

## **“Addressing the Needs of a Highly Diverse Population” For Strategic Planning Discussion**

### **Introduction**

CSU, Stanislaus is committed to increasing the diversity of the student body. Stanislaus students are full time and part time, first-time freshmen, continuing, transfer, graduate and re-entry students of all ages, economic levels and ethnic backgrounds. In 1999, nearly two-thirds of the student population was female. The University’s stated goals include addressing issues of culture, race, ethnicity and gender in our curricular and co-curricular activities and programs. Having recognized the diversity of the population, the University must provide an environment that accommodates the learning styles of the individuals served on two very diverse campuses.

### **Overview**

Addressing the needs of a diverse population allows all members of the campus community to:

- Expand their intellectual, creative and social horizons
- Develop a passion for life long learning
- Realize their potential
- Develop a sense of community
- Enhance the social and cultural climate of the campus
- Develop an intellectual culture inside and outside the classroom
- Establish a positive example of human rights

Realizing the goal:

- Attracts a high quality diverse population
- Promotes tolerance and understanding
- Provides general support for personal, academic, and career related issues
- Promotes outreach retention
- Increases graduation rates with all populations
- Serves the region
- Supports the mission of the University

### **“Addressing the needs of a highly diverse population”**

Since the adoption of the vision and strategic commitments outlined in “Pathways To the Future,” serving the needs of a highly diverse population have been addressed with a variety of initiatives and programs.

The office for **Disability Resources** is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive plan to provide necessary assistive technology to students with disabilities. The plan will provide for technology needs in the Library, Tutoring Center, Disability Resources, open computer labs and the Stockton campus. Disability Resources has also significantly increased its employment of sign language interpreters and captioners over the past three years in order to provide effective communication services to the growing number of deaf students who have become part of the campus community.

The University established the **Presidential Commission on the Status of Women** in 1997 as an open University and community group to promote, support, educate, research, advocate for and make recommendations about the status of women on campus. The Commission promotes National Women’s History Month (March) with a variety of activities, including annual awards to recognize the

achievements of female faculty, staff, community members, and students. Past year's themes have included "Women of Courage and Vision," and "Women Sustaining the American Spirit."

**Campus Allies Unified in Support of Equality (CAUSE)** was formed four year ago to provide support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) individuals. The steering committee has been comprised of faculty, staff and students. Since its' formation CAUSE has promoted events to raise awareness and tolerance of GLBT issues. Currently, CAUSE has prepared and presented a proposal for a resource center and is working on establishing a SAFE Zone project that will provide an allies program for students, staff and faculty that identify as GLBT.

**Student Support Services (SSS)**, a TRIO program that primarily serves low income, first generation, underrepresented and disabled students, has added graduate school entrance exam preparation to its array of services. SSS provides activities and events that promote interaction between staff, students and faculty. SSS also provides a full slate of skills enhancement workshops for a diverse population that includes services for ESL and students with writing or reading difficulties.

**Student Outreach** administers the university's high school and community college lottery programs. By charge, these programs promote the various opportunities and access to higher education, to the K-10<sup>th</sup> grade students and those community college students enrolled in vocational educational classes. The goal is to promote higher education to traditionally underrepresented, underserved students and parents.

Additionally, **Student Outreach** is involved collaboratively with many different special events and activities annually, targeting diverse prospective students and/or their parents, which includes:

- *Academic Achievement Conference* (through MCS Partnership) – promotes opportunities and access to higher education.
- *Harambee Conference* – held during Black History Month and targets high-achieving African American high school students.
- *Portuguese Student Recruitment Day* – promotes opportunities and access to higher education and exposes students to non-traditional majors.
- *Native American Pow Wow* – annual event that promotes cultural diversity.
- *Chicano/Chicana Youth Conferences* – (Hispanic Youth Leadership Council), promotes opportunities and access to higher education.

Other programs such as the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Summer Bridge, Reentry Program, High School Mathematics Access Program for Girls, Faculty Mentor Program, Senior Scholars Program and International Student Services are all designed to recruit and promote advancement of students of varying ages, experiences, ethnic and language backgrounds.

### **Exploring Options**

Identifying the continuing needs and serving a highly diverse population is an ongoing process. To further address the diversity of the campus community, activities and programs that need to be explored could include:

- Enhancing diversity among CSUS faculty and staff.
- Enhancing multicultural curriculum.
- Providing scholarships for GLBT students.
- Enhancing outreach, recruitment and retention of culturally diverse students.

- Supporting academic and co-curricular multicultural programs.
- Providing activities and events that promote interaction between staff, students and faculty.
- Identifying survey and assessment tools that gauge the needs of a diverse population.
- Providing access to courses that allow undergraduates to complete degree requirements in four years.
- Establishing a Multicultural Center, which would include centers for African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander, GLBT, Native American, Mexican-American, etc.
- Reestablishing a Women's Center.
- Continuing to develop the Gender Studies Programs.