Data to University of Oregon Context:

- In 2004, while 8% of those who completed high school with diplomas were Latino, Latino students accounted for 3% of the University's student population.
- In 2004, 2% of those who completed high school were African American and another 2% were American Indian, but African American and Indian students only accounted for 1% each of the University's student population.
- Asian students accounted for 5% of those who completed high school in Oregon, and 6% of the University's student population.
- While the proportion of international students at the University has increased in recent years, there has been little growth in proportions of students who are domestic students of color.

University of Oregon Graduation and Retention

- Based on an analysis of data from the cohort of first-time full-time freshmen enrolled at the University in 2000, 78% of students persisted at the University between the first and second year.
- While few group differences are observable in the second-year retention rates, Latino students had the lowest retention rate (74%).
- Third-year retention among African American students was 59%, while the retention for all other racial/ethnic groups was above 70%.
- Fourth-year retention among African American and American Indian students was 59% and 58%, respectively.
- 41% of white students, 37% of Asian students, 28% of Latino students, 22% of African American students, and 16% of American Indian students graduated from the University within 4-years.
- In general, about 65% of University students have graduated after six years, and the gap between students of color and white students narrows by six years.
- Many potential predictors of retention and completion, such as socio-economic background, family structure, and experiences on campus, are not included in these data.

In many ways these data speak for themselves. There is no question that Oregon is undergoing rapid and massive sociodemographic change, and the University does not yet reflect these rapidly changing conditions in its student enrollment. We have maintained relative proportionality in some areas but have yet to catch the curve of rapid growth that we are seeing throughout the state. We can and must do better in respectfully accommodating and enhancing our diverse University community, which will continue to diversify in the decades to come. Our students must be prepared to live and work in highly diverse and challenging circumstances.

A recent study by University of Oregon English Professor Julia Lesage and her colleagues, *Making a Difference: Students of Color Speak Out* (2002), describes how some students experience our campus. Students of color and other underrepresented students often do not feel included, respected, or safe. They regularly confront inappropriate comments made by University employees and fellow students and endure tense interactions in living, learning, and other public spaces. Such cumulative experiences take their toll. In preparing all of our students for the future in an increasingly diverse state, nation, and world, we must create and maintain contexts for learning and engagement that respect, represent, and benefit from our larger diversity.