

October 23, 2011

To: President John Sexton and Provost David McLaughlin

From: The Provost's Task Force on Diversity

Re: FRAMEWORK: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT NYU

Executive summary:

Over the past year, a distinguished group of faculty and administrators at New York University met by invitation of Provost David McLaughlin. Under the leadership of Jane Tylus and Diane Yu, the Diversity Task Force discussed NYU's diversity profile and proposed recommendations for future planning that are in keeping with NYU's historical commitment to inclusion. We documented a number of constructive and positive activities and initiatives in individual Schools. Yet we also noted the great need for more attention to coordinating and publicizing NYU's ongoing diversity initiatives, as well as for more serious reflection on the University's overall mission and vision with respect to diversity.

The chief recommendations of the Diversity Task Force include:

- Having the President and Provost issue a strong statement regarding the University's commitment to diversity as a core value
- Launching a new campaign to increase financial aid and scholarships as well as scholarships for study at our global sites for minority and disadvantaged students
- Creating a Diversity Innovation Fund to support student, faculty, and School initiatives that aim to study and promote diversity
- Appointing a Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion
- Appointing a Diversity Council to work closely with the Deans and Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion

MISSION

As we envision and embrace NYU's role as the university of the future, we must produce both a vision and concrete objectives for a University-wide diversity plan. To keep pace with the momentum, growth, and promise of the Global Network University, NYU at Washington Square must be well-positioned both domestically and internationally. In turn, we must embrace the challenge of serving as a model in New York for our campuses abroad, as well as for other universities around the world.

NYU was founded by Albert Gallatin on principles of access and openness to individuals regardless of their economic and social background. Almost two centuries after Gallatin transformed the world of higher education, we continue to build on his convictions and commitment to inclusion with respect to ethnicity, race, class, sexual orientation, gender, nationality, protected classes, physical and mental ability. NYU has emerged as a leader academically in the last few decades. As NYU prepares our graduates for an increasingly complex world, how can the University enhance excellence by becoming a leader in the area of diversity as well?

The Provost's Task Force on Diversity has begun the important work of reviewing the various aspects of our diversity footprint. We discovered that there are notable successes that could be replicated across the University, and there are promising ideas upon which we can build. But more needs to be done to highlight the Schools and programs where diversity, education, community issues, and professional development come together most successfully. We identify the challenges and the possibilities below.

CHALLENGES

1. **Achieving a more diverse faculty and student body.** Although NYU is based in some of the most diverse cities in the world, the reality of our community demographics does not match our aspirations or our environment. While NYU's national standing and application numbers have steadily risen in the last two decades, we are in the middle of the pack when it comes to the various diversity measures nationally.¹
2. **Integrating diversity throughout the campus.** In addition to addressing statistical inequalities, we must also work together to ensure that diversity becomes embedded into our curriculum, our students' lives, our research, and our campus ethos.
3. **Assuring leadership and coordination.** We must position diversity as an outcome that exists in the fabric of our everyday life at the University, while at the same time acknowledge that energy for a diversity mission needs to be consistently generated from the highest levels of the administration.
4. **Promoting awareness and expansion of ongoing activities.** Even as new initiatives will take shape, we must continue to identify what is already happening at NYU, build on and support individual efforts, and maintain a network to increase the number of diverse communities in and among schools. The much-improved diversity website is only a start, albeit an important one, in this effort to enhance communications.
5. **Identifying differences and fruitful synergies between the "local" and the "global."** Diversity at home and diversity abroad may mean very different things. The University should launch a serious discussion as to those differences and synergies, and how they should be reflected in policy as well as practice.
6. **Serving as a model for others.** The Square should be a model of academic behavior, affirming our core academic pursuits and establishing the right climate for the entire global network. All faculty, students, and administrators at NYU should be prompted to reflect on how to identify and move toward outcomes that will change our community.

¹ See attached appendices for relevant graduate and undergraduate statistics.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION: For the Provost and President:

1. Announce a new campaign with the Office for University Development and Alumni Relations, donors, alumni, and pipelines to increase financial aid and scholarships and applications from underrepresented students, as well as study- away scholarships earmarked for underrepresented students who otherwise have little opportunity to benefit from the GNU.
2. Appoint a Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion who will coordinate all University- wide diversity efforts and keep Schools on track with respect to their diversity missions. His/her responsibilities will include:
 1. Reporting on a regular basis to senior administration and to deans;
 2. Overseeing the Diversity Council - a group of faculty, students, staff, and alumni committed to advancing NYU's diversity efforts;
 3. Developing strategic plans relative to the University's diversity objectives that can be incorporated into the workings of the Global Network University;
 4. Overseeing a cabinet of key administrators and staff in the offices of Admissions, the Center for Multicultural Education and Programs, the Faculty Resource Network, the Office for Equal Opportunity, Office of Human Resources, and the Associate Vice Provost for Diversity.
3. Publicize and supplement the current bridge funds in the Provost's office for under- represented faculty candidates.
4. Create a Diversity Innovation Fund to support and showcase student, faculty, and administrator initiatives that aim to promote diversity at NYU through curriculum development grants, awards, and research projects.
5. Reappoint interested current members of the Task Force to an ongoing commission (the Diversity Council), while asking for new candidates from the student body, trustees, alumni, and staff. The new Vice Provost for Diversity and a faculty member should serve as co-chairs of the Council, which will meet on a monthly basis throughout the academic year.

For the Diversity Council (formerly known as the Task Force on Diversity):

1. With the Provost and President, identify the communities involved in diversity initiatives, including The Office of Admissions, alumni, prospective donors, individuals key to the GNU, Office of Public Affairs, Office of Human Resources, Office of Equal Opportunity, and Deans.
2. The Diversity Council and top administration should work with Deans to create diversity directors for each School, and where the School is sufficiently large, each department.

School diversity directors would be expected to coordinate and help promote activities within their schools and should furnish school-level reports each year to the Council.

3. On an annual basis, the Diversity Council will:

1. Identify best practices in each school and unit and which school initiatives might be put to University-wide use. Incentives should be given for new projects and the expansion of successful ones. Our global campuses should also be included in this evaluation.
2. Establish incentives for developing courses that engage diversity on a variety of levels. Encourage workshops focusing on creating diverse curricula. Establish a periodic review of course evaluations to ensure that diversity is taken into account.
3. Encourage individual schools to develop ongoing relationships with existing NYU programs such as Explore New York and Explore the World, and cultural, political, and educational institutions in the city as a way both to expose NYU students to the many resources of the city and to cultivate long-term relationships with local high schools and the New York community.
4. Work with Institutional Research, Admissions, the Office of Human Resources, and other relevant offices to produce an annual report on the University's diversity efforts. The report's focus should include data on recruitment and retention of both faculty and students; potential salary inequities; and the relative success of diversity programming.
5. Facilitate and be a catalyst for the Schools' progress in diversity efforts. The Council should heighten awareness throughout our campus and engage in an ongoing dialogue with deans, chairs, and leaders of student and faculty groups.
6. Plan for a three-year reassessment of the initiatives, with appropriate benchmarks and outcomes in mind.

For the Office of Human Resources:

1. Provide data on a regular basis to Provost and Diversity Council on faculty hires, retention efforts, and resignations, and work closely with OEO to provide exit interviews.
2. Identify universities beyond the list of "usual suspects" for faculty recruiting, working with the Faculty Resource Network and other campus and national resources.

For the Office of Equal Opportunity:

1. Continue to sponsor workshops on hiring practices to strengthen NYU's efforts to produce a more diverse pool of candidates.

TIMELINE:

Fall, 2011:

The President and Provost should issue a statement regarding the University's commitment

to diversity as a core value of NYU. This should appear not only on the diversity website but on NYU's homepage and other strategic places on the website.

Appoint a Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion

Late Fall, 2011:

Use the occasion of a Provost/Deans' meeting to explore the final report of the Diversity Task Force, and to engage the deans in conversation and strategic planning.

Spring, 2012:

Plan for a first diversity "summit" to be held every two to three years that enables us to consider, along with other universities, "best practices" and assess where we are and where we need to be. The first summit should be organized for the spring of 2012 as a way for NYU to continue gathering information about successful diversity practices and initiatives around the country. Alternately, ensure that appropriate NYU faculty and staff attend meetings that showcase best practices (ACE at Home, etc.)

We look forward to working with you both in our ongoing and collaborative efforts to ensure that NYU becomes internationally recognized as a leader in diversity and inclusion.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mary Signor, Executive Director, Office of Equal Opportunity

Anthony C. Thompson, Professor of Clinical Law, School of Law

Jane Tylus, Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature; Faculty Director of the Humanities Initiative, Faculty of Arts and Science (co-chair)

Diane Yu, Chief of Staff and Deputy to the President; Executive Director of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Scholars Program (co-chair)
