Statement Concerning the Value of Cultural Competence at CRC

Definition of Cultural Competence

Cultural competence is an ongoing process of increasing proficiency in the ability to assess and revise individual and organizational behavior in response to an expanded understanding of culture. Culture refers to an integrated pattern of collective behavior, including habits, customs, values, beliefs, and institutions. Cultural competence is associated with attributes, knowledge and skills that enable individuals and organizations to demonstrate respect and value for each person and to manifest an understanding of the dynamics of difference.

Cosumnes River College pursues attitudes, values, and practices that promote healthy, constructive interactions in a diverse community and enable the college to work effectively with our diverse students. To promote cultural competence and create an inclusive learning environment, CRC values:

1) Diversity and pluralism
2) Continuous personal and professional development, assessment and revision
3) Awareness of the dynamics of cross-cultural interactions
4) The ongoing pursuit of teaching strategies and student services that better serve diverse populations
5) An environment of respect, equity, and justice

Snapshots of Student Demographics (Fall 2012 Census)

- Enrollment at CRC was approximately 14,675 students.
- CRC served a diverse community including many students of mixed heritage. The composition included: 26.3% Asian-American/Pacific Islander, 22.1% White/European American, 21.9% Hispanic/Latino, 12.6% African American/Black, 10.7% Unknown, 4.9% Multi-Race/Multi-ethnic, 1% other Non-White and 0.4% Native American.
- CRC served the younger as well as the older student with almost 60% of the student population under the age of 25 and almost 14% over the age of 39.
- The ratio of female students to male students was approximately 55% female and 44% male. One percent of our students selected unknown as their gender.
- According to the Spring 2010 UCLA Diverse Learning Environments Survey, more than 18% of our students identified they were bisexual, gay, lesbian or questioning their sexual orientation.
- More than 42% of CRC students were first-generation college students.
- CRC students come from varied economic backgrounds with slightly more than 41% of students reported incomes considered below poverty and almost 27% of students reported incomes that are considered middle income.
- Almost 49% of CRC students attended classes only during the day and 16% of students attended only at night. Slightly more than 23% of students took classes during the day and evening and almost 13% of our enrollments were in online classes.
- Most students attended part time with approximately 27% taking fewer than 6 units and 42% enrolled in 6 to 11.9 units.
- Approximately 4.5% of CRC students received services through the Disabled Students Program.
The Cultural Competence Continuum

**Organizational**

**Cultural destructiveness.** The most negative end of the continuum is represented by attitudes, policies, and practices that are destructive to cultures and consequently to the individuals within the cultures.

**Cultural incapacity.** The system or agency does not intentionally seek to be culturally destructive but rather lacks the capacity to help minority clients or communities.

**Cultural precompetence.** Agencies move toward the positive end of the continuum by recognizing cultural differences and making efforts to improve.

**Cultural competence.** Culturally competent agencies accept and respect cultural differences, continue self-assessment of cultural awareness, pay careful attention to the dynamics of cultural differences, continually expand their cultural knowledge and resources, and adopt culturally relevant service models in order to better meet the needs of minority populations.

**Individuals**

**Cultural destructiveness** - refusing to recognize differences from mainstream culture or assigning values (either negative and positive) to them (e.g., state policies that refuse to offer supplemental language classes in early elementary grades to children whose language is not the dominant culture's in order to prevent them falling behind in school)

**Cultural incapacity** - unintentional systemic bias (e.g., setting size or age limits regardless of qualifications due to arbitrary "job requirements")

**Cultural blindness** - an expressed philosophy of being unbiased (e.g., "This organization is totally color blind - our ability to work with others is never affected by our differences.")

**Cultural pre-competence** - realization of own weaknesses, strengths, and needs (e.g., "I hold these beliefs because that's what my parents believed and my experiences reinforced those beliefs. However, others may have had different experiences and I may only remember those experiences that validate my viewpoint, not those that contradict it.")

**Cultural competence** - genuine respect for cultural differences with ongoing self-assessment (e.g., embracing practices unique to the different cultures represented in your organization with individuals from those cultures explaining their significance)

**Cultural proficiency** - seeing culture as central to who each of us is (e.g., respecting each individual as a unique joining together of different experiences and ways of seeing the world)
CULTURAL “ICEBERG”

SURFACE CULTURE
Art · Music
Literature · Drama
Dance · Games · Cooking
Dress

FOLK CULTURE
Modesty · Beauty · Childrearing · Inheritance
Cosmology · Authority · Courtship · Sin · Justice
Work · Leadership · Decision Making · Disease · Cleanliness
Deportment · Problem Solving · Non-verbal Communication ·
Relationship to Nature · Time · Language · Social interaction · Emotion
Roles related to age, sex, class, occupation · Kinship · friendship · Individualism/Collectivism

FOLK CULTURE

DEEP CULTURE

Attributes/Knowledge/Skills Associated with Cultural Competency

- **Attributes:**
  - genuineness, accurate empathy, nonpossessive warmth and a capacity to respond flexibly to a range of possible situations and solutions
  - acceptance of differences between people from different ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic,
  - willingness to work with different ethnic groups
  - ability to articulate/clarify their personal values, stereotypes, and biases about their own and other’s ethnicity/social class
  - personal commitment to change racism and poverty
  - resolution of feelings about one’s own professional image in an educational institution that has systematically oppressed and excluded people based on color and social class

- **Knowledge of:**
  - culture (history, values, traditions, family systems, artistic expressions) of more than one cultural group
  - the impact of class and race on behavior, attitudes, and values
  - help seeking behaviors of students
  - role of language, speech patterns, and communication styles
  - resources that can be utilized and how to access them
  - the ways that professional/institutional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of students from traditionally underrepresented groups
  - power relationships within the community or institution and their impact on students from traditionally underrepresented groups

- **Skills:**
  - techniques for learning about culture
  - ability to openly discuss racial differences and respond to culturally based cues
  - ability to assess the meaning ethnicity has for individual students
  - ability to differentiate between the symptoms of intrapsychic stress and stress arising from the social structure
  - teaching techniques that are culturally sensitive
  - ability to utilize the concepts of empowerment on behalf of the student and community
  - ability to recognize and combat racism, racial stereotypes, and myths in individuals and institutions
  - ability to evaluate new techniques, research, and knowledge as to it’s validity and applicability in working with students of color

*Adapted from: “Toward a Culturally Competent System of Care” T. Cross, B. Bazron, K. Dennis, M. Isaacs March 1989*
QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE FACULTY

**Discipline Preparation:** Faculty members must possess extensive knowledge of their discipline including the contributions of women and ethnic minorities, as well as global contributions to their discipline. The faculty hiring committee must ensure the excellence of this preparation. More importantly, potential faculty should demonstrate the ability to use their professional and interpersonal skills to teach this discipline-specific knowledge to students, using a variety of teaching methodologies that satisfy the requirements of different student learning styles. Those providing professional support services (counselors, librarians and others) must also be sensitive to the needs of diverse students, using appropriate methods and approaches to meet these needs. An effective faculty should also show a commitment to maintain currency in his/her discipline by attending conference, joining professional organizations, in depth study, and in other related ways. While the Education Code (section 87356) defines the minimum qualifications, the hiring faculty may broaden the qualifications for hire. Such a broadening can only enhance the hiring process resulting in a more effective faculty. However, local qualifications should never be discriminatory nor erect a barrier to diversity.

**Communication and Other Interpersonal Skills:** Effective faculty must be able to explain ideas clearly to students in ways that students can understand. Effective faculty respect students' varying styles of communication. Effective faculty are articulate and help students learn to express themselves clearly. This skill implies that the faculty have a working knowledge of a variety of communication styles that are effective with various student populations.

Effective faculty may themselves have stylistic differences in communicating. Hiring committees should acknowledge that regional and second language accents may not be, in and of themselves, barriers to teacher's effective communication abilities. Interpersonal skills go beyond the ability to communicate effectively. They encompass respect for the individual, regardless of differences in opinion and background, and are demonstrated in each contact between faculty member and student. Good interpersonal skills enable the faculty member to relate to the student and help students learn to relate to one another. They help the faculty member create an environment conducive to learning.

**Sensitivity to, and Knowledge of, a Diverse Student Body:** According to AB 1725 (87360a) the applicant must demonstrate "a sensitivity to and an understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students." The job announcement should reflect and communicate this concern and the district's hiring policy should emphasize these criteria in the paper.
screening and interviewing process. In order to ascertain whether job candidates meet these criteria, a hiring committee could look for such elements as:

- a. demonstrated successful history of involvement in communities or colleges with diverse populations
- b. successful completion of any of these kinds of courses: classes dealing with disabilities, multicultural studies, the sociology of different socioeconomic groups, methods or theories dealing with differences among learning and teaching and counseling styles, and other relevant course work
- c. involvement in activities focusing on diverse populations
- d. study or travel abroad
- e. membership in organizations which promote understanding of other groups or that have an international focus
- f. sensitivity to, and knowledge of, diverse students, as demonstrated in a classroom, counseling, library or other support services setting
- g. materials or publications prepared by the candidate which manifest such knowledge and/or sensitivity
- h. other

It is expected that a substantial portion of the new faculty hired in the coming decades will come from diverse backgrounds bringing with them alternative perspectives to enrich campus life and foster the understanding which this section addresses. These faculty can model for their students a positive future as community college teachers, counselors, librarians, and support staff.

**Creativity and Innovation:** In the past, community colleges have placed a premium on previous experience. This emphasis on experience needs to be examined. Rewarding experience by itself is akin to rewarding seat time in the classroom without evaluating the quality of student work. The quality of the experience as well as the length of experience must be ascertained through such means as checking references and making sure the assessment was based on observation. Experience would then have real meaning as an indicator of creativity and innovation.

Talented newcomers who have not had the opportunity to become experienced must not be overlooked. To do so may shortchange the institution. Measuring creativity and innovation in prospective faculty members is a challenge. In order to ensure that the most creative and innovative faculty are hired, selection committees must objectively assess potential for and experience in demonstrating creativity and innovation. Evidence of innovation should be included in the job announcement as an expected qualification.
Some questions to consider as you write an interview questions to assess Cultural Competence (not all exemplary!)

1. (after giving them the university Mission Statement and drawing their attention to the section on the value of diversity) How has your background and experience prepared you to be effective in an environment that holds this value?
2. Tell me about a time that you adapted your style in order to work effectively with those who were different from you.
3. What kinds of experiences have you had in relating with people whose backgrounds are different than your own?
4. Can you recall a time when you gave feedback to a colleague who was not accepting of others?
5. Can you recall a time when a person’s cultural background affected your approach to a work situation?
6. Have you ever realized you had said or done something that may have been offensive to a colleague? How did you respond to that realization, and what was the outcome?
7. Give examples of times when your values and beliefs impacted your relationships with your colleagues.
8. Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to a wide variety of people by accepting/understanding their perspectives.
9. In your experience, what are the challenges faced by members of historically underrepresented groups in the workplace? What strategies have you used to address these challenges, and how successful were those strategies?
10. What does it mean for you to have a commitment to diversity? How have you demonstrated that commitment, and how would you see yourself demonstrating it here?
11. Describe the climate for diversity at your present position. What impact have you had on that climate?
12. What efforts have you made, or been involved with, to foster multicultural understanding and cultural competence?
13. Have you encountered concerns about "chilly climate" raised by members of identity groups that have historically experienced discrimination? If so, how have you handled them?
14. What measures have you taken to make someone feel comfortable when some people seemed uncomfortable with his or her presence?
15. What have you done to further your knowledge/understanding about diversity? How have you demonstrated your learning?
16. Tell us how you work with people to create or foster diversity in the workplace.
17. In what ways have you integrated multicultural issues as part of your professional development?
18. What do you see as the most challenging aspects of an increasingly diverse academic community, and what steps have you taken to meet such challenges?
19. Suppose that you encounter a pervasive belief that diversity and excellence are somehow in conflict. How do you conceptualize the relationship between
diversity and excellence? What kinds of leadership efforts would you undertake to encourage a commitment to excellence through diversity?

20. In what ways do you feel it is appropriate to incorporate topics related to diversity and (your discipline) into the classes you teach? How would you do this?

21. Has diversity played a role in shaping your teaching and advising styles? If so, how?

22. What is your vision of diversity at an institution like Oregon State University?

23. Describe a specific situation in which you worked with a diverse group of people over a period of time. Based on this experience, what did you learn?

Reference:  [http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/president/hiringQuestions.html](http://oregonstate.edu/leadership/president/hiringQuestions.html)

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