

# USI Board of Trustees

## Diversity Committee Annual Report

March 4, 2010

### **Diversity Committee Formation and Objectives**

The Diversity Committee of the University of Southern Indiana was created in response to House Enrolled Act 1256, authorized by the 2007 Indiana General Assembly (IC-21-27-8-7) which requires that each public institution of higher education create a diversity committee to:

1. Review and recommend faculty employment policies;
2. Review faculty and administration personnel complaints concerning diversity among faculty;
3. Make recommendations to promote and maintain cultural diversity among faculty members;
4. Make recommendations to promote recruitment and retention of minority students; and
5. Issue an annual report stating findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the committee to the board.

The University already had an Affirmative Action Committee in place which has been adapted to meet the requirements of IC 21-27-8-7. The Affirmative Action Committee was renamed the Diversity Committee and currently consists of the following members:

*Karen Altstadt-Administrative Associate, Publishing Services*  
*Kirat Baath-Contract Assistant Professor of Biology, Pott College of Science and Engineering*  
*Cynthia Brinker-Vice President for Government and University Relations*  
*Deborah Carl-Interim Assistant Dean, College of Nursing and Health Professions*  
*Nadine Coudret-Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs*  
*Katherine Draughon-Executive Director, Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment*  
*Donna Evinger-Director, Human Resources and Committee Chair*  
*Douglas Goepfner-ADA Coordinator, Human Resources*  
*Pamela Hopson-Director, Multicultural Center*  
*Maria Jalilpour-Student, Student Government Association Representative*  
*Timothy Jones-Manager, Foundation Accounting*  
*Robert Parrent-Vice President for Student Affairs*  
*Rose Scruggs-Electronic Services Coordinator, Library Services*  
*Joseph Uduehi-Associate Professor of Art Education, College of Liberal Arts*

Incorporating and expanding upon the legislative mandate, the Diversity Committee has established the following objectives:

1. Define the University's vision of diversity and recommend methods to integrate that vision with existing University policies and procedures;
2. Collect information on University programs and initiatives and community resources;
3. Review University employment policies and processes and recommend improvements intended to increase hiring of diverse candidates;
4. Review University complaint policies and processes concerning diversity issues and recommend improvements;
5. Review University programs and processes, developing recommendations as appropriate for improvements to existing programs and processes and for new programs and initiatives that promote recruitment and retention of diverse students, faculty, and staff;
6. Recommend methods that increase awareness of the University's commitment to diversity;
7. Assess University diversity training and communication need and make recommendations;
8. Develop methods to assess the University's diversity efforts; and
9. Provide Annual Reports to the University's Board of Trustees.

The work of the Committee during 2009 focused primarily on the first three objectives, with some activities also facilitating objectives 6 and 7.

## **Diversity Committee Activities and Accomplishments**

- Defined the University's vision of diversity and communicated the Diversity Committee's role and the vision of diversity throughout the University community

The Committee drafted a vision statement, refined it, and communicated it throughout the University community. The vision of diversity statement is:

At the University of Southern Indiana, diversity means embracing and celebrating the many differences that exist among the members of a dynamic, intellectual, and inclusive community that welcomes the full spectrum of human characteristics, ideas, and world views. We strive to create an exciting, energetic living and learning community in which people with different experiences can learn through intellectual engagement, both within and beyond the classroom. Diversity stimulates learning, encourages imagination, and benefits everyone—students, employees, and the community. We believe that intellectual and personal developments are best supported in a climate that respects differences and provides a sense of belonging and inclusion.

As members of the University community, we are committed to cultural competency and meaningful intercultural relationships within the University and with our community partners. We seek to develop these capacities in the classroom and through recruitment, orientation, open forums, programming, and partnerships. We encourage every member of our University community to embrace this vision and exhibit a strong commitment to

attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining students, faculty, administrators, and support staff who mirror the diversity of our global society.

Various committee members, from August through November 2009, communicated the Diversity Committee's role and the vision of diversity to all institutional entities through meetings with:

- Administrative Council
  - Faculty, Administrators, and Support Staff
  - Deans and Department Chairs
  - Staff Council
  - Faculty Senate
  - Student Government Association
- Conducted research to gather information about existing University programs and initiatives that support diversity, as well as ideas for new programs and initiatives
    - In August 2009, Katherine Draughon provided a presentation about the newly formed Diversity Committee at the Deans and Department Chairs retreat. Deans and department chairs were asked to provide a short summary of the programs, activities, and courses offered within their departments and colleges – the starting point for our inventory of diversity-related programs at the University.
    - Also in August 2009, a web-based survey called The USI Faculty & Staff Experience Survey gathered opinions from faculty and staff regarding:
      - diversity issues at the University;
      - knowledge of University programs and activities related to diversity;
      - participation in University programs and activities related to diversity;
      - interest level in potential new diversity programs and activities at the University;
      - identification of the types of programs and activities that faculty and staff feel would be beneficial to enhancing diversity on the University's campus; and
      - identification of local organizations that offer programs and activities related to diversity that may be of use to University faculty, staff, and students.
    - In September 2009, to assist with the Committee's research activities, a graduate assistant position was approved to work within the Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment (OPRA). OPRA began a comprehensive assessment of the diversity programs and activities already in place at the University.
    - From the above sources, combined with direct outreach to each University department and college, graduate assistant Toni Brink compiled a preliminary database of over 200 existing University classes, programs, and initiatives with diversity-related content or goals.

- Gathered information on University and other institutions' employment policies and processes and initiatives in order to identify opportunities to increase hiring of diverse candidates:
  - Identified current policies and processes for employment of faculty and administrators, support staff, and students at the University;
  - Researched and identified 16 aspirational peer institutions and three local organizations; and
  - Began gathering information on the 19 institutions' employment policies, processes, and employment-related diversity activities.

### **Diversity Committee Next Steps**

During 2010 and 2011, the Committee will focus on:

- Continued gathering and refining of information on existing University programs and initiatives
- Outreach to local organizations to gather information about diversity-related activities in the community and to identify partnership opportunities
- Continued research on employment policies, processes and initiatives of aspirational peer institutions
- Development of a comparative summary of University and peer institutions employment practices
- Solicitation of ideas from the University community regarding employment-related improvement opportunities and development of recommendations
- Development of a University-wide action plan for diversity initiatives
- Review of complaint policies and processes concerning diversity issues and recommendations for improvements
- Further communication within the University community of existing diversity activities and new initiatives
- Identification of measurement methods for selected initiatives

The Committee looks forward to continued achievement of our objectives as we work toward an increasingly diverse and inclusive University faculty, administrative staff, support staff, and student body.