

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Diversity As a Core Institutional Value

Strategic Planning 2018

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**Special thanks to the entire
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“Diversity is not an ideological luxury or indulgence; it is an economic and social imperative for the nation. The national demographics rapidly move toward a population that is made up of a majority of minorities. Education will be critical to pulling us out of a long-term economic shortfall, which means that the elimination of educational disparities among racial and ethnic groups in this country is inextricably tied to the social and economic destinies of all Americans (Jones, 2010).”

As we near the completion of Vision Twenty12, the sense of urgency to achieve DePaul’s diversity mandate and strategic objectives can be felt throughout the organization. Changing demographics, legislation, and state and national priorities compel us to create a DePaul community which mirrors society and addresses the lack of attainment at all levels of the academic enterprise. While much has been accomplished towards diversity in Vision Twenty12, there is still much work to do in order for DePaul to truly be a diverse university. This paper will highlight the history of diversity at DePaul, showcase some of our accomplishments, detail some emerging trends, and make recommendations for the future.

I. History

Since our early founding in 1898, DePaul University has had a long-standing commitment to diversity. DePaul by its very Vincentian, Catholic, and urban mission is grounded within the context of valuing diversity and respecting the human dignity of each individual. Because of our Vincentian history, social justice and diversity has long been a hallmark of DePaul. We have a legacy and tradition of serving historically underrepresented students. This commitment was first demonstrated by opening the doors of access to immigrant, ethnic, and religious minorities.

By 1984, Student Affairs had created the Office of Minority Affairs to assist in the development of a formal program and office to serve students of color at DePaul. Also, in the 1980’s, DePaul was the first Catholic university in the country to recognize a gay/lesbian student group as well as openly support them as part of our community. In the early 1990’s, student concerns and demonstrations served as a catalyst for a refocus and a recommitment to diversity at DePaul. To begin this important work, in 1994 then President John Minogue, C.M. created a Multiculturalism Implementation Committee (MIC). This committee submitted a final report in January of 1995. The report stressed the need for DePaul to articulate a strong diversity mission not only in word but also in deed: “...there is a serious need for DePaul University to demonstrate its real commitment to multiculturalism by developing long term programs for the recruitment and retention of students, staff and faculty from communities historically oppressed and disenfranchised (MIC, 1995).” The recommendations of this committee resulted in the creation of the Office of Diversity and the funding of a cultural center, which was in the planning stages at the time of the MIC’s work.

In 1997, the Board of Trustees of DePaul University issued the following diversity commitment and mandate: “The Board of Trustees is strongly committed to the education of students who come from diverse cultural and ethnic groups that are represented in the Chicago metropolitan area and to the recruitment of faculty and staff who reflect the diversity of these students. In a truly diverse university all members of the community administration, faculty, staff and students – will contribute to and benefit from the rich interaction of people of widely differing backgrounds. This commitment to diversity has been a hallmark of DePaul’s mission for most of its one hundred years. If we fail to meet this challenge of creating a truly diverse community, we fail in our mission (Brennan, E. BOT, Past Chair).”

In 2004, the Diversity Blue Team report described the necessity for DePaul to realize that “multiculturalism or diversification in higher education requires an ethic that emphasizes inclusion and equalization of groups that have been historically disenfranchised, oppressed, or excluded (DBT, 2004).” As part of the strategic planning process, in 2006, DePaul confirmed diversity as a strategic objective in Vision Twenty12 stating, DePaul will “*Be a Model of Diversity.*”