

February 28, 2017

Adela de la Torre

Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs and Campus Diversity

RE: Feedback on Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

Dear Vice Chancellor de la Torre:

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan was forwarded to all standing committees of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate. Twelve committees responded: Affirmative Action and Diversity (AA&D), Academic Personnel Oversight (CAP), International Education (CIE), Faculty Welfare, Graduate Council, Public Service (PSC), Research (COR), Undergraduate Council (UGC), and the Faculty Executive Committees (FEC) of the College of Engineering, College of Letters and Science, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, and the School of Nursing. The UC Davis Academic Federation also provided feedback.

Our response is divided into four sections: implementing the strategic plan; definition of faculty; content of the strategic plan; and a conclusion with recommendations. As we cannot cover in-depth each piece of committee feedback, we strongly encourage the authors and individuals involved with the Strategic Plan to read committee responses in their entirety. They are enclosed.

Fundamental concerns with the absence of clear priorities and implementation strategies*“There is the danger of casting too wide a net.” – Committee on Public Service*

Committees appreciate the comprehensiveness of the plan’s ideas and high-level visions, and consider diversity and inclusion to be fundamental UC Davis values. However, considering the plan is supposed to be “both aspirational and *operational*,” and “broad enough to encompass the range of what we do yet *specific enough to inspire real action* [emphases added],” committees feel the plan’s broadness in ideas far surpasses its planning and efforts, as currently outlined, to achieve those ideas. “Many similar past recommendations to the administration from the faculty have never been implemented,” writes AA&D in regards to the content of the plan. “The devil lies in the details of commitment of material resources, not simply a statement of intent.”

“In some places,” writes UGC, the plan “does serve the valuable purpose of assembling information on the various campus units, initiatives and projects addressing diversity. The [plan] needs an improved concise statement of where we are, and where we want to be.” Similarly, AA&D “strongly [feels] that the strategic plan contains no specific details for implementation nor has it identified funding sources,” and the FEC of L&S suggests that the plan “would benefit from the inclusion of concrete examples of ‘measureable action plans’ for promoting diversity as well as more clarity on the source(s) and allocation of budgetary incentives.” The Academic Federation, Faculty Welfare, CIE, PSC, and COR also expressed concerns about implementation. As a suggestion for narrowing focus, COR recommends that the plan “provide a list of the top 5-10 recommendations that will be aggressively pursued (out of the many provided) in the next 3-5 years,” and the plan should “indicate which of the recommendations will be required and which will be encouraged.”

Committees appreciate the data presented in the appendix and the intention behind developing a diversity analytics framework. However, the Davis Division wonders why, as noted on page 22, an “in-depth

analysis of analytics” is an “important component of *implementation phases* [emphasis added], in which...campus diversity leaders will begin to set benchmarks and goals”? Why weren’t benchmarks and goals set in the Strategic Plan itself? The Davis Division understands that we were asked to vet the “Strategic” Plan prior to the creation of an “Implementation” Plan. Yet, the two seem inseparable, as the feasibility of implementation should help determine, from the outset, which ideas and goals are worth brainstorming and including in a strategic plan.

As such, the Strategic Plan, as currently written, is not a plan—it is a long list of ideas. How can the campus plan the implementation of diversity and inclusion goals when there are, as of now, no measurable goals to implement? How do we move forward when there is neither a clear point A at which to start nor a clear point B at which to arrive?

Several committees also expressed concern that the plan’s eventual implementation might cause excessive work to fall on faculty’s shoulders. As PSC notes, “The current plan seems to have offices to provide guidance, but not help do the work or alleviate other tasks demanding faculty time. Implementation seems to require faculty to perform another large role. Tackling this issue is important, as only so much can be achieved by an already over-taxed faculty.” COR concurs: “Any further proposed training or other requirements for faculty should be considered quite carefully; demands on faculty time are growing every year and faculty indicate they do not have enough time for their research.” The Davis Division requests that the scope of faculty time be clearly outlined in the Strategic/Implementation plan, whatever its final form.

In short, the Davis Division feels there is nothing to concretely “implement” from this Strategic Plan. If there is, it is not communicated clearly. The plan’s goals, as currently stated, are thematic, high-level visions and ideas, not actionable goals. We strongly recommend that the plan be revised to contain clear, focused, actionable goals. Plans to implement these goals should be included in the Strategic Plan itself.

Finally, as a point of best practice, the Davis Division feels that the strategic plan should not require a page called “How to Read and Use This Plan” (see page 8). An inclusion of such a page means the plan is too broad and dense. Overall, the plan should be rewritten to be clear and succinct enough for all campus constituents to quickly and easily understand.

Definition of Faculty

“There is a critical need to accurately assess and increase the diversity of faculty, which includes our traditional definitions of senate and many federation faculty positions. The term faculty must first be redefined to include all positions that serve in an instructional capacity for students, while also acknowledging those who may not have direct instructional roles but still have an impact on learning, research and service outcomes.” – p. 11, Strategic Plan

This proposed redefinition violates the definition of “faculty” in APM 110. CIE and UGC expressed concern about the vagueness and intention of this statement. UGC believes the redefinition is unwarranted, and asks, “Is redefinition necessary, appropriate, or significant to the strategic plan? An alternative: ‘We continue to hire excellent faculty members to achieve diversity reflective of the state.’ Conflating achieving diversity with redefining ‘faculty’ dilutes priorities, message, and tasking.”

The Davis Division would appreciate clarity on the intention behind redefining the term “faculty.” Why is this considered important to the Strategic Plan, and what does it actually mean?

Comments on the Content of the Strategic Plan

Below are specific committee comments we wish to highlight. Again, we strongly encourage the authors of the plan to read committee comments in their entirety.

- *Affirmative Action and Diversity:*
 - “We believe the priorities of the strategic plan are very good, but the order of priorities needs to be reversed. The committee suggests placing goal number three (‘Advance a climate that fosters inclusion excellence’) as the primary goal so that once we attract students and faculty from historically underrepresented groups, we are more likely to retain them. We recommend that the attraction and retention of historically underrepresented minority faculty and staff be the second goals of the strategic plan. With these two goals accomplished, we would then create the necessary environment for retaining the diverse students we attract to campus.”
- *Academic Personnel Oversight:*
 - “Objective B.i on page 12 reads, ‘Enforce consistent use of diversity statements for hiring and promotion decisions across campus and systemwide.’ CAP recommends that ‘Enforce’ be changed to ‘Encourage.’ Diversity statements are not currently a required component of faculty merit/promotion dossiers: to make them so would require changes to the UCD and perhaps systemwide APM.”
- *Faculty Executive Committee of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences:*
 - “Two items: [1] The metrics for encouraging/rewarding engagement of faculty and departments are not adequately developed. [2] In certain places (for example, ‘Diversity Analytics Framework’) but perhaps others, the term undergraduate, but not graduate or professional students is used, when all should be included.”
- *Faculty Executive Committee of the School of Nursing:*
 - “There appears to be an inherent assumption in the strategic plan that diversity can be achieved primarily through efforts that address the academic preparation of students who are academically disadvantaged. While that is certainly an important piece of this puzzle, we must also address all of the factors that are barriers to diversity in its broadest sense. So what strategies will help attract diversity with respect to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, rural areas, etc.?”
- *Faculty Welfare:*
 - “FWC suggests that the Plan include a set of pathways for hearing and managing negative experiences with respect to Diversity and Inclusion. Such pathways could provide courses of action that would enable our institution to grow and move forward when it falls short.”
- *Graduate Council:*
 - “Under ‘Students’ [p.24], answering the following question is identified as a strategic priority: ‘Where are underrepresented or disadvantaged undergraduate students falling out of the pipeline to graduation?’ We suggest broadening this strategic priority to include disadvantaged graduate and professional student communities as well. Specifically: ‘Where are underrepresented or disadvantaged graduate or professional students falling out of the pipeline to completion of their degree?’”
 - “Are there specific objectives or recommendations for addressing the challenges and opportunities for improvement for international students?”

Conclusion

While we respect the Strategic Plan’s attempt at creating a comprehensive framework that addresses the various issues of diversity and inclusion on campus (even with gaps in the content as noted by committees above), there is general agreement that prioritization and concrete implementation plans must be linked to the Strategic Plan in order for it to be a useful reference point. To leverage the intent of this plan, it needs to incorporate focused, actionable goals. We support the aspirational quality of the plan and are not

advocating for it to be reduced to a series of small, quick-fix measures. However, we would like to see the Strategic Plan become a real framework for meaningful and substantive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachael E. Goodhue".

Rachael E. Goodhue
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Professor and Chair, Agricultural and Resource Economics

Enclosed: Davis Division Committee Responses

- c: Emily Prieto-Tseregounis, Assistant Vice Chancellor and Chief of Staff, Student Affairs
- Rich Shintaku, Director, Diversity and Inclusion, Student Affairs
- Brittany Derieg, Assistant Director, Student Affairs
- Edwin M. Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division of the Academic Senate