



EXECUTIVE VICE CHANCELLOR'S DIVERSITY ADVOCACY WORKGROUP

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND GRADUATION OF A
DIVERSE STUDENT BODY

August 2018

Introduction

This purpose of this report is to identify several key ideas for implementation to address the recruitment, retention, and graduation of a diverse student body. After an initial collaborative session, the Diversity Advocacy Workgroup agreed on 5 key areas where strategies can be focused. These five areas are:

1. Addressing Accessibility Issues: “Accessibility issues” are defined here as “areas where access to resources that are leveraged to support student success are limited or restricted. Such resources include, but are not limited to, financial support, approaching academic advisors, and knowledge of available support.”
2. Mentoring: “Mentoring” is defined here as “a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) assists another (the mentee) in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person’s professional and personal growth”.
3. Community Connections: “Community connections” are defined here as “resources within the community that might be beneficial in supporting the emotional and personal growth of a diverse student body”.
4. Addressing Systemic Issues: “Systemic issues” are defined here as “policies and procedures that are already in place at UNL that inhibit the ability of underrepresented students to succeed”.
5. Training for Faculty, Staff, and TA’s: “training” is defined here as “resources or programs that develop faculty, staff and TA’s cultural competence”.

Ideas for implementation in each of the 5 key areas are discussed.

Key Area I: Accessibility Issues

Key Idea 1: Finances

The ability to pay for college is often overwhelming and a larger barrier for first generation students and those from underrepresented backgrounds, including low income and racial minorities. A few options to assist students with paying for college include:

1. Workshops for prospective students to navigate the details of scholarship opportunities and financial aid.
2. Identify private funding sources to assist with the number and amount of awards available for students from underrepresented backgrounds. The committee firmly believes it is critical to build a strong partnership with the University of Nebraska Foundation to raise additional funds focused on supporting the recruitment and retention of students from underrepresented backgrounds.
3. Expansion of workshops connected to finances for currently enrolled students.

Key Idea 2: Approachability and inclusiveness of programs on campus

It is critically important that support services help create a visibly inclusive environment so students feel comfortable reaching out. It is also important for organizations to be proactive with their outreach. A few ideas include:

1. Support organizations and offices need to be cognizant of the representation within their staff, student workers, and photos. If students are not able to identify with anyone in the organization, the organization may appear to be “not for them” unintentionally.
2. Summer Melt/Intro Activities to Campus: While there are some programs that exist, these are often select programs. An opportunity exists to proactively reach out to students through summer melt activities in their communities. Summer melt occurs when a student pays their enrollment deposit with the intention of enrollment, but does not end up enrolling. The steps between paying the enrollment deposit and officially enrolling in college can seem daunting. More guidance and support in this area to navigate items such as New Student Enrollment, reviewing the aid package, learning about organizations to support the student, etc., can be very helpful. (Also, see related idea in Key Area 4: Addressing Systemic Issues for the Summer Success Academy)

Key Idea 3: Academic Completion/partnerships with two year institutions

The academic path can be daunting for any student, but especially for those students looking to transfer into the University. We know that many students choose to start at a community college due to finances with the hopes of transferring, but never end up moving on to a four-year institution. This is often due to a financial barrier and concerns with an academic path. The University, and in particular academic units, could play a role in identifying clearer academic pathways for students from Nebraska two year institutions.

The University could assess the overall sense of mattering to students through the College Mattering Inventory (CMI). The University could assess a few other items by looking at the following:

1. Summer melt rates across key populations.
2. Attendance at workshops connected to finances.
3. Persistence of students from underrepresented populations.
4. Overall use of support services by students from underrepresented populations: Were we able to increase students accessing services that can help them?

Key Area 2: Mentoring

Key Idea 1: Create an online directory of existing mentoring programs on campus

1. Include contact information/mentor request form
2. Create keyword/key-intention categories so students can locate mentoring services available based on their self-defined needs (socio-emotional, academic, professional). There is likely to be overlap but helping students identify these easily will aid in their decision making process.
3. Giving students agency in choosing also increases likelihood of successful continuation/completion

Key Idea 2: Explore assigning a mentoring experience as a part of an ACE requirement (ACE 2)

Key Idea 3: Explore making the Teaching Assistant role in STEM courses a Mentor role to engage students in inquiry and collaboration.

1. Would require specific training in mentor v. tutor

The following resources could be utilized in the implementation of these ideas.

- Initial survey of campus mentoring programs developed by this committee
- Existing campus mentoring sites
- Centralized mentoring location (see above)
- New Student Enrollment advising inventory *Key information available in the survey referenced above. It is self-reported information but this does not preclude the information's validity.

Success could be measured by:

- Completion of reflection essay/survey by mentees and mentors
 - Will need to include goals of mentoring (both those of student and mentoring program)—likely retention at the University, not necessarily in specific program
 - Will need to be universally adopted in all UNL mentoring programs
- Longitudinal data

Key Area 3: Community Connections

Key Idea 1: Streamlining websites such as diversity.unl.edu.

1. Information targeted for diverse populations is scattered across multiple websites and is therefore difficult to access
2. Institutional jargon may be difficult to interpret and should be simplified

Key Idea 2: Display more student profiles of both undergraduate and graduate students that have diverse backgrounds.

1. Admissions Website: Having successful student stories on Admissions website
2. College/Departmental Websites: Networking with successful diverse alumni (even displaying their stories of success) would encourage students to find their home away from home on campus.

Key Idea 3: Engage the community with UNL resources

1. Provide programming in afterschool programs such as the Malone Center, Boys & Girls Club, etc. (i.e. Leadership development, college readiness activities, etc.)
2. Partner with LPS to provide education opportunities for them include in their curriculum (i.e. Physics professor visits a class and delivers a lecture and performs a demonstration)
3. Offer more college/departmental sponsored camp opportunities such as the Dream Big camp sponsored by the College of Business

Key Area 4: Addressing Systemic Issues

While a few ideas are listed here, it is recommended that we connect with Georgia State University who has a wealth of information for student success initiatives that had considerable impact to their recruitment of a diverse student population. You will find a link to their initiatives (See appendix 2).

Key Idea 1: I'm First Learning Community

Create a Learning Community with programming specific to the needs of 1st Generation college students. Success will be measured by the number of students who participate and the retention rate compared to those who are not a part of the learning community.

Key Idea 2: Department Policies and Procedures Audit

Each department should assess its present policies and procedures and address any elements that might present an unnecessary barrier to students. Where changes cannot be made, departments should consider alternative ways to educate and guide students through that process. It's helpful if departments use focus group of current students who have previously gone through the process for identifying the gaps.

Key Idea 3: Chat Bot

A student texting platform where students can text in general questions and get an immediate response from a bank of answers. New questions would be routed to a service member whose response would then be added to the existing bank of answers. This gives students immediate responses in a medium they are already familiar with. Success would be measured by seeing fewer students stuck in a process where the University is waiting for documents or other action.

Key Idea 4: Summer Success Academy

Georgia State implemented this program for admitted at-risk students who attended a 7-week summer session before fall classes started. Students enroll in seven credits of college-level (non-remedial) courses and are given the support of the University's tutoring, advising, financial literacy and academic skills programs. This was offered to students who would have previously been deferred. Students also then participated in a Freshman Learning Community. Success would be measured by the retention rates of these students.

Key Area 5: Training of Faculty/Staff/TA's

Key Idea 1: Create Training modules as student groups and individuals (likely through TIPS) indicate a need for training on specific topics

1. Coordinate with OASIS, ISSO, SSD, etc. as issues are raised by student organisations

Key Idea 2: Implement web form allowing faculty/staff/students to answer questions from THE PRIVILEGE WALK (see appendix 3)

Key Idea 3: Extending position after PRIVILEGE WALK to starting position in a race where everyone has the same finish lines.

APPENDIX 1: REFERENCE LIST, ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

Arnold, K., Fleming, S., DeAnda, M., Castleman, B., & Wartman, K. L. (2009). The summer flood: The invisible gap among low-income students. *Thought & Action*, 25, 23-34.

Castleman, B. L., & Page, L. C. (2013). The not-so-lazy days of summer: Experimental interventions to increase college entry among low-income high school graduates. *New directions for youth development*, 2013(140), 77-97.

Castleman, B. L., Owen, L., & Page, L. C. (2015). Stay late or start early? Experimental evidence on the benefits of college matriculation support from high schools versus colleges. *Economics of Education Review*, 47, 168-179.

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Naranjo, M. M., Pang, V. O., & Alvarado, J. L. (2015). Summer melts immigrant students' college plans. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 97(4), 38-41.

Simon, S. E. (2016). Summer melt mitigation. *Journal of College Admission*, 233, 16-17.

Tovar, E., Simon, M. A., & Lee, H. B. (2009). Development and validation of the college mattering inventory with diverse urban college students. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 42(3), 154-178.

APPENDIX 2: REFERENCES FOR “ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC ISSUES”

Deardorff, D. K. (2011). Assessing intercultural competence. *New directions for institutional research*, 2011(149), 65-79.

<https://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/recruit/litreview.htm>

[http://www.cssia.org/pdf/20000253-
ASummaryofBestPracticesforRecruitmentandRetentionofStudentsofColor.pdf](http://www.cssia.org/pdf/20000253-ASummaryofBestPracticesforRecruitmentandRetentionofStudentsofColor.pdf)

http://undergrad.umn.edu/sites/g/files/pua3591/f/multicultural_student_recruitment_report.pdf

<https://tcf.org/content/facts/9-ways-colleges-support-underrepresented-students/>

Georgia State Student Success Initiatives
<https://success.gsu.edu/initiatives/>

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FROM COMPARABLE SCHOOLS

University of Notre Dame:
<http://diversity.nd.edu/take-action/>

Duke University:
<https://oie.duke.edu/we-can-help/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-services>
<https://oie.duke.edu/training-and-workshops>

Colorado State University:
<https://diversity.colostate.edu/our-programs/>
<http://diversityinventory.colostate.edu/home;>
Also puts out a newsletter monthly with programming

Washington State University:
<https://studentaffairs.wsu.edu/initiatives/campus-culture-climate/cultural-competency/>
<https://studentaffairs.wsu.edu/initiatives/campus-culture-climate/cultural-competency/april-4-2018-update/>
<https://studentaffairs.wsu.edu/initiatives/campus-culture-climate/cultural-competency/may-2-2018-update/>

American Association of Colleges and Universities Conference:
Hosts yearly conferences, see attached programs
<https://www.aacu.org/conferences/dlss/2019> website for 2019 meeting