

**D-Center:
A Proposal by the Repositioning Diversity/Equity Task Force**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We have approached the charge of our group using a two-pronged approach: 1) acknowledging the work that needs to be done in the College and 2) recognizing a commitment to work that needs to be done within the campus/community. We have relied less upon citing research/activities of our own and others; replacing such by considering ideas that are more generative and contextual. In efforts to position the College and University in ways that forefront our diversity/equity expertise and move toward dialogue and concrete actions, we accomplished the following tasks this semester:

- consulted with Chancellor's Task Force on Diversity;
- developed and administered a diversity survey in the College;
- consulted WebPages of other centers/institutes in the nation with a focus on diversity;
- inventoried intersections/connections with: a) the campus strategic plan, b) the College strategic plan, and c) drafts of task force reports of the 4 College initiatives;
- began planning for a mapping retreat in the College;
- conceptualized D-Center.

The overarching value of the College as noted by Dean Kalantzis is "Ensuring Excellence and Diversity in all College and Graduate Operations" [Sept. 2006 presentation to task force members]. Although we know diversity is central to all levels of operations in the COE, explicit expression of this commitment is not always present in COE documents, policies, and practices. Nor is it clear from existing documents how we are defining diversity as a College. We suggest that before our Committee can begin to re-conceptualize and rethink diversity and equity, we need to identify how diversity is presently being defined within the COE and develop a taxonomy of diversity as a benchmark from which to build and strategize. For example, in our early conversations we have found how unaware each of us is about the range of activities by our faculty that focus on diversity and equity and the range of definitions and responses that arise when one asks "What is diversity?" Two questions have helped to guide our initial response to the charge of the Committee: 1) How do we provide a context and space for faculty in the COE to form connections across the range of projects and research we know are occurring in the COE? 2) How do we aid the College in understanding its present commitments to diversity so that we can rethink/reposition diversity and equity for the future?

D-Center derives its name from the evolving idea of diversity and equity in a global economy where the University of Illinois can be at the forefront. In this respect, the D

stands for “Diversity” in culture, languages, genders, physical and mental abilities, religion, and other ways in which people are positioned in society; “Decentering” dominant and oppressive ways of thinking (e.g., whiteness, wealth/status, English, heterosexuality, and narrow conceptions of ability); “Defining” a new age and new presence for the University as a place where people come to talk about issues of diversity and where students are systematically supported to engage critically with such issues; and “Demanding” respect for humanity and the complexity of lived experiences. Towards this end, part of the goal of the center is to begin to develop common language and mission in the college and on campus. To be clear, the point of D-Center is neither to become so broad that it overwhelms our focus on underrepresented groups nor duplicates initiatives that already exists on campus.

RATIONALE

The Repositioning Diversity/Equity Task Force recognizes that the College of Education is currently in a position of trying to regain credibility. Although the College is a potential partner with other campus units, it is often considered as an afterthought on major grants (e.g., only useful for helping other units tack on a required component for teacher workshops). Although a number of faculty/staff regularly conduct action research projects and offer professional development to the surrounding area, the image that gets portrayed is that COE is not engaged with local schools. Given the state of developing strategic plans and initiatives as well as current campus climate of racial/cultural insensitivity in fraternities and beyond, we see this as an optimal time to address cultural and other sensitivities.

In an era of budget cuts, UIUC is also attempting to reposition itself within the US and internationally. Although we have a number of strengths, diversity is not currently part of our branding. With the exception of Allen Hall and Living Learning Centers, there is little integration of diversity issues at UIUC. More than just responding to an increasingly diverse and interconnected world, the College specifically, and the campus more generally, needs to be anticipating and leading efforts to reenvision and transform that world.

Schools of education should be citizens of the campus—we have relevant expertise, but we have not sought these roles in the past—we should build on our strengths: (a) we are the only *College* that is involved with diversity (only one of 2 units on campus--the other being Social Work--with a strong component of civic commitment in their strategic plan) and we might be able to do things that area studies cannot; (b) we have substantive expertise in the college, and (c) we do better in recruiting and retaining minority faculty and students than most, if not all, colleges of education across the country. We are a natural source for scholarship and leadership. We need to position ourselves in ways where we can offer what have we learned so that it could be useful to the rest of the campus.

If the College wants to have a more active voice in setting an agenda for a broader campus climate, we must partner with area/ethnic/gender studies, the Center for

Democracy in a Multiracial Society, Chancellor's diversity initiative committee, and other allies. Part of the mission of D-Center is to enhance and build partnerships with already existing resources on campus [See Appendix A]. As such, the center would serve as an umbrella unit to cut across departments and colleges in the university, and to complement and highlight the work being done in the 4 COE initiatives [See Appendix B]. Rather than having to appoint ad-hoc diversity committees on campus, D-Center will be a hub where a number of stakeholders will have representatives. D-Center will operate with three overlapping priorities: research, teaching, and outreach.

GOALS

Research

- Diversity Survey--The initial survey will capture the nature of diversity/equity in research done by COE faculty. It will highlight both issues of conceptualization as well as chronicle the volume of work being done so that it can become part of COE's future image. In addition, it will help identify a different vocabulary, beyond categorical thinking as a way of conceptualizing the issues.
- Post docs—Reaching across units and areas, not just in COE, these postdocs will help the University develop a presence (inter)nationally while centralizing common efforts on campus. Ideally, the University of Illinois will become known as a place where top people who are focusing on race, social justice, equity, etc. come and are engaged with others. Such postdocs will be chosen with a preference for action research, thereby connecting with another priority—outreach to the community. Another goal of the post doc program is to potentially recruit new faculty to campus. As such, these postdocs would not be solely recent graduates, but could also include faculty within the first 5 years of their position. Postdocs will be located in D-Center and given research/conference travel funds. A committee will be appointed to select these postdocs, with a preference for candidates who study systems of oppression (not just narrow categories) and who hold a moral imperative (e.g., activist stance).
- Programming—A number of conferences and activities will promote dialogue and action on campus around issues of diversity. Some will be international and broad in scope, others will be at the state or local level (e.g., focusing on teachers and bringing in area studies people).

A primary activity that will kick off D-Center is an international conference. In consultation with Bill Cope and the Repositioning Diversity/Equity Task Force, the purpose of this and other conferences would be to have panels discuss the intersections of work on diversity (e.g., examining how gender and race play out, also highlighting the tensions between an “international” focus in diversity and a US focus that is sensitive to historical oppression). One potential topic for the conference is genocide (e.g., language genocide, genital mutilation, gender disparities globally, etc). However, a final topic can only arise in consultation with key stakeholders on campus, consulting with them to see what are their needs, looking to see what they might want from D-Center.

COE will need to make explicit and overt efforts not to step on anyone's toes. This could result in the form of a 1/2-day session at Levis Faculty Center with directors of area/ethnic/gender studies, International Programs of Study, Living Learning Center, Program in Intergroup Relations, Ethnography of the University, and others. As part of the planning for the international conference, CDMS has offered to develop a planning conference to capture "who is doing what" on campus with respect to diversity. This planning conference would attempt to develop a general blueprint and road map for the future. Using the model of MillerComm, the kick off conference will attempt to connect invited guests with units on and off campus. The purpose is to create dialogue around such issues so they can translate into campus coordination and potentially new activities.

- **Named Chairs—D-Center Chairs**, housed in particular departments, will be comparable to University Swanlund chairs (5 year endowed chair, plus other benefits). The stature of the kind of people we see recruiting would be along the lines of: Cornel West, Pedro Noguera, Gary Orfield, Patricia Hill Collins, Janet Helms, and Robert Jensen.
- **Shoe String Grants**—Develop proposals and projects, small grants to control through peer review of D-center affiliates. Foster a range of projects, including for example, course release for research related to D-center.
- **Faculty Mentor Program for Teaching**—Campus is asking for instructors to educate students about uncomfortable topics; yet there is little support for how to do this work in strategic ways. Different from and complementary to what ethnic studies and other units do, the faculty mentor program could: 1) foster mechanisms to talk about pedagogy and issues of teaching diversity (especially as they relate to supporting underrepresented students to graduate and teaching in a hostile environment), 2) help marginalized faculty develop community and navigate through the system, and 3) explore other ways of evaluating teaching around issues of diversity (e.g., potentially offer additional teaching evaluations to offset the hostile commentary that ICES forms/scores promote).
- **White Papers**—Support for the development of position/research papers (approximately 10 per year) on issues related to D-Center.

Teaching

- **Certificate or Minor with an emphasis on diversity.** This would be a college program.
- **Odyssey courses**—with a focus on critical pedagogies.
- **Help inform the teaching of students from underrepresented backgrounds to make sure they graduate.**

Outreach

- **Conference**— Area study outreach coordinators who can help teachers, etc.
- **Governor Rod Blagovjevich Blegovich** signed into law (August 5, 2005) House Bill 312 that requires all public schools teach about genocide beyond the Holocaust. The bill

is to help students understand the causes of genocide and how to become more accepting of humanity and differences, issues often not covered in schools. We could offer teacher information from research on genocide, to literature, to activities to enrich their teaching.

- Local Workshops--Giving local parents the tools to intervene in schooling issues, look at local data, providing the means for community members to become well informed on issues of diversity.
- Pedagogical and academic aspects in which other units on campus may not have expertise, so COE serves the university.
- Summer Institutes
- Diversity Mapping—coordinating issues and committees, etc.

We propose to implement what we refer to as a Diversity Mapping Project. This project will serve our committees and the COE in several ways. Primarily the Diversity Mapping Project will:

- Provide the COE with a ‘map’ of diversity activities (teaching, research, service) across units and faculty including understandings of how diversity is presently conceptualized within the College;
- Provide baseline data for our Committee to make subsequent recommendations;
- Make the commitment to diversity a visible and explicit value in the College;
- Provide the four task forces with centralized data that may be useful to their own initiatives and grant applications, thus helping to infuse diversity across the COE strategic plan initiatives;
- Foster community building in COE and provide opportunities for faculty to see points of common interests and potential opportunities for synergy in research, teaching, and service.

We further believe that the Diversity Mapping Project will aid in COE discussions and initiatives on recruitment and retention of diverse students and faculty; aid in fostering more direct linkages with UIUC’s Gender and Ethnic Studies Programs, as well as other units on campus; leverage existing projects; and generate new diversity initiatives that situate the COE at UIUC as a key player in local, state, and national issues of educational diversity and equity.

Diversity Mapping Project Activities

Initial Data Gathering:

- Demographic data (e.g., staff/student make up, student acceptance/retention rates)
- Course audit (listing of “official” courses, part of our public image)

- On-line faculty survey (see attached protocol)—detailing all courses (including omnibus ones), research, and service as well as how relates to diversity
- Meet with department chairs/heads and division heads (to clarify language and our interpretations of survey data)
- Meet with task force chairs (to clarify use of language in task force texts and to highlight concrete activities for future proposal writing)

Diversity Mapping Activities:

- COE faculty retreat (one day/four hours)—where faculty attempt to “place themselves” on the diversity map
- Task force finalizes diversity map of COE
- Develop strategies and suggestions, building from strengths and gaps in diversity map of COE (e.g., postdoctoral fellowships and named professorships)

As we imagined the work ahead of us following the aforementioned two-pronged approach, we present the diversity related activities in the following matrix, highlighting their connections to internal or external goals.

Internal: Beyond the survey and mapping, we need face-to-face interactions (e.g., retreats) with administration, faculty, and staff. There is a tacit assumption that if we are modeling and informing campus about these issues, we already have our own house in order. Yet, this is not necessarily the case.

**INTERNAL OBJECTIVES & TASKS
(College of Education)**

| Objectives | Related Tasks |
|--|---|
| Identify diversity activities Identify theoretical lenses used | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course & staffing audit • Faculty diversity survey • Diversity Taxonomy |
| Coordinate efforts Incorporate diversity into the 4 strategic initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with new task force chairs |
| Locate/Maintain Systematic Support Structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postdocs in COE “centers” • Academic Professional • Named chairs • Mentors • Shoestring grants • White papers • Maintaining the mapping project • Faculty run workshops (e.g., Joycelyn Landrum-Brown) • Small group dialogues in COE • Certificate or minor with an emphasis in anti-racist education |

External: The College of Education becomes a model for how to address diversity issues in complex and action-oriented ways.

EXTERNAL OBJECTIVES & TASKS
(campus, local, state, international)

| Objectives | Related Tasks |
|---|--|
| Promote Dialogue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interracial Dialogue Workshops |
| Locate/Maintain systematic support structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop TA's for campus diversity (e.g., Joycelyn Landum Brown; Lisa Spanierman) • Odyssey courses with critical pedagogies • Summer Institute on Teaching for Equity (for teachers and administrators; for professors) • Racial harassment workshops • Develop a teaching resource list |
| Coordinate Diversity Initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDMS conference (mapping the university) • Meetings with key stakeholders (area/ethnic/gender studies, PIR, Living Learning Center, Ethnography of the University, International Programs & Studies) |
| Establish Strong Collaborative Relationships (college as a unit, not just individuals) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint appointments & TOPS hires • Work with initiatives--fellowships, <p>releases to coordinate the units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial harassment workshops |

TIME LINE

Fall 2006

Create and administer diversity survey in the college
Request course & staff/student audit
Consult with CDMS (ongoing); Chancellor's Task Force on Diversity
Inventory intersections/connections with strategic plans and initiatives
Plan for a mapping retreat in the college
Conceptualize D-Center.

Spring 2007

Analyze survey results
Analyze course & staff/student data
College mapping retreat
CDMS conference (college mapping)
Formal meetings with key stakeholders
Commission white papers

Fall 2007

Continued meetings with stakeholders
Shoestring grants
White papers produced
Speakers, workshops, seminars
Train TA's for COE diversity projects

Spring 2008

White papers produced
Speakers, workshops, seminars
International conference

Summer 2008

Summer Institute on teaching for equity
Develop teaching resources list

BUDGET

D-Center will need a director, or co-directors, administrative assistant, graduate research support, and clerical staff, at a minimum. Other universities like the University of Michigan have been successful in building a name for themselves around diversity issues partly because they have committed resources: a full-time research specialist assessing diversity on campus, \$100k's dollars in budget, and 17 years of institutional commitment. With this kind of support, they are able to take a much more integrated view of diversity on campus (e.g., they don't differentiate academic subjects from social student services). D-Center would seek similar funding, partly through internal campus funds and partly through external partners.

A business partnership (e.g., Wachovia) would help D-Center continue to fund research, teaching, and outreach programs. Potentially, the business partner could sponsor a new building or offices for post docs so they feel like they are part of a broader unit on campus, as opposed to connected with a particular unit. In addition, an academic professional and director would need to be hired in order to maintain regular programs. The specifics of the budget follow.

COE Total Diversity Initiative Budget Request for 2007-08

| | | |
|---|------------------|----------|
| Shoestring grants | \$25,000 | |
| White papers | \$10,000 | |
| COE Diversity Mapping Project | \$25,000 | |
| CDMS Diversity Mapping Project | (matching funds) | \$25,000 |
| Train and hire TA's for COE Diversity Projects | \$25,000 | |
| Summer Institute on Teaching for Equity (for teachers and administrators; for professors) | \$200,000 | |
| Develop a teaching resource list | \$10,000 | |
| Speakers, workshops and seminars leading up to major international conference on diversity* | \$100,000 | |
| to be coordinated with CDMS spring 2008 conference assessing diversity programs at UIUC | | \$50,000 |
| Meetings with other stakeholders (area studies, ethnic studies, PIR's, Ethnography of the University, Living Learning Center, International Programs & Studies) | \$5,000 | |
| COE Total Budget Request | \$400,000 | |

Appendix A: COE Points of Intersection and Connections with Strategic Plans and Initiatives

COE Strategic Plan

Goal 1:

Innovating and Continuing Excellence in Core Activities

Objective A. Building a Stronger and More Diverse Research Capacity

- Increase faculty and student involvement in research.
- Recruit/retain highly productive faculty and top students.
- Engage in more interdisciplinary and cross-institution research collaborations, including international and school-university partnerships.
- Integrate the research process and findings into coursework and professional preparation programs.
- Communicate research results to influence policy, practice and public perception.
- Use research activity to generate new revenue.

Objective B. Strengthening Our Capacity and Reach as a Provider of Professional Preparation and Leadership

- Pursue interdisciplinary collaborations to update and refine pedagogic and content knowledge.
- Increase recruitment and retention efforts for underrepresented minority students in undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Increase recruitment and programming in high need areas such as STEM

Objective C: Partnering within our Community to Improve Educational Opportunities

- Coordinate all educational outreach programs on Urbana-Champaign campus to create university-wide resource for local/regional schools.
- Offer mentoring and induction support to all graduates of College teacher or administrator preparation programs during first 3 years of employment.
- Build on Chancellor's Teaching Academy and proposed Master Teacher Program to establish permanent, collaborative research and practice partnership with Champaign and Urbana schools.
- Continue to partner with Chicago Public Schools, its community colleges, and the Chicago foundation community on evaluation, professional development and other critical education issues.

Goal 2:

Diversifying Sources of Income and Increasing Overall Operating Income

- Identify private support for projects undertaken as part of our four "breakthrough" initiatives.
- Develop and distribute instructional products or services that meet market demands and are revenue generating (e.g., evaluation tools, journals, curriculum/instructional manuals, electronic course development software, etc...)
- Diversify public and private funding sources.

Goal 3:

Focusing Efforts on Four New “Breakthrough” Initiatives Aligned with Strategic Campus Goals.

Strategic Initiative #1: Center for Education in Small Urban Communities

Critical Goals and Aspirations-Small Urban

- Develop a Center for Education in Small Urban Communities that promotes research, teaching and service pertaining to the distinctive educational issues faced by these communities and improves the standing of the University as both a local (Champaign County and the region) and national/international resource for small urban communities.
- Model and implement an innovative, collaborative model of knowledge production that is context-driven, problem-focused, interdisciplinary, and application-oriented, that breaks down traditional divisions between theory and practice, or university and community in order to more effectively link research, policy, and action-oriented reform.
- Promote an understanding that the problems and potential of education are not simply the responsibility of institutions of formal education but shared, community-wide concerns, involving families, community organizations, businesses, civic groups, and neighborhood associations.

Strategic Initiative #2: Initiative on STEM Teaching and Learning

Strategic Initiative #3: Ubiquitous Learning Institute: New Education Ecologies

- Develop models of knowledge production that are context-driven, problem-focused, interdisciplinary, and application-oriented.
- Provide a dynamic, problem-focused learning environment for preparing students for jobs as researchers, consultants, and industry technicians who will continue to shape and transform the technologically mediated, socially networked environment.

Strategic Initiative #4: Forum on the Future of Public Education

- Influence the educational policy making process by generating, analyzing, and synthesizing research intended to influence educational policy and practice.
- Build a technology-based infrastructure providing digitized, readily accessible sources of respected information, as well as making possible virtual forums for public debate.
- Create venues and public forums for face-to-face discussions of policy issues that bring together citizens, business leaders, policy makers, academics, and the media.

Points of Intersection and connections with Drafts of Task Force Reports

Small Urban

II. Connections between initiative and campus strategic goals

Building partnerships within the Champaign-Urbana communities.
Preparing students for leadership roles in addressing critical societal needs.
Expanding the Chancellor's Academy for Teachers.
Fostering an inclusive campus community.

III. Collaborations with other units or external entities to enable goals

Other UIUC Colleges and Units.
Office of School University Partnerships- OSUP

STEM

1.2.c Increasing the access and retention of minorities and women in the sciences.

1.2.1 Research

1.2.2 Evaluation

1.2.3. Development

1.2.3 a. Developing models and approaches to enhance the effectiveness of outreach efforts associated with large STEM research grants at UIUC to better recruit and engage females and minorities;

1.2.3 b. Developing pedagogies and pedagogical models that extend the current knowledge base on best instructional practices in the context of K-16 education into the realms of educating the public at large, which brings particular challenges given the associated wide range of "learner" characteristics in terms of age, interest, background, cognitive abilities, etc

1.2.4. Outreach

1.2.4. c. organizing a series of high profile, widely publicized public forums on science-related issues of interest to the public and the media, including teaching evolutionary theory in schools, sex education, the "math wars," conflicting views on the gender gap in STEM education; etc.

Ubiquitous Learning Institute

4. Undergraduate and Graduate Student Training

Although we hope to train students of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, we will be particularly interested in those students who are underrepresented in this field. We will actively recruit students who show interest and academic promise at the early stages of their undergraduate and graduate training and encourage them to work for the Institute for a minimum of three semesters. We also plan to give students multiple opportunities to publish.

Future of Public Education

I. Critical goals

Core objectives

Social learning outcomes of public education (particularly for marginalized students)

Alternative models of public education

Engagement/distribution/dissemination

Appendix B: External Points of Intersection and Connections with Strategic Plans and Initiatives

UIUC Strategic Plan

<Insert Jorge's stuff here.>

Also, do we need a list of things going on in the community that may be important links?

Appendix C: Points of Intersection and Connections with Drafts of Task Forces

Small Urban

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