

Diversity

At Michigan we are firmly convinced that the ability of this University to achieve excellence in teaching, research, and service will be determined increasingly by our capacity to achieve and sustain a campus community characterized by its racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity.

We seek to build an environment on this campus which is receptive, supportive, and nurturing for all individuals, regardless of race, creed, national origin, gender, or sexual preference.

Yet the goal of diversity is a challenging one, particularly in the face of the prejudice and ignorance which continue to plague our campus and our society.

Racism and bigotry, whether through overt acts or more subtle institutional forms, continue to exist on our campus and throughout American society.

The difficulties we experience even with our rhetoric on this subject is symbolic of many of the challenges we face in moving toward this multicultural community:

For example, the use of the word minority is offensive to many. It is also becoming inaccurate, since underrepresented groups such as Blacks, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans will comprise a majority of American population within several decades-- just as they already represent the vast majority of peoples throughout the world.

In a similar fashion, the word racism becomes a substitute for thoughtful and constructive criticism when it becomes an emotion-laden or indiscriminately-applied epithet.

Those who would pose diversity and excellence as conflicting objectives, in my opinion, seriously misunderstand the degree to which both American society and academic institutions such as Michigan draw strength from the diversity of their members. While it is true that our university has a moral imperative to address the under-representation of racial and ethnic groups, it is also the case that the members of these groups will contribute greatly to our intellectual vitality.

To me, diversity includes a merging of our rich scholarly traditions with the stimulus of new perspectives, provoke inquiries, and innovative interpretations. The insights and erudition of hitherto excluded groups can enrich our scholarly enterprise; indeed, it seems apparent that we cannot sustain the distinction of our university in the pluralistic world society that is our future without the diversity which sustains excellence.

All of us--faculty, staff, and students--must recognize that the challenge of diversity is our challenge and our responsibility, and until we recognize and accept this both as individuals and as members of the University community, we are unlikely to achieve our goals.

We can secure this future by setting aside confrontation and empty rhetoric, by seeking the understanding that comes from working side by side, by engaging in thoughtful dialogue, and by standing firm in our commitment to the creation of a pluralistic community on this campus.

My college generation of the 1960s was ignited by

the spirit and leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his effort to blaze a new path of opportunity for all peoples. Indeed, at my commencement in 1964, Dr. King received an honorary degree. Dr. King conveyed a sense of love and appreciation for one another, regardless of our differences. He taught us to replace confrontation with cooperation...to replace distrust with respect...to replace ignorance with understanding. He also taught us that we can only make progress toward his dream if we move forward together.

We simply must put aside our distrust, our anger and rhetoric, and instead join together as a community.

All of us--students, faculty, and staff--must demonstrate the courage and wisdom to acknowledge our mistakes; to listen; to learn, and to understand; and then to resume our efforts to move ahead together in our efforts to achieve diversity and excellence, two intimately related and mutually reinforcing goals that will be the key to the distinction of this University in the years ahead.

The students we are educating today will spend the majority of their lives in the 21st century...

Yet most of us...and our faculties...are products of the 20th Century...

Furthermore, the structure of the American university as we know it today is a product of the 19th Century!

On this campus you will encounter for the first time in your lives the remarkable diversity and richness of peoples of different races, cultures, religions, nationalities, and beliefs.

Many of these people will look different... many have different backgrounds... many have different beliefs...

Yet they, like you, bring characteristics of great value to our campus...talent, intelligence, ambition,... and the rich diversity of cultural beliefs and experience...

One of the most important things you must learn on this campus is to respect others for their differences...as well as their similarities.

The Challenge:

The Importance of Diversity

It seems imperative that universities such both recognize as Michigan both recognize the importance of diversity and pluralism in its mission...

And make a firm commitment to its achievement:

- i) Through the recruitment, support, retention, and success of minority students, faculty, staff -- and leaders
- ii) And through the development of an environment of mutual understanding and sensitivity that not only tolerates diversity, but moreover seeks and embraces it as an essential objective

□ - of the institution.

: + Excellence

.heqd 3 + There seems little doubt that our ability to achieve excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service will be determined over time to a considerable degree by the diversity and pluralism of our campus community.

W! draw strength from diversity. diversity.

We have set before this University an important

new agenda to achieve new levels of understanding, tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of diverse racial, cultural, gender, economic, and

national backgrounds.

This will require major new commitments of human and financial

resources. It will also require the active involvement and cooperation of our faculty, students, staff, alumni, friends, and supporters in the effort to move toward this important goal.

It will require us to pull together as a community...

in a new spirit of cooperation rather than confrontation...joining one another in our mutual pursuit of a truly multicultural community of scholars.

One of the most significant, fundamental, and

redeeming features of American society is its cultural diversity.

But to realize this potential, we have to

eliminate those ethnic, religious, and racial prejudices that continue to impede our achievement of this social and moral goal.

Pluralism

One of the most redeeming aspects of our society's liberal institutions is their basis in the idea that different groups should be able to get along together (i.e., have common access to procedural justice) without completely agreeing on what is good, just, and worthy.

Moreover, pluralism, the companion idea of liberal institutions, is based on the notion that different races, cultures, or ethnicities can peacefully--even productively--coexist by celebrating their variation.

Pluralism validates cultural diversity and requires that we mediate our cultural and other conflicts through various nondestructive mechanisms.

Pluralism may be one of the most daring experiments of human history. The great calling of liberal societies is not to make one group from many, but to build from many varying cultural, racial, and ethnic groups a federation of diversity in which we share some common beliefs.

2. Diversity and pluralism

There seems little doubt that America of the 21st century will probably be the most pluralistic, multicultural nation on earth...and perhaps in history...

Our nation will face a challenge of diversity and pluralism in the years ahead that will determine our strength and vitality.

As both a microcosm and leader of society at large, higher education has a special challenge and responsibility to develop effective models of multicultural, pluralistic communities.

Composition of college age population is also changing...

You've probably all memorized Harold Hodgkinson's data...

Today minorities comprise 14%...by 2000, 22% will be Blacks and Hispanics...by 2020, 30%...

By the turn of this century, one-third of college age students will be underrepresented minorities.

Indeed, by the turn of the century, over 50% of K-12 students will be children of color (in California, over 50% will be Hispanic)

Indeed, by the late 21st Century, Hispanics will be the largest ethnic group in America

Less than 15% of new people entering the labor force of the 1990s will be white males.

NOTE: We must make special efforts to expand participation by these groups...not just because that is good social policy, but because we cannot afford to waste their talents!

In particular, we face the challenge of reaching out to increase the participation of those racial, ethnic, and cultural groups not adequately represented among our students, faculty, and staff--of taking "affirmative action" to compensate for the inequities faced by these groups in our society.

But simply providing access and encouraging participation is not enough. We face the challenge of building supportive environments which embrace, and sustain diversity as essential to the quality of our missions of teaching, research, and service.

We must strive to achieve new levels of understanding, tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.

A Case Study: The Michigan Commitment

We have learned that at Michigan through the racial tensions that have developed on our campus over the past several years...just as they have on other campuses throughout America.

Unfortunately, it took several deplorable incidents of racism on our campus to wake us up to the reality that the challenge of diversity is not simply successful affirmative action programs...recruiting and retention and such...that is, access.

Our challenge goes far beyond this...in first recognizing that old vision of the campus as a melting pot of cultures and races is obsolete...and must be replaced by a vision of a highly pluralistic, multicultural community in which we achieve new levels of understanding, tolerance, and mutual fulfillment for peoples of highly diverse racial and cultural backgrounds...

In which people learn to respect and cherish one another for their differences...yet, at the same time are drawn together by certain fundamental values that we have in common.

We had to face some tough facts of life:

To make progress toward our goal of diversity, universities must move away from their present reactive, and uncoordinated efforts toward a more strategic approach designed to achieve long-term systemic change.

Efforts that focused only on affirmative action...that is, on access and retention...on representation...rapidly become mired down in bureaucracy and will inevitably fail...

Instead, we must strive to achieve permanent system change in our institutions.

We must link diversity and excellence as the

two most compelling goals...recognizing that these goals are not only complementary, but will be tightly linked in the multicultural society characterizing our nation and the world in the years ahead.

In our efforts, we must take the long view that will require both patient and persistent leadership. While progress will require sustained vigilance and effort, it will also require a great deal of help and support.

To succeed, we need a very simple leadership agenda that can be kept clearly focused and before the institution.

At Michigan we have taken the first important steps...

Commitment:

To recognize the importance of diversity and pluralism to the mission of the University, and to make a firm commitment to their achievement.

Representation:

To commit to the recruitment, support, retention, and success of underrepresented minority groups among our students, faculty, staff, and leadership

Environment:

To build on our campus an environment which seeks, nourishes, and sustains diversity and pluralism.

Some early results:

- i) Hired 16 new Black faculty this past year... with 10 more offers out and under negotiation
- ii) Black freshman enrollments will be up 21% (373)
Hispanic enrollments up by 54% (195)
Total minority enrollments up by 23% (1059)
- iii) Black first year graduate students up by 100%
- iv) Retention numbers are coming up (55% to 60%)... but still lag behind majority students (65% to 70%)
- v) Racial harassment policy for students, faculty and staff
- v) Believe we are finally beginning to get people's attention...

As an aside, I would note that this year we estimate we are putting over \$34 million a year into minority student and faculty recruitment and retention as well as into a broad array of programs designed to build a true multicultural community on our campus.

Hence, it should be obvious that responding to the challenge of pluralism will require an extraordinary commitment on the part of our university... and higher education more generally

3. The Internationalization of America

Some facts of life:

7-fold increase in international trade since 1970

Market for nearly all significant manufacturing industries has become world-wide

70% of goods we produce now must compete against merchandise from abroad

In slightly more than 5 years, US trade deficit has taken us from the world's largest creditor to its largest debtor nation.

American will no longer take its know-how and apply it to low-cost natural resources from third-world countries, turn it into products, and then sell it back to them--as we do in a hierarchical economy.

Rather, we'll be only one member in a global dynamic economy with tremendous network

interdependency between countries.

US is the destination of about half the world's immigrants

Probably 10 million this decade alone...

One-third of annual population growth is immigration

Indeed, now that native fertility rates have stood since
mid-1970s at 1.8 (below replacement level of 2.0),
immigration promises to become the main determinant
of future population variability

America is evolving into the first true "world nation",
shifting rapidly away from Eurocentricity into a society
with strong ethnic ties to all parts of the globe--
with a growing focus on the nations of the Pacific Rim.

Historically, Europe has been the center of economic
power...Japan, China, Southeast Asia, US, USSR will be the
major economic players in world.

As you may have seen, David Gardner in his recent
editorial in Science quotes one of his faculty, Robert
Scalapino as referring to the "21st Century" as the
"Pacific Century"

US is no longer self-sufficient or self-sustaining. We are not
immune to the shocks of the world society. We have never
been more vulnerable.