OFFICE OF DIVERSITY PROGRAMS
A new approach with a new name

It has become increasingly clear that the efforts of the University of West Florida to create, enhance, promote and support a diverse community are, while noble, disjointed, at best, and foundering, at worst. Individuals and groups have struggled because of the University’s lack of coordination, and the lack of an emphasis and a formal, highly visible structure for diversity programs.

The Office of Multicultural Studies attempted to bring awareness to diversity issues, yet it is just one part of a much larger mosaic of activities that include focused commitment at all University levels, student recruitment and retention, faculty and staff recruitment, student affairs, community outreach, cultural events and diversity training for students, faculty and staff. Dr. Godfrey Franklin provided the University a most valuable service in developing and coordinating, under changing central administration leadership, the present Office of Multicultural Studies.

This proposal unites the University and community outreach programs in the area of diversity under one umbrella, thus providing a coordinated and integrated approach to make real improvements when they are most needed.

More than one out of every five residents (21 percent) in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa and Walton counties will be a minority by the year 2012, according to the Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development. Florida’s public school system now has a majority of minority students, with 50.3 percent of the 2.6 million students reported as being minority this academic year. All of UWF’s enrollment growth between 1991 and 2002 has been in minority enrollment. (See Figures 1 & 2 below.) The number of African Americans has increased from 425 in 1991 to 943 in 2002, Hispanic students from 130 to 371, Asian students from 189 to 417 and Native American students from 26 to 102. The percentage of female students at UWF has increased from 57 percent in 1991 to 59 percent in this academic year. Finally, UWF matriculated-international-student enrollment increased more than 10 percent every year from 1997 to 2002.

Because of those demographic shifts, UWF must begin now to accentuate efforts to make UWF a warm and inviting place for all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, economic status, sexual orientation and physical capability.

A work group convened by Interim Provost Wes Little was charged with redefining the role of the Office of Multicultural Studies. The group, whose members are listed at the end of this document, praises those who have worked
long and hard on campus diversity issues for many years. Without such diligent efforts, we would not be in a position today to refine existing programs and forge ahead with renewed vigor. The group proposes to enhance what already has been created, coordinate activities whenever possible, and bring to UWF an enlightened vision of how a diverse community can flourish.

With that, the workgroup presents the following case statement and proposed mission statement, charter and job descriptions for the Office of Diversity Programs.

Return on investment

As the demographics of American culture and Northwest Florida change, it is imperative that the University of West Florida provides leadership for multiculturalism. Enrollment increases at UWF for the last decade have come from increased minority enrollment, yet our campus culture is lacking in meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Any investment of financial resources and human effort in these areas will make UWF a more inviting place for students from diverse backgrounds.

Our job as an educational entity is to prepare our students for life in our cities, counties, nation and the world, all of which continue to increase in diversity. We simply must, if we are to provide adequate preparation, reach meaningfully to all students through a variety of efforts, beginning with our recruitment efforts. But UWF recruiters can only highlight what exists on our campuses, so it is imperative that we create a campus that is as friendly to the female as well as the male, to the person with disabilities as well as the able-bodied individual, to the student of color as well as the white student.

By investing in increased academic and cultural programming on diversity, we send a strong message to all students that our campus is a mirror of our society, and we invite all people to attend. That makes the job of our recruiters much easier.

We also must continue to pay close attention to the diversity levels of our faculty and staff, addressing those areas of need to ensure that our employees mirror our student body. UWF will become a much more inviting place to current and potential employees if that happens. If we have minority staff and faculty members, as well as students, who feel they are treated with respect and dignity and that their contributions are valued highly, they can assist tremendously in spreading the virtues of attending and working at UWF.

Finally, external relations with minority constituents in Northwest Florida require attention. The negative news accounts of a few years ago handicapped UWF’s efforts and bolstered a lingering, negative reputation among certain minority
communities. We simply must recover what we have lost and move forward with
new initiatives.

If we fail to provide diversity leadership with results, then it becomes increasingly
difficult to seek support from minority communities. By investing in a coordinated
outreach program and working in collaboration and partnership with our diverse
community partners, we increase the likelihood of attracting minority students
and employees. We also have an obligation to make available our intellectual
and leadership strengths to assist all our diverse communities in reaching their
full potential. By doing so, we help ourselves by helping others.

The Office of Diversity Programs would coordinate outreach activities, working
closely with the president and senior administrators to make those valuable
connections with community leaders.

**Staffing, budget and space**

The current staff of the office of Multicultural Studies consists of the director and
administrative assistant. The office budget for 2003-04 is $23,000, not including
the salary of the director or administrative assistant. About $15,000 of the
budget was allocated for expenses, including programs. The office currently
reports to the Provost.

To emphasize the importance of achieving diversity goals, this proposal calls for
creating the position of an Associate Vice President to lead the new Office of
Diversity Programs. That person would report jointly to the Provost and
Executive Assistant to the President/Deputy Corporate Secretary, thus giving
authority to implement and coordinate needed programs. An Administrative
Director would report to the Associate Vice President. Their duties are specified
in the job description. An Advisory Board, Executive Committee and Community
Relations Advisory Committee would be formed to provide guidance to the office.

The budget for the Office of Diversity Programs would have to be increased
substantially to accommodate the proposed position salaries and to increase
programming, outreach and coordination of activities. (See implementation
proposal below.)

Space is a valuable commodity at UWF. While the workgroup stresses the need
to have adequate space to house the staff in a facility that would accommodate
the Office of Diversity Program’s new and many activities, it defers to the senior
administration to make the appropriate space assignments, encouraging them to
make this a high priority as its reach extends across all divisional lines and
deply into external communities. In addition to adequate space for the Office,
the workgroup recommends that the senior administration make the space
appropriate to the commitment for diversity; i.e., space should be central in the campus physical environment.
Implementation

It is recommended that the ideal UWF Office of Diversity Programs staff report to the Provost and Executive Assistant to the President. The staff includes the following positions:

- Associate Vice President for Diversity Programs (academic position also responsible for academic programmatic needs on campus)
- Administrative Director of Office
- Administrative Assistant

For all the positions, formal searches are recommended (internal and external searches).

Given economic, programmatic, and political realities, the staffing for the ideal UWF Office of Diversity Programs should be undertaken during a one year period. *This timeline would also allow the work-group to monitor and evaluate the proposed Office of Diversity Programs.*

**For transitional implementation of the Office of Diversity Programs, the work group recommends the following:**

**Interim Associate Vice President, Office of Diversity Programs – Academic emphasis**

*For the transition period, the Interim Associate Vice President should have senior academic rank, be released from 2/3 teaching duties, and have a 12-month appointment.*

*The 2004 –2005 Diversity Programs budget should include an administrative supplement for the Interim Associate Vice President, as well as adjunct teaching funds for released courses of the Associate Vice President.*

*An internal search (call for nominations) for the Interim Associate Vice President for Diversity Programs, coordinated by the Provost and Executive Assistant to the President, should be conducted as soon as possible.*

**Administrative Director of Office of Diversity Programs**

*The duties for this permanent position should be presently filled by an A/P or USPS professional, with 3/4 workload for the Office.*

**Administrative Assistant, Office of Diversity Programs**

Presently, the Office of Multicultural Studies has a fulltime Administrative Assistant.
The Interim Associate Vice President for Diversity Programs, incoming Provost, Executive Assistant to the President, and workgroup members should meet in August 2004 to develop goals and objectives for the Office of Diversity Programs. With such goals and objectives, the workgroup will provide a review of the Office of Diversity Programs in August, 2005.

It is extremely important for the form and function of this office to be formalized quickly to secure its future. The impetus behind this effort is now largely being driven by individuals, who may not hold the same positions in the future and, thus, not be available to further its cause. The appointments of Office leadership and the creation of the Advisory Board, Executive Committee and Community Relations Advisory Committee are essential in guaranteeing the functions of the office will continue with continuity and not be contingent upon the desires and motivations of the original workgroup.

**Workgroup committee members**

Doug Friedrich – chair

Keith Goldschmidt  
Kay MacKenzie  
Angela McCorvey  
Madeeha Mir  
Jackie Pinkard  
Jeff Pollard  
Mary Lou Ruud  
Chat Sue  
King Walker
The University of West Florida
Headcount Enrollment by
Ethnicity and Gender

Minority Enrollment Trend

1,000
800
600
400
200
0

Asian  African American  Hispanic  Native American
The University of West Florida
Headcount Enrollment by
Ethnicity and Gender

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SOURCE: Student Data Course File