



# **Report on Institutional Programs of Cultural Diversity**

## **Volumes I & II**

### **MSAR # 8751**

### **December 2015**



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## **Volume I**

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## 2015 Cultural Diversity Report

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Maryland Education Article §11-406, each public postsecondary institution in Maryland is required to develop and implement a plan for cultural diversity. These plans must include a description of how the institution addresses cultural diversity among its student, faculty, and staff populations; how the institution plans to further enhance diversity; and a summary of resources needed to recruit and retain a culturally diverse student body. Each institution must submit an annual progress report to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) regarding the implementation of its plan. MHEC reviews these progress reports to monitor compliance with diversity goals established in the State Plan for Higher Education. These progress reports are included in Volume II of this report.

Goal 3 of the 2013 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education, *Maryland Ready*, establishes a broad definition of cultural diversity, incorporating a wide range of socioeconomic factors and many different categories identifying populations underrepresented in higher education. Institutional plans address a number of these populations.

While institutions have developed a wide range of strategies to increase diversity on their campuses, several common themes emerge. Recruitment of students from underserved populations has largely involved various forms of outreach to those populations to make them aware of postsecondary educational opportunities. Similarly, recruitment of faculty and staff has largely focused on increasing advertising in venues visible to many traditionally underrepresented individuals and outreach to institutions that serve them. Retention strategies have taken a two-pronged approach: providing additional support to underrepresented populations and creating an environment on campus that results in enhanced awareness of cultural diversity.

In accordance with the goals established in *Maryland Ready*, Maryland's colleges and universities have made a number of strides towards ensuring that diversity is valued and embraced as a fundamental priority in Maryland's postsecondary environment. Maryland colleges and universities continue to utilize and develop new and unique initiatives to enhance cultural diversity on their campuses.

## INTRODUCTION

Maryland Education Article §11-406 requires that each public postsecondary institution develop and implement a plan for cultural diversity, including both an implementation strategy and a timeline for meeting goals established by the plan. Plans created in accordance with this statute must include:

- (i) A description of the way the institution addresses cultural diversity among its student, faculty, and staff populations;
- (ii) A description of how the institution plans to enhance cultural diversity, if improvement is needed;
- (iii) A process for reporting campus-based hate crimes, as defined under Title 10, Subtitle 3 of the Criminal Law Article and consistent with federal requirements under 20 U.S.C. §1092(f), known as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act; and
- (iv) A summary of any resources, including State grants, needed by the institution to effectively recruit and retain a culturally diverse student body.

These plans are submitted annually to the institution's governing board for approval. Each governing board submits a progress report each year to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) detailing the institution's implementation of its diversity plan. By statute, MHEC is the state agency responsible for monitoring compliance with the diversity goals of the State Plan for Higher Education.

In addition to satisfying the requirements of §11-406, this report provides an opportunity to monitor key access and success metrics critical to achieving goals articulated in Goal 3 of the 2013 Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education, *Maryland Ready*. Goal 3 outlines the state's commitment to diversity and achieving equitable outcomes for all students. *Maryland Ready* establishes a very broad definition of diversity, incorporating "age; cultural identity; disability; ethnicity; family educational history (e.g., first-generation college students); gender identity and expression; nationality; sexual orientation; political affiliation; race; religious affiliation; sex; economic, marital, social, and veteran status; or any other personal attribute included in institutional policies and codes." The majority of diversity plans address each of these populations.

While §11-406 refers only to public institutions, Maryland Education Article §10-211 requires Maryland's state-aided independent colleges and universities to develop and report on programs designed to "promote and enhance" cultural diversity. These reports are submitted each year to the Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities Association (MICUA). While MHEC does not have regulatory oversight for the diversity programs at these institutions, MICUA is required to provide the Commission with an annual status report and an analysis of best practices in place at these institutions.

This report includes two volumes. Volume I includes a description of the types of programs available at public institutions throughout the state focusing on certain aspects of diversity, along with selected highlights of those programs. Volume II contains institutional narratives as submitted to MHEC, presented unedited by Commission staff. This includes the narratives prepared by both Maryland's public colleges and universities and independent institutions and an index categorizing programs by type. Institutional narratives contain a summary of programs offered, a review of program implementation and progress towards the institution's diversity goals, and information regarding the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act.

## **INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES**

Maryland's institutions have developed a wide variety of initiatives to improve cultural diversity on their campuses. In accordance with the requirements established in §11-406, all are designed to "enhance cultural diversity programming and sensitivity to cultural diversity through instruction and training of the student body, faculty, and staff." Institutions have created many programs to increase the representation of minorities on campus, primarily by focusing on recruiting and retaining diverse students, faculty, and staff. Other programs focus on creating positive interactions within a diverse community and creating greater cultural awareness, including initiatives both inside and outside of the classroom.

### **Underrepresented Student Recruitment and Retention**

As noted above, the definition of diversity in *Maryland Ready* is very inclusive. Institutions both in Maryland and nationwide have increased their emphasis on recruiting and retaining many types of underserved populations, including underrepresented minorities, low-income, first-generation, veteran, and other non-traditional students.

Many colleges and universities have focused on outreach as a tool to increase their visibility to these populations. In particular, institutions have utilized strategies such as presentations to high schools with large percentages of target populations, presence at and participation in community events, and increased advertising targeting minority students. Several institutions have created programs specifically focusing on recruiting students from Baltimore City, including the University of Maryland, College Park, Towson University, Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Partnerships between institutions also play a substantial role in the recruitment of underrepresented students. Institutions are increasingly attempting to address the academic pipeline, to ensure both that students are prepared for college-level work and are aware of the plethora of postsecondary education opportunities available to them. Many colleges and universities have created partnerships with local middle and high schools to provide services such as enhanced college advising. A number of four-year institutions work together with two-year colleges, particularly those with higher enrollments of students from underrepresented

minorities. These partnerships involve articulation agreements to improve the transfer process and programs that allow for a seamless transition from the two-year to the four-year program. For example, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) has established active partnerships with Montgomery College, Howard Community College, Anne Arundel Community College, and the Community College of Baltimore County to help facilitate reverse transfer for students who transfer without first having received an associate degree, allowing students to apply credits earned at UMBC to the community colleges' degree requirements.

To help reduce concerns regarding the financial aspects of postsecondary enrollment, many campuses stress the availability of financial aid, particularly to low-income and first-generation students. At most campuses, this is facilitated by admissions officers discussing the many financial aid programs available through programs funded by the state and federal government at admissions events. There are also a number of scholarship and financial aid programs offered by institutions that specifically focus on underrepresented minority and low-income students.

Once students are enrolled, they have access to a number of initiatives specifically designed to help increase the success of underrepresented students. Every college and university in the state offers programs targeting minority, low-income, and/or first generation students, and all institutions provide disability support services. A number of these programs are supported through Federal TRIO grants, which fund programs created to identify and serve students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Services provided under these various programs include increased and targeted advising, supplemental instruction, mentoring, and personal and professional development opportunities with the goal of keeping them enrolled and progressing towards graduation.

### **Underrepresented Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention**

The primary strategy for increasing representation of minority faculty and staff – at every institution – begins with a recruitment strategy designed to increase diversity in the applicant pool. Colleges and universities advertise in a number of publications targeting diverse constituencies, including *Insight into Diversity*, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, *Minority Update*, *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, and *Hispanics in Higher Education*. Many schools have enhanced their recruiting efforts at institutions with large numbers of underrepresented minorities enrolled in graduate programs, particularly at historically black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions. Additionally, institutions continue to work to ensure diversity among those serving on hiring committees. Training is provided to those serving on hiring committees to ensure that members are aware of and compliant with non-discrimination requirements throughout all stages of the hiring process.

Recruitment is only one step in ensuring diversity among the faculty and staff populations, however. Once individuals have been attracted to the institution, campuses have created a number of programs designed to ensure that they will want to stay there, and colleges have



increasingly created programs that emphasize the importance of retaining minority faculty and staff. For example, Maryland's colleges and universities have implemented faculty mentoring programs, increased professional development opportunities, and provided opportunities for faculty and staff to become engaged with co-curricular programming. Many of these programs focus on retaining women in STEM fields, where they remain underrepresented.

### **Faculty and Staff Cultural Training Programs**

All colleges and universities require some form of diversity training during new employee orientations. At most institutions this is accomplished by a module on working within a diverse environment. However, many institutions offer additional training in cultural diversity topics that address topics central to increasing faculty, staff, and student recruitment and retention.

Incorporating diversity and multiculturalism into the classroom environment is a subject that many institutions emphasize in their training offerings. This also includes instruction and/or discussion about the benefits diversity within the educational setting has upon all students' success. As in other areas, these programs tend to have a very broad definition of diversity, consistent with the definition used in *Maryland Ready*. Maryland colleges and universities have provided faculty and staff instruction on a wide array of topics, ranging from identifying, understanding, and responding to mental health illnesses to special issues affecting LGBTQIA students inside and outside of the classroom.

### **Curricular Initiatives to Promote Cultural Diversity in the Classroom**

Today, all Maryland campuses incorporate some form of cultural diversity course requirements into their general education programs. While specific requirements vary by institution, these often include courses in topics such as world history, languages, and social and cultural studies, though not all diversity courses are explicitly labeled as such. Some colleges and universities expect that rather than requiring completion of courses specifically focusing on diversity, all general education courses should incorporate concepts such as the influence of the environment and culture on societies and human behaviors.

Many academic majors also require coursework focusing on diversity issues within the specific field of study. Nursing, medical, dental, and counseling programs throughout the state require coursework and training in culturally competent care. In particular, University of Maryland, Baltimore offers a particularly high number of these courses in response to the licensure requirements for its professional schools.

In addition to coursework focusing on issues within a specific major, many colleges and universities today offer full academic majors or minors specifically focusing on cultural diversity. These interdisciplinary programs draw upon a wide array of fields, such as sociology, political science, languages, and history, to investigate issues related to populations often underrepresented both in higher education and in the general population. The University of

Maryland, College Park operates a number of these types of programs, offered through nearly twenty different academic departments.

Study abroad opportunities have begun to play an increasingly prominent role in college and university efforts to promote cultural diversity. Study abroad can give students and faculty increased exposure to and awareness of diverse cultures, supporting the institutional goal of creating a welcoming environment on campus. Many of Maryland's colleges and universities have worked with faculty to assist them in creating faculty-led programs for study abroad. A number of other venues for study abroad are also offered, such as direct enrollment in campuses abroad, participation in campus programs abroad, or participation in structured independent study abroad programs. For example, the Community College of Baltimore County operates an Alternative Break program allowing students an opportunity to perform service for a week of summer or entire spring break outside of their community, interacting with different cultures and gaining a greater understanding of cross-cultural differences. They have worked in Maine, South Dakota, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, and Honduras. Other institutions have also substantially increased outreach and promotional efforts designed to increase student participation in study abroad, utilizing methods such as holding Study Abroad Days and campus presentations.

### **Co-curricular Programming for Students, Faculty, and Staff**

Co-curricular programming at Maryland colleges and universities provides faculty, staff, and students opportunities to share aspects of their culture with others on their campus and to increase their exposure to other cultures. Every campus offers programming centering on topics such as religious or ethnic diversity. Institutions have also developed programs that focus specifically on unique and underrepresented populations, both to increase student, faculty, and staff cultural awareness and to make members of those populations aware of resources that might be available to them on campus. A large number of campuses use events such as World AIDS Day or Pride to educate, celebrate, and inform.

There are also many campuses that offer discussion series and workshops focusing on a wide variety of topics. A particularly popular topic this year revolved around the Freddie Gray case in Baltimore, examining the incident and the subsequent unrest and the complex interactions between crime, poverty, and unemployment. There are also a number of campuses offering workshop series and speaker series that focus on multiple aspects of diversity, such as world history, African-American culture, or LGBTQIA issues.

In addition to these types of programs, Maryland colleges and universities host a wide variety of cultural events, including dance, music, theatre, and art. As these events are typically open to the public, they provide an opportunity to expose both students and the broader local community to cultures other than their own. They also provide a chance for colleges and universities to engage with the local community and afford institutions with additional ways by which to increase their visibility. These are advertised throughout the surrounding community.

## CONCLUSION

Institutions continue to develop new and unique initiatives designed to increase cultural diversity on their campuses. Programs have been designed to help recruit and retain minority faculty, students, and staff. Additionally, institutions have utilized a number of curricular and co-curricular methods to foster and maintain a welcoming and inclusive environment on campus, consistent with diversity goals described in *Maryland Ready*.