Report of The Division of Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force
Submitted by Laura Beauvais, Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
To the Equity Council
June 2011

In the 2010-2011 academic year, the task force met seven times: September, October, December, February, March, April, and May. The task force members are listed in Appendix A at the end of this report. The task force web page:
http://www.uri.edu/provost/planning/diversity.html

Major activities/discussions of the task force included:

1. Dissemination of task force proposal for incorporating multicultural competencies in the curriculum to faculty senate committees and colleges

Last year the Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force produced a report entitled "A Framework for Multicultural Learning within the URI Community" (see Appendix B). This report not only offers a set of multicultural competencies that may represent learning outcomes and goals for the URI community, but also outlines a framework for a possible curricular approach to multicultural learning at URI. The Student Equity group reviewed an early draft of the competencies and provided direct input that was incorporated. This report, formally approved by the Task Force in May 2010, has been forwarded to the University College and General Education Committee for its review and incorporation in the revisions of the general education program that are currently underway. The report was also sent to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for distribution to the Curricular Affairs Committee for its review.

The framework for multicultural learning was also distributed to the Equity Council, college deans, and the Student Senate President and Academic Affairs Representative for review. College deans were asked to share the report with members of their diversity committees for review and discussion.

2. Diversity Week Presentation

On behalf of the task force, Provost DeHayes and Laura Beauvais presented the work of the task force and introduced the multicultural competencies in a presentation to the community during Diversity Week entitled: “A 21st Century Curriculum for URI: Vision for a Multi-culturally Competent Campus.”
3. Faculty and staff diversity and development

a. Diversity Workshops
With the help of outside facilitators who are experienced trainers in multicultural competence and equity issues in academic settings, the Office of the Provost and the Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force sponsored two days of pilot workshops for faculty and staff on January 11 and 13, 2011. The first set of workshops was delivered to faculty and staff in each of three colleges: Human Science and Services, Pharmacy, and Nursing. These sessions were designed to give faculty an introduction to concepts and strategies for developing a multicultural and inclusive campus environment. Offered in sessions of 3.25 hours, attendees:

- Explored key concepts for diversity: participation, privilege, and power;
- Considered connections between individual identities and institutional issues;
- Assessed the implications and opportunities for engaging in positive change at URI by promoting a more multicultural and inclusive environment; and
- Explored resources related to diversity.

The second type of workshop offered in the afternoon of January 13th was targeted to members of college diversity committees, inviting chairs and two or three members of each committee. The workshop assisted committees in setting goals and plans for actions within each of their respective colleges. The goal of the diversity committee workshop was to help diversity committees in the various colleges develop and share ideas for actions to take to advance diversity, multiculturalism, equity, and community within the unit.

Offered as one session of 3.25 hours, this session was designed to provide participants with strategies and tools that they could bring back to their college diversity committees for further development. Participants:

- Considered connections between individual identities and institutional issues;
- Identified and examined areas of focus and activities;
- Explored opportunities for ongoing action and learning;
- Considered approaches for assessing progress and outcomes, and
- Identified next steps for action and resources.

Several members of the task force helped Barb Silver summarize feedback on these workshops and made suggestions for future development efforts. Based on these recommendations, Barb Silver, Laura Beauvais and a subset of members of the task force will be planning future workshops for the remaining colleges as well as follow-up sessions for Human Sciences and Services, Pharmacy, and Nursing and the college diversity committees.
b. Planning future faculty development efforts for building multiculturalism and inclusion in teaching.

A subcommittee of the task force will lead development of programming (summit, forum, panel discussions, series of topical lunches, etc.) to assist faculty in learning “best practice” pedagogical approaches for enhancing inclusiveness and multicultural perspectives in teaching. Kathryn Friedman will provide guidance here.

4. Data and information gathering

a. Roxanne Gomes provided data on the demographic diversity of the faculty to provide baseline data for assessing where we are and to set goals for the future

b. Barb Silver presented on the work of the ADVANCE initiative, especially pointing out the need to continue the faculty mentoring program and search committee training.

c. Melvin Wade and Glenn Hubbard from the Multicultural Think Tank of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education presented rubrics to assess progress on diversity within educational institutions

5. Encouraging and Recognizing Faculty Diversity Work

The task force has been working to add language to appointment letters, performance review guidelines for promotion and tenure, and faculty position descriptions to encourage, support, and recognize work performed in the area of diversity, equity, and multiculturalism. The task force has suggested that the following language be added to appointment letters:

“URI is committed to building and sustaining a community based on inclusiveness, equity, and diversity. We expect all new faculty to engage with students and colleagues in ways that reflect these values that are central to our identity and mission. These key values are part of the guiding vision of President and embedded within the goals and strategies of the University’s Academic Plan (see enclosed copy).”

The task force has suggested the following language for faculty performance review guidelines. We will need to provide a definition of multiculturalism, diversity, and equity, possibly by linking to a website where these concepts are defined. For any language changes in the promotion and tenure forms, Faculty Senate and the AAUP will likely need to be consulted.
“Consistent with the President’s vision and the goals in the Academic Plan, meaningful and explicit contributions that advance multiculturalism, diversity, and equity as part of a faculty’s teaching, research and scholarship, and/or service are especially valued. Demonstrated commitment to this work is shown by providing evidence that support the impact or outcomes of this work.”

The task force is also drafting language to add to faculty position descriptions. To date, this language is still under consideration by the task force. Roxanne Gomes and Kathryn Friedman are being consulted on adding such language to job advertisementsDESCRIPTIONS as well as training for search committees.

“URI is committed to building and sustaining a community based on inclusiveness, equity, and diversity. We are committed to building a multicultural workforce and strongly encourage women, racial/ethnic/gender minorities, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans to apply. We also encourage candidates with a demonstrated commitment to multicultural teaching, research, and service to apply. The University of Rhode Island is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.”

6. Develop subcommittees to work on initiatives next year:

   a. Multicultural Enhancement Fund (initial investment: $20,000)
      i. Develop process for proposals and determine what activities should be supported (refer to Academic Plan, Goal 5)

   b. Advancing Multicultural Competencies and Curriculum Development
      i. Working with University, college, and department curriculum committees, how do we diffuse the multicultural learning competencies developed by the task force?

   c. Faculty Development in Diversity and Multicultural Understanding
      i. Working with college diversity committees, what faculty development/training areas should be designed?

Website: http://www.uri.edu/provost/planning/diversity.html
## Appendix A

**Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force Membership 2010-2011**

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Appendix B

A Framework for Multicultural Learning within the URI Community

Endorsed by URI Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force on May 12, 2010

Rationale

The 21st century is characterized by a rapidly expanding demographic profile of our nation and a global society replete with cross cultural opportunities, communication, and exchanges. Issues pertaining to understanding, respect, inclusion, and equity are critical to creating vibrant and inclusive learning communities at URI as well as to promoting a viable and functional global society. Multicultural learning and competence is a critical element of this fundamental understanding that must be developed and advanced in order to achieve a truly inclusive and pluralistic learning environment and community on our campus and throughout the nation and world.

As a community, URI is making insufficient progress in its goal of becoming an inclusive, respectful, and just campus. According to a recent report developed by students attending the Equity Leadership Conference, some students from underrepresented groups experience disrespect, prejudice, and discrimination on our campus. Often the needs of these students are inadequately addressed, which may signify that many community members are ignorant of issues of social justice, including prejudice, discrimination, and hate.

In order to produce a community of learners who are educated about these issues and are prepared personally and professionally to live in a diverse world, the Diversity Task Force of the Division of Academic Affairs believes developing and enhancing knowledge pertaining to multicultural competence is critical. Furthermore, the Task Force believes the primary vehicle to create multicultural learning and competency is through the curriculum. URI students have also recognized that they need to better understand injustice and develop “cultural intelligence” to become productive global citizens. They have identified “lack of knowledge” about issues related to cultural awareness as one of the “biggest challenges” at URI and also emphasized that the curriculum is a primary means for providing that learning and awareness. The URI Academic Plan, Charting Our Path to the Future, also explicitly pushes us to “raise consciousness …. about privilege, bias, multiculturalism, and diversity” and “support learning about diversity throughout the curriculum.” Now is the time to enhance multicultural learning as a core value of our institution toward the larger goal of encouraging a deep and profound understanding of diversity for all at URI.

Multicultural Competency

Goal

The Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force proposes a set of ten Multicultural Competencies that will provide context for multicultural understanding at URI and serve as learning goals for all URI students and as core elements for multicultural curriculum development. The goals are to ensure that all students at URI develop knowledge, awareness, and skills in regard to diversity, equity, and multiculturalism and provide a foundation for individual transformation and the development of inclusive and pluralistic communities on campus and throughout the world. “Diversity” in this document refers to disenfranchised/oppressed groups in U.S. society, including (but not limited to): class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and
physical/mental ability. We have identified the following multicultural competencies, which are pertinent to the enhancement of all individuals and groups of students, staff, and faculty:

Specific Competencies

Exposure/Awareness

• Awareness of the meaning of diversity and multiculturalism, including the legal and ethical aspects of affirmative action, prejudice, and discrimination;
• Awareness of identity formation and development, and how our own identities and those of others affect attitudes and behavior;
• Development of a multidisciplinary appreciation of multicultural diversity and origins of American society as well as diverse cultures around the globe, including recognizing commonalities and differences across cultures;

Knowledge/Understanding

• Knowledge and understanding of power structures, privilege, and explicit and implicit prejudice and how they relate to American society, including within our University community;
• Knowledge and understanding of the history and patterns of difference, discrimination, and oppression with regard to different groups, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, and culture, and how they relate to American society, including within our University community;
• Knowledge and understanding of the social construct of race and its social, political, economic, and behavioral consequences;

Skills

• Development of problem solving and analytical skills about diversity as a means of constructing action plans for addressing diversity issues in the community and resolving conflicts linked to difference;
• Ability to carry out meaningful cross cultural discourse with people whose voices, experiences, and ideas are different from our own for the purpose of creating a shared vision of American and global society;
• Development of advocacy and change management skills for achieving social equity;

Transformation

• Developing the capacity for deep understanding, reflection, and empathy with regard to the current and past experiences of marginalized groups at URI and across the nation, including issues of discrimination, injustice, and hate, and summoning the internal courage to confront such issues.

Framework for Multicultural Learning in the Curriculum

After vetting these competencies with the broad URI community, modifying them as appropriate, and reaching consensus on a set of principles upon which they are based, the Task Force believes that URI is obligated to put in place mechanisms to support students, faculty, and staff in acquiring these competencies and advancing diversity in the URI academic community through curricula and co-curricula efforts.
The Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force recommends the:

- establishment of a new multicultural requirement for all undergraduate students defined by attainment of at least one of the above stated competencies from within each of the four categories;
- development of courses and/or experiential learning opportunities that serve to develop these competencies in our students and satisfy the requirement;
- establishment of a Faculty Senate Diversity Curriculum Review Advisory Committee to aid the Curriculum Affairs Committee and/or the University College and General Education Committee, as appropriate, in evaluating courses that appropriately address the agreed upon set of multicultural competencies.

An academic requirement for all URI students, built upon the agreed upon set of Multicultural Competencies, can be achieved through a general requirement for all students or by a set of courses or learning experiences offered through the perspective of the disciplines/professions associated with each college. In either case, the learning outcomes associated with the course/experience would need to explicitly address at least half of the defined competencies.