

Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS): Diversity, Access and Affordability Call Notes (AF Credits 20-26)

October 16, 2008

The call began with a discussion about this section. A caller said that he was getting pushback and confused responses from people within his department and institution about diversity being considered a sustainability issue. Diversity is an important institutional goal, but people don't associate it with sustainability. The caller suggested that AASHE needs to get in front of this issue and make the case that diversity is an important component of sustainability. The first time people encounter diversity as a sustainability issue shouldn't be during an audit.

Another caller said that diversity was a strength of her institution and she's glad to see it included because, by connecting the issues under the umbrella of sustainability, it may help strengthen the interest in environmental initiatives tasked to her office.

Another participant said that sustainability measures will sink if diversity isn't front and center. He suggested that this section should be strengthened. Diversity, global vision, and understanding other cultures are important learning outcomes for most students. This caller suggested that Bioneers did a good job making holistic connections to diversity. The Earth Charter, three e's (equity, economy, ecology), and triple bottom line all make that connection too.

There was some discussion about partnering with the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) to strengthen the connections between diversity and environmental issues.

AF Credit 20: Diversity and Equity Committee

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

AF Credit 21: Diversity and Equity Officer

A caller said the staff person at his institution who directs and coordinates diversity and equity initiatives is the Vice President of Human Resources, who has many other responsibilities. This caller questioned whether or not it is necessary to have a full-time equivalent staff person solely dedicated to this duty. The diversity officers who helped develop this credit suggested that for schools of a certain size (more than 5,000 students) the diversity officer should be full-time. AASHE welcomes further input on this point.

A caller questioned whether or not it is important that the Diversity and Equity Officer report to the President or Provost of the institution. Reporting at a high level serves as a proxy for how the institution prioritizes the issue, which is why it was included. The participant agreed, but suggested that the President or Provost may be one level too high in the hierarchy. A caller suggested checking with NADOHE to determine the level at which most diversity officers report.

AF Credit 22: Diversity and Equity Attitudes Assessment

A caller noted that their institution had performed equity attitudes assessments in the past, but not on a systematic schedule. This caller asked if there is a specific timeframe within which these assessments should

take place. The general timeframe for all STARS credits is three years, so you can use that for now. For future versions of STARS, AASHE will clarify the timeframe in the credit.

AF Credit 23: Diversity and Equity Plan

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

AF Credit 24: Support Programs for Under-represented Groups

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

AF Credit 25: Support Programs for Future Faculty

A caller asked for some examples of programs that would fit this credit. Programs that offer scholarships to minority doctoral or terminal degree candidates would qualify for this credit. The Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Colleges and some Women in Science and Engineering programs would count as well. A caller suggested adding the word “scholarships” to the credit criteria would help clarify.

AF Credit 26: Affordability and Access Programs

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

Diversity, Access, and Affordability: Tier Two Credits

1. *Institution offers gender-neutral housing options.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

2. *Institution has a comprehensive non-discrimination policy.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

3. *Institution makes cultural competence trainings and activities available to all staff.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

4. *Institution makes cultural competence trainings and activities available to all students.*

There were no questions or comments on this credit.

5. *Institution includes diversity as a criterion in search processes.*

A caller commented that their institution is pretty much limited to advertising for new positions. One caller said that their institution requires candidate review processes to name the top minority candidate.

6. *Institution includes diversity in employee performance evaluations.*

A participant asked what kinds of programs would qualify for this credit. Another caller said that some of their employee evaluations measure how well a person works with individuals of diverse backgrounds.