

UIC Diversity Strategic Thinking Process Framework for Colleges

INTRODUCTION

UIC will spend 2009 engaged in Diversity Strategic Thinking and Planning at both the campus-level and within colleges and administrative units. The DSTP process has been initiated so that we might collectively evaluate our activities and achievements, consider opportunities and priorities, and establish goals through which diversity is made a distinguishing characteristic of UIC.

The DSTP process will occur in two stages: Diversity Strategic Thinking and Diversity Strategic Planning. Colleges and administrative units will assemble diversity committees. Committees will meet during the spring and summer to complete the Diversity Strategic Thinking exercise and work collaboratively with the campus-level DSTP Committee to share information. Their work will provide the foundation for stage two of the process in which college/unit and campus Diversity Strategic Plans are developed.

DSTP NOTEBOOK

Thinking and planning activities for both the campus-level DSTP Committee and college/unit committees have been outlined in a DSTP timeline. The timeline is located in Section One of this notebook which has been assembled to frame Diversity Strategic Thinking within your college. As the year progresses, additional information will be distributed for inclusion in the notebook to guide Diversity Strategic Planning activities.

At present the notebook provides information on which your diversity committee can reflect upon and eventually respond to, including a set of guiding questions designed to initiate conversations about how your college interprets, accomplishes, assesses, and perhaps most importantly uses diversity. The guiding questions are attached. In considering answers to these questions, your diversity committee will find it useful to revisit the college's strategic plan (see DSTP Notebook Section Four). The committee may also want to review the descriptions of working group topics and discussion notes from the 2008 Leadership Retreat which focused on diversity at UIC – see <http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/oa/leadership/breakouts08.html>.

For diversity to truly be a cornerstone of the educational, scholarly, and professional activities of UIC, we must do more than increase the numbers of historically underrepresented populations. We must think broadly about the benefits diversity provides and develop strategies to insure a campus climate that encourages the success of all faculty, staff, and students. We must also reconsider how data can be used to identify issues, challenges, and opportunities upon which to focus our efforts and assess our progress. As such the notebook includes a sampling of data about the college's current diversity representation. The data presented are not comprehensive. The selected tables and charts were compiled to generate discussion and demonstrate how disaggregated data can be informative, particularly about how our students, faculty, and staff experience UIC.

COLLEGE THINKING ACTIVITIES & DELIVERABLES

Over the next few months, college and unit diversity committees will complete a Diversity Strategic Thinking exercise and share their initial reflections in writing and in meetings with the campus-level DSTP Committee. Specifically your college diversity committee is asked to:

- Review the committee's charge and responsibilities
- Consider expected outcomes of the DSTP process
- Revisit the college's mission and Strategic Plan
- Review the data presented in the DSTP Notebook
- Answer the set of guiding questions
- Outline preliminary goals
- Develop an initial report of the committee's activities and reflections

The initial report will be submitted to the campus in early April 2009. It need only be a few pages in length and should include: (1) preliminary comments on the data presented in the DSTP notebook and suggestions for what additional data might benefit the diversity work of the college, as it is anticipated that similar data will be produced annually to aid colleges/units in assessing progress towards their diversity goals; (2) initial responses to the Diversity Strategic Thinking questions; and (3) a summary of additional issues and questions that arise from your work. The initial report will also serve as a focal point for meetings with DSTP Committee teams in late April, May, and June and will assist them in their efforts to draft a campus-level Diversity Strategic Thinking document.

At the conclusion of the Diversity Strategic Thinking stage in late summer, colleges and units will draft formal documents outlining their diversity philosophies, current activities, and future priorities. Diversity Strategic Thinking documents will be submitted to the campus on August 1, 2009. The Diversity Strategic Thinking outcomes will guide colleges and units in more fully integrating diversity in their current Strategic Plans, so the plans specify diversity goals, steps for attaining them, and mechanisms to assess progress towards achieving them. The final Strategic Plans will be submitted and published in January 2010.

DIVERSITY STRATEGIC THINKING: GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR COLLEGES

1. What is diversity to your college?
 - a. How does the college define diversity?
 - b. How does diversity intersect with the college's core mission?
 - c. What are the college's current diversity aims?
 - d. What were the factors that contributed to the development of these aims?

2. What is currently being done to achieve the college's diversity aims?
 - a. What programs or policies currently address the college's diversity aims?
 - i. College level
 - ii. Campus level
 - iii. How are these activities currently coordinated within and between colleges/administrative units?
 - b. How are the college's diversity efforts currently supported?
 - i. Monetary
 - ii. People
 - iii. Space
 - iv. Programming
 - v. Others
 - c. What are the challenges to achieving the college's diversity aims?
 - d. How do you envision this might change in the future?

3. How is each of your departments, institutes, and/or centers contributing to efforts to achieve the college's diversity aims?
 - a. How do you envision this might change in the future?

4. How do you currently assess the effectiveness of the college's diversity efforts?
 - a. How would you envision assessment developing in the future?