



Cultural Diversity Initiatives Cecil College North East, Maryland

Planning

Cecil College develops a Cultural Diversity Plan every two years. The plan is developed in collaboration with a community diversity advisory board comprised of business leaders and current students to ensure that all actions are consistent with the needs of the surrounding community and currently enrolled students. Further, the plan is reviewed every quarter to document measurable progress and to provide opportunities for refinement that adapt to changes in our student population or the community.

The current Cultural Diversity Plan ('09-'11) continues to have the support of the College and the Advisory Board and advances four strategic goals. They are as follows:

- Student Recruitment, Retention, and Academic Success;
- Promotion of Cultural Activities in Collaboration with Community Partners;
- Inclusiveness and Critical Thinking in the Curriculum; and
- Cultural Diversity in all areas of Employment and Professional Development.

Programs

A full complement of programs is offered each year with the goal of increasing awareness of cultural diversity and/or promoting student retention and graduation. A sampling of "showcase" events includes:

- Unity in the Community – Annual community festival including performances, booths, and children's activities that promote varied cultures. Student and community groups staff booths and book performances. More than 800 community residents attend the event each year.
- Mentoring Minorities – A series of student success and life skills workshops are hosted annually. Minority students are assigned mentors from the business community and participate in college and community events that promote college success. Since the inception of the program retention and graduation rates of minority students has risen to the same level as the general student population.
- Speakers Series – The College hosts national speakers to address issues related to global diversity. Issues and topics include: The Culture of Global Health; Transcending Conflict in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam; Environmentalism and Cultural Awareness; and Balancing Security in the Age of Terrorism. Attendance at events ranges from 200-375 and includes students and community members.

Results

- Enrollment of minority students has increased by 32.2% from 254 students in the fall 2006 to 336 in the fall 2009.
- The level of diversity among employees (12.2%) exceeds the percentage of minorities residing in the county (7.6%).
- Cultural Diversity is embedded in the curriculum as a general education requirement.
- Retention of first-time, full-time minority students increased by 2% per year from 2003 to 2006. This retention rate has been sustained and reflects the same retention rate of the general student population.
- The College routinely hosts speakers, workshops, and special events to expand cultural awareness related to ethnicity, social issues, and religious tolerance.