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**Informing Campus Climate Surveys for Diversity:  
Summary of Undergraduate and Graduate Focus Groups and  
Faculty Interviews**

September 2002, NC State University continued its process of examining its climate for diversity. An assessment plan was developed that outlines the assessment of the campus climate over a three-year period with suggestions for continued assessment for undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff. (A full history of NC State's assessment of diversity can be found in the report, *Classroom Climate Diversity at NC State University*). Each step of the assessment plan was designed to inform the next step. Following the outline of the work to date, this report describes for participants in the focus groups the general themes that emerged as they inform the development of the next series of surveys.

The first step in the assessment process was the development and administration of the *Classroom Climate Survey*. In addition to assessing students' perceptions of the classroom climate for diversity, the *Classroom Climate Survey* enabled administrators to understand how students defined diversity. Specifically, administrators learned that students' definition of diversity appeared to influence their perceptions of the classroom climate for diversity. These assessment findings led to further refinement of the next stage of the assessment process.

The next step set forth by the Diversity assessment plan was to create surveys that would examine the characteristics of a diversity-enriched environment. In order to inform the creation of the surveys, focus groups for undergraduate and graduate students and faculty interviews were conducted. The information gained from the focus groups and interviews will be used to design the surveys for students and faculty to assess where the campus stands currently in offering the characteristics of a supportive environment for diversity. The surveys of campus climate for diversity are being constructed from the results of the original survey and the follow-up focus group sessions. The administration of the surveys is planned for Fall 2003.

Therefore, under the sponsorship of the NC State University's Division of Undergraduate Affairs (acting on behalf of the vacant Office of Diversity) and with the support of both Chancellor Marye Anne Fox and the Provost Office, a qualitative assessment was conducted in Spring 2003 to examine the characteristics of a campus that advocates for diversity. The assessment involved focus group interviews with graduate and undergraduate

students and individual faculty interviews. Due to the findings of the *Classroom Climate Survey*, the University's definition of diversity was used as a framework for the discussion of the characteristics of a diversity-enriched environment. This report is a summary of the findings from the student focus group interviews and individual faculty interviews intended for dissemination to participants of this investigation so they can provide the research team with a member check of the findings.

It is important to keep in mind that the design of the interview and focus group protocols, as well as the methodology and analysis, were created to inform the development of three separate surveys. Thus, challenges to writing up the findings in a narrative report are evident in this document. For example, now having to go back and roll up detailed thematic analyses in a narrative form may appear as an incomplete description of characteristics of a diversity-enriched environment.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

A total of 34 undergraduate and 10 graduate students participated in seven focus groups. Students were selected through a peer and administrative nomination process. Letters were sent to various student leaders, administrators, and faculty asking them to nominate two or three students who they felt would lend significant insight to the University definition of diversity. Nominated students were then sent an invitation via email and US or campus mail asking for their participation in the various focus groups. Incentives for participation consisted of food and beverage provided at the focus group and entry in a drawing for a bookstore gift certificate.

The students participating in the undergraduate and graduate focus groups were of various races/ethnicities and nationalities including African American and Latino. In each of the 10 focus groups there was a mix of African-American students and White, Non-Hispanic students. In terms of gender, there were approximately equal number of males and females represented throughout the undergraduate and graduate focus groups. Various majors were represented throughout the undergraduate focus groups such as engineering, design, and sociology. It appeared from students' descriptions of their activities during the focus groups. Various positions held included athletes, resident hall assistants, student group participants, and student government positions. For the graduate students, it appeared there was an over representation of students from the Adult and College Community Education graduate program.

A total of 23 faculty one on one interviews were conducted. Faculty were selected through a nomination process from their respective Academic Dean in their college. Letters were sent to the 11 colleges' Academic Deans asking them to nominate two faculty from their college that they felt would lend significant insight to the University's definition of diversity. Nominated faculty were then sent an invitation via email and campus mail asking them to participate in the study. No incentives were provided for the faculty. Each of the 11 colleges was represented by at least one faculty member. Faculty participating were also various races/nationalities such as African-American.

When one uses focus groups and interviews as a methodology, follow-up focus groups and interviews are conducted to expand participants and ensure equal representation of the population that the sample is drawing from. Due to the time constraints of the investigation,

the research team was unable to conduct any follow up focus groups with students or faculty interviews.

### ***Measures***

Three separate interview protocols were created for each of the sub-samples (undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty). At the beginning of each focus group and interview, the participants were given the University's definition of diversity which is "diversity is an inclusive collection of individuals and groups who bring varied human characteristics, backgrounds, interests, and points of views to enrich the university community" (NCSU Diversity and African-American Affairs Office, 2003, <http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/diversity/>) and asked to reflect on it. They were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with the definition. If they disagreed with the definition, they were asked why they disagreed and how they would change the definition.

Following the discussion of the definition, the participants were asked how they would know that the definition of diversity had been realized or met by the University. In other words, what would diversity look like operationally in all areas of the University? Participants were specifically asked how they would recognize the institutional diversity definition in various areas such as the student body population. Participants were further asked to elaborate on what steps they would take to implement the characteristics generated.

Specific topics covered differed among the three sub-samples. The areas asked of the undergraduate students included classroom, classroom activities, faculty, student body population, administration/staff, curriculum, residence halls, co-curricular activities, student support services, academic support services and university policies such as admission. The areas asked of the graduate students included all of the above including the laboratory environment/research team, mentor/advisor, and advisory committee. The areas asked of the faculty included design of your curriculum, various policies of your program, classroom population, classroom activities, university administrative leadership, departmental administrative leadership, faculty/staff support services, university policies, equality, and faculty colleagues.

### ***Procedure***

Groups of students were interviewed by a trained facilitator in small groups of four to eight students in various locations across campus. Students' responses and discussion of a variety of questions were audio-taped. In addition, a trained observer took notes on the discussion. Following the discussion, students were provided the opportunity to write down any additional thoughts or comments they may have by completing the interview protocol. The focus groups took approximately 2 hours to conduct. Faculty were interviewed one-on-one by a trained interviewer using an interview protocol. Faculty's responses to the interview questions were also audio-taped. In addition, the interviewer took notes throughout the interview. The interviews took approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour.

The overall temperament of the student focus groups and faculty interviews were positive in nature. Students within the focus groups participated in a calm and pleasant dialogue. No negative comments directed at other students occurred in any of the other focus groups. In addition, each member of the focus groups participated in the conversation. To ensure that all the focus group protocols were covered, meetings between the research team members were held following the evening of the focus groups to inform the facilitator of the next focus group of what topics did not get covered that evening. Thus, the facilitator of the next focus group began with the topics that the previous facilitator was unable to cover in

the previous focus groups. This procedure was done between each focus group ensuring complete coverage of the focus group protocol. The trained interviewer for the faculty interviews followed the same procedure of starting the next interview with topics that were not covered in the previous interview. The majority of the faculty interviews flowed like a conversation, although there were a few interviews that followed the format of question and answer.

The trained interviewers, observers, and facilitators were members of the diversity assessment research team, consisting of the Director of Undergraduate Assessment, the Academic Assessment Research Associate for Undergraduate Assessment, and several graduate students from various graduate programs including psychology and adult and community college education. Each member of the research team attended several trainings on the following topics: conducting focus groups, conducting interviews, and qualitative coding. In addition, each of the members participated in several norming activities for their qualitative coding.

## Results

### ***Analyses***

Participants' comments were analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As stated above, each member of the research team received this type of training in several workshops. In this process of coding, themes and sub-themes emerged from the participants' comments. Specifically, researchers note the re-occurring ideas, words, and phrases in the students' responses. The researchers then organized the participants' thoughts into ideas, words, and phrases, allowing for different key themes or concepts to emerge. Prior to analysis, each of the transcriptions was verified. Transcriptions of audio-tapes were performed by Roger's Word Service.

Graduate, undergraduate, and faculty statements were analyzed separately. The research team members were divided into mini-teams reviewing undergraduate, graduate and faculty responses. Those research team members who conducted the undergraduate focus groups coded the undergraduate data. The mini-team for the graduate student focus group and faculty interviews coded their respective data. As a validity check and control for bias, each transcript was coded by at least two research team members who conducted the specific focus groups or interviews. Discrepancies or differences in coding were then discussed. As an additional check against bias, a research team member who had not conducted the undergraduate focus groups, questioned the resultant themes in the undergraduate focus group data. A similar process was used for the graduate focus group data and faculty data. In addition, the notes taken by the note-taker during the focus group and interview were coded in the same manner. Finally, a member check of the analyses was performed. Participants were given the opportunity to review a draft form of this report to ensure that their comments and thoughts were adequately represented.

The results of the coding are presented in a discussion of the dominant themes that emerged from participants' comments. To meet the primary purpose of this investigation--to inform the development of surveys to assess the campus climate for diversity--summary charts of the emergent themes and their sub-themes were created for each of the sub-samples. Included in the summary chart of the emergent themes were sample statements for a survey to illustrate the theme.

### ***Overall Finding***

One overall finding between the three sub-samples that is important to note is that graduate and undergraduate students and faculty tended to change their diversity definition depending on which topic they were discussing. For example, when discussing classroom-related diversity issues, students' definition of diversity would include individuals with learning disabilities; however, when discussing student support activities, their definition of diversity was limited to race/ethnicity.

### ***Undergraduate Findings***

Interaction. The emerging dominant theme for the undergraduate students was the need for interactions among members of the university community. This theme was further broken down into the sub-themes of interactions between students and students, students and faculty, students and administration, and between faculty and faculty. When discussing student-student interactions on a campus that advocates for diversity, undergraduates envisioned the university offering projects in which the goal was to help humanity or to contribute to the greater good of the community. The undergraduate students agreed that having students work on projects that resulted in providing help to humanity was a sure way to encourage interaction between students of different ethnicities, race, age, gender, majors, sexual orientations, religious affiliation, and economic class. Examples such as forced interaction between different students, more discussion oriented classes, and increased attendance at campus activities initiated by incentives for attending diversity focused events were identified as characteristics or elements of a campus that advocates for diversity.

The second sub-theme that arose under the theme of interactions was that of faculty-student interactions. When addressing the relationship between faculty and students, undergraduates stated a need for increased interactions outside of the classroom. Undergraduates suggested that faculty should know how to relate to all students, make an effort to get to know students, and enable students to feel comfortable to come to them. Additionally, undergraduates stated a need for "administrators to attend campus activities or student group meetings that promote diversity." Furthermore, the respondents reiterated the need for administrators such as the Chancellor, Provost, Vice- Provost, and Vice-Chancellor to have "one-on-one conversations with students."

While discussing the third sub-theme of faculty-faculty interactions, students suggested that faculty on a campus that advocates for diversity should have positive interactions with one another. According to the undergraduate students, positive interactions between faculty members included attending another faculty member's classes, offering to teach for a colleague within the same department, collaborating on research efforts, and having one-on-one conversations with other faculty members.

Diverse representation. Another theme that surfaced from the data is that a campus should have diverse representation throughout all levels of the University community. Specific sub-themes that arose include diversity as represented by race/ethnicity, ideas, learning and teaching styles, demographics, experiences, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and open-minded behaviors. In addition, students, faculty, administration and staff were addressed within each of these sub-themes. Within the sub-theme of race/ethnicity, undergraduates suggested that students and staff represent various races/ethnicities, diverse faculty (races/ethnicities) should be teaching, and the administration should search for applicants (staff and faculty) with diverse backgrounds. One student stated that her respective college needed "more African-American professors." Similar statements were

made throughout the focus groups in terms of greater representation concerning gender, sexual-orientation, socio-economic class, and demographics.

The sub-theme diversity of ideas permeated the discussion as one of the elements of a campus that advocates for diversity. Students believed that to encourage scholarly discussions and debates, the campus needed faculty and students who have different opinions and ideas relative to problem solving and world-views. The sub-theme of open-minded behaviors refers to the comments students made such as having “faculty who are open-minded and willing to listen to different ideas.”

Education/training. A third prominent theme in the undergraduate focus groups was the need for education/training for students, faculty, administration and other members of the campus community. The undergraduates felt that all students should take a mandatory diversity class to learn how to interact with diverse people and develop respect for diverse opinions. Undergraduate students suggested that “students should be required to attend different seminars, if a diversity class is not mandated.” In addition, undergraduates stressed the importance of increasing students’ awareness of diversity via “essay contests” or “campus activities that promote the celebration of different cultures.”

In regards to faculty education/training, undergraduates felt that all members of the faculty should be trained to create a positive and/or welcoming diverse environment. Specifically, faculty should be trained to facilitate a diverse environment such as one that “creates critical thinking about diversity.” Furthermore, undergraduates emphasized that a diversity-advocating campus would be one where “faculty are trained to make all students feel comfortable” and “to encourage an environment that allows students to freely express their own perspectives.”

Undergraduates also stated that the “administration and staff should be required to attend diversity training during the university employee orientation process.” Students believed that having diversity as a part of administration and staff orientation further emphasized the university’s commitment to creating an environment that advocates for diversity. Students stated that all members of the university community should be trained through workshops or seminars. In an effort to increase cohesion in the university community, workshops or seminars would include students, faculty, staff, administration, and members of the surrounding community. Students also stated that “the seminar should not be offered in the traditional lecture style” but instead “provide opportunities for students and faculty and administration to work in small groups.”

Environment. Environment was another emergent theme from the undergraduate focus groups. Undergraduate students described a campus that advocates for diversity as one that has an open, comfortable and respectful environment. One example of this environment identified by the students included “the requirement of common courtesy in the classroom.” The participants also specifically stated that students and faculty should have an open relationship within and outside the classroom and that students should feel comfortable approaching student support services and the administration (Chancellor, Provost, Vice-Provost, and Vice Chancellor) when they are in need of assistance. Undergraduates identified student services as the counseling center, residence hall staff, and tutorial services. Finally, students described a respectful environment as one in which students, faculty, and staff would engage in scholarly discussions about diversity and be able to agree, disagree, listen, and use common courtesy.

Accountability/responsibility. A fifth theme that emerged was the need for the university community, specifically the administration and faculty on a campus that advocates for diversity, to acknowledge and be accountable and/or responsible for non-existing, past, and/or present failed and successful efforts to provide intentional actions that set the stage for creating a campus that advocates for diversity. Specifically, students stated that faculty should be accountable for covering diversity issues in the curriculum. Moreover, students agreed that “academic deans and department heads need to be held accountable for knowing what a professor is teaching and what is happening in the classroom” related to diversity.

In addition, a supportive environment for diversity would have an administration that would be accountable for the development, implementation, and enforcement of diversity initiatives on campus. Undergraduates suggested that the “Chancellor and members of the community should be accountable to a person or governing body whose sole responsibility is to monitor diversity efforts on the campus.” They also indicated that on a campus that advocates for diversity the university would be responsible for the enforcement of policies related to diversity. Finally, students felt that accountability as it relates to diversity needs to be applied to the entire campus community because, according to the undergraduate respondents “all levels of the community have a role in helping to shape a campus that advocates for diversity.”

Support. Another emergent theme from the undergraduate focus groups was the need for financial support for faculty, staff, student support services and goal/objective support. Undergraduates suggested that the “university should offer funding to help promote organizations and initiatives that advocate for diversity.” Regarding faculty, undergraduates stated that faculty should receive support in the form of release time or credit towards tenure for attending diversity related activities, working to improve campus climate, and/or conducting research related to diversity.

Students stressed the importance of staff, specifically housekeeping and dining service temporary workers, to receive support through job security. They offered that on a campus that advocates for diversity, all staff should be provided the same opportunity to report oppressive work conditions without receiving negative repercussions, such as loss of employment. Additionally, students envisioned staff members receiving support to attend diversity training and workshops.

On the sub-theme of student support services, undergraduates suggested that a university that advocates for diversity would allocate financial resources to student support services, which would enable departments to provide opportunities for students to network with other students and develop cross-cultural connections. Finally, respondents indicated that a university that advocates for diversity should make sure that every member of the community is introduced to and held accountable for the common goals and objectives related to diversity.

Policies. The final prominent theme that emerged was the university policies theme. Sub-themes within the policies theme were related to policy makers, policy awareness, resources devoted to policies and recipients (those affected by the policies). While discussing the university's policy makers, students stated that the policy makers needed to be diverse. In regards to awareness, undergraduates stressed that the “student population should be aware of the policies” and the importance of the university community “being aware of the resources available to them.” Community members could be informed through flyers, e-mails, essay contests, and campus activities. Finally, undergraduate focus group participants

suggested policies that would help to improve the environments for the residence halls and classrooms. These suggestions included having open door policies in the residence halls, requiring future residence halls to have traditional style hallways, and requiring students to live with a roommate of a different race/ethnicity and/or from a different geographical location. They also suggested standard policies related to promoting a classroom environment that advocates for diversity.

**Summary. Students clearly identified the following as important elements of a campus that advocates for diversity:**

- Diverse representation in the university community, including policy makers, is important and should be actively developed.
- Events need to be framed in a way that attract broad involvement, but ways should be found for providing, recognizing, and rewarding participation in activities designed to foster diversity and inclusion.
- Opportunities for interaction in and outside the classroom and work structure should be provided and encouraged.
- Informal interactions and a sense of welcome provide an environment where both the cognitive and affective aspects of cultural competence can be developed.
- Support relative to university goals and for students, faculty, staff, and students support services should be a commitment.
- Financial support is allocated to offices that will work to promote an inclusive, diverse, and culturally aware learning environment
- Education and training should be offered and participation should be required for the university community (administrators, students, faculty, staff, surrounding community members).
- Respect and freedom of expression are important elements of the environment.
- Policies should exist to improve community in the residence halls and classroom environment.

**Graduate Findings**

Building collaboration/interaction. The primary, emergent theme for graduate students was the need to build collaboration and interaction among students, faculty, and administration throughout the campus. Within this theme, four sub-themes emerged: interaction within the classroom; faculty-student interaction outside the classroom; interaction between students and the administration; and student-student interaction outside the classroom. When identifying interaction within the classroom, students stated a desire for the "encouragement of free expression" and "the ability to argue different perspectives." "Reciprocal teaching," having the faculty assign students the task of bringing in material for topical discussion, and the use of "different teaching methods" to account for students' diverse learning styles and personal perspectives were noted. In addition, restricting research-focused professors from frequent classroom contact was suggested. This could be accomplished by either one semester dedicated to research followed by one semester dedicated to teaching or having these professors' exposure to the classroom restricted to "guest lecturer" on a specific topic of expertise.

Faculty-student interaction outside the classroom included the expectation of a "more accessible and involved advisement process", "mandated faculty attendance at social events", and "having select faculty to live with students in residence halls". Implementation of a

program for the more involved faculty to act as mentors to other faculty members as a means of increasing involvement was also suggested. When discussing interaction between students and the administration, students recommended that the administration should plan, attend, and fully participate in diversity-related events and also support and attend student-led group functions.

Student-student interaction involved three sub-themes. Students identified a need for more social events, such as “teas” within their academic departments. They also noted the importance of structuring the physical environment to allow for non-restrictive accessibility and including “common areas” to assist in frequency and ease of social interaction. Finally, students recognized a need for events that could act as “rallying points” that would offer common experiences and improve student interaction.

Increasing awareness. Another leading theme that prevailed in the data was the need to increase awareness of diversity issues throughout campus. The need for improved publicity about the campus’s commitment to diversity was seen as the most prevalent means to increase awareness. Publicizing to the external community about events on campus and the campus’s definition of diversity was viewed as a way to increase awareness of the campus’s inclusive environment. It was also deemed important to publicize administration-sponsored events and available services geared toward a diverse campus community to both current and prospective students. Students suggested that “easily maneuverable links off the university homepage” to “diversity programs and services for specific populations” would also be useful to increase awareness.

Students also recommended that the campus should “celebrate diversity,” which should include the entire campus’s efforts. In particular, they identified the need for the administration to acknowledge diversity as a “top priority,” in such ways as including the definition of diversity in the university’s mission statement. In addition, assurance that department heads, faculty and staff members know the definition of diversity was important to students. While it was not in response to the questions asked, graduate students commented that the campus’s official definition of diversity needs revision. For example, students discussed the portion of the definition “who bring varied human characteristics,” noting that individuals with differing sexual preferences sometimes hide their characteristics as opposed to bringing them, and that it may better be written as “who possess varied human characteristics.”

Education and training outside of the classroom. Another recurrent theme among graduate students was the need for greater education and training for faculty, staff, and students. It was suggested that all levels of employees attend “diversity-related workshops and trainings”, and that mandatory attendance should be required for faculty members. Students also recommended that faculty should be “taught” that diversity is valuable to make certain that there was departmental level ownership of the diversity definition.

In contrast, student attendance at diversity-related workshops was never mentioned. Only two references to students being educated about diverse perspectives were mentioned. Students recommended that the library continue to offer a “wide variety of materials in different formats” and “be unrestrictive regarding geographic locales or personal perspectives” that the students could have access to. In addition, students recommended that the curriculum include material from different perspectives.

Changing of the campus population. The final prevailing theme identified by graduate students was the need to make changes in the campus population through our recruitment

efforts. They noted that the process of selection for students and employees should include references to this campus's inclusive environment. More specifically, they recommended that the "diversity definition should be printed on the job application", and "the interview process for both student and staff should include questions about the applicants' views concerning diversity." To increase the diversity of the student population, it was suggested that the university target its recruitment efforts, including the development of outreach programs, to include diverse populations. Finally, students recommended that the diversity of staff and faculty members should be increased so that it "matches" the demographics of the surrounding area.

Summary. Graduate students clearly identified the following as important elements of a campus that advocates for diversity:

- Opportunities for interaction in and outside of the classroom should exist among all members of the University community.
- Education and training should be offered for faculty and staff.
- An awareness of diversity should be promoted not only for its members but also for its surrounding external community.
- A supportive recruitment process of diversity for the campus population should be in place.

### **Faculty Findings**

Definition of Diversity. One major theme that arose among the faculty was the definition of diversity. Their comments focused primarily on the breadth and the limitations of the university's definition. Some of the participating faculty felt that the university's definition was "too vague" and "lacked real meaning". Others took the opportunity to share how they interpreted the definition or what they felt the definition should be. Specifically, some interviewed faculty felt that the definition should acknowledge and reflect differences according to race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, socioeconomic status, family structure, culture, and geography. One interviewed faculty member felt that sexual orientation should not be a part of the diversity definition.

Evidence of Diversity. The information categorized as evidence of diversity yielded four sub-themes of university, department, classroom, and required courses and workshops. The university sub-theme was divided into three categories: students, administration, and climate. Most of the interviewed faculty addressed the climate as an indication of diversity at the university level. Some participants suggested that evidence of diversity within the university is a climate where underrepresented students are not expected to assimilate; the needs of diverse people are met; and there is recognition that all people are valuable to the organization.

The department sub-theme was organized by five categories. Those categories reflected the general student population, undergraduate and graduate students specifically, faculty, and administration. The interviewed participants indicated that, within the department, diversity according to race, gender, ability, and nationality of the faculty, administration, and student population would all provide evidence of diversity.

The classroom sub-theme produced only one category of diversity, and that was the "students" category. Again, the participants interviewed indicated that diversity by race and gender would be evidence of diversity within the classroom, but they also indicated that classrooms where there is diversity according to family structure also exhibit evidence of

diversity. Some of the interviewed faculty said that they are able to identify this evidence of diversity through both “visual assessment” and “classroom activities”.

The final sub-theme in the evidence of diversity theme is required courses and workshops. Some of the participants indicated that a requirement that all students take a course with a diversity focus would be evidence of diversity. Several faculty stated that the currently offered workshops and lectures series on diversity enhance the faculty's and administrators' knowledge of diversity issues and the needs of diverse people.

Diversity in the Curriculum. The third theme for these interviews was diversity in the curriculum. This theme consisted of three sub-themes: course content and resources, faculty role in facilitating diversity in class, and objective and rationale. Commentary on course content and resources was organized by class discussion, classroom activities, guest speakers, text, co-curricular activities, assignments, cooperative learning, and current events. Almost all faculty described having to make considerable effort to make the course content diverse. They indicated that it was necessary to supplement the text with “guest speakers, co-curricular activities, and assignments in order to provide students with the practical information about different groups of people, different lifestyles, and different experiences and allow for the recognition of underrepresented group members' contributions to the discipline”. Some interviewed faculty indicated that students should be allowed to discuss issues related to race, sexual orientation, and religion in the classroom.

In the sub-theme addressing the faculty's role in facilitating diversity in class, participants described developing self and student competence, identifying instructional materials, and identifying guest speakers with diversity competence. The faculty being interviewed addressed the faculty members' ability to facilitate discussion about race, religion, and gender and other issues pertaining to diversity and the faculty's ability to assess the development and needs of their students with regard to diversity. These participants indicated that faculty have the responsibility to assist students in learning to work with students who have different values, experiences, and lifestyles and to understand how to facilitate class discussions centered on those issues. The suggestion was made that faculty also have the “role and responsibility to identify instructional materials and guest speakers that help them meet their course goals with regard to diversity.”

The final sub-theme of diversity in the curriculum dealt with the objectives for a diverse curriculum and the rationale for a diverse curriculum. Some faculty indicated that the curriculum should always be compatible with the university and college mission and should reflect the diversity of the community and the state. At least two faculty members felt that their curriculum should be diversity-neutral, but one of the two acknowledged that “students should be prepared to work in a global society.” Quite a few of the participants interviewed indicated that the rationale for diversity in the curriculum was to prepare students for professional work and to respond to the needs of a diverse society. Some faculty felt that another positive point of having a diverse curriculum was that it improved student retention.

Responsibility for Diversity. The responsibility for diversity as a major theme was divided into the administration and faculty sub-themes. Faculty suggested that a campus that advocates for diversity should have administrators who are role models and represent the university's commitment to diversity. In addition, the administration should be responsible for holding others accountable for their actions or lack thereof, make allowances for faculty and student development in this area, and provide rewards and recognition for diversity efforts and activities as well as censure for the lack of them. Additionally, this group of faculty felt

that the administration had the responsibility to encourage and support recruiting underrepresented groups to the university community and the responsibility to establish and maintain policies and practices that are fair and unbiased.

Faculty responsibility in this theme is not a replica of faculty responsibility addressed in the previous theme. This area specifically focuses on the responsibility of underrepresented group members and majority group members for creating and maintaining a diverse environment. Some of the interviewed faculty indicated that too much of the responsibilities of creating a diverse climate rest with underrepresented faculty groups and that it should be more evenly distributed among both faculty with majority group membership and faculty belonging to underrepresented groups.

*Retention, Recruiting, and Promoting.* The final major theme for the faculty interviews was retention, recruiting, and promoting. The interview respondents addressed these issues for faculty and administration and students. The interviewed faculty focused on pre-college preparation, targeting underrepresented groups, admissions criteria, mentoring, and the factors that impact retention for students. Some expressed the “need to intentionally target members of underrepresented groups for both graduate and undergraduate study.” Several of the interviewed faculty indicated that administrators and faculty should initiate activities for underrepresented group members’ admission to the university as early as middle school. Many stated that although they were not an integral part of the admissions process, they felt that the process should be examined for cultural bias or the use of success indicators that are culturally biased. The issue of support and mentoring was reflected in quite a few comments, and the category reporting factors impacting retention reflects similar ideas. The interviewed faculty felt that there should be support, a welcoming environment, and efforts to safeguard against underrepresented group members’ feelings of isolation in order to positively contribute to student recruitment and retention.

The faculty and administration sub-theme addressed retention, recruiting and promoting. This sub-theme included incentives, tenure review, support, mentoring, and factors impacting retention categories. Several of the interviewed faculty indicated that the perception that underrepresented faculty will be supported by and connected with other faculty weighs quite heavily in the recruitment process, and they suggested that the same greatly impacts retention. Some interviewed faculty suggested that members of underrepresented groups have to be introduced to both the formal and informal systems of support, and many felt that it was the responsibility of the administration to assist them in getting established in these networks. They also described the balance of departmental responsibilities, opportunities for growth and development, and the opportunities to contribute to decision-making as factors that impact retention of underrepresented faculty.

*Summary.* Faculty clearly identified the following as important elements of a campus that advocates for diversity:

- A campus community should have an inclusive definition of diversity.
- A campus should have an administration that is responsible for and supportive of diversity in the campus community.
- Evidence for diversity in terms of diverse representation among campus community members and supportive retention and recruitment efforts would be present.
- Diversity would be evident within the various curricula through classroom activities, guest-speakers, the text, and co-curricular activities.

## Conclusion

The student focus groups and faculty interviews were conducted in the spring of 2003. The purpose of these in-depth interviews was to gain an understanding of what undergraduate and graduate students and faculty view as the characteristics of an environment that advocates for diversity. The information gained from this investigation will be used by University Planning and Analysis to design surveys for students and faculty to assess where the campus currently stands in demonstrating the characteristics of a supportive environment for diversity. The purpose of this report was to provide a brief summary and feedback for the participants of this investigation.

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