

**Diversity and Social Justice at Goddard College:
A Board Centered Agenda**

How to use a board-centered approach to providing oversight, direction, monitoring, evaluation and accountability in setting and achieving social justice and diversity priorities, programs and policies.

Presented by the Goddard College Board of Trustees' Diversity and Social Justice Committee:

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I. PURPOSE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES' WHITE PAPER ON DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The purpose of the White Paper on Diversity and Social Justice is to recommend ways that Goddard can become a visible national leader by creating a model progressive educational community of excellence, diversity and social justice for adult learners. The White Paper is drafted for the Goddard Board of Trustees by its Diversity and Social Justice Committee (DSJC) and was completed with input from the entire Board.

This White Paper forms the basis for the Goddard College Board of Trustees' Diversity and Social Justice Plan, a new document with multi-year plans for both the Board and the College. The Plan highlights how the Board can use its unique role of oversight, direction, resource allocation, monitoring, evaluation and accountability to create a national model of excellence, diversity and social justice.

Diversity and social justice are intrinsic to the College's values and outcomes. As such, this Board of Trustees' White Paper sets forth elements necessary to establish a diversity and social justice plan using priorities, goals, plans, programs, policies, and strategies that build upon Goddard's tradition of inclusion and cutting edge social justice practices. The Paper contains and expands upon components and strategies used by other colleges and universities. These institutions have integrated diversity and social justice throughout the academic institution in ways that are substantive, bold, and enhance the educational experience of students. All goals approved by the Board for inclusion into diversity and social justice plans should be specific, measurable, action-oriented, results-focused, and have the required resources, measurable benchmarks, and a timeline.

The Diversity and Social Justice Matrix for Monitoring and Reporting Activities of the Board's Committees and Task Forces is included. A timeline for implementation of a Diversity and Social Justice

plan is presented. And we proposed that a methodology for measuring progress be developed.

Generative thinking processes helped to incorporate the College's past traditions in ways that expand and deepen Goddard's history of inclusion and social justice. This required each standing Committee and Task Force of the Board of Trustees, as well as the College President, to carefully examine this document within the context of their duties, functions, and responsibilities.

This Paper was presented at the September 2005 Board meeting for feedback and input. Further revisions reflected Board feedback. It is expected that a multi-year plan and policy will be presented and adopted at the March 2006 Board meeting and those priorities will be reflected in the 2006-2007 fiscal budget.

II. DEFINITIONS, VISION AND RATIONALES

Prior to adopting any diversity and social justice plan for the College, the Board must clarify a number of issues. It is important to start with our working definitions for diversity and social justice, and include Board statements that articulate its vision and rationale for diversity and social justice.

A. Working Definition of Diversity

Diversity is "otherness," or those human qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups. It is important to distinguish between the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity.

Primary dimensions are the following: age, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, physical abilities/qualities, race and sexual orientation. Secondary dimensions of diversity are those that can be changed, and include, but are not limited to: educational background, career path, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, parental status, life and work experiences, and religious, political and philosophical beliefs, perspectives, social standing, and opinions.

B. Working Definition of Social Justice

Social justice is defined generally as the equality of human rights for all which includes access to the freedom of speech, employment, pay and benefits, resources, information, economics, power, and voice within an institution and society. Within Goddard College, all students, staff and faculty have access to power and a voice in the governance of the College through their respective representative councils, through various policies and practices of the administration, and on the Board of Trustees through their duly elected representatives via the processes set out in the By-laws of the College. As an institution that values social justice, Goddard College is committed to being a socially responsible educational facility, employer, and member of society at large.

C. Proposed Vision Statement

Goddard College, a progressive educational institution, “encourages students to become creative, passionate, lifelong learners, working and living with an earnest concern for others and for the welfare of the Earth.” To achieve this result, Goddard College embraces academic excellence, diversity, and social justice as essential goals and objectives for the effective advancement of the Goddard mission.

Goddard will become a national leader by creating a model progressive educational community of excellence, diversity and social justice for adult learners.

The College embraces “racial, cultural, class, ability, religious, generational, and ideological diversity and inclusiveness as positive and necessary characteristics of an effective educational system and democracy” and demonstrates “an earnest concern for others and for the welfare of the Earth through our programs, structures, outreach, and participation in local, state, national and international higher education communities.” (Goddard College Third Century Plan, 2004)

Our vision will be realized when the Goddard academic community consists of individuals from the widest range of backgrounds and demographic categories, whose diversity of ideas are encouraged, accepted, and valued, and where the environment of the College community promotes equity, respect and recognition of currently underrepresented individuals, and provides at least a minimum livable salary to all its staff, faculty and administration.

D. Proposed Rationale

Goddard College’s primary responsibility is the academic and social growth of its students.

Understanding diversity is at the core of effective human interaction for intellectual and civic maturity. Students learn not only from the faculty and College staff, but also from others, especially when they interact with persons who look at things differently and whose experiences are different. These interactions help students to broaden their perspectives, to increase their ability and capacity to work with others, and to foster an understanding of inclusiveness and social justice. Board members, administrators, faculty and staff can experience the same outcomes. People of varied backgrounds, cultures and beliefs bring different, important and relevant knowledge and perspectives about work, life and teaching, enhancing innovation, understanding, and enriching the learning experience for all.

Social justice, likewise, is essential to the Goddard mission and advances its pedagogical approach. As a socially responsible educational institution, Goddard must foster an environment where a complete diversity of students, faculty and staff have the access and opportunity to learn, teach and work at Goddard. In addition, individuals and groups must have access to the benefits, resources, information, economics, power, and voice within the College. And, they must understand how to pursue and achieve social justice within society. Moreover, social justice within the Goddard community requires that the College be socially responsible to its students, staff and faculty, and in its dealings with those outside the college community. Social responsibility includes fostering a work environment that enables every

member of the staff and faculty to earn a fair income, be involved in the governance of the College, and to work and live with dignity and respect. Involvement in the governance of the College, access to power and a voice within the College is provided to all students, staff, and faculty through their respective representative College councils, various policies and procedures, and through their duly elected representatives to the Board of Trustees who have the power to vote on all matters about which they have no conflict of interest, as set out in the Board's By-laws and as amended as necessary.

The Board has an essential and unique position in moving forward the diversity and social justice agenda at the Board and College levels. The Board establishes direction, oversees, monitors, and evaluates the necessary College-wide policies, monitors the progress of diversity and social justice programs and plans, and ensures that appropriate and adequate funding is provided to meet stated goals and objectives.

III. BOARD BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Goddard College Board of Trustees has a rich history of supporting the recruitment and retention of diverse students, faculty, staff and administrators, but it has been uneven and not always viewed as an institutional priority. Moreover, the Board has a lengthy and strong tradition of embracing social justice.

In 2002, the Board of Trustees verbally and visibly reaffirmed its commitment to diversity and social justice as top Board priorities. Those actions include but are not limited to:

- Integrating diversity and social justice throughout the College's strategic plan, the Third Century Plan.
- In 2003, creating the Diversity and Social Justice Task Force and asking members to develop diversity and social justice goals for the Board and the College.
- Developing a working definition of diversity and social justice, which was adopted by consensus by the full Board at its meeting in October 2004.
- Surveying Trustees to assess the Board's professional development and committee needs on diversity and social justice.
- Passing the following resolution at the February 2005 Board meeting:

"Whereas the Goddard College Board of Trustees, in accordance with its ethical and social commitments, in recognition of the educational value of a diverse academic community, and reflecting its place as a national college:

Be it resolved, on this the 19th day of February 2005, that the Board of Trustees

* supports efforts to increase the presence of African American, Latino, Asian-American, and Native

American faculty, staff, and students at Goddard College;

* requests the development of a College diversity plan, inclusive of achieving this result;

* requests annual progress reports related to recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students from the College administration.”

· Conducting workshops on diversity and social justice for the Board of Trustees at the February 2005 and at the June 2005 Board meetings, facilitated by consultants with a national reputation.

· In September 2005, affirming the need for and the value of diversity and social justice by changing the Diversity and Social Justice Task Force of the Board of Trustees from a temporary task force to a standing committee of the Board.

· In September 2005, approving this White Paper as part of the foundation for a proposed Board plan and policy for diversity and social justice.

· In January 2006, agreeing to use the Diversity and Social Justice Matrix for Monitoring and Reporting Activities of the Board Committees and Task Forces.

IV. THE ROLE OF THE BOARD IN CREATING DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENDA

The Board’s role is to set organizational direction, to provide oversight, and to ensure that the College has the necessary resources to achieve diversity and social justice plans and priorities. The Board has successfully discussed the appropriate role and process regarding oversight, setting directions, monitoring, evaluation, and resource allocation. More professional development is needed in those areas due to the breadth and complexity of board roles.

The Diversity and Social Justice Committee (DSJC) recognizes that the Board’s role in creating diversity and social justice plans for the College is simultaneously both limited and broad in scope. The Board should develop a Board-wide Diversity and Social Justice Plan to ensure that the Board lives up to the aspirational goals it seeks for all members of the College community. The Board will also disseminate this White Paper that sets out the definitions, vision, mission, and rationalization statement, and provides some suggested goals and objectives.

The Board has appropriately delegated responsibility for the development and implementation of the Campus diversity plan and annual reports to the Goddard President. The Diversity and Social Justice Committee (DSJC) proposes the reports be submitted at the June Board meetings and include social justice activities and progress. The Board can, and should, require each segment of the Goddard community to engage in meaningful dialogue to develop and implement campus diversity and social justice plans. In doing so, the Board does not seek to micro-manage the College administration or to in

any way overstep its stewardship role. Rather, the Board recognizes that each segment of the Goddard community is in the unique position of knowing the realities and challenges of accomplishing the goals of diversity and social justice within that segment and may have different goals, tasks and resources necessary to create change within that part of the community.

The most effective plans should be useful tools that create and maintain diversity and social justice, not merely statements of political correctness. There should be no distance between our rhetoric and our reality.

V. PROPOSED GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES FOR BOARD PLAN

The Diversity and Social Justice Committee has identified major goals with related objectives and discussion questions for Board use in discussing and developing policies, procedures and programs consistent with the Board's Plan on Diversity and Social Justice.

A. Access, Development and Retention of Board Members

Access means welcoming new Board members while ensuring the full participation of existing Board members. Current efforts at recruiting members of under-represented groups have been improved but should be enhanced. Questions for discussion related to the Board include:

- What do we need to do to become more competitive in attracting Board members from under-represented populations?
- How do we communicate that we are both a welcoming and supportive community?
- How can we make our search processes for new Board members more productive, especially resulting in more under-represented members?
- What are the obstacles to recruiting members of under-represented groups to the Board?
- Are there any changes we need to make to adapt to new populations of Board members?

Development and retention of Board members is also a necessary element of diversity and social justice. All members of the Board should feel welcome and supported. Such support includes appropriate orientation of new Board members, good communication among Board members, access to necessary information, mentoring to take on higher positions on the Board, utilization of skills, and equitable treatment of Board members. Questions for discussion include:

- What are the best methods of developing and training Board members?
- What are the factors associated with retention of Board members?

- What are the barriers which hinder efforts at retaining members of diverse groups on the Board?
- What factors impact full and equal participation and voice, especially for women, racial minorities, and representatives of other groups.
- Are policies, programs and practices regarding the Board equitable?
- Are resources appropriately allocated to development and retention efforts of Board members?
- Are there any changes we need to make to retain current Board members?

Proposed Goal 1: Goddard College will increase the presence and contributions of the spectrum of diverse groups on the Goddard Board and its various committees and task forces, with a special focus on racially underrepresented groups.

1.1 Objective: Goddard will increase the presence of diverse populations at all levels of the Board of Trustees, including the Executive Committee, all other committees and task forces of the Board.

1.2 Objective: Goddard will focus upon the retention and effective utilization of the contributions of diverse individuals within the Board of Trustees.

1.3 Objective: Goddard will identify and address inequities and other factors that hinder the recruitment and retention of Board members.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES:

- Review current methods of recruiting Board members and revise as necessary to increase recruitment of a diverse population of Board members, including determining how to target recruiting efforts in a meaningful way.
- Develop methods to measure effectiveness of efforts to recruit and retain diverse Board members.
- Review current methods of determining assignments of Board members to committees and task forces and revise as necessary to increase diverse representation on each of the Board's committees and task forces.
- Hold diversity and social justice workshops or professional development for current and new Board members that foster a better understanding of diversity and social justice and the College's policies, procedures and practices regarding diversity and social justice.
- Establish the practice of routinely conducting exit interviews of Board members, asking specific

questions related to diversity, equity and social justice.

B. Educational and Working Climate

Goddard's educational and working climate is set by the culture, decisions, practices, policies and behaviors of the College. All members of the Goddard community should feel that they are members of a supportive educational and working environment where they can study or work with dignity and respect. Such a climate is everybody's responsibility, and includes fostering a climate of civility and respect for others, elimination of discrimination, providing easy access to redress, if needed, and fostering a work environment that is economically fair. The climate of the College, though difficult to quantify or change, sets the tone for successful recruitment and retention of students, faculty, staff and administration. Board policies play a large role in ensuring that a supportive climate is maintained within the College.

We must insure that the climate of the College is positive for all members, and at the same time, the Board must first address its own climate. Board dialogue regarding improving the climate of the Board should respond to the following issues:

- Is there a mechanism in place to continuously monitor the climate and engage the Board to resolve issues?
- Do Board members feel competent to handle the implications of a commitment to diversity and social justice in its policies and practices?
- Does the Board have a program in place to proactively discourage harassment and discrimination within the Board and to teach appreciation and understanding of differences?
- Do the Board members know the reporting mechanisms for addressing incidents of discrimination?
- Are policies, programs and practices clearly communicated to Board members to promote understanding?
- Does the Board have an effective dispute resolution process?
- Are all Board members aware of services available to them?
- Are all Board members aware of, and understand, the mission of the College?

Proposed Goal 2: Goddard College will create an environment where differences are welcomed and valued so that the Board will have a climate that offers opportunity and supports the success of all its members.

2.1 Objective: All individuals on the Board will be expected to treat others with dignity and respect at all times and foster a culture of inclusiveness.

2.2 Objective: Opportunities for Board member development that focus on creating a supportive climate or on advancement will be made available.

2.3 Objective: Board members will be trained in ways to create an equitable environment and to recognize and effectively manage complaints of inequity, discrimination and harassment.

2.4 Objective: Dispute resolution processes will be effectively communicated to Board members and examined for their sensitivity to the needs of diverse people.

2.5 Objective: Policies, procedures, and practices will be reviewed and revised when appropriate to ensure diversity and social justice.

2.6 Objective: The Board will continuously monitor Goddard's climate for diversity and social justice.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES:

- Provide opportunities for enrichment, education, and growth on topics related to diversity, inclusiveness, and social justice.
- Implement training and education on diversity, inclusiveness, and social justice.
- Identify systems and processes for measurement and accountability of diversity goals.
- Determine ways to assess climate regarding diversity and social justice including attitudes, knowledge and behaviors.

C. Curricular and Pedagogical Approaches

Although the Board can set the institutional policy and direction requiring diversity and social justice, the faculty of Goddard College are critical to its successful acceptance and implementation. Not only do students interact most with them, but, even in the student-centered learning environment of Goddard, the faculty control to a great extent what content is learned, how it is learned, and what learning outcomes should be emphasized. Since diversity and social justice enhance the educational experience, Goddard College should include diversity of both content and pedagogy, and should advance social justice in the studies by students.

The faculty of Goddard must be integral in this critical institutional dialogue, which will forge the agenda

for change. Faculty must help frame the questions, establish priorities, and ultimately produce a richer development of the educational process. The decision-making process or its results should adversely affect neither academic freedom nor faculty governance.

The goals and strategies the faculty choose may flow from the following questions:

Should curricular and pedagogical approaches at Goddard College seek to:

- broaden existing ideas and theories so they are more inclusive and more diverse?
- better prepare students for increasingly complex and diverse communities?
- foster in students a comprehensive understanding of different groups, beliefs and ways of thinking across history, culture, and society?
- introduce students to different peoples, cultures, and perspectives?
- enhance student analytical listening, thinking, communications and leadership skills?
- help students to better negotiate the ambiguity and conflict often associated with differences?
- provide the skills to be competitive in the global marketplace?
- comprehend and respect other “ways of knowing?”

Proposed Goal 3: Goddard College will incorporate diversity and social justice in a significant way into teaching, thinking, knowing, being, learning and research.

The Diversity and Social Justice Committee recommends that the Board direct the President to work with faculty and staff to develop strategies that address the objectives below.

3.1 Objective: Goddard College faculty and students will be introduced to the varied intellectual traditions associated with diverse scholarship and social justice and will be assured of the fair inclusion of the different voices represented by this scholarship.

3.2 Objective: Goddard College faculty will increase their awareness of the factors that enhance equity and social justice in the educational process while continuing to emphasize students’ ways of being.

3.3 Objective: Goddard College faculty will generate new knowledge about diversity and social justice and the impact of both on the College and society.

3.4 Objective: Goddard College faculty will assure that pedagogical transformation continues to reflect

the best practices associated with effective education.

3.5 Objective: Goddard College will provide appropriate support and resources for the academic success of integrating diversity and social justice into the educational process.

3.6 Objective: Goddard College will engage in publishing efforts and communication to the outside world about diversity and social justice.

D. Institutionalization

The commitment to diversity and social justice should be made evident, where appropriate, in Goddard College's communications, including employment and admissions materials, website, orientation literature, programs, catalogues, speeches, news releases, external and internal publications, and in oral presentations. This commitment also includes modeling diversity in the College's Board of Trustees and in senior administrative positions. It also includes promoting diversity and social justice in all aspects of the internal and external College community. In addition, it means the willingness to allocate the resources necessary to achieve diversity and social justice, and to make support of the diversity and social justice initiative a part of performance appraisal.

Proposed Goal 4: Goddard College's commitment to diversity and social justice will be evident in all of its operations.

4.1 Objective: Where appropriate, Goddard College communications and publications materials, especially admissions, new student and transfer orientation materials, course catalogues, alumni newsletters, advertisements for faculty and staff positions, handbooks, policies and procedures, and the website, will reflect our commitment to diversity and social justice.

4.2 Objective: Where appropriate, Goddard College's commitment to diversity and social justice will be expressed in the variety of written and oral presentations on and off campus, such as speeches, presentations, news releases, and guest columns.

4.3 Objective: Goddard College will reach out to the community to respond to issues and events and to develop partnerships that create an environment supportive of diversity and social justice.

4.4 Objective: Goddard College will create a work environment where administrators are held accountable for the recruitment, retention, and cultivation of an inclusive and diverse workforce, and where administrators will not tolerate or allow unfair or inequitable practices and behaviors.

4.5 Objective: Goddard College will include issues of diversity and social justice in all current and future faculty, staff and student orientation sessions.

4.6 Objective: Goddard College will foster an economically just and equitable work environment for its

staff, faculty and administration.

4.7 Objective: The Board of Trustees of Goddard College will continually and actively monitor and question the College's programs and policies to ensure that diversity and social justice are included. The administration will be accountable to the Board of Trustees regarding the development of and implementation of a campus diversity and social justice plan and update reports.

4.8 Objective: Goddard College will provide the resources needed to institutionalize our commitment to diversity and social justice.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES:

- Identify appropriate local and national publications, which reach diverse populations for distribution of information about College issues and events.
- Create checklist of considerations to insure that program development and initiatives are responsive to societal needs and change and meet the goals of diversity and social justice.
- Incorporate diversity checklist when reviewing and evaluating existing programs, policies and procedures.
- Include diverse representation on all committees and/or task forces.
- Identify systems and processes for measurement and accountability of diversity and social justice goals.

E. Funding

Proposed Goal 5: Goddard College's commitment to diversity and social justice shall be adequately funded and tied to the budget process.

5.1 Objective: Funding for diversity and social justice initiatives will be reflected in the College's annual financial plans and budgets.

5.2 Objective: The Board and the President will develop avenues for fundraising specifically for use in executing the Diversity and Social Justice plan.

5.3 Objective: The College President will report to the Board regarding any specific funding needs that are directly related to diversity and social justice goals.

5.4 Objective: The Board and the College, through the Institutional Advancement Department, shall

specifically raise, from within the Goddard Community and through the expansion of “Friends of Goddard,” grants and specific moneys raised for use only to execute this Diversity and Social Justice Plan.

SUGGESTED TACTICS:

- Each program within the College shall examine the funding necessary to implement realistic and attainable goals regarding diversity and social justice and will communicate such funding requests to the President for review and consideration for inclusion in budgeting.
- Funding necessary for marketing and outreach efforts to accomplish diversity and social justice goals shall be appropriately addressed in each fiscal year’s budget.
- The administration should also consult with the students of each program regarding the funding they may seek for programs, speakers, and other avenues of promoting diversity and social justice. Such requests by the students should be reviewed and considered for inclusion in budgeting.
- Funding necessary to eliminate any inequities in pay and/or benefits for faculty, staff or administration should be regularly reviewed and budgeted for.
- Review of other financial needs to ensure a just and humane workplace should be done on an on-going basis; the budget should be modified as deemed necessary and appropriate to meet such concerns.
- Review of funding necessary to create an educational environment that fosters and promotes diversity and social justice should be done on an on-going basis and modifications to any budget should be presented as deemed necessary.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Board, in its leadership role, is committed to using diversity and social justice as a means to achieving progressive education, excellence, civic engagement and other institutional priorities.

This Board has the capacity, and the desire, to lead in role-appropriate ways, by providing the necessary overview, direction, monitoring, evaluation, accountability and resources needed to create change in concrete and tangible ways.

The Board of Trustees must effectively champion for these changes within the campus, community and national arenas. These changes will be progressive. Student focused. Creative. Action oriented. Bold. And, it will be trailblazing. Doing so will forever change those who volunteer, work, and learn at Goddard

College. Succinctly stated, these changes will make Goddard College an even more “Goddardly” place to be.