

Inclusion and Diversity

A Focus for the University of Dayton

AN OPEN LETTER FROM PRESIDENT DANIEL J. CURRAN, PH.D.

Dear colleagues:

I strongly believe improving diversity and inclusion ranks high among our strategic priorities for the University of Dayton if we are to reach our vision of academic excellence and be true to our mission as a Catholic, Marianist institution. The President's Council affirms this direction.

The results of the Campus Climate Audit tell us that we must focus on strengthening diversity and inclusion if we are to continue to be a vibrant, welcoming learning community. The trustees and the administration agree that we must concentrate on systemic, measurable change that will move the University toward realizing the Vision of Excellence.

The University of Dayton strives to be a community committed to the Catholic and Marianist educational tradition. Within this tradition, we recognize the importance and educational value of other traditions and beliefs held by members of the community. These traditions and beliefs are shaped by a wide variety of life experiences: culture; race and ethnicity; religious backgrounds; gender; socio-economic status; age; sexual orientation; and varying abilities. We are committed to achieving an intellectual, cultural and social environment on campus in which all are encouraged to make their contributions. We all have gifts to share and can learn from one another. We envision a campus climate in which community members think, act, learn and grow without prejudice, intimidation or discrimination.

BASED ON THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

As Provost Fred Pestello and I wrote in the 2004 Joint Report to University-Wide Diversity Plans, "to be successful in this endeavor, UD must build and sustain an environment that is inviting and supportive for all who work, learn, and live here. We also recognize that it is essential for UD to recall that the concept of inclusion is fundamentally Catholic and Marianist, and, therefore, consistent with the University's past, present, and future. It also is important for us to lead the way by advancing and embracing diversity and inclusion in all areas as an educational responsibility that we must uphold. All of us – students, faculty, staff and administrators — must learn to function effectively in diverse settings as to do so will clearly demonstrate the successful commitment to and fulfillment of our mission."

We will make systemic adjustments over time that allow the University of Dayton to retain its distinct identity while becoming a model institution that truly prepares students for success in a diverse, global workplace. For more than 150 years, we have believed that to be effective, education must address the needs of the whole person, imparting more than just knowledge. It must reflect each individual's experiences, celebrate cultural differences, and address a variety of social and historical perspectives. We must build on our strong foundation of social justice that is inherent in our Catholic and Marianist heritage. Finally, the University must maintain an environment that is inviting and supportive for all to realize their personal and professional goals.

Recognizing that accountability is essential to any successful initiative, University leaders have accepted the challenge of making a lasting cultural change on campus — one that integrates diversity, inclusion and social justice principles throughout the fabric of the University. Furthermore, we believe that each individual must take part in this effort to transform our community. Through the collective efforts of individuals, the world changes. Therefore, the President's Council offers its personal commitment to, and invites others to join us in, cultivating an environment that educates, encourages, and empowers all who enter our community.

ABOUT THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

We are adopting an organizational framework implemented successfully at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. This new direction builds upon our strengths and offers us the opportunity to engage many individuals in creating a lasting impact for the University of Dayton.

An Institutional Steering Team will coordinate all of the diversity and inclusion initiatives, which are:

- Recruitment and Retention of Faculty
- Recruitment and Retention of Staff and Administrators
- Recruitment and Retention of Students
- Diversity Plans
- Diversity Lecture Series

Integrative Teams will collaborate across the work of the strategic teams. These are:

- Assessment
- Communication
- Leadership Development

More than 75 individuals from throughout the University, including hourly wage earners, salaried staff, students, faculty, administration and members of the Board of Trustees, will be involved in shaping the future of the University of Dayton's diversity and inclusion direction. Individuals have received invitation letters to join me in shaping the future. We are counting on all members of University of Dayton community to come together in support of this effort. As we continue in this process, we will keep you informed of how and when you will have the opportunity to become involved. We seek and need your support and input.

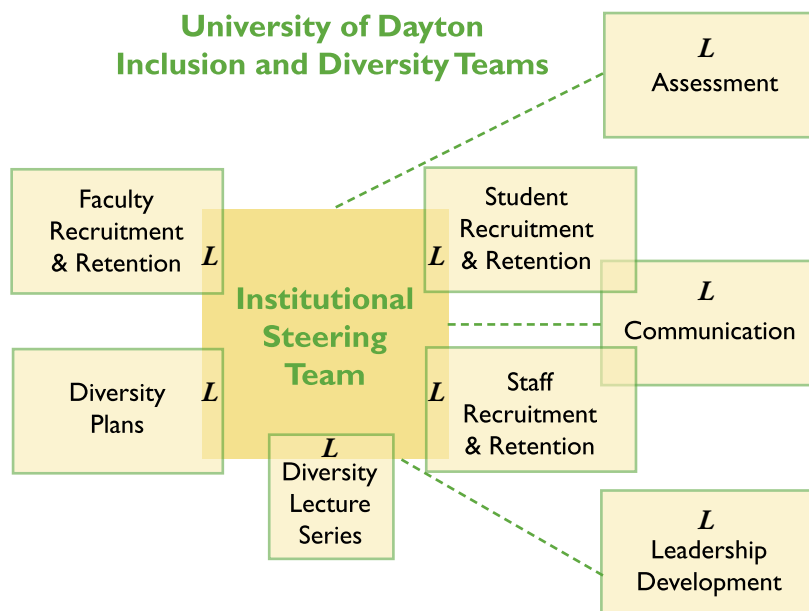
CHARGE TO THE INSTITUTIONAL STEERING TEAM

Inclusion and diversity will become assets and strengths of the University as we achieve recognition as a Catholic leader in higher education committed to academic excellence and multicultural competence. We will achieve this preeminence by:

- Creating a more inclusive and equitable learning, working and living environment at the University of Dayton;
- Developing proactive management practices and strategies regarding "Campus Climate, Inclusion, Diversity and Social Justice at the University of Dayton;"
- Increasing responsibility and initiatives for Community, Diversity and Social Justice at the University of Dayton at the local level;
- Developing common language and understanding of the university's Catholic and Marianist mission, and how this mission calls us to inclusion and diversity; and
- Fully integrating and synergizing the new model into the mission of teaching, research and outreach.

As you can see, the work we have before us is challenging, but it is essential for the University to achieve its goals. Therefore, I offer my personal commitment to, and invite you to join in cultivating and sustaining an environment that educates, encourages, and empowers all who enter here.

For more information, visit <http://diversity.undayton.edu>.



An organizational model for Campus Climate, Social Justice, Inclusion & Diversity at the University of Dayton

L=Liaison



(Based on the MCOD model developed by University of Massachusetts-Amherst—Jackson & Marchesani 2004.)