

Introduction to the
Selected Readings on SJSU's Shared Value of Diversity
For the Fall 2006 President's Reading Group

In Fall 2005, President Kassing and Annette Nellen, Director of the Campus Reading Program, co-facilitated a campus reading group. The selected reading tied to the shared value to be emphasized for 05/06 – student success. A group of 24 employees and students from across campus read and discussed *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions that Matter*, by Kuh, et al (2005). The group met five times during the fall semester, created a list of ideas for the campus and shared them with their own units and other units to which the ideas were most pertinent.

The feedback from the fall 2005 reading group was positive and a high level of interest was generated leading others on campus to also read the book. So, to help promote our culture of reading at SJSU, provide an opportunity to discuss the meaning and importance of our shared values, and to help build community, another reading group for fall 2006 was formed. This group will focus on the shared value to be emphasized for 06/07 – diversity. Specifically, this SJSU shared value provides:

“We value and respect diversity, inclusion, civility and individual uniqueness and recognize the strength these factors bring to our community and learning environment. All of our interactions should reflect trust, caring and mutual respect.”

There are several books that address some aspect of diversity. However, we did not find a single book that addressed a broad range of diversity topics. To better assure broad and varied coverage, a collection of articles, reports and book chapters have been selected for the reading. The goals in selecting from a long list of possible readings include:

- § To have a manageable amount of reading that is relevant to the shared value.
- § To have readings that are of interest to members of the reading group who come from different parts of the campus.
- § To address varying aspects of diversity in terms of how people might be described, to broaden our insights into understanding and working with diverse groups and people with different experiences and views from our own; and to find ways that we might gain better understanding of challenges members of the SJSU community might face and how we might address them.
- § To help people to better understand and gain new perspectives on the shared value and its relevance to them, their work and their community.

Inherent in the word “diversity” is that there is no one view or description of how to describe or identify what is diverse. The majority of readings on diversity focus on ethnic and cultural diversity. Our campus climate policy describes diversity in many more ways and the readings include more than a focus on ethnic diversity. Anyone looking at this assortment of readings may very well ask whether this is the best set of articles on diversity. It represents one set accumulated through library searches and discussions with colleagues. Also, does one article completely describe, for example, all millennials? Of course not. These readings should be viewed for what each author intended to convey – results of research, observations from years of teaching or advising, and ideas and suggestions based on the authors’ research and perspectives.

The readings represent a variety of topics, focal points, sources, research approaches and intended audiences. The hope is that they will serve their purpose in stimulating meaningful and enriching discussion in the reading group on the SJSU shared value of diversity. The readings and discussions should give us all things to think about in how we interact with others at SJSU, how we approach our work, how our experiences and ideas may differ from those of others, what we might want to change at SJSU to help us reach Vision 2010, and perhaps even what we might do to have more readings available on this topic from members of the SJSU community, which is far more diverse in many ways than most of the campuses mentioned in the readings.

Thanks to Ellen Lin, Marcos Pizarro, Carol Robledo, Eloise Stiglitz, and Sharon Willey for making recommendations for this reading packet. Any questions or comments about the selections should be directed to Annette Nellen who searched many databases, websites, journals and asked many people, in order to select and assemble this reading packet (anellen@sjsu.edu). All of the materials were obtained from the King Library or the Internet. Additional information on the topics mentioned in the reader can most likely be found in the King Library.