

## **DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY 2011 - 2013**

### **Framing Statement**

Eastern Oregon University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer and educator, committed to building a diverse and inclusive community and learning environment. Making excellence inclusive is a key element of the University's strategic plan. This strategic goal includes the following supportive aims:

- The recruitment and retention of students representative of the demographics of Eastern Oregon and the region, with special attention to Latinos and Native Americans.
- Providing resources (financial aid, work, advising, curriculum) to all students to ensure access to college.
- Ensuring a diverse, equitable, and inclusive student, faculty, and staff participation.
- Striving to make the educational experience inclusive through curricular and co-curricular innovation.

Encouraging diversity, however, is about much more than the social justice imperative of ensuring equal opportunity, of numerically leveling the playing field. It's about embracing the richness and possibilities of diverse thought arising from differences of culture and circumstance. It's about seeing diversity as strength, as a competitive advantage, and a moral imperative. It's about shaping the culture and the workforce of the University to be more reflective of the pluralistic world our students encounter. It's about encouraging all members of this community to take ownership for creating a welcoming, safe, inclusive, and supportive climate. In the end, it's about excellence.

### **Diversity Defined**

Diversity is the celebration of difference. Diversity is not about passive accommodation, or compliance, or compromise. Rather, it's about the relentless unending pursuit of enrichment and excellence.

## **A Place for Everyone**

Diversity at Eastern Oregon University means learning and working with people who come from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. This richness of difference is made more complex by the fact that individuals and groups have different histories, different sensibilities, and at times, different expectations. When we speak of diversity we mean differences of age, physical abilities, ethnicity, culture, color, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, appearance, education, national origin, citizenship, religious beliefs, veteran status, socioeconomic class or status, political affiliations and beliefs, and diversity of thought, ideas, perspectives, or other ideologies. Because the breadth of human differences is limitless and evolving, the participants in the diverse culture we seek resist easy classification, categorization, or labeling. This list is, therefore, by no means comprehensive.

## **The Case for Diversity**

The case for diversity in institutions of higher education is particularly compelling. Students exposed to differences with which they're unfamiliar emerge from the educational process with a greater appreciation for the benefits of tolerance, inclusion, and diverse perspectives. In many cases, they approach an increasingly complex world with a greater measure of personal adaptability and resilience. Research has confirmed that employees working in diverse pluralistic environments find them more enriching, more satisfying, and more motivating. This leads to higher levels of productivity and contribution, morale and retention, and constructive participation. In effect, a diverse and inclusive culture can lead to enhanced creativity, innovation, and collaboration, factors critical to an institution's adaptive behavior in facing change, competition, and the imperatives of ensuring long term sustainability.

## **Context**

Most institutions within American higher education are challenged with improving the diversity of their respective academic communities. This goal remains a particular challenge for Eastern Oregon University, given its rural geographic location. The University vigorously pursues diversity recruitment strategies in order to markedly broaden the pool of prospective applicants, while ensuring the highest standards of recruitment, admission, and appointment.

**EOU Demographics.** Eastern Oregon University remains remarkably homogenous. As of fall term 2010, approximately twelve percent of EOU students on the La Grande campus identified themselves as members of under-represented minority racial groups. The largest and growing percentage of that population claim Latino/Hispanic identity, a pattern that parallels demographic trends in Oregon. Fifty-three percent of La Grande campus students are women, slightly more than the comparable U.S. Census rate

(51%), and somewhat lagging the national college participation rate for women (59%). Graduation rates among some minority students at EOU suggest challenges that transcend the mere recruitment for diversity. Following is the 6-year trending, as of October 2010:

Graduation Rates: '03-'04 Cohort*					
All Male	All Female	African American	Native American	Asian/Pac Islander	Hispanic/Latino
26.20%	36.30%	33.30%	0%	57.10%	12.50%

\*Unknown and non-resident aliens have been excluded from racial/ethnicity counts above.

Students transferring within OUS after initial enrollment at EOU have been excluded.

Approximately six percent of all EOU employees and six percent of faculty declare minority racial status. Nationally, fifteen percent of the professoriate claim minority/racial/ethnic identities. Exactly fifty percent of EOU bargaining unit faculty members are women, exceeding the national trend of forty-five percent. The present distributions of minority and women faculty at EOU by rank are as follows:

	Male Faculty (72)			Female Faculty (72)			Minority Faculty (9)		
	% Male	% Total	% Total	% Female	% Total	% Total	% Minority	% Total	% Total
	Pop	Rank	Faculty	Pop	Rank	Faculty	Pop	Rank	Faculty
<b>Professor (39)</b>	35%	64%	17%	19%	36%	10%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Assoc Prof (32)</b>	25%	56%	13%	19%	44%	10%	44%	13%	3%
<b>Assist Prof (43)</b>	29%	49%	15%	31%	51%	15%	33%	7%	2%
<b>Instructor (30)</b>	11%	27%	6%	31%	73%	15%	22%	7%	1%

**National Demographics.** Nationally, by 2010, over forty percent of elementary and secondary school children, and forty percent of high school graduates, were students of color or ethnic minorities. Demographic trends suggest that by the year 2050 current minority groups will comprise the majority of the U.S. population.

In the end, the ways in which we respond to these demographic and cultural transitions will determine the future character, complexion, and vitality of Eastern Oregon University. Moreover, for many of our traditional students, each of whom is at an important stage in their development, Eastern Oregon University represents their first

sustained exposure to an environment other than their home community. We have an obligation to prepare them for a much more diverse world than their parents and grandparents likely encountered.

### **Diversity Committee Mission**

To promote mutual respect, participation, and inclusiveness in all aspects of the university community, both on and off-campus. This charter directly supports the overall mission of the University to encourage responsible and reflective action in a diverse and interconnected world, and the University's strategic goal of making excellence inclusive.

### **Diversity Committee Duties and Responsibilities**

The duties and responsibilities of the Diversity Committee include the following:

- To advise the University Council and University President on matters related to diversity;
- To formulate and facilitate diversity policy, to include a campus-wide diversity plan and the review of existing policies and practices,
- To promote public education, collaboration and special events;
- To review and report progress on the achievement of strategic plan objectives related to diversity;
- To serve as an advisory resource for the campus and off-campus communities on diversity issues; and,
- To work with faculty on changes in the curriculum related to issues of diversity.

**Diversity Committee Organization.** The Diversity Committee consist sof 11 members: Four (4) academic faculty members, one (1) from Arts and Sciences, one (1) from Education, one (1) from Business, and one (1) librarian, plus two (2) administrative faculty members, two (2) classified staff members, two (2) students, and the Affirmative Action Officer, who shall serve ex-officio. In addition, a secondary nonvoting advisory group selected by the diversity committee includes interested faculty/staff/students who work specifically in the area of difference and diversity and represent/advocate for/work with groups based upon (but not limited to): socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, culture, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, and disability. The list of advisory members and their positions is updated each year and is available on the committee website. Members are kept informed of pertinent agenda and action items discussed by the committee. They may be called upon for various purposes; in addition, they will be encouraged to attend meetings as appropriate.

## **Plan Development<sup>1</sup>**

This Strategic Plan represents the collaborative effort of all participating members of EOU's Diversity Committee, a group whose appointed (ex-officio) and elected membership is highly diverse and representative of campus constituencies. As such, this plan is a consensus document that is intended to serve as a blueprint for strengthening diversity at Eastern Oregon University.

There are many dimensions, nuances, and priorities possible in preparing such a plan. This plan is not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, the proposed goals, strategies and actions have been intentionally limited in number and complexity. This approach is designed to provide a framework that is straightforward and practical, actionable and achievable, and measurable. As we experience success and develop institutional confidence in furthering diversity, we should expect greater ambition in the form of future revisions, additions, and refinements.

### **DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY 2011 - 2013**

#### **Goal 1: Recruitment, Retention, and Development**

Increase and maintain the diversity of students, faculty, staff and administrators through targeted and innovative recruitment, retention, and professional development.

#### **Benchmark Indicators**

- Progressive improvement every year in the total number of students, faculty, staff, and administrators from under-represented minority groups.
- Retention rates of under-represented minority and women students, faculty, staff, and administrators are at least equal to those of the majority.
- Promotion and advancement rates of under-represented racial and ethnic minority faculty, staff, and administrators are roughly equal to those of the majority.
- Promotion and advancement rates of men and women faculty, staff, and administrators are roughly equivalent to those of the majority.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that diversity strategic plans from the following universities furnished useful structure, concepts, goals, strategies, actions and language adapted in the formulation of EOU's plan: UCLA, Auburn University, University of Puget Sound, Regis University, Emerson College, Central Michigan University, Brown University, Cornell University

**Strategy 1 - Recruitment:** Develop and support recruitment policies, strategies, and processes that ensure equal opportunity and progressively expand the number of highly qualified diverse candidates for student, faculty, staff, and administrator openings.

**Recommended Actions - Students**

- A. Consider increasing funding for diversity admissions recruitment.
- B. Consider enlisting and paying currently enrolled students and alumni from under-represented groups as Admissions reps on targeted trips.
- C. Consider establishing pre-college programs targeted at diverse underrepresented student populations in our region, especially Latino/Hispanic and Native American.
- D. Continue to improve the enrollment management infrastructure to provide a smoother, more coherent admissions process and an enhanced research database.

**Recommended Actions – Faculty, Staff, Administrators**

- A. Put in place a Dual Career Couples policy.
- B. Make greater use of diversity-centric advertising venues, networking, and targeted recruitment of diverse candidates.
- C. Improve the diversity website and the recruitment process and infrastructure to provide smooth, rapid response through automated application and selection processes.
- D. Continue the training of search committees on the importance of diversity and the selection approaches and hiring practices that ensure equal opportunity.

**Strategy 2 - Retention:** Better understand the factors related to successful recruitment and retention of a diverse student body, faculty, staff, and administrators.

**Recommended Actions – Students:**

- A. Conduct an assessment of the current state of student academic performance disaggregated by race, gender, ethnicity, fields, degrees, etc.
- B. Conduct a campus climate survey among students, focused on diversity.
- C. Conduct a survey of diverse alumni, seeking their candid recommendations.
- D. Pilot the use of a scorecard tool for assessing success of underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, women, and other diverse students at EOU.
- E. Expand mentoring programs for students in under-represented groups.
- F. Expand programs which involve and interrelate majority with minority students from under-represented groups.

**Recommended Actions – Faculty:**

- A. Conduct an assessment (survey) of faculty attitudes toward diversity and equity on campus.

- B. Expand mentoring for new women faculty and those from underrepresented groups.
- C. Use information gathered to develop additional retention measures for women faculty and faculty from underrepresented groups.

**Recommended Actions – Staff and Administrators:**

- A. Conduct an assessment of staff and administrator attitudes toward diversity.
- B. Expand mentoring for new staff and administrators from underrepresented groups.

**Strategy 3 – Development:** Strengthen existing policies and practices and develop new programs that ensure the professional growth and advancement of a diverse workforce at EOU.

**Recommended Actions – Faculty**

- A. Offer educational seminars to increase cultural competency among faculty to help them develop culturally sensitive educational opportunities for students.
- B. Review percentage of university funding committed to staff development and growth opportunities for women and minority faculty, to ensure that it roughly equals that of the majority.
- C. Formalize efforts to retain, mentor, and promote faculty from underrepresented groups to tenured teaching and academic leadership positions.
- D. Encourage the Faculty Senate to broaden ‘RAG’ guidelines to promote and fund faculty attendance at academic conferences, workshops, seminars, and webinars that advance diversity and related networking (not just for those who present papers).
- E. Encourage greater ad-hoc peer-to-peer teaching by faculty as a means of expanding professional knowledge.

**Recommended Actions – Staff and Administrators**

- A. Conduct structured focus groups and ‘brown bag’ sessions with staff and administrators to generate discussion and definition around their perceived professional development needs, priorities, and interests, as a foundation for setting development goals and program design.
- B. Develop and conduct diversity training for managers and supervisors.

**Goal 2: Campus Culture and Climate**

Foster a campus culture and climate that respect differences, encourage inclusiveness, and reflect diversity as a core value of the University.

## **Benchmark Indicators**

- The goal of expanding all dimensions of diversity at Eastern Oregon University (access, retention, culture, excellence) is an integral component of the University's strategic plan, institutional accreditation plan, and academic planning efforts.
- Regular communications to all University constituencies emphasize the institution's commitment to diversity as a core value, and to its aspirations for achieving a diverse workforce, inclusive culture, and educational experience
- Campus climate surveys on diversity and equity report improving perceptions of a safe and inclusive environment, free of harassment or discrimination, where the proximity of interaction is constructive and informing
- Diversity activities enhance cultural awareness, promote greater social interactions and understanding of cross-cultural communication, and encourage constructive dialogue and reflection on diversity

**Strategy 1 – Reward and Recognition:** Tangible support, recognition and reward are afforded faculty, academic departments, staff and administrators that engage in meaningful diversity initiatives that make a difference at Eastern Oregon University.

### **Recommended Actions**

- A. Establish an awards program to recognize and showcase outstanding and innovative diversity activities of faculty, staff, and administrators at EOU accomplished through teaching, research, community involvement, recruiting, etc. Recognize recipients at a university convocation or symposia.
- B. Urge the Faculty Senate to recognize and reward significant contributions to diversity in the standards for promotion and tenure at the University.
- C. Empower, hold accountable and reward department chairs, deans, and administrators for diversifying their faculties and staff through recruitment and retention, in keeping with the University's diversity mission.

**Strategy 2 – Communicating Leadership Commitment:** Communicate to EOU students, faculty, staff, administrators and external constituents that the leaders of the university are firmly committed to progressively achieving a diverse workforce, culture, and educational experience at EOU

### **Recommended Actions**

- A. Improve the University's diversity Web site.
- B. Make diversity an integral mindset of all search committees.
- C. Engage the EOU community in diversity efforts by making diversity a standing agenda item at least quarterly for executive Cabinet, University Council, and Faculty Senate meetings.

- D. The President and Provost actively reinforce the importance of diversity as a core value of EOU in media, university forums, convocations, other venues.

**Strategy 3 – Promoting Cultural Awareness:** Further programs, activities, and initiatives that enhance cultural awareness for the entire campus and surrounding communities and foster education, constructive dialogue, and honest reflection on diversity.

**Recommended Actions**

- A. Improve the University’s Diversity website.
- B. Develop a campus-wide speaker series involving the invitation of prominent outside thinkers on diversity.
- C. Create opportunities for open forums for students, faculty, and staff
- D. Formalize coordination of efforts on the part of campus organizations and resources concerned with diversity.

**Strategy 4 – Grievance Processes:** Ensure that formal grievance processes are in place and well-communicated to report, investigate, and resolve allegations of discrimination, disparate treatment, and intolerant behavior within the EOU community and its external relationships

**Recommended Actions:**

- A. Work with the campus Grievance Committee, Human Resources/Affirmative Action, Student Affairs, PCSW members, and Faculty to review, refine, and align existing policies and practices regarding discrimination, harassment, and intolerance.

**Goal 3: Community Outreach and Engagement**

Build and strengthen partnerships with diverse communities, community-centric organizations, civic and government entities to advance diversity and multiculturalism in the University and the region.

**Benchmark Indicators**

- Community organizations and governmental entities, including law enforcement, routinely look to the University as a competent resource for building community awareness and understanding of diverse populations.

- An increasing number of ethnic minority students from Eastern Oregon and Eastern Washington, and Southwestern Idaho high schools choose to apply for admission to EOU.

**Strategy 1 – Outreach and Engagement:** Starting with La Grande, build working relationships and connections between EOU and the communities of Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington, and Southwestern Idaho.

#### **Recommended Actions**

- A. Create an inventory of the La Grande/Union County community, civic, business, governmental organizations, and diverse communities, with key contact information.
- B. Create a bi-lingual ‘speakers bureau’ on diversity topics and publicize among local community organizations.
- C. Work with Admissions to develop programming to increase interest in postsecondary education among ethnic minority students in Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington, and Southern Idaho.

### **Goal 4: Curriculum and Pedagogy**

Infuse and maintain the principles of diversity in the curriculum. Promote pedagogical strategies that facilitate respect of differences in perspective and circumstance, encourage student involvement, and prepare students for success in a world growing more diverse and complex.

#### **Benchmark Indicators**

- Over time, the amount of core coursework incorporating DPD principles, a requirement for graduation, is progressively increasing.
- Students graduating from EOU are prepared to work effectively across ‘lines of difference’ in diverse communities and workplaces.

**Strategy 1 – Embedding Diversity:** Strengthen existing curriculum and pedagogical practices to include the experiences of diverse peoples, examine and assess theories of human difference, analyze historical and contemporary structures of inequality, and review their impact.

**Recommended Actions:**

- A. Offer professional development opportunities to faculty to increase cultural competency and encourage the development of a culturally sensitive educational experience for students.
- B. Ensure that all curricular offerings addressing diversity provide opportunities for interaction and dialogue to enable students of different backgrounds and perspectives to learn about and from one another.
- C. Provide support for further integration of diversity content into new and existing courses.

**Goal 5: Management, Measurement, and Accountability**

Design and develop a comprehensive system that defines responsibilities and accountabilities and measures progress toward achieving a culturally diverse academic community, an improved campus climate, and advancing the knowledge of diversity and differences in perspectives.

**Benchmark Indicators**

- Plans are in place that assign accountabilities, timetables, and metrics for all actions in support of diversity goals and strategies.
- Plans are in place to periodically review with Cabinet and the campus community accomplishments, progress and effectiveness of diversity strategies and actions.
- Campus climate surveys on diversity report improving perceptions of a safe and inclusive environment, free of harassment or discrimination, where the proximity of interaction is constructive and informing (see Goal 2: Campus Culture and Climate).

**Strategy 1 – Diversity Strategic Plan:** Craft, communicate, and implement a comprehensive Diversity Strategic Plan that reinforces diversity as a core value of Eastern Oregon University.

**Recommended Actions:**

- A. Charge the Diversity Committee with drafting the Diversity Strategic Plan, vetting it with Cabinet, and communicating it to the University community.
- B. Assign Plan accountabilities, deliverables, and measures to responsible departments and individuals.

- C. Formally budget adequate funding to support diversity initiatives, programs, and processes approved as priorities in the Diversity Strategic Plan.

**Strategy 2 - Measurement and Reporting:** Create assessment and reporting processes that systematically measure and communicate progress toward implementing all goals of the Diversity Strategic Plan.

**Recommended Actions:**

- A. Incorporate Support for Diversity as a meaningful element of the performance assessments of the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans, and other senior leaders of the University.
- B. Develop a Diversity scorecard aligned with the Diversity Strategic Plan, to be reviewed semi-annually by the Cabinet, along with the status of progress on diversity initiatives.
- C. Plan for a regular bi-annual report and presentation to the campus community on progress made toward achieving Diversity goals in the Strategic Plan.
- D. Conduct periodic campus climate surveys, focused on diversity, among students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

**Strategy 3 – Closed Loop System:** Create feedback loops that ensure acquired information, metrics, research and assessment (survey) data, and learnings from experience are incorporated into future diversity planning and policy.

**Recommended Actions:**

- A. The regular bi-annual report and presentation to the campus community on progress made toward achieving Diversity goals in the Strategic Plan will include reporting on changes and refinements to policy and practice.
- B. A special working session will be held at least annually by the Diversity Committee to review existing policies, practices, and initiatives, with an eye to identifying prospective changes, advocating for their approval, and laying the groundwork for implementation.