2002 Diversity Council Recommendation

June 9, 2002

President and Board of Trustees
Central Washington University

Annual Report of Accomplishments and Recommendations

Introduction

To begin, we congratulate Dr. Jerilyn McIntyre for recognizing the centrality and significance of diversity issues as they relate to the future success of Central Washington University. Her appointment of the first Diversity Council demonstrates her awareness of the fact that the U.S. population has become a multicultural democracy, home to over 200 ethnic, religious and cultural groups. In order to grow, CWU will need to be able to recruit and retain employees from all segments of the populace. Her creation of the Diversity Council also demonstrates her belief that diversity and equity are central values of institutions dedicated to academic excellence.

Although we recognize the value of tolerance, tolerance is not enough. It is not enough for students, faculty and staff of diverse ethnicities, genders, abilities and sexual orientations to describe the atmosphere at Central as tolerant. Our goal is to create and maintain a campus environment for learning and working so supportive that our diverse faculty, students and staff will sing our praises to other campuses, sending the message that CWU not only "talks the talk," but "walks the walk."

In creating the Diversity Council, Dr. McIntyre referred to the Campus Climate Task Force Report of 1996, citing her desire to continue diligently toward addressing the recommendations in the report. The report ends with the following recommendation:

To ensure that a concern for climate is a continuing institutional priority, we recommend that a permanent Campus Climate Oversight Committee with rotating membership be established to gather and review information regarding campus climate and to make reports and recommendations to the Board of Trustees, the president, the faculty senate, and the Central community as appropriate.

After five years of waiting, the Diversity Council was created in response to that recommendation. Some of the other forty recommendations embedded in the report have also been addressed by the president or other administrators, most notably the hiring of an ombudsperson to provide independent, impartial, and confidential consultation to all members of the campus community. Others have not been addressed. It is difficult to assess our progress toward addressing many of the recommendations because responsibility for implementing and monitoring change is spread across several units.

Therefore, the Diversity Council recommends that the president and the Board of Trustees direct all administrators above the department level to return to the Campus Climate Task Force Report
of 1996 to review the efforts of their own units toward addressing the recommendations made there. In addition, each administrator should construct a plan for meeting, or a rationale for modifying and then meeting, the recommendations. They should also construct a list of perceived needs related to diversity and equity which were not mentioned in the report but over which their units have some responsibility. The results of the administrative reports should be taken into account in the next revision of the president's Strategic Management Objectives. Future actions of the Diversity Council will be guided by these objectives in support of the president's strategic plan.

Accomplishments

In alignment with the recommendation cited above, the Diversity Council was appointed in fall of 2001 by President McIntyre. During its first year, the Council met six times and interacted regularly through an e-mail list. Meeting agendas are described below.

October 19, 2001: Introductions, reviewed the charge to the Diversity Council, facilitated brainstorm to identify issues, encourage involvement, and establish governing principles.

November 2 and 11, 2001: Half-day meetings with members of the Diversity Council in smaller groups review Campus Climate Report and construct preliminary mission and goals documents.

December 7, 2001: Met with President McIntyre and Provost Soltz, who responded to our direction, intentions, and preliminary drafts of mission and goals. Reviewed and revised Mission and Goals, prioritized action items and selected those to focus on this year, made a plan for encouraging inclusion.

January 22, 2002: Met to plan our Forum: Determined preferred place, time, duration, methods of encouraging participation. Focused issues to be discussed.

March 25, 2002: A Forum on Diversity Issues and Governance: Open forum, invitations to all members of the campus community, including facilitated discussions on governance and priorities. All comments and concerns were discussed and incorporated into Diversity Council documents and future plans.

May 16, 2002: Reviewed, revised, and adopted governance plan in alignment with Forum recommendations. Determined the rotation of membership. Nominated candidates for positions of chair, chair-elect, and vice chair, setting leadership three years in advance to insure continuity.

At its third meeting, the Council decided to prioritize and take observable action on three issues this year. We met and exceeded that expectation. The plans and results are listed below:

1. Work with the president to hold specific units accountable for diversity efforts. At our meeting, she reported that she had already required unit leaders to articulate one indicator for performance that relates to diversity efforts as part of their assessment plan. She also suggested that we might be of assistance in helping to articulate those indices.
2. Insure that as university policies evolve, they take into account the effects of diversity. The President responded to this action item by offering the Diversity Council a seat on the President's Advisory Council.

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Recommendations

Although the Council, in accordance with its mission and goals, will work to celebrate, mediate, facilitate, and communicate diversity issues, it is committed to overseeing the infusion of strategies and policies related to diversity throughout all operations of the CWU system. In addition to reporting on their progress toward addressing the recommendations of the Campus Climate Task Force Report, we have identified several other specific concerns we would like to see taken into account in our strategic planning and performance evaluation processes. On issues of diversity and equity, we need to continue to move beyond tolerance to assent, beyond seeing diversity issues as a problem to seeing diversity as part of our solution.

1. Because people involved in recruitment and hiring seem very unsure about what we can and cannot do to support minority hiring under I-200, we request that the administration solicit specific guidance from the State Assistant Attorney General about permissions and restrictions related to advertising, network recruiting, promoting and hiring a diverse workforce. We also request that the information be disseminated to all hiring units with a clear message of advocacy for diversity, and that the administration project a clearly proactive, public stance in relation to diverse hiring practices.

2. To attract and retain students from all populations, the university has already recognized the need to enhance our student support and student service facilities. In the same vein, to attract and retain a diverse population, we need to enhance Multicultural Student Services and Gay Student Services on this campus. Every other university in the state system has
support centers for students of color, and we don't have one full-time employee working with students of color in a recruiting/retention/support capacity. NO other university in the state system has a recruitment/retention/support person for gay students, so it would be a big recruitment advantage.

3. Because there is a decided lack of shared assumptions guiding our university discussion of diversity issues, we propose that opportunities for university-wide development of diversity awareness be explored and initiated; we suggest that CWU dedicate itself thematically for a year to transforming itself into an institution that embraces diversity as a core value. This venture needs to have as its end specific and measurable outcomes for the academic, fiscal, development, and support units. Specifically, the Diversity Council supports the initiative on the part of the Diversity Committee of the Center for Teaching and Learning to bring to campus professional development leaders in the areas of ethnicity and education.

4. While many individual departments, faculty members, and students have generated curricular ideas in support of diversity, there is no curricular requirement that would guarantee all students the opportunity to consider issues of diversity. We propose that a diversity requirement be considered by the faculty senate general education committee.

5. While the catalogs indicate to prospective students that we have programs in Women's Studies and Ethnic Studies, these programs exist almost entirely because of the singular efforts of individual faculty members who keep them alive despite little funding or support. These programs are specific examples of how we have tolerated but not really invested in diversity programming. All of these programs currently take advantage of the slim resources of other departments. They are organized and named on paper but then compete with sometimes resentful home departments for faculty time and energy. We propose that the university consider strategies for enfranchising these programs and moving them from the margins to the center of curricular innovation. For example, a Cultural Studies department could be established to house, budget and assess minors and/or majors in areas such as Women's Studies, Ethnic Studies, GLBT Studies, and even Asian Pacific Studies and Latin American Studies. It could also provide some of the courses for a general education diversity requirement.

6. While we do identify with the goal of inclusiveness and promulgate a broad definition of diversity, we also do not want the campus community to lose sight of our most terrifying reasons for concern: racism, homophobia, and all forms of hatred that lead to violence and harassment. We recommend that all units adopt zero tolerance policies in regard to hate activities and establish clear consequences for violations of these policies.

7. We seem to have a problem retaining our staff and faculty of color. To find a solution to this revolving-door situation among minority faculty, the EOP office and Human Resources should undertake a Cultural Audit of the employee population at CWU. The campus-wide process can determine whether the climate is conducive to productivity for all constituencies. The Cultural Audit should focus on the groups most likely to be victims of discrimination: women, older workers, people of color, disabled individuals and members of the gay and lesbian communities. The purpose of the audit should be to provide a framework for developing policies necessary for all people to prosper and thrive here.

Conclusion
We thank President McIntyre and the Board of Trustees for empowering CWU's conversation related to diversity by endorsing the Diversity Council's efforts. We believe that not only do our campuses benefit by promoting a climate of support for all people, but the entire community prospers when we recruit, educate, and retain role models and leaders that reflect the diversity of our region. These role models can encourage others like them to attend CWU. In turn, CWU will earn an enviable reputation as a campus that welcomes diversity.

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Chair, Diversity Council