

# Diversity

## Background

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Diversity is highlighted as a core campus value in the campus Principles of Community, as well as in its mission statement. UC Santa Cruz has witnessed dramatic changes in the demographic composition of its undergraduate and graduate student body over its relatively brief history. In 2013-14, the undergraduate population included a historically large number of first-generation college students (52%) and those belonging to underrepresented ethno-racial groups, in particular Latino students, who now comprise 25% of the undergraduate student body. The University of California's directive to increase public access to higher education intersects with the distinctive tradition of social responsibility that characterizes the Santa Cruz campus.

These changes, of course, reflect the shifting demographics of California. Like other UC campuses, Santa Cruz mirrors the composition of the state's population imperfectly at best. African-American, Latino/a, and American Indian students make up a smaller proportion of the undergraduate student body at UCSC than they do of young people in the state in general, or the college-eligible population in particular. Student success efforts here appear to be paying off: community college transfer students, who are more likely to belong to underrepresented groups and/or to be first-generation college students, are graduating at campus average rates. Still, many stakeholders feel that more needs to be done to provide a welcoming and inclusive campus climate for everyone, and the results of the recent Campus Climate Survey bear this out. Diversity extends beyond campus climate issues, however. The increasingly pluralistic cultural landscape in which we live demands new forms of knowledge, and new ways to share it. UC Santa Cruz may be in the best position it ever has been to unite the academic and social missions of the university by becoming as a major source of diverse scholars and leaders.

The proportion of groups traditionally underrepresented in academia shrinks as one looks up the ladder. A few statistics will illustrate this. About 3 percent doctoral students UC-wide are African-American, and 8 percent are Latino. Women comprise 52% of the undergraduate and graduate population at UC Santa Cruz, but only 37% of the faculty (even less—23%—in STEM fields). In terms of racial diversity, this “inverted funnel” pattern is even more pronounced: Latinos, African Americans, and American Indians comprise 28% of the undergraduate and graduate population but only 9.5% of the faculty. The total percentage of faculty from underrepresented groups is even less in STEM fields: 9% in Engineering, 4% in PBSci. Diversity within administrative and support staff is, likewise, unevenly distributed.

## Lessons Learned

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There are differences of opinion across campus constituencies, both in perceptions of the need for specific measures to address diversity, and in understandings of what the term means. The UC-wide set of "Principles of Diversity" is quite wide-ranging. Various Senate and Divisional committees and special task forces have contributed piecemeal to the larger picture. It may be useful to arrive at a common definition of what the term means for UC Santa Cruz in particular before proceeding to formulate further plans and goals.

When speaking about underrepresented groups, aggregated data is less helpful than nuanced statistical portraits. Noting the historically high percentage of non-white undergraduate students on campus today, for instance, does not indicate that some underrepresented groups have not seen the same level of growth in numbers.

Many stakeholders report that achieving critical mass in terms of diversity goals is important because numerous studies indicate that the presence or absence of perceived role models is an important factor in the success or failure of underrepresented students. This is also the case for other minority groups, such as member of the LGBTQT community, religious minorities, and disabled persons for which fewer benchmark statistics are available.

Institutional knowledge that is sometimes painfully gained can easily be lost. Programs that are sacrificed during budget cuts are hard to bring back, even when they were successful.

## National/State Trends

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Diversity is a high priority for the UC system as a whole. In one of her first moves as President of the UC system, Janet Napolitano allocated \$15 million to support undocumented and underrepresented undergraduate and graduate students and to increase their numbers.

Much recent scholarship has considered the persistent gap in college completion rates between majority and underrepresented students. This gap is widely seen as a major American social problem given the well-documented community and personal benefits of a baccalaureate degree, and the growing proportion of college-age students who are non-white and those who live in financial insecurity due to the growing wealth gap in the United States. This research yields suggestive results:

- Retention and graduation rates, and other measures of student well-being, are correlated to having an inclusive campus climate and a diverse faculty and staff.

- Colleges nationwide are admitting an increasingly diverse set of students, but the composition of their faculties has been slower to catch up. As the nation's demographics shift and a broader cross-section of Americans goes to college, some studies warn that the student-faculty divide could become even more of a barrier to the success of students from underrepresented groups.
- Many faculty, staff, and students alike report that a lack of critical mass of underrepresented groups means that the same people are tapped over and over again for committees in order to “diversify the room.”
- As women continue to be well represented in college enrollments, and to make strides in fields like law and medicine, the gap in the STEM fields has many wondering exactly what the culprit is. Many chalk up the difference to a lack of female role models. A 2011 report by the U.S. Department of Commerce found only one in seven engineers are female. Additionally, women have seen no employment growth in STEM jobs since 2000.
- Proposition 209 continues to impact systemwide diversity efforts, especially with regard to the highest-performing African-American students, who are disproportionately opting out of the UC system to go to college elsewhere.

## Strategic Themes

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Diversity can be understood as a through-line: extending from support services offered to entering students, to meaningfully integrated academic work that makes the most of diverse knowledge, to mentoring of undergraduates for graduate school and research opportunities, to recruiting the strongest graduate students whose successful completion of their advanced degrees will in turn increase the flow of underrepresented scholars into the academy.

In this planning process, we need to ask ourselves: Is diversity seen as a “crisis” or an “opportunity” at UC Santa Cruz? How well are diversity climate goals tied to the academic mission of the campus?

## Opportunities

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Current conditions present an opportunity to make UC Santa Cruz a nationally recognized producer of scholars and leaders from underrepresented groups. In relation to the available pool in specific research areas, this means women and underrepresented groups in STEM fields; and women, disabled persons, African-American, Latino, American Indian, and Asian-American scholars differentially across fields.

- Opportunities for targeted funding to advance diversity goals exist at the federal level (e.g. those opened up by moving to formal Hispanic Serving Institution status), as well as UC-wide programs and private philanthropy.
- New degree programs across campus are working to conceptualize the current and future social questions raised by diversity, and to understand its intersection with social justice.
- The formation of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in 2010 has raised awareness on campus about diversity issues. Its mission is to advance the University's teaching, research and service mission and its commitment to excellent by working collaboratively with others throughout the institution to promote a campus climate that values diversity, equity and inclusion, and is free of bias and harassment. The Ethnic Resource Centers and Queer Cantú Centers play a crucial role in serving a diverse student population.
- The technology industry to which UC Santa Cruz has strong local ties has come under fire for its lack of gender and ethno-racial diversity.

## Short- and Long-Term Plans

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A first step in any effort to take the whole picture of campus diversity should be to gather together information that is currently spread out around campus (administrative units, colleges, departments, divisions, EOP and student support services, etc.). Among these questions are:

- What effect will the anticipated increase in the numbers of out of state and international students have on campus diversity, according to multiple measures?
- How effective are current and former student support and mentoring programs related to diversity, especially programs aimed at building a pipeline of scholars and leaders from pre-university to?
- Which academic programs at UCSC have produced a number of undergraduate and graduate degree holders from underrepresented groups in the past?
- Does data exist that would demonstrate what UCSC has already contributed to the national pool in past years? How could alumni be leveraged as mentors and supporters in the future?

In sum, it is important to take this opportunity to **define and clarify local campus diversity goals** and **narrow them down to realistically achievable focus areas**. Many stakeholders feel that diversifying the faculty should be a high campus priority.