

BACKGROUND

Over 60 years, the University of Illinois has committed itself to broadening the diversity of its students, faculty and staff and to education and scholarship that promotes a democratic society. The University, its faculty and administrators have continually enhanced and renewed this commitment through a variety of initiatives from the founding of the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services on 1948, the era of Project 500 (the Special Educational Opportunities Program), which grew out of the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s, the institution of racialized communities/ethnic studies units a Gender and Women's Studies programs in the in the decades following; campus-wide initiatives promoting diversity in 2000 and 2008, to Chancellor Phyllis Wise's current commitment to diversity as one of her own goals for the coming year, to name just a few. While these and other efforts have yielded many important advances in diversity and inclusion, their repeated reassertion also underlines the extent to which the institution's commitment to and realization of diversity goals remain incomplete. One missing element is a publicly affirmed statement of the significance of diversity as part of the institution's missions that can simultaneously showcase, mobilize and help to coordinate many valuable but insufficiently synchronized efforts to embed diversity in the goals of our teaching, research and service missions.

With this concern in mind, Helen Neville, Professor of Educational Psychology and African American Studies undertook to draft a diversity value statement for the campus as part of her work on diversity initiatives during her year as Provost Fellow, 2011-2012. Professor Neville was co-chair, with Feniosky Peña-Mora, of the Project 2012: Transforming Illinois initiative during 2006-07, which produced a strategic planning document that outlined goals for advancing diversity in critical areas of campus environment, education, representation, scholarship and public engagement. Her draft diversity value statement drew on these objectives and provides one way of renewing University commitment to them. Professor Neville also modeled her draft statement on existing statements adopted by comparable Institutions such as the University of California and the University of Michigan. She consulted with and incorporated feedback from Chancellor, selected deans and other administrators, faculty, and staff, including members of the Academic Senate's Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Committee, who met with her twice last year.

Professor Neville has now completed the final draft of her proposed diversity values statement, and Chancellor Wise has indicated her eagerness to adopt and publicize the statement as part of what directs campus missions. In its final round of discussions with Professor Neville and Associate Chancellor Menah Pratt-Clarke, the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Committee determined that a resolution affirming the Academic Senate's endorsement of the diversity values statement should precede and support its public announcement. The Equal Opportunity and Inclusion recognizes that promoting such an endorsement is in line with its mandate to "develop guidelines and programs promoting an equitable and welcoming campus environment for members of any underrepresented, historically disadvantaged, or marginalized groups," "evaluate continually the equal opportunity posture of the campus," and "communicate and cooperate with other University offices and committees" established to work on these objectives. Furthermore, the committee recognizes the objectives laid out in the diversity statement as commitments only meaningful if undertaken and realized at every level and unit of the University, a project the Academic Senate is centrally positioned to support. With this in mind, the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Committee proposes the attached resolution endorsing the Diversity Values statement and committing the Senate to further efforts to define and pursue programs of action that will meaningfully implement the values and goals it proposes.

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE**

Prefiled Resolution
(Final; Action)

EQ.13.01 Resolution on Diversity Values Statement

WHEREAS, The Senate and its Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Committee are mandated to promote an equitable and welcoming campus environment for members of any underrepresented, historically disadvantaged or marginalized groups, and

WHEREAS, The Chancellor has recently affirmed the importance of diversity as a central goal of her office and signaled her intention to embrace the Diversity Values statement drafted by Prof. Helen Neville in her role as Provost Fellow as part of campus policy and publicity, and

WHEREAS, The realization of the goals and values of the Diversity Values Statement can most effectively be realized through the commitment of every level and unit of the University, which the Academic Senate is positioned to promote and support;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Academic Senate endorses the Diversity Values Statement drafted by Professor Helen Neville, as follows:

DIVERSITY VALUES STATEMENT

As the state's premier public university, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's core mission is to serve the interests of the diverse people of the state of Illinois and beyond. The institution thus values inclusion and a pluralistic learning and research environment, one which we respect the varied perspectives and lived experiences of a diverse community and global workforce. We support diversity of worldviews, histories, and cultural knowledge across a range of social groups including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities, economic class, religion, and their intersections.

Ensuring access to the Illinois experience and committing to recruiting a full representation of the state's diverse populace in terms of students, faculty, staff, and administrators allows the University to respond to the needs of contemporary society. At the same time it demonstrates the importance of diversity to strengthen excellence and innovation. Diversity is strength, and with it comes excellence! Research indicates that people from diverse backgrounds working together identify more creative solutions to problems than people working in more homogenous groups. Thus, increased diversity encourages everyone on campus to think in more creative and innovative ways. This in turn enhances several important functions of the campus, including the production of ground-breaking research designed to address pressing societal needs and the training of future leaders to effectively work within increasingly diverse and global settings.

Our commitment to diversity means

- we demonstrate our values and appreciation of the perspectives and contributions of the wide spectrum of people reflected in our community;
- we support curricular, interdisciplinary, and co-curricular learning environments that expose students to multiple perspectives including the histories and contributions of groups across social and economic identities; and

- we provide opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and administrators to establish meaningful relationships across differences and we actively encourage the campus community to participate in programming and events to create, develop and sustain those relationships.

As such, we aspire to create a truly pluralistic environment, free of barriers associated with identity, in our pursuit of academic and scholarly excellence.

AND

BE IT RESOLVED that the Academic Senate commits itself to following up this endorsement with resolutions recommending specific processes for implementation of the Diversity Value Statement's goals,

AND

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Senate add to the charge of its Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Committee the tasks to monitor these diversity implementations on the UIUC campus and that it report to the Senate on the University's diversity status.

Senate Committee on Equal Opportunity and Inclusion

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