9 March 2015

Dear Steering Committee,

We believe it is the responsibility of every member of this institution—as part of our commitment to create a welcoming, equitable, and respectful campus community—to genuinely address issues of access and climate for our students.

After reviewing institutional data, reports and documents, new and old survey data, information from our 32 individual “conversations” and focus groups, and the all-campus open forums, we have come to the following conclusions: Across the university, a significant amount of work by staff, faculty, and students has been devoted to our longstanding commitment to institutionalizing diversity, equity, and inclusion. At HSU, we have the intention of supporting diversity, and we have taken many important steps in this effort. We have not succeeded, however, in closing achievement gaps, and discrimination and bias persist both on and off campus. Clearly, we are not yet fully equipped to provide our changing student demographic with the resources and support to succeed.

We believe we need to create a culture of respect, trust and accountability in order to make positive changes for all students. Many stakeholders with whom we spoke mentioned a culture of "conflict avoidance" on campus, which frequently prevents administrators, faculty, and staff from engaging in difficult conversations and making decisions. If we are to succeed in our efforts toward inclusive student success, we must commit, communicate authentically, collaborate, and hold each other accountable for achieving a better experience for all members of the HSU community.

During our strategic planning work, several key issues regarding diversity and inclusion were highlighted by stakeholders:

1) The diversity in our faculty, staff, and administration does not match that of the student body.

2) We have various academic and non-academic supports for students in place, but they are not an institutional priority and coordination across supports is not consistent. Students are not tracked across these units and the result is that they fall through the cracks.

3) There is a need for coordinated, relevant, and expanded development for faculty, staff and administrators. We need to increase our intercultural competency and provide substantive training to assist all HSU employees in supporting inclusive student success.

4) Historical patterns of engaging with local Tribal Nations and communities have not always resulted in trusting and productive relationships.

5) There is a need to proactively address the discrimination, bias, and exclusion reported both on campus and in our communities, as it negatively impacts retention and success for all.

In light of the above, we present our recommendations. We have listed two main strategies under each recommendation with additional specific recommendations in Appendix II. Please note that these are not exhaustive lists. We provide our working definition of “diversity and inclusion” in Appendix I and a list of people with whom we have met in Appendix III. We are happy to provide access to our Moodle page with all DITF documents if the Steering Committee would find this helpful.

Sincerely,

Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Members
**Recommendation 1:** Recruit and retain faculty, staff, and administrators from diverse backgrounds in order to match the demographics of our students and the state of California as a whole.

- Coordinate and expand ongoing training efforts for search committees and hiring authorities to ensure that hiring processes take steps to address and remedy bias and foster a supportive, welcoming, and diverse campus.
- Acknowledge and amend the disproportionate impacts and expectations (“cultural taxation”) on our faculty, staff, and administrators from underrepresented groups.

**Recommendation 2:** Coordinate academic and co-curricular programs that support underrepresented students as one part of a broader, campus-wide effort to close academic achievement gaps.

- Develop a prioritized, holistic, specific implementation plan that re-evaluates and addresses operational needs for academic and co-curricular programs such as EOP, INRSEP, ITEPP, LSAMP, Queer Resource Center, SDRC, STEM Collaborative, TRIO, Upward Bound, the Veterans’ Center and the Cross Cultural Centers for Academic Excellence. Clarify and assess their relationships to one other, to RISS and to all academic units. Break down any “silo-ing” of efforts.
- Communicate consistently and clearly to the campus about inclusive student success programs and initiatives.

**Recommendation 3:** Increase intercultural competency and grow capacity to better support inclusive student success through professional development for faculty, staff and administrators.

- Expand and institutionalize across campus high-impact, diversity-related practices and content, including curricular and co-curricular transformation, knowledge about the dynamics of power and privilege, and intercultural communication skills in order to eliminate achievement gaps for underrepresented students and reduce bias on campus.
- Establish consistent, effective training for faculty, staff, and administrators in these areas and incentivize success through performance reviews and other accountability measures.

**Recommendation 4:** Repair relationships and engage with local Tribal Nations and communities through authentic actions, specific planning, accountability, and true collaboration.

- Establish a meaningful, iterative process for collaboration based on reciprocal engagement that identifies and addresses needs and strategies.
- Appoint and support a Tribal Liaison who will work with tribes on behalf of the President and University.

**Recommendation 5:** Develop a plan to partner with local communities to transform the culture surrounding diversity and inclusion in order to create a safer, more welcoming off-campus environment.

- Appoint specific faculty, staff, and administrators to collaborate with local community leaders to create a work plan that addresses issues of discrimination in our communities.
- Increase opportunities for students within local communities.
APPENDIX I. Definition of “Diversity and Inclusion”

What we mean by diversity:

We believe it is our responsibility as an institution—as part of our commitment to creating a welcoming, equitable, and respectful campus community—to genuinely address issues of access and climate for our community members* who might encounter barriers based on:

• Being a Person of Color, including underrepresented groups and new immigrant populations
• Being members of Indigenous Sovereign Nations
• Being a person with a visible or invisible disability
• Identifying as a woman
• Identifying as gender diverse or people of various gender and sexual identities and expressions
• Being a first-generation student
• Being from an economically disadvantaged background
• Religious, political, and/or cultural expression
• Veteran status
• Legal status
• Sexual orientation
• Age
• National origin
• Language
• Race or ethnicity

Furthermore, we recognize the importance of working with people who claim more than one of the above identities and those as yet unforeseen. We also recognize the dynamic nature of diversity and value the breadth of experiences that all people bring to campus.

* Please note that the order of the above list does not imply an order of importance.

What we mean by inclusion:

Being inclusive is the active, intentional, ongoing engagement with diversity in ways that increase one’s awareness, content knowledge, high-level thinking, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within value systems and institutions, with an aim of creating a climate that affirms the inherent value and dignity of all individuals and communities.
APPENDIX II. Additional ideas recommended by various stakeholders.

1. **Recruit and Retain Faculty, Staff, and Administrators from Diverse Backgrounds**
   - Improve recruiting practices, including training on writing broader job descriptions, to attract diversity candidates.
   - Establish formal mentoring practices for all new employees and pathways for mobility and promotion.

2. **Coordinate, Re-evaluate and Support Academic and Co-curricular Student Services**
   - Pursue Department of Education Title V and other external funding by
     - bringing in outside experts to evaluate and assist in making recommendations to enhance our student support services,
     - providing specific faculty, staff, and administrative training opportunities,
     - expanding and improve our student orientation and advising programs, and
     - funding the development of high-impact practices such as a first-year experience and summer bridge programs that include academic support, soft skills, and cultural sensitivity training.
   - Provide Additional Support for Current Specific Programs, including:
     - Developing transition and integration programing and academic support for Veterans’ Services, establishing recognition events (e.g., Veterans’ and Memorial Day events), and finding a space with windows for the center.
     - Considering implementing recommendations from the 2013 HSU Undocumented Students Task Force.
     - Providing structure and regular staffing for the Queer Resource Center.
     - Creating community building events for students using the SDRC, including one during Disability Awareness Month, and ensuring all-university implementation of universal design, including tools and training for faculty and staff.

3. **Improve Faculty and Staff Professional Development**
   - Create a coordinated professional development plan and office.
   - Provide follow-up training and implementation help year-round for the Institute for Student Success topics and initiatives.
   - Explicitly recognize that familiarity and experience in diversity-related topics are professional competencies.
   - Increase knowledge, awareness, and capacity on diversity-related topics among all students by ensuring that diverse perspectives are a key component of the curriculum and co-curriculum.

4. **Repair Relationships with Local Tribal Nations and Native American Communities**
   - Hire a Native American/Alaska Native recruiter.
   - Continue to support programs that are designed to enrich the academic, co-curricular, and professional lives of Native students on campus (ITEPP, INRSEP).
• Increase employee and student awareness and education about local tribal history and current affairs (potentially by offering trainings/workshops and/or incorporating this into employee and student orientations).

5. **Create a Safer, More Welcoming Off-Campus Community**
   • Bring in outside experts to help develop culturally appropriate community engagement strategies.
   • Collaborate with schools, local government, and businesses, among others, to develop specific strategies for developing training and educational opportunities around diversity-related issues.
   • Engage with local Communities of Color to draw on existing knowledge, expertise, insights and local projects already underway; ensure that these communities are represented in any ongoing process.
   • Support multicultural community programming off campus that can increase awareness and foster positive connections between students and community members.
APPENDIX III. List of People Contacted.

“Conversations” (21 Total)

- Adrienne Colegrove-Raymond, ITEPP
- Alison Holmes, International Studies Department
- Christina Accomando, Kim Berry, and Jennifer Eichstedt, CRGS and Sociology
- Dan Saveliff, EOP
- Graciela Chipres and Jerry Dinzes, Associated Students
- Jenny Zorn, Academic Affairs
- Kathy Thornhill, Undergraduate Advising, Career Services, Service Learning and Internships
- Kenneth Ayoob and John Lee, CAHSS and CPS
- Kevin O’Brien, Student Disability Resource Center and Student Access Services
- Kim Hall, Veterans’ Office
- Leo Canez and Jen Dyke, Upward Bound
- Lisa Castellino, Institutional Research and Planning
- Lorena Boswell, Molly Kresl, and Tay Triggs, YES House, Clubs and Activities, and Student Engagement and Leadership
- Marlon Sherman, Native American Studies Department
- Marylyn Paik-Nicely, Multicultural Center
- Peg Blake, Student Affairs
- Radha Webley, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- Rebecca Brown, International Programs Office
- Sarah Bacio and Tracy Smith, RAMP
- Scott Paynton and Rick Zechar, CAHSS and CNRS
- Vikash Lakhani, Enrollment Management

Focus Groups (11 total groups; number of attendees in parentheses below)

- Arcata Chamber of Commerce (3)
- Black/African American Students (3)
- City of Arcata Committee Chairs (8)
- Faculty (5)
- General Students (5)
- Humboldt County Educators (4)
- International Students (2)
- Latin@ Students (2)
- Staff (30)
- Students with Disabilities (6)
- Veterans (24 students, 2 staff, 1 faculty, 1 parent)