

SS-S95-5

At its meeting of April 17, 1995, the Academic Senate approved the following Sense-of-the-Senate Resolution presented by Kenneth Peter for the Curriculum and Research Committee.

**FOSTERING APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSITY  
AT SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY**

- Whereas, San José State University serves a student body and community that is extraordinarily diverse and becoming more so; and
- Whereas, Diversity can be a great strength when institutions, such as the university, help educate society to unlock the creativity contained in cross-cultural interchange; but can be a grave weakness when ignorance, bigotry and structured inequalities serve to limit human potentials; and
- Whereas, A variety of campus reports and studies suggest that San José State can do substantially better in turning diversity from a weakness to a strength; and
- Whereas, The recent Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation report (November 1995) states that "SJSU is still at a very preliminary stage in addressing the challenges [diversity] poses" (p. 23) and "there is an attitude expressed consistently that at SJSU there is a lot of talk about diversity but nothing is being done" (p. 58); and
- Whereas, The Senate's Task Force on Ethnic Studies and Cultural Pluralism has diligently worked to advise the University Curriculum and Research Committee on how the curriculum should address those aspects of diversity concerned with the issue of race relations; and
- Whereas, Diversity is a comprehensive issue which defies traditional categories; consequently, it needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner which utilizes all the diverse talents and resources of the University; now, therefore, be it
- Resolved, That the Academic Senate declares that it should be SJSU's highest aspiration to create and maintain a supportive learning environment that serves all our diverse students equally well, and that budgetary priorities should be arranged to help the University achieve that aspiration; be it further
- Resolved, That in order to better address matters of diversity at SJSU, the Academic Senate accepts the attached report from the University Curriculum and Research Committee and endorses its recommendations, calling upon all members of the university community to work towards implementation of these recommendations and their associated timelines; be it further
- Resolved, That the Academic Senate thanks the members of the Task Force on Ethnic Studies and Cultural Pluralism for their investment of time and energy to consideration of an especially difficult and longstanding controversy at SJSU.

REPORT BY THE UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE  
TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE  
RECOMMENDING SEVERAL ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN TO FOSTER  
APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSITY  
AT SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

*The scope of this report*

This report presents to the Senate a series of measures which the University Curriculum Committee (UC&RC) believes are needed to improve appreciation and understanding of diversity at SJSU. This report follows up on our earlier charge to respond to the issues raised by AS 847 (proposed) "Ethnic Studies as a Graduation Requirement" and secondly to the charge by the Senate Chair to all policy committees to review the WASC accreditation report and recommend appropriate actions.

UC&RC makes far-reaching recommendations that go considerably beyond the curriculum, which is our formal charge. While our committee's work began in 1993 with the relatively narrow goal of making a recommendation on the proposed AS 847 "Ethnic Studies as a Graduation Requirement," it soon became evident that curricular change would be only one part of any reasonable response to the challenges posed by our campus's diversity. In fact, a restriction of the discussion to curriculum alone distorts the issue and offers unrealistic hope that centralized changes in course requirements automatically translate into real differences in what students learn. It would be misleading and ultimately futile to offer a very narrow solution to an exceptionally broad challenge. Therefore, UC&RC feels justified in interpreting its mandate broadly, and responding comprehensively to the underlying issues which we found to have prompted the initial ethnic studies proposal (A.S. 847).

*Understanding the Senate's role in this report*

The purpose of this report is twofold. First, it seeks to stimulate a comprehensive effort to improve SJSU's treatment of diversity. Senate acceptance of this report should be interpreted as an endorsement of its recommendations, which consist of the "Guiding Vision" and the seven additional items in bold type (these are reviewed on pp. 3-4).

The second purpose of the report is to provide practical guidance to those who will be entrusted with the development of the various initiatives. UC&RC felt that providing specific advice would help stimulate the process of reform, and so considerable effort has been expended to provide each recommendation with detailed analysis to catalyze the process. However, since each substantive recommendation will require additional Senate action, the proper venue for debating the details of proposed policies are in the committees that will create these policies and on the floor of the Senate when the policies are actually proposed.

*In short, this report should be viewed as a device to initiate policy development and not as policy.*

*Use of the term "diversity"*

The term "diversity" is used deliberately in this report. The Committee chose this term since it includes all members of the university community rather than only particular constituencies. The Committee embraces the WASC "Statement on Diversity" which includes consideration of socioeconomic class, gender, age, religious belief, sexual orientation, and disability as well as race and ethnicity to be the most useful to our campus as we search for ways to make our institution a community of mutual respect.

The Committee is particularly influenced by the positive, forward-looking connotation of the term diversity.

WASC emphasizes this point when it contrasts the term with the retrospective character of affirmative action:

Affirmative action is retrospective in that it is designed to rectify the effects of past discrimination. Diversity, on the other hand, is prospective. It looks forward to the creation of an environment that supports the aspirations of all persons....Affirmative action excludes certain groups from consideration under its provisions....diversity includes all groups that are part of the working or living environment.... (WASC Statement on Diversity, p. 3)

It is in this spirit that the Committee makes its recommendations for *creating a supportive learning environment in which students, staff, and faculty from all walks of life, from the entire spectrum of the rainbow, from whatever cultural or language group, regardless of socioeconomic class, age, or religious belief, whatever their sexual orientation, gender, or disability are equally welcomed into a single university community as full participating members.*

### *Reasons for Change: the Influence of the WASC Report*

UC&RC's recommendations are based upon our own best judgment, after two years of immersion in debates over diversity, and are not tied to any other single source. While the Report of the Task Force on Ethnic Studies and Cultural Pluralism, the CSU's Survey of Needs and Priorities, Special Consultant Steve Maack's Reports on Profiles of SJSU Students, the SJSU Campus Climate Survey, and the testimony we took at our own joint hearings with the Board of General Studies (BOGS) all informed our deliberation, it would be a mistake to attribute our conclusions to any one source.

The Committee was frequently unsuccessful in its efforts to secure hard empirical data on virtually any curricular question, and was generally dissatisfied with the reliability of all existing assessment data. Finally, the Committee decided that this lack of information is itself a major problem at SJSU that must be addressed, and included a recommendation to that effect. However, despite the decrepit state of our current assessment practices, UC&RC agrees with the WASC report that there is much to be done to improve undergraduate education in general and our treatment of diversity in particular.

While no study of the curriculum or the broader campus climate has won our full confidence, they do fall into a disturbing pattern. Many sources relate incidents of distrust, indifference, discord, and hostility. This certainly corroborates the anecdotal evidence we gathered through our own Joint Hearings on Ethnic Studies as a Graduation Requirement with BOGS. But most influential in our deliberations were the findings of the WASC Visiting Team:

There is an attitude expressed consistently that at SJSU there is a lot of talk about diversity but nothing is being done. Many times during the visit the Team heard that the issues of diversity, and particularly related to people of color, were not of central importance to the leadership of the campus. A number of staff, faculty, and administrators stated that the University as a whole did not take ownership of the issues and challenges of diversity. Instead, institutional responses to issues of diversity were perceived as localized or ghettoized to the margins. Several people reported...that the campus has systematically ignored the issues of people of color, particularly African Americans, and at best, issues of diversity have become parenthetical afterthoughts....

The Team found these responses disturbing not only because of their content, but because they came from all ethnic groups; from gays and lesbians; from persons with disabilities, and from all levels of students, staff, faculty, and administration....

*There is a considerable and unusual level of frustration, disaffection, and alienation among a significant portion of the SJSU population.* (WASC report, pp. 58-60, emphasis added.)

The Visiting Team pointed out that the quality of students' educational experiences at SJSU depends on whether students become productively involved in effective learning communities (WASC report, p. 25). The Visiting Team thought that SJSU could do much more "to ensure that students' educational and intellectual progress is effectively supported within the institution" (WASC report, p. 26). There were a number of concerns that led to this conclusion. Four were of particular concern to the Committee:

- 1) student orientation to the campus culture,
- 2) effective student advisement,
- 3) students working in cooperative learning groups and becoming part of an educational community, and
- 4) barriers within departments to cross-cultural participation.

Diversity is central to all four areas of concern. An understanding of the multicultural fabric of the student body and greater society is necessary for both students and faculty to improve the learning community at SJSU.

While the visiting team clearly recognized that SJSU "energetically incorporated multicultural education into its general education requirements," it noted that "despite the apparent diversity of its student population, SJSU is still at a very preliminary stage in addressing the challenges it [diversity] poses" (WASC report, pp. 20, 23). A major problem found by the Team was that the campus conceptualizes diversity in representational or numeric terms, rather than the quality of a campus community comprised of intersecting sub-communities (WASC report, p. 23). *The Visiting Team concluded that the current Cultural Pluralism requirement in general education both reflected and contributed to this primitive way of viewing diversity at SJSU. It recommended that curricular considerations of ethnic diversity be extended beyond the current focus in the cultural pluralism requirement* (WASC report, p. 24).

In perhaps its most strongly worded admonition, the Visiting Team urged the campus to

move aggressively to establish and promote a culture of communication, collaboration, cooperation, and trust so that all SJSU campus community members feel that they are full participating members of the community. The University needs to explore the way diversity is defined, and by so doing this must also redefine their notion of the mainstream.

Problems must be confronted and dealt with openly, and the institution must demonstrate its sensitivity to these issues through listening and through communicating its strong support for diversity. (WASC report, pp. 60-61, emphasis in original.)

It is the intent of UC&RC to begin the process of redefining SJSU's mainstream with the recommendations in this report. We hope that the Senate will demonstrate its strong support for changing the way we think and act about diversity, from an outmoded focus on constituencies to one based upon the goal of building a diverse university community.

## Recommendations

UC&RC makes the following recommendations. In subsequent parts of this report these recommendations are accompanied with analysis and advice to aid in their implementation.

### Guiding Vision

SJSU needs to take a broad approach to promoting an understanding and appreciation of social diversity, and should not expect the curriculum alone to produce social progress. Instead, SJSU should strive to transform the campus into a supportive learning environment in which students, staff, and faculty from all walks of life, from the entire spectrum of the rainbow, from whatever cultural or

language group, regardless of socioeconomic class, age, or religious belief, whatever their sexual orientation, gender, or disability are equally welcomed into a single university community as full participating members.

**Recommendation 1**

The Academic Senate should develop a series of policies to comprehensively improve SJSU's treatment of diversity. The Administration should provide the resources needed for the development phases of these policy proposals. Upon development, the Senate and the Administration should prioritize these initiatives and begin implementation.

**Recommendation 2**

The Professional Standards Committee of the Academic Senate, in conjunction with relevant campus experts, should develop a detailed policy proposal for in-service seminars to educate faculty and staff in matters of diversity.

**Recommendation 3**

The Instruction and Student Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, in conjunction with relevant campus experts, should develop a detailed policy proposal for improving advising in general, and improving advising on matters of diversity in particular.

**Recommendation 4**

The Instruction and Student Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, in conjunction with relevant campus experts, should develop a detailed policy proposal for improving orientation in general, and improving orientation towards matters of diversity in particular.

**Recommendation 5**

The University Curriculum and Research Committee, in conjunction with relevant campus experts, should develop a detailed policy proposal for improving the assessment of the undergraduate curriculum in general, and improving the assessment of the undergraduate curriculum as it relates to matters of diversity in particular.

**Recommendation 6**

The Board of General Studies, in consultation with the full university community, should prepare a detailed policy proposal for adding requirements on "Equality in the United States" and "Global Understanding" to the Advanced General Education package. BOGS should also recommend corresponding reductions or restructuring of the package to keep its size at the current level. This policy proposal should be presented to the University Curriculum and Research Committee for consideration and passage to the Senate.

**Recommendation 7**

The University Curriculum and Research Committee, in conjunction with relevant campus experts, should develop a detailed policy proposal for stabilizing the General Education package for a period of five years.

*Guiding Vision*

In making recommendations for improving the learning environment of our campus, the Committee was guided by the general principle of serving all of our students equally well. We believe that the following vision should continue to guide those who will implement the recommendations in this report:

#### Guiding Vision

SJSU needs to take a broad approach to promoting an understanding and appreciation of social diversity, and should not expect the curriculum alone to produce social progress. Instead, SJSU should strive to transform the campus into a supportive learning environment in which students, staff, and faculty from all walks of life, from the entire spectrum of the rainbow, from whatever cultural or language group, regardless of socioeconomic class, age, or religious belief, whatever their sexual orientation, gender, or disability are equally welcomed into a single university community as full participating members.

#### *Process, Timetables, Priorities*

The University should be aware that achieving improvements in its treatment of diversity will necessitate a campus-wide effort of deliberation and strategic planning. Strong cooperation between the Academic Senate and across all three major divisions of the campus--Academic, Administrative, and Student Affairs--is called for. The University must reckon with the necessity of reallocating scarce resources to fund new program initiatives and systematic program evaluation. These tasks, particularly the latter, are daunting. However, given SJSU's historical commitment to serving our students to the best of our ability, the Committee is confident that the university community will rise to this challenge.

UC&RC suggests the following plan as a means of developing, evaluating, and prioritizing the various initiatives:

#### Recommendation 1

The Academic Senate should develop a series of policies to comprehensively improve SJSU's treatment of diversity. The Administration should provide the resources needed for the development phases of these policy proposals. Upon development, the Senate and the Administration should prioritize these initiatives and begin implementation.

- a. The President should direct his administration to provide staff and resources to aid in the development of detailed plans for recommendations 2-5.
  - 1) The appropriate Vice Presidents should confer with the Senate Committees and relevant campus experts to ensure that the study of each recommendation is supported with adequate staff and resources. For initiatives crossing the divisional boundaries of the campus, the Vice Presidents should develop action plans to coordinate efforts.
  - 2) By the first full Senate meeting of AY 95-96 (in September '95) the Vice Presidents should report to the Senate on their plans to support the committees in the development of detailed plans. These reports should note what kinds and quantities of support will be provided for research, for clerical and office support, etc.
- b. All Senate policy committees charged with developing plans for the attached recommendations 2-5 should complete their initial plans by December 1995.
  - 1) All plans should be presented to the Special Priorities Committee (see 1.d. below.)
  - 2) Senate policy committees may appoint *ad hoc* panels to assist them in their work on these initiatives. In addition, Senate policy committees should receive additional support from the Administration to assist them (see 1.a.2 above.) Committees are encouraged to consult campus experts and utilize them in the preparation of plans. The Administration should make these experts available for participation in this planning process.

- 3) If final plans cannot be produced by December '95, then the best available preliminary plans should be submitted in their place.
- c. The President should direct his administration to provide budgetary estimates for the costs of implementing the attached recommendations 2-5.
- 1) The various committees charged with developing detailed plans for recommendations 2-5 will consult with the administration in October 1995 and suggest a range of alternative scenarios for implementing each initiative. Based upon these preliminary findings, the administration will develop a range of budgetary estimates for the costs of implementing each initiative at various levels.
  - 2) The budgetary estimates should include options for various levels of funding and options for various budgetary cuts that could be used to offset the increased costs; the estimates should also consider those aspects of the recommendations that could be implemented with no increased costs, those that could be partially self-funding through special fees, and the possibility of fund-raising efforts dedicated to some or all of the recommended reforms.
  - 3) The administration should report the budgetary estimates to Priorities Committee (see 1.d below) by December '95.
- d. After it receives both the preliminary implementation plans from its policy committees, and the budgetary estimates from the Administration, the Senate should set clear priorities for the implementation of recommendations 2-5.
- 1) In November '95 the members of the Senate Budget Advisory committee and all policy committee chairs will form a special (ad hoc) Priorities Committee for the single task of drafting a Sense-of-the-Senate resolution that places the suggested reforms in order of priority, a recommended level of implementation for each initiative, and also the suggested means of financing them in order of priority. The resolution will be termed the "Priorities Resolution."
  - 2) The Senate should debate the "Priorities Resolution" and vote on it at the first meeting of Spring semester, 1996.
  - 3) The "Priorities Resolution" will then stand as the Senate's advice by which to guide the implementation of this package of initiatives. The relevant committees should then draft specific policy recommendations for the implementation of initiatives which would achieve funding under the Priorities Resolution.

*University-wide faculty and staff development: Perfecting skills for better education*

One of the dangers in focussing too heavily upon the formal curriculum is that this curriculum is a tool to educate students and is not a tool to educate faculty and staff. But education of faculty and staff may be much more productive than formal curricular changes. Most faculty and staff were shaped by this institution before it became so diverse, or they were hired from graduate programs and institutions that lacked the extraordinary challenges of diversity that SJSU faces. While most have adapted quite well on their own, they no doubt could do better yet if the university gave them some form of organized support and rewarded their efforts. It simply is not reasonable to expect all faculty and staff to intuitively know how to handle SJSU's diversity, especially given the already high workloads and the lack of practical assistance.

It was for this reason that we called for faculty seminars in our April 94 report (4c) and outlined minimal goals and incentives for these seminars. The Task Force on Ethnic Studies and Cultural Pluralism also called for such seminars. Since then the WASC report *"recommends that the University aggressively follow through on the academic senate resolution to develop seminars to increase faculty skills in multicultural education. Staff should also have the opportunity to participate..."* (WASC report, p. 20, emphasis added). It is most unfortunate that these seminars have not already begun.

In the recommendation with regard to faculty, the committee is responding to several different needs. First, one of the greatest sources of complaints we heard from students at our hearings had to do not with curriculum *per se* but rather with issues of sensitivity. For example, we heard repeated stories of faculty who were unable to manage incidents of bigotry that occurred in their classrooms. Faculty are necessarily experts in their subject matter, but rarely have they received training in classroom dynamics that would assist them in responding to such situations.

Second, some faculty tell us that they would welcome practical help in responding to the extraordinary pedagogical challenges posed by the diversity of our students. For example, many faculty are at a loss with how to deal with students with substantial linguistic differences. Faculty might also find useful a discussion on how to overcome the stereotypes that students may hold of the faculty.

Third, faculty need encouragement to find materials within their own fields that work well in a diverse setting. The very high workload that SJSU imposes on faculty gives them little time to re-tool and to rethink their teaching. They need every resource available if they are to creatively respond to the changing educational environment.

Finally, faculty seem unprepared to cope with the broad advising tasks that have recently fallen to them. They need help in learning how to be effective advisors in matters that go beyond the major field they represent.

Many of the same concerns expressed with regard to faculty also apply to staff. Staff are at least as overworked and underrewarded as faculty, which makes it a heroic effort for them simply to survive their current duties, let alone undertake new training. But staff are the front line in SJSU's interaction with its customers, the students, and the University's future relations with alumni and its ability to draw new customers depends heavily upon the impressions the students receive from staff. We believe that staff, like faculty, must be given opportunities to learn more about interacting with our diverse customers, and that the University should provide significant rewards to make this happen. The WASC report also concurred that staff must be given opportunities to learn how to function within an environment of extraordinary diversity.

#### Recommendation 2

**The Professional Standards Committee of the Academic Senate, in conjunction with relevant campus experts, should develop a detailed policy proposal for in-service seminars to educate faculty and staff in matters of diversity.**

- a. The Committee should consult with representatives from Faculty Affairs, the Institute for Teaching and Learning, UC&RC, BOGS, college multicultural equity enhancement committees, representatives from Human Resources, SJSU staff associations, Associated Students, and other campus experts, making use of their expertise whenever possible.
- b. The Committee should design a curriculum of "in-service" seminars for all SJSU faculty and staff in matters of diversity.
  - 1) The Committee should consider those aspects of diversity that merit study by all faculty and staff. For example, the curriculum should provide faculty and staff with a comprehensive overview of the various cultural groups found on the campus and in the



- surrounding service region. Faculty and staff should have some understanding of basic theories of culture and the role that they play in facilitating or retarding the process of acculturation that students undergo at the university.
- 2) The Committee should consider those aspects of diversity that all faculty particularly need to understand. For example, the curriculum should include general classroom pedagogical concerns such as principles of good teaching and specific techniques on teaching to the different learning styles of SJSU's students. The curriculum should also cover techniques for managing classroom dynamics when incidents of bigotry occur.
  - 3) The Committee should consider those aspects of diversity that faculty should approach from within their own academic areas of expertise. For example, it should address how individual faculty can incorporate issues of diversity relevant to their own disciplines in their courses. The latter should include recent literature reviews and bibliographic resources. Faculty should be acquainted with techniques and resources for directing their research towards curricular improvements.
  - 4) The Committee should consider those aspects of diversity that staff particularly need to understand. For example, all employees should be knowledgeable in the principles of "customer service" and the importance of satisfying SJSU's "customers." Understanding the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the customers is essential to be able to provide quality service. Furthermore, the curriculum should remind employees that they are representatives of SJSU and how they interact with SJSU's customers will characterize the institution's public image and establish the tone for campus climate.
  - 5) The Committee should provide its advice on the priorities of implementing this curriculum. If it is to be phased in over time, then in what order should the various faculty and staff members receive these seminars?
- c. The Committee should consider how best to structure this curriculum. Not every faculty and staff member should necessarily receive an identical seminar--for example, faculty seminars exploring the inclusion of materials relevant to their own disciplines might best be done at the college or the department level, while advice on managing incidents of bigotry could well be universal for all faculty and staff. Furthermore, some aspects of the curriculum of this program might be universal, and some aspects might be relevant only to certain disciplines.
- d. For the faculty and staff in-service seminars to be successful, two vital conditions must be met:
- 1) The curriculum must be intellectually rigorous, sophisticated, and should present a range of views. A simplistic or doctrinaire seminar would be counterproductive, and care must be taken to guard against that possibility.
  - 2) Faculty and staff must receive adequate compensation for their participation. These seminars must not be implemented through an uncompensated increase in workload.
    - a) Staff should be released from regular duties in order to provide time for their in-service seminars.
    - b) Faculty should be rewarded with compensation in one of the following ways: cash stipends for summer seminars, release-time for Fall or Spring seminars. In addition, faculty should be rewarded with credit in the ARTP process. The Committee should review those aspects of the current ARTP policy (S-94-6) and publicize those portions of it that support the rewarding of credit for this activity.

