

The Road to STATE'S REAFFIRMATION 2015



Diversity at WVSU

As we learn more about the reaffirmation of accreditation each week in *The Road to State's Reaffirmation 2015*, we will examine how select elements of West Virginia State University campus life and culture interact with the Self-Study Report. It is essential that the University understands and demonstrates the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society. Therefore, let us briefly review facets of diversity at West Virginia State University and how it works congruently with the mission.

WVSU addresses diversity at prominent administrative levels that include the president and vice presidents and throughout all facets of the campus community. Article II of the Affirmative Action Policy states that WVSU is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action institution that does not discriminate against any person because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, or disability. In 1983, the University amended this policy to include activities related to the management of its educational, employment, financial business, and other affairs.

The University periodically reviews and publishes its policies, goals, and timelines. In addition, WVSU always presents the equal employment opportunity statement on the University website and in all job postings. Any issues brought forward related to affirmative action are addressed appropriately.

The student experience at WVSU entails a comprehensive undergraduate education that includes an extensive General Education curriculum, extracurricular activities, as well as an academic major. The University supports these programs with existing student services in an effort to ensure the programs help prepare students to become conscious citizens in a multicultural world. Specifically, the General Education curriculum is centered on a set of common objectives (i.e., Interdisciplinary Matrix, Intellectual and Personal Development, and Modes of Inquiry, described in detail in Criterion Three) students can select based on University and departmental requirements. These objectives become the basis of an exploration of human diversity as listed below in the learning outcomes for Gender, and Identity in a Diverse Society:

- demonstrate knowledge of the basic biological and cultural differences among human social groups;
- interpret the significance of human differences in terms of how they may lead to either cooperation or conflict between various social groups;
- identify and evaluate their own attitudes and emotional reactions to various racial, ethnic, gender, and other variously defined groups (such as immigrants or the disabled);
- describe the consequences of discrimination from the perspectives of several disciplines, including psychology, sociology, political science, biology, and the humanities;
- identify and describe the various forms of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, etc.) as well as the different explanations about the origins of oppression;
- distinguish the relationship between prejudice (attitude) and discrimination (behavior);
- define and describe the terms and concepts related to racism, sexism, and heterosexism;
- demonstrate a knowledge of the history and theories pertaining to issues of human diversity (e.g., segregation, discrimination, etc.); and
- distinguish between individual, institutional, and legal discrimination.

The University acknowledged the need to address these concepts in other courses because diversity is important throughout WVSU; thus, a faculty committee that oversees the General Education curriculum voted to include additional classes that fulfill the General Education Common Learning Objectives as well as the subsection of human diversity. The courses were chosen from different academic programs and include Introduction to African Studies, Race and Gender Issues in Criminal Justice, Exceptionalities and Human Diversity, Cultural Aspects, and Foundations of Inquiry.

WVSU also offers three interdisciplinary minors that qualify as part of promoting diversity in education. These interdisciplinary minors are African and African-American Studies, International Studies, and Women's Studies. Each minor provides students a course of study in an area of current importance and interest that intersects various academic disciplines. The minor begins with an introductory course that provides an overview of its field of study. Subsequent courses help develop breadth and focus in the field as WVSU prepares students to embrace diversity in their respective fields.

The University also provides certificate programs that promote diversity. These certificates include Human Diversity, Diversity Literature, and Interpersonal and Group Communications. Each certificate provides an opportunity for students to develop specific skills that enhance their knowledge of diversity while exposing the student to new aspects of the world and life.

For more information about The Road to State's Reaffirmation 2015, please click [here](#) to discover in-depth information about the process, read the University's Self-Study Report, and more!