

## **Diversity Enhancements Within Excellence in Delivery and Productivity Initiatives Rationale and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

Opportunities exist to incorporate considerations of diversity into the broad objectives of the State Board of Higher Education Excellence in Delivery and Productivity (A.K.A, “More, Better, Faster” or “MBF”) Working Group. As the MBF Working Group seeks to enhance student-centered initiatives including community college/OUS dual enrollment agreements and common core curricula, high school/postsecondary connections, a statewide student data tracking system, increased retention and graduation rates, increased availability of courses, and the use of online options, cross-sector activities can facilitate enhanced academic opportunities and achievement among diverse student populations.

Oregon’s increasingly diverse population includes racial/ethnic growth; varied socioeconomic levels; first-generation college students; second-, third- generation, and beyond college students; returning adult students; and students with disabilities, among others. Tremendous growth is seen in the number of Hispanic/Latino students moving through the K-12 pipeline; however, many students of color are experiencing high drop out rates prior to completing a high school diploma and many do not seek or successfully complete postsecondary options. For all populations, the completion of a postsecondary education represents an entrée toward increased economic empowerment and societal contributions.

*Key issue:* MBF concepts are relevant to all student populations; however, the general public often does not understand that “diversity” is included in postsecondary efforts unless explicitly stated and developed. This lack of information may discourage progress among certain populations because of the “chilling effect” that some students and families experience when they are unintentionally made to feel excluded from postsecondary opportunities. As OUS works to enhance the representation, inclusion, and engagement of diverse people, the strategic plans of MBF provide mechanisms for additional progress.

*Long-term benefits:* MBF initiatives can provide opportunities for campuses and K-12 to increase the “cultural competence” of faculty/teachers/administrators by affording opportunities to gain increased awareness of the needs and backgrounds of diverse student populations. At the postsecondary level, sustained leadership and effective initiatives have the potential to encourage improved campus climates, thus fostering environments in which diverse students are *more* informed, feel welcomed, are *better* enabled toward academic achievement, and can *faster* set and achieve postsecondary educational goals.

### Selected Race/Ethnicity Data

The following data suggest that, although the numbers are relatively small, community college transfer students are experiencing high levels of retention and graduation success within OUS institutions.

#### OUS Six-Year Retention and Graduation Rates, by Race/Ethnicity, First-Time Freshman Students and Community College Transfers, 1997-98 Cohorts

Race/Ethnicity	Status	Six-year rate for first time freshman students, fall 1997-98 cohort	Six-year rate for community college transfers, 1997-98 entering cohort
<b>African American</b>		<b>N= 111</b>	<b>N= 31</b>
	Continuing	6 (5.4%)	0
	Graduated	52 (46.8%)	24 (77.4%)
	Stopped Out	53 (47.7%)	7 (22.6%)
<b>American Indian</b>		<b>N= 114</b>	<b>N= 49</b>
	Continuing	9 (7.9%)	0
	Graduated	52 (45.6%)	28 (57.1%)
	Stopped Out	53 (46.5%)	21 (42.9%)
<b>Asian American</b>		<b>N= 507</b>	<b>N= 158</b>
	Continuing	32 (6.3%)	4 (2.5%)
	Graduated	297 (58.6%)	122 (77.2%)
	Stopped Out	178 (35.1%)	32 (20.3%)
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>		<b>N= 255</b>	<b>N= 97</b>
	Continuing	21 (8.2%)	3 (3.1%)
	Graduated	130 (51.0%)	66 (68.0%)
	Stopped Out	104 (40.8%)	28 (28.9%)
<b>Caucasian</b>		<b>N=5,682</b>	<b>N= 1,905</b>
	Continuing	337 (5.9%)	32 (1.7%)
	Graduated	3,194 (56.2%)	1,445 (75.9%)
	Stopped Out	2,151 (37.9%)	428 (22.5%)

These preliminary data represent one snapshot; however, a further review of data may reveal additional trends in retention and graduation rates among specific groups. *For further consideration:*

- How much attrition is occurring at the community college levels among racial/ethnic groups, and why?
- What are the characteristics of students who successfully transfer and graduate within a six-year period (e.g., GPA, high school curriculum, AA/OT status, major disciplines, etc.)?
- What patterns exist within diverse populations of students who “swirl” between and among various types of institutions?
- Other issues?

## **Recommended Framework for Actions (preliminary list for discussion)**

### *Statewide Data/Tracking System, and High School/Postsecondary Connections*

- Include demographic data in the proposed data/tracking system
- Identify academic trends among diverse populations that encourage successful postsecondary completion; and, identify areas for improvement
- Utilize research findings to inform progress toward improving K-12 racial achievement gaps in preparation for postsecondary education

### *Common Core, Dual Enrollment, Course Availability, and Major Issues*

- Determine how research findings can be used to better advise and prepare students of color (see data section above)
- Identify current campus-level initiatives that successfully encourage cross-sector linkages for students of color
- Identify areas of campus-level initiatives that need enhancement to better provide outreach and inclusion to diverse populations
- Explicitly include related concepts in campus-level diversity action plans

### *Postsecondary Retention*

- Identify successful practices within student support services
- Identify areas and methods in which cross-sector student support services can be enhanced through collaborative efforts
- Determine opportunities for enhanced cross-sector collaboration in service provision to students with disabilities

### *Other Issues*

- Include positive and inclusive messages that encourage participation by diverse populations in all outreach initiatives
- Weave specific activities to inform and engage diverse families and students into all outreach and advising initiatives (e.g., in addition to providing materials in diverse languages, ensure that outreach initiatives take into account socioeconomic and geographic diversity)
- Develop viable and sustained methods for cross-sector sharing of best practices
- Develop viable and sustained methods to increase the awareness among faculty/teachers/administrators of best practices to educate increasingly diverse populations
- Develop specific methods of integrating MBF research findings and best practices into teacher preparation programs in order to facilitate enhanced cultural competence in newly-prepared K-12 teachers