

Diversity Dimension Report  
Lawrence Technological University

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Dimension:

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- Interact in an open and civil community with people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own
- Reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold
- Explore their own cultures and the cultures of others.

Team:

Committee Leaders:

Kevin Finn, Dean of Students  
Holly Helterhoff, Director, ASUD/Scholars Program, Senior Lecturer

Committee Members:

Andrea Freille, Student; Ronald Jenkins, Student; Janielle Tchakerian, Director of Residence Housing; Leslie Wilson, Coordinator, Student Activities; Kingman Yee, Faculty

*Overall, we rank ourselves as "low" in assuring a diverse experience for our students.*

PI 7.1 Diverse ideas: *To what degree does the institution assure that first-year students experience diverse ideas and world views through the following:*

- *Initiatives based in the curriculum?*
- *Initiatives based in the co-curriculum (campus sponsored out-of-the class activities)?*
- *Initiatives integrated across the curriculum and co-curriculum?*

As a complicating factor, during the investigation of the Diversity subcommittee, both the Multicultural Affairs director and the Commuter Student director were laid off. While their duties have been reassigned, the lack of secure funding for these positions is highly problematic.

- Curriculum: Although the required University Seminar Course offers a fairly high degree of exposure to diversity, and many core courses offer exposure to diverse ideas, other opportunities are minimal. Foreign languages currently play a very small role in giving students experience to world views because our majors have no foreign language requirements. Therefore, few students take a foreign language. *Obviously not all courses should focus on diversity.*
- Co-curriculum: Currently our limited diversity opportunities include housing global perspectives, diversity seminars, and other activities occurring on campus (e.g., celebrations of international holidays). Since we are largely a commuter-based campus, the exposure students receive if diversity events are held outside of class time is minimal.
- Integrated across curriculum and co-curriculum: Our only true integrated programs, at this point, are our Leadership Program in China, our Global Leadership Certificate, our underutilized Study Abroad program, and our ESL program. Our ESL program has inspired Arabic language clinics in the AAC and the Al Farabi Caf  .

7.2 Interactions *To what degree does the institution structure opportunities for first-year students to interact with individuals from backgrounds and cultures different from their own within the following categories?*

The data from the student and faculty surveys indicate high satisfaction with the opportunities for first year students to interact with staff and other students from different backgrounds. The survey indicates that opportunities for students to interact with diverse people outside the university are very limited.

We did not survey working experiences, since we have so many students working off campus.

PI 7.3 Behaviors *To what degree does the institution convey to first-year students the standards of behavior it expects for participants in a diverse<sup>1</sup>, open, and civil campus community?*

We determined that while first-year students are highly aware of overall expectations for college students, we do very little to communicate expectations specific to appreciation of diversity on a college campus.

The Dean of Students communicates expectations related to the Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor Code at Discovery Days. Expectations regarding diversity could easily be dispersed at the same time.

As University Seminar is the only course that virtually all first-year students take, it should also be used to communicate (or reinforce) these expectations.

The university shows encouragement of participating in diversity events by hosting international events such as the Chinese New Year celebration, Diwali, etc., and emailing students about these opportunities.

The primary challenge is within the mindsets of individual first-year students, particularly those raised in an environment where diversity was not celebrated or was perhaps even discouraged.

#### Discussion Notes on Sources of Evidence

We noted that the survey did not ask students about their diversity expectations. What do the students want? We also do not have any data discussing how students feel about the curriculum in terms of diversity. We do, however, have some data from a graduate survey.

The opportunity to "assure" implies that the experience actually occurs. Most programming outside of the classroom relies on students wanting to participate. *We assure that the experience is available, in most instances, but we cannot assure that students take advantage of the opportunities.*

We cannot filter survey results by sexual orientation, so we don't know how the GLBT campus community feels about these issues. Future investigation could include meeting with the leaders of OUT! With Friends at LTU. We also are not certain how we are meeting the needs of older returning students.

Our sources of evidence were the University Seminar curriculum, the surveys regarding Discovery Days, as well as the NSSE 2008 Mean Comparisons.

1. Our subcommittee assumed that the rating for the first question (curriculum) should be "high" (instead of "low") because of the high diversity content covered in University Seminar, but we don't have the data to support that assumption. We don't have any relevant student data. Faculty and staff who are not connected with University Seminar would not know that diversity experiences are required in University Seminar. Consequently, the staff surveyed reported the diversity opportunities as much lower than they probably are.

Recommended Grade: NA

Recommended Action Items:

- Expand diversity topics within specific courses (medium priority) *(High priority)*
  - i. Publicize to all faculty, staff, and advisors what diversity topics are covered in University Seminar [First Year Program]
  - ii. Consider adding diversity topics in Intro to Engineering: e.g., Asian theory for manufacturing/business; global competition; technology in different parts of the world (modern countries vs. third world countries: e.g., lighting, how to move water, how houses are built) [Engineering]
  - iii. Consider exploring western vs. eastern economic theories in SSC2303 Princ. of Economics [Harold Hotelling]
  - iv. Offer foreign language (culture) courses on campus, which could increase interest in study abroad programs [Humanities, AAC]. Expand publicity for Communicating Across Cultures course
- Explore offering foreign language minors beyond Spanish [Humanities] *(High priority)*
- Explore creating an architecture-specific study abroad requirement [Architecture] *(High priority)*
- Form more international, multicultural, and nontraditional student organizations on campus *(High priority)*
- Develop the current Inter-Faith Lounge into a spirituality center (high priority) *(High priority)*

Develop the current Inter-Faith Lounge into a spirituality center where students can freely go to pray, meditate, and learn about different traditions of spirituality. The center would not have an affiliation with religion, but would provide resources to learn about different traditions as well as a serene, private place to practice one's own beliefs (high priority): [Student Affairs]

The following student groups have requested this development:

  1. Muslim Student Association
  2. Saudi Student Union
  3. Chaldean Student Union
  4. Campus Crusade for Christ
  5. Student Government
  6. Various students seeking quiet meditation and yoga space
- Create an environment where staff and faculty have time to attend diversity events *(High priority)*

Create an environment where staff and faculty have time to attend diversity events, to lead by example (high priority) [Office of the Provost, Deans]
- Foster interaction between American and International students (medium priority) *(High priority)*
  - i. Maintain and expand the practice of having international and American students as roommates in the dorms. [Housing]
  - ii. Have international and American students working together on team projects in and out of class. [Various]
- Increase publicity for all programs supporting diversity (high priority) *(High priority)*
- Improve future surveys to ask students about their diversity expectations *(High priority)*

Improve future surveys to ask students about their diversity expectations, both in and out of class, and how they feel about the curriculum and diversity (high priority)
- Publicize the university's expectations on diversity *(High priority)*

Publicize the university's expectations on diversity for students on web and in orientation materials (high priority) [Marketing, Student Affairs, Admissions]
- Provide information to students on the diversity of metro-Detroit [Student Affairs] *(High priority)*

- Create a student advisory board to oversee Brown Bag series (high priority) [Student Affairs] (*High priority*)
- Create and organize more opportunities for students to participate in projects outside of LTU (*High priority*)
- Include new ESL students in first year activities (high priority) [Various] (*High priority*)
- Explore offering a shuttle bus to facilitate off-campus activities [Student Affairs] (*High priority*)
- Investigate creating an Alternative Spring Break program [Student Affairs] (*High priority*)
- Review expectations on diversity and the Code of Conduct with student organizations (*High priority*)  
Review expectations on diversity and the Code of Conduct with student organizations. Provide diversity and inclusiveness training to student leaders, faculty, staff, and Greek organizations (high priority) [Student Affairs]
- Communicate diversity expectations at convocation (high priority) [Office of the Provost] (*High priority*)
- Develop sanctions for violations [Student Affairs] (*High priority*)
- Create opportunities for students to interact with students they might not know otherwise (high) (*High priority*)