



AACRAO

Report from the Diversity and Leadership Task Force

The AACRAO Diversity and Leadership Task Force met in Washington, DC on October 3-5, 2003. The committee was charged with reviewing issues and questions relating to accessibility, processes, and barriers that may impact diversity in leadership and membership of AACRAO.

The task force believes that despite the fact that members of AACRAO are people of good will, many of the processes and procedures used in the identification, development, and selection of leaders need revision and modification. Diversity and leadership are inextricably woven into the fabric of an organization, and AACRAO, as a leader in higher education, has every reason to desire and demonstrate diversity in practice and philosophy. The task force believes that inaction can lead to a crisis of leadership at AACRAO.

The task force chose to view the challenges of diversity in the context of our strength and expertise, which is enrollment management. Through the development of appropriate strategies for success, such as recruitment, development, retention, and training, the Association can address the issues of diversity throughout its membership and leadership.

The task force was also charged with making recommendations to the board to address this major concern and to improve the outcomes for diversity in leadership and at all levels of member participation. The task force reaffirms AACRAO's commitment to diversity by offering this statement of commitment and these concrete recommendations for changes in both policy and practice to the AACRAO Board of Directors.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Understanding that the future of AACRAO depends upon the participation and professionalism of all members, the Association actively commits itself to diversity as a means of promoting excellence, inclusion, and openness in the fulfillment of its mission.

Immediate steps are needed to advance this commitment. These include:

1. Address diversity and leadership development in the AACRAO mission statement, strategic plan, operating plan, and budget.
 - a. Incorporate AACRAO's commitment to diversity into the AACRAO mission statement and all relevant publications.
 - b. Add diversity initiatives to AACRAO's strategic and operating plans.
 - c. Fund diversity initiatives according to priorities indicated in the strategic plan.
2. Elevate the level of responsibility for diversity and the Association's commitment to diversity within the Board of Directors.
 - a. Responsibility for diversity should be added to every Board of Directors position.
 - b. A new Board of Directors position, with a title such as Vice President for Access, Equity and Diversity, should be created and assigned primary responsibility for the Association's diversity efforts.
 - c. Create the necessary committee structure or realign existing committees to support the new Vice President.
3. Implement processes that lead to diversity in all AACRAO activities, including committee and task force appointments.
 - a. Incorporate diversity initiatives into all AACRAO activities. Develop committee/task force expectations and requirements for diversity participation including reporting of results.

- b. Consistent practice of communication and openness of the Association's activities.
4. Adopt a theme for 2005: Celebrate Diversity
 - a. For the annual meeting in New York, adopt a theme that embraces diversity and highlights the Association's commitment to diversity.
5. Develop and communicate a list of position qualifications for all leadership positions
 - a. A list or matrix of required and desired qualifications should be determined for each elected and appointed position (board, committees, chairs, task forces, etc).
 - b. Qualifications should be the basis for selection for any nomination or appointment to all Association positions.
6. Provide diversity training for board, committees, Nominations and Elections Committee, and staff
 - a. Provide diversity training, from both internal and external sources, as part of orientation for AACRAO Board, Nominations and Elections Committee, professional activities committees, and AACRAO office staff.
7. Increase the diversity of members of the Association
 - a. As part of a diversity campaign, ask institutional contact members to add more diverse members to their institutional rosters.
 - b. Encourage state and regional associations to collaborate with AACRAO in the promotion of diversity.
8. Evaluate and make necessary changes in the nominations and elections process to promote openness and communication that will assist all members to better understand how that process works within AACRAO. We recommend that Nominations and Elections Committee take the following actions.
 - a. Develop and communicate written guidelines, policies and procedures for the operation of Nominations and Elections.
 - b. Start the process of soliciting nominees prior to the annual meeting.
 - c. Certify that the pool of candidates for the slate of officers and Nominations and Elections positions is sufficiently diverse before proceeding with its deliberations.
 - d. Publish a roster of all candidates for each position in the final report of the committee.
 - e. Provide a statistical summary of the candidate pool in the final report.
9. Insure accountability to the members by implementing communication strategies that promote member awareness.
 - a. All appointments and decisions at AACRAO should be communicated and explained openly to the members with appropriate accountability.
 - b. The Association's activities and Board of Directors' actions should be clearly articulated in both a written and spoken format so as to be understandable by all members.
10. Report the results of this task force to membership
 - a. Report of the task force should be available on the AACRAO Web site
 - b. Board actions as a result of the task force should be reported.
 - c. A session from this task force should be added to the annual meeting program.
11. Monitor progress of diversity annually
 - a. As part of the responsibility of the Vice President in recommendation two, the status and progress of diversity in AACRAO should be monitored, evaluated, and reported to the membership annually.

This task force reaffirms AACRAO's historical commitment to diversity. The group consulted a document⁽¹⁾ from 1989 that indicates that AACRAO had given serious and substantial attention to equal educational opportunity and affirmative action.

Task Force Members: **William Haid**, Colorado State University, Chair; **Josephine Figueras**, Passaic Community College (NJ); **Larry Friedman**, Newman College (PA); **Jo Henderson**, Park University (KS); **Adrienne McDay**, William Rainey Harper Community College (IL); **Glenn Munson**, Rhodes College (TN); **Michael Poindexter**, Kingsland Community College (NY); **Kathie Rawding**, Antioch University (CA); **Paul Taylor**, Lexington Community College (KY), Ex-officio, **Barmak Nassirian**, Associate Executive Director, AACRAO.

⁽¹⁾ *Equal Educational Opportunity, Affirmative Action and AACRAO: A historical Perspective and Report of Commitment and Progress (1989)*