Introduction

A successful diversity-focused strategic process requires careful planning and meaningful assessment, as well as clear programmatic ties to the university’s core mission. In the “business” of higher education, the most important considerations are: the quality and support of the academic program; the knowledge and capabilities of the faculty; the character of the teaching and learning endeavor; and the effectiveness of the support services provided by administrative units. The Facilities Service’s goal is to provide the level of support necessary for the university to carry out its commitment. This strategic process consists of an established foundation for the diversity planning process, assessment and benchmarking of Facilities Services’ diversity/inclusion efforts, development and implementation of programs to create a diverse and inclusive environment, and evaluation criteria and methods to measure the success of the diversity effort.

University Mission

Cornell is a private, Ivy League university and the land-grant university for New York State. Cornell’s mission is to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge; produce creative work; and promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community. Cornell also aims, through public service, to enhance the lives and livelihoods of our students, the people of New York, and others around the world.

University Vision

Cornell aspires to be the exemplary comprehensive research university for the 21st century on the basis of its distinctive status as a private university with a formal public mission. Faculty, staff, and students thrive at Cornell because of its unparalleled combination of quality and breadth; its high standards; its open, collaborative, and innovative culture; the opportunities provided by beautiful, vibrant rural and urban campuses; and programs that extend throughout the state of New York and across the globe.

Facilities Services Vision

Facilities Services serves Cornell through the planning, design, construction, operation and ongoing maintenance of University facilities. Facilities Services has established values for its workforce consisting of truth, respect, excellence, teamwork, and integrity.
Establishing the Foundation

1. **Senior leadership’s commitment to diversity:** Vice President of Facilities Services, Kyu Whang has taken actions to demonstrate a commitment to diversity. Issue a statement about the commitment to diversity and the endorsement of accountability of supervisory personnel in carrying out the commitment. An announcement about the initiative will be issued along with a website link on the FS main page with information about the initiative.

2. **Creation of a Diversity Leadership Council/Committee:** To assist in the strategic implementation process, a diversity leadership council has been formed to: 1) serve as an ally for staff; 2) provide input on what diversity-related issues need to be addressed; 3) help communicate Facilities’ commitment to diversity and to ensuring a good working environment; and 4) assist with aspects of the roll out of the diversity implementation process; 5) develop and implement division-wide diversity strategy. These individuals consist of: Brenda Conklin, Building Care; Tim Dorn, Project Design & Construction Shops; Wendy Franzese, Project Design & Construction; John Kiefer, Project Design & Construction; Jessica Lang, Human Resources; Dave Perrine, Utilities Central Heating Plant; Jutta Brann, Accounting & Financial Services; Nancy Phelps, Contracts & Capital Projects; Darrell Reynolds, Contract Colleges Facilities; Tammy Lopez, Transportation & Mail Services; David Richardson, Recruitment & Employment Center; Luanne Stockdale, Transportation & Mail Services; Kevin McGraw, Grounds Department; and Nancy Snowberger, Mechanical Shop.

3. **Planned Communication of Diversity Progress:** Facilities Services will develop a communication plan to ensure that everyone within their community understands the “business case” for diversity and senior management’s expectations related to the diversity and inclusion efforts. The communication plan will take into account the differences in language backgrounds of the community, the need to communicate with individuals with disabilities, and different forms of communication (memoranda, videos, social networking, and newsletters) to address different learning styles.

4. **Strategy for ongoing education of Facilities Services staff:** Facilities Services’ diversity council will identify the development needs of its workforce and recommend training and necessary resources to support the training initiative. The training will be ongoing, and include foundational work (avoiding discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace), as well as “lunch and learn” sessions on different aspects of diversity. Facilities Services’ employees will be offered to complete the diversity informational workshops provided through the diversity-related SkillSoft workshops: *Diversity in the Workplace, Organizational Inclusion, The Reason Why Diversity Matters, and Workplace Diversity.* In-person, interactive training plans will be developed for all staff during FY11. The Facilities Services Diversity Council will also take the SkillSoft courses: *Starting the Change Process and Planning a Diversity Initiative.* As needed, The Office of Organizational Effectiveness, in conjunction with the Office of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion, will be consulted regarding additional training opportunities.
Assessment and Benchmarking

1. **Environmental scan**: Facilities Services will conduct a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) to determine what are the trends, opportunities and “threats” that the unit is facing in an effort to determine the best way to address its diversity efforts. As part of this analysis, Facilities Services has identified the following organizations for diversity benchmarking purposes. Facilities will also be doing an “environmental scan” of its workforce related to the climate for diversity during 2010. To that extent, the unit staff will complete a diversity-related survey to better understand the diversity challenges that the unit is facing.

2. **Statement of core capabilities**: To assist in “marketing” the Facilities Services division to prospective diverse candidates, the division will determine, compared to other colleges and organizations, what it does best, what sustainable advantages it has, and what capabilities it has that matches the emerging needs of the “marketplace”. The council will work with the Recruitment & Employment Center and Facilities Services Human Resources to utilize materials already established and work to improve those materials.

3. **Organizational knowledge requirements**: Given the current economic situation, Facilities Services will work to align current high performing staff with the changing priorities of the organization and changing work demands. A focus will be on providing opportunities specifically for high performing underrepresented individuals.

4. **Current demographic composition**: Facilities Services has reviewed its workforce with regard to race/ethnicity, gender, and age or generational group in combination with employment group (e.g. management/supervisor, administrative support, skilled trades and employment status, full time, part time, temporary). As of 2009, of the total workforce, 300 or 36.82% are women and 30 or 3.65% are from racial/ethnic minority groups. From a generational perspective, 5.75% of the Facilities Service workforce are “Generation Y” (between the ages of 19 and 29), 27.26% are from “Generation X” (ages 29-43), 65.28% are “Baby Boomers” (ages 44-62), and 1.71% are “Traditionalist” (ages 63-78).
Development and Implementation of Programs

In implementing the diversity strategic process, Facilities Services will focus on four key program areas that have been shown to facilitate progress toward building and maintaining organizations that value diversity.

1. **Composition/access**: Taking into account the current demographic composition of the workforce, Facilities Services will need to fill staffing voids through recruiting efforts and pipelines.
   a. **Recruitment**: Facilities Services will focus its recruitment efforts—especially when attempting to reach out to women and minorities—in the local community. The Department will work with Human Resources to identify more widespread channels of posting available jobs to attract minority applicants on a regional, and where appropriate, national level. Work already in progress to make the hiring process more efficient will continue to be a focus. In addition, diversity search plans will continue to be developed for each recruitment effort.
   b. **Community Outreach**: With the assistance of Human Resources and the Public Service Center, Facilities Services staff will participate in job fairs and community events to inform the public of employment opportunities, including explaining the specific requirements of the available jobs, and to establish good will/trust relationships with members of underrepresented populations within the local community.
   c. **Flexible Work Arrangements**: Some of the technical and administrative jobs within Facilities Services could be completed through flexible work arrangements. Facilities Services will identify and eliminate barriers to allowing employees to work in flexible work arrangements in an effort to increase recruitment options for qualified applicants—particularly women and minorities.
   d. **Orientation**: The Facilities Career Mapping group is currently developing a Facilities Orientation Program for all campus facilities employees. The program could include a 90 day mentor partnership for new employees.
   e. Human Resources will continue to conduct exit interviews to gather feedback from employees leaving the organization. An additional question specific to diversity and inclusion will be added to the current exit interview survey.

2. **Fostering engagement**: Facilities Services is committed to the ongoing and proactive steps necessary to retain the current workforce and to promote the active participation of staff in the mission, goals, and strategic initiatives of the university, including providing the skills necessary for success. This takes into account onboarding/orientation, succession planning, and retention efforts.
   a. **Improved English language skills**: Understanding that excellent written and oral skills in the English language are critical for good customer service and career advancement, Facilities Services will encourage its entire staff to further their knowledge of English language skills.

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1 Improving access may include specific targeted activities in the area of recruitment.
b. **Succession planning**: Facilities Services’ senior management staff will make good faith efforts to periodically discuss succession planning with staff. Discussions will include necessary skills needed, additional training, and other intangibles that are required for ultimate advancement within the organization. This will be accomplished through the usual annual review sessions, scheduled special sessions, and informal discussions between management and line staff.

c. **Rewards and Recognition**: Facilities Services aims to recognize and reward work accomplishments through a variety of recognition programs. Specific to diversity, the council is expanding the PDC Bridge Award to be a Facilities Services wide award to recognize accomplishments related to diversity and inclusion.

d. **Career Development**: Facilities Services will continue to look for ways to provide developmental opportunities for staff through the Facilities Career Mapping program, promotions, cross training, and other means to help with retention efforts, specifically for underrepresented groups.

3. **Promoting Excellence and Achievement**: Facilities Services recognizes the efforts necessary to create a supportive environment or climate for culturally diverse staff to excel in their areas of expertise and responsibility. This effort includes the provision of opportunities for increasing professional knowledge. The department also values educating its workforce on the skills necessary to work effectively as part of a diverse and inclusive workforce.

   a. **Participate in formal training sessions**: Facilities Services staff will be required to attend formal training sessions on the issue of diversity in the workplace and in the community. As stated previously, training will be available to FS staff on the issue of diversity in the workplace and community by June 30, 2011. By June 30, 2012, all FS leaders will have completed one SkillSoft class or other in-person training.

   b. **Removing the stigma surrounding the issue of diversity**: Facilities Services’ management staff will strive to eliminate the discomfort and hesitancy surrounding the issue of diversity within the department. This will be accomplished by having managers lead and encourage open dialogue on diversity issues with their staff. Managers will provide opportunities for staff to learn about differences in people through frank discussion and other activities.

   c. **Recognition of the Department’s cultural diversity efforts**: Facilities Services management will periodically provide opportunities for staff to share insights and experiences related to diversity and inclusion. This may be accomplished through “ethnic” potluck lunches that include a speaker on that aspect of diversity; brown bag sessions related to trips abroad; “tailgate” discussions of diversity questions during staff meetings; and other such opportunities. The Department management team will schedule at least two opportunities per year for informal cultural experiences by staff.
4. **Aligning organizational systems for inclusion:** Facilities Services will review and, as necessary, develop or revise its internal policies, programs, and formal and informal practices to promote diversity and inclusion. This alignment includes demonstrated leadership commitment; participation of Facilities Services staff in local community diversity-related efforts; a commitment to addressing the work/life/family challenges and mental/physical wellbeing of faculty and staff; and the department’s use of diverse business suppliers.
   a. **Staff morale:** Facilities Services management staff will be vigilant of staff morale in general and specifically as it relates to diversity issues. Once identified, management staff will act immediately to address the issues that may be causing morale problems.
   b. **Customer service:** Facilities Services provides important services to the Cornell community. Employees will be provided with tools to more easily communicate with employees and students who have limited English proficiency. Additionally, the Facilities Services will translate key information into Mandarin and Spanish. Other languages may be added as the need in the community increases.
   c. **Publish a diversity column in Facilities Services Communications:** A link exists on the FS main page to provide easy access to information regarding diversity and inclusion. The council will communicate with division staff members on a regular basis.
   d. **Outreach and partnerships with local schools:** Facilities Services staff will commit to periodically attending school functions, including working with the Village of Ithaca, to discuss careers in the relevant fields and their educational requirements. The purpose of these programs will be to reach out to the community’s children in general and its minority children in particular, to share information on the range of careers. Facilities Services will also seek out more partnerships with schools to provide on-the-job training and internship opportunities for students in the community.
   e. **Work environment:** The council work towards creating a culture of inclusion, built around the organizational values to make the work environment welcoming to all individuals.

**Evaluation Criteria and Methods**

1. **Presence/absence of affirmative action job group goals:** Facilities Services management will review affirmative action data to determine if, over time, unit efforts have resulted in meeting the federally recommended level of race/ethnic and gender parity vis-à-vis the appropriate recruiting area.
2. **Facilities Services staff composition compared to student body composition:** In an effort to reflect the university’s customers (students), Facilities Services will review how well the composition of its staff (in terms of gender and racial/ethnic diversity) mirror the students enrolled in the university.
3. **Climate measurement:** Facilities Services has committed to conducting surveys of its workforce to determine what the staff’s perceptions are related to the unit’s climate around diversity and inclusion.

4. **Accessibility:** Facilities Services, in particular their Diversity Council, will review the university’s Commitment to Disability Access and outline what it is doing related to accessibility in the six core areas of the university’s disability strategic planning process: physical access of the facilities, employment, educational services, technology, communication, and emergency planning/evacuation.

5. **Work/Life and Mental/Physical Wellbeing:** Facilities Services will review the work arrangements of its staff to determine; what is the rate of utilization of flexible work arrangement by staff employees with the goal of increasing the utilization rate by 10% per year. Facilities Services will also obtain/track data to determine how many staff participate in Work/Life, Wellness, or Faculty Staff Assistance Program-offered programs.

6. **Other specific measurements:** Additional measurements made necessary by the planning process can be constructed.

Prepared by Lynette Chappell-Williams, Associate Vice President, Workforce Diversity and Inclusion, Cornell University, and Marie Garland, Director of Faculty and Staff Diversity, in conjunction with the Facilities Services Diversity and Inclusion Council incorporating information from: 2009 Masterworks *Investing in Talent During Troubled Times*, K. Newman & C. Farren; the Cornell University Diversity Council Executive Committee April 5, 2009 Diversity Strategic Planning Document; and Profiles in Diversity Journal.