



## **Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan**

for recruitment of faculty,  
recruitment, retention and teaching of students

*Revised Fall 2016*

### ***Background***

Since its inception, J&PR's diversity recruitment program has literally changed the face of our majors. In fall 2006, roughly 9 percent of our journalism majors reported their ethnicity as Asian, African American or Hispanic. In spring 2015, some 44 percent of our students self-identified as members of those three ethnicities. That's an increase of nearly 400 percent, which largely can be attributed to eight years of active recruitment by one faculty member from one of the university's smallest departments in challenging budget times.

The department's diversity initiative is based on developing and maintaining positive, long-term relationships, which can only be done if students from partner high schools and community colleges have successful experiences once they enroll at the university. We have viewed graduation with a four-year degree to be the primary indicator of success, as it reflects commitment not only to recruitment, but to retention.

The greatest success of our recruitment program is a strong pipeline-school relationship with Southwestern College, located south of San Diego near the Mexican border—600 miles from Chico. Nearly 50 journalism recruits from Southwestern have either graduated or are progressing toward graduation. Most of these students are Latinos from economically poor homes in which the parents lack four-year degrees. Retention rates for our recruits approach 100 percent, which reflects on the commitment of the J&PR faculty to student success.

In fall 2015, Chico State joined the ranks of Hispanic-Serving Institutions across the country and has continued its focus on diversifying the students, faculty and staff. Put simply, Chico State values diversity and J&PR values diversity. A diverse student body benefits everyone and adds value to our degrees. Students leave our program with experience working with – and reporting on – diverse populations.

J&PR's diversity recruitment initiative was grant funded for the first three years and has been sustained through private donations and department, college, and university

support since. We continue to seek partnership grants that would allow for substantial growth in our recruitment and retention efforts.

In spring 2015, J&PR was awarded a Student Success Grant from the California State University Chancellor's office to develop high-impact practices for improved student recruitment and retention. This competitive grant allowed us to hire a full-time, tenure-track faculty member who would receive a course release each year to focus on diversity recruitment and classroom inclusion.

This Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan is in line with Chico State's action plan for equity, diversity and inclusion. The university's goals are to retaining designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, which it has held since fall 2015. This plan is responsive both to California having the largest Hispanic population in the United States and to the growing number of Latino high school students who are enrolling in four-year universities. The partnership also has the potential to contribute to the development of Hispanic community leaders, which has been identified as a significant issue.

## **I. Faculty Recruitment**

Although the pool of faculty candidates from under-represented backgrounds is small and the competition strong, the faculty believe that the campus and location should be attractive to many candidates from under-represented populations who are seeking a high quality of life. Located in the far northern end of the Central Valley, between the Sierra Nevadas and the Pacific Ocean, Chico has excellent recreational opportunities and has a distinct college town feel. Housing costs are low when compared with other campuses in the CSU system, which has a systemwide salary structure.

The department needs to sell its advantages when it recruits faculty from under-represented backgrounds. The department will use strategies to expand the pool of applicants by actively seeking candidates from under-represented populations. Providing that the department has no budgetary restrictions placed on recruitment efforts, it will seek diverse applicants by:

- Sending announcements to all U.S. journalism and mass communication schools, particularly those that award doctorate degrees when hiring for tenure-track positions. Those announcements can be followed with phone calls to faculty at locations likely to produce candidates from under-represented backgrounds who meet the requirements.
- Advertising in publications and websites for associations that focus largely on under-represented populations, including the National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Native American Journalists Association and National Association of LGBTQ Journalists.

Public relations-specific outlets include the National Black Public Relations Society, the Hispanic Public Relations Association and the diversity groups within the Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communicators.

- Targeting potential candidates from under-represented backgrounds and contacting them directly by phone, email or social media direct messaging.

- Although current law in California restricts the department's ability to give preferential treatment to candidates from under-represented backgrounds, the majority of faculty understand that they have a professional and educational responsibility to have a diverse faculty. To that end and within the limits of state law, the faculty will continue to view candidates from under-represented backgrounds as possessing positive attributes, including but not limited to: sex, gender, race, class, age and ability, that the department seeks in a faculty member.

## **II. Student Recruitment**

CSU, Chico is one of the few universities in the system in which a majority of students come from places outside the geographical area that the university is primarily charged with serving.

J&PR has had an active diversity recruitment initiative since 2010, with a goal of assuring that the percentage of enrollment of students from under-represented backgrounds matches or exceeds that of the university overall.

To increase our enrollment of a diverse student body, we will:

- Recruit within our 14-16 sections of lower-division General Education classes each semester in an effort to draw new majors from Chico State's increasingly diverse first-year enrollment.
- Continue to maintain a faculty liaison with the university's outreach programs, which have effectively increased recruitment of under-represented students for the institution. The department will:
  - Provide recruitment materials to admissions recruiters to disperse to high schools that they visit throughout the year.
  - Build connections with high school academic counselors and provide program swag to keep J&PR on their minds.
  - Build connections with community college journalism and communication programs.
  - Directly contact student applicants and potential applicants who are identified as being interested in careers in journalism.
  - Continue to financially support at least one week a semester for a faculty member to recruit at high schools and community colleges in diverse areas of California.

## **III. Inclusion, Student Retention and Teaching**

Mere recruitment of students from underrepresented groups is not adequate. In the past, when achieving greater diversity was perhaps less valued, most of the department's students enjoyed social and economic advantages, so it was not necessary to have a structured system for helping students stay in our programs.

When all is said and done, the goal should be to assure that our graduation rate for the percentage of students from underrepresented groups matches or, better yet, exceeds that of the university overall. Further, the department is committed to preparing students for working in the multicultural society of California and the nation. To achieve the above objectives includes the following:

- The department will use scholarship money to help those students who are in financial need. Faculty will encourage all students to apply for state, regional and national scholarships that they may be qualified for.
- The department will continue its active and successful internship program that has provided under-represented students with the training and professional experiences they need to succeed.
- A focus on diversity and inclusion should be woven into the curriculum in all classes. Students additionally are required to take JOUR 411, "Race & Diversity in Media," as part of the major core. They also have the option of taking JOUR 211, "Gender & Sexuality in Media," which is a popular course as a major elective, as well as Chico State's General Education program.
- In seeking guest speakers and visiting professionals, the faculty should actively seek guests who bring diverse perspectives to their classrooms.
- Faculty should continue to actively seek out and complete Chico State's professional development focused on diversity and inclusion, including the diversity certificate, serving first-generation students, what it means to be a Hispanic-Serving Institution, Safe Zone (LGBTQ+ support) and teaching to different learning styles, and other options as they are offered.