

Culture and Equity Team

Recommendations for FY2014

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The Charter

The team (19 staff and faculty) has focused on initiatives that will contribute to the academic success of underserved students. Our goal has been to establish a set of practices that will enable students (first generation, low income, underrepresented) of diverse backgrounds to thrive in the academic community. The team has based its recommendations on NECC research, the research of Dr. Jorge Santiago and research articles citing practices that enable students to succeed. Our recommendations represent an approach that advocates fuller participation within the institution to bridge the academic gaps that are experienced by many of our students. Our exploration and vision is as follows:

1. **Peer Mentoring Program:** Explore the creation of a Peer Mentoring Program designed to help students adjust to college life and learn about opportunities and resources that can contribute to student success. Peer students who are familiar with the college campus, services, resources and classes can assist students and provide academic and personal support.
2. **Professional Development:** The work of improving the success of minority students while at the same time expanding opportunities for majority students with respect to diversity requires attention to several approaches:
 - Supporting faculty development related to teaching and classroom practices:
 - Instructional development as it relates to curricula and course content:
 - Organizational development related to the inclusion of existing diversity initiatives and activities into the academic setting.

- Support of Reading Apprenticeship with attention given to cultural content
3. **Expanding our Pool of Diverse Faculty and Staff:** Research suggests that the presence, engagement and scholarship of diverse faculty and staff positively affect the impact of learning for students while contributing to a more inclusive college environment. This practice does suggest that it would be beneficial to take a more pro-active approach to hiring and retention practices particularly expanding opportunities to qualified professionals in our own communities.

Peer Mentoring Program Subcommittee Recommendations

Peer Mentoring Program: Explore the creation of an NECC Peer Mentoring Program designed to help students adjust to college life and learn about opportunities and resources that can contribute to their success. Peer mentoring students would be familiar with the college campus, services, resources and classes and be able to assist other students by providing academic and personal support.

Action Items:

Item 1.

- Determine recruitment for the pool of mentors.
 - Tap into peer tutors and SI's and provide training for them regarding the role of peer mentoring and college resources
 - Make it possible for students to participate as mentors without over taxing their own schedules but rather provide an experience of support and professionalism for the peer mentors. Students will have an opportunity to better understand how the college works and an opportunity to learn about themselves and others.
 - Explore the possibility of collaboration with Academic Affairs and Peer Mentoring by offering this work as a part of a practicum/internship for a semester with credits for participation. The Practicum would involve training on mentoring, case management, crisis intervention, etc. This model might be ideal for students in Human

Services, Criminal Justice, Psychology, and health related programs.

Item 2.

- Determine which cohort of students to work with.
 - We would consider an initial alignment with a department such as Health or Human Services. We would work with the student mentor in their discipline to develop a connection with other students.
 - Socio-cultural (social capital) skills would be explored passively via peer mentor while a more intrusive approach would occur at the Student Success Center.
 - Determine the level of intrusiveness (low-level: table/students passing out information, mid-level: Supplemental Instructors, high-level: mentor/SI/tutor made a requirement for class)

Item 3.

- Determine the outcomes that are appropriate to measure success/productivity for a particular cohort.
 - Meeting with professors within first two (2) weeks of semester. Communication with professor correlates to successful completion.
 - Requirement to seek support at the Math Center, Writing Lab, additional tutoring, etc. Record visits and measure outcomes.
 - Initiate a policy of "no drops" (withdrawal) from any class until resources are explored.

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Professional Development Subcommittee Recommendations

Action Items:

Item 1.

In keeping with the ATD goals and objectives, Dr. Jorge Santiago's sabbatical will provide a 20-minute video for faculty and staff. It will include two basic attributes ("La Familia"/The Family, and the special relationship of "Personalismo"/Personalism) of the Latino culture. In addition, the video will address learning styles of both Latino and Western Eurocentric students. We will consider how these approaches may not take into consideration the cultural gap. The video will conclude with one example of an alternative approach to teach Latino students.

Item 2.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Create a small pilot project in which faculty participate in a semester long guided experience in creating classrooms that bridge between urban cultures and more classical academic curriculum. Faculty will be introduced to social, cultural and academic relevance of hip-hop music, literature that reflects the Latino urban experience and rap poetry. Consider targeting particular academic areas such as Criminal Justice, College Success Seminar and Liberal Arts.

The objectives are:

- Develop oral and written skills
- Working in groups
- Presentation skills
- Critical thinking skills/music/poetry and literature
- Study Skills
- Teaching Tolerance: Culturally relevant Pedagogy: Morell E and Duncan Andrade

Item 3.

- Reading Apprenticeship support for faculty:
- Support five faculty members who teach multicultural students to complete the online reading apprenticeship program (\$2500) with an additional inclusion of socially inclusive curriculum.

Item 4.

- Professional Development for staff:
 - Create opportunities for staff to participate in NCBI workshops and dialogue groups with staff and students in culturally, ethnically mixed groups.

Item 5.

- Consider participation in the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE) Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in Higher Education.
 - Background: A project team which emerged from NERCHE Multicultural Affairs think tank developed the Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in Higher education.
 - Six dimensions constitute the rubric structure: Progression from stage one: Emerging to Stage three: Transforming suggests the institution is moving closer to fully institutionalizing diversity, inclusion and equity on campus.

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Faculty/Staff Hiring Subcommittee Recommendations

Action Items:

Item 1.

- More active and personal and local recruitment of possible candidates
- Sponsor an NECC social/recruitment social highlighting the benefits of working at NECC and invite key NECC personnel and members of the Lawrence and local community
- Advertise locally and by word of mouth
- Actively recruit professionals in the community to teach as adjuncts at NECC
- Establish a talent pool

Item 2.

- Create an attractive website for the purpose of attracting minority professionals. CVs could be submitted and connected to HR for this purpose. The website would highlight NECC accomplishments, activities and commitment to diversity/multiculturalism.

Item 3.

- Continue to refine the Search Committee training and move towards making it a requirement to serve on a Search Committee.
- Recruit and train advocates who have an interest in this mission of multicultural hiring and create a pool of advocates who will serve on search committees.

Item 4.

- Consider becoming part of the Commonwealth compact.

Item 5.

- Create a department of Multicultural Affairs and create a position to head the initiative.

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