



Rankin & Associates, Consulting

Assessment • Planning • Interventions

North Dakota University System

Strategic Plan for
Equity & Community

July 18, 2007



Rankin & Associates, Consulting

This report submitted to NDUS System
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The NDUS Diversity Council

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North Dakota System Plan for Equity, Diversity and Community

Introduction

One of the primary missions of higher education institutions is to unearth and disseminate knowledge. Academic communities expend a great deal of effort fostering an environment where this mission is nurtured, with the understanding that institutional climate has a profound effect on the academic community's ability to excel in teaching, research, and scholarship.¹ The climate on college campuses not only affects the creation of knowledge, but also affects members of the academic community who, in turn, contribute to the creation of the campus environment.² Several national education association reports advocate creating a more inclusive, welcoming climate on college campuses.

A 1990 report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the American Council on Education suggests that in order to build a vital community of learning a college or university must provide an environment where

...intellectual life is central and where faculty and students work together to strengthen teaching and learning, where freedom of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where civility is powerfully affirmed, where the dignity of all individuals is affirmed and where equality of opportunity is vigorously pursued, and where the well-being of each member is sensitively supported.

In addition, a report by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 1995) challenges higher education institutions "to affirm and enact a commitment to equality, fairness, and

¹For more detailed discussions of climate issues see Bauer (1998), Boyer (1990), Peterson (1990), Rankin (1994, 1998), and Tierney and Dilley (1996).

²For further examination of the effects of climate on campus constituent groups and their respective effects on the campus climate see Bauer (1998), Kuh and Whitt (1988), Peterson (1990), Rankin (1994, 1998, 1999), and Tierney (1990).

inclusion.” AAC&U proposes that colleges and universities commit to “the task of creating inclusive educational environments in which all participants are equally welcome, equally valued, and equally heard.” The report suggests that in order to provide a foundation for a vital community of learning, a primary mission of the academy must be to create an environment that cultivates diversity and celebrates difference.

Colleges and universities, therefore, seek to create an environment characterized by equal access for all students, faculty, and staff regardless of cultural differences, where individuals are not just tolerated but valued. Institutional mission statements and strategic plans suggest it is crucial to increase multicultural awareness and understanding, within an environment of mutual respect and cooperation, a climate that is nurtured by dialogue and evidenced by a pattern of civil interaction. On many campuses, however, a climate that is equally supportive of all of its members does not exist.³

The North Dakota University System (NDUS) believes in nurturing a supportive and inclusive environment as evidenced by the system’s support of this project, the NDUS Diversity Council’s mission statement, and the commitment of the system office. The project was commissioned by the NDUS system and each of the 10 campuses through their representation on the Diversity Council to identify challenges and implement initiatives to create this climate. To minimize internal bias, the Diversity Council contracted with an outside consultant⁴ to assist them in identifying challenges confronting the campus communities with respect to underrepresented employees and students. The

³ Institutions of higher learning are defenders of First Amendment rights and academic freedom. Campuses are venues for dialogue among different voices and viewpoints; this discourse must not only be allowed, but encouraged. Universities and colleges should provide a safe space where **all** voices are respected, where no voice is silenced simply because it is antithetical to our own. The fundamental right to free speech, however, is not a justification for acts of violence or harassment. Rankin & Associates recommends that institutions of higher education review campus policies concerning First Amendment rights, as well as official university activities and course descriptions, to ensure that they are for intellectual inquiry and not vehicles of discrimination, intimidation, or hate.

⁴ Rankin & Associates, Consulting was the firm hired to work in collaboration with DAC to conduct the project.

project was a proactive initiative by the Diversity Council to review the climate on campus for underrepresented groups.

Each NDUS campus received individual campus reports reviewing the successes and challenges respective to each campus. Campus representatives attended a two-day retreat in April 2007 to begin the process of reviewing their reports and identifying challenges specific to each campus. Using the system-wide rubric presented in this document, the next steps in this project are for each campus to use the results to identify specific strategies for addressing the challenges facing their respective communities and support positive initiatives on campus.

A summary of the system-wide findings⁵ suggests that while NDUS faces several challenges in regard to diversity issues, these challenges parallel those identified in higher education institutions across the country⁶. The results of the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest three major challenges in the NDUS at that all revolve around issues of power and privilege.

The first challenge reported by both students and employees revolve around issues of race. Specific and unique to North Dakota, the largest population other than White/Caucasian is Native American/American Indian. Of the eighteen percent of respondents who reported experiencing offensive, hostile or intimidating conduct, almost twice as many respondents of color reported experiencing this conduct than did White/Caucasian respondents. The respondents suggest that they experienced this conduct in subtle (intimidation, ignored, racially profiled) forms. Interestingly, the source of the conduct was primarily within cohort (e.g., student on student, staff on staff, faculty on

⁵ The reader is directed to the full aggregate system-wide report for a more detailed account of the findings.

⁶ Rankin (2008). *Campus Climate Assessment and Planning*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press

faculty). Twenty-eight percent of all respondents indicated that they had observed offensive, hostile or intimidating conduct and *racial profiling* was reported most often.

The second challenge is within institution classism/privilege among employees. The results suggest that staff and faculty respondents reported experiencing offensive, hostile or intimidating conduct due to their position status within the system. Again, the source of the conduct was reported as within cohort (e.g., faculty on faculty; staff on staff). These experiences were substantiated in the comments provided by respondents in the survey particularly among staff. The perception among staff respondents is that they are devalued and underappreciated for their work. Staff respondents report feeling that they are perceived by others in the institution as having a *lower class* status.

A final challenge noted primarily by women respondents is safety. Fifty-six respondents indicated that they had experienced sexual assault while at an NDUS campus. Analyses of the data indicate that 29 of the survivors were students; and 21 were employees (six respondents did not identify their positions at NDUS). It is important to note that the “rape culture” and the underreporting of sexual assault is a national campus concern⁷.

The assessment was conducted and the results were used to identify specific strategies for addressing the challenges and supporting positive diversity initiatives through the *NDUS Plan for Equity, and Community: 2007 – 2012*. This report provides an overview of the process used in creating the implementation plan and the implementation plan rubric.

⁷ Fischer, B., Cullen, F., Turner, M. (2000). The sexual victimization of college women. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

Process Review

Because of the inherent complexity of the topic of diversity, it is crucial to examine the multiple dimensions of diversity in higher education. The conceptual model used as the foundation for the assessment of campus climate was developed by Smith (1999) and modified by Rankin (2002).⁸

Following the design of the model, the Diversity Council collaborated with the consultant in the development of the system-wide survey. The survey questions also were informed by the work of Rankin (2003)⁹. The project proposal, including the survey instrument, was reviewed and approved by the NDUS Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was provided exempt status. The proposal indicated that any analysis of the data would ensure participant anonymity. The final web-based survey and paper and pencil surveys were distributed to the campus communities in Spring 2006. Each survey included information describing the purpose of the study, explaining the survey instrument, and assuring the respondents of anonymity. The survey was distributed to the entire population of students and employees at each campus via an invitation to participate from the respective President. To encourage participation from underrepresented groups on campus, members of the Diversity Council on each campus forwarded subsequent invitations.

From the findings of the internal assessments on each campus and the aggregate system report, the enclosed Plan for Equity, and Community: 2007 –2012 was created. It includes a planning rubric identifying the newly formulated Vision and Goals with specific actions organized around the following seven components of campus climate and their related objectives:

⁸ See Appendix A of the Climate Assessment Report for a more detailed description of the Transformational Tapestry© model.

⁹ Rankin (2006, in progress) is a national study examining the campus climate for underrepresented groups.

Goal 1: Curriculum/Pedagogy

Enhance student learning about diverse cultures, experiences and perspectives and foster critical, creative and compassionate student thinking about power and privilege dynamics by:

- a) Continuing to enhance and value a curriculum and pedagogy tied to the intercultural and international elements of the NDUS vision
- b) Providing faculty with the tools, resources, & support to teach inclusively
- c) Encouraging involvement in curriculum and pedagogy among all members of the college community.

Goal 2: Research/Scholarship/Service/Co-Curricular

Continue to value and enhance an academic environment and a curriculum that values a community of difference by fostering and recognizing research/scholarship, community service/experiential engagement, and co-curricular programming that support the intercultural and international elements of the NDUS vision.

Goal 3: Recruitment/ Retention of Students

Increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented populations among students

Goal 4: Recruitment/ Retention of Faculty, Staff, & Administrators

Increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented populations among faculty, staff and administrators.

Goal #5- Campus Policies, Procedures, and Training

To assure equal access, respect, opportunity and safety for all students, faculty, staff, and administrators regardless of difference.

Goal 6: Inter-group and Intra-group Relations

To foster a campus climate that creates an environment free from harassment, violence, and sexual victimization for all groups through awareness programs, trainings, and policy review. Initiatives will create a space for meaningful inter and intra group exchanges between culturally and socially diverse groups. These interactions will exist within a campus environment that encourages dialogue free from judgment that is safe for those who want to speak, and which recognizes that such interaction is important to sustain a dynamic campus community.

Goal 7: External Relations

Strengthen and expand working relationships with external constituencies (e.g., alumni, local police, local businesses, local government, non-profit agencies, K-12 schools, other colleges, religious/cultural institutions, media)

For each proposed action in the plan, the grid also provides the following:

- **Suggested responsible person(s)/group for the oversight of each action**
Each action item has attached to it suggested office(s)/person(s) that are responsible for initiating and providing oversight of the action.
- **Resources and/or source of resources for each action**
These include fiscal resources and human resources for implementation of each action.
- **Outcomes implied for each action successfully completed**
Each action is followed by a potential outcome, suggesting that if the action is successfully completed that the stated outcome will be achieved.
- **Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey – or campus climate survey - and other related reports)**
This section notes how the actions relate to specific challenges identified in the assessment.
- **Action Status**
An action item is marked in this column with an asterisk (*) if the action is under consideration for implementation or with a check mark (√) if the action is currently supported by NDUS.
- **Time Frame**
The timeframe indicates where in the five-year plan the action should be completed.
- **Priority**
The action items in bold face in the rubric reflect the item's relative importance, though all actions were identified by the Diversity Council as initiatives for consideration.

**NDUS Implementation Plan for Equity and Community
 Shared Vision/Goals/Actions**

NDUS Diversity Council Shared Vision

A Community of Difference where, through education & awareness, all are accepted, respected, & celebrated

Goal 1: Curriculum/Pedagogy

Enhance student learning about diverse cultures, experiences and perspectives and foster critical, creative and compassionate student thinking about power and privilege dynamics by:

- a) Continuing to enhance and value a curriculum and pedagogy tied to the intercultural and international elements of the NDUS vision
- b) Providing faculty with the tools, resources, & support to teach inclusively
- c) Encouraging involvement in curriculum and pedagogy among all members of the college community.

ACTIONS	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
1.1 Develop a first-year, first semester course						
1.2 Develop funding to support integration of difference into the curriculum						
1.3 Develop an NDUS Diversity Council Newsletter for sharing information on initiatives and successes throughout the system	NDUS Diversity Council					

ACTIONS	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
1.4 Create a yearly calendar of activities to share across the system						
1.5 Develop training for faculty to assist them in integrating their curriculum						
1.6 Invite corporations who have successful diversity initiatives to discuss employee programs						
1.7 Revise and update web site to reflect the new vision/goals/actions						
1.8 Identify student/faculty mentors for prospective students						
1.9 Provide professional development opportunities for minority faculty (e.g., leave with pay for graduate work)						

Goal 2: Research/Scholarship/Service/Co-Curricular

Continue to value and enhance an academic environment and a curriculum that values a community of difference by fostering and recognizing research/scholarship, community service/experiential engagement, and co-curricular programming that support the intercultural and international elements of the NDUS vision.

ACTIONS	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
2.1 Develop a clear plan for the establishment of a Clearinghouse of diversity events – linked to Diversity Council site				Campus Climate Survey (CCS) report – lack of awareness of campus-wide activities and programs on diversity		
2.2 Develop awareness training on issues of difference for current faculty/administrators						
2.3 Develop faculty incentives for promoting issues difference that is reflected in annual reviews						
2.4 Create service learning initiatives on ND reservations						

ACTIONS	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
2.5 Create meaningful exchange programs with Tribal Colleges						
2.6 Implement current policy on leave with pay for faculty to pursue doctoral degrees						
2.7 Create a mentor program for faculty of color in tenure track positions to assist them in the P&T process						

Goal 3: Recruitment/ Retention of Students

Increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented populations among students

ACTIONS RECRUITMENT	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
3.1 Create programs to actively recruit and target students of difference						
3.1.1 Build bridges with minority communities ie. Adopt a Reservation						
3.1.2 Bring junior and senior classes to campus to observe the campus experience						
3.1.3 Include parents on campus visits. ie. Students talk with coach or advisor while parents visit with administrators or financial aid						
3.2 Create websites where minority student can see themselves fitting onto the campus						
3.2.1 Build relationships with the community which takes time to build trust						
3.2.2 Evaluate Cultural Diversity Tuition waiver program to insure waivers are awarded consistently among campuses.						
3.2.3 Explore linkages/collaboration with tribal colleges						
3.2.4 Identify someone on campus who's goal is specifically to contact Tribal Colleges						
3.2.5 Use current students to recruit in home town high school (e.g., All American Basketball Star to recruit in home town was highly successful.						

ACTIONS RETENTION	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
3.3 Create opportunities to have planned conversations providing students with opportunity to share dreams, needs, hurts (e.g., times to build trust)						
3.3.1 Freshman experience class that includes diversity activities						
3.3.2 Book discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a book that all disciplines can use for class discussion • All freshman and freshman faculty read book • Discuss the book in each class (English, Math, Science, Social Science, Humanities) 						
3.3.2 Movie discussions (e.g., Crash, All God's Children, Color of Fear)						
3.3.3 Build relationship with parents, especially with parents of 1 st generation students						
3.3.4 Involve students in classroom through Peer review of course work						
3.3.5 Use mixed methods in classroom presentation which will allow for student flexibility with how they attend class (e.g., On-line, in class)						
3.3.6 Establish a task force to address retention on each campus						
3.3.7 Hold discussion in the financial aid community addressing the special needs of native American students						

Goal 4: Recruitment/ Retention of Faculty, Staff, & Administrators

Increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented populations among faculty, staff and administrators.

ACTIONS RECRUITMENT	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
4.1 Use professional listservs to announce new job openings						
4.1.1 Faculty and Administration must take opportunity to recruit new faculty/staff through networking (e.g., Attending professional conferences)						
4.2 Competitive Salaries						
4.3 Identify opportunities for career enhancement e.g. Opportunity for research						
4.4 Offer faculty opportunity for advancement and tenure						

ACTIONS RETENTION	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
4.5 Provide mentoring for new faculty and staff						
4.5.1 Invite new faculty/staff to community activities. Encourage community involvement						
4.5.2 Provide instructional development						
4.5.3 Provide opportunities for foreign faculty and staff to improve English speaking and communication skills						
4.5.4 Provide opportunity for contact with others outside college department						
4.5.5 People move on. We need to recognize this as a good thing. If the work experience at an institution is positive, faculty will talk positively about their work at that institution. They can act as a recruiter.						
4.6 Explore Faculty Exchange programs						

Goal #5- Campus Policies, Procedures, and Training

To assure equal access, respect, opportunity and safety for all students, faculty, staff, and administrators regardless of difference.

ACTIONS	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
5.1 Review and enhance faculty and staff training of current policies and procedures ensuring it is written in language people understand						
5.1.1 Review current policies and procedures						
5.1.2 Policy and Procedures need to be accessible						
5.1.3 Post to College Website						
5.1.4 Rapid Response Crisis Team – Trained						
5.1.5 Train staff, Faculty and students where to access Policy and Procedures						
5.1.6 FERPA Training						
5.1.7 Liability Training						
5.1.2 Write P & P in a language people understand						
5.2 Create website link that is easily accessible that provides information on Policy and procedure, Training and Development.						

Goal 6: Inter-group and Intra-group Relations

To foster a campus climate that creates an environment free from harassment, violence, and sexual victimization for all groups through awareness programs, trainings, and policy review. Initiatives will create a space for meaningful inter and intra group exchanges between culturally and socially diverse groups. These interactions will exist within a campus environment that encourages dialogue free from judgment that is safe for those who want to speak, and which recognizes that such interaction is important to sustain a dynamic campus community.

ACTIONS	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
6.1 Plan gatherings which focus on team building that cultivates an environment of respect						
6.1.1 Develop intentional activities which focuses on social justice issues which cultivates interaction between student/faculty/staff/ and administration (e.g. Hunger banquet, inter-religious gathering, and poverty simulation)						
6.1.2 Train facilitators for subject specific conversations (coffee and conversation)						
6.1.3 Establish Peer mentoring-community mentors mechanism						
6.2 Develop mechanisms that foster students to think globally and act locally						
6.2.1 Hometown Heroes						

ACTIONS	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
6.3 Each campus will be encouraged to designate a diversity resource person or group for students discuss diversity issues or share experiences on their campus						
6.4 Campus leadership will be encouraged to show strong support for diversity initiatives on their campus and will be encouraged to recognize the importance of diversity as a future necessity for education and economic development.						
6.5 Leadership will be encouraged to implement and display their support throughout their public relations, strategic plans, media relations, marketing, curriculum development, and all other areas of importance at their institution.						

Goal 7: External Relations

Strengthen and expand working relationships with external constituencies (e.g., alumni, local police, local businesses, local government, non-profit agencies, K-12 schools, other colleges, religious/cultural institutions, media)

ACTIONS	Suggested Responsible Person(s)/Group	Resources/ Source for Resources	Outcome	Rationale (as relates to C.C. survey and other related reports)	Action Status	Time Frame
7.1 Create and sustain more community and regional partnerships						
7.1.1 Collaborate with law enforcement to improve student/faculty –relations						
7.2 A statewide diversity conference inviting area business leaders, community members, system institutions, educators, counselors etc. to participate or present.						
7.3 Local community diversity training for our system campuses and communities						
7.4 The NDUS Diversity Council will act as a resource for the State in providing best practices in institutional diversity planning and implementation						