DIVERSITY dimension report

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1. How did we focus on our charge?

The Gardner Institute grounds the rationale of the Diversity Dimension in the conviction that "institutions have the responsibility to provide experiences of diversity to their students, irrespective of the campus's racial, ethnic, or cultural makeup" and that "first-year students' experiences of diversity should be accompanied by time for reflection and greater understanding." As the guidelines indicate, "diversity" may be defined broadly "to include diverse ideas, values, and cultures as well as demographic diversity."

We spent considerable time as a committee attempting to define diversity in a far-reaching way that would serve to highlight the many areas in which students should have opportunities to engage with people of different backgrounds and self-identifications than their own, including: cultural diversity, diversity of area of study or professional interest, diversity of sexual orientation, economic diversity, gender diversity, political diversity, racial diversity, regional diversity, and religious diversity. We discussed the importance that students feel comfortable in a group as a prerequisite for experiencing diversity. Particularly, first-generation students or students who are part of a minority group on campus benefit from seeking out students with similar backgrounds to their own. Therefore, we took as axiomatic the belief that students will experience diversity most beneficially if there is an underlying commonality within which this diversity can be recognized. For example, students gathered around a common interest, activity, or intellectual pursuit creates a context in which the diversity of the group can be usefully explored.

The Foundations of Excellence surveys show that both faculty and students indicate interactions with other students as the primary means by which students experience diversity. The data also show that both faculty and students believe that first-year students' experiences of diversity could be increased. To better identify how we might do so, we conducted a survey of students serving as First-Year Success coaches (a group of highly driven, self-reflective students with high exposure to diversity). This survey indicated that students' experiences of diversity are largely extracurricular, and it helped us to identify specific beneficial resources (especially student groups). Ultimately, we recommend bolstering these extracurricular experiences, fostering an emphasis on diversity among faculty, staff and student leaders, and building more chances to experience diversity into the curriculum.

2. How did we gather information and data?

The Foundations of Excellence surveys also suggest that both students and faculty see the university as doing "moderately" well at facilitating diversity. The mean scores were in the "moderate" or "moderately" range for almost all questions pertaining to diversity (see Table 1 and Table 2). The only exception was the question pertaining to the degree to which the institution provides opportunities for first-year students to interact with *people outside of the institution* from differing backgrounds and cultures (Q041 of the faculty survey and Q044 of the student survey), which both faculty and students on average identified as "slight." Although community embeddedness constitutes a core element of the university's mission, this finding suggests a focus on the reinvigoration of our partnerships with Tempe, Maricopa County, Arizona and the larger world through internships, fellowships, corporate collaborations, service opportunities, Fulbright scholarships, and our other globally-engaged programs. In tandem with the attention paid on maintaining our community partnerships and

seeking new opportunities in that regard, we suggest an enhanced emphasis on the messaging to faculty and students about such programs and the opportunities they provide for broadening experiences of diversity. It is important that we do not allow ourselves to assume that the university can only exercise real influence on people within the university. Although the committee chose to focus on identifying ways that inter- and intra-group diversity within the university might be enhanced with the hopes that increased experiences of diversity within the university would secondarily lead to increased experiences of diversity outside of the institution.

Examining the Current Practices Inventory, we identified Residential Life, the Office of Student & Cultural Engagement, and the associated Student Clubs and Organizations as critical to the promotion of diversity. We found that Residential Life promotes diversity though CLAS Residence Hall Programing, including programs on: 1) Study Abroad, value of including international component to a degree program, 2) Research, the breadth and variety of programs available across all CLAS units, 3) Internships, value of adding practical experience to a degree program, and 4) Clubs/Organizations, diversity of student organizations. Additionally, Residential Life's Community Mentor Training includes multiple sessions addressing diversity. ASU's office of Student and Cultural Engagement (https://eoss.asu.edu/student-engagement) provides numerous opportunities for both domestic and international students to become involved in a variety of organizations, events and leadership roles that celebrate and support cultural engagement and exchange between students.

Drilling down past the aggregate data, it is possible to identify some academic units where diversity is embedded in course content and co-curricular activities, primarily in those units whose disciplines focus on issues related to cultural studies (e.g., ethnic studies, gender studies, religious studies, global studies). It is apparent, however, that some academic units are better at developing both content and exposure to issues of diversity than others. During the implementation phase close attention should be paid to assisting units who demonstrated the lowest mean scores in finding ways to enhance the experience of diversity.

To further identify where students are currently encountering diversity, we decided to survey current First Year Success coaches (see Table 3). 59 students responded to the survey. This population is demographically similar to the student body as a whole but consists of older students (mostly Seniors over the age of 21) who, by virtue of their roles as success coaches, are very engage with issues of diversity. 85% of these students reported finding it easy "to meet people who come from significantly different background than [themselves]." They are therefore well positioned to identify areas that could be the focus of diversity efforts and to identify where diversity is currently being facilitated successfully. The types of diversity that one-third or more of respondents identified as mostly *absent* in groups of people they talk to regularly were: diversity of sexual orientation, regional diversity, political diversity, and religious diversity. When asked to identify "specific programs, groups, or events (either offered by the university or informal ones) that have facilitated meeting people significantly different from yourself," respondents mostly identified student-led groups and organizations, such as LGBTQ events, Coalition of International Students events, Campus Crusade for Christ, Hispanic Business Student Association, Black and African Coalition events, and Soccer Club.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on this information, we arrived at the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1:
Individual units should add the experience of diversity to their educational missions, develop more content and experiential opportunities for students to encounter others from diverse backgrounds and of diverse outlook, and mechanisms for assessing the prominence of diversity in the classroom.

It is in individual classes that students will receive the most powerful signals about the role of diversity in academic work. Therefore, we recommend that each unit be tasked with articulating individual statements about the importance of diversity in its discipline and assisted in designing criteria by which the unit's success at conveying this importance to its students can be judged, especially in lower-level and specifically first-year courses. Ways in which individual units might be rewarded for their efforts should be considered and we will look to do so during the implementation phase.

Recommendation 2:
Lower-level courses should be designed that highlight multiple disciplinary perspectives.
Specifically, we recommend creating courses that can be offered in the B session each term (when first-year students who need to drop a course they are failing often need supplemental credits) dealing with topics, such as those identified in the survey, that encourage diverse engagement. The course might focus on different disciplinary approaches to a broad topic, such as food, family, tradition, or happiness, or to a specific current event or political question. The course could consist of guest speakers from various departments presenting on the topic followed by discussions of students' own perspectives or be team-taught by faculty from disciplines who dissimilarity might lend itself to a diversity of approach and discourse.

Recommendation 3:
Student groups contributing to the experience of diversity should be more actively supported by engaged faculty and administrators.
The power of student-driven initiatives and the importance of leveraging peer-to-peer influence in facilitating a campus climate that supports diversity were evidenced in the survey results. As noted above, ASU's office of Student and Cultural Engagement (https://eoss.asu.edu/student-engagement) provides numerous excellent opportunities for cultural engagement and exchange between students. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that a majority of these opportunities are student-initiated and student-driven. It is unclear to what extent faculty and administration engage or participate in these activities, and in several instances it appears that it is the very minority or otherwise alienated student population (i.e. ethnic minority, first generation, etc.) that takes the lead in creating programming, developing student organizations and promoting advocacy to create a welcoming campus climate for themselves and others. From a student success and retention standpoint, these efforts make a positive difference and, as such, responsibility for them should be shared by the individual groups affected and by the larger institution including university leadership, faculty and staff professionals. Accordingly, we recommend that faculty and staff, be encouraged to take more active roles in mentoring and assisting various organizations and activities. Specifically, representatives of interested student groups could be selected to meet with a faculty administrative committee to discuss specific diversity efforts that the groups could undertake and be given funds and organizational support to accomplish these efforts.

Recommendation 4:
More professional development opportunities focusing on diversity awareness and cultural sensitivity should be provided for faculty and staff.
There is a need for ongoing, comprehensive, competency-based training to support of the overarching commitment to diversity to transform courses and co-curricular experiences. Specifically, we recommend training these stakeholders on: 1) The holistic and developmental needs of college students, 2) The increasingly diverse demographics of the ASU student populations, 3) The vast university and community resources and supports available to support student success.

Recommendation 5:
A centralized "clearing house" for campus events that support diversity should be established to encourage the promotion of these events by student groups, residential life, and faculty members.
Given the size of Arizona State University and the tremendous number of activities going on each day on every different campus, aggressively proactive publicity is necessary to promote events pertinent to diversity. We recommend that a centralized "clearing house" for such events be created. This would work in unison with campus communications to actively foster contacts in student groups, residential life, schools and colleges and among faculty members. It would seek to make information about events available well in advance of the events so that faculty members could build these events into their syllabi and classroom activities. We visualize this as a stepping-stone to connecting students, especially first-year students, with the various student groups on campus, cultural events, and curricular opportunities that offer venues for exploration of diversity. This would help them to feel connected to ASU and part of the campus community.

Recommendation 6:
Placing a more public emphasis on the opportunities afforded students to engage with diverse communities outside the university.
Survey results indicating that there is little opportunity for experiences of diversity outside the university campus underscore a need to make both students and faculty aware of the many internship, service learning, and study abroad opportunities available. While those opportunities are already present in significant numbers, it seems apparent that better messaging is needed.

APPENDIX
Table 1

Questions to Faculty Pertaining to Diversity	Faculty Responses
Q037. Diverse Curriculum and Co-curriculum - To what degree does this institution's: Curriculum, as experienced by most first-year students, include appropriate attention to diverse ideas and world views?	49% (5) very high or (4) high 35.2% (3) moderate 15.8% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=355, Mean=3.42, SD=1.09
Q038. Diverse Curriculum and Co-Curriculum - To what degree does this institution's: Out-of class activities for first-year students include appropriate attention to diverse ideas and world views?	43.8% (5) very high or (4) high 33.6% (3) moderate 22.7% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=256, Mean=3.27, SD=1.03
Q038. Diverse Interactions - Within the following groups, to what degree does this institution provide opportunities for first-year students to interact with individuals from differing backgrounds and cultures: Other students at this institution?	59.7% (5) very high or (4) high 30.9% (3) moderate 9.4% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=385, Mean=3.72, SD=.095
Q040. Diverse Interactions - Within the following groups, to what degree does this institution provide opportunities for first-year students to interact with individuals from differing backgrounds and cultures: Faculty and staff?	45.9% (5) very high or (4) high 34.8% (3) moderate 19.3% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=405, Mean=3.41, SD=1
Q041. Diverse Interactions - Within the following groups, to	28% (5) very high or (4) high

what degree does this institution provide opportunities for first-year students to interact with individuals from differing backgrounds and cultures: People outside this institution?	30.9% (3) moderate 41.2% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=243, Mean=2.88, SD=1.11
Q081. Standard of Behavior - To what degree does this institution communicate to first-year students the importance of: Standards of behavior in an academic community?	48.5% (5) very high or (4) high 34.3% (3) moderate 17.3% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=400, Mean=3.46, SD=1.04

Table 2

Questions to Students Pertaining to Diversity	Student Responses
Q038. Focus on Diversity - To what degree is this institution exposing you to different: World cultures?	48% (5) very high or (4) high 30.7% (3) moderately 21.3% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=531, Mean=3.37, SD=1.13
Q039. Focus on Diversity - To what degree is this institution exposing you to different: World religions?	35.9% (5) very high or (4) high 30% (3) moderately 34% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=523, Mean=3.03, SD=1.19
Q040. Focus on Diversity - To what degree is this institution exposing you to different: Political perspectives?	34.7% (5) very high or (4) high 31.3% (3) moderately 34% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=521, Mean=3.00, SD=1.20
Q041. Focus on Diversity - To what degree is this institution exposing you to different: Issues related to social class / economic status (poverty vs. privilege)?	38.2% (5) very high or (4) high 29.6% (3) moderately 32.3% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=524, Mean=3.09, SD=1.22
Q042. Interactions - Within the following groups, to what degree does this institution provide opportunities for interactions with individuals from differing backgrounds and cultures? Other students at this institution?	54% (5) very high or (4) high 31.1% (3) moderately 14.9% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=531, Mean=3.56, SD=1.22
Q043. Interactions - Within the following groups, to what degree does this institution provide opportunities for interactions with individuals from differing backgrounds and cultures? Faculty and staff at this institution?	37.7% (5) very high or (4) high 40.4% (3) moderately 29.9% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=525, Mean=3.22, SD=0.98
Q044. Interactions - Within the following groups, to what degree does this institution provide opportunities for interactions with individuals from differing backgrounds and cultures? People outside this institution?	25% (5) very high or (4) high 28.7% (3) moderately 46.3% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=520, Mean=2.69, SD=1.18
Q045. Standards of Behavior - To what degree does this institution communicate the importance of: Respecting other with differing opinions?	53.4% (5) very high or (4) high 32.8% (3) moderately 13.8% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=530, Mean=3.57, SD=1.03
Q046. Standards of Behavior - To what degree does this institution communicate the importance of: Standards of behavior in an academic community?	59.9% (5) very high or (4) high 28.6% (3) moderately 11.5% (2) slight or (1) not at all N=531, Mean=3.69, SD=1.02

Table 3

Gender		N = 59
	Male	36%
	Female	64%
Age		
	18-20	24%
	21-29	76%
Ethnicity		
	White (non-Hispanic)	49%
	Hispanic	24%
	Black or African-American	7%
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%
	Asian	7%
	Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander	0%
	Other	0%
	Multiple	12%
Grade Level		
	Freshman	0%
	Sophomore	7%
	Junior	28%
	Senior	51%
	Graduate +	14%
Father	did NOT graduate from college	53%
Mother	did NOT graduate from college	46%
Diversity	Strongly PRESENT among those you talk to regularly?	
	cultural diversity	83.05% 49
	diversity of area of study or professional interest	84.75% 50
	diversity of sexual orientation	50.85% 30
	economic diversity	74.58% 44
	gender diversity	76.27% 45
	political diversity	50.85% 30
	racial diversity	74.58% 44
	regional diversity	44.07% 26
	religious diversity	61.02% 36
Diversity	Mostly ABSENT in groups of people that you talk to regularly?	
	cultural diversity	12.96% 7
	diversity of area of study or professional interest	12.96% 7
	diversity of sexual orientation	38.89% 21
	economic diversity	22.22% 12
	gender diversity	14.81% 8
	political diversity	33.33% 18
	racial diversity	24.07% 13
	regional diversity	35.19% 19
	religious diversity	33.33% 18
Exposure	easy for you to meet people who come from significantly different backgrounds and experiences than yourself	85% YES
ASU programs	specific programs, groups, or events (either offered by the university or informal ones) that have facilitated meeting people significantly different from yourself?	63% YES See below