

Committee on Inclusion and Diversity Directions 2007

Over the past 18 months, the Committee on Inclusion and Diversity (CID) has launched several initiatives and helped to shape campus conversations about diversity and inclusion. The CID structure has worked to engage the campus through representatives from key administrative units as well as faculty from the Senate, professional schools, and the College. One co-chair, Beth Dobkin, has worked with two other co-chairs during this time, Reuben Mitchell and Chris Nayve. Activities sponsored by the CID have included:

- Development of and review of applicants for the Circle of Excellence scholarship
- Initiation of a spring phone bank to help recruit students of color
- Co-development and support of a summer college success course for entering first generation and low income students
- Establishment of a grant with awards in two cycles for eight projects
- Sponsorship of student and faculty attendance at the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE)
- Development and presentation of workshops on successful faculty recruiting

Several additional projects are planned or under consideration for 2007. These include:

- Presenting the first University award for Inclusion and Diversity to be presented at the fall new student convocation (attached)
- Formalizing the luncheons and mentoring that should come with receipt of the COE scholarship
- Conducting a university-wide diversity audit to assess progress toward creating a diverse and inclusive campus community
- Reworking the award structure for grants to stimulate new initiatives
- Developing a “Third Thursday” forum for campus conversations about critical issues
- Creating a group of “inclusion scholars” to provide mentoring for junior faculty and support for team-taught and diversity course development
- Assisting in achieving student enrollment goals
- Sponsoring an invited team of engaged students, faculty, and staff to attend NCORE
- Establishing a tribal liaison to consult on Native initiatives, cultivate relationships with Native communities, and serve as an indigenous resource

Although some of this work can arguably be sustained by the work of the present committee, the current structure does not provide continuity of membership and relies too heavily on the work of a few individuals. The lack of designated staff support means that communication about the CID is limited, staff assigned to other duties are overburdened, and basic coordinating functions, such as maintaining a website, are not possible. Although much coordination across divisions is necessary for the success of CID initiatives, no committee member is formally assigned with performing this function. Finally, there is no “place,” either physically in the form of office space or a person(s)

officially designated to respond to issues around diversity and inclusion. The university needs a formal mechanism by which diversity efforts can be coordinated, expertise can be provided, accountability can be ensured, concerned members of our community can have a voice, and consultation can be provided regarding available campus resources and appropriate actions taken in response to issues of concern. (Several Catholic universities have adopted an institutional structure to advance inclusion and diversity; examples are attached).

To that end, CID members created a worksheet of “Goals/Strategies, Responsibilities, and Proposed Structures” (attached) to inform strategies for sustaining and advancing inclusion and diversity. Recommendations are made in the areas of student recruitment, integration, and retention; faculty recruitment, integration, and retention; cultural competency, and campus climate. Discussion of the worksheet led to an outline of phases (attached) – discovery, building accountability, establishing a coordinating structure, and providing commitment – that would ultimately lead to the founding of a Chief Diversity Officer at USD.

This recommendation was not seen as the best option for USD. Rather, discussion has shifted toward three possible structures:

1. Charge the **Executive Council with performing the functions of a Chief Diversity Officer** and assuming the responsibility of holding their respective divisions accountable for progress (under this structure, the role of the CID is uncertain). *This option is the least costly, as it does not require additional resources. It makes explicit the Executive Council’s commitment to inclusion and diversity, and could improve accountability for progress. Ideally, the Executive Council will function in this manner if either option 2 or 3 is chosen as well. However, this structure alone does not signal any substantive change nor offer any mechanism for carrying out activities or recommendations that cross divisional lines. Administration of scholarships, grants, awards, and other activities that have been established would be cumbersome. This option is likely to be seen as “business as usual,” particularly as it would probably require the CID to continue in some form.*
2. Form a **Presidential Advisory Board**, with the following charge:
 - A. **Advise** the President on issues, policies and practices that affect the University of San Diego’s commitment to inclusion and diversity, including standards and methods of accountability;
 - B. **Report** regularly to the President and the University community on the status of issues of diversity at USD, such as diversity in employment, campus environment, compensation and campus leadership;
 - C. **Offer recommendations** in support of the University’s mission, such as enhancing the University’s recruitment, integration, retention and graduation of underrepresented students, faculty and staff in pursuit of the compositional diversity required to achieve excellence;

- D. Propose initiatives** to educate the University about diversity as it relates to academic excellence and institutional viability, and to fully engage faculty, staff and students in the creation of a campus that is inclusive and culturally competent.

Sample bylaws for a Presidential Advisory Board on Inclusion and Diversity is attached. *If based on the proposed structure, this Advisory Board gives the President another person who would be reporting to her. Alternately, the Advisory Board Chair might perform this function as part of the Executive Council rather than reporting regularly to the President. This option could signal substantive change, create a mechanism for broad, sustained, and representative campus involvement, and provide coordination for an array of initiatives. The existence of such a group could also strengthen accountability toward achieving diversity and inclusion goals. Some costs are implicated in that the Chair would likely perform this role as a half-time position/responsibility, and staff support would be required.*

3. Create a new **Vice President of Mission Effectiveness** with responsibility for Institutional Research, Strategic Directions Initiatives, Catholic Social Thought, Committee on Inclusion and Diversity, Social Issues Committee; basically, initiatives or committees with institutional-wide impact. This person would be charged with keeping abreast of current trends, issues, technologies and processes; seeking out ways to change or improve the quality of programs and services as well as the strategic planning and evaluation process; developing an innovation process that solicits and incorporates employee ideas relative to university improvement; and providing accurate information and timely recommendations to the President and Executive Council. The individual should have the academic credentials necessary to establish credibility with faculty. *This position would give greatest centralization by bringing together CID activities with other campus-wide initiatives. As a position at the vice-presidential level, integration with the Executive Council would be assured. Care would have to be taken so that diversity and inclusion initiatives are not “absorbed” into the structure, losing emphasis and visibility. This option would require the greatest cost and structural change.*

Although the CID could continue in its current configuration, the opportunity costs are considerable. We could appreciate prompt consideration of the options presented here so that we may have clear direction in the months and years ahead.