University of Maryland, College Park

Implementation of Diversity Goals
& Appointment of Diversity Officers

Office of Diversity & Inclusion
June 1, 2013

Overview

The aim is to create an infrastructure that supports the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Diversity and the achievement of the goals in the six core areas: Leadership, Climate, Recruitment & Retention, Education, Research & Scholarship, and Community Engagement. Given the size and dispersion of the University, given the relative decentralization of University governance, and given the unique strengths, challenges, and opportunities in different divisions, colleges, and schools, we will use the following leadership and accountability structure:

Each Division, College, School and the President’s Office (hereafter referred to as “Units”) will engage in a cyclical process to:

- Assess the Unit’s diversity and inclusion strengths and challenges
- Establish Unit-specific diversity-related objectives, with benchmarks and metrics, that align with goals in the Strategic Plan for Diversity
- Develop and implement initiatives and strategies to address the Unit’s established objectives
- Develop and implement initiatives and strategies to address diversity objectives that have been prioritized for the University as a whole
- Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of these initiatives and strategies

To foster this plan, each Unit will name a senior staff or faculty member (termed “Diversity Officer”), who is either part-time or full-time in this role, and who will serve as part of the senior leadership team in the Unit. Diversity Officers will be appointed by their Dean or Vice President in consultation with the Chief Diversity Officer, ideally, for a three-year term.

Objective-setting and Implementation Process

The assessment, objective-setting, implementation, and evaluation processes will generally take place annually before the beginning of the academic year, with Units requested to establish objectives that align with the Strategic Plan for Diversity. These specific objectives might be for a period of one to three years. The objectives might be established for the entire Unit or they might be specific to a department or sub-unit within the Unit. In the large Units and in Units where departments and sub-units are quite disparate, it is advised that each department and sub-unit engage in the assessment, objective-setting, implementation and evaluation processes (or that related departments and sub-units engage in this process together), and that these deliberations inform the overall Unit-level discussion.
Units will submit their specific objectives to the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) for publication on the website, so that all Units will be aware of the objectives of other Units; thus enhancing opportunities for sharing information and ideas and working collaboratively.

Additionally, there may be one or more Academic Affairs-wide or University-wide objectives, for example, retention and promotion of under-represented minority faculty or enhancing the climate for non-exempt staff, that all relevant Units are expected to address in their annual plans.

At the end of each academic year, Units will provide an evaluative report, indicating the outcomes of their objectives. In cases where the objectives are for a 2- or 3-year duration, a progress report will be provided. The outcomes/progress reports will be published on the ODI website to foster information-sharing and utilized in the annual Cultural Diversity Report that the University submits to the Maryland Higher Education Commission. These reports may also help to inform Unit leaders’ PRDs.

The staff of ODI will serve as consultants and resources to the Units in assessing strengths and challenges, setting objectives, developing implementation plans, and evaluating outcomes.

**Diversity Officers**

The Strategic Plan for Diversity, *Transforming Maryland: Expectations for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion*, states that:

Units represented on the Diversity Advisory Council will appoint diversity officers who will be responsible for providing diversity education and training, overseeing climate assessments, and supporting diversity-related recruitment/retention, programming, and evaluation efforts within the unit. Diversity officers will also collaborate on campus-wide diversity initiatives. Responsibilities, expectations, and accountability for diversity officers will be clearly defined and consistent across units. (p. 15)

The role and standing of the Diversity Officer has been fleshed out further: Each Dean and Vice President will name a staff or faculty member to this role in consultation with the Chief Diversity Officer, ideally, for a three-year term. The Diversity Officer serves as a member of the Dean/Vice President’s senior leadership team, and has the respect of staff and faculty within the Unit. For academic Units, tenured senior faculty members may be the ideal choice. For non-academic Units, senior staff members, for example, Associate or Assistant Vice Presidents, are the likely choice.

*Equity Administrators* will continue to serve, in their primary role of ensuring the integrity of the search and selection process with respect to equity and diversity, and in their secondary role as a primary contact person and resource for complaints of harassment or discrimination. In contrast, Diversity Officers will focus with the Dean/VP on the broader strategic issues of how the Unit is doing with respect to equity, diversity and inclusion across the array of areas and goals in the Strategic Plan for Diversity. For the Diversity Officer, the core questions will be: How is the Unit doing overall with respect to equity, diversity and inclusion? How do we implement a process to advance our success with respect to equity, diversity and inclusion? In some cases, the same person may serve as both the Equity Administrator and the Diversity Officer.

The core responsibilities of a Diversity Officer are to:
• Provide leadership to the Unit in assessment of diversity strengths and challenges, development of Unit diversity objectives, implementation of strategies, and evaluation of outcomes
• Serve as a member of the Unit’s senior management team and work with senior leaders to establish a diversity leadership and accountability structure throughout the Unit, that includes all departments and sub-units
• Advise the Unit leader about equity, diversity and inclusion issues in the Unit
• Collaborate with the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and other relevant offices to achieve diversity and inclusion objectives
• Partner with the Equity Administrators and ADVANCE Professors to support the creation and sustenance of an equitable, diverse, and inclusive Unit and to consider procedures and guidelines to enhance equity and diversity in search, selection, promotion, tenure, and compensation
• Organize workshops, seminars, and forums to provide equity, diversity, and inclusion education, training, consultation and guidance for faculty, staff, and students;
• Serve as the Unit’s liaison to the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI); participate in a network of University Diversity Officers, led by ODI; and work to further develop and refine the university-wide process for implementation of diversity goals

Given the scope and breadth of these responsibilities, it is important that Diversity Officers be given adequate release time, course releases, and, where appropriate, summer salary, to devote to the work.

Resources

Each Unit is responsible for providing the resources necessary for the Diversity Officer to do their work. Smaller Units may require only a portion of an existing staff or faculty member’s time in the role of Diversity Officer. Larger Units may require a full-time person or several part-time people to serve in this capacity.

In general, Units are expected to utilize their own operational and human resources to support the different aspects of this plan; however, on an RFP basis, ODI may offer grants for projects and initiatives that support Units in achieving their goals.

Timeline

The initial set of Diversity Officers will be appointed by August 2013 and begin service in September 2013. The initial set of Unit objectives will be submitted by January 2014.