University of San Diego Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence
Approved by Executive Council, April 2014

INTRODUCTION

The University of San Diego *Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence* originates from the dual foundations of our Catholic identity, mission and values as well as the grounding efforts of the past two decades moving us toward building a more diverse and inclusive community. The plan collects and assesses efforts across the institution in the spirit of subsidiarity and shared responsibility, as well as provides a platform to innovate, meeting current and future challenges and opportunities by informing university strategic planning.

Diversity means difference, understood as an historically and socially constructed set of value assumptions about what/who matters that figures essentially in power dynamics from the local to the global. Some differences have been made to matter more than others. As a Catholic University, we seek to justly represent the breadth and beauty of God's creation in our own community, embracing the values of both pluralism and equity.

We conceptualize difference as a manifestation of culture, especially in the context of the Catholic intellectual tradition and discuss the advantages of a learning community enriched by difference. The Six Terrains establish vision and goals that operate at the institution, division, area, and department levels and offer a sustaining infrastructure that reflects our value that the responsibility of inclusive excellence lies with each member of our community.

This document draws on Strategic Visioning that began in 2003:

> *USD will become a more culturally diverse and culturally competent community through recruitment at all levels, deepening trans-border and international educational partnerships, and involving students and faculty in international learning experiences.*

This plan also builds on the work of the Committee on Inclusion and Diversity, which issued recommendations in 2007, and the Presidents Advisory Committee on Inclusion & Diversity (PABID), which issued a report in 2010. It acknowledges the intellectual labor and personal investment of members those committees and those who have continued the struggle to cultivate diversity, belonging, and equity over the years.

The Center for Inclusion & Diversity (CID) provides active oversight, assessment, tracks implementation, and maintains lines of accountability around USD's diversity and inclusion efforts. The CID produces reports for the Strategic Diversity Plan Oversight Committee and Executive Council.

What is difference?

Among people, cultural, political, and economic differences characterize the breadth of the human experience, but difference must be understood as historically determined, socially constructed, and manifesting in hierarchical relationships among and within groups. Difference, at its essence, refers to "distinctions among things" (Bowker & Star, 2003, p. 231), and plays an essential role in how we classify and make sense of the world. The classification of people as different from each other is not without consequence, but hierarchical and infused with the ideological dynamics of power and privilege and disproportionate allocation of resources.

Differences are constructed, maintained, and transformed in culture. Culture, fundamentally, refers to a system of meanings we use to make sense of the world (Geertz, 1973), or a whole way of life (Williams, 1960). Culture operates through both extraordinary moments of meaning-making and in the practices of everyday existence. Difference can be constructed in culture from positions of power, and also from the lived and shared experiences of people and their communities. Regardless of whether human differences are assigned "from above" or created "from below," some differences matter more than others. Contemporary human differences of historical consequence include gender, race, ethnicity, generational history, culture, socioeconomic class, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship status, political perspectives, geographic origin, and ability. These, and a growing understanding of other differences, have mattered through history in material ways, and that history continues to shape how they matter.

This complex set of differences and their intersections provides a fertile ground for inquiry, particularly in context of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Why is difference important at the University of San Diego?
The University of San Diego is a learning community and foundational to USD's Catholic character is the conviction that all human beings are created by God. This guides our consequent commitment to recognize, respect, reverence and promote the inherent human dignity of all people -- regardless of any and all differences.

Catholic Social Thought affirms not only the inviolable dignity of all people but also emphasizes the responsibility to protect the human dignity of others, *especially those on the margins*, engaging others in ways that honor both the fundamental dignity of each as well as our essential interdependence. Likewise, the Catholic intellectual tradition promotes the development of an authentic community -- a community comfortable with and capable of investigating, questioning and celebrating differences. Catholic higher education, therefore, ought to help us see through other people's eyes, "other people from other times in history, from other cultures and societies, and other types of experiences" (Hellwig, 2010).

Within this context of our dual commitments to human dignity and community, USD approaches difference through the logic of inquiry, knowledge, and praxis regarding

- the ways human beings are simultaneously different and similar;

- the dynamics of power and privilege;

- the historically and socially constructed value assumptions about who and what matters;

- which differences are noticed and/or problematized;

- how the differences that are noticed and/or problematized have changed over time; and

- how we appreciate and honor differences while inviting all into full participation within the campus community.

What are the advantages of an academic community enriched by difference?
"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle
The University of San Diego is a learning community. Difference among the members of this community expands the set of opinions and viewpoints that exist in the learning environment and provides opportunities to engage in dialogue enriched by multiple perspectives and experiences. This type of engagement enhances critical and creative thinking skills as the different social perspectives and cultural knowledge expand one's thinking universe and demand more complex thinking. There is an established and growing body of research that supports the educational value of diversity in the learning environment.

For example, Chang showed that "there are statistically significant differences of opinion between racial groups on important social and political issues such as the death penalty, consumer protection, health care, drug testing, taxation, free speech, criminal rights, and the prevalence of discrimination" (Chang, 2003). Chang and colleagues also found links between the racial composition of campuses and several educationally relevant domains of opinion at the institutional level, where the higher the proportion of underrepresented students, the more opinions diverge (Chang 2002; Chang, Seltzer, and Kim 2001).

Psychological theories explain the educational value of interrupting students' previous patterns of thinking about and viewing the world. Exposing students to environments and viewpoints that differ from their previous experience develops their capacity to seek and receive multiple perspectives. Antonio and colleagues showed that the presence of diversity in groups enhances complex thinking particularly when group discussions include issues with generally divergent racial viewpoints like the death penalty (Antonio et al. 2004).

A report by the Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute concludes that a diverse faculty enhances the teaching and scholarship at an academic institution (Fine, 2010). The report highlights the results of several studies: diverse groups produced ideas of higher quality than homogeneous groups; underrepresented viewpoints enhanced the scope and quality of discussions; there is a conscious effort to hire a diverse workforce in most innovative companies; women faculty and faculty from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups catalyzed new thinking in their disciplines and brought diverse viewpoints and active learning into the classroom.

Exposure to difference unlocks the possibilities for students to contribute to and thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Jayakumar studied the effects of structural diversity on post-graduation behaviors and showed that structural diversity enables the kinds of experiences that foster *stronger pluralistic orientation*, "the extent to which students' thinking demonstrates dualistic versus multiple perspective-taking orientation" (Jayakumar, 2008). And to some degree *leadership skills*: it develops the "capacity to negotiate controversial issues, reflecting the competencies required of leaders in an increasingly diverse global society" (Jayakumar, 2008).

In a study commissioned by AAC&U and conducted by Hart Research Associates, 81% of employers indicate that they want colleges and universities to place more emphasis on critical thinking and analytical reasoning, skills enhanced by a diverse learning environment as discussed above. And in a separate study conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) employers rate "ability to work in a team structure" as second most important (4.6/5-point scale) candidate skill or quality. In 2010, Fine found that "diverse working groups are more productive, creative, and innovative than homogeneous groups" (Fine, 2010).

The US Census Bureau forecasts a more diverse population by 2060 with no single racial or ethnic group comprising a majority. As the United States population diversifies, human interaction needs to become more sophisticated to engage difference and value what it offers. Further, as we continue to develop an understanding of our interconnected world, our global society can only evolve justly if we subject our ideas to a broad audience to question and challenge them.

As a Catholic, liberal arts, campus community, we are called to understand difference in a context of mutuality as a means to live out our mission and values. We must overcome historical and present day influences that exclude or deny access to any individuals if we are to achieve equity and inclusive excellence.

"Liberal education is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world. To acknowledge such diversity in all its forms is both an intellectual commitment and a social responsibility. In embracing a diversity of ideas and experiences, liberal education likewise embraces a diversity of people, for the opportunity to learn with and from diverse peers is also a critical element of educational excellence. This commitment to diversity and equity in all their forms is what we mean by inclusive excellence."(Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2013)

Why should USD have an institutional strategic plan for diversity and inclusion?
Structural diversity is essential but it is not sufficient to ensure exposure to and interaction with different perspectives. Institutions must offer intentional courses and social involvement that facilitate such engagement with diverse ideas to achieve the gains discussed. Campus culture and climate are also important elements in ensuring these gains. Studies show that higher levels of perceived institutional commitment to diversity, demonstrated in the mission, goals and funding for key diversity initiatives on campus, are associated with lower racial tension among different groups, higher reported grade point averages, and a desire to promote racial understanding. Studies also show that the positive

effects of a diverse learning environment on critical and complex thinking are enhanced if a positive campus also exists. (Association of Amercian Colleges and Universities, 2005)

In particular, faculty, staff, and administrators who both represent diversity and are committed to inclusive excellence serve as positive and relatable role models and mentors for an increasingly-diverse student population. Diversity perpetuates itself, as a diverse student body feels welcome at an institution that represents diversity in its employees, and vice versa.

Lower levels of perceived institutional commitment are associated with higher levels of perceived hostility, lower grade point averages for certain groups, and feelings of isolation and alienation. "Evidence suggests that students are more likely to perceive greater levels of institutional commitment when campuses enact a more comprehensive diversity approach, as opposed to a piecemeal one. The effects of a strong institutional commitment to diversity may positively affect not only individual outcomes but also the campus climate, which further reinforces the benefits associated with diversity." (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2013).

SIX TERRAINS

How we activate our values as a community

In 2003, the university began the process of strategically advancing institution-wide inclusion and diversity efforts by initiating the following strategic direction:

> *USD will become a more culturally diverse and culturally competent community through recruitment at all levels, deepening transborder and international educational partnerships, and involving students and faculty in international learning experiences.*

Following this strategic direction, the International Center was established in 2007. Regarding domestic diversity and equity, through the work of the Committee on Inclusion and Diversity (2006-2007), the Presidential Advisory Board on Inclusion and Diversity (2008-2010), and the establishment in 2010 of the Center for Inclusion and Diversity and appointment of its director, the Associate Provost for Inclusion and Diversity, tangible gains have been made toward living out our mission to create "a diverse and inclusive community." Out of the second planning cycle, in 2011, President Mary E. Lyons announced new Board of Trustees-approved strategic directions directly germane to inclusive excellence, including to: "attract, retain, and support" diverse students and faculty; strengthen "connections with local, national, and international communities and its contributions to improving the global human condition;" promote its Catholic character, "foster interreligious dialogue and understanding" while promoting social justice.

In the context of these strategies, and growing from CID and PABID recommendations, we now put forward a thoughtful plan to cohere work done around campus, to catalyze inclusive excellence in all functions of the university, and to establish accountability for progress.

The *2020 Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence* establishes a sustaining infrastructure from 2014 to at least 2020, offering panoramic vision and goals at the institutional level, and operationalizing diversity and inclusive excellence for our entire community. The *2020 Plan* manifests in three parts.

Part I: Framework. Drawing on past efforts and related strategic documents, a CID-led collaboration identifies six interconnected terrains where inclusion and diversity are operationalized and our values activated:

1. Access & Recruitment of Students
2. Student Success, Retention, and Integration
3. Faculty, Staff, and Administrator Access, Recruitment, & Development
4. Campus Climate
5. Curricular & Co-curricular Learning
6. Community Relationships & Engagement

Part II: Participation. Vice Presidents will provide information about established and planned efforts that support the goals in the terrains to create an *inventory* of current work. These strategies may operate at the level of division, area, or unit, and in the case of Academic Affairs, at the level of Provost's Office, dean, or department. Assessment in *Part II* is essential. Each strategy at every level will provide outcomes and measures, and will be able to be tracked and assess regularly through assessment infrastructure software.

Part III: Support University Strategic Planning. Ultimately, the 2020 Plan for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence will support institutional strategic planning, as discernment on an institutional level will be future-oriented, resource driven, and in dialogue with aligned priorities.

TERRAIN 1: ACCESS & RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS
As a central tenet of its Catholic character and institutional mission, University of San Diego endeavors to expand the diversity of our student body, better reflecting the breadth of God's creation and enhancing academic excellence and learning for all students.

Goal 1. Enhance access for potential students and current students from all socioeconomic classes to undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, especially those whose perspectives have been historically underrepresented and underserved in higher education.

Goal 2. Actively recruit students from groups underrepresented at USD, aiming to broaden our pool of applicants so that the differences interwoven into the human experience are justly represented in our recruitment processes.

TERRAIN 2: STUDENT SUCCESS, RETENTION, & INTEGRATION

As a Catholic university in the liberal arts tradition, we strive to provide an intellectually stimulating and enriching experience for all of our students and support the development of the whole person. We take a student-centered approach to learning, where students are empowered to take co-creative roles in their education and where the university works to ensure every student and every group of students experience its transformative potential.

Students who decide to attend USD deserve our best efforts to support their success, measured by retention, persistence, graduation rates, level of integration into the campus community, as well as satisfaction, fulfillment, and happiness in chosen paths after graduation.

Goal 1: Identify and track areas where individual students and identity cohorts of students require support, and develop and assess strategies for groups of students whose retention, persistence, and graduation rates are lower than those of the general student population and/or experience a lack of integration into our community.

Goal 2: Collaborate and work strategically toward the elimination of barriers to student success, whether they are economic, cultural, or political.

TERRAIN 3: FACULTY, STAFF, & ADMINISTRATOR ACCESS, RECRUITMENT, & DEVELOPMENT
Every employee deserves to be treated with dignity, empathy, respect, and civility when interacting with students and colleagues, as well as have opportunities for professional growth. We recognize the importance of collegial life in the development of our university as well as the fulfillment of individual potential. Student success relies on faculty, staff, and administrators committed to inclusive excellence and who represent the diversity of our San Diego community.

Goal 1: Develop strategies to increase the diversity of the faculty, particularly in areas where there is underrepresentation according to gender, race and ethnicity, in order to advance academic excellence and student learning.

Goal 2: Develop strategies to increase the diversity of staff and administrators, eliminating access, recruitment, and development barriers that deter professional advancement and personal fulfillment.

Goal 3: Provide equal opportunities for all employees to balance work and life commitments within a mission-driven culture of care, and to build community by exploring commonalities and differences in a work context of mutuality.

TERRAIN 4: CAMPUS CULTURE
Campus culture describes the habits and meanings that manifest in felt realities and everyday lived experiences of members of our community. To understand campus culture, universities often measure "climate." Climate refers to the attitudes, values, perceptions, language, and behaviors of students, faculty, staff, and administrators, especially as they relate to difference, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Campus culture and climate influences how individuals and groups feel personally safe, heard, valued, and treated fairly and respectfully.

While often ineffable, campus culture is extraordinarily influential. It communicates as powerfully as institutional mission statements, lists of core values or strategic plans about what matters to the community as well as expectations for how members of that community treat one another.

Goal 1: Foster a campus culture in which all members of the community, especially those from underrepresented groups, (1) feel safe, respected and valued; (2) are invited to participate fully, sharing their unique gifts, talents and backgrounds; (3) increasingly recognize the value of perspectives that differ from their own; and (4) agree that diversity and inclusion are key priorities of the university.

Goal 2: Develop and assess strategies where all members of the community experience inclusivity, felt in spatial features, institutional communication and design languages, and participatory cultural practices.

Goal 3: Adopt a regular routine to measure campus climate at fixed intervals

TERRAIN 5: CURRICULAR & CO-CURRICULAR LEARNING
A community enriched by difference brings together multiple perspectives and experiences to enhance the learning environment, expand the thought universe, and develop critical and creative thinking skills leading to more complex thinking. These opportunities should be fostered in all realms of experience: intellectual, interactional, spiritual, and emotional. We hold commitments that understand learning in curricular and co-curricular contexts as linked, and collaborate across divisions to realize the transformative potential of educating a whole person.

Goal 1: Build on and expand curricula that integrate diversity, inclusion, and social justice into the student experience, encouraging a diversity of perspectives, research topics, and pedagogical styles while advancing a commitment to explore power and privilege through disciplinary lenses using universal design.

Goal 2: Build on and expand co-curricular learning and student development opportunities that educate the whole person in an inclusive context, and are characterized by equity, justice, compassion, and love.

Goal 3: Create opportunities for interdisciplinary research and practice to expand our understanding and appreciation of difference in academic and co-curricular domains.

TERRAIN 6: COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS & ENGAGEMENT
Our mission-level commitment to compassionate service, ethical conduct, and to creating an inclusive and diverse community is not only generative of academic excellence on our campus, but implores us to expand positively our relationships with the broader community. We seek to create deep, meaningful connections with members of the USD community, as well as with the community within which USD is situated in all of its diversity.

Goal 1: Further develop existing relationships with university constituents, including prospective students, families, alumni, donors, and other friends of the university, to communicate more clearly the interrelated truths that our commitment to diversity flows from our Catholic identity and our practices of inclusive excellence lies at the center of our institutional excellence."

Goal 2: Expand interdependent relationships with the communities of Linda Vista, San Diego, and beyond, attending thoughtfully to how the diversity of the human experience in those contexts can enhance academic excellence on campus and can grow the opportunities for institutional development and impact.

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Another possible resource:

http://www.stanford.edu/~hakuta/www/policy/racial_dynamics/Chapter5.pdf

Also cite: http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb12-243.html