

# Quincy University Strategic Diversity Action Plan

QU Diversity Action Council

## **Quincy University Mission Statement:**

Quincy University stands as a Catholic, independent, liberal arts institution of higher learning in the Franciscan tradition. Inspired by the spirit of Francis and Clare of Assisi, we respect each person as a sister or brother with dignity, value, and worth. We work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. We prepare men and women for leadership and for the transformation of the world by educating them to seek knowledge that leads to wisdom. We welcome and invite all to share our spirit and our life.

## **Rationale for Diversity Action Plan (Baseline Data Analysis)**

The latest available data reported by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IHBE) indicates that while Quincy University boasted a black student enrollment of 11.4% graduation of blacks sat at only 2.4% of total degree conferrals for that same academic year. While QU's overall retention remains a matter of concern for the university community as a whole, the need also exists for a targeted university-wide effort to increase retention of underrepresented minority (i.e., non-white or Asian self-identification) students.

QU's 4-year graduation rate stands at 34.2%. Yet when disaggregated, it becomes clear that the rate for underrepresented minority students is only 18.5% (collegeresults.org, 2005 cohort data). Again, when comparing this data to the national average, QU falls well short of being competitive. The gap in minority graduation rate, both at 4 and 6-year increments is much higher than QU's overall gap in graduation rate.

QU currently has a large minority student population when compared to like institutions both regionally and nationally. While QU can be lauded for its commitment to attract and enroll underrepresented minority students, the same cannot be said about the university's ability to attract, employ, or retain faculty members reflective of those same cultural backgrounds. To date, QU employs only one black full-time faculty member. Professional staff and administrator totals are equally disproportionate to the minority student population.

As a liberal arts institution, Quincy University also falls well short of providing diversity-related programming both in terms of academic program offerings (i.e., majors, minors, workshops) and co-curricular program offerings. This lack of focus on diversity-related programming prompts speculation as to how comprehensive the liberal arts experience can be at Quincy University.

## **Purpose of Diversity Action Plan**

Under current leadership, the university has taken active steps to promote sustainability and vitality for the institution for years to come. This pro-active approach to planning has led to comprehensive university initiatives such as the 5-year Strategic Plan and the university-wide Retention Plan. In practical terms, this focus on planning informs the allocation of resources for projects the university community deem valuable. Formal review of these initiatives reveals that issues of diversity are currently absent from the planning process. While the Strategic Plan does mention the need to add diversity to the Board of Trustees, both it and the Retention Plan fail to speak to the diversity-related deficiencies in other areas of the university. The Diversity Action Council believes that both an evident, and even profound, need exists to make diversity at Quincy University a clearly-stated value of the institution. Thus, this Diversity Action Plan was developed to assist the university in “living its mission” by identifying needs/deficits (i.e., baselines & comparisons), planning and implementing a clear strategy, and evaluating impact. A key resource that helped to shape the development of this plan was the book by Garcia et al. (2001) entitled, *Assessing Campus Diversity Initiatives: A guide for Campus Practitioners*. This document provides a framework for quality diversity plans suggesting that they minimally include strategies that address:

1. access and success
2. campus climate and intergroup relations
3. education and scholarship
4. institutional viability and vitality

## **“Diversity” at Quincy University**

The aforementioned university mission statement states that QU will strive to promote an environment that welcomes and invites “all to share our spirit and our life.” This mission reflects an inclusive spirit that undoubtedly attracts students from around the world who wish to thrive in an environment that respects, and even values their vastly divergent perspectives, customs, languages, and orientations toward life. This statement, at its core, aptly captures the inclusive manner in which the concept of diversity is understood by the Quincy University community. Diversity, therefore, is not limited by census classifications or regional designations, but instead is reflective of the many identities that make up one’s total self—that which makes us fully human. Thus, while the diversity-related initiatives discussed herein may, at times, include focus on a specific group or collection of groups, the diversity action plan is intended to represent an initial step toward moving the university forward with an intention and direction regarding diversity-related action.

## **Diversity Action Council**

The following excerpt, intended to clarify the impetus for the development of a diversity action council at Quincy University, was adopted from the original "Diversity Action Council Proposal" approved by the QU Executive Leadership team:

*Within the vision statement of Quincy University it highlights that the university will strive to build and maintain a sense of community, while promoting the value of inclusion and diversity among all its constituencies. It goes on to state that Quincy University will embrace its Franciscan values which include, hospitality and respect for all and the integrity of creation.*

*As the university continues to increase its diversity across its student body population there is an identified need for a committee such as the Diversity Action Council (DAC). One of the main purposes of the Diversity Action Council will be to uphold the principles set forth by the university's vision statement. Another purpose of the DAC will be committed to ensuring that Quincy University provides an environment that prevents discrimination of any type, promotes a bias-free atmosphere and showcases the importance of diversity and inclusion to students, faculty/staff and administration.*

*Based on the 2009 Self-Study Report submitted to the Higher Learning Commission, there have been three identified areas of improvement for Quincy University, those to include:*

- *The University has fallen short of its goals in recruiting diverse faculty.*
- *The lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the area community has made it particularly challenging, particularly in times when budgetary constraints affect the funding of salaries.*
- *The University has increased student diversity, but there are still few opportunities for students to experience discussions and positive exchanges with students from racial and ethnic backgrounds other than their own. The Mission calls for continued emphasis on recruitment and efforts by instructors to design units that foreground diverse perspectives if this goal is to be fully achieved.*

*The committee, in conjunction with the Office of Multicultural and Leadership Programs and Campus Ministry, will provide continual multicultural resources and educational initiatives to students, faculty/staff, and administration. Minority members of the student body have identified a feeling of lack of support on the campus; to that the DAC has been identified as need in order to ensure that an environment is created where all feel safe and supported. The DAC will assist in showcasing the appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism and identifying areas of concern in regards to diversity as they appear both on the campus and in the surrounding community.*

*The DAC will be responsible for intercepting any bias related issues on campus and addressing this issue two-fold; (1) those targeted by a bias related incident will be provided with support as well as referred to the appropriate campus resources and (2) the council will educate the greater campus and community about the issue at large, being sure not to isolate a specific person or incident which ensures and promotes a bias-free atmosphere for the entire QU campus and surrounding community. As a result of this review, the DAC may provide written recommendations to the university's executive leadership team or a representative member.*

*In the spirit of fostering an environment where all students have adequate opportunities to thrive, the DAC will also be charged with promoting collaborative partnerships with various entities (i.e., university departments, offices, and student groups) across campus. The DAC will also promote collaboration with relevant community leaders and community-based initiatives that support the committee's goals.*

*The current council consists of representatives from Campus Ministry, Academic Affairs, Athletics and Student Affairs.*

*Circa 2012*

## **Development of Plan**

The impetus for the development of a strategic diversity action plan grew out of DAC discussions surrounding the initial objectives, charge, and scope of the committee. That meeting served as a catalyst for the exploration of current diversity-related data (e.g., minority retention, minority faculty/student ratios, minority employment totals, minority-focused academic and co-curricular programs) along with an exploration of current university-wide initiatives (i.e., how resources were being utilized). This initial assessment led to subsequent discussions about the need for a strategic, comprehensive plan to address the dearth of diversity-related programs and/or plans within the university community. From these discussions, the committee unanimously agreed to pursue the development of a comprehensive strategic diversity action plan.

## **Action Plan**

### **Goals, Objectives, Actions (Previous and Recommended), Outcomes**

- 1. Programs (i.e., academic and co-curricular) (this might include program implementation at the co-curricular level as well as promotion of new academic programs that are diversity-centric)**
- 2. Employment (i.e., pertaining to recruitment, hiring, and retention)**
- 3. Planning (i.e., diversity-centered inclusion in university-wide strategic planning initiatives)**
- 4. Retention/Graduation**
- 5. Community (i.e., this might include community engagement as well as diversity-centric community building here on campus)**

<b>Goal 1: Increased diversity-related programming at Quincy University</b>			
	<b>Actions</b>		<b>Outcomes</b>
	<b>Previous</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	
<b>Objective A</b>			
<b>Increased diversity-related co-curricular programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Creation of Minority &amp; Leadership Programs position</li> <li>– Creation of Graduate Assistant for Multicultural and Diversity Initiatives position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased diversity-focused programming in various student life venues (e.g., residence life, athletics, leadership programs, community initiatives)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Determine baseline programming level and increase incrementally to reflect successful model program initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Objective B</b>			
<b>Increased diversity-related academic programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Global &amp; Diversity Designation in Bonaventure Program</li> <li>– Town &amp; Gown on Race in Higher Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development of diversity-focused major/minor undergraduate and graduate academic programs</li> <li>– Develop and offer diversity-focused workshops for students, alumni, faculty/staff, &amp; community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Students will demonstrate diversity-related competence via AAC &amp; U “Intercultural Knowledge &amp; Competence” Value Rubric as part of Bonaventure program</li> <li>– Creation of academic majors/minors</li> <li>– Creation of diversity-focused workshops</li> </ul>

<b>Goal 2: Increased efforts to attract, employ, and retain minority faculty, administrators, and staff at a level that reflects the student population</b>			
	<b>Actions</b>		<b>Outcomes</b>
	<b>Previous</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	
<b>Objective A</b>			
<b>Adopt a university hiring policy that reflects intentional minority recruitment efforts</b>	– Equal Opportunity Employment Statement	– Develop an intentional, purposeful plan to recruit visible racial/ethnic minority faculty, staff, and administrators	– Plan implementation by specified target date
<b>Objective B</b>			
<b>Adopt a university hiring policy that promotes inclusion of minority search committee membership when available</b>	– None *	– Develop, implement, and assess the policy by a specified date to determine effectiveness	– Policy implemented by specified target date – Faculty, staff, and administration will be made aware of policy changes
<b>Objective C</b>			
<b>Develop incentive options to assist the university in retaining minority faculty, staff, and administrative hires</b>	– None*	– Explore models from other institutions	– Adopt a model that best fits with the QU mission

<b>Goal 3: Increased focus on diversity as a fundamental component of university-wide planning</b>			
	<b>Actions</b>		<b>Outcomes</b>
	<b>Previous</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	
<b>Objective A</b>			
<b>Review current university-wide action plans for diversity-related focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Conducted audit of University-wide Retention Plan &amp; 5-Year Strategic Plan for diversity-related initiatives (Result: clear dearth of diversity focus)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Further discussion with members of Executive Leadership Team (ELT) regarding diversity component in other planning initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– University-wide planning will demonstrate clear articulation of diversity focus</li> </ul>
<b>Objective B</b>			
<b>Adopt a policy for developing university-wide plans that includes an intentional focus on diversity as a fundamental component</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– None*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Continued dialogue with ELT members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A clear policy for developing university-wide action plans will be developed, disseminated, and implemented across the institution</li> </ul>

**Goal 4: Increased efforts to attract, retain, and graduate underrepresented minority students at a level that meets or exceeds like institutions nationwide**

	Actions		Outcomes
	Previous	Recommended	
<b>Objective A</b>			
<b>Increase minority retention rate to a level that meets or exceeds the national rate for like institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Examined baseline minority retention rates at QU</li> <li>– Explored national minority retention rates for comparison</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establish clear success indicators for minority retention and execute intentional strategy to achieve stated targets</li> <li>– Provision of appropriate resources to achieve target minority retention rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increase minority retention to “success” levels within specified time period</li> <li>– Resources will be clearly delineated for minority retention initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Objective B</b>			
<b>Increase minority graduation rate to a level that meets or exceeds the national rate for like institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Examined baseline minority graduation rates at QU</li> <li>– Explored national minority graduation rates for comparison</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Establish clear success indicators for minority graduation rates and execute intentional strategy to achieve stated targets</li> <li>– Provision of appropriate resources to achieve target minority graduation rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increase minority graduation rates to “success” levels within specified time period</li> <li>– Resources will be clearly delineated for minority graduation initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Objective C</b>			
<b>Disaggregate university-wide retention objectives and develop a specific plan to counteract the attrition rate for underrepresented minority students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– None*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Identify specific groups that may need additional university support related to retention/graduation</li> <li>– Develop, implement, and assess plan for improving retention/graduation rates for minority students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A strategic retention plan based on disaggregated university-wide retention objectives will be developed, implemented, and assessed on a continual basis</li> </ul>

<b>Goal 5: Increased focus on promoting an environment that is “welcoming to all,” including underrepresented minority students</b>			
	<b>Actions</b>		<b>Outcomes</b>
	<b>Previous</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	
<b>Objective A</b>			
<b>Increased university-based community outreach regarding the Franciscan mission of Quincy University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Service-Learning initiatives</li> <li>– Faculty &amp; Staff individual community service initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased diversity-related focus of service initiatives (i.e., community service, service learning, volunteerism)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increase in collaborative efforts between the university and community partners that speak to diversity-related community and university issues (e.g., disparity, poverty, discrimination, minority retention)</li> </ul>
<b>Objective B</b>			
<b>Increased community-based outreach in effort to promote minority student community engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– None*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increase discussion &amp; reflection regarding diversity as a component of civic engagement, leadership, and various other student roles</li> <li>– Identify developmentally appropriate strategies to integrate students into the surrounding community as a means of promoting continued minority student engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increase in visibility and collaboration between diverse community organizations (e.g., minority, poverty, women’s rights, domestic violence, veterans affairs) and the university community</li> </ul>
<b>Objective C</b>			
<b>Increased focus on diversity as a vital component of what makes the Franciscan mission, and the University as a whole, distinctive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Depiction of diverse students in certain marketing campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increased examination of minority student investment in the Franciscan mission and how this may impact overall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze the components of diversity reflected in QU’s mission</li> </ul>

		community investment	statement and how they've experienced this as a student
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**(\*) Indicates that no formal policy or initiative could be identified at the time of this document's creation**