



Diversity Task Force Report

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Planning
Accreditation
Board

I. Introduction

One of the goals of PAB's 2012 Strategic Plan was to "Promote and encourage a systematic approach to diversity and multicultural understanding throughout each planning program." PAB created a Task Force to examine the diversity of faculty and students at PAB-accredited programs. The Task Force sent out a survey to the 72 PAB accredited schools in 2015, and distributed preliminary results in fall 2015. (An Executive Summary of the report and list of Task Force members is attached.) In Winter 2016, PAB charged the Task Force with identifying effective and exemplary practices in diversity activities for recruiting and maintaining a diverse student body and faculty. The Task Force formed two sub-committees – Student and Faculty – to follow up with selected program administrators and identify noteworthy practices in faculty and student recruitment and retention. The Task Force decided to focus on graduate programs given the greater number of accredited graduate programs versus undergraduate programs and the fact that undergraduate student recruitment is often outside of the direct control for programs. This report presents the approach and findings from the student sub-committee and faculty sub-committee.

II. Data Collection

Approach:

The student and faculty sub-committees identified graduate programs that appeared to achieve progress in increasing diversity through review of the PAB Annual Report data from 2010 to 2014. Next, the sub-committees reviewed the responses to the 2015 survey results. The sub-committee attempted to get a broad cross-section of programs accredited by PAB. The student sub-committee selected nine institutions and the faculty sub-committee selected eight institutions. The programs selected for interviews represented Public Land Grants, Public, and Private institutions located throughout the U.S. Institutional enrollment ranged from 24,000 to 64,000 students. Phone Interviews were held from October 2016 to January 2017. The questions were emailed ahead to program administrators and asked during interviews that lasted from 20-60 minutes.

Student Diversity Data:

Of the 53 programs responding to the survey, four showed little change in student diversity (< 1.0%), 15 showed an increase in the percentage of white students, and 34 showed a decrease in non-white students. In other words, about two-thirds (34/53) of the programs showed an increase in non-white students. Moreover, 24 of those 34 programs showed an increase of more than 10% in non-white students between 2010-2014.

Twenty graduate programs responded in the survey that they had met their goals for student diversity. In this group, however, the percentage of white students changed little.

Twenty-six programs claimed to have not met their goals for student body diversity. Of these, three programs showed little change (<1%) in the white/non-white distribution, six increased the percentage white students, and 16 decreased the percentage white students, 6 by less than 10%, and 10 by more than 10%.

Faculty Diversity Data:

Of the 53 programs responding, 37 programs stated diversity goals existed, 33 of which provided the specific text. Of the 33, only one-third had specific goals. Others were fairly general, referring to seeking overall representation by gender, race, ethnic status, national origin, age, experience, and expertise.

Programs indicated that diversity goals were generally created at the program and department level. Information on goal achievement was very limited with 30% of the respondents indicated success in achieving their goals.

III. Findings

Student Diversity

There were a variety of responses regarding the applicant pool, ranging from a heavily in-state pool to international. Of nine programs interviewed, only one did not track diversity enrollment data.

The programs used a variety of strategies for student recruitment and retention. Programs attempted to achieve their diversity goals through outreach efforts, personal contact, program and application modifications, assistance from student organizations and alumni and through providing funding. Programs had a demonstrated commitment to diversity and buy-in from the faculty and higher administration. They employed multiple strategies to ensure some level of success, examples of which are noted below.

Strategies used:

1. Outreach
 - a. To Historically Black Colleges and Universities through promotional materials, in-person appearances in programs/classrooms, graduate school fairs, as well as taking current program students to HBCU events
 - b. Promotional materials to National Name Exchange
 - c. Ad hoc retired faculty member conducts outreach via alumni and prospective students
 - d. Open house every semester
 - e. Studio and capstone projects in local (diverse) neighborhoods
 - f. Publicize urban planning program at other campus-level events
 - g. High school speakers series where program faculty engage in different topics with local high schools
2. Recruitment
 - a. Program Coordinator “high touch” with applicants, following up with phone calls and on-campus meetings, if possible
 - b. Other faculty enlisted for contacting prospective students
 - c. Student Services Coordinator sends applications to Program Coordinator early on – (early high touch)
 - d. Recruit from undergraduate programs on campus with greater diversity
 - e. Obtain funding to bring potential students of color to Open House

- f. Direct approach – identifying families, faculty host events at their homes for high school students
 - g. Bilingual information nights
 - h. Faculty exchanges at targeted institutions to attract potential students
 - i. Study abroad programs (for international recruitment)
 - j. Enlist help of alumni
 - k. Target community colleges and 4-year institutions
3. Program innovation
 - a. Create dual degree programs with fields on campus with more diversity, e.g. Public Health and Public Administration
 - b. Curriculum review to integrate social justice
 - c. Special 3+2 programs for targeted groups (e.g. Hispanic Students) and with other programs (e.g. Geography, Environmental Studies and Black Studies)
 - d. McNair Scholars
 - e. National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates – a program that brings in 12 undergraduates for 6 weeks in summer to work on individual projects with faculty – partner with Sociology. Students are identified with help from PhD alums
 - f. Allow early declaration of undergraduate majors - can apply in freshman year
 4. Application Reviews
 - a. Implicit bias training for Admissions Committee (full portfolio review, e.g. leadership skills, volunteer experience, active in school; relate system of inequality- talk continuously with committee)
 - b. Admission Committee eliminated biased criteria (e.g. GPA, prestige of undergraduate university, prior internship experience) which indirectly had an impact on admissions; Committee attempted to add pro-diversity orientation to the process
 - c. Advocated to eliminate GRE as basis for “merit” scholarships because GRE not accurate predictor of success
 5. Student Organization
 - a. Delegate responsibility to the group (e.g. “Safe Space” lunches with professionals as guest speakers)
 - b. Peer-networking platform
 - c. Peer mentoring prospective students. One year they helped with hands-on recruitment for admitted students
 - d. National Organization of Minority Architecture Students (NOMAS) – support for degree completion
 6. Retention
 - a. Alumni serving as mentors
 - b. Create a nurturing environment and inclusive climate through special events on race-relevant topics (e.g. police brutality), bringing professional into the classroom as external reviewers of studio projects (honoraria given), and training faculty to engage in dialogue when an issue of diversity arises
 7. Funding
 - a. Endowed scholarships
 - b. Planning Diversity Award: 2-year assistantship which funds 100% of tuition plus a stipend; three assistantships awarded annually per cohort
 - c. Target financial aid helps to create “critical mass”
 8. Public Image
 - a. Making the Program’s work on diversity and equity more visible on the website
 - b. Faculty research and partnership with communities of color

9. Faculty Diversity
 - a. Increasing diversity of the faculty, both tenure-line and adjunct faculty

Faculty Diversity

Programs have implemented several diversity-specific initiatives and resources that have may have been effective, including:

1. Salary supplements, when available
2. New Faculty Academy – one course release so faculty can attend classes related to teaching, research, networking and mentoring
3. Research Incentive Program for new faculty
4. A post-doctoral program, including mentoring for program participants
5. Active recruitment of minority practitioners to teach studio courses

However, challenges persist with retaining and recruiting faculty diversity. Programs interviewed provided the following advice for colleagues based on their experience:

1. Be flexible, don't get too specific with job requirements, which is limiting.
2. Check references first before "resume reviews" which helped raise people to the surface; when they bring people in for interviews they ask if people want to see schools, religious institutes, cultural institutions anything like that they arrange
3. Some efforts are too narrowly focused by topic
4. Labor pool needs to be broader. Need to grow the labor pool to recruit diverse PhD students with diverse specialties
5. Don't let up!, Don't rationalize and let that become the reason
6. Deans, Provost, etc. need to be willing to risk the "not perfect fit" to get diversity.

IV. Summary and Conclusion

Programs have executed a variety of strategies to increase the diversity of their student bodies and faculty with varying success. Programs appear to have been more active (and successful) in addressing student diversity; data collection on efforts to enhance faculty diversity was challenging for the Task Force.

In terms of student diversity, programs utilized a variety of strategies from initial interactions (outreach, recruitment, application reviews) to creating a more hospitable climate for students of color (curricula reviews, student organizations and sponsored events, funding) to cultivating a faculty committed to demonstrating how their work reflects respect for diverse communities. Many of these strategies require some funding support; many do not. The Task Force recommends that these strategies be made available to the public and programs review the strategies noted here. The PAB may want to add this list to their website and make them available to programs looking for ways to increase the attractiveness of their programs to students of color.

The work of the Task Force also suggests that increasing faculty diversity is somewhat more challenging. Institutional policies and practices (such as a lack of spousal hiring) can frustrate efforts. However, because of the linkage between student diversity and faculty diversity, this remains an important area for the PAB and the academy to address.

Appendix A: 2015 Executive Summary
Appendix B: 2015 & 2017 Diversity Task Force Roster

**PLANNING ACCREDITATION BOARD
DIVERSITY TASK FORCE SURVEY**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF 2015 SURVEY RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

PAB's 2012 strategic plan includes the following strategic initiative, "Promote and encourage a systematic approach to diversity and multi-cultural understanding throughout each planning program." In early 2015 PAB formed a special purpose Diversity Task Force comprised of appointees from PAB, the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP), the American Planning Association (APA) and its professional institute, The American Institute of Certified Planning (AICP).

This arose in part from the value that PAB and its partner organizations (i.e., APA, AICP and ACSP) place on this issue of student and faculty diversity, and in part due to the frequency that programs were cited for limited success in meeting criteria related to student and faculty diversity.

The first initiative of the task force was to develop a survey for PAB-accredited programs on the subject of student and faculty diversity.

In May 2015, Program administrators at 76 PAB-accredited institutions were sent a Survey Monkey link request for completion by May 25. After follow-up, the Survey closed June 15, at which point in time 61 of PAB's 76 accredited institutions had participated, for an 80% response rate. The response rates for specific questions vary considerably, as programs choose not to respond to a number of individual questions in the survey. Response rates are noted in the report for each question. To retain survey anonymity, all respondent names were replaced with a number, and other identifiers were removed from the data made available to the committee for analysis. Outlined below are the results of the survey followed by the survey instrument in the appendix.

STUDENT BODY DIVERSITY

Diversity Goals: Thirty programs responded that student body diversity goals existed, and 41 provided the text of their goals, which were broad in their definition of diversity (and hence, perhaps, an explanation for the discrepancy in the responses to the two questions.) When asked if their goals had been achieved, more than half of the respondents replied their goals had not been met.

Reasons for Lack of Diversity Goals: Programs without student body diversity goals stated the restrictions of state law, the lack of need (in highly diverse programs), and the adherence to their university goals (and therefore a lack of need for program-specific goals).

APPENDIX A

Reasons for Non-Achievement of Diversity Goals: The two most frequent reasons for non-attainment of goals was a lack of financial resources to provide scholarships and assistantships and a lack of diversity in the applicant pool. Related to both issues was the lack of resources to conduct targeted recruitment. Roughly half-a-dozen programs noted their geographic disadvantage in attracting a diverse student body.

Methods to Increase Diversity (Recruitment and Retention): About half of the respondents identified specific approaches to increase student body diversity. The efforts cover a wide assortment of activities with varying resource demands. Some efforts required the following: additional resources such as providing targeted scholarships, financial aid and research opportunities and targeted recruitment within the institution, at other higher ed institutions, and at elementary, middle and high schools and junior colleges. Other approaches rely on innovative steps within existing constraints, such as emphasizing diversity in the curriculum and through the establishment of affinity groups, providing mentors, and offering diversity training for faculty and students. Importantly, student interest groups engage in activities that can also be seen as creating an hospitable and welcoming climate for students with diverse backgrounds, sponsoring speaker events on relevant topics, partnering with community organizations, and generally providing a venue for students to share their intellectual and social commitments. Some of these student organizations are within planning programs; others function at broader scales within the institution. Of the 54 programs responding, only six indicated that they do not undertake one or more activities to support diverse segments of the student body.

Summary: A majority of programs recognize student body diversity as an important element of their work to develop professional planners with a well-rounded perspective. However, more than half of those with goals are struggling to meet them. Although obtaining additional financial resources is often seen as a first step toward achieving goals, a number of other actions can be taken to attract and support a more diverse student body. This survey falls short of providing an assessment of the effectiveness of various methods.

Three next steps are recommended to further evaluate the survey results: (1) follow-up data collection with select programs to understand better their strategies, methods, and perceived success, (2) further analysis of existing data to ascertain patterns within and among the data pool, and (3) identification of “success” as defined by empirical data collected by PAB with respect to student body diversity, paired with interviews to better understand strategies used by programs demonstrating significant change in the student body diversity.

FACULTY DIVERSITY

Diversity Goals: Thirty-seven programs stated diversity goals existed, 33 of which provided the specific text. Of that, only one-third had specific goals. Others were fairly general, referring to seeking overall representation by gender, race, ethnic status, national origin, age, experience and expertise. The goals were generally created at the program and department level. A lack of diversity goals at the University level can create barriers to achieving faculty diversity in a program.

APPENDIX A

Goal achievement information is very limited, with 14 of the 40 responses (1/3) indicating success in achieving their goals. The specific meaning of this self-reported success is not clear from the survey. Follow-up is necessary to understand this issue.

Strategies for success included explicit processes for hiring and supporting faculty through the tenure process. Again, follow-up is necessary to understand this issue, what the processes are, what was attained, and how success is measured.

Obstacles to achieving diversity were more fully provided. Issues raised included: a “lack of diverse applicant pool,” limited job openings resulting in little ability to increase faculty diversity, competition for top (diverse) candidates, salary limitations, locational disadvantages (remote location, lack of spousal job opportunities) and legal limitations. Further discussion of the exact nature of legal constraints would clarify specific state or institutional restrictions. This is a legal issue that is under court scrutiny, so it is understandable that programs and institutions would not be clear. Attention should also be focused on the exact meaning of “lack of qualified diverse faculty.” More information is required to determine if the distribution of expertise was based on a limited pool of diverse candidates or a statement about the quality of that pool.

Support for hiring diverse faculty was provided by just over two-thirds of the programs. This support was often sustained through opportunity funding targets, and often included some combination of start-up funds and salary support.

Support for retaining diverse faculty: Approximately one-third of programs responding listed mentoring, travel funds, graduate student research assistants and start-up funds, about half of the programs said that they either “provided none” or “did not know.” This could have disparate effects for faculty seeking tenure and promotion.

Diversity related curriculum development initiatives relate directly to the PAB standard of “preparing students to work effectively in a diverse environment.” Half of the programs indicated that university support through teaching centers or diversity offices provide assistance in this area. ACSP recently sponsored a compilation of diversity related curriculum activities compiled by Sid Sen and Karen Umemoto. Analysis of this material is underway separately from this survey.

Discussion and follow up on diversity issues is generally attained through faculty meetings, student organizations and program consideration of PAB standards during accreditation review processes. More information must be obtained as to what or how this information is used to set policy or measure success.

Current faculty composition: Respondents were asked to detail their faculty of color by title. Due to the wide variety of presentations of responses, data taken from the respondents’ 2014 annual reports was presented instead.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Diversity issues are important and challenging for a variety of reasons. Our ability to work effectively and productively in a diverse society is an important value and ethical principle of the planning profession. Working in a society where issues of diversity continue to be difficult makes this moral objective even more significant.

There are several factors that create more technical challenges. One factor is the importance of specific definitions. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, discussions of the issue can be burdened with several layers of meaning and differences in perspective. As a result of these challenges many legal issues have been raised and the issue of diversity in a university is under review by courts ranging to the US Supreme Court.

Current (2012) PAB criteria addressed diversity through consideration of the makeup of the faculty and student body. “Because students will join an increasingly diverse workforce, and work in diverse communities affected by global pressures, the student body should be diverse.” A similar statement is made regarding faculty.

Attaining significant diversity among faculty and students have been difficult for many programs. Current court precedent does not support quotas or counting of various groups to assess diversity. Rather, there must be a clear substantive reason to consider specific personal characteristics for admission or hiring that relate directly to the nature of the field or position.

Draft revised PAB criteria and standards would change the emphasis from the composition of the faculty and students to requiring programs to prepare their students to function effectively in diverse communities. This includes a variety of elements including interaction with diverse populations (e.g., faculty, students and communities) as well as curricula that provides substantive, methodological and applications.

Overall, we are interested in understanding the current state of program activities and performance in this area. Perhaps most important is to identify “best practices” that can be shared among all programs. What works in attaining a diverse student and faculty? What approaches are most effective in delivering an operational understanding of diversity to students?

There were a number of gaps in the data. Definitional issues arose in the survey, as we purposefully left the definition of diversity general. Some respondents did not complete parts of the survey for that reason. Other responses were difficult to interpret. The case of whether programs met their diversity goals is an example of this situation, as vague and generic goals might be considered met in many cases, where numerical goals have more specific requirements.

In an effort to better understand the survey results, respondents were asked if they would be open to additional survey discussion. A total of 82% of the respondents expressed a willingness to provide additional information about their responses. Specific follow-up could include questions regarding:

- Program definitions of diversity
- Program goals and their attainment

APPENDIX A

- University requirements relating to diversity
- Scale and effectiveness of specific approaches to attracting and retaining diversity among students and faculty
- Resources used to attract and retain diverse students and faculty

In the short term, the results of this survey will be shared with Boards of APA, AICP and ACSP for their comments. PAB will review the results of the survey and comments from other organizations and determine our next steps.

As noted above, PAB is focusing on elements that prepare students to work effectively in diverse communities, rather than computing diversity ratios for programs. We face a number of challenges in this process. Several questions should be considered:

- What is an operational definition of our diversity goal in moving forward?
- What role do faculty and student diversity play in planning education? Accreditation decisions are based on programs meeting our criteria and standards for quality planning education. The overarching diversity goal programs must meet is to prepare students to be effective in working in diverse communities.
- What curricular and related approaches (other than student and faculty composition) are effective in preparing students to be effective in working in diverse communities?
- What are some best practices that we can share with the planning community?
- How do our findings compare to various analyses and recommendations made in past studies by ACSP, APA and AICP?
- Our survey information reflects the views of directors of our accredited programs. It would be useful to include input from faculty members of color on issues of tenure, etc. as well as student input on the role of faculty diversity.

APPENDIX B

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