

Diversity and Affirmative Action Taskforce

Dialogue and Update

April 12, 2004

We are pleased to report that the Diversity and Affirmative Action Taskforce has been actively pursuing its charge delegated by President Dana Mohler-Faria to review and assess the current state of diversity and affirmative action initiatives and programs at Bridgewater State College.

The charge is linked to the core mission of BSC:

...to improve the quality of life of its constituencies and members of the surrounding communities....to transform this region, to prepare students to participate and lead in this global society, to acquire a deeper, broader and more comprehensive understanding of all of the various stakeholders of the Bridgewater academic community, and to address the changing needs of the academic institution.

During the past three months the task force has convened and members participated in several team meetings that included significant dialogue and activity. Here is a summary of the past activities, which engendered the following insights and agendas:

- Identified the dimensions and forms of human diversity: age, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, spirituality/religion, (dis)ability, socio-economic class, and language, and discussed inclusiveness, appreciation, and respect for differences.
- Explored and reflected on diversity from an experiential and observational perspective.
- Discussed how to address the multifaceted and multi-staged nature of the task.
- Focused on diversity as an integral component that encompasses all stakeholders - all students, staff, faculty, alumni, and administrators at BSC.
- Participated in discussions on how to assess and engage all members of the BSC academic community in providing information on perceptions, experiences, insight, behaviors, attitudes, and needs.
- Researched the published literature from academic institutions, which have approached similar initiatives related to diversity and affirmative action.
- Addressed sustainability and ongoing commitment and opportunities to address diversity issues throughout campus.
- Communicated with representatives of various institutions who have successfully incorporated their diversity findings with ongoing institutional initiatives.
- Established the following work groups:
 - Survey Team
 - Focus Group Team
 - Individual Campus Leader Interview Team
 - Research and Best Practices Team

- Drafted instruments to be used to collect data.

In the future we are planning the following activities:

- Meet with consultant to discuss process, procedures, and training (Spring 2004)
- Begin to conduct focus groups with students (Spring 2004)
- Begin conducting interviews with individual campus leaders (Spring 2004)
- Continue to promote and provide dialogue and update to campus community (ongoing)
- Participate in Diversity Training (Spring/Summer 2004)
- Establish a Diversity and Affirmative Action website (Spring 2004)
- Refine and perfect a campus-wide survey to be administered in the fall (September 2004)

Committee Members

The Diversity and Affirmative Action Taskforce, appointed by President Mohler-Faria is comprised of representatives from a cross section of BSC campus:

Mr. Stephen Agard - Student
 Dr. Anna Bradfield – Dean, School of Education and Allied Studies
 Mr. Tony Chaves – Maintainer and AFSCME Union Steward
 Dr. Shu-Ling Chen – Director, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
 Dr. Alan Comedy – Assistant, to the president for Affirmative Action and Minority Affairs
 Ms. Andrea Garr-Barnes – Director of Multicultural Affairs and International Affairs
 Mr. Bob Haynor – Staff Associate, Counseling Center
 Mr. Michael Henry – BSC Alumni
 Dr. Michael Kocet – Assistant Professor, Department of Counselor Education
 Dr. Maggie Lowe – Associate Professor, Department of History
 Ms. Pamela Spillane – Learning Disabilities Specialist, Academic Achievement Center
 Mrs. Gloria Stanton – Principal, Martha Burnell Campus School
 Dr. Wing-Kai To – Associate Professor, Department of History
 Ms. Ann Ulett – BSC Alumni
 Ms. Eileen DeAndrade-Recording Secretary
 Mr. Peter Martel, Co-Chair
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 Dr. Anna Martin Jearld, Co-Chair
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Our ultimate goal is to develop a comprehensive Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan with recommended actions in line with the overall goals of the College's mission.

To achieve this goal together, we need to gather the opinions, needs, experiences, and impressions of all members of the BSC community. We welcome and encourage your full and voluntary participation in achieving the goals of this initiative.

“Diversity may bring with it many challenges, but those challenges are far exceeded by new opportunities and benefits.” President Dana Mohler-Faria, 2003

President’s Charge to the Diversity and Affirmative Action Taskforce
<http://www.bridgew.edu/President/speeches/diversity.cfm>