



Faculty Forum

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The Council on Diversity and Inclusion Henry D. Wong

Diversity means differences. These differences go beyond the covered groups of the Civil Rights Act like race, gender, religion, disability, and others. It also includes how we think and the expression of our being.

Research suggests that recognizing and valuing diversity has the potential to enhance employee satisfaction, competitive business advantage, innovation, problem-solving, and best practices in the workplace. Inclusion and diversity efforts by higher education have implications for achieving excellence in learning, teaching, research, student development, and community engagement.

The Council on Diversity and Inclusion (CODI) established in 2011 addresses the UNC Tomorrow Phase II Report. The purpose of the CODI is to develop a campus-wide diversity plan and suggest recommendations for diversity initiatives congruent with the 2020 Vision: Focusing Our Future.

To ensure campus-wide representation of the five divisions and colleges, council members were recommended by their respective Deans (See <http://www.wcu.edu/26030.asp> for an inclusion video and biographies of council members). The diversity plan that has been developed to date includes the following:

Vision – Western Carolina University is committed to being a diverse and inclusive learning environment where students, faculty, and staff aspire to be global citizens, multiculturally competent, and respectful in words and actions of all members of the University community.

Mission - Build and maintain a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming university that promotes respect, global citizenship, and access to education and the workplace for students, employees, and members of the global community.

The complete list of value statements can be found at <http://www.wcu.edu/28762.asp>. Some of the values include:

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Learning experiences, pedagogy and curricula that lead to the development of globally aware, confident citizens/graduates who possess multicultural competence.

Co-curricular Learning Experiences

1) Connecting curricular, co-curricular, leadership, and culturally diverse experiences to provide accessible opportunities that challenge students to expand their boundaries and horizons.

Fostering Diversity in the Workplace and University Community

1) The recruitment and retention of a culturally diverse and multiculturally competent workforce and student body.

2) A workplace and university community that is inclusive, welcoming and supportive of all individuals and that promotes freedom of expression and ideas.

Relationship Building through Leadership & Communication

1) Collaboration, engagement, and outreach that foster an open community with shared interests and goals, and that make a positive impact and promote success.

Climate

1) A welcoming and inclusive community in which honesty, mutual respect, and collaborative participation underpin all interactions.

Goals:

Goal 1: Prepare students to become globally aware, multiculturally competent, and civic-minded.

Goal 2: Foster cultural immersion and learning experiences, including international experiences that challenge students to expand their boundaries and horizons.

Goal 3: Recruit, develop, and retain a diverse multiculturally aware work community that promotes inclusion and equal opportunity in a welcoming and supportive work and educational environment.

Goal 4: Build an open community that is supported by executive leadership and is inclusive, accessible, and that promotes collaboration and engagement among all participants internal and external to Western Carolina University.

Goal 5: Establish and maintain a climate that is welcoming, accepting, and respectful of diverse groups and opinions, and that provides opportunities and access to obtain an education.

Three recommendations by the CODI to the University include:

- 1) Increase faculty, staff, and student minority rates;
- 2) Improve student retention and graduation rates of underrepresented groups; and
- 3) Promote diversity education opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.

The CODI plan is congruent with Chancellor Belcher's vision and principles outlined in his installation address whereby he stated, "our time of stewardship will be worthy of remembrance, not because of the fleeting glory of rankings and statistics, but because of the genuine difference Western will make in the quality of life of the people – the wonderful, resilient, diverse, extraordinary and ordinary people – we serve" (The Reporter, March 30, 2012). The plan supports the core value of cultural diversity and equal opportunity of the WCU 2020 Commission.

Henry Wong is the Director for the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs at Western Carolina University. He investigates complaints of discrimination and grievances based on the covered groups under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (2008). He serves as the chairperson for the Council on Diversity and Inclusion.

The Forum Goes Front Row

Mark Mattheis

Starting Spring Semester 2013 an additional form of the Forum will be available for faculty to discuss topics of interest. Although the written word is always welcome, discussing topics in a live studio setting may help to bring out details that wouldn't normally jump off a page. If you have a topic or interest please contact [Mark Mattheis](#) so you can be worked into a schedule. I want to thank Freya Kinner for her time to discuss the [F.A.C.E.](#) program available to faculty on campus. [Link](#)

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The opinions expressed here belong solely to the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the editorial staff or of the Faculty Commons. If you would like to respond, you may input your comments directly through the wiki on the Faculty Forum webpage, or e-mail your comments to [FacultyFellow](#) and they will be posted.

For additional information about the Faculty Forum or to submit an article please contact:
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