

TO: Campus committees and groups at MSU, Mankato University  
FROM: Diversity Task Force  
DATE: February 6, 2004  
RE: **Requesting your comments on the Draft Diversity Plan**

The Diversity Task Force has presented the draft of the Diversity Plan to the University community for your comments and review. The Plan is posted online on President Davenport's web site (located at: <http://www.mnsu.edu/president/priorities/reports/diversity>) and includes an online form to collect feedback and suggestions anonymously.

The Diversity Task Force held several open sessions for public comment at the end of January and is now meeting with campus committees and groups to gather comments and reactions to the draft Diversity Plan as it refers to specific areas of interest to each group or constituency.

In the Diversity Plan we have set goals toward which we propose the campus and particular offices should work. The Diversity Task Force welcomes feedback on this draft plan before submitting a final plan to the President and the campus. We specifically ask that your department/group/unit(s) consider the following questions:

1. Does your group agree with the *definition of diversity* proposed?  
Why or why not?
2. Does your group agree with the establishment of a *Diversity Commission*?  
Why or why not? Who do you think should be represented in this Commission?
3. Does your group agree with the implementation of a *Campus Climate Survey*? Why or why not?
4. Does your group agree with the establishment of *diverse representation* on all committees, task forces, and campus wide groups that are formed?  
Why or why not?
5. Does your group agree with the establishment and adoption of a *diversity orientation program* for all faculty and staff by fall 2004?  
Why or why not?
6. What parts of the plan will affect *areas of concern to your group*?
7. What *specific recommendations* would your group make to the Diversity Task Force?
8. What is *missing* in the draft Diversity Plan?
9. Is there anything that *does not belong* in the Diversity Plan?
10. Do you have *other suggestions* for the Diversity Task Force?

---

**MEMBERS of the Diversity Task Force:** Maria Baxter-Nuamah, Ben Benson, Barbara Carson, Christine Connolly, Brian Colehour, Michael Fagin, Cedrick Frazier, Gwen Griffin, David Karwoski, Lori Lamb, Jayne Larsen, Jackie Lewis, Rob McGinn, Michael Miller, Dean Moosavi, Tuan Phan, Guadalupe Quintero, Joan Roca (chair), Deirdre Rosenfeld, Warren Sandmann, Nicole Schultz, Nithy Sevanthinathan, John Seymour, Julie Snow, Michael Walsh, and Lucette Wildt.

## THE DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY

*Diversity at Minnesota State University, Mankato is a commitment to create an understanding and appreciation of diverse peoples and diverse perspectives; a commitment to create an academic and cultural environment that develops mutual respect for and celebration of different ways of learning and different ways of living.*

*Meeting this commitment requires a transformation of the University Community to appreciate, respect, promote, teach and learn from differences in gender, ethnicity, race, national origin, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation, abilities/disabilities, age, physical appearance, marital/partnered status and whatever else can separate rather than unite the University Community as a genuine learning, teaching and living community dedicated to the education of all.*

*Meeting this commitment also requires action from the entire University Community to end discrimination and prejudice by and toward all people and groups.*

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT DIVERSITY?

As a modern University, Minnesota State University, Mankato is an educational institution that exists for the primary purpose of educating students in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive environment. The proposed definition of diversity includes every member of the University community. Given that we exist in a diverse society, failure to educate our students about diversity and failure to acknowledge and respect diversity is a failure of education. We care about diversity because it is what we must do as educators. We care about diversity because we must have a safe and respectful place to learn for all students. If students leave Minnesota State University, Mankato without the ability to function in a diverse world, we will have failed. If students leave Minnesota State University, Mankato without the ability to understand diverse perspectives, we will have failed. Minnesota today is not the Minnesota of 10 years ago, and Minnesota of today is not the Minnesota of 10 years from today. Minnesota is more diverse today than it was in the past, and it will continue to be more diverse in the years to come. If we do not prepare our students—all of our students—to understand diverse perspectives, peoples, and cultures, we will fail our students. Our students will not be prepared to live and succeed in a diverse world unless we educate in a diverse manner.

## THE DIVERSITY PLAN AREAS

The plan addresses our shared definition of diversity and consists of three main sections. Each section has a slightly different structure, but the goal is to show outcomes along with indicators that the outcome is progressing in the context of a timeline, with awareness of policy, funding, and accountability considerations.

**SECTION ONE: A PLURALISTIC ACADEMIC COMMUNITY** (*an academic and cultural environment that develops mutual respect for different ways of learning and celebrates different ways of living*). Outcomes related to Recruitment and Retention of Faculty/Staff/Administration, Recruitment/Retention of Students, and creating an inclusive and welcoming community.

### **SECTION TWO: THE STUDENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

(*a genuine learning, teaching and living community dedicated to the education of all*). Outcomes related to teaching and learning (teaching methods and styles, curriculum, advising, orientation, ...), development and implementation of diversity workshops, review of all policies, collaboration with the local community

**SECTION THREE: AN ENGAGED CAMPUS** (*action from the entire University Community to end discrimination and prejudice from and to all people and groups*). Outcomes related to the campus commitment to diversity, assessment of campus climate, and participation of all campus offices in diversity efforts.