

UNH FACULTY SENATE
MOTION # VIII-M8

Statement on Diversity

1. Motion presenter: Paul McNamara, of the Academic Affairs Committee
2. Date of Faculty Senate discussion: March 8, 2004
3. Motion:

The Senate Academic Affairs Committee unanimously recommends to the Faculty Senate adoption of the following statement.

Statement on Diversity as a Compelling Interest

The Vision

The Faculty Senate, composed of the duly-elected representatives of the faculty, believes that the University of New Hampshire exemplifies our state and national commitment to both liberty and inquiry. The latter values have always been intertwined. Part of the value of liberty is that it allows for a plurality of voices, which in turn enhances inquiry. So to advance the interests of inquiry at UNH it is essential to construct an intellectual community in which a plurality of voices can be heard. Furthermore, to prepare our students for the future, we must provide them with an environment that reflects multi-cultural and socio-economic diversity. This too is continuous with a traditional concern: the cosmopolitan aspirations long associated with a higher education. A corollary to both of these considerations is that we should be especially attuned to those groups that have been underrepresented.¹ Therefore, the University of New Hampshire must exert every reasonable effort to create and sustain a community of students, faculty and staff that reflects multi-cultural and socio-economic diversity.

Our Special Challenge

It is the goal of the university to provide students with a balanced education. UNH expends significant effort to do so. This is demonstrated in its long-standing commitment to required general education courses, as well as study abroad programs, a program of broad intercollegiate and intra-mural athletics, and extensive programming in the arts as a part of non-classroom campus life. In the same way in which UNH seeks to provide students with exposure to a diversity of subjects, international cultures, athletic activities, and arts, UNH has an obligation to offer its students exposure to that multicultural diversity that comprises our nation. Were UNH situated in a state with a diverse population, the normal processes of recruitment might naturally provide an educational experience which reflected the desired diversity. Alas, this is far from our situation. UNH faces special challenges. For example, UNH serves a state in which minorities

¹ For example, in our nation, many people have been traditionally underrepresented in various forums because of disability, economic status, ethnicity, gender, lack of educational opportunity, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

are not present in large numbers: in 2000, New Hampshire had a non-white population that is one-eighth the national average. As a result, the vast majority of native New Hampshire students at UNH have had very little exposure to a plurality of voices which comprises approximately 25% of our nation's population (in 2000).² Thus it is essential that UNH take significant affirmative action to recruit and retain students, faculty, and employees from such underrepresented groups. Absent this effort, we have left a serious gap in the educational program which we offer our students. With it, we may yet fully achieve our ideal of the sort of diverse educational community that is optimal for inquiry and that facilitates the emergence of cosmopolitan graduates.

4. Senate action: passed
Vote: approved by a voice vote

Date: March 8, 2004

Senate chair's signature:



Forwarded to: President Ann Hart
Forwarded to: VPAA Bruce Mallory
Forwarded to: Pat Gormley
Forwarded to: Michael Kalinowski
Forwarded to: Paul McNamara

Date: March 10, 2004
Date: March 11, 2004

² 2000 Census Bureau: http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2001/tables/nh_tab_1.PDF; in friendlier format at: <http://www.usatoday.com/graphics/census2000/newhampshire/state.htm>. There are, of course, subtle gradations: the proportion of Asians, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Blacks in NH is one-third, one-fifth, one-seventh, and one-eighteenth that of the nation, respectively. (Percentages and proportions are per one-race declarations.)