

DIVERSITY

REPORT



NORTHERN
Oklahoma College

Background

Northern Oklahoma College (NOC), the State's oldest community college, is a multi-campus, land-grant institution that provides high-quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services which create life-changing experiences and develop students as effective learners and leaders within their communities in a connected, ever-changing world ("About NOC," n.d.). The vision of NOC is to be a model institution for academic quality, cultural enrichment, student success, collaborative learning, creative and forward thinking, and community responsiveness ("About NOC," n.d.). NOC believes that educated citizens are necessary for a healthy, democratic society, and that free and open expression and an appreciation for diversity are cornerstones of higher education. NOC seeks to ensure all strategic enrollment initiatives are driven by the institutional mission and its focus on an educational experience that is high quality, accessible, and affordable.

In the summer of 2014, members of the Administrative Council met with local tribal leaders to address how the institution could better serve Native American students. This initial meeting led to the creation of the Native American Council. In 2015, this council was renamed the Diversity Council to address the needs of diverse populations at NOC. The mission of the Diversity Council is to assist in developing a culture of diversity acceptance across the NOC community. The objectives of the Diversity Council are to 1) advocate for the recruitment and representation of diverse faculty and staff, 2) encourage diversity initiatives that enhance recruitment, retention, and engagement of diverse students throughout the college, 3) enhance community collaborations that support the interests of the college in the area of diversity and inclusion, and 4) encourage faculty, staff, students, and administrators to participate in the professional development opportunities related to diversity ("Diversity Council," n.d.). In 2016, NOC revised the then-open position of Coordinator of International Students, adding the role of Diversity Officer to meet the needs of the institution. Following this appointment, the Diversity Council added three more objectives for the Diversity Council: 1) achieve access and equity for historically underrepresented groups, 2) create a multicultural and inclusive environment for every member of the NOC community, and 3) develop curricular and co-curricular initiatives to prepare students for a diverse and global world ("Diversity Council," n.d.).

In the fall semester of 2016, the Diversity Council began the process of developing a climate survey for NOC. This survey was intended to be a fact-finding mission to ascertain the broader implications of climate across the institution and with different groups by describing the experiences and perceptions of faculty and staff in the workplace and classroom. Data from the survey will be used to drive diversity education and professional development for faculty, staff, and students. Goals 1A and 1B of the 2013 -2018 Strategic Plan of NOC mandate that the institution "enhance the quality of life for students" and "enhance the recruitment, retention, and graduation" for students ("Strategic Plan," n.d.). Additionally, this report will be used as evidence for NOC's Assurance Review with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for the purpose of accreditation. Criterion 1C of HLC's Criteria for Accreditation states that "the institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society ('Accreditation," n.d.)." This report should highlight areas where NOC can take necessary steps to address these goals and demonstrate its role in a multicultural community. Based on the findings, recommendations for next steps will be submitted to the NOC Executive and Administrative Council in summer of 2017.

Definition of Climate

For the purpose of this study, climate is defined as the "current attitudes, behaviors, and standards of employees and students concerning the access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for individual and group needs, abilities, and potential" (Rankin & Reason, 2008).

Rationale for Diversity

Institutions of higher education that are made up of a diverse group foster an environment that aids in the educational experience of students (Rankin & Reason, 2008). The learning environment for students should support different perspectives and life experiences that will raise the level of consciousness in academic and social interactions inside and outside of the classroom. An institution that sets diversity as a priority creates an atmosphere for students to develop greater critical thinking skills (Antonio, Chang, Hakuta, Kenny, Levin, & Milem, 2004). Critical thinking skills will help individual students succeed in academics and prepare them for the professional world. Critical thinking skills in "today's increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints" (570 U.S. __ 2013). In general, higher education institutions should play a role in exposing students to diverse groups of people. In particular, community colleges are open access and open enrollment for "all segments of American society, including people of all races and ethnicities . . . [Therefore] attaining a diverse student body is at the heart of [a community college's] proper institutional mission" (579 U.S. __ 2016).

As a result, NOC recognizes the "enduring challenge to our nation's education system to reconcile the pursuit of diversity with the constitutional promise of equal treatment and dignity (579 U.S. __ 2016). As a business organization, NOC can benefit from a positive impact of diversity and inclusion initiatives. Diversity and inclusion is often linked to high performance among employees and helps achieve: improved performance; better ability to respond and change; greater creativity and innovation; improved customer satisfaction; higher staff motivation and engagement; increased staff retention and improved brand awareness. NOC has recognized the importance of assisting its students and employees in developing these essential diversity competencies as evidenced by diversity programs offered to faculty and staff in the academic year of 2015-2016 and the addition of a Diversity Officer in April 2016. In the future, NOC will offer programs that cover topics in diversity, cultural competence, and working with first-generation students. These workshops are open to faculty, staff, and students.

Project Design

In the fall semester of 2016, the Diversity Council began the process of developing a climate survey for NOC. The Council developed two distinct surveys for faculty and staff that reflected the perception of climate inside and outside of the classroom. In November and December of 2016, the Institutional Researcher and Diversity Officer conducted three focus groups with students, faculty, and staff. The Diversity Council made edits to the survey to reflect the thoughts and opinions of the participants of the focus groups. The Climate Survey contained 46 items, which included quantitative and qualitative questions administered via a secure online portal and was available from January 23, 2017 through February 3, 2017.

The Diversity Council chose a survey tool that utilized both closed-ended questions and open-ended questions to allow the participants to further explain their thoughts. The use of both types of questions allowed the Council to look at the participant's responses both quantitatively and qualitatively. Closed-ended questions were designed to collect quantitative data using a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). The results were then analyzed using descriptive statistics to see if a pattern would emerge between faculty and staff. Open-ended questions were used to qualitatively explore underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations of participants.

The survey was designed by the Diversity Council using the input from focus groups. The Institutional Researcher and Diversity Officer examined several studies and modified questions to ensure that it was relevant to NOC (Hart & Fellabaum, 2008; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Rankin & Reason, 2008). Data collecting focused on the experiences and perceptions of diversity inside and outside of the classroom at NOC. The Diversity Officer worked with an external legal counselor to review the legality of the survey. The Diversity Council analyzed the results and presented a *Diversity Report* in the summer of 2017.

Strategic Diversity Priorities

The NOC *Diversity Report* provides baseline data on diversity and inclusion for faculty and staff. The findings of this report may guide decision-making in regard to initiatives, practices, and policies at NOC. It should be noted that each NOC location (Tonkawa, Enid, and Stillwater) has a unique culture that is specific to its geographic position. This must be considered when developing strategic diversity priorities. NOC should identify priorities that will fit the entire institution and can be implemented seamlessly throughout the organization. The diversity report findings provide NOC with an opportunity to build on its strengths and address the challenges of a multicultural society.

As a result, the Diversity Council has developed strategic diversity priorities that the institution should support to actualize its commitment to an inclusive college community and to institute organizational structures that respond to the needs of the NOC community. These priorities will follow a three-year plan and will reflect the Diversity Council's mission to assist in developing a culture of diversity acceptance across the NOC community. In pursuing this mission, the Diversity Council should strive to fulfill the following institutional objectives:

- 1) Advocate for the recruitment and representation of diverse faculty and staff.
- 2) Encourage diversity initiatives that enhance recruitment, retention, and engagement of diverse students throughout the college.
- 3) Enhance community collaborations that support the interests of the college in the area of diversity and inclusion.
- 4) Encourage faculty, staff, students, and administrators to participate in the professional development opportunities related to diversity.
- 5) Achieve access and equity for historically underrepresented groups.
- 6) Create a multicultural and inclusive environment for every member of the campus community.
- 7) Develop curricular and co-curricular initiatives to prepare students for a diverse and global world.

These overarching goals will guide the diversity programs, annual objectives, and performance indicators. Annual objectives will target the academic calendar years of 2017-2018 (Year 1), 2018-2019 (Year 2), and 2019-2020 (Year 3). The Diversity Council will measure the annual objectives to see if NOC is achieving its goals through key performance indicators. It should be noted that this is the first diversity report in the history of NOC. The Diversity Council is cognizant that developing a diverse and inclusive community is a journey and not an end point. It is the Council's hope that NOC will accomplish much in this area. However, the Diversity Council will make adjustments and addendums to this document in the form of diversity progress reports each year.

Strategic Diversity Priorities Timeline

INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVE	DATE OF COMPLETION		
Advocate for the recruitment and representation of diverse faculty and staff	September 2020		
Encourage diversity initiatives that enhance recruitment, retention, and engagement of diverse students throughout the College	September 2020		
Enhance community collaborations that support the interests of the College in the area of diversity and inclusion	September 2020		
Encourage faculty, staff, students, and administrators to participate in the professional development opportunities related to diversity	September 2020		
Achieve access and equity for historically underrepresented groups	September 2020		

Strategic Diversity Priorities Timeline

INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVE	DATE OF COMPLETION		
Create a multicultural and inclusive environment for every member of the NOC community	September 2020		
Develop curricular and co-curricular initiatives to prepare students for a diverse and global world	September 2020		
THREE-YEAR PLAN		ANNUAL OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
2017-2018	September 2017	Develop a comprehensive institutional diversity statement for NOC	To be completed by December 2017
	September 2017	Administer college-wide student diversity survey	30% participation rate
	September 2017	Administer staff and faculty demographics survey	30% participation rate
	February 2018	Administer annual diversity survey for faculty and staff	30% participation rate
	April 2018	Submit annual diversity progress report	Complete by April 2018
	May 2018	Increase monthly diversity lectures to focus on diverse populations	Five diversity lectures by end of year
	May 2018	Collaborate with Native American Student Success Specialist for professional development programs that target Native American students	One program in fall or spring semester

Strategic Diversity Priorities Timeline

THREE-YEAR PLAN		ANNUAL OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
2017-2018	May 2018	Diversity assessment criteria with Institutional Researcher to be implemented 2019-2020	Develop criteria by end of year
	May 2018	Develop infographic comparing student survey results to staff and faculty demographics	Completed by end of fall semester
	May 2018	Discuss Title VII and Title IX training for faculty and staff with Vice President for Student Affairs	One workshop by end of year
	May 2018	Increase professional development for faculty and staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 mandatory workshop in the fall and spring semester • Implement optional workshops for diversity throughout the year 	Increase participation by 5 staff and faculty members
	May 2018	Incorporate professional development for part-time staff and faculty	One workshop by end of year
2018-2019	September 2018	Administer college-wide student diversity survey	35% participation rate
	February 2019	Administer annual diversity survey to faculty and students	35% participation rate
	May 2019	Increase student education workshops	Two workshops for students by end of year

Strategic Diversity Priorities Timeline

THREE-YEAR PLAN		ANNUAL OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
2018-2019	May 2019	Professional development for faculty and students	One workshop by end of year that focuses on students with diverse backgrounds
	May 2019	Focus groups for students to adapt classroom environments and lectures	One focus group by end of year
2019-2020	May 2019	Submit annual diversity progress report	Complete by end of year
	September 2019	Administer college-wide student diversity survey	40% participation rate
	February 2020	Administer annual diversity survey for faculty and staff	40% participation rate
	May 2020	Develop and implement diversity training for search committees	Complete by end of year
	May 2020	Create search committees that reflect diversity of Northern Oklahoma College students	Complete by end of year
	May 2020	Recruitment for faculty and staff positions	Attend one job fair by end of year
	May 2020	Discover new avenues for low-cost advertisement option	Complete by end of year
	May 2020	Identify alternative funding options for diversity initiatives during current budget crisis	Complete by end of year
	May 2020	Combine diversity awards with service pin program	Complete by end of year

Strategic Diversity Priorities Timeline (Continued)

THREE-YEAR PLAN		ANNUAL OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
2019-2020	May 2020	Review NASNTI grant for opportunities to collaborate on online trainings	Complete by end of year
	May 2020	Submit new diversity report and three-year strategic diversity priorities	Complete by end of year

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