

Parsons Diversity Initiative

Assessment & Planning Overview

2008–2009 school year

primary goals of the diversity initiative

I address issues of access & underrepresentation

II improve the social climate for diversity

III measure, institutionalize & sustain efforts

I address access & underrepresentation

gain compositional diversity in our students, staff and faculty

assure access for all to the institution (revisit hiring strategies, financial aid, admissions strategies, relationships, image of the school & view of art/design)

attract, promote and support greater numbers of quality individuals from underrepresented groups into faculty, administrative, and staff positions

recruit, retain, and graduate numbers of students from underrepresented and diverse backgrounds

identify and prioritize funding (for student aid, culturally specific services, professional development/support, targeted hiring, research awards and mini-grants)

II improve the social climate

foster an environment where people from diverse backgrounds thrive socially, academically and professionally

take inventory of program content, curricula and pedagogies

evaluate current services & support

provide space where underrepresented groups can build community and explore their identity

create opportunities for the campus community to engage issues of race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, religion and spirituality

facilitate meaningful peer-to-peer, cross-cultural learning opportunities

III institutionalize & sustain

institutionalize efforts to assure sustainability, measure progress & adjust plans accordingly

revisit mission, values, strategic plans and policies of the institution to be sure that diversity goals are reflected

work closely with university Provost to coordinate strategic academic goals

consider projected demographic shifts in higher education to better inform planning

design measurement tools to evaluate progress and adjust plans when necessary

strategic & long-term budget planning to fund the initiative's work and reflect an institutional commitment

08-09 goal: evaluate Parsons faculty searches/hiring plans

-introduce the goals of Diversity Initiative at the outset of every search (committee meeting)

-provide strategies for search committees to better implement the core value of diversity in the search process

-prepare sample interview questions related to diversity to be used during interviews

-monitor demographics of candidate pools to assure more diversity

-audit recruitment methods, augment relationships, networks and branding strategies to improve quality and diversity of candidate pools

-develop an internal guidebook for use throughout the entire search process

08-09 goal: learn about the Parsons student experience as it relates to diversity

-facilitate focus groups for students that are School, department and affinity group based

-work with Admissions to better understand current recruitment strategies, process and criteria

-interview a sample of alum about their experiences here

-plan for a presence of the diversity initiative at student-centered school events

-explore the pre-enrollment programs as a foundation for deepening Parsons relationships with high school students, families and underrepresented communities

-facilitate opportunities for Parsons advising staff to gain resources and skills to better meet the needs of a more diverse student body