Report to the Executive Committee on Diversity  
University Committee on Diversity (UCD)  
December 21, 2010

I. UCD Evaluation of Unit Diversity Reports

The UCD is the university-level committee responsible for assessing the effectiveness of diversity efforts on campus; identifying gaps in university diversity policies and efforts; developing new policies and initiatives as necessary; and ensuring that units across the university are meeting diversity objectives.

In spring 2010 sixteen university units submitted reports to the UCD describing their diversity vision and efforts for the period from April 2008 to April 2010. As requested, the reports were organized according to the implementation goals established in the Campus Climate Implementation Plan (CCIP) for 2006-2011. This fall the UCD assigned each of its members to evaluate one diversity report. A rubric was developed based on the CCIP implementation goals to provide UCD members a consistent method by which to assess the reports.

II. Assessment of diversity objectives

The unit reports document, in general, that diversity-related programming, activities, and events were implemented and delivered as planned by the units reporting. Key insights gathered regarding the assessment process include the following:

- **Activities versus outcomes:** Most of the diversity reports reflect the efforts of units to develop intentional diversity planning and programming. However, most units have difficulty measuring outcomes, particularly when those outcomes serve the larger campus community and may be difficult to enumerate or quantify. The diversity report request focused primarily on the accomplishment of objectives rather than on the impact of unit-level and institutional achievement of the CCIP implementation goals.

- **Cross-unit efforts:** Specialized support units (e.g., Extension, ITS) and broader-serving units (e.g., VPRED, Student Affairs) often partner with colleges and departments to develop and implement diversity programming. For this reason, such units may be uniquely challenged to create and carry out specific and cohesive diversity initiatives within their own units. Even if these units play a significant supporting role in the diversity efforts of direct service units, they may find it difficult to communicate and demonstrate their contributions. Our assessment mechanism does not adequately acknowledge cross-unit efforts or collaborations.

- **Benchmarking:** The demographics of Ames and ISU are unique to central Iowa. Assessment of diversity efforts may be benchmarked more meaningfully against other universities in similar demographic settings.

III. Effectiveness in meeting diversity goals

The diversity reports demonstrate that most units are engaging in diversity-related activities and programming. The focus of each unit is largely dependent upon its role and function within the university. While it would appear that many diversity efforts contribute to the accomplishment of the university's diversity goals, measurement of effectiveness is difficult. We identified the following themes related to the effectiveness of diversity efforts in meeting institutional goals:

- **Unique strengths:** Diversity reports address unique strengths and challenges for each area, and highlight how differences between units holistically contribute to an inclusive campus climate.
Units should continue to focus on specific diversity efforts and contribute critical components based on their unique strengths. Attempting to spread limited resources thinly across many objectives reduces effectiveness in areas of strength.

Not all goals of the CCIP apply to all reporting units (e.g., pedagogy does not apply to some administrative units). In the future, diversity reports and their evaluation should be tailored to the various organizational, program, and services types.

- **Integration**: The complex interplay of diversity efforts arising from direct service units, more broadly serving units, and colleges as a whole should be supported, promoted, and appreciated in order to achieve integrated university-wide diversity goals.

- **Competing goals**: The competition between intra-versus inter-unit diversity efforts for administrative support units can be problematic as units strive to achieve diversity goals. Support units may be forced to prioritize their intra-unit diversity needs (e.g., diversifying their personnel, programming for new and diverse student populations) versus their inter-unit diversity efforts (i.e., providing support services to other units).

### IV. Gaps and barriers to achieving diversity goals

The diversity reports reveal administrative, structural, organizational, and fiscal gaps which serve as barriers to goal achievement. The lack of an overarching institutional diversity strategy, limited resources available for central and unit-level diversity programming, and insufficient diversity training for faculty and staff were recognized as significant barriers, as indicated by the following observations:

- **Institutional strategy and collaboration**: A cohesive, institutional strategy for nurturing diversity on a campus-wide basis is absent. Units engage in diversity efforts with minimal communication, limited coordination, or superficial collaboration. As a result, the university’s potential for effectively achieving diversity goals and objectives is not being fully realized.

- **Impact**: Diversity-related activity occurs and is reported, but without measurable evidence of impact. Furthermore, while there is recognition of what has been done, we do not address what has not been done.

- **Training**: The need exists for more specific employee training in diversity and inclusion which identifies specific advantages, strategies, and tactics of diversity.

- **Recruiting and retention**: The diversity of faculty and staff is critical to achieving the goals of ISU’s 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, affects the inclusivity of the campus environment, and impacts the retention and recruitment of a diverse student population. However, maintaining and expanding the diversity of personnel in a time of downsizing has been, at best, challenging.

Units have reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, staff, and students to ISU. A highly effective way to recruit faculty, staff and students is relationally—through personal contacts and word-of-mouth—particularly when seeking greater diversity.

### V. Moving Forward

Diversity is established as a basic value of ISU’s 2010-2015 Strategic Plan: “It is imperative that the creation, sharing, and application of knowledge be a global effort characterized by a profound respect for the diversity of people and ideas.”

Diversity efforts at ISU would be greatly strengthened by shifting our institutional culture to careful analysis in the **planning** of diversity-related activities and the assessment of the impact of these activities. In addition, the measurement of diversity as core to our institution’s excellence requires emphasis on accountability for **achieved**, not simply desired, outcomes.
As a first step, creating a university-wide Strategic Plan for Diversity will help us establish common goals. As the university-level body charged with overseeing institutional diversity efforts, the UCD, in collaboration with senior leadership, recommends taking the following actions:

1. **Develop** a institutional Strategic Plan for Diversity with clear goals and measurable outcomes;
2. **Establish** an active and inclusive definition of "diversity" that can inform these diversity goals;
3. **Implement** a communication plan for sharing with the university community the Strategic Plan for Diversity, the definition of diversity, and diversity-related resources;
4. **Encourage** collaborations within and among units to achieve the goals and outcomes of the Strategic Plan for Diversity;
5. **Identify** central funding that may be used in support of these strategic goals and initiatives;
6. Using both qualitative and quantitative measure, **assess** the attainment of identified goals and positive outcomes as identified in the Strategic Plan for Diversity.

The members of the University Committee on Diversity are encouraged by the dedication of our campus units to developing effective diversity policies, programs, and initiatives. We hope the recommended next steps articulated here will lead to more strategic alignment of diversity-related goals and better assessment of identified outcomes.