

Jackson State Community College Diversity Committee Master Plan

Submitted to Tennessee Board of Regents, June 11, 2008

Master Plan

The Jackson State Community College Master Plan for Diversity arises out of a need to enhance diversity on our campus. Jackson State is the flagship community college of West Tennessee, and as such, the College seeks to serve as a leader in its service area both to eliminate barriers working against historically under-represented or under-served constituents and to foster a campus climate that honors and celebrates diversity in all its forms. The belief that a diverse population enriches all members of the community drives the Diversity Committee's goals and activities. The College's support for the Committee reflects the institution's commitment to an inclusive, safe, and diverse environment in which honest discussion drives positive change.

Annually, the Committee will assess the campus climate for diversity, identify under-represented or under-served groups, enact programs or support services to enhance these groups' experiences at Jackson State, and assess the effectiveness of the programs and services offered. The Committee will always be guided by the spirit of planning and assessment and by the notion that diversity lifts us all.

Background

The history of discrimination in Tennessee leaves a lasting legacy that even an institution like Jackson State Community College, which was founded at a time when the state found itself questioning the mores surrounding diversity, racism, and inclusion, continues to overcome.

Overview of JSCC's history

Jackson State Community College was authorized by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1965 in response to the 1957 Pierce-Albright Report, which recommended the creation of a group of community colleges throughout the state. The report's recommendations include the following ideals:

- All persons who can profit from it should have the opportunity of receiving a college education.
- Provisions should be made for a larger percentage of the bright and more able students to attend colleges and universities.
- Higher education opportunities should be readily accessible to the youth of the state.

A follow-up report responding to the Pierce-Albright revealed that Jackson, located between Memphis and Nashville in the western third of the state, was one of three areas in the state not

within 50 miles of a major state university. Thus, Jackson, along with Chattanooga and Columbia, was picked as a location for one of the new two-year institutions.

The school's first registration, held on September 27 and 28, 1967, saw 640 students enroll, 240 more students than projected. Today, the college enrolls over 4000 students each semester and has graduated more than 10,000, many of whom remain in West Tennessee to benefit their communities through the use of skills learned and degrees earned at Jackson State Community College.

Jackson State Community College's service area consists of fourteen mostly rural counties in western Tennessee: Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry, Madison, McNairy, and Weakley. Jackson State's 97-acre main campus is located in Jackson, Tennessee (Madison County). Students are also served through three satellite campuses, in Lexington (Henderson County), in Savannah (Hardin County), and in Humboldt (Gibson County). Students also have access to online, videotape, hybrid, and Tennessee Board of Regents Online Degree Program courses. Classes are also offered at public schools and businesses in McKenzie, Milan, Bolivar, Paris, and other local cities. Dual-credit education is also available to college-bound high school students. A program that offers JSCC courses taught in the local Tennessee Technology Centers meets the needs of students in Jackson, Crump, Paris, MacKenzie, Ripley, Newbern, Covington, and Whiteville. Please see Appendix A for demographic information on Jackson State's service area.

Discrimination in Tennessee in the Post-Geier Era

For decades, the United States has increasingly addressed the disparity in opportunities for minorities. Equal rights movements' successes on both the legal and the moral fronts have driven our society towards justice for historically under-represented or under-served groups, based on race, gender, ethnicity, physical disability, mental impairment, sexual orientation, geography, economic standing, or religious and intellectual freedom.

Since the 1968 suit filed against the state of Tennessee by Rita Sanders Geier alleging that *de facto* segregation of public education continued in violation of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, discussions of discrimination in this state have focused on issues of race. The suit was settled in 2006, and institutions of higher learning in Tennessee have the opportunity and obligation to expand the focus of *diversity* beyond race while ensuring that racial issues do not become lost in the expansion.

Jackson State Community College's commitment to diversity is long-standing. Founded as an open-door institution for all of the people of West Tennessee just one year before the Geier suit was filed, Jackson State Community College as an institution did not have the legacy of discrimination to overcome that many of the historically white or historically black campuses across the state did. Still, the campus has not come as far as it could in terms of inclusion and diversity.

Statement of the Problem

Jackson State Community College must continue to work to ensure that its campuses not only reflect the diversity of the communities they serve but also honor the cultural identities of those communities. Additionally, the College must operate under the belief that diverse student and personnel bodies benefit not only the targeted under-represented or under-served populations but the college community as a whole. Existing discrimination must be eliminated, and future discrimination must be prevented. Those groups that still encounter barriers to the promise of higher education must be protected, supported, and fostered; those groups whose barriers have been eliminated must be encouraged to protect, support, and foster those for whom the dream is not yet real. The campuses of the College must be seen by the students, personnel, and community as safe spaces for all people, regardless of difference, and the idea that difference is a positive element of the College should be encouraged. Importantly, Jackson State Community College must strive to become an environment of open and honest discussion that fosters positive change.

The Diversity Committee

The Diversity Committee at Jackson State was organized in March 2007 through an open call to all campus constituents, including faculty, staff, and students. Members of each group responded to the call, and the first meeting brought together nearly 30 diverse men and women -- faculty, staff, and students -- to discuss the need for the committee and its future goals.

Charge and Activities of Committee

The Jackson State Diversity Committee is charged with exploring and enhancing the climate of diversity at Jackson State Community College. As the committee's mission statement outlines, the primary goal that shapes the committee's decisions and activities is a diverse campus culture that not only reflects but also honors the immediate and global community it serves.

The committee's activities have varied with the needs of the campus. In general, committee members meet together at least monthly, or more often as needed, with subcommittee meetings scheduled monthly or as needed as well. Starting in 2008-09, the committee will submit annual plans and year-end effectiveness reports in line with Jackson State's existing practices. Specific activities will be outlined within each annual plan to support the goals and objectives set forth in the committee's strategic plan, i.e., this document.

During its first year in 2007-08, the Jackson State Diversity Committee focused on

- organizing itself,
- drafting a short-term action plan, mission statement, and definition of *diversity*,
- applying for, winning, and implementing TBR diversity grants,
- developing new Access and Diversity Scholarship guidelines and application materials, and

- beginning to assess the campus climate for diversity.

In the Spring 2007 semester, the committee drafted a questionnaire about students' perceptions about their experiences at Jackson State Community College as an institution that fosters difference and diversity to include in graduation surveys; the committee also drafted a definition of *diversity*, which was approved by the entire campus before May 2007.

During Summer 2007, the committee met on a weekly basis to continue developing ideas to improve the campus climate for diversity and to draft a mission statement, revised scholarship guidelines, and grant applications. Committee members gathered data from existing sources to determine the race, gender, and location of Jackson State Community College's students and personnel. (See Appendix B.)

Throughout the Fall 2007 semester, the committee met monthly to draft its action plan and to further develop ideas to improve the campus climate for diversity.

By Spring 2008 and into Summer 2008, the committee was awarding access/diversity scholarships, enacting the access/diversity grants awarded by TBR, and planning for the following year's activities, including Fall 2008 in-service training, which the President of Jackson State asked the diversity committee to organize and lead.

Missions and Definitions

The Jackson State Diversity Committee operates under a definition for diversity and mission statements for itself and the College.

Definition of Diversity

Jackson State Community College promotes a diverse campus culture that honors and reflects the communities it serves by respecting, valuing, and celebrating individual ideas, identities, and traits. Jackson State is committed to attracting, recruiting, and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student body from a broad range of cultural, ethnic, geographic, and economic backgrounds.

The committee is recommending the following amended definition for approval by the faculty and staff:

Jackson State Community College promotes a diverse campus culture that honors and reflects the communities it serves by respecting, valuing, and celebrating individual ideas, identities, and traits. Jackson State is committed to attracting, recruiting, and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, and student body from a broad range of cultural, ethnic, geographic, and economic backgrounds in the belief that diversity is central to the success of Jackson State, its students, and its community.

Jackson State Mission Statement

Jackson State Community College provides accessible learning opportunities and services to a diverse student population and community. The College enhances quality of life by offering associate degrees, certificates, and enrichment courses as preparation for further higher education and for career entry or advancement.

Diversity Committee Mission Statement

The Diversity Committee's mission complies with and complements Jackson State Community College's core values of education, excellence, integrity, and success. The Committee's mission is to foster an inclusive campus climate that promotes the success of diverse student, personnel, and community populations in obtaining quality education, academic success, career preparation, and life improvement *in the belief that diversity is critical for success in these areas*

Master Goals, Objectives, and Measurements

The College's Master Diversity Plan will focus on three primary goals for the remainder of this strategic planning cycle. College-wide objectives and annual targets for 2008-09 and 2009-10 will also be proposed in a format identical to Jackson State's Strategic Plan. Once the Master Plan is adopted and incorporated into the College's Strategic Plan as strategic objective 2.2 [Jackson State Community College will define regional target groups and improve programs, services, and outreach for that diverse population.], various individual units across the institution will also address the Plan within their annual Effectiveness Planning cycle. Please see Appendix C for a JSCC Effectiveness Plan form and Appendix D for a JSCC Year-End Report form. This Plan, like the College's Strategic Plan, is being developed as a living document. It will be reviewed continuously, and adjustments will be made as needs are met or arise. Appendix E contains the actual Diversity Committee Effectiveness Plan for 2008-09. The annual effectiveness plan shows the diversity goals, objectives, proposed activities, timeline, responsible person(s), budget, expected outcome (s), and proposed measurement instrument(s). In the GOAL column, links to both the related Strategic Goal(s) and the specific Diversity Goal reinforce the interconnectedness of this Plan with the 2005-2010 Jackson State Community College Strategic Plan.

Goal 1: By 2010, increase awareness of and compassion for diverse communities, beliefs, and issues on campus.

Rationale: Providing an environment conducive to learning and working increases Jackson State's competitiveness in the higher education market as well as the overall morale of the campus family [SG 5.1].

- Objective 1.1. Assess the campus climate to identify barriers to diversity

2008-09 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of offices and physical plant complete and on file • Barriers identified
2009-10 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and begin implementation -- as budget and policies permit -- of a plan to remove barriers to diversity

- Objective 1.2. Assess current curriculum to determine existing level of diversity infusion.

2008-09 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity subcommittee for curriculum created and convened • Schedule of curricular reviews developed and initiated.
2009-10 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcommittee's final report on existing level of diversity in the curriculum presented to full committee, the Faculty Council, and appropriate administrators.

- Objective 1.3. Engage an increasing number of students in various activities related to diversity.

2008-09 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15% of student population will attend/participate in one or more diversity activities.
2009-10 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of student population will attend/participate in one or more diversity activities.

Measurement: Attendance rosters (or headcounts at large events) will be filed and tallied. The individual events, dates of occurrence, and participation rates will also be recorded in Diversity Committee meeting minutes.

- Objective 1.4. Engage an increasing number of faculty and staff in various activities related to diversity.

2008-09 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of employees will attend/participate in one or more diversity activities.
2009-10 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35% of employees will attend/participate in one or more diversity activities.

Measurement: Attendance rosters (or headcounts at large events) will be filed and tallied. The individual events, dates of occurrence, and participation rates will also be recorded in Diversity Committee meeting minutes.

Goal 2: By 2010, recruit and retain increasing numbers of students from historically under-served and/or under-represented populations.

Rationale: Increase the target populations' participation in higher education, thereby enhancing their quality of life [SG 2.2].

- Objective 2.1. Target one or more recruitment/retention strategies to the identified underrepresented or under-served student groups.

2008-09 Projected Progress	At least one recruitment or retention strategy identified and implemented for each of the following under-represented/under-served groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • male and female students in non-traditional majors • single parents • students whose native language is not English
2009-10 Projected Progress	At least one recruitment or retention strategy identified and implemented for each of the following under-represented/under-served groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • male and female students in non-traditional majors • single parents • students whose native language is not English

Measurements: Strategies will be identified in Diversity Committee meeting minutes. Data will be on file showing the dates of implementation and the level of student participation where applicable.

- Objective 2.2. Increase the number of male and female students majoring in non-traditional fields, i.e., males in nursing and radiography, females in industrial technologies, etc., by 0.5% by 2010.

2008-09 Projected Progress	21.65% participation of under-represented gender groups in non-traditional majors
2009-10 Projected Progress	21.65% participation of under-represented gender groups in non-traditional majors

Measurement: Percentages will be calculated using the database supplied by TBR for use in compiling measurements for Perkins IV/FAUPL. Numerator=number of underrepresented gender students enrolled in a career program that leads to employment in a non-traditional field. Denominator=number of students enrolled in a career program that leads to employment in a nontraditional field.

- Objective 2.3. Decrease by \$80,000 per year the unmet financial needs of enrolled designated underrepresented/ underserved students through diversity scholarships.

2008-09 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$80,000 scholarships awarded
2009-10 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$80,000 scholarships awarded

Measurement: Amount of scholarship monies awarded to selected underrepresented/ underserved students each year; the students' applications and the award letters will be on file; a copy of budget printouts will be available on request.

Goal 3. By 2010, recruit and retain a greater number of persons from historically under-served and/ or under-represented populations into faculty, staff, and administrative positions.

Rationale: The quality and commitment of faculty and staff determine student learning and success, institutional integrity, image, and mission fulfillment. Align our faculty and staff diversity levels more with our service area's diversity levels, thereby providing a more visually welcoming and inclusive campus environment. A closer alignment of the two groups will also create more on-campus mentoring opportunities for the students [SG 3.2].

- Objective 3.1. Identify and target one or more recruitment/retention strategies to specific underrepresented/ underserved groups of employees by 2010.

2008-09 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey completed and on file • Target group(s) identified • Baseline measures recorded • At least one recruitment or retention strategy identified and implemented for each of the specified under-represented/ under-served groups.
2009-10 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one recruitment or retention strategy implemented for each of the specified under-represented/under-served groups of employees.

Measurement: Employee Diversity Survey results on file, target groups and baseline measures recorded in Diversity Committee minutes, strategies identified in Diversity Committee meeting minutes, and data will be on file showing the dates of implementation and the level of faculty and staff participation where applicable.

- Objective 3.2. Increase the percentage of the specified under-represented/under-served groups employed by 2010.

2008-09 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and compile baseline measures of target group(s) of employees. • Specify target measurement level for 2009-10.
2009-10 Projected Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be determined during 2008-09 after target groups are identified from data.

Measurement: The percentage of each group identified during Fall 2008 will be calculated annually using Human Resource's annual EEO Report.

Summary

As the flagship community college of West Tennessee, Jackson State Community College embraces its role as a leader in the push towards embracing all people. The belief that a diverse population enriches all members of the community drives the Diversity Committee's goals and activities; the College's support for the Committee reflects the institution's commitment to an inclusive, safe, and diverse environment in which honest discussion drives positive change.

Annually, the Committee will assess the campus climate for diversity, identify under-represented or under-served groups, enact programs or support services to enhance these groups' experiences at Jackson State, and assess the effectiveness of the programs and services offered. The Committee will always be guided by the spirit of planning and assessment and by the notion that diversity lifts us all.