New Council Will Help UA Achieve Diversity Goals

University Relations - Communications
December 2014

To make the UA a more inclusive place that benefits from a wide range of viewpoints and opinions, the Never Settle [1] strategic plan calls for the University to strengthen its efforts to increase diversity.

A new Diversity Coordinating Council has been created to develop an integrated approach for meeting the plan's diversity goals.

"I'm excited about the potential of the new Diversity Coordinating Council to help us advance diversity of all kinds at the UA," said Provost Andrew Comrie, who established the council earlier this year. "Even more, by focusing on how we 'do diversity' in all of our units, we will make diversity a competitive advantage for the UA."

The Never Settle plan calls for the UA to build on and strengthen the diversity of its community by encouraging diversity at all levels. Diversity, as defined by UA Programs for Inclusive Excellence, goes beyond just race, ethnicity and gender; it also includes gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, language, religion, socio-economic background, and a variety of other thinking styles and perspectives.

Comrie has charged the Diversity Coordinating Council with synchronizing the wide range of campus offices that contribute to achieving the UA's diversity goals, including Student Affairs and Enrollment Management offices that concentrate on student recruitment and multicultural programming. It also includes other units that focus on community outreach, federal compliance issues, faculty recruitment and development, and strategic planning.

The council is chaired by Dr. Francisco Moreno, assistant vice president for diversity and inclusion at the Arizona Health Sciences Center.

Moreno said that leveraging the University's efforts to increase diversity will not only help achieve Never Settle goals but will also help the UA raise its national status and better serve its students. (See Moreno's guest column [2] about the council and its members in Lo Que Pasa.)

The Diversity Coordinating Council is composed of representatives from across campus. The council will report to Comrie and related vice presidents on the President's Diversity Leadership Team.

The UA more than doubled its number of new freshmen from minority backgrounds between 2003 and 2013. In the same period, the number of Hispanic students increased by 120 percent, the number of African-American students increased by 60 percent and the number of international students tripled.

"We have made significant progress with recruiting and retaining students from
underrepresented backgrounds, and now we need to leverage that progress to develop
diversity into a competitive advantage,” Comrie said.

The UA has several units working across campus to promote diversity, such as Programs for Inclusive Excellence, the Commission on the Status of Women [3], the Arizona Hispanic Center for Excellence [4], the Disabled Veterans Reintegration and Education Project [5], the Institute for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies [6], the Southwest Institute for Research on Women [7] and many others.

The Diversity Coordinating Council will help deepen these efforts by bringing together faculty, administrators and staff from the major units responsible for diversity in student, community, staff and faculty affairs.

To learn about more diversity efforts at the UA, visit diversity.arizona.edu [8].

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