

**Undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid and Pipeline Sub-Committee
Diversity Blueprints Task Force
University of Michigan
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Members:

Shari Acho
Cinda-Sue Davis
Anthony England (Co-chair)
Pam Fowler (Co-Chair)
Jamila Fair
Maya Kobersy
John Matlock
Lorelle Meadows
Edward St. John
Ted Spencer
Perry Teicher
Evans Young
Angela Locks provided research assistance

The Undergraduate Subcommittee of the Diversity Blueprints Task Force examined the undergraduate program from pre-admission through graduation and identified six primary focus areas that govern the effectiveness of our diversity programs. These are:

- Pipelines that Assure a Diverse Pool
- Application and Admission Processes
- Financial Aid and Other Conversion Processes
- Retention, Persistence, and Graduation
- Climate
- Research and Evaluation

This report summarizes the recommendation of the committee in each of these six areas as they relate to the University of Michigan's continued commitment to the educational value of diversity.

Our short-term focus was primarily upon adapting the application, admission, financial aid, and conversion processes to the new environment in which we must work, and maintaining a commitment to existing and entering students to more effectively address their transition and climate-related challenges. Transition challenges include deficiencies in academic and/or life-skill preparation. Our climate-related challenge is to ensure that our campus climate is both welcoming and inclusive.

Our longer-term focus was upon building pipelines, much as we have seen in Washington State and Texas, as a key means of maintaining a diverse student body in the post Proposal 2 era. These pipelines will range from informal associations to true partnerships, and they will involve both K-12 systems and post-secondary systems like community colleges and other four-year institutions.

Finally, our programs will be more successful when they are grounded in research and successful experience, and when thorough evaluation and assessment inform our decision processes. We believe that small, central coordinating and assessment functions would provide needed institutional memory and assistance with planning and executing project evaluations. These central functions should be viewed as enabling college-level projects rather than as guiding them.

Pipelines that Assure a Diverse Pool

It is our understanding that the Outreach Subcommittee is addressing pipeline programs as a means of building a diverse pool of students prepared to enter higher education. As such, the recommendations of this subgroup will focus on suggested key elements of such activity and coordination that we find of value in preparing a diverse pool of applicants to the University of Michigan.

To truly build the pipeline will require more than short-term contact with a particular group of students. Rather, establishing a partnership with individual high schools to provide more regular, longer-term interaction with that school's students – in the form of workshops, academic support programs, and the like – will better enable those students (a) to develop the academic qualifications necessary to enter higher education, (b) to understand the processes for applying for admission and financial aid, and (c) to feel a connection with the University such that those students are more likely to apply to the University. Additionally, developing a corridor strategy with other colleges and universities in the state would help all of our partnerships be successful.

Recommendation 1 Pipeline Partnership Development Concepts

The undergraduate sub-committee suggests that the following key strategies or elements be included in any discussion of pipeline program development:

Themed Pipelines

Effective pipelines rely on the clear identification of career pathways, such as: STEM-related fields, the Health Professions, Humanities, among others. While these pipelines may exist side-by-side within a high school setting, a homogeneous approach to pipeline development removes program clarity and reduces the enthusiasm that college faculty and graduate students have for participation in such programs. Most importantly, it reduces the likelihood that pre-college students will identify with a particular career path.

Linking Outreach to Research/Faculty Involvement

Many of our faculty are interested in outreach activities, but feel that these activities are marginalized by an overwhelming focus on promotion and tenure. Indeed, a Research I University stakes its reputation on the research productivity of its faculty. It is therefore essential that the outreach activities of a Research I University be directly linked to the campus research environment. Without this link, there is a risk of disconnection of faculty from the outreach activities. Successful research requires high motivation and a good story on the part of the faculty. For those faculty who can effectively share their enthusiasm to students at the pre-college level, involvement with outreach is both consistent with research and motivationally effective for the pre-college students.

Engagement of Students

Many existing pipeline programs (such as Caltech's Classroom Connection, <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~ccc/home.html>) engage students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in long-term sustainable outreach activities. This provides students with unique opportunities to practice teaching skills and often engages faculty directly and indirectly

into pipeline programs that link their research with the middle school and high school classroom. Such activities serve to enrich the learning experience by vertically integrating the learning environment and engaging students at all levels to learn with and from each other.

Recommendation 2 Suggested Program Elements

Several key program elements are recommended to assure the development of a viable and productive pipeline that may potentially lead to a cultural shift within the partner school towards higher education for their graduates.

Financial Incentive for Pipeline Students

In many cases, the economic barrier to higher education is one which serves to de-motivate even the most promising individuals. To remove this barrier for students in a pipeline program will alleviate this distraction to educational achievement and success. We recommend some form of a financial incentive for early-identified students who show promise in middle school and maintain performance in high school pipeline programs. (A form of this concept is proposed in Financial Aid: Recommendation 2.)

K-12 Counseling

Conscious or unconscious biases in counseling students may result in the tracking of students into specific career pathways. Through innovative means of counseling and mentorship, this process can be repaired to recognize student promise and empower students to enroll in the courses required for entry into higher education. One example of such a program can be found in the School of Education and College of Engineering proposal to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, which proposes creation of a “College Advising Corps” made up of recent UM graduates and/or graduate students, who will spend up to two years in local schools, providing support and information to the K-12 communities in southeastern Michigan.

Parent Involvement in Student Career Development

While it is important to encourage students to attend college, it is the parents and guardians of our youth who play a key role in shaping their future. In a state where 75% of parents feel that a high school education will suffice for their children, it is clear that parent education on the value of higher education in this economy will be essential. Effective concepts for parent involvement includes parent seminars/workshops addressing college finances, parent orientation to the college environment, internet literacy, an introduction to professional career paths in today’s working environment, among other topics. Examples of such programs exist both within the University and at other institutions and expansion of these programs is offered as a recommendation in the Conversion section of this document.

Parent Education

As noted earlier, while it is important to encourage students to attend college, it is the parents and guardians of our youth who play a key role in shaping their future. In a state where 75% of parents feel that a high school education will suffice for their children, it is clear that parent education on the value of higher education in this economy will be essential. One innovative method for parent education is the creation of a parent college on the site of a pipeline partnership. The parent college would offer coursework toward a high school diploma,

preparatory courses for community college or four-year college, and other courses related to “re-tooling” skills of parents who wish to change careers.

Training for Engaged College Students and Faculty

While many students and faculty may have enthusiasm for outreach activities, it is often the case that these same individuals may lack the cultural sensitivity to conduct themselves effectively in an unfamiliar environment. It is highly recommended that preparatory training be offered for both students and faculty prior to engagement in pipeline outreach programs. It is also recognized that training is not sufficient to completely prepare students or faculty for these environments and that continuing opportunities for engagement in cultural dialogues be offered as students and faculty progress in their interactions with pipeline partnerships.

Transportation

Any pipeline development should consider the eventual necessity of transportation, both for faculty, staff, and students of the University to the secondary settings, as well as for enrichment activities of the administrators, teachers, staff, and students that take place on campus.

Recommendation 3 **Transfer Pipeline Development**

In addition to the traditional undergraduate pathway to UM, the University also maintains several non-traditional pathways to an undergraduate degree. Exploration and development of these non-traditional pathways will open doors to students of lower socio-economic standing and greater cultural diversity.

Community College connections

Through the M-Ties program and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation grant, the University of Michigan has already begun to foster relationships with the Community Colleges in the State of Michigan. While this work continues, schools and colleges should be encouraged to creatively explore these partnerships within their own settings, driving the development of effective advising, mentoring, and other transitional programs to support these non-traditional students. Partnerships of this type may also be linked to the pipeline programs described above as well as financial aid programs to provide multiple pathways of improved access to the University of Michigan.

Partnerships with other four-year institutions: 2+2 and 3+2 Dual Degree

While many students transfer to Michigan from other four-year institutions, it is often without the benefit of clear articulation and is often a loss that the other institution suffers in terms of the loss of a potential granted degree. Through creative design of cooperative programs, students can be offered opportunities for a seamless transfer as well as the prospect of a dual degree (one granted from each institution) or an advanced degree (bachelors and masters). Target universities and colleges may include those that serve communities that are historically underserved by the University of Michigan. In addition, scholarship funding may be tied to programs of this type (see Financial Aid Recommendation 2). The College of Engineering, Dual Degree Program with the Atlanta University Consortium is one example of such a program.

Recommendation 4 Organizational Infrastructure/Outreach Coordination

The University has a long-standing tradition of decentralization. Within this environment, it is important to recognize the individual assets and contributions of the units with respect to outreach without creating a large central infrastructure. Rather, we recommend a small central center that can coordinate cross-campus awareness of outreach programs that originate in each unit and, when appropriate leverage such programs to form appropriate partnerships to enhance outreach effectiveness.

Conclusion

We believe that building pipelines with K-12 systems and with post-secondary systems like community colleges and other four-year institutions is the key to maintaining a diverse campus in the post-proposal 2 era. The most effective of these pipelines will require true partnerships between the University, the K-12 and other institutions of higher education. Characteristics of successful pipeline programs have largely been established elsewhere and need not be reinvented here. Our challenge is to effectively adapt the “best practices” of these programs to our distributed campus culture and our emphasis upon cutting edge research.

Application and Admission Processes

As noted in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions' Mission Statement:

“The University of Michigan seeks to enroll and graduate applicants who will develop and grow educationally and personally and contribute to the University community, the State of Michigan, and the broader society. To that end, the role of the Undergraduate Admissions Office is to recruit, admit, and encourage enrollment of applicants who are academically excellent, accomplished in extracurricular endeavors, and broadly diverse. It is the University’s experience and judgment that this mix of students will foster the vibrant educational atmosphere that provides the best educational experience for all students.”

This mission statement captures the philosophy and outlook we recommend be adopted for Application and Admission Processes. We recommend the following short-term and long-term benefit actions for their potential of yielding a diverse and vibrant student body. These recommendations should be read in concert with the complete Admissions plan created by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

Application Processes

Recommendation 1 Application and Campus Visit – Immediate Benefit

These recommendations are to be immediately implemented and, to some degree, have begun to be employed.

Race/Gender on the Undergraduate Application

The undergraduate application will continue requesting information on race, national origin and gender directly on the application, so that the University may monitor any change in applications, acceptances and enrollments. Such inquiries of applicants will continue to include the statement that providing such information is voluntary. Collecting such information will also allow us to comply with current and future federal guidelines or programs.

Diversity during Campus Day

One of the recommendations from the email solicitation was to speak more about the educational value of diversity during Campus Day and not just during minority recruitment functions. We have addressed this concept with our Campus Day leaders. While this is important to admissions work, we recommend that it be a major focus of the outreach and any other campus visit activities.

Recommendation 2 Essay and Personal Statement – Immediate Benefit

Undergraduate admissions will work with the schools and colleges to develop persuasive essays and strong personal statements that will allow applicants to speak to their experiences with diversity or the lack thereof. In addition, the office of admissions will continue to work with the

Deans and the Vice President for Student Affairs to include Michigan Learning Communities (MLC) information on the application. In terms of timeline, most of these items should be completed before next year's application goes to the printer. This activity will be conducted in coordination with the Office of Financial Aid (See Financial Aid Recommendation 2).

Admission Processes

Recommendation 1 Holistic Review Process - Immediate Benefit

The primary tools that the admissions office will use to identify students who will add to the diversity at The University of Michigan will be Descriptor Plus — identifying Educational Neighborhood (EN) and High School (HS) Clusters – as well as the holistic review process, coupled with the present recruitment activities and enhanced outreach programs. A major part of the present recruitment plan includes many phone calls, as well as some interviews by alumni, students, faculty and admissions staff, to prospective and admitted students and their parents.

Recruitment of Volunteers

We recommend that more application review volunteers be added to the current staff. These volunteers should be identified as soon as we reach clarity regarding the distribution of financial aid and merit scholarships.

Expansion of Scholarship Funding to Admitted Students

We recommend that the University create a new scholarship program for admitted students who attend partner high schools and/or participate in special pipeline programs. The elements of such programs are mentioned elsewhere in this report and the conditions of such a scholarship program are noted in the financial aid section, under Recommendation 2: ***Promised scholarships tied to performance in pipeline partnerships.***

Recommendation 2 Developing Special Partnerships with Specific High Schools – Immediate Benefit

We recommend that in-state / out-of-state high schools be identified as elements of a special network in which some students will be given a boost in the admissions process provided they meet or exceed the holistic review criteria.

The list of high schools selected to be a part of the partnership may have the some or all of the following characteristics:

- Descriptor Plus H.S. Clusters;
- High Schools that have minimized the black-white achievement gap within their schools;
- High Schools that have strong diversity populations;
- High Schools where there the UM faculty help some teachers develop lesson plans;
- Cook Foundation H.S.
- Designated Pipeline H.S.

Recommendation 3 Potential Alternatives - Long Term Benefit

Alternative recommendations may be considered in the event that the above-noted recommendations do not assist in achieving a student body that is sufficiently diverse to foster a vibrant and educational atmosphere. The following options are presented in order of priority with the latter being alternatives to consider if the preceding suggestions prove ineffective.

Descriptor Plus Based Pipeline and Partnership System

We recommend that the University implement a combination of a holistic review process based upon Descriptor Plus and a pipeline/partnership system with under-served K-12 and post-secondary systems. We believe this combination has greatest potential for a fairly chosen diverse student body.

Percent Plan

The concept of a percent plan should be considered if the Descriptor Plus-holistic review-partnership high school efforts fail. Although such a plan appears to have fostered a diverse student population for the flagship University of Texas, the situation in Michigan might not allow a similar outcome.

Application Quest

Similarly, the use of Application Quest should be considered only if it can assist in achieving diversity in addition to providing a method to gain some form of fairness. Again, an investigation of its use should be thoroughly pursued and tested prior to implementation of this program or any similar commercially available admissions method.

Limited/Restricted Guaranteed Admissions

The suggestion to offer limited and restricted, guaranteed admissions and financial support to different geographic areas, based on competitive recommendations, test scores and GPAs, should be considered only as a last resort.

Conclusion

We believe that these adjustments to the admission process will provide a diverse pool of admits. The greater challenge will be offering adequate financial aid and convincing admits that the University offers them the best learning environment.

Financial Aid and Other Conversion Processes

Increasing conversion rates among all student populations will provide for a richer, more challenging academic environment. Since the University admits students based on a holistic review of their many diverse qualities, ensuring that as many students as possible commit to attend the University following admittance is an important goal.

Financial aid is the cornerstone of successful conversion for needy students and students who add to the diversity of the campus who are sought after by our peer institutions. Thus, we address the role financial aid does and can play in the successful conversion of admitted students. Below are recommendations that directly address immediate financial aid concerns as well as two areas of focus that are especially relevant: underserved student conversion rates and conversion rates among highly competitive candidates. Strategies for approaching these different (but often overlapping) populations vary but are grounded in the mission of making the University of Michigan a highly accessible, competitive, and welcoming institution that will “challenge the present and enrich the future.” Both groups of students should palpably feel that they want to be part of “the leaders and best.”

Embedded within the recommendations is the importance of developing an enrollment management strategy. It is necessary to continually assess and identify what it takes to reach and enroll targeted students (top scholars, underserved students, low-income students) and the timing of the overall admissions process. The two major foci of the recommendations are increased and better communications on financial aid options as well as expanded personal interaction. While focusing on the conversion step, many of the recommendations should be expanded to address other points in the process of identifying, recruiting, and admitting students. Direct contact and conversations with underserved students early on in each point in the process is crucial.

Financial aid is a key concern for underserved students. The following recommendations are therefore based on the assumption that a stronger and more effective communication of and commitment to greater financial aid for awarded students would play a large role in increasing conversion rates. Peer-to-peer interactions are also important, since they give prospective students additional support on a personal level and convey student experiences of an accepting and welcoming community and campus.

These recommendations should be read in concert with the complete plan submitted to the Fiscal Planning Committee of the Office of Financial Aid.

Financial Aid

Recommendation 1

Programs that can and should be implemented in the short-term and those items that will immediately impact the recruitment and enrollment of students who will contribute to a diverse campus – First Priority

The Office of Financial Aid will submit a separate list of recommended actions for the balance of the Fall 2007 admissions cycle to its Fiscal Planning Committee, chaired by Associate Provost Phil Hanlon, for approval. If approved, these recommendations will be implemented by March 1, 2007. Approval for immediate implementation of the recommended actions listed below will be included in the proposal:

Four year full tuition scholarship based on academic promise and financial need to students of targeted geographic location.

We also recommend creating a scholarship for students admitted from underperforming high schools. We will identify underperforming high schools as defined by the U.S. Department of Education under the No Child Left Behind legislation; as well as underrepresented neighborhoods and high school clusters as defined by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions using the College Board's Descriptor Plus software. These scholarships will be for the equivalent of tuition for resident students and for \$10,000 per year for non-resident students. (We do not recommend full ride scholarships due to funding limitations as well as the high family income for most of our students.)

Recommendation 2

Programs that can be implemented for the next recruiting cycle which begins in the late summer 2007, that will impact the recruitment and enrollment of students that will contribute to a diverse campus, but cannot be implemented in the short term – Second Priority

Summer Bridge Scholarship/Stipends

Support in the form of stipends and scholarships should be provided for students selected and enrolling in summer bridging programs prior to the first year at Michigan. The University has long experience in offering intensive academic preparation and highly individualized advising in summer programs that strengthen academic skills, develop networks for peer support, and familiarize incoming students with the resources of the campus. Bridge programs at Michigan and peer institutions typically admit students based on a review of a wide range of variables, including grade point average, test scores, grades in college preparatory courses, writing samples, and letters of recommendations. Students offered the opportunity to participate in such programs are eager to enroll but a key concern for many students and their families has been that, while need-based aid may provide a degree of support, the financial aid offered is not sufficient to compensate for lost income from employment during the bridging summer. Bridge scholarships and stipends would alleviate this problem and make the programs more attractive to prospective students.

Increase UM scholarships for first-generation college students

The Office of Financial Aid and Blueprint Task Force recommend awarding a scholarship for \$7000 (approximately 75% of tuition) to resident students from families where the parents do not have a bachelor's degree. UM currently does not have many first generation students. Our research shows that although a small percentage of these students are underrepresented minorities, the majority students come from a wide range of geographic areas and communities. This scholarship will encourage more first generation students to apply to Michigan. It should be noted that there are not sufficient funds to significantly expand these scholarships today.

Scholarships to students who demonstrate commitment to "civic engagement"

We recommend the creation of a "Civic Engagement" scholarship based on responses to newly developed questions and personal statement sections of the undergraduate application. This will require coordination with the Admissions application writers and readers (see Application Processes Recommendation 2 and Admission Processes Recommendation 1). These students may be offered a tuition scholarship for four years which may be linked to participation in formal structures that exist now or in the future for such engagement (i.e., Michigan Community Scholars Program, UROP Community-Based Fellowship Program, Service-Learning Curricular threads, Pipeline Outreach). Although strings may not be attached to federal and state need-based aid, with additional funding, offering "civic engagement" scholarships will increase aid to students who will have a positive impact upon the commons.

Create a foundation to award scholarships based on race, gender, and ethnicity.

We have not yet received direction from the General Counsel's Office regarding the endowments currently set aside for minorities and women. If the ruling is that these scholarship funds cannot be limited to minorities and women, a private foundation that can award scholarships based on race and gender will become essential. The current makeup of women and minorities at UM cannot be sustained by awarding scholarships based on socio-economic status and geographic location when our competitors (private colleges) are free to make scholarship offers based on such criteria. We, therefore, also recommend the creation of a foundation to award scholarship based on race, gender and ethnicity such as those in the following suggestions supplied to the Task Force:

- Commission a Michigan Minorities Scholarship Fund.
- Set up 501(c) 3 to provide full ride scholarship to students identified in 9th grade – assign a mentor (Michigan grad) to track with student through HS.
- Non-profit foundation for diversity scholarships and under-represented student outreach.

Beef up need-based scholarships.

The Office of Financial Aid continues to work on improving our need-based aid packages to non-resident students, however, to do so is very expensive. If we want to continue to attract high quality women and minority students from outside the state of Michigan, we will need to meet full demonstrated need. We only come within \$12,000 of meeting the need for non-resident students currently. Meeting the full need of all needy students has long been a goal but the funding is currently not available. We require additional funding to do so - \$32 million per year or a \$640 million dollar endowment. Ongoing fund raising activities will bring us closer to this goal.

Industry partnerships for internships

It is recommended that the University form partnerships with industry/companies for the purpose of offering summer jobs and internships to students who are identified as coming from low application neighborhoods or high school clusters. An indication of student interest will need to be added to the application. The process of identifying companies to participate should begin as soon as possible.

Promised scholarships tied to performance in pipeline partnerships

Like in Washington State and Texas, many of our future minority students will come from the K-12 and community college pipeline partnerships we establish with school systems that we have historically under-served. Tying guaranteed scholarship support to the top few candidates from each of these systems will greatly increase the opportunities and likelihood for these students to enroll at Michigan. We offer the following as potential criterion for such an award:

- Attend a designated partner or pipeline school
- U.S. citizenship or permanent resident status and State of Michigan residency (as defined by the University of Michigan Regents)
- Upon graduation from high school, possess a recalculated minimum cumulative GPA in a college preparatory courses during the last two years of high school to be determined by a merit based index in consultation with the faculty of our schools and college and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions
- Attain a composite minimum ACT or SAT score determined by a merit based index
- Renewable up to a total of 8 terms if a minimum cumulative GPA is maintained while enrolled
- Maintain continuous full-time enrollment at Wayne State University (12 or more credit hours per semester) until graduation

Funding for transfer student partnerships

As discussed in the Pipeline section of this proposal (Recommendation 3), financial aid funded may be tied to special pathways into the University of Michigan, such as special articulated partnerships with two- and four-year institutions. Partnerships of this type have the potential to attract a transfer student population with improved preparation from communities historically under-served by the University of Michigan. In addition, these pathways may lead to improved access to higher education for students of lower socio-economic status. The M-Ties program may be a model for such pathways.

Paid student internships for work within the university, with a focus on low-income students.

Federal and State regulations prohibit funding internships for which academic credit is given; unless every student in the course is paid for the internship. Therefore, we do not have any internship programs funded by work-study or other funds. Other University resources should be developed to fund internships beyond what is currently being offered at the department level.

Conclusion

Financial aid is a key component of successful conversion processes and supporting our students throughout their undergraduate careers. Eliminating real and perceived financial barriers should be a key goal. Creating scholarship programs to increase access and enrollment for underserved

state residents and sought after competitive out-of-state students, rethinking development activities on behalf of the Office of Financial Aid or targeted students (i.e. low-SES, underserved) are avenues of change worth pursuing in the short- and longer-term.

Other Conversion Processes

Recommendation 1 Pre-college financial aid education – First Priority

To bring our message of financial commitment to the pre-college age community, we recommend that the University provide parents, high school counselors, teachers, and administrators with information regarding the University of Michigan's commitment to assuring committed financial aid to in-state students, with the goal of convincing potential students and their families that the university understands their needs and concerns. This can be accomplished via parlor meetings with families and/or seminars at high schools with students, faculty, and administrators. In addition, the University can provide increased counseling for assistance with financial aid by working with families and other stakeholders in a student's life. In addition, expanding the university's current financial aid assistance to include other matters of financial planning to anticipate potential difficulty in maintaining family contribution over the course of 4 to 5 years, particularly in the case of awards that end after the first year of enrollment, is essential to the retention of these students.

Recommendation 2 Increase and enhance personal contact between prospective students and current students, alumni, faculty, and administrators – First Priority

Making a personal connection with students and their families offers us opportunities to make the institution a more welcoming place. Additionally, our faculty, staff, alumni, and current students are sources of information about the institution that should be made more readily available to students. Their presence in existing conversion activities should increase. We therefore also recommend that the University increase the involvement of current students, alumni, faculty, and administrators at university-wide programs such as Campus Day, in events earlier in the pipeline, and in departmental recruitment programs. The University should undertake the development of best-practices regarding how to involve this variety of stakeholders in most effective ways based upon different situations. In addition, the University should increase the financial and structural support necessary to implement strategies of increased personal contact, such as:

- Involvement of alumni in strategies targeting out-of-state students.
- Parlor meetings for accepted students in underserved communities, potentially with a specific focus on the financial aid process
- Development of long-term relationships with alumni in targeted communities, including mentoring for high school students, scholarships, receptions for admitted students, and internships/employment during the undergraduate career.
- The use of current students as ambassadors in conversion activities
- Examination of the utility for undergraduates of the graduate model that supports UM students in key departments in hosting admitted students in the field.

Such relationships and events should be tailored to target high-achieving students *and*, perhaps separately as needed, students who typically have not envisioned going to Michigan.

Recommendation 3 Provide increased opportunities for visiting campus – Second Priority

Eighty percent of students who visit campus pay an enrollment deposit. Expanding the number of programs pre- and post-admittance to visit campus should then provide additional prospective students with the opportunity to visit and hopefully enroll at the University. We should ensure that the University begins its commitment to financial need by providing resources to all students to visit the university both before and after they are admitted. Since students from diverse backgrounds are rightfully uncertain of how they will be received at the University, they may benefit from additional programs that promote more one-on-one and frank dialogue. We recommend that the University be creative in encouraging students to come to Campus Day, for example by encouraging small groups of admitted students from the same high school to come together with one family member or adult chaperone. This would reduce the cost of attending, lessen the isolation of attending alone, and give the student additional sources of feedback. With other Michigan universities (WMU, MSU, EMU, WSU), it may be advantageous to organize pre- and post-admit bus tours for prospective students and some family members from Native American communities, the upper peninsula, and other areas of interest. To foster coordination and greater networking between units, departments and student organizations, we should develop a comprehensive list of all campus visitation programs sponsored by the university and sponsored by student organizations, as well as benchmarks for campus days organized by student organizations to gain university recognition and support. These events should provide easy-access to the Office of Financial Aid and Office of Admissions for campus visits. In addition, student organizations that engage in such events should be provided with the opportunity for additional funding. Efforts should be placed on the creation of additional “focused” campus days to target students with specific interests as well as additional broad-based programs. Examples, include: individualized visitations that welcome students to small communities such as the residential learning communities, Intergroup Relations, Ginsberg Center, etc. as well as taking this type of small communities orientation “on tour” to targeted communities and locations around Michigan.

Recommendation 4 Peer advisors focusing on financial aid – Third Priority

It is recommended that the University increase the use of peer advisors as an alternative method to increase knowledge and understanding of financial aid information and processes. Peer advisors could be made available to prospective students, admitted students, and enrolled students. This would necessitate training students to be para-professional staff who would be qualified to discuss and assist with financial aid concerns. With the proper infrastructure and resources, a well-supervised team of peer advisors could develop a publicity campaign about financial aid and an assessment program to explore the effectiveness of the current system and identify areas for improvement.

Conclusion

Personal contact is critical as students consider their post-secondary options and increasing personal contact is at the heart of our conversion recommendations. Additionally, improved communications to students about the financial resources needed and available for University of Michigan students is essential. Nurturing and welcoming students begins at our first contact with an individual student and their family. Our efforts will be only be successful if we engage the entire campus community—current students, alumni, faculty, and administrators—in the conversion process.

Retention, Persistence, and Graduation

Retention of students at the University of Michigan, along with admission policies and financial aid packages, is a key component to an integrated holistic approach for a successful and diverse student body. As the committee reviewed recommendations that addressed student retention, one overarching need boiled to the surface: that of an individualized transition/retention program for at-risk students. Below are recommendations for the development of such an inclusive support network for Michigan students.

Recommendation 1 An individualized transition/retention program with multiple integrated components.

It is important that student support/retention services appear seamless to the student. Components of an integrated retention program, depending on the academic discipline or focus (for example student athletes), should include the following:

- Rigorous schedule of in-class/out of class activities and structure in early years
- Study groups, supplemental instruction, tutors
- A spectrum of social and cultural support in multiple contexts and methods
- Mentor matching programs with staff/faculty/upper division students
- Student Internships within the University and during the summer outside the University (see Financial Aid Recommendation 2)
- Proactive (perhaps even intrusive) advising to students with consistent monitoring of success
- Help students prioritize college experiences and focus on high priority items
- A highly structured, academically rigorous summer transition program.
- Parent/family groups
- Community service opportunities
- Participation in learning communities
- Dedicated facilities and staff
- Pass/Fail options for the freshman year and/or summer bridge students

The University already has an excellent model for an integrated seamless retention program in the Stephen M. Ross Academic Center. Designed for a selected, yet significant, group of individuals, specifically student athletes, this center provides counseling, advising, tutoring,

study space, workshops, computer labs and specialized student support such as the Sweetland Writing Center and the Science Learning Center. The College of Engineering and the Science Departments of LS&A are currently developing a retention/transition program for STEM students. Most if not all of the components in these approaches can be used for any discipline or group of students. Such development should be encouraged and enhanced by the University throughout the disciplines, and, in particular, in those disciplines for which historically under-represented student retention is low.

It is important to note that all current and new programmatic retention interventions must be based on sound research findings and evaluated, both formative and summative, on a regular basis. Please refer to the Research and Evaluation component of this report.

Conclusion

A support network of the magnitude and flexibility described here will provide a well-rounded “coaching” environment for students at a variety of stages in their academic growth. It will provide students with a central location for resources and create a learning environment that spans the variety of learning styles our diverse student body possesses.

Create a Nurturing and Supportive Climate for all Students

The climate of the University is keenly tied to its attractiveness to a diverse student community. Much of what is noted here complements, and, in some cases, duplicates the strategies previously noted. However, this redundancy underscores the importance and unique characteristics of campus climate issues.

Addressing campus climate to improve the educational experiences of all students will not occur without an overriding system of accountability and financial support. Strategies that should be considered depend upon the academic discipline, but include the following:

Recommendation 1 Address and assess the current poor climate

Increase transparency of policies and procedures

Myths and misconceptions amongst our undergraduate population of university policies and practices abound. It would serve our community well for undergraduates to receive more complete information about how and why they were admitted, how financial aid is distributed, and how housing assignments are made, for example.

Decrease the burden upon social identity representatives

Too often many of our students who belong to marginalized social identity groups (i.e. gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, language status) are further marginalized in their residence halls, classrooms and the broader social arenas of campus life. The university should develop a comprehensive plan to address the negative formal (classroom) and informal (residence hall) actions of community members that contribute to a poor campus climate, which is more fully described in Recommendation 2.

Support the benefits of congregative behaviors

Students who belong to social identity groups who have negative formal and informal interactions with other university community members may find themselves congregating with students from similar backgrounds. While some in our community may label such congregative behavior as self-segregation, such group affiliation has benefits to students. Congregative activities through student organizations and departmental activities should be supported and encouraged by the university as they are a primary source of respect and validation of the human diversity that is an integral part of our campus.

Climate assessment

These have been conducted at Michigan in the past, but we do not have current data. It is important to note that at a Research I University, the faculty are particularly responsive to rigorously acquired and thoroughly analyzed data. An example of which can be seen in the ADVANCE program data presentations. We recommend that a thorough climate assessment of the University be undertaken to identify existing conditions and the information disseminated in a manner that will speak with validity and clarity to multiple audiences.

Recommendation 2

Create a system of rewards for individual leadership, departmental innovations and practices that welcome, respect, and nurture our undergraduates.

Diversity innovation grants for student groups, faculty, and departments

The goal of this recommendation is to foster a campus environment that is compelling and attractive to prospective students, whether “top scholar” or presently “underserved”. This can be accomplished by creating an environment where innovative, engaging, effective, and challenging programming is possible across multiple levels. This will establish the university as an incubator of social entrepreneurship to enable different university stakeholders to develop ideas which allow current and prospective students to grasp and understand the Michigan Difference. Showcasing the diversity of the university as a tangible and useful concept in regard to education and post-graduate opportunities is important, particularly at this uncertain juncture, to convincing students of different backgrounds to enroll. We therefore recommend that the University provide additional funding for innovative programming that addresses issues of diversity both within and between groups, activities, and ideas. The University should ensure the diversity of stakeholders on the evaluation committee and encourage programs that reach beyond the university community, including partnerships with local communities, enable development of outside-the-box programs to bring together teams of diverse students to creatively grapple with problems, to learn together, and to challenge each other in both program development and involvement in peer-created programs.

Recommendation 3

Create a system of accountability for behaviors, policies, and procedures that undermine our core value of honoring human diversity.

We recommend that units such as the Office of Institutional Equity, CRLT, and Intergroup Relations be given the charge to consult with all departments, units, schools, and colleges to develop standards for their own sub-communities.

Recommendation 4

Integrate diversity issues into the curriculum and enhance corresponding faculty training

Infusing the curriculum with diversity

Faculty should be able and empowered to use diverse examples in their lectures or in their problem sets – or show how the concepts they are teaching are applicable in diverse situations. Some faculty members do this already and do it well. Of particular note is the Multicultural Math course piloted as part of the CRLT. It is recommended that the University form a cadre of faculty to develop examples of this that their colleagues could use as models or even directly incorporate it into their own courses.

Faculty education on the necessary benefits of diversity

A significant step in incorporating diversity issues into the curriculum would involve better educating the faculty about whom our students are and why diversity is important during their

time at Michigan and beyond. We know, for example, that some STEM corporate recruiters are no longer recruiting at Universities where the graduating seniors do not have multicultural sensitivities. The work of Pat Gurin and others at this University documenting the importance of diversity in student learning, both in and out of the classroom, should be disseminated to all faculty.

Diversify visiting seminar/departmental speakers

Such diverse offerings provide students with intentional role models that often relate to students in ways that no other speaker will. This is especially true in fields where historical under-representation exists and can provide a powerful mechanism for the boosting of student confidence.

Expand use of interactive theater

A new group work sketch presented by CRLT Players is a wonderful example of the use of interactive theater in engaging both students and faculty in topics that are difficult to discuss when personal involvement interferes with decision-making. It is recommended that such research based and empirically derived sketches continue to be developed for both student and faculty audiences addressing issues related to climate and diversity.

Recommendation 5 Complete access to expanded internship, practicum, study abroad, and civic/community engagement opportunities should be available to all students.

Many underserved students have financial and career considerations uppermost in mind when making academic decisions. Research also shows that historically under-represented students in the STEM fields often indicate altruistic goals linked to their career choices. Within these fields, students are not often offered significantly visible opportunities for civic engagement and community service or outreach that directly relates to their chosen profession. Development of such offerings at the University will enhance our power to attract and retain students with these goals.

We should make it financially feasible for all students to envision a rich experience of internships, practicum placements, and study abroad as part of the “normal” time at the university. When further developed and expanded these experiences are also part of the Michigan Difference and will encourage students to think more creatively about their opportunities at the University. We strongly encourage the University to increase funding to make these opportunities an expected part of a Michigan education. Development of additional programs like “Michigan in Washington,” particularly those with appeal to students who have strong interests in “giving back” to their communities should be explored. In addition building an alumni network that may provide more paid internship and attractive practicum experiences in corporate, government, NGO, and community settings is recommended.

Recommendation 6 Language accessibility.

Signage and electronic information in multiple languages will improve accessibility and the image of the university as a global community.

Conclusion

A poor campus climate continues to plague many of our students and hinder our ability to provide the rich educational environment that is a hallmark of a Michigan undergraduate degree. Our recommendations represent strategies that have been effective in our own history as well as in those of our peer institutions.

Research and Evaluation

Beyond the recommendation that changes in student aid and admissions be evaluated, the email recommendations reviewed did not address research and evaluation. Extensive short-term and longer-term changes in outreach, admissions, student aid, and retention are now under consideration as means of responding to the legal mandate imposed by MCRI.

The goals that should be considered in the evaluation process include: 1) increasing fairness in admission processes; 2) improving diversity in enrollment; and 3) enhancing quality of education within academic programs. Research and evaluation play can play an important role in this improvement process. To move toward this end, we make the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1 Action Inquiry Approach

Use an action inquiry approach to improve diversity in all programs as means of providing the robust dialogue that is essential to quality education in undergraduate and graduate programs.

Action inquiry (see Figure 1) is being practiced by the Admissions and Student Aid subcommittee of the Diversity Task Force in developing recommendations. The steps in this process include:

1. *Build an understanding of the challenge.* Through hearing and reviews, the committee considered the origins of the challenge. We recognize the importance of diversity for education quality in all programs of the university. Our recommendations consider how to implement legal, just, and fair practices that reduce inequality in opportunity caused at least in part by the K-12 and public finance systems in the State of Michigan.
2. *Look internally and externally for solutions.* There were open hearings and opportunities for people on campus to propose remedies that could address the challenges. We consider best practices for outreach, admissions, student aid, and retention and how they might be adapted to meet local needs. Experienced experts visited from the University of California, University of Texas, and University of Georgia, providing a wealth of information on how other campuses have addressed similar challenges.
3. *Assess possible solutions.* The committee considered a large range of alternatives in relation to our understanding of the problem. The analyses considered the extent to which solutions would address inequalities, promote diversity and improve the quality of education.

4. *Develop action plans.* The recommendations in this report represent a possible action plan that merits consideration by the wider university community.
5. *Implement, Evaluate, and Refine:* With respect to the University of Michigan’s response to MCIR, change is necessary. It is critical evaluate how the campuses implemented influence diversity in enrollment, retention of students, and quality of learning, including engaged learning within undergraduate and graduate programs. This portion of the report addresses this challenge.

The recommendations in this report suggest an action plan for improving admissions and student aid. The aims are to improve fairness in enrollment opportunity, diversity in enrollment and quality of education. These criteria—fairness, diversity, and quality—represent the standards for evaluating changes made in response to MCRI.

The committee also recognizes that evaluation of current practices provides a baseline against which to assess the impact of changes made in response to MCRI. Past practices—the strategies implemented before MCIR—provide the baseline standard of fairness, diversity, and quality against which the new practices should be measured. Research using institutional data can examine the effects of past practices and build an understanding of the ways in changes in practice can improve fairness, diversity and quality of education.

Figure 1. Action inquiry Integrated with Evaluation



Source: St. John, McKinney, & Tuttle, 2006.

Recommendation 2 Research Based Assessment Processes

Develop a research-based process of assessment that considers how past practices (pre MCIR) influenced diversity in enrollment, equality in persistence, and engagement in student learning.

The University of Michigan maintains extensive databases on student records (from admissions, student aid, registration, and other information systems in the University of Michigan) and has extensive information on student attitudes and engagement in learning (from the National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE] and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program [CIRP]). CIRP provides a means of measuring attitudes and expectations, NSSE provides data on engaged learning, and student record system provides a basis for enrollment and retention studies. In combination these databases provide a resource that can be used to assess the effect of most current programs on:

- Fairness in admission (including whether able students who attend poor quality schools have an opportunity and whether prepared underrepresented student are admitted)
- Diversity of enrollment (while it is now not legal in Michigan to consider race in admission, it is appropriate to consider diversity as a criterion for evaluating the effective of programs used in admissions, student, and retention.)
- Quality of learning opportunities and outcome in UM its academic programs (Research for the Supreme Court decisions focused on the role of diversity in learning, including different forms of engaged learning. These and other appropriate outcome measures should be refined and used as basis for continuous improvement in learning outcomes at the University of Michigan.)

Specifically, the following actions should be considered high priority:

1. Develop of an integrated research system, with records on student cohorts and their engagement in learning. (The feasibility of this method was proven in studies conducted for the Summer Academy.)
2. Use the integrated research database should be used to assess the impact of pre-MCRI admissions, student aid, and retention programs, as a baseline for evaluation of new practices.
3. To the extent possible within the decentralized system of governance, the integrated research system should be used to assess current practices and to identify opportunities for improving diversity and engaged learning within schools and colleges of the university.
4. Programs that have had had substantial, positive effects should be carefully studied and used a models for the redesign of programs and practices at UM to improve fairness, diversity, and quality of learning outcomes at the University of Michigan

Recommendation 3 Evaluation Plan to Assess Change

Develop a plan to evaluate the effects of changes in practice in admissions, student aid, retention, and other programs on both diversity and learning in the University of Michigan.

To complete the action inquiry cycle it is important to build an evaluation capacity. It is important to evaluate whether changes in admissions, student aid, retention, and other programs affecting students, actually result in improvement in diversity and learning outcomes. Such evaluation is also necessary to integrate an orientation toward continuous improvement within the University of Michigan as it adapts to the legal mandates posed by MCRI.

Once an initial plan is developed and approved, as a result of the work of the Diversity Blueprint process, an evaluation strategy should also be developed and approved. The evaluation strategy should include:

1. Use of integrated cohort databases to evaluate the effects of changes in programs on diversity enrollment, retention, and student learning.
2. Use of surveys to generate supplemental information that can be used in evaluations of specific interventions and program changes in admissions, student aid, and other areas.
3. Use of focus group interviews and other qualitative methods, as appropriate, to build an understanding of student perspectives on diversity, engagement, and learning.

Recommendation 4 Research Support and Infrastructure

Research and evaluation support should be provided to academic units of the University of Michigan that are committed to improving diversity and learning outcomes through review, adaptation, and redesign of programs.

All of the colleges and schools at the University of Michigan face challenges in adapting current programs and practices to improve diversity and learning outcomes to the legal constraints imposed by MCRI. The aims of fairness, diversity, and quality education are widely shared by academic units and many have taken steps toward these goals. For example, the College of Engineering has been exemplary among schools in colleges in the University of Michigan in the use of research to inform for improvement of outreach, school partnerships, bridge programs, admissions, student aid, supplemental academic support, service learning, and retention programs. Support from the National Science Foundation has been integral to the systematic approach in the COE. However, it will be necessary to change many of these programs as means of adjusting to the new legal mandates created by MCRI. In addition to building a central capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of changes in admissions and student aid, colleges and schools that have made extensive investments in programs that promote diversity will need supplemental support in efforts to adapt and improve their programs. Therefore the University of Michigan's effort to research and evaluation support should also provide a mechanism for support schools and college, possibly through collaborative arrangements.

Recommendation 5 Evaluating Diversity and Learning Outcomes

The University of Michigan should develop a research and evaluation capacity for student aid, admissions, and retention with respect to evaluation of fairness, diversity and learning outcomes of changes in response to MCRI. To the extent possible, support should also be provided to colleges and schools making adaptive changes in response to MCRI. This capacity may also be necessary for long-term quality improvement at the University of Michigan.

The University of Michigan needs to enhance research and evaluation to support transitions in outreach, admissions, student aid, retention, and academic programs that support diversity and engaged learning. There are models for this type of organization at UM and other universities. At UM, the Center for Research on Teaching and Learning has built a capacity to collaborate with academic units on the design and evaluation of programs; the Office of the Provost has a

capacity to analyze student database and develop reports on educational outcomes; the National Center for Institutional Diversity is developing a national research and service program; and other academic units have built research capabilities. In addition UCLA and other universities have research and evaluation units that have well established reputations for improving learning outcomes and support programs in specific fields of study.

As the University of Michigan develops plans to evaluate changes made in response to MCRI, it should consider development of a unit within UM to support research and evaluation. Possible ways of achieving this objective include:

1. Improved coordination among units that provide research and evaluation services;
2. Improved research and evaluation capacity within units (e.g. employing expert researchers within student aid and other administrative units);
3. Develop a coordinating function within one of the research units on campus; and/or
4. Develop a unit focusing on research and evaluation related to student diversity and learning that also collaborates with other academic and administrative units on campus.

Conclusion

We recommend adopting an integrated research system to (a) evaluate current practices and (b) identify practices and programs that sustain or create opportunities for increasing the numbers of students who benefit from the education values of diversity and (c) assess engaged learning. Such a system would include integrating data from our institutional records, the Cooperation Institutional Research Program and the National Survey of student Engagement. Programs that have demonstrated substantial, positive effects should be carefully studied and used as a model for the redesign of programs and practices at UM to improve fairness, diversity, and quality of learning outcomes at the University of Michigan. One example of such a program with a strong assessment and evaluation record is the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program that has several peer-reviewed journal articles and well as a history of best practices.¹ The Office of Multicultural Academic Initiatives has a long-standing research program and their Michigan Student Study is an excellent example of a more comprehensive approach to assessing student attitudes and perspectives.²

¹ See *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research* (2005) by Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini, pages 406-407 and *Understanding and Reducing College Student Departure: ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report*, Volume 30, Number 3 by John M. Braxton, Amy S. Hirschy, and Shederick A. McClendon.

² See <http://www.umich.edu/~oami/mss/> for more information.