

Biltmore Park Campus Conversation  
All Topics Covered  
Tuesday, November 3, 2015  
3:00-5:00pm

Discussion made up of: Nursing, counseling, educational leadership faculty, Biltmore Park staff (including nursing staff), and graduate research

### **Topic 1: Campus Diversity**

- What would diversity look like if we had it?
  - “Everyone in this room/Not this room” from two different individuals almost simultaneously (laughter)
  - Diversity should not be defined as race, which is negligent considering our communities that we live in and work in. If we only look at race, then we are essentially saying that we want to change WNC. That we want WNC to have a larger racial makeup than what we have. Diversity should first be defined and then define how those issues correlate to the university as a whole. What about first generation college students/college faculty? Are those looked to as diversity? No. The accreditation only defined diversity as race. That’s being negligent of the communities we live in.
  - Qualification: gender is definitely an issue. Age, gender, LGBTQ, many other things to look at. It is definitely much broader than race and that should be considered when we do define diversity for the university.
  - Diversity with Cherokee. We know in counseling that many [diverse peoples] do not seek counseling in the traditional route, so how do we bring them in? I don’t know if working with focus groups and figuring out what people’s needs are and if that should be done university-wide or just for counseling. But definitely working with what is naturally here and instead of chasing diverse students and faculty who will get better pay and resources and assistance from other universities.
  - We have had diversity from first-generation college students at Western for over 50 years.
  - There is a changing face of our community. Research shows that there will be more black American students who are entering college and fewer white American students moving forward. One stereotypical trend that we have seen is that white American students will tend to travel farther to go to school. African American and Latin students are more likely to go to a college right in their own community. One thing that we are looking at moving forward is how do we become the school that individuals from the Triangle, Triad, and Charlotte area want to come to, knowing that they’re going to have to travel farther away from home and there are schools in their own areas that will cater to them.
  - Increase money for graduate assistantships? Scholarships?
  - There are more opportunities in urban areas over more rural areas. So there will probably be more to overcome than just the distance to come to our little mountain town.
  - We need to look like our community does. We can’t fix all of WNC, but we can have our student body mirror our community and have the same makeup, as our faculty does as well. We want to recruit people from different backgrounds while still acting legally (from

an HR perspective). Having a more diverse faculty will help to attract more diverse students. I'm not going to go to a place that doesn't "look" like me because they may not accept me. I want these three things to broach together, but I am unsure how to make that happen.

- So having a more diverse faculty and staff to attract a more diverse student population that reflects the community in which we live and work.
  - I want to be in a place that has a diversity of ideas as well. Not just the people themselves, but the ideas they have and their beliefs and ideas. To me, that's what being a university is all about. How can we be sure to have diversity in thought?
  - Perhaps we could market differently to appeal to more diverse faculty to want to come to our university?
  - Maybe we could do some sort of cultural awareness? For different cultural experiences? Learning more about different cultures, or even subsets of our existing culture, will help us to be more able to understand their educational and career aspirations and attitudes.
  - We could have more community engagement. And being more serious to the communities that we do reach out to.
  - If WCU even just had cultural diversity in campus events, people who belong to those cultures would feel more willing to come here and feel more accepted and appreciated when they are here. However, if we don't have any people with that "cultural expertise" we won't be able to know about their cultural celebrations and how to make them feel more accepted. It may mean that we have to connect with community organizations that already have those skillsets and get some assistance on setting these events up.
  - That will also highlight that we have a diverse vision even if we do not look like we're diverse.
  - We could invite people from the community to develop this vision and these events. If we plan different events for the subsets of our community outlined in our definition of diversity, we could invite community members associated with that subset to help plan our events. These could be debates or discussions that may be uncomfortable for us, but that we might need to hear.
  - Have more diverse internships/Graduate assistantships/abroad opportunities? Have free Rosetta Stone (foreign language training) available to students and professors? Things to help foster diversity of thought amongst our students and faculty. Things that require resources.
- What are our true goals? How do we create a tangible plan with metrics for success? How is success defined? Are we only looking to increase our favorability with the accreditation board? I don't think so.
    - Benchmarking, goal setting.
    - How do you put "diversity of thought" into a checkbox to check off?
    - It keeps coming back to resources. What are our resources?
    - How do we share our successes? Demographics have already changed. But why? How? What have we've done that has caused this happen? How can we continue it? How can we let everyone know what we have done or already do to address diversity?
    - Cultural Affairs has collected information on speakers and cross-cultural events/representation, but I do not know what has happened to it.