

## Foundations of Excellence® Diversity Dimension Report

February 8, 2018

**Foundations Institutions ensure that all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities.**

Whatever their demographic composition, institutions structure experiences in which students interact in an open and civil community with people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own, reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold, and explore their own cultures and the cultures of others.

### Section 1. Process summary.

The committee convened in the fall semester of 2017. We started a google doc and began brainstorming sources of evidence for each part of our dimension (curriculum, co-curriculum, diverse interactions, and communication of standards for an inclusive campus community). As we generated sources of evidence, committee members volunteered to research particular programs, interview key staff, and examine particular data sets available in the inventory. Committee members shared their findings with each other on the google doc. Over winter break, the committee then divided into subgroups for each section of our dimension to draft a summary of findings as well as recommend a particular ranking/evaluation for that area. The committee met as a whole in January to discuss everyone's report, reach consensus on rankings for each area, and discuss possible recommendations. The chairs then compiled all the sub-reports into one document and uploaded summaries and rankings to the FoE platform. After the chairs revised the report and prioritized the recommendations, the report was sent out to the full committee once more for another stage of feedback and revision before being finalized.

### Section 2: Diversity dimension committee

Name	Title	Committee Role
David Boromisza-Habashi	Associate Professor, Communication	Committee Member
Scarlet Bowen	Director, Gender & Sexuality Center	Committee Chair
Suzanne Classen	Director of Student Services, Continuing Education	Committee Member
Abel Estrada	EA Program Mgr & Access Coord, International Education	Committee Member

Andrea Feldman	Senior Instructor, Program for Writing & Rhetoric	Committee Chair
Amanda Linsenmeyer	Director, Women's Resource Center	Committee Member
Hillary Potter	Associate Professor, Ethnic Studies	Committee Chair
Vanessa Roman	Associate Director, Admissions	Committee Member
Brian Shimamoto	Assistant Director of HR, Housing & Dining Services	Committee Member
Christi Sue	Associate Professor, Sociology	Committee Member
Terrenda White	Assistant Professor, Education	Committee Member

**Section 3. Narrative of committee opinions on each question the FoE instrument asked it to address.**

**PI 7.1 Diverse Ideas**

To what degree does the institution assure that first-year students experience diverse ideas and world views through the following?

Roughly a third of first-year students as well as faculty and staff in the FoE survey strongly agreed that courses exposed students to diverse world views, religions, and political perspectives. In the NSSE 2017 Multi-year Report (Item 21), 55% of first-year students report their assignments and course discussions frequently included diverse perspectives. The committee agrees with the perception that the curriculum for first-year students offers some opportunities for students to learn about diversity, but that offerings are uneven across the different colleges, and that about half or most students are probably taking courses in diverse ideas and cultures after their first year.

For the initiatives based in the curriculum, the most highly enrolled freshman course is first-year writing and rhetoric. In the evidence library item 86. [The Relationship Between Taking a Writing Course and Academic Success in the Freshman Year](#) suggests that this course is a strong predictor of student retention. The course exposes students to a wide range of diverse ideas and world views. The retention data and GPA for students of color and underrepresented students appear to be quite good, but when compared with the data for non-underrepresented students, we see a lower overall GPA and retention. In addition, Engineering students are not required to take a first-year writing course, and the majority of international students are engineering students; therefore, depending on the College to which students are

admitted, they may not have curricular opportunities to explore diverse ideas. The committee also found that the newly piloted first-year seminars are not required to address diverse ideas and world views.

There are many opportunities for students to encounter diverse ideas and worldviews in the co-curriculum, but the opportunities are siloed and not well connected as a matrix or menu of ways to interact with diverse ideas on campus that are cohesively known and understood by faculty/staff/students and effectively marketed by campus to first-year students. Even though these pieces are positive and add to the cultural capital on campus, we believe there could be more communication/ collaboration between campus resource and advocacy centers and other units that are strongly first year focused, like New Student and Family Programs and Housing and Dining Services - specifically Residential Life - that support students in encountering diverse ideas and worldviews in the places that first-year students congregate. We note that in the recent Residence Life Survey, 72% of first-year students reported that their residence hall experience helped them recognize culturally biased behavior in themselves and 79% of students said that their residence hall experience helped them be more open-minded about diversity issues (Item 69 and 70). We see these results as promising and support the inclusion of diversity and inclusion components in the residential curriculum that is currently in development.

CU Boulder provides multiple opportunities during which students can learn about diverse world views and ideas outside of their required curriculum. There are over 500 registered student organizations on campus, one third of which are culturally based. First-year students can be connected to these organizations through events such as the Be Involved Fair and New Student Welcome. However, it falls on the impetus of each student organization to reach out to first-year students, and the data behind how many FY students actually become involved are not available.

Another example of diverse ideas are the multiple resource centers across campus that work towards supporting underrepresented students on campus. These resource centers provide a space for students to build community and also serve as a safe space to talk about diverse ideas. In fact many resource centers hold trainings and workshops that any student across campus is welcome to participate in. ODECE also hosts a diversity summit each semester “to engage the campus and community members in valuing our common experiences and celebrating our differences.”

We also note that there are not many co-curricular opportunities that are focused on/restricted to first-year students, so many of the examples are for all undergraduate students, not just first year students. While the opportunities exist and in many senses are abundant across the CU campus, there is no existing mechanism or requirement that can assure that first-year students will take advantage of these opportunities. While underrepresented students are highly encouraged to take part in these opportunities, the majority of students have not and can easily go through their first year without ever being exposed to them.

## **PI 7.2 Interactions**

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

The FoE survey results regarding first-year students’ interactions with individuals from different backgrounds and cultures varied significantly between the student responses and the faculty/staff responses and between the persons with whom they interact. Students reported significantly higher levels (responding 4/high, or 5/very high) of believing that the institution provides opportunities to first-year students to interact with *other students* from different backgrounds and cultures (41.9%), than opportunities provided for first-year students’ interactions with *faculty and staff* (29.7%) and with

*individuals outside the institution* (19.1%). For the faculty/staff results, 28.1% of faculty/staff believe the institution provides opportunities to first-year students to interact with *other students* from different backgrounds and cultures, while 22.1% of faculty/staff believe opportunities are provided for interactions with *faculty and staff* and only 11.1% of faculty/staff believe opportunities are provided for interactions with *individuals outside the institution*.

Of the 2,375 instructional faculty in Fall 2016, women comprised 40.4% (n=960). Faculty of color comprised 15% (n=356) of the instructional faculty, which includes 164 women of color and 192 men of color (6.9% and 8.1% of instructional faculty, respectively). (Non-residential foreigner faculty and those of an unknown race accounted for 302, or 12.7%, of the faculty.) In sum, there are relatively few faculty of color with which any student could interact.

The “CU Boulder Survey of Non-Returning Students, Fall 2016: Final Report” (Item 26) reveals that social/environmental reasons were the main reasons identified by students who left CU Boulder, with 59% of students marking this factor as very or somewhat important in their decision to leave. Although this is not a direct measure of a (presumably lack of) engagement with other CU students of diverse backgrounds, the mention of lack of diversity could possibly indicate dissatisfaction on this level.

According to retention data of all CU students from the first fall to the second fall (i.e. the first year) from 2006-2015, we see that for categories labeled students of color, “underrepresented minority,” African American, and “Hispanic,” the retention rates are consistently somewhat lower than the White student average. This was historically the case for international students, but in 2011 they surpassed the “all students” average retention rate. Further, from 1992 through 2015, first-generation students have continuously had lower retention rates than non-first-generation students. Similar trends exist for 6-year graduation rates between 2006 and 2010, although the gap between all students and the aforementioned groups is larger and international students have lower retention rates than all students. There are only data on LGBTQ retention for 2014 and there was a higher dropout rate of LGBTQ students compared with heterosexual students (24% vs. 18%). Retention rates are important because if CU does not enroll and retain a diverse student body, then CU students will be limited in their ability to interact with other CU students from backgrounds different from their own.

Evidence from the Residential Academic Programs (RAPs) provides some additional indication of the level of interaction students have with faculty and staff of different backgrounds. The Honors RAP Student Experience Survey indicated that 30% of students strongly agreed that the Honors RAP encouraged contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.), while 29% of the respondents mildly agreed with this survey inquiry.

The diversity and inclusive excellence statements by various RAPS provide goals and efforts made in increasing diverse and inclusive interaction. Some examples include the efforts by the Health Professional RAP (HPRAP) and Libby RAP. HPRAP has partnered with the Miramontes Arts and Sciences Program (MASP) to reserve a dozen HPRAP beds for MASP students known to MASP to have interest in healthcare. The Libby RAP reported that it actively recruits students of color to serve as student leaders. In AY2016-17, 75% of the student coordinators are students of color; and in AY2017-18, 50% of the student coordinators are students of color.

In addition to diverse interactions that are encouraged and structured in Residence Life, we also note that CU Dialogues, which has held 23 dialogues each academic year in RAPs since 2015, has engaged roughly 886 students in dialogues about difference. We agree with the authors of the white paper submitted to academic futures, “Let’s Talk” (Item 98).

### **PI 7.3 Behaviors**

To what degree does the institution convey to first-year students the standards of behavior it expects for participants in a diverse, open, and civil campus community?

The majority of first-year students (63%) on the FoE survey reported that the university effectively communicates the importance of respectful standards of behavior in an academic community. Less than half of faculty and staff (43%) felt that the university communicated the importance of respecting others with differing opinions, and even fewer (35%) believed that the university conveyed the importance of standards of behavior in an academic community.

After surveying various forms of communication to new students regarding standards for behavior in a diverse, open, and civil campus community, the committee agrees that CU Boulder merits a ranking of “medium” in this area. Beginning with the CU admissions application, students are asked to write about a time they interacted with someone whose social identity was markedly different from their own, and how they responded to this challenge. Once admitted, students are required to take a “Community Equity” module (Items 57 and 58) which covers all of the protected classes at CU and educates them about respectful interactions with diverse people. The Office of Student Conduct also conveys messages through the welcome process (both online and in workshops) about standards of behavior for an academic community (Item 94). New Student Welcome Days include interactive sessions called CommUnity (Item 93) to instill in students the importance of and skills needed to create an inclusive community. Once students arrive on campus, they are exposed to syllabus statements on inclusivity in all their courses, their Resident Advisors model and guide them in fostering inclusive living communities, and they are given the opportunity to attend a host of Fall Welcome events that celebrate diverse ideas and people at CU Boulder.

### **Section 4. Sources of evidence.**

- 26. Non returning UG Survey Fall 2016
- 56. Retention Data - Diversity Dimension
- 57 and 58. On-line Community Equity Module and In-Person Bystander Intervention
- 65. Honors RAP Student Experience Survey
- 68. First Year Retention Data
- 81. Fall 2017 Faculty/Staff Survey Results
- 83. Fall 2017 Student Survey Results
- 86. The Relationship Between Taking a Writing Course and Academic Success in the Freshman Year
- 89. Foundations of Excellence Diversity RAPs Summary
- 93. New Student Welcome Days--CommUnity sessions highlight inclusivity
- 94. Proposed Student Conduct D2L messaging and in-person optional workshops
- 95. Not Under-Rep Minority Data
- 96. CU Boulder Instructional Faculty Fall 2016
- 97. International Student and Scholar Statistics
- 98. [LetsTalkWhitePaper.pdf](#)

### **Section 5. Committee recommendations.**

1. We recommend that all cohort structures for first-year students, including RAPS, first-year seminars, FIGs, and LLCs, be required to demonstrate how they are providing opportunities for diverse interactions and learning about diverse cultures and world views.

2. We recommend that all Colleges require first-year students to take a class that focuses on diverse cultures, worldviews, and perspectives. Although such a course is currently offered and required in the College of Arts and Sciences, we recommend expanding the requirement to all schools and colleges to require it during the first year.
3. We recommend that the university strategically package and publicize the multiple co-curricular opportunities on campus for first-year students to engage with diverse people and worldviews. We also believe the Colorado Creed is something that could be woven more explicitly throughout the new student welcome experience, move in-week, and welcome events: <https://www.colorado.edu/creed/>
4. We recommend that faculty provide tips during the first week of class on how to express differing perspectives in a respectful way, and that Residence Life curriculum and Fall Welcome events offer opportunities for students to learn to participate in dialogues across difference. To enhance the quality of diverse interactions between students, we support the expansion of a dialogues program for all first-year students, delineated in the white paper "Let's Talk" (Item 98).
5. We recommend increased recruitment and retention and financial support of more faculty/staff/students of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to build intercultural interaction experience. By diversity we mean socioeconomic and first-generation, ethnicity, nationality, race, people of diverse genders and sexualities, and people with disabilities.