

## Academic Program Planning Workshop

### **Integrating Diversity**, *Lisa Beckstrand & La Vonne Cornell-Swanson* (2185 Grainger)

This session will address what is meant by diversity and inclusion within new and existing systemwide initiatives. We will discuss integrating diversity into program goals for student learning & assessment, and address issues such as the recruitment and retention of students and faculty, and curricular transformation. Examples of strong diversity strategies as articulated in recently approved authorizations will be distributed.

#### **1. What do we mean by Diversity and Inclusion? Definitions from AAC&U.**

- *Diversity*: Individual differences (e.g. personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g. race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political religious, or other affiliations) that can be engaged in the service of learning.
- *Inclusion*: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase one’s awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

#### **2. Why is it important in the context of Program Planning and Review?**

- Recent educational research demonstrates that “learning in an environment that engages rich diversity provides all students with the cognitive skills, intercultural competencies, and civic understanding to help them thrive in work and citizenship.” (Clayton-Pedersen et al. “Making Excellence Inclusive” AAC&U).
- The educational benefits that result from engaging with diversity include: enhanced critical and complex thinking skills, stronger leadership skills, greater racial and cultural awareness, a keener ability to understand diverse perspectives, a heightened openness to diversity, higher rates of educational persistence, greater satisfaction with overall college experience. (Milem, “The Educational Benefits of Diversity: Evidence from Multiple Sectors,” *Compelling Interest...*, 2003).

#### **3. How does this fit with new and existing systemwide initiatives?**

- *Plan 2008* had goals aimed at diversifying our institutions and establishing a critical mass of faculty, staff and students from historically underrepresented groups. Modest gains were made through the Equity Scorecard project, pre-college programs, & multicultural/disadvantaged initiatives.

- *Inclusive Excellence* is a broadly defined initiative aimed at increasing compositional diversity as well as at creating learning environments in which students of all backgrounds can thrive. It rests on the premise that *Excellence and Diversity* are inextricably interwoven, and thus, are central to the core of the academic enterprise. (See UWS hand-outs on IE; also see AAC&U website).

#### **4. How do we practice Inclusive Excellence in the planning of new academic programs?**

- Articulate program goals for student learning that incorporate engagement with diversity; develop a plan to assess those goals.
- Infuse the curriculum with diversity content.
- Consider integrating curricular and pedagogical practices that have proven to help retain students, such as capstone courses & projects, internships, service learning, diversity/global or experiential learning, collaborative assignments, writing-intensive courses, and learning communities. (see George Kuh, High Impact Practices hand-out).
- Consider ways to recruit & retain students from diverse backgrounds into the programs; especially those underserved populations in your region.
- Consider ways to recruit faculty/staff from diverse backgrounds to teach in the program.
- Devise methods to engage and support faculty/staff in the promotion of equity and inclusion.
- Support the use of engaging pedagogical practices to foster gains in learning, including intercultural learning.
- Develop Advising strategies that will help all students understand learning outcomes.

#### **5. How do we incorporate diversity and inclusion in our new program authorization proposal?**

- Contact institutional researcher to request final reports or any findings that might be useful in ways to recruit/retain students, e.g. any data from Equity Scorecard, the Climate Study, NSSE etc.
- Consult faculty chairs or specialists from programs that are focused on diversity, e.g. Women's/Gender Studies, Ethnic Studies, Disability Studies etc. for ideas on potentially cross-listing courses or infusing diversity in the curriculum.
- Consult with int'l study office (directors) to get ideas on incorporating global or experiential learning into the program.
- Write a diversity plan that includes other High Impact Practices (see hand-out).
- Describe how the plan fits within broader diversity initiatives at your institution and in the UW System.

#### **6. Examples of diversity plans in new program authorization proposals. (See hand-out).**