

Lane Diversity Plan

Introduction

A Diverse Community will:

- Enhance open access and opportunity for all and attract a diverse population.
- Enrich the educational experience and promote personal growth.
- Foster mutual respect and an appreciation of differences and promote cross-cultural understanding.
- Prepare leaders for a competitive global community.

Lane Community College, a comprehensive community college, was founded in 1964 and since the opening of the main campus in 1968, has emerged to be one of the top two-year colleges in America. Lane is the third largest of the 17 community colleges in Oregon. Approximately 40,000 students take classes each year. Lane has received many awards and accolades for its innovative programs and high quality instruction. For almost four decades, Lane has been a member of the League for Innovation in the Community College, a consortium of community colleges organized to stimulate innovation and experimentation in all areas of community college development. Lane is the only League college in Oregon and one of the nineteen member colleges that comprise the League's board. The 1998 issue of Change Magazine called the League "the most dynamic organization in the community college world." In 2000, Lane became one of 12 Vanguard Learning Colleges, an initiative of the League of Innovation, which work toward placing learning first throughout their institutions. These colleges are developing and strengthening policies, programs and practices across their institutions with a focus on the five project objectives: organizational culture, staff recruitment and retention, technology, learning outcomes and under-prepared students. Lane's membership with the League of Innovation and selection as a Vanguard college provides a strong foundation for implementing diversity initiatives.

Lane is the only community college in the state with the positions of a chief diversity officer and coordinator of Ethnic Studies and is one of the few colleges in Oregon with a Diversity Council to oversee institutional diversity planning and policy efforts. For several years, Lane has played an important role in planning and organizing the annual Oregon Diversity Institute conference. Lane also has taken a leadership role in responding to the needs of a diverse population. Some examples are its Rites of Passage programs for middle and high school students of color, the American Indian Language Program, the Women in Transitions Programs offered by the Women's Program, the Associated Students of Lane Community College (ASLCC) Multicultural Committee, the building of a new Native American Longhouse, the Veterans Resource Center, and the various programming and support for student groups provided by the Multicultural Center. In addition to the services offered by Disability Services and the Affirmative Action/Diversity/Equal Opportunity in the Diversity Office, many college departments, including the President's Office, have initiated diversity efforts.

Historical Background

In 1995, the Lane Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) committee, comprised of 30 Lane students, and staff and community representatives adopted a Diversity Plan for Lane Community College. The 1995 Diversity Plan primarily focused on the four racial/ethnic groups and women. The Diversity Team was created to ensure implementation of the plan as well as to expand the area of diversity concerns to be addressed by the college. The 1995 Diversity Plan

incorporated the values of the college's Mission, Vision and Unifying Principles and identified the following areas of emphasis:

- ◆ Leadership and Commitment
- ◆ Staff Recruitment, Training and Retention
- ◆ Curriculum Development
- ◆ Student Recruitment, Retention and Campus Life
- ◆ Community Involvement

The Diversity Team formulated an Executive Committee and created sub-committees to work on specific areas of the plan. Despite the challenges in implementing the plan due to the extensive number of tasks required to complete assignments with limited resources and staff, the Diversity Team successfully accomplished the following:

- ◆ Creation of Diversity Scholarships
- ◆ "Synergy Training" for Staff on Hiring Committees
- ◆ Respectful Environment Training
- ◆ Establishment of the Ethnic Studies and Diversity Coordinator Positions
- ◆ Gender/Ethnicity/Multicultural AAOT Degree Requirement
- ◆ Minority Student Focus Groups

In 2000, President Jerry Moskus requested an update of the 1995 Diversity Plan. Out of that process, additional areas such as language and cultural competency, disabilities and serving the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and international populations were included in the updated 2003-2008 Diversity Plan.

In 2009-10, Lane's Diversity Council updated its 2003-2008 Diversity Plan and proposed the 2010-2015 Diversity Plan. This plan incorporated items from the college's Response Team Recommendation Report as well as new items focusing on diverse student and staff recruitment and retention, hiring processes, training, and student evaluations.

A Vision of Diversity for Lane

The understanding by the college of what diversity means provides the foundation for diversity initiatives on campus. Many colleges follow a vision of diversity that Frederick A. Miller identifies as the "Individual Differences Perspective". This model describes diversity as a simple understanding between different individuals and celebrating everyone's differences. The major flaw of this perspective is that it does not recognize the reality that individuals may be deterred from being fully included by systems and operational practices that favor some people at the expense of others. According to Miller, a "Social Justice Perspective" will address discrimination and oppression and meet the "isms" directly. A social justice framework will "identify the 'isms' that continue to exist, exposing where they occur, how they work and what mechanisms perpetuate them." Some examples of the "isms" are: **(1)**

- ◆ Ableism
- ◆ Ageism
- ◆ Classism
- ◆ Lingüicism
- ◆ Sexism
- ◆ Racism
- ◆ Heterosexism

At Lane, we pursue a social justice framework to guide our diversity efforts. Lane's diversity work should have an experiential-based definition, i.e. defined experientially by actions. Lane should

actively seek a healthy mix of individuals with diverse backgrounds, life experiences, approaches, skill-sets, and understandings so that we may build our capacity to produce solutions that will address the needs of a growing, diverse student population and workforce. It must be clearly understood that diversity is not simply a mirroring of demographics of the local population. Diversity is about becoming a higher performing organization, which produces outcomes that serves the needs of a diverse college population. Diversity is about being inclusive, not exclusive. Understanding that people within the college will reflect a collection of similarities and differences, diversity will gather the power of many and reflect the spirit of one. **(2) (3)**

Relation to Lane's Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Directions

The 2010-2015 Diversity Plan is central to the College mission, values, and strategic directions. Diversity is reflected in its Core Values and Strategic Direction statements:

Core Values

Diversity

- Welcome, value and promote diversity among staff, students and our community
- Cultivate a respectful, inclusive and accessible working and learning environment
- Work effectively in different cultural contexts to serve the educational and linguistic needs of a diverse community
- Develop capacity to understand issues of difference, power and privilege

Strategic Directions

A Diverse and Inclusive Learning and Working Environment

- Create a diverse and inclusive learning college
- Develop institutional capacity to respond effectively and respectfully to students, staff, and community members of all cultures, languages, classes, races, genders, ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, sexual orientations, and abilities

Context

Diversity is more than simply mirroring the demographics of the local population. Applying a social justice framework is important for creating a diverse and inclusive learning college. Welcoming and respecting students and employees with diverse backgrounds, life experiences, approaches, skill-sets, and understandings will enhance Lane's capacity to address the needs of our increasingly diverse community and workforce.

Goals

- Improve hiring and retention efforts from within communities of color for part-time and full-time positions

- Provide trainings to increase cultural competency among Lane staff
- Develop effective, ongoing, systematic processes and measurements that assess the needs and success of diverse populations at the college
- Promote a welcoming, inclusive campus climate that supports the success of Lane's diverse students and staff by implementing best practices, community defined practices, and comprehensive strategies that focus on retention

See Appendix II for Lane Community College's Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Direction statements.

Why Diversity is Important

Who Needs Diversity?

Consider the following questions:

- What are the demographics of our constituency? (e.g., age, income, gender, ethnicity, race, etc.)
- How many languages are spoken in our community?
- How frequently does inter-group conflict arise?
- Is there a high level of turnover among certain employee groups?
- Are policies and benefits attractive to potential diverse applicants?
- Are we losing top talent because people do not feel valued, included or heard?
- Are employees with diverse talent and skill sets rewarded?

According to the Diversity statement from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), diversity initiatives produce work environments that yield greater productivity and outcomes. Exploring new ways to be inclusive will lead to a better opportunity to make full use of contributions of all employees. The Society for Human Resource Management identifies a several components of diversity initiatives that go well beyond a moral or social justification. (4)

Diversity Initiatives Can Improve the Quality of the Workforce

As the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, diversity initiatives play an important role in providing a stimulus to creating an environment that will value the worth and contributions of every individual. Diversity will benefit an organization by producing more effective work groups, less conflict on the job and create a better understanding of customer service. In an environment that promotes diversity, all employees will feel valued and demonstrate greater commitment and motivation.

Communities are Even More Diverse than the Workforce

Having employees who “speak” the language, understand the needs of diverse populations and provide new ways to serve diverse communities, benefit the organization. Few institutions can expect to access diverse communities without recruiting and retaining a staff that reflects the diversity of the population.

Recognized Diversity Initiatives and Diversity Results Will Attract the Best and Brightest Employees to an Organization

Crucial to the success of an organization is the ability to recruit and retain talented potential employees who possess diverse skill sets. Such potential candidates will demonstrate more interest in organizations that shows a commitment to developing, promoting and valuing diversity initiatives.

Increased Creativity

In a diverse organization, a diverse workforce can bring different perspectives, ideas and solutions, as well as provide new challenges to accepted views. By viewing a diverse workforce as a resource, a dynamic synergy will emerge, which in turn, provide opportunities for enhancing the organization.

Flexibility Ensures Survival

The organization, and its employees, must have the ability to learn how to respond to changing environments. Employees must learn to adapt to new situations and be able to learn from people different than ourselves.