



**Higher Learning Commission**  
A commission of the North Central Association

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July 8, 2013

Dr. David L. Chicoine  
President  
South Dakota State University  
Box 2201, AD 222  
Brookings, SD 57007-2298

Dear President Chicoine:

The progress report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. A staff analysis of the report is enclosed.

On behalf of the Commission, staff accepts the report on the implementation and effectiveness of the University's Diversity Plan. No further reports are required. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2019 – 2020.

Also enclosed is a copy of the institution's Statement of Affiliation Status, which reflects the actions taken by the Commission. For more information on the interim report process contact Lil Nakutis, Process Administrator, Accreditation Services, at [lnakutis@hlcommission.org](mailto:lnakutis@hlcommission.org). Your HLC staff liaison is Steph Brzuzy ([sbrzuzy@hlcommission.org](mailto:sbrzuzy@hlcommission.org)); (800) 621-7440 x 106.

Thank you.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION



## STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: July 8, 2013

STAFF: Steph Brzuzy

REVIEWED BY: Katherine C. Delaney

INSTITUTION: South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: David L. Chicoine, President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION RE: REPORT: A progress report due 7/1/2013 focused on the implementation and effectiveness of the University's Diversity Plan for the Office that was published in April 2008.

ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The office of the Commission received South Dakota State University's report on the above topic on 6/28/2013.

STAFF ANALYSIS: South Dakota State University hosted a comprehensive visit in November 2009. In reviewing the institution's responses to the previous comprehensive visit in 1999-2000, the visiting team concluded that insufficient progress had been made on issues related to diversity and recommended that the current progress report be submitted on the implementation and effectiveness of the institution's diversity plan that was published in April 2008.

The University submitted an excellent and thorough report that documented progress in several areas relating to diversity and inclusion. For example:

- The University's Strategic Plan, *Impact 2018*, launched in July 2013, reflects the university's commitment and vision to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of a pluralistic society. A core value of the strategic plan is "Acceptance and embracement of diverse cultures and perspectives." Colleges, departments and other units are in the process of completing strategic plans that include diversity and inclusion as goals with related action steps and measures. The appendix of the report included the strategic plan for the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community.
- A full-time Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) was hired in 2011; this position reports directly to the President. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community (ODEC) is located adjacent to the President's Office and provides leadership in centralizing diversity and inclusion efforts.
- The American Indian Education and Cultural Center (AIECC), established in 2010, centralized services for American Indian students and visitors. The AIECC serves as a "home-base" for American Indian students, provides resources as well as academic and co-curricular activities. It is now staffed by Native professionals who recruit, mentor, and support American Indian students and provide information to campus on best practices in conducting research with indigenous peoples.
- With the establishment of the Office of International Affairs and Outreach (OIAO), international



student recruitment, admission, and success initiatives and study abroad efforts are centralized resulting in an increase in the number of international students at SDSU.

- The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) has dedicated re-modeled space to provide a resource room for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) students. Moreover, the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) has grown in membership and is advised by three faculty members. The organization is involved in research projects, campus and community activities. The OMSA and the ODEC have begun co-sponsoring Safe-Zone training.
- Support services for all students have been expanded. These include early alert, supplemental instruction, tutoring, first year advising and others. Residence hall and AIECC staff manage a Living Learning Community for Native Students and those interested in learning more about Native culture. Staff at the AEICC and the OMSA identify and provide support specific to underrepresented groups.
- Articulation agreements, course equivalency guides and other memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with state and regional tribal colleges and high schools are in the process of being developed and updated.

The progress report provided the following data on undergraduate student enrollment by race/ethnicity:

Ethnicity	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
Non-Resident Alien	117	146	152	158	183
American Indian/Alaska Native	199	212	177	175	159
Asian	0	0	96	109	110
Asian/Pacific Islander	106	105	0	0	0
Black or African American	96	114	130	142	164
Hispanic	76	98	152	166	182
2 or more races	0	0	169	167	196
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0	10	9	12
Unknown	643	728	129	62	48
White	9,295	9,391	10,188	10,155	10,064
Total Fall Enrollments	10,532	10,794	11,203	11,143	11,118

The progress report also provided commentary on these data:

- *There has been an increase in the total number of students who identify themselves as a member of a historically underrepresented group (from 734 in fall 2010 to 823 in fall 2012).*
- *There has been the most robust growth in the number of individuals who identify themselves as Black or African American, Hispanic, and of two or more races.*
- *The ethnic categories of Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Asian/Pacific Islander or Asian have remained steady.*
- *The University's undergraduate enrollment is 90.5% White (Fall 2012).*
- *Since 2010 there has been a decline in the number of American Indian/Alaska Native students. The decrease in the number of American Indian/Alaska Native students is due primarily to the very low retention rates. A careful analysis of which programs work and which do not is needed in order to move forward and to see an increase in the number of American Indian students enrolling and completing degrees at SDSU.*



- *The University is primed to move in a positive direction in regard to continuing to increase the number of domestic students of color with increased staff, programs and commitment. This work will continue with the leadership of the Tribal Relations Director and the approval of the American Indian Studies (AIS) major in May 2013.*

Current enrollment goals related to increasing the number of minority students at SDSU are:

- Develop SDSU's presence in out-of-state markets that have a more racially diverse student population (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Wisconsin and Western Undergraduate Exchange states);
- Develop a model to create new markets for domestic students of color;
- Support existing and identify new partnerships with organizations such as Gear-Up and St. Joseph Indian School and Red Cloud High School;
- Collaborate with the SDSU Foundation to identify new scholarship opportunities for economically disadvantaged students and students of color; and
- Collaborate with Academic Affairs and International Affairs to create new agreements with international institutions and with community colleges with high populations of minority students.

The monitoring report also addressed the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty. A summary of the data was presented:

*While increasing the diversity of faculty and staff has long been a goal of the University, limited progress has been made over the past decade. Moreover, until the 2012-2013 academic year, no formal programs or initiatives were in place to provide the guidance and financial support to help reach this goal.*

*Over the 2008-2012 period for all categories of faculty (Tenured, Tenure-Track and Term Full-Time), there was a decrease in total faculty from 596 to 591 (approximately 1%). Over this period, the greatest increase was in the number of Asians from 37 to 63 and non-resident aliens from 15 to 20. There was a small increase in the number of American Indian or Alaska Natives from one (1) to three (3); similarly, there was an increase from five (5) to six (6) in Black or African American. There was a slight decrease in the percent of White faculty from 86.7% in 2008 to 83.2% in 2012.*

*During this same period the number of women faculty increased from 239 (40.1%) to 256 or to 43% of the faculty. Most of the increase for women has been in tenure-track positions where the number increased from 37 (30% of the tenure-track faculty) in Fall 2008 to 56 (43%) in 2012.*

In response to the limited growth in the number of faculty from Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native and Black/African American groups, in Fall 2012, three initiatives were developed to support hiring of diverse faculty. These include: Bridge Funding, Diversity Postdoctoral Fellowship Program and Dissertation Fellowships.

The progress report articulated directives for the future of diversity, equity and community at SDSU:

- *The student body, faculty, staff and administration remain primarily White. While the goal is to more closely reflect the demographic profile of South Dakota, achieving that goal will require long-term commitment and an increase in scholarships and other resources to recruit and retain members of historically underrepresented groups.*
- *A decentralized approach to data management and analytics hinders analysis of diversity and inclusion initiatives. In Fall 2013, the Office of Planning, Decision Support and Assessment will be launched to increase access to accurate data and assist in using the data to inform practice.*

- *While improving, sporadic assessment and evaluation of current programs continues. Assessments that demonstrate the effectiveness and impact on student learning and success, particularly for co-curricular activities, are needed.*
- *A more intensive and comprehensive English as a Second Language (ESL) program is needed to address English language learning for those whose first language is one other than English and to improve student persistence and success. (Plans are in place to launch the program fall 2013.)*
- *More programming on diversity and inclusion-focused education experiences is needed for front-line staff.*
- *An updated review of the current curriculum is needed to identify gaps in course and program offerings in the quest to prepare students to function effectively in a diverse and global world.*

Staff comment: It is clear from the very comprehensive and excellent report submitted by South Dakota State University that the University has given high priority and focus to the issues of diversity among students and faculty. The University is commended for the substantial progress it is making in developing a diverse community of learners that are well served by University programs and services.

STAFF ACTION: Accept the report on the implementation and effectiveness of the University's Diversity Plan. No further reports are required. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2019 – 2020.