

Notes from CSUSM Diversity Town Hall Forum Dialogue, November 10, 2008

Mentoring

- For students, the Faculty Mentoring Program serves 90 students per year. Administrators receive more purposive mentoring. Faculty mentoring tends to happen at the department level.
- At the Library, each new librarian is matched with a senior librarian for 1 year.
- The Academic Senate provides peer coaching across departments.
- The College of Education has a professional mentoring committee that shepherds new hires for the first year.
- What about staff? In units like IITS, staff are very busy just getting their work done. Mentoring needs to be built into the campus curriculum.
- New faculty need peer mentoring in the areas of pedagogy and scholarship and how you balance the two. In the absence of formal mentoring efforts, deans and chairs do it informally (some better, some worse). This would be a good area to develop, perhaps within the Academic Senate as a “best practice.”
- The University of San Francisco has a great model of a campus-wide diversity program funded by the Irvine Foundation (we also applied for funding) that looks at faculty from underrepresented groups, offers retreats for underrepresented faculty, and aims to establish a “community of scholars.”
- GLBT representatives have met with the Faculty Mentoring Program to discuss how criteria for selection might include sexual orientation. We also wrote a “Foundation for Change” grant and got a small amount of money for an GLBT student mentoring program.
- Students should know that having a mentor is the point where things can take off for you. If you don’t have an “official” mentor, talk to your professors and identify one informally. Faculty and staff also should seek out informal mentoring.

Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention

- We should begin by taking an inventory of the programs and services we have. Let Garry know what our best practices are.
- Are there exit interviews to find out why faculty and staff leave? Yes, but they are voluntary and inconsistent.
- Our department is hiring an administrative coordinator, and thank God we’re a union shop. People who are already staff or temp workers have hiring privileges; hiring outside that list is difficult. So you’re limited by the hiring practices of those who preceded you, i.e., white people.
- If a department chair is committed to hiring and curriculum changes, that will move things. An Equal Opportunity Administrator sat on a search committee to make sure procedures were followed, but that doesn’t get to the hard questions faculty need to ask. We need to re-think the existing EOA model. We need to have people of color on search committees. There is resistance to outsiders who, quote, “may not understand” what the dean is looking for, so you hire people like yourself, and you don’t break the existing cycles.

- It might be easier to have a pool and make offers to underrepresented candidates. Do we have information on candidates who turn us down?
- Other universities have “targets of opportunity” hires, strategic hires where they put money aside for faculty of color. Does CSU have such a program? (No, Proposition 209 would rule that out.)
- Can we establish a pool of candidates who are members of underrepresented groups? I receive curriculum vitae from people from a wide variety of disciplines who want to come to work here. But we don’t really do anything with them. Could one office collect them?

Student Retention

- As just one example, faculty and staff reach out to students of American Indian descent, and mentoring is part and parcel of that.
- If we don’t help students who need remediation, and they fall behind, we have to disenroll them. So we put a lot of energy into remediation, and it has a positive outcome.
- We’re in the second year of a literacy grant proposal for “Teaching Writing to Multilingual Students.” These students from non-English-speaking families are conversationally fluent, but they need help with academic writing. This is done through the Language Learning Center, it’s free, and it uses trained instructors.
- Student Affairs and Academic Affairs has a whole host of programs: Language Learning Center, EOP/SSS, ASI, Cross Cultural Center, Women’s Center, there are lots of student organizations.
- We need programs tailored to the needs of students who are parents; most can’t afford child care. We need to help them overcome the barriers they face and come together for mutual support, maybe through the Women’s Center.
- Projects funded by the co-curricular funding committee are visible ways to support graduation ceremonies for different groups. Maybe we should reach out to students *and* their families and serve intergenerational interests.
- Student organizations have lots of resources on campus. But administrative processes are cumbersome, e.g., it takes forever to reserve a room. Classroom instruction takes first priority, but this has struck a nerve. The President has named a task force to explore this issue. A Student Union will give us more space, but that won’t happen in the foreseeable future.
- Student services are wonderful, but “gatekeeping” courses in areas like math and science are problematic, difficult to get through, and negatively affect retention and graduation rates. The Provost is piggybacking on system-wide efforts to address this. David Barsky is identifying courses to pinpoint. Then we need to find faculty mentors across the system who can help, and then use technology so that learning happens in better ways. We’ve just started in the last 1 or 2 years in chemistry, history, accounting.
- Once you identify “gatekeeping” courses, then dovetail with mentoring by enlisting faculty with expertise in those areas.
- In Social Justice, we’ve become dependent on professional grant writing to bring major events to campus, and that takes so much effort. We need campus money

that's dedicated to programming and infrastructure so that good programs don't go the way of the "PowWow." We need a campus initiative for "out of class" learning.

- We need "supplemental instruction" within a couple of disciplines to address "gate-keeping" issues and help student succeed with tough courses.
- As a women's studies major, I see that a lot of the faculty who attend and promote diversity events are the same circle of people. I'd like to see other faculty from other disciplines promote these events even if they don't pertain to their subject. As a student of color, I'd be really encouraged to see other faculty who are different from me embrace diversity because it is a core value of the university.

Campus Climate

- This spring, we are conducting research with focus groups on subtle acts of racism that occur around campus. Preliminary findings have shown the existence of "white areas" within the campus community.
- We're having a conversation with the police and with student organizations about conduct that is directly related to racism. We need to name what we're talking about.
- We shouldn't always preach to the choir. There are a lot of conversations about diversity that take place because people have to have them, like in Academic Senate. We have mandatory sexual harassment training. Students have to take multicultural education. What about multicultural training for faculty and staff? Diversity needs to be on the campus radar; it should be part of the everyday conversation.
- The "Foundations of Excellence" looked at that and found support for diversity efforts doesn't carry forward into curricular areas. We gave ourselves a D-minus. First-year students learn about educational equity, social justice, and diversity, but they said they didn't feel like they were really learning about multiculturalism. We need an action plan.
- We need to expand this conversation beyond race and ethnicity to include gender and sexual orientation. What can we do to improve the climate for GLBT students, who often face discrimination and hostility? We're setting up a committee to study this, and we think a good first step is a "safety zone" near the Pride Center. Look at campus climate from all aspects of social identity, not just race.
- The President suggests a campus climate survey that benchmarks what we have done and covers a broad swath of issues but doesn't oversurvey.
- The campus climate for disabled persons is still a problem. A conversation about diversity must include disability.
- An IRA fund created a group to encourage women in math. What are we doing to change disciplines historically dominated by white men, like business and science. They have very entrenched cultures. Can we introduce accountability in such departments?
- How does the university insert itself as needed into a conversation about building diversity?
- Achieving progress in diversity and improving the campus climate should be incorporated into MPP evaluations.

DIVERSITY TOWN HALL FORUM: A CALL TO ACTION
Monday, November 10, 2008
Evaluation Feedback

What ideas will you take away from today's diversity forum?

There are so many opportunities for growth. Mentoring is a hot topic that could energize the campus.

We need more forums on diversity.

That perhaps we need more "grassroots" efforts – faculty members willing to be "fresh eyes" readers for students, papers, colleagues, RtP efforts – those kinds of things.

There are many things happening on campus, and still much needs to be done. Can we increase awareness on existing efforts and move forward strategically?

Happy to hear about ideas (Provost) for identifying "gatekeeper" courses. Need to look further at mentoring faculty and staff. Need to do campus climate survey.

There is a need for more opportunities for students to obtain mentoring, not only from faculty but also from other students.

We need more time to discuss this with students, staff, faculty, administrators, and community members.

Bolman and Dent's symbolic leadership concept was realized through President Haynes's facilitation regarding the importance of diversity at CSUSM. Great start regarding learning about best practices.

The need to increase mentoring programs (formal) for students, but also for staff members. This would be a great idea to create mentoring programs for staff, and especially staff that aspire to become leaders within their areas, in division, or in higher education in general. I was very surprised to hear that African-American students were having problems, and issues with the police department. This was disturbing.

Our campus needs work.

CSUSM promotes diversity and tolerance, yet for those students who hold conservative views, their voices are silenced. They are not tolerated, nor are they included. So many students here at CSUSM are afraid to voice their conservative values. I, for one, will most definitely not be at the forum.

What issues should be addressed at future diversity forums?

Economic diversity wasn't mentioned. So much focus is put on race, but sexual orientation and economic are factors that cannot be overlooked

Have a session on each of the 5 areas. And provide more options to share graffiti chart paper or electronic discussion. Not all have a chance to speak in current forum structure.

Disability issues.

\$ support for practices!

Integration/awareness of activities, practices across entire campus

How do our everyday practices reproduce inequity and retard diversity?

How to establish a real mentoring program and other means to reinforce/build the connection of students to the university community.

Address actions we can take and how we can make social justice a priority in our day-to-day life. Often, we need detail @ what we can do and then have the support, time and money to enact and even practice these actions.

Clear definitions of diversity, multicultural, and social justice. Use definitions to assess student knowledge and experiences. Need to increase analysis of disaggregated data; for example, if 5,000 students answer a campus climate survey, and 75% are of dominant social identities [and] indicate a safe climate, then is it really safe?

More discussion on campus climate and how it impacts students and staff. Also perhaps some updates on what may be happening at the Chancellor's office level as FYI, and also how it may impact our campus (i.e., enrollment). Although time ran out, more in-depth discussion on engagement with external community. There is a lot happening on that end, which tends to be left out frequently or minimized.

Accountability within all academic departments. Promoting of diversity and social justice events by faculty not within the Women's Studies and Sociology departments. More events/speakers covering the topic of ability.