

1.5 Consistent with its purposes and character, the institution demonstrates an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in society through its policies, its educational and co-curricular programs, and its administrative and organizational practices.

Guideline: The institution has demonstrated institutional commitment to the principles enunciated in the WASC Statement on Diversity.

Evidence:

The WASC statement on diversity acknowledges that the term diversity is multi-dimensional, referring to both heterogeneity among people and the climate of the campus community in terms of tolerance and nurturance. The [SSU Diversity Vision Statement](#) emphasizes that appreciating, supporting, and respecting diversity are at the core of creating an inclusive, nurturing learning community. SSU's [Recruitment Policy](#) describes the university's goal of providing equal employment opportunity to all qualified candidates and its commitment to providing an environment free from discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual assault.

The university's [Strategic Plan](#) identifies diversity as one of the key macro issues to be addressed by the university community. This focus on diversity is reflected in the university's [Program Review](#) policy, which directs departments to "*Explain how your department, program, or unit:*

- a. Addresses the cultural, ethnic and social diversity of the Sonoma State student body in the curriculum*
- b. Accommodates differences in student preparation and access to educational opportunities*
- c. Shows leadership in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and students, without reliance on discriminatory preferences*
- d. Addresses diversity issues in its advising, mentoring, and career development*

The process of Program Review is continuing in cycles throughout the campus, with some departments and programs having completed their Self-Studies, and others scheduled to complete the process this year or the next academic year.

The [Educational Policies Committee](#), which has primary responsibility for the academic standards and curriculum of the university, outlines its goals and objectives for General Education classes. One of the primary learning [objectives for GE](#) courses is to “develop social and global knowledge,” including understanding and appreciating human diversity and multicultural perspectives, and understanding social justice. The First Year Experience program theme for 2006/07 is “[Identity and Global Change](#),” with fall semester topics focusing on individual identity and human diversity from the perspective of various disciplines, and spring semester topics focusing on emphasizing human sameness as well as human differences. The Institutional Research office collects data on enrollment by self-identified [demographics](#), including ethnicity.

The [Academic Planning Committee's](#) most recent [strategic plan](#) for 2006-2010 lists developing and implementing an effective plan to increase the diversity of the university as a key initiative. This initiative encompasses expanding community outreach programs to the multicultural areas of the community, prioritizing the recruitment of faculty from underserved communities and ethnic groups, and developing global partnerships to exchange faculty and students. As discussed in the CSU's most recent system-wide strategic plan, entitled Access to [Excellence](#), the CSU has identified a critical need to increase access to the university for Latino students, who comprise a growing proportion of California's population

The [Campus Climate Committee](#), which reports to the President, is charged with making recommendations on ways to promote a positive campus climate “in which cultural diversity is respected and is seen as integral to the mission of the University.” The CCC conducts periodic assessments of the campus climate, and the findings of the most recent diversity survey will be reported to the President in Fall 2007, after review of the results is completed. The CCC's most recent discussions (see http://www.sonoma.edu/diversity/doc/3.5.07_CCC_Agenda.doc) have focused on how to infuse multiculturalism

throughout the curriculum, and how to streamline and prioritize the diversity initiatives outlined in the University Strategic Plan.

The work of the [SAEM](#) (Student Affairs and Enrollment Management) division on student recruitment and retention has shown promising results in the 2006-2007 academic year. Significantly, recruitment and outreach efforts resulted in an approximately 30% increase in African-American student enrollment at SSU during this time.

Sonoma State University remains involved in working with the Roseland University Preparatory Charter School in Santa Rosa, where high schoolers from economically deprived families are invited to visit SSU and begin the process of preparing for college (see: [News Release: SSU Provides Early College Connection for Under-Served High Schoolers in Roseland](#)). The Roseland school focuses on preparing students, beginning in ninth grade, to become academically prepared to consider entering college. SSU has promised a place at the university for all Roseland students who meet the academic criteria.

The university also continues its partnership with Solano Community College, located in one of the most demographically diverse areas of the Bay Area, as part of ongoing efforts to improve the climate for diversity.

The SAEM division includes Academic Advising, Career Services, and the Educational Opportunity Program as part of the "[ACE](#)" unit. The [Advising Center and the EOP](#) provide information and support for undeclared and EOP students on choosing a major, choosing classes, progress toward degree and preparation for graduation, and navigating the challenges of college life.

The SSU [Center](#) for Culture, Gender, and Sexuality was created in order to provide opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to learn about ourselves, each other, and the world in which we live (CCGS Mission Statement). The Center is one of the sponsors of public lectures such as the Heritage Lecture Series and the Queer Lecture Series, and other events offered on campus as educational resources for the campus community and the public to learn about the history and culture of various groups. The Center provides a resource list of [Clubs and Organizations](#) for people interested in contacting others interested in diversity issues.

Students with certified disabilities have access to the services provided by the [SSU Disabled Student Services](#) office. These services include providing students with information and support, with the goal of providing "equitable opportunities for higher education" (DSS mission statement). In addition, SSU is participating in the ENACT program, which was created with funding from the U.S. Department of Education in order to support students with disabilities who are pursuing postsecondary education. Part of the mission of ENACT, for example, is implementing the CSU [Accessible Technology Initiative: California State University, Office of the Chancellor](#). The goal of the initiative is to "*....make information technology resources and services accessible to all CSU students, faculty, staff and the general public regardless of disability.*" As part of this, the university has created some faculty learning communities that study and apply concepts of [Universal Design for Learning - EnACT](#) to their courses, so that the learning experience is more accessible to all students.

Employees of Sonoma State University who have certified disabilities have a resource in the [Disabled Employee Program](#), which is part of Human Services. This program is the start point for disabled employees or applicants for SSU positions who need reasonable accommodations to perform their work.

The Sonoma State University [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute](#), which is offered through the School of Extended Education, illustrates the institution's recognition that lifelong learners can be any age. The Osher program presents a variety of courses for learners aged "50 or better," with the goal of offering the "pure pleasure of learning unencumbered by grades."