

SUNY Polytechnic Institute Strategic Diversity and Inclusion Plan

Reference

Memorandum to Presidents

March 10, 2016

Policy and Guidance: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

October 19, 2016

Introduction

This plan provides background and outlines the process by which SUNY Poly will recruit a Chief Diversity Officer in compliance with SUNY requirements. It emphasizes the unique elements of achieving diversity in the polytechnic university environment and concludes with planning to recruit a part-time CDO.

Demographics at SUNY Poly

SUNY Poly's student body is currently 40% female and 60% male. With the addition of new programs (e.g. IMGD) and more women moving into STEM fields, an increase in the percentage of females is expected.

SUNY Poly has continued to attract diverse students as a result of recruiting initiatives and special program opportunities. These initiatives include a close working relationship with On Point for College, a Utica and Syracuse-based organization that helps first generation and low-income students navigate the college admission process. We also work with CBO's across New York State.

The percentages of the student population comprised of minority students was 11% in 2005, 13% in Fall 2014 and currently 16% in Fall 2015. The percentage of International students has also seen a similar increase with 4.2% in Fall 2005 to 6.4% in Fall 2015.

The overall student demographic for a 5 year average is shown in Table 1.

White	76%
African-American	7%
Hispanic	4%
Asian/Pacific Island	3%
International	5%
Native	.3%
NR	2%

SUNY Poly's faculty and staff headcount has increased since the merger of SUNYIT and CNSE in July 2014. There were 598 faculty and staff as of Fall 2015; 356 or 60% were male with 242 or 40% being female. Approximately 9% are foreign born and 11 % are in minority categories.

As SUNY Poly increases enrollment and adds new programs, the faculty/staff headcount will increase, with a consistent increase in the actual headcount of minorities and foreign born individuals.

Table 2 – Faculty and Staff				
	Male	Female	Total	% to Total
Nonresident Alien	34	18	52	9%
Hispanic/Latino	9	2	11	2%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	2	3	1%
Asian	26	7	33	6%
Black/African American	8	8	16	3%
White	278	204	482	81%
Two+ Races	0	1	1	0%
Total	356	242	598	100%
<i>Minority</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>11%</i>

Approximately 45% of the SUNY Poly faculty and staff are female. It is worth noting that SUNY Poly has successfully recruited four new female faculty members in the past 2 years to engineering and computer science.

Regional Characteristics

For Oneida County, census data shows:

Male 49.8% Female 50.2%
 White 87% African American 6.8% American Indian 6.3% Hispanic/Latino 5.5%

For the City of Utica, census data shows:

Male 48.1% Female 51.9%
 White 69% African American 15.3% American Indian 0.3% Hispanic/Latino 10.5%

The City of Utica population includes a large number of refugees so that the number of individuals born outside of the U.S. is larger and diverse.

Utica has the fourth highest concentration of refugees of any American city, and is known as “The Town That Loves Refugees.” The presence of people and cultures from all over the world is felt both in the city and the SUNY POLY campus. Since the early 1980’s, there have been approximately 15,000 refugees who have been welcomed through the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees. SUNY POLY has embraced the diversity of the city and the opportunities that can be found in Utica in terms of applied learning and cultural enrichment of our students, faculty, and staff.

The diversity of the city is well represented on the SUNY POLY campus, with refugees from countries such as Bosnia, Burma, Sudan, Vietnam, and Cambodia succeeding in academics, graduating, and finding jobs in their fields. One recent graduate from Burma, Jenjira May Htoo, received the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence, which points to significant support by faculty and the institute as a whole. SUNY POLY has made many efforts to welcome refugees, immigrants, and low-income people to campus. For example, SUNY POLY offers scholarships and transportation for summer camps and makes it possible for students to participate. SUNY POLY students have mentored community members in Robotics and Life Sciences as part of an NSF-funded program.

SUNY Poly strives to increase diversity and fosters programming that creates a culture of inclusion. Initiatives are ongoing and are reflective of collaborative efforts across the University.

SUNY Poly’s EOP program is a diverse group of men and women who are from academically and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Currently funded for 58 students, the EOP program, through its summer program and FYS series, has benefited from higher than the institutional average first-to-second-year retention rates.

SUNY Poly’s CSTEP program, commencing in Fall 2015 following a competitive RFP process, is funded for 40 students across both sites to assist and support underrepresented populations entering STEM disciplines as well as disciplines leading to professional licensure.

SUNY Poly kicks off the Fall 2016 semester with a new awareness campaign that will highlight diversity. The RESPECT campaign, instituted through a working group made up of faculty, staff and students, will focus on individual differences. This educational initiative will provide educational and reflection opportunities for the entire campus.

The SUNY Poly Student Associations have also consistently been supportive of diversity and inclusion efforts as they assist with the activation of student clubs that foster acceptance of differences. Some of the most active clubs include: BLASU (Black and Latino American Student Union), ISA (International Student Association), WIAC (West Indian African Club) and Poly Pride.

All gender housing has been slowly integrated into the residential complexes at SUNY Poly. Although instituted in Fall 2015 in select complexes offering single room suites, all gender housing was added to the housing selection process for Fall 2016. Legislation specific to protecting transgenders assisted in offering greater flexibility in housing options and SUNY Poly

will be proactive in creating living and learning environments that are conducive for our diverse population.

Search committees for faculty and staff are carefully formed and fully engaged with the HR office to ensure minorities, women, veteran, and disabled individuals are fully considered. Success has been excellent and plans to strengthen outreach are being put in place.

Objective

SUNY Poly as a polytechnic institution, understands that its graduates must embrace diversity, in the broadest sense, to be effective professionals in their careers. It also understands that its faculty, staff and students bring perspectives to the campus that represent their own life paths. SUNY Poly strives to achieve breadth of perspective by employing broad measures of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, economic status, cultural experience, and mode of thought in order to provide a campus environment conducive to the development of that breadth.

SUNY Poly has an aggressive retention program that has achieved 79% first year to sophomore retention. The goal is 85% by 2020. It is the case that EOP students have exceeded this goal for each of the past 2 years.

In the polytechnic environment, there are inherent limitations formed by several phenomena:

1. Small number of students interested and capable of studying STEM subjects.
2. Even smaller number of women interested in STEM subjects
3. Extremely small number of potential faculty members with diverse characteristics.

Nevertheless, SUNY Poly has employed an aggressive recruiting strategy for faculty, staff and students with considerable success.

Going Forward

In the polytechnic arena, it is essential to maximize the number of graduates in order to fulfill the positions necessary to sustain the economic competitiveness of the nation. To do that we must successfully recruit faculty, staff and students with the intellectual ability and motivation to succeed. To succeed, we must draw from the ethnically and gender diverse populations who presently do not see themselves as pursuing polytechnically oriented degrees or jobs.

We plan to recruit a Chief Diversity Officer to work with all offices – Admissions, Human Resources, Student Services and Colleges, to promote engagement of all employees and students in achieving a more diverse population.

We recognize the need to achieve a diverse faculty if we are to succeed in achieving the diverse student body we seek. To that end, we know we must be proactive in faculty recruiting efforts because there is a dearth of candidates in many disciplines that form a polytechnic faculty. To build that strong faculty we require not only gender and ethnic diversity, but also economic, geographic, and experiential perspectives as well.

Recruiting CDO

Since SUNY Poly is a relatively small college, we will seek a part-time CDO, either stand alone or shared with other small institutions. A search will be launched in a timely manner to insure the position is filled by September 1, 2017.

We will insure that the CDO is a member of the President's Cabinet and Provost's Council. The CDO will report to the President or Provost. The CDO will insure the campuses follow best practices with regard to faculty, staff, and student recruiting. A diversity task force is being invited to advise the community and the CDO regarding status and best practices.