



Cultural Diversity Plan for Garrett College

**Approved and Submitted by the
Garrett College Board of Trustees**

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I. HOW CULTURAL DIVERSITY AMONG STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF IS BEING ADDRESSED:

The role and importance of diversity in higher education has been widely recognized. In 2008, the Maryland General Assembly affirmed the importance of diversity as an educational goal by enacting legislation requiring that every public college and university develop and implement a cultural diversity plan. The 2008 legislation defines “cultural diversity” to mean “the inclusion of those racial and ethnic groups and individuals that are or have been under-represented in higher education.” Garrett College is committed to achieving a culturally diverse student body, faculty, and staff, and a campus environment that values and actively supports diversity. The College also strives to ensure that its graduating students are adequately prepared to live and work in a global society comprised of diverse cultures and beliefs. This commitment to diversity is evidenced in a variety of ways including the College’s Mission Statement, Institutional Goals and Strategic Plan, recruitment practices, goals for general education, Global Education Program, and campus environment.

A. Mission, Goals and Strategic Plan

Portions of Garrett College’s Mission Statement, two of its six Institutional Goals, and portions of its FY2010-2013 Strategic Plan attest to its commitment to achieving a more diverse student body and workforce and a campus climate that values and supports diversity:

Mission Statement:

Garrett College provides accessible, quality education in a supportive environment to a diverse student population. We offer associate degrees and certificate programs as well as continuing education to meet the transfer, career, workforce development, and lifelong learning needs of our students and the community. We are committed to the ongoing development of engaging, innovative, and sustainable curricula, programs, and initiatives that are responsive to a changing world.

Institutional Goals:

Accessibility: Make higher education accessible to a diverse student population through appropriate admissions practices, active recruitment of a diverse student body, affordable tuition and fees, financial aid and scholarship assistance, developmental studies for students who are under-prepared for college-level work, student support services, and delivery of courses at times and via media that are responsive to student needs. [Institutional Goal 1]

Educational Effectiveness: Ensure, through an emphasis on teaching excellence, that graduating students are able to demonstrate mastery with respect to oral and written communications skills, information literacy, critical reasoning and analysis, quantitative reasoning, scientific literacy, and information management; that they have achieved the requisite levels of academic and technical proficiency in their major; and that, through activities focusing on diversity and cultural awareness, they are adequately prepared to live and work in a global society comprised of diverse cultures and beliefs. [Institutional Goal 3]

FY2010-2013 Strategic Plan:

The following excerpts from the College's FY2010-2013 Strategic Plan address the enhancement of diversity, either directly or indirectly:

Accessibility:

Make higher education accessible to a diverse student population through appropriate admissions practices, active recruitment of a diverse student body, affordable tuition and fees, financial aid and scholarship assistance, developmental studies for students who are under-prepared for college-level work, student support services, and delivery of courses at times and via media that are responsive to student needs.

- Increase each year the number of students served by Garrett College in credit-bearing programs.
 - Through targeted recruitment and retention efforts, maintain or increase each year the number of students from under-represented groups and the number of international students attending the College.
- Ensure that developmental studies are effective and facilitate a student's progress toward degree completion.

Student Satisfaction and Success

Create and sustain a supportive learning environment that encourages student growth and achievement through appropriate advising and career counseling, transfer and career preparation programs, experiential learning opportunities, and curricular as well as extra-curricular activities that encourage student engagement and responsibility.

- Increase the graduation rate for each cohort of full-time, first-time, degree or certificate-seeking students (to reach the median for the IPEDS peer group).

- Strengthen and make congruent the behavioral policies and procedures contained in the Catalog, Student Handbook, the Student Code of Conduct and the Residence Hall Guide. Through consistent enforcement of policies, encourage a culture of zero tolerance for harassment, violent behaviors and other destructive or illegal actions.

Educational Effectiveness

Ensure, through an emphasis on teaching excellence, that graduating students are able to demonstrate mastery with respect to oral and written communications skills, information literacy, critical reasoning and analysis, quantitative reasoning, scientific literacy, and information management; that they have achieved the requisite levels of academic and technical proficiency in their chosen program of study; and that, through activities focusing on diversity and cultural awareness, they are adequately prepared to live and work in a global society comprised of diverse cultures and beliefs.

- Implement a systematic process of program review for all educational offerings that derives from expected student outcomes and includes demand and cost-benefit analysis.
 - By September 2010, complete a comprehensive evaluation of general education courses as they lead to the learning outcomes desired for graduates; use the results to guide needed improvements.

B. Recruitment of Students, Faculty and Staff

The College believes in the importance of making its education and employment accessible to minorities. Since Garrett County's population is more than 98 percent white, the College has had look to other geographic areas to recruit minority students, faculty, and staff. Garrett College takes pride in the percentage of minorities within its student population. In fall 2008, minority student enrollment reached a record high of 14.7 percent, which far exceeds the representation of minorities within the College's service area. According to the most recent data, only 1.9 percent of Garrett County's population is made up of minorities who are 18 or older. Historically, most of the College's minority population has been comprised of student athletes. More recently, however, the number of minority students who are non-athletes has grown and now, student athletes account for a little under half of the College's minority population. This shift is at least partially due to an increase in the number of international students enrolling.

The College has been less successful in attracting minority faculty and staff. The realities of a relatively small staff and an even smaller number of full-time faculty, low turnover, almost no minority representation in the service region, the rural character and isolation of Garrett County, and a low wage scale, pose a significant challenge to the College's ability to recruit and retain minority faculty and staff. While minority representation among Garrett College's full-time faculty and staff exceeds the representation of minorities within its service area, the reported percentages represent only a few individuals. The College's relatively high percentage of minority faculty (5.89%) is the result of having one minority faculty member among its full-time faculty of seventeen. As of fall 2008, minority representation among the College's full-time administrative and professional staff was 8.80%, but again, only a few individuals are represented.

C. General Education Program

The development of a cultural and global perspective is one of the goals of Garrett College's general education program. The College defines "cultural and global perspective" as the "awareness of global issues and an appreciation of cultural dynamics through different disciplines." The College initially sought to achieve this goal by offering a program of multi-culturally focused co-curricular events and activities. However, in FY2008, the faculty recommended that diversity be incorporated as part of the required general education curriculum. Diversity and multi-cultural content and activities have been integrated into the curricula of selected general education courses. All students must complete (with at least a "C" grade) one of these "Identity and Difference" courses in order to graduate. The selection of Identity and Difference courses ranges across several disciplines including geography, history, psychology, philosophy, and sociology.

D. Global Education Program

The Global Education Program was initially established for the purpose of offsetting the insularity of life in Garrett College's rural service region. It was intended to not only benefit Garrett's students by exposing them to other cultures, but the wider community as well. This program initially provided full scholarships to students from the Baltic nations, with whom the former College President had special ties, and later to students from the Republic of South Africa. The program was subsequently expanded to recruit students from other countries, although full scholarships are no longer awarded. (Qualifying international students are currently eligible to receive scholarship aid of up to \$2,000 annually; in addition, \$30,000 has also been allocated

in the current budget to provide on-campus work opportunities for international students to assist them in meeting their tuition and living expenses.) The College's largest international student enrollment to date occurred in fall 2007, when 20 students representing 16 different countries were enrolled. For fall 2008, 16 students from 15 countries were enrolled.

The World View International Club is an outgrowth of the Global Education Program. Its membership is made up of both international and American students. This club conducts a number of activities and events both on and off campus which are aimed at promoting greater awareness and understanding of other cultures.

E. Campus Climate

Over the last 25 years or more, the administration of Garrett College with the aid of the campus community has worked to create an environment where diversity is not only accepted but valued and actively supported. For example, one of the College's guiding documents is "Characteristics of Excellence at Garrett College." This document sets forth standards of performance and behavior for faculty, staff, and administrators as well as students and forms the basis for personnel evaluations. Faculty are expected to treat students fairly and equitably based on their merit and performance and without regard to factors such as race, religion, and gender; expectations for administrators and staff are similar. Another guiding document, the "Principles of a Just and Humane Community," affirms the freedom to openly express one's views, including those expressing dissent.

On a survey conducted for the College's 2007-2008 Self-Study, 90 percent of the faculty, staff, and administrators who responded agreed or strongly agreed that Garrett College is committed to a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administrators from a range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives. On a 2006 employee survey, 57 percent of the employees who responded agreed or agreed strongly that the College demonstrates and encourages a climate of diversity; only 10 percent disagreed. Surveys have also shown that most of the faculty and a majority of the College's other employees feel that academic and intellectual freedom is encouraged and that their views can be expressed openly. On a 2007 student survey, almost three-quarters of the respondents felt that the College supports the freedom for them to openly express their views.

The College's Code of Student Conduct does not specifically address issues relating to diversity, nor does it make any reference to hate crimes, but it is currently being revised to include these issues.

II. HOW CULTURAL DIVERSITY WILL BE ENHANCED

A. Areas Where Improvement Is Needed

As the foregoing discussion indicates, Garrett College has made significant progress toward achieving diversity among its student body, infusing diversity into the curriculum, and creating a campus climate that respects differences and values diversity. However, there are several areas in which the College can improve. Maintaining or increasing the number of students from under-represented groups and the number of international students will continue to be a major objective, as is called for in the FY2010-2013 Strategic Plan. Other areas needing improvement include

Minority retention and success - Retention and completion rates for the College's minority population and among its African American students in particular, are lower than those for the overall population. Improved and expanded academic and other support services and a more effective developmental studies program for under-prepared students are new initiatives that may help to improve minority retention and completion rates.

Identification and assessment of diversity learning outcomes – The College has not articulated specific diversity learning outcomes for Identity and Difference courses. Therefore, it is not possible to assess the extent to which the “cultural and global perspective” general education goal is being achieved. A set of diversity learning outcomes common to all Identity and Difference courses needs to be developed and regularly assessed so that the effectiveness of those courses can be evaluated.

Training for faculty and staff to heighten awareness of cultural differences – As has been stated earlier, Garrett College's faculty and staff value and support diversity. However, certain cultural and ethnic differences are not always recognized or fully understood. Activities and training designed to heighten the faculty and staff's awareness of cultural differences may help them to communicate more effectively when dealing with minorities and to respond appropriately when dealing with problem situations.

Lack of a policy addressing hate crimes – The College currently has no policy that specifically addresses campus-based hate crimes. The Student Conduct Code is also silent with regard to hate crimes or any issues involving respect for diversity. The College's existing policy regarding sexual harassment/assault will be expanded to

include campus-based hate crimes. The Student Conduct Code will then be revised to accord with the amended sexual harassment/assault/hate crimes policy.

Targeted recruitment of minority faculty and staff – While the percentage of minorities among Garrett College’s faculty and staff is considerably higher than minority representation within its service area, the actual number of individuals represented is very small due to the fact that the total number of faculty and staff the College employs is relatively small, as has already been explained. Thus, a single personnel change could significantly affect the College’s minority composition. From the foregoing discussion on faculty and staff recruitment, it is also clear that Garrett College faces some significant challenges in trying to recruit and retain minority faculty and staff. Nevertheless, by using targeted recruitment strategies, the College may be more successful in attracting minority faculty and staff. Opportunities to hire minority faculty are likely to increase, given that almost half of the College’s full-time faculty will be eligible to retire within the next 5-10 years.

B. Action Plan for Enhancing Diversity/Summary of Resources Needed to Effectively Recruit and Retain a Culturally Diverse Student Body

Garrett College has devised the following action plan for enhancing cultural diversity, focusing on those areas where improvement is most needed. (Note: The summary of resources needed to effectively recruit and retain a culturally diverse student body is included within this plan.)

Goal 1: Improve minority retention and success.
[This goal is also a FY2010-2013 Strategic Plan objective.]

Strategy 1: Hire a Director of Student Support Services to oversee delivery of appropriate academic and other support services, including services to students with learning disabilities, and to coordinate efforts to improve retention.
Responsibility: Dean of Academic and Student Affairs
Timeline: Fall 2009
Resources needed: Salary and benefits - \$73,500 (re-configured position)

Strategy 2: Create a process for early identification of at-risk students and their intervention needs.
Responsibility: Director of Student Support Services
Timeline: Spring 2010
Resources needed: None (see Strategy 1 above)

Strategy 3: Revise the developmental studies program with the goal of making it more effective.

Responsibility: Dean of Academic and Student Affairs

Timeline: Fall 2008 – spring 2010

Resources needed: Computers (\$40,000) and software (\$5,000)

Strategy 4: Hire a Coordinator of Health Services (part-time) and a Coordinator of Counseling Services (part-time) to assist in identifying students with health and/or personal/emotional issues and refer them to the appropriate off-campus services.

Responsibility: Associate Dean of Student Life

Timeline: Fall 2009

Resources needed: Salary and fringe benefits - \$43,000 (total for both positions)

Goal 2: Develop and regularly assess diversity learning outcomes.

Strategy 1: Identify a common set of diversity learning outcomes for all Identity and Difference courses.

Responsibility: Dean of Academic and Student Affairs

Timeline: Spring 2010

Resources needed: None

Strategy 2: Develop and implement a process for assessing diversity learning outcomes.

Responsibility: Dean of Academic and Student Affairs

Timeline: Spring-fall 2010

Resources needed: None

Goal 3: Conduct training to heighten faculty and staff's awareness of cultural differences.

Strategy 1: Conduct annually a joint faculty/staff training session aimed at improving awareness of cultural and ethnic differences with guidance on how to respond to such differences.

Responsibility: Director of Personnel, Dean of Academic and Student Affairs

Timeline: FY2011 and ongoing

Resources needed: Outside presenter and miscellaneous expenses - \$5,000 (annually)

Strategy 2: Encourage more faculty and staff participation in on-campus presentations, events, and activities focusing on other cultures.

Responsibility: Executive Council

Timeline: AY2009-2010 and ongoing

Resources needed: None

Goal 4: Develop and adopt a policy that addresses campus-based hate crimes and revise the Student Conduct Code to accord with that policy.

Strategy: Revise (amend) the Sexual Harassment/Assault Policy to include campus-based hate crimes and the Student Conduct Code to address hate crimes separate from other offenses.

Responsibility: Director of Personnel, Associate Dean of Student Life

Timeline: Fall 2009

Resources needed: None

Goal 5: Increase minority representation among faculty and staff through targeted recruitment.

Strategy: Advertise faculty and professional staff openings in minority publications.

Responsibility: Director of Personnel

Timeline: FY2011 and on-going

Resources needed: Advertising costs - \$4,000 (annually)

Total cost to implement this plan: \$170,500.

III. PROCESS FOR REPORTING CAMPUS-BASED HATE CRIMES

The occurrence of hate crimes can be detrimental to the College's goal of achieving student satisfaction and success. Garrett College values its sense of community and expects students and employees to abide by specific regulations that dictate appropriate behavior. Any evidence of prejudice based on religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or ethnicity/ national origin can be viewed as a hate crime. The process for reporting crime statistics on a college campus is defined under Title 10, Subtitle 3 of the Criminal Law Article and is consistent with federal requirements under 20 U.S.C. 1092(f), known as the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics. The Campus Crime Statistics Act mandates the manner in which statistics are to be collected and the format in which they are to be published. Since the implementation of the Jeanne Clery Disclosure Act, Garrett College has had no reportable incidents of any hate crimes.

The Office of Safety and Security investigates all reported incidents occurring on the Garrett College campus. Incidents that occur off campus are referred to the local law enforcement agency for that jurisdiction. Campus Security guards will assist victims of crimes occurring in other jurisdictions to the limit allowed by law. In cooperation with other law enforcement agencies, reports generated by the Campus Safety and Security

office are usually available to those persons who are directly involved in the incident, including other law enforcement agencies or when mandated by law. All reported information, police reports and files remain confidential and secure. Names of suspects, victims and/or witnesses are not released unless approved by the proper college authorities.

Students who feel that they have been victims of a hate crime should register a complaint with the Office of Safety and Security, who will investigate the allegation and, if warranted, will report it to the proper authorities, either within the College or the local law enforcement agency, depending upon the circumstances. Action will be taken when necessary against any individual responsible for a hate crime. Disciplinary action may be taken by the College according to the Student Code of Conduct, or criminal action may be taken by the local law enforcement agency, depending upon the severity of the incident.