

University of Oregon Diversity Strategic Action Planning Resource Guide

Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity UO Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC)

Overview

The Diversity Plan for the University of Oregon was adopted and issued by President Frohnmayer on May 14, 2006 and adopted by the University Senate on May 24, 2006. Adoption of this plan represents an important step for the institution in realizing its diversity goals. The plan provides a set of guiding principles to direct the University as it moves forward in fostering a culturally responsive community. A cornerstone of the Diversity Plan is that each college, school, and unit must develop its own Strategic Action Plan. The Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity and the Diversity Advisory Group appointed by President Frohnmayer are working to assist the University and individual units as they navigate this process. This guide is a part of that work. This guide is intended to provide information, identify resources, and offer initial ideas about the strategic planning process.

Responsibility for Creating Plans

While there is no exact prescription about the number of strategic plans that will be submitted, the expectation is that, at minimum, there will be plan developed for every college, school, and vice presidential office, as well as a plan for the athletics department, the library, the Office of the Provost, the Office of the President, and the ASUO. Some units have already begun the process of creating strategic plans or have recently adopted diversity plans, and this initiative should be applauded. In terms of the next steps in these cases, the expectation is that those plans would be further refined as necessary for alignment with the university diversity plan, and then reviewed along with other plans.

Leadership transitions involving a number of campus units should be viewed as opportunities for us to examine anew the diversity challenges we face and to initiate a strategic planning process now that will inform current and future leadership. Because the resulting strategic plans will be reviewed and revised on a regular basis, there will be ample opportunity for plans to evolve over time based on unit-level leadership transitions.

Plan Organizing Elements

According to the University Diversity Plan, each Strategic Action Plan (SAP) must include a focus on three main areas. They are as follows:

1. Provide **details and data** (where appropriate) about the specific diversity challenges that are to be addressed in the Strategic Action Plan and why these targets are most appropriate.
2. Provide detailed **descriptions of the specific actions** that will be taken to address the identified diversity challenges.
3. Provide information about the **measurable markers of progress** that will be assessed during implementation.

Areas of Content Emphasis

The University plan describes six main points that are to be considered in each strategic plan. They are:

- Developing a Culturally Responsive Community
- Improving Campus Climate
- Building Critical Mass
- Expanding and Filling the Pipeline
- Developing and Strengthening Community Linkages
- Developing and Reinforcing Diversity Infrastructure

All strategic plans are expected to address these six strategic directions, although we recognize that particular colleges, schools, and units may emphasize more strongly one or more of the focal areas.

Template Information

In Appendix A, we provide a possible template for the SAP document. The template is provided only as a starting point of how a unit may want to organize their SAP. Units are encouraged to use whatever organizational structure makes sense to them, as long as the organizing elements and content areas are each fully addressed. In addition, in Appendix C, we provide examples of draft plans from campus units. These examples are only provided to give unit leaders a sense of how other units have approached this process. As of yet, none of these plans has been officially reviewed by the Provost, Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity or the Diversity Advisory Committee.

Committee Development

As the strategic planning process gets underway, the two main preliminary steps are likely to include identifying a workgroup or committee to develop the plan and beginning the process of environmental scanning for current unit-level diversity efforts and challenges.

As unit leaders begin to identify a committee or work group to develop the unit's SAP, it is imperative that the process be viewed as the shared responsibility of all faculty, students, staff, and officers of administration in the unit. Each of these constituencies, along with external

community members, should be considered for membership in committees. Also, it is important to avoid marginalizing expertise for diversity planning to those few individuals from underrepresented groups in a particular unit. This is about all of us, and we encourage unit leaders to engage the broad constituency base in developing plans. In establishing a committee or workgroup, consider the following questions:

- Is there a natural group to guide this process already functioning within the organization?
- Who should be at the table for planning and which voices should be heard?
- What commitment is there from the unit leadership to participate directly in the planning process?
- How will committee members be nominated or selected?
- Will the meetings be open?
- How will information about the work of the committee be shared with others in the unit?
- How will decisions be made in the committee and what is the place of the committee in the unit governance?
- Given wide representation in the committee, how will issues of power, status differentials, and other group dynamics be handled in the working agreements of the group? How will the committee ensure that all members have an equal voice within the workgroup?

Organizing Element 1: Identifying Unit Strengths and Challenges

As the strategic planning process commences, a main activity centers on collecting and analyzing relevant unit-level data about current diversity efforts and challenges. In engaging in this type of environmental scan, it might be useful to aggregate existing documents such as organizational charts, governance policies, unit mission statements, and any existing unit diversity plans. Furthermore, units will also want to consider examining relevant archival data¹ about program demographics and outcomes (e.g., student demographics in various programs, search pool demographics, student persistence and graduation, records of complaints and grievances). In addition to reviewing current programs and activities, units might also consider the potential value in prospective data gathering strategies such as conducting surveys or focus groups to assess current conditions. During the environmental scanning process, consider the following (non-exhaustive) set of questions:

- What diversity programs/initiatives are currently underway?
- What is required by your accreditation body or generally perceived as best practices?
- How effective are the current programs in addressing diversity goals?
- Where are the gaps in curriculum, initiatives, programs, and services?
- What are the historical conditions that have shaped the unit's responses to diversity issues?
- What are the internal and external reputations of the unit in terms of its diversity efforts?
- What concerns about diversity have gone unaddressed in the unit?
- What is the resource capacity of the unit and unit leadership to address diversity challenges?

¹ Beyond analyzing unit-level archival data that might be available, unit leaders may want to contact the Office of Resource Management at 346-1242 for access to additional source of institutional research.

- What good ideas and initiatives have been developed in the unit, but not ever brought to fruition?
- What are strengths that might be directed towards addressing new challenges?
- Who might have a relevant perspective on these questions who is not already involved?

Organizing Element 2: Targeting Strategic Actions

Once relevant data have been synthesized and analyzed, the goal is for units to have a clear a sense of their strengths, challenges, gaps, and resource potential in addressing diversity issues. With that information, the next step is to begin identifying specific targeted actions that could be taken to capitalize on unit strengths and address the gaps. This effort is likely to include a review of the availability of best practice interventions that target specific problem areas and consideration of potential efficacy of such interventions were they to be supported by the unit. Consider the following questions:

- Given identified unit gaps, what are intervention strategies that could be employed to fill these gaps?
- How will historically unaddressed concerns be addressed in new initiatives?
- What are some of the best practices available to the unit? What is being done in similar units elsewhere?
- Which identified strategies are likely to have short-term vs. long-term impact on unit outcomes?
- How can professional development activities be employed to address identified challenges?
- Given available resources, what can the unit do now?
- What long standing practices should be reconsidered in support of new directions?
- How will the unit ensure that responsibility for particular actions is shared?
- How will the unit leadership maintain accountability?
- What are the strategies that will have maximum buy-in from unit constituency?
- What can the unit do to expand existent knowledge and resources within the unit given efforts to act on specific strategies?
- What opportunities are there to collaborate on strategic actions across units?

Organizing Element 3: Identifying Markers of Progress

The university plan requires that SAPs describe measurable markers of progress for each identified strategic action. The main purpose is to collect sufficient data about the ongoing effectiveness of the intervention as they are implemented so that unit leaders can refine their approaches on a regular basis. Progress on strategic actions will be reported as part of the yearly public reporting requirement that is delineated in the university's plan, Appendix D. When considering progress markers, it is advisable to consider short-term, proximal markers that demonstrate success on smaller steps towards a broader strategic action. For example, if the unit identifies a strategic action related to diversifying the ranks of search pools, direct short-term markers could include things such as level of accessibility of job postings by diverse

constituencies. In determining measures of progress, we recommend consideration of the following questions:

- What will the unit community be like when diversity goals have been reached?
- What are some small, immediate ways that the unit will know that progress is being made on a particular action?
- How will outcome variables be operationalized as measurable indicators?
- What are some qualitative and quantitative methods that might be employed to track progress?
- What are some of the measurement tools that have been used commonly in the field for particular programs and services?
- Who will be responsible for collecting, tracking, and reporting outcome data?
- What types of data will be useful to inform revision of the unit's strategic plan over time?
- What are the relevant sources of information in tracking progress and success as related to the current climate of the unit, e.g. students, faculty and staff?

Timelines

Units are expected to begin development of their plans during fall term 2006. Completed drafts must be submitted to the Provost on or before March 23, 2007. The Provost, Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity, and the University Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) will provide review feedback so that plans may be revised and adopted in spring 2007.

Review Process

The review will be collaborative. The University plan provides that each dean or unit leader will have final discretion as to the content of their strategic plan subject to the authority of the Provost. Our expectation is that informal review, consultation, and discussion would occur throughout the planning process, and not just following the final submission of draft strategic plans. The Provost, the Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity, and the DAC will all be involved in the review process. The review process will include a focus in the following areas:

- Consistency with strategic directions outlined in the University Diversity Plan
- Appropriateness of targeted actions given specified college, school, and unit challenges
- Appropriateness of measures to track progress on strategic actions
- Clarity of specification for who will take responsibility for each action
- Sufficiency of resource allocations
- Feasibility of implementation
- Level of involvement of unit constituency base during the planning process

Technical Assistance and Support

As these initial steps get underway, OIED and the DAC have created a process to provide technical assistance and support during the strategic planning process. This support includes the following:

- A resource guide with information, examples, and templates.
- Three open technical assistance work sessions hosted by OIED and the DAC so that those involved in strategic planning will have direct support in developing the structure and content of their plans. Work session dates are as follows:
 - Tuesday, October 3, 2006 / 9:30-12:30 / Knight Library Browsing Room
 - Friday, October 13, 2006 / 9:00-12:00 / REC Center Bonus Room
 - Thursday, October 26, 2006 / 1:00-4:00 / REC Center Bonus Room
- All colleges, schools, and units are encouraged to request individual consultation and support from OIED and the DAC during the planning process.