

To: Members of the Western Illinois University Board of Trustees
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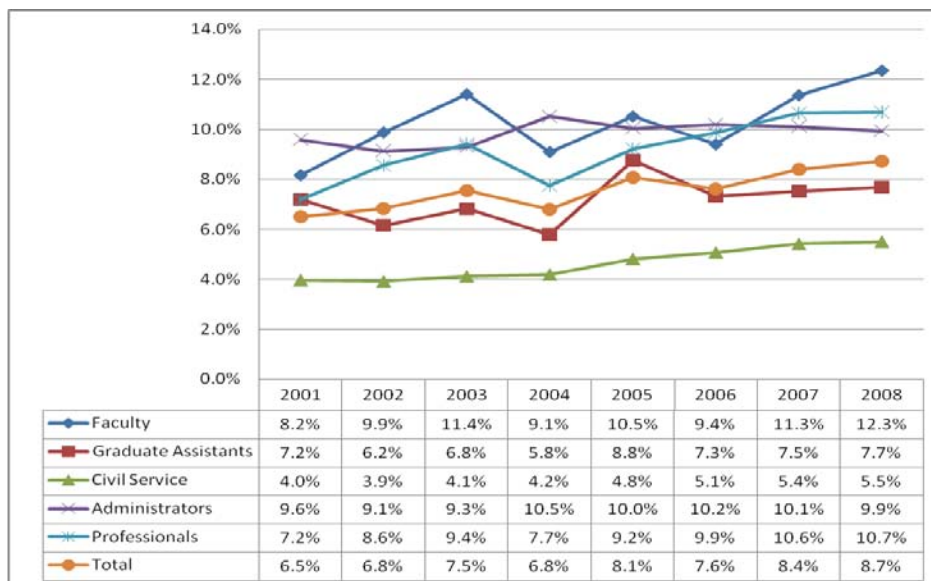
From: Joe Rives, Vice President, Quad Cities, Planning and Technology

Date: December 17, 2008

Re: December 2008 Strategic Plan Update

Last month's *Strategic Plan Update* focused on university initiatives to increase diversity during the period of institutional self-study for re-accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission-North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. This month's *Strategic Plan Update* looks at minority staffing data for the same time period, as the University successfully implements priorities from *Higher Values in Higher Education* to increase campus diversity.

Minority employees as a proportion of total Western Illinois University employees increased from 6.5 percent of the total in fall 2001 (N = 2,432) to 8.7 percent of the total in fall 2008 (N = 2,592). Comparing fall 2001 to fall 2008, the University saw increases in the proportion of minority employees across all staffing categories (minority graduate assistants, civil service, administrative, and professional staff).



Through the original *Higher Values in Higher Education Strategic Plan*, Western Illinois University made many accomplishments related to minority employee recruitment and retention. This includes establishing the Dual Career Recruitment and Retention Program; using the Trainee and Learner programs to enhance workforce diversity within civil service job groups; supporting the Affirmative Action Internship program; creating the

Center for International Studies, providing integration of global and cross-cultural education in the curriculum, forming the Community University Partnership Program, engaging in the Global Challenges and Personal Responsibilities in the area of Cultural Diversity theme year programming, and initiating new Provost's Awards for Excellence in Multicultural Teaching and Internationalizing the Campus.

These and many other initiatives support a diverse and supportive campus environment. Comparing results from the academic year 2001-2002 to the academic year 2006-2007 *Campus Climate Surveys* (available at www.wiu.edu/surveys/local/2006-07surveys/index.php#CampusClimate) shows that successful implementation of the original *Strategic Plan* priorities reinforces a supportive and inclusive campus environment. *Survey* results from over 2,500 respondents showed that:

- Progress was shown with comments such as “Diversity is getting better at WIU and the administration has shown a deep commitment to getting this issue addressed.”
- The most significant factor in students, faculty, and staff deciding to come to and stay at Western was the physical attractiveness of the campus, followed closely by the availability of social and cultural activities and the physical accessibility of the campus.
- Interaction among diverse groups is an important factor in creating a positive campus climate. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents reported having frequent interaction with persons of race/ethnicities and religious backgrounds that differ from their own.
- Insensitive or disparaging remarks about individual groups are seldom evident on campus, and when they are made, the majority of students, faculty, and staff readily challenged those who made the derogatory comments.

Building on the successes of its predecessor, *Higher Values in Higher Education 2008-2018* has many priorities related to recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff, including:

- Developing and expanding fiscally responsible, family-friendly policies and procedures across all employee classifications that assist in faculty and staff recruitment and retention.
- Providing increased structured educational opportunities and resources to increase student-faculty interactions and active and collaborative learning through international studies, internships, service learning, and undergraduate and graduate student research.
- Creating opportunities for increasing public involvement in cultural, intellectual, and educational activities.
- Providing the campus and surrounding communities with a diverse season of quality cultural entertainment.
- Developing new and enhanced programs and services specifically designed for the professional development needs of faculty and staff.
- Supporting economic and cultural development of our host communities and regions.

Similar to its student diversification efforts, Western Illinois University expects that it will be successful in its employee diversification efforts:

- The University has already achieved three of the initial diversity priorities from *Higher Values in Higher Education 2008-2018*:
 - The Provost and Academic Vice President's Office established underrepresented minority dissertation fellowships and visiting professor programs.
 - The President's Office established the University Diversity Council (UDC). The UDC is co-chaired by Ms. Cathy Couza, Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access and Dr. Ron Williams, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. The UDC makes recommendations to the Equal Opportunity and Access Officers and the President regarding policy, campus initiatives, and programs in support of the University's Affirmative Action program.

- The Quad Cities Campus engaged in a diversity audit with doctoral students from the University of Iowa. These students will be presenting recommendations for the campus community to further enhance and celebrate diversity.
- The University has a strong history of Strategic Plan accomplishments. Of the original 140 *Higher Values in Higher Education* action items, 122 (87.1 percent) are either accomplished, maintained or currently in progress.
- The University's core value of personal growth celebrates diversity, supports internationalization of the curriculum, and encourages plurality of thought and perspective.
- Results from the academic year 2007-2008 *Equal Opportunity and Access Survey* (available at www.wiu.edu/users/survey/local/2007-08surveys/index.php#Governance) show that 88.2 percent of survey respondents indicate that Western is supportive of all employees.

If you have any questions about or feedback regarding the continued successful implementation of *Higher Values in Higher Education*, please contact me. I wish you and your families a happy holiday season.

cc: President Goldfarb CSEC President Lavin Alumni Council Chair Hoffman
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