

## UC BERKELEY -- STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLE

### EXCERPT FROM:

#### *Chancellor/Academic Senate Diversity Project : Diversity Project Coordinating Committee (2005)*

**Report Summary:** Excellence has been the overriding principle governing the evolution of the University of California, Berkeley, in every respect. Diversity is an integral part of that principle - inherent in the very definition of "university." "University" joins "diversity" into a whole which is greater than its parts; excellence is made possible when diverse viewpoints, socio-economic status, ethnicities, and experiences unite, creating the very best education. This is particularly true for public universities. As in the natural world, the synergy of different elements creates new, stronger, more adaptive results: when a species or group becomes inbred and doesn't adapt to its changing environment, it sickens or disappears. The diversity of the people of California and our nation offers the opportunity for healthy change leading to greater excellence. Without increased diversity, the University will become ever more inbred and, ultimately, will be unable to meet the challenges of our environment. Our arenas of research and their utility to society, and our ability to produce new leaders and thinkers are compromised if we do not respond well. It is natural for Berkeley to lead and innovate; it is unnatural for it to be complacent. Our response to the changing diversity of the State we serve has not been excellent. We must now become energized to promote the excellence that has been Berkeley's hallmark through increased diversity.

### KEY THEMES

**A. Maintenance of the highest standards for a public institution of education:** Sustaining a diverse campus that encompasses the demographics of the state of California is necessary to achieve the highest academic standards and the highest democratic ideal of social equality and respect for both the individual and the community. We must draw upon the full talent pool of the state in order to provide optimal leadership and opportunities for a successful society. **The pursuit and attainment of diversity:**

- creates options for new models of leadership;
- ensures the highest moral ground when considering difficult societal issues;
- deepens our institutional and individual understanding of the social issues and problems we are here to address; and
- enhances the economic viability of the state/nation.

**B. Opportunity for innovation:** Bringing together different perspectives and experiences breeds innovation. Providing an educational program and campus environment inclusive of the widest variety of human experience offers the richest context for advances in research, teaching, and service. **The pursuit and attainment of diversity:**

- increases the opportunity for inquiry and discovery;
- promotes creation of new synergies and fields;
- enhances creativity, breadth, and relevance of research;
- embraces an evolving understanding of excellence in terms of areas of study, as well as modes of intellectual inquiry; and
- removes barriers to teaching and learning at the highest levels.

**C. Value of human understanding:** Living, working, learning, and teaching with people from different backgrounds promotes increased understanding of the human condition, leading us beyond tolerance to appreciation, compassion, and mutual respect. **The pursuit and attainment of diversity:**

- heightens the understanding of self as well as others;
- fosters cultural awareness in a globalized world; and
- promotes social justice, tolerance, and democratic ideals.

**D. Quality citizenship:** In order to prepare our students for success and responsibility within our increasingly complex and global world, their educational environment must, at the very least, reflect a population and experience as diverse as that world. **The pursuit and attainment of diversity:**

- strengthens the university's connection to the society which supports it; and
- provides the optimal training for successfully interacting with and leading the people of the state of California, the nation, and the world.

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### EXCERPT FROM:

#### *The Berkeley Strategic Academic Plan (2004)*

**A VITAL AND DIVERSE INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY.** We believe social and cultural diversity are essential to the university. They stimulate creative thought and new paths of inquiry, ensure that the research questions we tackle address the whole of society, and enable us to train leaders who encompass the entire spectrum of Californians.

**THE PRIMACY OF PUBLIC SERVICE.** Notwithstanding the growing pressure to seek private resources, we recognize our core purpose is to serve and benefit the people of California through the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge, including outreach to underserved communities.

**EXCELLENCE IN EVERY ENDEAVOR.** We must ensure each element of the academic enterprise – teaching, research and service – continues to maintain the Berkeley standard of excellence. This requires us to recruit and retain the best people from the full talent pool, and to provide the resources they need to excel.

**PUBLIC MISSION.** As a UC campus, Berkeley has a clearly defined role in the historic California Master Plan for Higher Education, which with great foresight articulated complementary missions for the Community Colleges, the California State Universities, and the University of California. Under this plan, the people look to UC to provide our state with research institutions of national and international standing, offering the most demanding and rigorous education to our most promising students. Over the years, our performance has not only equaled but often outpaced the nation's elite private universities, despite their longer histories and far larger private endowments. The excellence of Berkeley is a testament to the public spirit and vision of the people of California, who have sustained us for over a century as a premier research university, while also ensuring a Berkeley education remains within reach of every deserving student.

**ESTABLISH CLEAR CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM REVIEWS.** If program reviews are to be fair and credible, they should be based on a common and universally accepted set of findings, including:

\_\_ **Is this program a recognized leader in its field?** Excellence is our standard for every academic endeavor: each program at Berkeley is expected to be a leader in terms of its reputation, its contributions to knowledge, and its inclusion of new talents and concepts, and each new program should have the potential to be so.

\_\_ **Does this program have the vigor and resources to yield significant advances in knowledge?** Each program at Berkeley is also expected to remain a leader. While many programs at Berkeley have a long and noble history of contributions, they must also demonstrate the capacity to continue at this level in the future.

\_\_ **Does this program engage students and faculty from the full talent pool?**

Diversity is integral to excellence, and programs should demonstrate their efforts to recruit, retain, and engage the best minds from the whole of society.

\_\_ **Does this program address a topic of critical importance to society?** Academic programs cannot be evaluated entirely in terms of the practical value we perceive today. In fact, our role as a research university includes the advance of knowledge beyond its current application. However, many of our programs do have clear relevance to societal problems, and as such contribute to our mission of public service.

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### EXCERPT FROM:

*Draft Systemwide Academic Senate Statement on Diversity: (lengthier version was finally adopted in May 2006)*

“Diversity—a defining feature of California's past, present and future—refers to the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences of culture and circumstance. Such differences include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and geographic region, among others.

Diversity is integral to the University's achievement of excellence. Diversity enhances the ability of the University to accomplish its academic mission and to serve all of the members of its community equitably. Diversity broadens and deepens both the educational experience and the scholarly environment, as students and faculty of diverse backgrounds learn to interact effectively with each other, preparing them to participate in an increasingly complex, pluralistic society. Educational excellence that truly incorporates diversity promotes mutual respect and makes possible the full, effective use of the talents and abilities of all to foster innovation and train future leadership.

Therefore, the University of California renews its commitment to fully realizing its historical promise to recognize and nurture merit, talent, and achievement by promoting diversity and equal opportunity in its education, services, and administration, as well as research and creative activity. The University particularly acknowledges the acute need to remove barriers to the recruitment, retention and advancement of talented students, faculty and staff from historically excluded or currently underrepresented populations.”

### EXCERPT FROM:

*Commentary from the Academic Senate's Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity: "Excellence Requires Diversity – Leading UC into the 21st Century" (2003)*

Why is it so critical to the fundamental mission of the University that it reflect the diversity of the society in which it lies? We may start with the very definition of the word "*university*". Its roots suggest "a society..., or community regarded collectively" (OED). Indeed, the core of "*university*" has the same Latin origin as the core of "*diversity*". Diversity becomes an issue for a University when the varied members of the society in which it is embedded are not fully included. It becomes not a collective community, but an exclusionary community. Such a University does not satisfy a fundamental defining quality. This is particularly true of a public University, whose very existence depends on serving the State which founded it. Clearly, an "*excellent University*" could not long live with this problem and remain worthy of the description.

A compelling demonstration of why diversity is important to the future of the University comes from fundamental principles in the natural living world. A successful species or population *requires* genetic diversity – to help it adapt quickly to changing circumstances. If the percentage of closely-related individuals rises too high, the group becomes vulnerable to damage or extinction from a danger that would not be so critical in a more diverse population. The same can be said of ideas: when points-of-view become too narrow or ingrown, they are increasingly at risk of becoming wrong or irrelevant. They will be superseded by ideas drawn from a more diverse setting or group. Excellence and diversity are fundamentally related if we wish to attain the highest standard of intellectual endeavors.

Ours is an institution whose fundamental ethos is to collect the very best minds. For it to allow an increasing fraction of the talent pool to lie untapped is intolerable. This can only lead to declining excellence. A diverse faculty is more attractive not only to the larger pool of faculty candidates, but to the best students as well. The faculty provides examples to aspire to. Students and new faculty should be able to find role models and mentors from whom they can most fully benefit, and who will play an active role in

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advancing their future careers. Although we would prefer it were not so, gender, culture and ethnic identity play some role in this – it is not coincidental that the current faculty reflects to a large degree the faculty of the previous generation. There is, regrettably, a negative effect from looking around and finding very few people to easily identify with.

Since a lack of diversity is currently apparent (and getting worse relative to our community), we must vigorously and proactively work to fix it. The Table below summarizes the current numbers. The prodigious amount of new faculty hiring that will take place in the next decade (a number approaching 80% of the current faculty) provides a welcome opportunity to help insure that we stay at the top. It must be a fundamental goal of our faculty searches to attract and retain talented members from all parts of society, in full measure. In building our new faculty, *success must be explicitly evaluated regarding diversity* with as much weight as any other criterion. Our current performance makes that clear. The behavior of the University sets a powerful example for broader society – we should be in the lead, rather than waiting for the crisis to worsen. A failure to do so will constitute clear evidence that our current lack of diversity has already cost us true excellence. The larger community will ultimately come to feel that it must force change upon us if we cannot manage it ourselves.