



The UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at

CHARLOTTE

Plan for Campus Diversity, Access, and Inclusion

Background

Individuals from the faculty and staff and the student body have been vigorous advocates for greater inclusion at UNC Charlotte. Beginning in 1993, a series of committees and task forces examined issues related to diversity and made recommendations about how to advance campus diversity. The Minority Presence Planning Committee, the Instructional Success in Classrooms Planning Committee, the Faculty Recruitment and Retention Planning Committee, and the African and African American Faculty and Staff Caucus have reported on the status of campus diversity, calling attention to specific areas of concern and identifying strategies for improvement.

In 2004 the University adopted a goal specific to diversity: *to enhance opportunities for learning in a culturally rich environment*. To advance progress toward this goal, the Provost appointed the Diversity Plan Committee. This university-wide group convened in 2005-2006 and worked in subcommittees to address diversity in four areas: student body, faculty, staff, and curriculum, producing a draft plan that formed the basis for this document.

In his February 2006 installation address, Chancellor Philip L. Dubois highlighted the importance of campus diversity to the future of the institution. Accordingly, the Chancellor reconstituted the Council on University Community, comprised of members of his Cabinet and chaired by Provost Joan Lorden, charging the Council with the completion and implementation of a comprehensive diversity plan for faculty, staff and students. This Campus Diversity, Inclusion, and Access Plan (“the Plan”) is the product of the Council’s deliberations and builds on the carefully considered recommendations and insight of prior working groups. With the publication of this plan, the University affirms its commitment to promoting inclusive practices and processes that build community in a safe, positive learning environment.

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Introduction

In the 21st century, an increasingly diverse society and a global economy are drivers for diversity in higher education. As North Carolina and the Charlotte region undergo rapid population growth and demographic change, UNC Charlotte must respond to the needs of a more diverse student population. It is imperative that the University prepare its students to become leaders and thriving citizens in a pluralistic and multicultural society. At its fullest potential, higher education allows students to interact with people from different backgrounds and to intellectually engage a range of ideas and perspectives. This educational experience cultivates the skills that graduates will need to function adeptly in a global society.

For the purposes of this plan, the University defines diversity as the acknowledgement of the many facets of human difference. Diversity encompasses a variety of characteristics and experiences that include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, and religion.

The diversity imperative for quality education at UNC Charlotte is the foundation for the Plan. The Plan identifies components of a diverse campus community and outlines steps toward building an inclusive environment that promotes the success of all students, faculty, and staff. It is a living document that affirms our institutional values and is designed to offer guidance to University departments and units for achieving the University goals for diversity.

The Plan articulates a number of broad objectives for campus diversity and identifies key strategies for achieving these goals. It also begins to establish a dynamic repository of current practices at UNC Charlotte and inventories of best practices from other institutions. These strategies are organized by topic in the appendices of this document. Mechanisms to assess the diversity climate, the progress of underrepresented groups, and the effectiveness of diversity initiatives are detailed and linked to an accountability structure for the implementation and success of the plan.

The objectives are intended to give UNC Charlotte a framework for developing the policies and practices that support a diverse learning environment. A successful diversity plan necessarily involves all areas of the University and requires collective responsibility at all levels. UNC Charlotte is committed to fostering an inclusive environment that is respectful of differences and promotes understanding and cooperation.

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Objectives for Diversity, Access, and Inclusion

Objective 1: Create a broad understanding of goals for diversity, access, and inclusion for the University through active outreach to the campus community.

UNC Charlotte seeks to build a shared understanding of institutional values, including the importance of diversity, access, and inclusion in the campus community, and to create a culture that is respectful of differences. In support of this objective, the University articulates its commitment to diversity, offers opportunities to raise awareness of multiculturalism, and actively promotes an appreciation of diversity. The University will also maintain a physical environment that is inviting to faculty, students, and staff with disabilities.

Key Strategies

UNC Charlotte Crossroads Initiative is a campus-wide project designed to engage faculty, students, and staff in a conversation about the future of UNC Charlotte with respect to issues of diversity, access, and inclusion. The Crossroads project will create opportunities for personal reflection, group discussion, and coordinated action at all levels of the University. This project offers a means to diffuse institutional values and to develop a vision and strategies for building the campus community we desire.

The University will encourage increased participation in diversity education on campus. Through Human Resources, diversity training is available to supervisors and staff. For students, the Multicultural Resource Center and the Office of International Programs provide ongoing education and training to help students explore many aspects of diversity and offer multicultural programs throughout the academic year.

The Chancellor's Diversity Challenge Fund, a campus mini-grant program, supports a wide range of initiatives that educate the campus on a variety of topics related to diversity and raise awareness about the diverse groups and perspectives that comprise the campus community. The University will continue to support these efforts and consistently articulate the commitment to diversity. In addition, faculty and staff accomplishments in advancing diversity will be recognized in reviews and performance management processes.

Measures of Success

- Internal and external communications to constituencies articulate the University's goal for diversity, access, and inclusion.
- Announcements of campus events, including printed materials and website content, indicate the availability of accommodations for accessibility and reference campus resources for disabilities services.
- Participation by faculty, students, supervisors, and staff in programs that promote diversity, access, and inclusion.

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- Assessment of initiatives through the Chancellor's Diversity Challenge Fund indicates increased understanding and appreciation of issues of diversity, access, and inclusion
- Positive responses from faculty, students, and staff in climate surveys.

Objective 2: Recruit and graduate a diverse student body that reflects community diversity and addresses the state's need to increase access to higher education for historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students.

As North Carolina and the Charlotte region undergo dramatic demographic changes, UNC Charlotte must prepare to serve a diverse population of students. Measures are needed to ensure the access, support, and retention of underrepresented student groups. Practices and policies governing admissions must be consistent with the University's goal of greater access for students from underrepresented groups.

Key Strategies

Important mechanisms for effective student recruitment, progression, and graduation include targeted recruitment and ongoing outreach to underrepresented groups, with the goal of achieving diversity in all disciplines. The Office of Admissions and the Graduate School will continue to implement and enhance recruitment initiatives to diversify the student body. Academic support programs will expand outreach to students from underrepresented groups and address unique needs of identified cultural groups to support student success and graduation. The University will also prioritize increasing need-based financial aid opportunities and increase outreach and advising on financial aid to underrepresented groups.

Academic departmental diversity plans will incorporate mentoring and advising to foster the success of culturally diverse and low-income first generation students. Surveys will be used to investigate the student experience, with particular attention to the needs of underrepresented students, and to better understand campus climate for all groups. Departments and units of the University should continue to explore and expand additional promising practices for the success of a diverse student body (Appendix A). The Council on University Community will establish a consistent coherent approach for tracking student demographic information by discipline, disaggregated by gender, race, ethnicity, and citizenship and report to the campus progress in student recruitment, retention, and graduation.

Measures of Success

- Increase in the enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of students from underrepresented groups, at undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Increase in proportion of students from underrepresented groups in the Honors College, learning communities, and other opportunities for academic engagement known to promote student success.

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- Increase in the early receipt of financial aid applications from economically disadvantaged and underrepresented students to maximize their financial aid opportunities.
- Increase in the amount of need-based and scholarship aid available to economically disadvantaged students.

Objective 3: Increase the recruitment of underrepresented faculty and advance their progression through the faculty ranks.

To serve the increasingly diverse student populations and to best prepare them for citizenship in a multicultural society, the University needs faculty from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. The University community has a shared responsibility for meeting the goals for a diverse faculty in a proactive way. This will occur primarily through the usual faculty recruitment and hiring process but should also include special efforts and initiatives.

Key Strategies

The University will conduct aggressive national searches to identify candidates whose qualifications include an openness to diverse viewpoints and a commitment to advancing an inclusive culture that promotes the success of a diverse student body. Searches will seek to identify candidates from traditionally underrepresented groups for faculty and administrative positions and the University will, to the extent possible, provide resources for competitive offers. Human Resources and Institutional Research will provide timely data to help benchmark progress.

Strategies to promote the retention of a diverse faculty include instituting mentoring programs to support the development and success of all new faculty, with recognition and rewards for outstanding mentors. The University will support career development efforts, with the goal of moving more underrepresented-group faculty members up the academic ranks. The University will monitor and ensure salary and promotion equity for women and other underrepresented groups in faculty positions.

Training and resources will be made available to assist faculty search committees and department chairs with tools to generate diverse applicant pools and to conduct effective searches. Departments will work to develop connections with prospective candidates from underrepresented groups through targeted pre- or postdoctoral fellowships. The University will also use opportunities to diversify faculty and administrative positions that present themselves through spousal or partner hiring or other opportunities. The Council on University Community will establish a consistent coherent approach for tracking faculty demographic information by discipline and rank, disaggregated by gender, race, ethnicity, and citizenship. The Council will report to the campus the progress made with respect to recruitment, retention, and advancement of underrepresented faculty.

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Additional practices that have been successful in diversifying the faculty are detailed in Appendix B.

Measures of Success

- Diverse applicant and hiring pools for all faculty searches.
- Increased representation and retention of faculty from underrepresented groups.
- Increases in the number and proportion of faculty from underrepresented groups in tenured and tenure-track positions.

Objective 4: Increase the representation of staff from underrepresented groups.

To achieve a diverse and inclusive workforce, the University must increase the recruitment, representation, and retention of people from underrepresented groups in SPA and non-faculty EPA positions. Continued efforts are needed to advance diverse staff into positions of leadership. Climate in all offices of the University must reflect the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Key Strategies

Key strategies include enhanced career development programs for all employees and support for staff participation. The University will ensure inclusive hiring practices and make use of diverse search committees. The University will monitor and ensure salary and promotion equity for women and other underrepresented groups in staff positions at all levels. The Council on University Community will establish a consistent coherent approach for tracking staff demographic information by job classification, disaggregated by gender, race, ethnicity, and citizenship. The Council will report to the campus the progress made with respect to recruitment and retention of underrepresented staff and administrators.

Additional promising practices are listed in Appendix C.

Measures of Success

- Diverse applicant and hiring pools.
- Increases in the number and proportion of members of underrepresented groups in positions at all levels of responsibility.
- Increased participation by underrepresented groups in professional development programs.

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Objective 5: Ensure the presence of institutional environments and course development that enhance learning and appreciation for the full range of diversity.

Introducing students to global knowledge and different perspectives and cultures across disciplines produces the competencies that are vital to the success of 21st century graduates. UNC Charlotte must provide learning opportunities and a curriculum that prepares its students for work, leadership, and civic engagement in a diverse environment. All classes must have a climate that reflects the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Curricular content appropriate to the field of study must reflect diversity and engage students in analysis of issues of diversity.

Key Strategies

Responsibility for the curriculum rests with the faculty. Individual faculty and departments and programs should therefore actively pursue efforts to design and deliver curricula that will equip students with skills and knowledge for informed citizenship and to provide students exposure to and consideration of diverse perspectives. While some courses, those in specific departments and programs or those in General Education, may be particularly suitable for discussions of diversity, there is no area of the curriculum that is exempt from a careful consideration of how diversity can be taught. To that end, the University will support and encourage faculty participation in programs such as the Summer Institute for Diversity in the Curriculum that promote inclusiveness in course content, classroom climate, and diverse learning styles. The University will also encourage the use of the Chancellor's Challenge Fund and the Academic and Curriculum Improvement grants to develop, assess, and disseminate curricular innovations to support the University's goal for learning in a culturally rich environment.

Measures of Success

- Knowledge and understanding of issues of diversity are included in statements of program objectives and measured in assessments of student learning.
- Increased faculty participation at all ranks in Faculty Diversity Summer Institute and other curriculum development programs.
- Increased student experiences of diverse perspectives in discussions and assignments both in and out of the classroom, as reported on surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement.
- Faculty research related to issues of diversity, access, and inclusion and translation of research into pedagogical practice.
- Responses on student surveys that indicate a positive, inclusive classroom climate.
- Increased participation in study abroad programs.

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Objective 6: Develop external relationships with the community to enhance diversity on and off campus.

To better serve North Carolina and the Charlotte region, UNC Charlotte will seek collaborations with external organizations to support diversity on campus and in the community. As a microcosm of the larger community, UNC Charlotte aspires to be a model for external organizations by achieving diversity goals. The University provides leadership for the community in effectively undertaking the challenges of diversity, access, and inclusion.

Key Strategies

The University's commitment to diversity will extend to relationships with the external community. In developing partnerships with contractors, businesses, civic organizations, and other institutions, the University will seek to develop relationships that reflect the demographic diversity of the Charlotte region. UNC Charlotte will build community collaborations with diverse and underrepresented entities that are mutually beneficial and enrich the climate of the broader community. The University will regularly communicate its commitment to diversity in publications intended for external constituencies and on the campus website. Public statements by campus leaders will communicate clear expectations about diversity, access, and inclusion. Advisory boards, governing boards, and other mechanisms for external participation in University activities will be broadly inclusive in their membership.

Measures of Success

- Increased partnerships with historically underrepresented groups to promote their inclusion in University purchasing and contracting.
- Increased membership of historically underrepresented groups on governing boards, advisory boards, and other committees and councils.
- Participation of students, faculty, and staff in external events that support an inclusive climate in the Charlotte community through volunteerism and service learning.

Accountability and Assessment

Accountability for executing the Plan must occur throughout the University. The Vice Chancellors and Athletic Director are responsible for the implementation of the Plan in their respective divisions.

Administrator evaluations should include assessment of contributions to promoting the University's goal for diversity, access, and inclusion. The University Academic Plan and the college and unit plans must detail tangible efforts to support the University's commitment to diversity, access, and inclusion.

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The Council on University Community is responsible for producing and analyzing data to support the Plan and for the regular reporting of progress to the Chancellor and the University community. Longitudinal data will be used to monitor evidence of our success in increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the faculty, student body, and staff at all levels and creating a climate that supports the University's goals for diversity, access, and inclusion. Evaluations of student learning outcomes will indicate evidence students have been successfully prepared for work in a diverse society. The Plan will be regularly reviewed and updated by the Council on University Community.