

Moving Forward
Diversity and Inclusion Office
Major Initiatives 2012

There are, of course, many tasks that involve the Diversity and Inclusion Office; however, for this document only new (or recent) initiatives are listed. They are not listed in terms of importance. The Diversity and Inclusion Office is committed to successfully addressing these initiatives.

Mentoring

It is axiomatic that mentoring is a retention and enrichment strategy for undergraduate student success. The Diversity and Inclusion Office will identify mentoring models that can serve as pilot programs for the University. These projects will be geared toward student populations with the lowest rates of retention.

Likely Impediments

There are two impediments that should be addressed: 1) there is territoriality in the Ferris “mentoring community,” and, 2) if a new mentoring model is needed, it will involve finding the employees with the time and inclination to do the work.

Approach to Impediments

The Diversity and Inclusion Office will assess the mentoring initiatives that are in operation at the University. This will involve conversations with staff who currently direct mentoring efforts. We need to learn what the University is doing—and not doing. This information will help inform opinions on what “new” work, if any, is needed—and possible. These conversations will also be useful in relationship building, meaning, gently working through the territoriality.

Collaborators

Academic Affairs, centrally, especially Bill Potter
Faculty Center for Teaching & Learning, Todd Stanislav

Scholar Program, Karen GreenBay
Office of Multicultural Student Services, Matt Chaney

Grants

As the University attempts to balance its needs and expenses, it is imperative that outside funding sources are identified. The Diversity and Inclusion Office is involved with a number of projects that are fundable, including but not limited to, the Ferris Youth Initiative, the First Lady's Attic, the Tuition Incentive Program Office, the Office of Multicultural Student Services, the Office of International Education, the Jim Crow Museum, and the proposed mentoring initiative. The Diversity and Inclusion Office will take a leadership role in identifying and applying for public and private grants that may be used to help with the above-mentioned projects.

Impediments

The major impediments are identifying and applying for the grants.

Approach to Impediments

The Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion will meet with representatives from the Tuition Incentive Program Office, the Office of Multicultural Student Services, the Office of International Education, and the Jim Crow Museum to identify areas where their needs may be addressed with a grant. We will work together to write the grants. The Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion has started a series of exploratory meetings with the Director of Academic Research and Grants.

Collaborators

Ferris Youth Initiative, Leroy Wright and Nick Campau
Tuition Incentive Program Office, Bill Potter and Judy Watson
Office of Multicultural Student Services, Matt Chaney and Michael Wade
Office of International Education, Piram Prakasam and staff
Jim Crow Museum, Andy Karafa
Director of Academic Research and Grants, Karen Strasser

Diverse Workforce

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion remains committed to leading the effort to increase the diversity of the University's workforce. The major initiative involves finding ways to get the University's search committees to adopt the best practices that were identified in the Diverse Workforce Taskforce document.

Impediments

The impediments are many and varied, including but not limited to, a lack of knowledge about the Diverse Workforce Taskforce report; a Ferris cultural norm that discourages change; and, the perception among some employees—especially faculty—that searches are the “business” of the people conducting the searches.

Approach to Impediments

Regarding publicizing the taskforce report, the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion will meet with the Academic Deans and various directors to discuss the report. The Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion will meet with and discuss the document with all diversity work teams—and campus leaders.

This is an area where the chances for a successful outcome are greatly increased if Vice Presidents take ownership of the issue. One needed approach is for the Vice Presidents to encourage their direct reports to adopt the best practices. The goal (and challenge) is to get more people talking about and using the best practices.

Collaborators

All vice presidents, deans, and directors
Faculty leadership
Entire University