

Report to the Campus Diversity Advisory Council: Chairman Shawn Larry

San Diego Mesa College Diversity Committee

March 5th, 2013

The Campus Diversity Advisory Council has requested the Diversity Committee at each college to report on a plan to address deficiencies in the Cultural Climate Survey, administered in 2010. This report is in response to that request.

Purpose of the Survey: The purpose of this survey project is to collect evidence for the four SDCCD institutions (City College, Mesa College, Miramar College, and Continuing Education) and District Office on the current climate as it relates to diversity, equity, cultural competency, and the general work environment. The faculty, staff, and administrators were surveyed to elicit their perceptions and opinions on cultural climate. The information may be used to make changes in policies and procedures, and to implement strategies for improving the campus environment.

The Cultural Climate Survey, administered in 2010 had a very low response rate at Mesa College. Only 23% of the faculty, staff and administration answered the survey. Of the 1,260 employees at Mesa who received the invitation to survey, 285 employees responded. Of those who responded:

63% of the respondents were White Non-Hispanic: 14% of actual sample.

15% were Hispanic/Latino: 3.41 % of the actual sample.

8% were Asian/Pacific Islander: 1.82% of actual sample.

10% were either African American/Black Non Hispanic/ non Filipino: 2.2% of actual sample.

(5% each), 3% were Other Non-White, and 1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native: 0.39% of the actual sample.

The low response concerned the Committee. We discussed the results and concluded we could not make statistical determinations due to the low response rate. In addition, the qualitative data showed possible reasons for the low response

rate. After analysis of the low response rate and the answers from the qualitative portion of the survey, the committee made several conclusions:

1. There was a need for more education regarding diversity at Mesa College.
2. Mesa College employees do not seem to understand what diversity training is and why it is needed at Mesa College.
3. It does not appear that our employees are aware of the impact of insensitivity regarding diversity that affects the campus climate.

In response to the survey findings, the committee took the following actions:

The Committee asked President Luster to assist us in providing training for faculty, staff and administration. She dedicated President's Spring Forum 2012 to a 2 hour Diversity training. President Luster also provided funding for a trainer, Dr. Steven Jones. Dr. Jones is an internationally renowned diversity trainer and author. Pre and post tests for the training showed faculty and staff were interested in more in depth training experiences.

The committee provided three follow up trainings to the campus community in spring 2012 in response to this request:

March 8th, 2012 from 2-4pm:

- A. Academic Journey to Excellence Part II: How to utilize the book, "Journey to Excellence in your department or classroom; 3 flex credits. Participants must read the book," Journey to Excellence prior to training. 2 hour training.

March 29th from 2-4pm:

- B. Academic Journey to Excellence Part III: Racism and Sexism: 2 flex credits with an additional credit given for implementation of training materials in the classroom and administration of a brief pre/posttest. (2 hour training)

April 12th 2-4pm;

- C. Academic Journey to Excellence Part IV: Sexual Identity and Physical Challenges: 2 flex credits with an additional credit given for implementation of training materials in the classroom and administration of a brief pre/posttest. (2 hour training).

These follow up sessions were poorly attended, indicative of the poor response rate on the survey. The committee discussed this and concluded:

- We need more education regarding diversity training and why it is important, and more departmental support.
- We would benefit from collaborative work with other committees when planning educational activities to promote understanding the need for diversity training. This would increase our outreach and hopefully increase attendance.

In response to the follow up trainings and the poor attendance, the committee took the following actions:

- We decided to compose a Diversity Declaration, and create a video message as our statement to the campus community regarding the views of the committee on diversity. Please see attached copy of the Diversity Declaration. The Committee worked during Fall 2012 to edit this document for filming. Filming began in January 2012, and will continue through Spring 2013.
- The Committee continued to promote cultural events and educational opportunities on the website. Examples of these events for Spring 2013:

“The Bluest Eye” A play focusing on a child’s damaged self-esteem due to the psychological and societal focus on Eurocentric values, and the effects of racism and sexism.

“Gang Girls” Documentary and Discussion: This documentary highlighted issues of a young lesbian woman who finds acceptance in a gang as she works to deal with her sexual identity. Also highlights family struggles, mother daughter issues and why gangs are attractive to inner city youth.

The annual, “Tents of Truth”: This event, a favorite at Mesa College helps students, faculty, staff and administration to “walk in the shoes” of those who are diverse. Special “tents” teach us about the experiences of students of color, LGBTQ students, and immigrant students struggling with English, the horrors of the international border and to see what happens when we do not look at the history of discrimination and critically review how we can prevent atrocities.

- We again looked at the Eurocentric curriculum, and how infusion of diverse themes and educational materials could positively impact instructors, support personnel and students as they collectively learned about academic and social contributions of diverse cultures. This would also enrich the delivery and relevancy of education at Mesa College in a global and inclusive way.

Categories:

Climate and Intergroup Relations- This domain looks at the intergroup relations among all faculty, staff, and students that contribute to a positive cultural climate. In particular, it examines a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity within a welcoming campus climate.

The Committee continues to question the low response rate as a number that does not appear indicative of the intergroup relations among faculty, staff and students. Mesa College has made some positive gains in providing resources for understanding diversity and welcoming diverse groups on campus. However, the ambivalence of response to many items in this category and the qualitative data gave rise to critical thinking on how we can improve honest open dialogue on campus. The Committee feels that the ambivalence may represent several possible conclusions:

1. Confidentiality: The survey was given by email, which would identify the employee completing the survey. Employees may not want to respond to a survey when they can be identified as the respondent.
2. We suspect that if an employee has not responded directly about negative experiences, the assumption is that there were no negative experiences or lack of sensitivity.
3. Respondents to the survey may not be aware of the need for more sensitivity in communications with students, or the disenfranchised feeling that many students of color experience on our campus. We do not feel that respondents are always aware of their lack of sensitivity, or the feelings of students. More experiential education focused on racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and disabilities is needed for faculty. Offering double flex credit for attendance at the Tents of Truth or other diversity trainings could be helpful in this regard. More education, training and exposure to diversity would be beneficial at Mesa College.

Examples of ambivalence in responses that gave the Committee cause for concern:

Learning environments are designed to promote multiple ways of learning and student diversity appreciation is promoted through teaching and curriculum.” Response to this item: 36% on average neither agreed nor disagreed. Perhaps the respondents did not understand what they were being asked.

Overall, students are educated for the realities of today's increasingly diverse society: 23% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Building capacity for diversity is continually supported: 40% neither agreed nor disagreed

Communication regarding diversity effort is shared across the campus
Items 10g-10h): Almost two-thirds of survey respondents (64% on average) felt that communication regarding diversity efforts is shared across the campus, while one-quarter (25% average) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Interpretation by Institutional Research on items 10g-10h: Campus-wide communication regarding diversity efforts is largely facilitated through the Mesa Diversity Committee website. *These results suggest that Mesa may have communication mechanisms in place to inform personnel about diversity-related programs and activities but that it may not be as widespread as it could be.*

Committee Recommendation to address deficiencies:

The Committee feels that it is very difficult to access the Diversity Committee website from the main district menu. Easier access to the Diversity Website would be a beneficial way to expose our campus community to the opportunities for educational experiences.

Examples of qualitative data that gave us cause to reflect critically on our campus climate and intergroup relations are copied below:

Q1. Please comment on one area of cultural climate you believe Mesa College supports very well.

“Promoting all cultures other than non-Hispanic whites.”

“The campus supports films and events that engage students in conversations about diversity. That is good. The faculty doesn’t attend. Make the faculty use some of their flex hours on diversity training and designate some of the films and events as "diversity training". You've got it all here--you need to use what you already have. When our current students grow up and become faculty and we grow old and retire, we will have a campus that embraces diversity. Until then, you will have to obliterate the union entitlement before anything changes with respect to embracing diversity.”

“This campus supports ANYTHING that is anti white extremely well.”

“I think gay students feel quite comfortable here.”

“No areas are supported very well; however I find more sensitivity towards sexual preference than I do towards older faculty women or DSPS students.”

“All students, regardless of creed, color, and ethnicity are encouraged to use the cafeteria area to express their beliefs and opinions.”

“The method of performance evaluation of faculty does not include multiple measures, successful student learning outcomes and instead focuses on subjective, contextual opinions. I have never been so disrespected in my entire career. While I do not think this is intentional, the fact remains that adequate evaluative processes are not in place.”

Q2. Please comment on one area of cultural climate you believe Mesa College needs to improve:

“The campus leadership is clearly committed to diversity. However, there are individuals who are part of the staff that are not and would benefit from mandatory diversity awareness workshops/events.”

“It seems that "diversity" means encouraging one side only and disparaging the other. I am politically and socially conservative and wouldn't dream of expressing my ideas..... I've seen what happens to those who do.”

“There is very little done on campus to integrate the diverse groups and to really promote communication and celebration of diversity. Tolerance is not enough, public show is not enough.”

“Faculty is entitled to see the classroom as their private domain. When students enter the classroom they should know that this is their space to learn and grow. Since many faculty either don't know how to stop being racist or don't care, they continually insult students. Students are afraid to say anything. The whole secrecy thing with student complaints needs to come out into the open. We need to mandate faculty responsibility and accountability for embracing diversity in the classroom. We need new faculty and brave faculty to do that.”

“Racism is a problem on this campus and needs to be addressed. I have experience it firsthand many times.”

“Department chairs need more support when evaluating and disciplining horrible tenure-track instructors who are taking advantage of the system.”

“I have noticed some distrust of Muslim students.”

“Institutional racism: Why Latino and African-American students are more likely to place low on writing placement tests (which include no actual writing) and why are we most likely to lose them? Why are they sent through up to 4 Basic English courses before they get to a course that matters? Some call these courses "gatekeeper courses." Something's wrong and it needs serious attention.”

Committee Interpretation of Qualitative data for questions 1. and 2. :

Problems still exist at Mesa College. Racism is still an issue. The majority of administration has been very supportive of education regarding diversity. Committee has the following recommendations based low response rate and qualitative data it is evident that problems still exist on our campus.

Ideas for remedial action:

1. Student Survey of Cultural Climate is necessary for a comprehensive analysis of diversity issues and how our students see faculty needs for

more education and training, as well as how they experience the efforts on campus to promote diversity. Understanding student needs will augment our ability to improve SLO's

2. An anonymous way to administer survey questions, taking the political factor out of the equation would allow us to have a more honest open dialogue about deficiencies. It appears there may be fear of answering questions that will not be looked upon favorably by departmental leadership that could affect career movement.

Actions taken by the committee to remedy deficiencies:

1. We discussed with student leaders their views from the Cultural Advisory Council and student clubs to assist in writing the Diversity Declaration, and the need for curriculum reform.
2. Collaborative discussions with other committees to address global issues.
3. Promotion and attendance at the African American Latino Male Leadership Summit: the Diversity Committee would like to see this summit include students from Mesa College.
4. Plans to co-sponsor events with the Global Awareness Committee and the Asian Pacific Island Heritage Committee.
5. Promotion of community educational events that will assist our students in positive identity formation and self-esteem building.

Education and Scholarship-This domain involves educating all students and employees for the realities of today's increasingly diverse society and global community. In particular, a curriculum that is supportive of diversity goals through learning opportunities for students and professional development for faculty/staff. The results for the themes in this domain include:

Diverse perspectives are respected-Learning environments are designed to promote multiple ways of learning and student diversity appreciation is promoted through teaching and curriculum.

In our work at Mesa College, totaling 80+ years of collective experience in different disciplines, the committee members have noted that curriculum reform is slow to come and overdue for students of color and minority students. Among Committee members we have clinical staff from Student Health Services, an Academic Counselor, a Black Studies

Professor, Art History Professor, classified personnel and an administrator.

All members of the committee have discussed the importance of relevant and inclusive curriculum. The committee feels that our curriculum is outdated and does not support our changing demographics. Student Leaders on the Cultural Advisory Council, MECHA, Black Student Union, Muslim Student Association, Women's Empowerment Union, BEAT Club, DSPS students, as well as the Humanities Institute and the Asian Pacific Island Heritage Committee have voiced the same opinions. The Committee has been discussing a webinar that will help departments to integrate diverse themes into the existing curriculum. Education is needed as curriculum has been taught in one way for many years, and faculty may not realize how easy it would be to infuse curriculum with diverse themes.

As we examine the need for more education and awareness on campus of diversity issues and different cultural perspectives, we have partnered with other academic committees. Our collaborative work with the Asian Pacific Island Heritage Committee and the Global Awareness Committee have identified the need for curriculum that is representative of our current student body, and needs more representation of global history, music, art, cultural norms and role models.

The Tents of Truth were designed as a way to educate the campus community on the reality of discrimination, and to promote awareness and empathy by "walking in their shoes".

Actions by the Committee to remedy the deficiencies:

1. Discussion of producing a Webinar that will assist departments and faculty in integrating diverse and relevant themes into existing curriculum.
2. Collaboration with Asian Pacific Island Heritage Committee: Their mission statement, formed 20 years ago calls for curriculum reform and infusion of curriculum with diverse themes to motivate student learning and boost student learning outcome. Empowering all students to see their ethnicity honored in global contributions to academia and the arts is key in positive identity formation and student learning outcome.

3. Participation in the Tents of Truth: Committee members Starla Lewis and Judy Sundayo have been involved with this event since its inception in 2009. Co- Chair Sue Shrader-Hanes is the founder of this event, now celebrating its 5th year. *The Committee feels these types of educational opportunities, offered as flex to all faculty should be given incentive by the administration to attend with their classes and to experience as an aid to understanding our diverse campus climate. Committee would like administration to offer double flex credit or other incentives to faculty that experience the “Tents of Truth” and other diversity related trainings and educational experiences.*