

Resolution Agreement Compliance Review No. 01-99-6003

The University of Rhode Island's Plan for the Future

Over the past seven years the University of Rhode Island has supported a formal commitment to increasing and enhancing cultural diversity. Through a 1992 Faculty Senate agreement, subsequently approved by the Board of Governors, the President accepted four broad goals designed to increase ethnic and cultural diversity and thereby strengthen the University experience and create additional educational opportunities. Many of the specific objectives were realized or exceeded over the last several years and are documented in the President's letter this year in response to the Brother's United for Action student organization's, two demands and 10 points of light. The discordant events through 1998 and 1999 leading up to the U.S. Department of Justice mediation agreement and the current collaborative with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, are indications, however, that the process of changing our campus climate is not yet completed.

It is to this end--the creation of a just educational community--that we have identified several immediate methods to assess and identify accountability through this resolution agreement. By doing so we ensure that we continue a developmental process that creates additional resources through collaboration and advances lasting values that are shared and respected by all members of our community.

The recently completed Office for Civil Rights review of our campus started with specific concerns regarding access to educational opportunities and equity for minority students at URI. While we are recommending the establishment of institutional priorities that would achieve these goals, we are also mindful that the wider accomplishment of diversity is the larger institutional imperative along side of which these goals are written and will be achieved.

A diversity advisory committee has already commenced work with the Director of the Office of Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity and Diversity (AAEOD) to develop recommendations to support a just, equitable and diverse learning community. In addition they will seek to address those issues of inclusion such as students and community, outreach, institutional collaboration of staff and faculty, program development, gender equity and others, that remain to be addressed by a complete diversity model. The recommendations shall be consistent with and supportive of this agreement.

The committee shall be chaired by faculty member Professor Lynne Derbyshire and shall be representative of as many facets of the learning community including students and high level administrators in order to ensure its directive is accomplished. Written recommendations shall be made to the Chair of the Affirmative Action Committee and be reported to the President within a six-month period.

I. MEASURING UP

A. Assessment (Student Affairs, Strategic Planning and Institutional Research and AAEOD)

1. Measure campus climate by conducting a self-assessment of the racial climate on campus.

The University's goal is to foster an educational climate in which diversity and multiculturalism thrive and are esteemed as assets to the community. How will we know when that goal is achieved? We must identify a reliable way to measure the racial climate on our campus. Once measured, we will have a base line against which to judge the effects of all new initiatives. To do this we must look to the literature and consult with other colleges and universities to identify suitable methods and instruments. A research team must be assembled to administer the measure to a suitable sample of the University community, to process, evaluate, and disseminate the results. This investment will pay off, as we will have the ability to identify areas requiring more attention and the ability to measure progress with more than anecdotes.

We will also explore ways to collect data on why students leave URI with an emphasis on campus climate. The Student Affairs Vice President will convene a team to explore this issue with representation from Strategic Planning and Institutional Research (SPIR), University College, Student Affairs, University Registrar, and the Dean of Students' Office.

Information will be gathered each spring from students regarding campus climate. The Student Quality of Life Survey (SQUALS) Team will be responsible for this work. In addition, information will be used by Student Affairs and AAEOD to develop programming for campus climate improvement in areas of diversity through Strategic Planning and Institutional Research.

a) Timeline:

June 1, 2000	Instruments and methods identified.
October 31, 2000	Research team assembled, resources identified, methods chosen.
November 1, 2000	Data collected.
September 30, 2001	Data processed and evaluated. Dissemination of results begins.

b) Assessment: Responsible office - Student Life. Process is repeated every 2-3 years.

**B. Complaint Policy and Procedures
(Affirmative Action Committee, Student Affairs and AAEOD)**

1. Develop a communication plan that more broadly and effectively disseminates University policy relating to harassment including grievance and discipline procedures and where and how to report problems.

Many of our policies and practices are combined with other documents, making it difficult to have information at our fingertips. The University will look at and institute new ways of effectively disseminating policies and procedures to the university community including student, staff, and faculty. The office of AAEOD already has a web site that gives instant access to University policies and procedures. It is not an expectation that every department be linked to this site, but it is an option for future development. The goal now is for each department, office, college, etc., to have a copy of our policies and procedures readily accessible in their office. In addition each department, college etc. would regularly participate in an assessment and review of their internal dissemination process for the policies and procedures.

- a) Timeline: One to six months
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| October 2000 | Research current department policies and practices dealing with harassment. |
| November 2000 | Collect data and evaluate current dissemination systems. |
| December 2000 | Design a universal pamphlet for use by each department on campus. |
- b) Assessment: Some potential resources for dissemination:
The Cigar (Campus Newspaper);
Department of Housing's voicemail system;
Postings in each dorm (along with pamphlet/manual in all offices);
and Office of Student Life

2. Develop information that clearly articulates the University's policies and procedures for racial harassment.

The university will provide clear guidelines on investigating, documenting and reporting of incidents and complaints within a formal and informal resolution process. The President's Affirmative Action Committee is currently reviewing existing policy and developing new policy and procedures around harassment and hate crimes. In addition to normal ways of dissemination policy, a handout or insert could be developed alongside existing campus reference documents i.e. orientation or workshops. The harassment policy will be described in the completed pamphlet and become a part of the complaint process and normal disseminating of information.

3. Develop a process that tracks racial incidents that are reported by victims and third parties, but for which no complaints have been filed.

An informal review process will be developed to assist in the tracking of any incidents that did not result in a formal complaint. This would provide a way to record the impact of all incidents of harassment including hate crimes on our community environment.

Timeline: To support existing timeline in Section B 1(a)

4. Develop a complaint process that requires the centralization of data and identifies the office and or person(s) who will monitor and analyze the data collected.

The centralization of data should be made user friendly for staff, students and faculty. The information should be readily accessible in whatever form contained i.e. in a manual on grievance procedures. This would ensure that individuals and departments on campus report or forward all incidents to the appropriate office. The description of this process will provide guidelines on handling all types of incidents and complaints in a timely and effective manner.

- a) Timeline: To support existing timeline in Section B 1(a)
- b) Assessment: Annual reporting of findings to ensure campus community aware of trends or patterns of harassing behavior

5. Develop a process to coordinate investigative procedures among the appropriate administrative offices and campus police.

It is important that a process for coordinating investigations be implemented. With the centralization of data collection the university anticipates a more detailed notification and investigatory process. This will ensure timely and thorough investigation and responses.

Timeline: 2000-2001 Academic Year

6. Develop and implement a plan for training all staff including faculty, administrators and campus police on the revised racial harassment policies and procedures.

All staff should be trained on the revised harassment policies and procedures. This training should include information on what constitutes harassment so that all staff would be effective and knowledgeable on the issues of bias and harassment. In addition, the focus on centralization of the grievance and complaint process would require training for those individuals who would now be responsible for reporting or assisting should an incident occur. We would have to identify people and educate those individuals to act responsibly, timely, and effectively.

- a) Timeline: 2000-2001 Academic Year

- b) Assessment: The responsibilities for training and production of the materials would remain with AAEOB in coordination with Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

C. Residence Halls (Department of Housing and Residential Life)

Approximately 3800 undergraduate students reside in nineteen on campus residence halls comprising 900,000 square feet of space. Of these 3800 residents, approximately 2100 are first-year students. Undergraduate, graduate, and full-time staff are placed in each residential unit to provide student and community development programs and monitor student behaviors. Given the density of these living environments and the high concentration of first-year students, the residence halls represent areas of high social and interpersonal exchange. Most residents choose to live on campus for the convenience and for the high level of interaction between roommates, suite mates, and floor- and housemates. Community interaction within on-campus residential units is most often very constructive and positive. Nonetheless, these communities experience the same comforts, discomforts, tensions, and learning encountered around human differences - particularly differences in race, ethnicity, and life style - as experienced in our society as a whole. In these residential communities of such density and proximity, incidents of intolerance, ignorance, and disrespect for human differences sometimes become more immediate and intense.

The Department of Housing and Residential Life seeks to continue to provide successful and effective multicultural and diversity programs, support services, and response systems within the residence halls. To that end, the department seeks to conduct the following:

1. Enhance minority recruitment and retention programs for staff at all levels of the department.

- a) Timeline: Fall Semester 2000/Spring Semester 2001
- b) Assessment: Multicultural and Diversity Education Advisory Committee will assess at the end of the academic year and report findings and recommendations.

2. Assess multicultural perceptions and climate within residence halls via dedicated questions contained within the Resident Quality of Life Survey.

- a) Timeline: Fall Semester 2000/Spring Semester 2001
- b) Assessment: Data for these specific questions are to be assembled as part of the total data analysis for the Quality of Life Survey, and results shared with other appropriate departments.

3. Assemble a departmental multicultural and diversity education, intervention, and evaluation advisory committee

- a) Timeline: Fall Semester 2000/Spring Semester 2001
- b) Assessment: Annual Report submitted by the Advisory Committee. This report could include results from the resident quality of life survey and other reviews conducted by the department.

4. Review and revise bias and harassment reporting and response system within the department to ensure an efficient and effective system while maintaining strong intradepartmental liaison contacts as part of the campus-wide reporting and response network.

- a) Timeline: Fall Semester 2000/Spring Semester 2001
- b) Assessment: Annual review to be conducted by Senior Managers and Advisory Committee.

5. Provide training programs on the issues of bias and harassment for residential life staff that results in staff being more effective in dealing with incidents and complaints.

- a) Timeline: 2000-2001
- b) Assessment: Ongoing assessment and evaluation of staff training initiatives.

6. Continue to provide and sponsor quality student programs dedicated specifically to issues of multiculturalism, diversity, and social.

- a) Timeline: Fall 2000
- b) Assessment: The University has already provided a housing option i.e. a diversity house, for students focusing on multicultural, diversity and social justice. Students may select the diversity house for their campus residence. A graduate assistant will work within the residence hall specifically in the area of diversity. The University will also look into additional programs for the other on campus housing to ensure issues of multiculturalism and diversity are addressed and that residents of all campus housing are aware of harassment policies and procedures. Program evaluations and annual reviews/reports.

D. Continue to expand the commitment to diversity in all Student Affairs programs.
(Student Affairs)

1. Continue to review policies and procedures governing student organizations to ensure equity as well as uniformity in information dissemination and the provision of services.

The Student Affairs Division will continue to expand programs and efforts to address diversity issues. Based on SQUALS data and input from diverse student organizations, we will continue to address the needs of our students.

- a) Timeline: Fall 2000
- b) Assessment: Program evaluations and annual /reports

E. Office of Affirmative Action , Equal Opportunity and Diversity staffing

The Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity (AAEOD) oversees every department on campus and serves many functions at the University. All prior reports on staff utilization for this office indicate a need to increase the amount of resources allocated to it.

1. Stabilize the Office of AAEOD and create momentum for effective participation in issues and activities that support the development of increased equity, inclusion, diversity and legal compliance.

- a) Timeline: 2000-2002
- b) Assessment: Most of the cost is associated with developing staff capacity for outreach and training programs. The added benefit of expansion with positions that provide community development and training could offset other costs associated with training and development provided for Departments such as training of security personnel, etc.

The community to which we are committed must build from a sustained and focused momentum. Many of the current recommendations left unsupported and lacking nutrients of collaboration will not flourish. The improved staffing pattern at AAEOD would support the increase workload presented by leadership and support of a University-wide diversity plan. The staffing pattern would require that two additional full-time positions be allocated for AAEOD. Individuals would be expected to have expertise in training and education and diversity issues, in addition to affirmative action compliance experience.

These positions will serve a campus-wide function when, in conjunction with other departments, they support the development of the benchmarking process and shared resources and

experiences. It is expected that these positions will provide support to nurture and develop new ideas and issues involving change and compliance.

In support of the two additional positions, it is anticipated that added secretarial staff support, a graduate assistant and college work-study student(s) would provide added necessary resources to the department. Our goal is to create a focus and continuity that will provide leadership and increased accountability and evaluation by redirecting resources in a collaborative, shared structure.

II. COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

A. Campus Police and Security

Statements made to OCR by minority students indicate a sense that minority students are treated differently than white students. The basis for this sentiment appears to center on the interaction with campus police officers at night and on weekends. The examples cited range from treatment of individuals by police and security personnel to a perceived overreaction by police to minority students' parties and activities. Some students and staff members felt that campus police officers are not trained to deal with a diverse student population.

While the University recognizes that the nature of law enforcement will at times make police interaction with individual students and student groups an unpleasant experience, it also recognizes the importance that all students are actually treated fairly and equally across racial and cultural lines, and believe that this is so. As a result, the University believes that it can improve police relations with the increasing diverse student population through technology, training and greater interaction with student groups on campus.

1. Improve the reporting ability of campus police on harassment and bias complaints.

Campus security is currently limited in retrieving information on students when complaints are filed and it is a necessary first step in the investigation, identification and improvement of the racial climate on campus. It also appears that the campus police lack adequate technology to record data and track cases of racial harassment or hate crimes. The centralization of bias and harassment information will aid in this information gap. In addition, possible grant or program funding could be sought to update the campus police record keeping abilities. In the interim, current reporting techniques or systems used for other reports and agencies may be utilized.

- a) Timeline: Fall 2000
- b) Assessment: Annual Report

2. The establishment of a formal training program and budget in this area is believed to be essential to the identification of issues relating to minority and multicultural students and the resulting improvement of relations

The campus police receive no orientation or formal training in dealing with a diverse student population. The problem is compounded by the fact that the police and security assigned to the night shift are those with less seniority and therefore less experience generally.

- a) Timeline: Fall 2000
- b) Assessment: This process should become part of regular training. For training should consider PDLOT, Career Services, AAEOD and other training and development programs as a resource.

3. Enhance the understanding between students and campus police and security by more non-conflict or non-confrontational interactions.

Greater contact between students and campus police and security will enhance understanding and communications between the two groups, resulting in the overall improvement of relations. The interaction should be on a regular basis throughout the academic year and designed to encourage an open and two-way dialogue. It can take place in a formal setting such as an open forum in the multicultural center or on an informal basis between student leaders or particular student groups.

Implementation should involve representatives from campus police, interested members of groups and campus constituents in events focusing on two-way dialogue, formal discussion groups, and team meetings.

- a) Timeline: Fall 2000
- b) Assessment: Ongoing events and focus on multiple issues

B. Continue and expand programs of the Multicultural Center (MCC) with emphasis on student organizations inclusive in the planning and conducting of programs. (Student Affairs)

Part of the expansion of the services provided by the MCC will undoubtedly involve staff expansion and greater student involvement. While a resource issue, the Student Affairs Division will promote filling the Assistant Director of the Multicultural Center vacancy. In the interim, we will continue to seek student input through advisory committees.

- a) Timeline: 2000-2001 Academic Year

- b) Assessment: Any progress in this area should become part of an overall assessment or self-evaluation annual report.

C. Address the issues surrounding program development and delivery of services to a diverse population associated with the Multicultural Center and the Special Program for Talent Development. (Students Affairs)

Through the mission of Special Program for Talent Development and the Multicultural Center clearly differ (academic vs. programmatic), the two programs share, at the broadest level, a commitment to the quality of the educational experience that students of color have at the University of Rhode Island. Both offices contribute immeasurably to the resources supportive of a diverse educational community. To this end, meaningful communication on a broad range of issues concerning the respective programs is desirable.

The Directors of the Multicultural Center and Special Program for Talent Development will meet on a monthly basis to discuss participation in and continue support for the growing needs of a diverse student and educational community

- a) Timeline: 2000-2001 Academic Year
b) Assessment: Conducted through program evaluation and annual review

D. Increase the retention and recruitment of minority faculty and staff. (AAEOD, Vice Presidents and Provost)

The University is dedicated to the recruitment and retention of minority candidates. Many department and committee initiatives have been formed to address the issue of recruitment and retention of faculty and students from minority and under-represented groups. In order to continue to provide solutions, we need to re-examine and revise our system that evaluates how we delegate our efforts around these issues. The success of such plans should be a criterion for evaluation of Departments.

1. Develop an outreach and retention plan for each college on campus, with goals for the next three to five years.

Each plan should include a self-evaluation process and should outline basic areas of collegic and department activity relative to diversity and the University's affirmative action and equal opportunity policies. Each plan should identify areas such as programs and services, support networks, mentoring programs, and any employee orientation. Attempts should be made to identify the program collaborations, workshops and services which help create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

AAEOD will have the primary responsibility for assisting in the development of individual plans to meet the needs of each department. It is also understood that individual fields of study that traditionally have under-representation may present challenges.

In fostering an educational environment that promotes and celebrates diversity it is vital that we use and recognize models of successful achievement by faculty and/or staff from under-represented groups. As is the case with the efforts to recruit and retain students of color, there have been long-standing initiatives to recruit faculty from under-represented groups. While there have been some successes, there also have been some notable failures. Faculty of color with attractive portfolios of professional accomplishments is heavily recruited and, in the absence of compelling reasons to stay, they have left the University at about the same rate as they have arrived.

The University will further assess the issue and consider recommendations such as:

- Conduct reviews and exit interviews to seek the reasons faculty and staff leave the University emphasizing why under-represented groups and minorities seek employment and continue their careers with the University.
- Review present successful programs and strategies used by the University and similar institutions to recruit faculty from under-represented groups and minorities seek employment and continue their careers with the University.

a) Timeline: Fall 2000

b) Assessment: Ongoing annually

2. Provide resources to colleges that seek to develop plans that create a collaborative learning environment that supports inclusion and promotes and celebrates diversity.

Provide workable incentives to colleges that make progress on meeting the goals they set. Funding could involve the development of mentoring programs that meet the special needs of faculty of color as they adapt to the University and begin their professional careers. Special incentives could also involve additional fellowships, distinguished scholars and development of student exchange programs.

a) Timeline: 2000-2001 Academic Year

b) Assessment: Ongoing annually

E. Continue and expand programs that bring students from diverse cultures together. (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, AAEOD)

While it is natural and desirable that students group themselves according to their comfort levels, universities must encourage the crossing of boundaries and create opportunities for students to learn about themselves and others by working and socializing with people who are different from themselves.

1. Compile a directory to document current activities and initiatives in support of an inclusive learning environment.

2. Develop a team to create a list of recommendations and possible resources to bring to the appropriate vice presidents for action.

a) Timeline:

June 1, 2000	Directory compiled
September 30, 2000	Directory evaluated and recommendation created
March 1, 2000	Vice Presidents present action plans
September 30, 2001	Effectiveness of action plan evaluated. Process is repeated every 2-3 years.

b) Assessment: Any progress in this area should become part of an overall assessment or self-evaluation annual report.

For each entry, we will include a brief history, description, sponsors, funding sources, and participation rates. This in itself will be a valuable tool for those looking for ways to learn from others and for those looking for guidance in establishing new programs. The directory will be analyzed and evaluated to identify programs that may be faltering, programs needing additional support, and areas where opportunities do not exist.

III. CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMMING

A. Support inclusive teaching emphasizing successful approaches to teaching diverse populations (Academic Affairs)

Curricular development and reform to include systemically diverse and multicultural perspectives have seen some noteworthy successes, as well as frustrating failures. Several new faculty members from diverse backgrounds have developed and offered new courses focused on multicultural perspectives.

A clear curricular need, however, is the infusion of multicultural perspectives into the core of the undergraduate curriculum. It still requires Faculty Senate action, and the good faith efforts of the leadership of that body. The many views of appropriate curricular design, together with the very real constraints on many degree programs, will make full realization of this objective a challenge.

1. Expand instructional workshops for faculty

In the area of faculty development, the University will focus on pedagogy that promotes inclusivity. The Multicultural Faculty Fellows program jointly sponsored by the Multicultural Center and the Instructional Development Programs has sought to develop faculty expertise in this regard. In its second year, it has reached only a small proportion of University faculty. It must continue in future years and be expanded. Advocacy with

the faculty on this issue is essential and must be promoted and supported by the University and the colleges.

Timeline: Fall 2000

2. Continue to support the infusion of multicultural perspectives into the University curriculum.

Subcommittee on Diversification of the Curriculum (Faculty Senate)

a) Timeline: Fall 2000

b) Assessment: Annual report or self-evaluation/assessment.

**B. Explore ways to reward faculty, staff, and students for diversity initiatives.
(All Vice Presidents and Provost)**

This is an additional way to foster collaboration, leadership and group focus. Strategies should be developed through the Council of Deans and other groups of program directors that send a consistent message of support at the highest level for an inclusive, just and diverse learning community.

Provide incentives for progress on diversity initiatives. Funding could involve the development of mentoring programs that meet the special needs of faculty of color as they adapt to the University and begin their professional careers. Special incentives could also involve additional fellowships, distinguished scholars and development of student exchange programs.

a) Timeline: 2000-2001 Academic year

b) Assessment: Any progress in this area should become part of an overall assessment or self-evaluation annual report.

The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights and the University of Rhode Island enter into this agreement this _____ day of April 2000. The parties will schedule a date to meet, within 60 days of the signing of this document, to work out monitoring time lines.

Robert L. Carothers
President
University of Rhode Island