



OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY

President's Advisory Council on Diversity ¹

The Purpose

One of the central goals of Oklahoma City University is to create an inclusive campus community where all paths are explored, where social responsibility is emphasized, and where groups work collaboratively rather than competitively. The President's Advisory Council on Diversity works to foster change by recognizing the points of difference we have as a result of racial/ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, and religious heritage, among other factors, and encouraging a celebration of the points of intersection we share as a result of these differences. Rather than seeing differences as a source of separation, the Council promotes the belief that through the splendor of our different experiences, we come to realize that we are all bound together as members of one over-arching, values-driven community of learners.

As a result, the President's Advisory Council on Diversity consists of a group of faculty, staff, students, and constituencies who are committed to fostering the understanding that inclusiveness requires more than the mere introduction of "diversity" into the university community. It demands an incorporation of the essence and significance of the different backgrounds, perspectives and experiences of people from all walks of life into the culture of the institution. To do this requires creating the pathways and the means for University members to grow society. The Council works to help foster this process.

The Mission

To foster the principle that liberal education at Oklahoma City University means liberating ourselves from prejudice. It means studying with and living with people with different life experiences from our own. We start by affirming the human dignity, worth, and equality of each member of our community. We protect and encourage each other. Through sharing our life stories and the stories of our ancestors, we learn how people have been unfairly treated or privileged because of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, economic class, or sexual orientation. Our challenge is to bring our individuality to the richness of human experience at OCU. Embracing diversity here, we prepare for living in the diverse world.

The Council Membership

The composition of the President's Advisory Council on Diversity will include

- Vice President for University-Church Relations (Chair)
- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Vice President for University Advancement and External Relations
- University General Counsel
- Chair of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee
- Two Faculty Senate Appointees
- Dean of Students
- Dean of Enrollment Services and Associate Vice President
- International Student Advisor
- Associate Vice President for Human Resources
- President of the Student Senate
- Three Student Senate Appointees
- President of the Staff Council
- Director of Vivian Wimberly Center for Ethics and Community Service
- Conference Superintendent of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference
- Director of Multicultural Affairs
- Five appointees by the President of the University

The Steering Committee will coordinate the business and activities of the council. Members of the committee include:

Chairperson of the Council (Vice President for University-Church Relations)
Vice Chairperson of the Council
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Vice President for Student Affairs
Vice President for University Advancement and External Relations
Assistant Vice President for Human Resources
Director of the Vivian Wimberly Center for Ethics and Community Service

The University Diversity Plan

The Commitment to Diversity

The primary goal of the Oklahoma City University's Diversity Plan is to proactively promote diversity through administrative directive by creating an atmosphere of inclusion, openness, and appreciation for all individuals and groups. We further seek to increase the level of awareness within the university community of the educational benefits of diversity. We will identify and remove policies, programs, and practices that do not reflect the interests and achievements of underrepresented groups at the university. Oklahoma City University affirms its mission, heritage, and values as we move forward to build a united and inclusive campus community.

Core beliefs provide the foundation for our values:

- The dignity, worth, and equality of all persons
- The importance of community in human life
- The inherent strength and value of diversity in any community of active learners
- The authenticity of diverse opinions and ideas, even when different from one's own
- The mandate for ethical decision-making and social responsibility as central components for sustaining and growing a community.

The Religious Character and Values

Oklahoma City University affirms and values all religions, spirituality, and non-religious perspectives. We believe that the ethical and moral dimensions of religion, organized and other, are fundamental to the university's vision.

The Council encourages existing campus religious organizations to focus not only on providing services to the campus community, but on being a defining ethical force on campus. This must be achieved, not by forcing a particular religious view but by injecting religion/spirituality/ethics into community conversations. The campus must remember that being an affiliated United Methodist University we must assure that non-Christian perspectives are of value and we want an environment of acceptance and dialogue to pervade the campus.

We will focus our future on building bridges among the religious and secular communities. As a campus community we value academic excellence, integrity, and freedom. It follows from these goals that OCU is also dedicated to creating and enriching an inclusive community that reflects an awareness and appreciation of the contributions of the different traditions reflected in a pluralistic society. The OCU community is committed to instilling the values of ethical decision making, global awareness, environmental awareness, community service, civic responsibility, and religious freedom. Hence, we believe in the values of class equity, gender equity, religious and race equity, and we vigorously strive to achieve an environment that creates and sustains these values.

The Goals and Objectives

The Oklahoma City University Diversity Plan is our means of setting goals and evaluating progress. The plan will be communicated with both internal and external communication, and networks will be established to support its goals. The

Plan and our marketing and communications efforts will be evaluated annually to determine the level of success in implementing the specific strategic objectives. The primary goals are:

- To establish a recruitment and retention plan to achieve greater diversity in our student, faculty, staff, and support staff
- To increase diversity and the supportive climate for diversity within the student population
- To fully integrate diversity and related issues into the curriculum
- To integrate on-campus diversity efforts with the efforts of the external community.

Oklahoma City University affirms that women and men of diverse racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds are fundamental to the process of education. For this reason, the university's diversity plan articulates the university's belief that diversity is integral to education. The university strives to fulfill its commitment to diversity by focusing on five specific strategies:

- To create and foster a diverse community that appreciates, encourages, and protects all of its members
- To establish an environment in which all members participate in the intellectual, spiritual, and social life of the institution as well as in its decision-making process
- To provide contact with a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff, as well as foster an intellectual experience that recognizes, understands, and respects the distinctive contributions of these diverse groups
- To encourage our students to become well-informed, responsible, and positive world citizens who have an appreciation and capacity to relate to people of different cultures
- To investigate regularly the status, success, and/or shortcomings of our efforts and to make these results public.

The articulation of the importance of achieving an inclusive and diverse community obligates the University to devote resources and energies to specific commitments for the university's strategic plan. These commitments challenge Oklahoma City University to combat racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, and religious discrimination in order to enact and sustain a diverse community of inclusiveness. The specific obligations include:

- To seek out and eradicate discriminatory structures and procedures
- To combat intolerance within the institution, in the curriculum, and in the daily life of the community
- To work to rectify the historical exclusion as well as the limitations placed on many who have sought higher education
- To recognize a special responsibility and mission to expedite the inclusion of U.S., underrepresented racial-ethnic groups, international persons, and women of all races in the educational community at all levels
- To keep a special vigilance in combating discrimination against groups that have traditionally been neglected or marginalized
- To recruit and employ faculty and staff from underrepresented groups
- To recruit and retain students from underrepresented groups.

The Goals for Action

OVERALL GOAL: To embrace our core values and commitments to become an inclusive community.

GOAL 1: To increase diversity representation among

- Students
- Faculty
- Staff and Support Staff
- Governance constituencies (Trustees)

GOAL 2: To improve the campus environment to embrace diversity and becoming an inclusive community through

- Diversity Workshops
- Cross Cultural and Community Activities
- Center for Ethics and Community Service programs
- Religious Life Council and Interfaith programs
- Student Senate

GOAL 3: To expand curricular and co-curricular offerings:

- Africana Studies
- Latin American Studies
- Asian Studies
- Gender Studies
- Native American Studies
- International Studies
- Faculty Exchanges with related UM Colleges/Universities [e.g. Dillard, Philander Smith, Huston-Tillotson, etc.]

GOAL 4: To expand outreach efforts through:

- University Park Coalition
- Habitat for Humanity (Campus Chapter)
- International Student Association
- Oklahoma City Cooperative Urban Parish
- Racial, Ethnic, Intellectual, Political, and Interfaith Organizations*

GOAL 5: To integrate diversity value initiatives into our Marketing/Advertising Plan;

- All publications will reflect the diversity of the university.
- Publicize the goal of diversity and seek allies in the local community.
- Develop multi-lingual and bilingual advertisements for publications in non-English speaking communities and publications.
- After specific goals and objectives are identified, an update should be provided to the campus community (through the student newspaper) at the beginning and end of each semester, detailing progress towards each of the goals, discussing the adjustment and addition of new goals and announcing new efforts towards the goals.

Assessment Goals

The accomplishment of goals and the need for diversity will be measured for performance evaluation across the university. The role of diversity in evaluating performance ought to be included on all performance reviews if only for the purpose of establishing it as an important variable that will be considered. Including diversity as an assessment variable is important to ensure that those with responsibility for diversity will have it properly included in the evaluation of their importance.

The Diversity Plan will be assessed annually for effectiveness with a written report regarding the current outcomes of stated goals. The assessment will measure the plan in general and the specific goals making recommendations for changes and additions.

Office of Multicultural Affairs

The President's Advisory Council on Diversity has encouraged and supported the university administrative officers in developing an Office of Multicultural Affairs for Oklahoma City University. The Director of Multicultural Affairs is a permanent member of the Council and assists with the oversight and guidance of the Diversity Plan.

¹This plan has been adapted and modified with permission from Dr. Doug Lee, President, Stetson University, DeLand, Florida

*Updated 2/3/2004 [addition of "intellectual, political"]

**Updated Fall of 2005 to reflect new name and membership of the Council