

RESOLUTION ON WASC POLICY STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY
(#05-92/93-EX)

- WHEREAS, The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Draft Policy Statement on Diversity fails to proscribe discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; and
- WHEREAS, The CSU Academic Senate has drafted AS-2109-92/AA (attached) urging that WASC eliminate language in the Policy Statement which, by implication, condones and supports discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; and
- WHEREAS, Humboldt State University Academic Senate believes discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is contradictory to the mission and goals of both Humboldt State University and the California State University; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of Humboldt State University supports AS-2109-92/AA from the CSU Academic Senate; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of Humboldt State University urges President McCrone to use the moral force of his office to persuade the WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.



**ACADEMIC SENATE
OF
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

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Office of the Chair

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Campus Senate Chairs
FROM: Sandra Wilcox, Chair
Academic Senate CSU *Sandra Wilcox*
DATE: October 13, 1992

The Academic Affairs Committee has asked that I bring the attached resolution, scheduled for a first reading before the Academic Senate CSU on November 12-13, to your attention. The resolution addresses a revision to the first draft of the Draft Policy Statement on Diversity of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), which was endorsed by the Academic Senate last year. Campus presidents (or Accreditation Liaison Officers) will be addressing the new draft, dated August 30, 1992, at a WASC meeting November 4. We would like to be sure that campus senates are aware of the issue should they wish to discuss it with their presidents and Accreditation Liaison Officers before that meeting.

The committee is concerned that the discussion on sexual orientation in the enclosed excerpt could be construed to condone discrimination against gay and lesbian students or faculty under certain circumstances. The committee's recommendation is that the objectionable language be dropped and that additions be made as noted in the resolution.

Please call the Academic Senate Office if you have questions about this item.

cc: Academic Senators
Harold Haak
Elliot Brownlee
Donald Gerth
Steve Weiner
Paul Spear
Executive Committee

ACADEMIC SENATE
of
THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Attachment to #05-92/93-EX
October 27, 1992 Minutes

AS-2109-92/AA
November 12-13, 1992

DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT (August 30, 1992) ON DIVERSITY OF
THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES (WASC)

WHEREAS, Any policy or practice of discrimination against students or university employees based on race, gender, age, disability, or sexual orientation is inimical to the values of the University; and

WHEREAS, It is a violation of California law and California State University policy for the CSU system, or any part of it, to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation; and

WHEREAS, The campuses of the CSU are members of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and are accredited by this organization; and

WHEREAS, WASC's Standard 1.A states that: "...a college or university is not a political institution; it is not a religion or a church."; and

WHEREAS, WASC's Standard 1.A further states that: "Those within an educational institution have as a first concern, knowledge, evidence, and truth. This concern should not be undermined by particular judgments of institution benefactors, of public or social pressure groups, or of religious or political groups."; and

WHEREAS, WASC has published a Draft Policy Statement on Diversity on August 30, 1992; and

WHEREAS, WASC's Draft Policy Statement on Diversity allows institutions to discriminate based on sexual orientation by stating (page 7) that: "The Standards make no mention of sexual orientation. Institutions accredited by this Commission follow varying policies, based upon institutional mission and religious conviction, with respect to the admission and employment of persons of different sexual orientations."; and

(over)

- WHEREAS, WASC's Standards 1.B.3 and 1.B.6 state that institutions must make positive efforts to foster diversity, and must select students, faculty, and administration according to nondiscrimination policies; and
- WHEREAS, WASC's Draft Policy Statement on Diversity excludes sexual orientation consideration from its nondiscrimination standards; therefore be it
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University strongly urge the WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities to eliminate statements in its Draft Statement on Diversity (August 30, 1992, page 7) that by implication condone and support discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation ("The Standards make no mention of sexual orientation. Institutions accredited by this Commission follow varying policies, based upon institutional mission and religious conviction, with respect to the admission and employment of persons of different sexual orientations."); and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU urge the Chancellor, the campus senates, and the presidents to join it in expressing the necessity of eliminating discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in higher education; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU strongly urge the WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities to designate in its Draft Policy Statement on Diversity (August 30, 1992) discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation as unacceptable within the institutions it accredits; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU request the campus senates to urge their presidents to use the moral force of their offices to persuade the WASC Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation; and be it further
- RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate CSU urge the Chancellor to use the moral force of his office to persuade the WASC Accrediting commission for Senior Colleges and Universities to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The word "diversity" has been used frequently in discussions of higher education policy in the last 70 years. It has been used to refer to the great variety of American institutions of higher education--their varying missions, pedagogies and constituencies. It also has been used to refer to the enrollment of students from various regions of the United States and nations of the world. Beginning in the decade of the 1960s, diversity was used to describe students from historically underrepresented ethnic groups, most of whom were the first in their families to attend college. It was only a very short time until diversity was applied not only to the student body of an institution, but also to the faculty, administration and board of trustees. The meaning of diversity, however, was still limited to questions of physical representation within an institution.

THE SEVERAL DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY

Excerpts from pages 5, 6, 7 of the above-referenced report, 8/30/92

DRAFT COMMISSION POLICY STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

FIRST DRAFT: December 16, 1991
SECOND DRAFT: August 30, 1992

ACCREDITING
COMMISSION FOR
SENIOR COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

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MSC

WESTERN
ASSOCIATION OF
SCHOOLS AND
COLLEGES

As is the case with many other important concepts (e.g., innovation, quality, fairness), diversity is difficult, if not impossible, to define in words that fully satisfy. However, the Commission finds it useful to think of diversity in higher education today as having three vital and related dimensions: 1) representation; 2) the nature of campus community; and 3) the impact of group membership on both individual development and the content and organization of academic scholarship and study.

1. **Representation.** First, diversity speaks to representation of members of different groups in the various constituencies of a college and university--its student body, faculty, staff,

governing board and alumni. The focus on representation is closely linked to the challenge of achieving educational equity. This is a challenge accepted by public institutions in our region and by many private institutions: to improve the rates of matriculation and graduation for persons from those groups that have been historically underrepresented in colleges and universities.

The question of which groups are to be considered when the diversity of an institution is assessed has no universal answer. Rather, it is a function of the group distinctions that have achieved significance in society as a whole and in each individual institution. Membership in particular groups becomes salient when those identified with that group, particularly on campus, perceive themselves as being excluded from full, fair and respected participation in the life of the institution.

The Standards indicate those groups that the Commission and institutional representatives had in mind when drafting the new provisions. These included a diversity of groups in terms of ethnicity,* socio-economic class, gender, age, religious belief and disability. Subsequently, the legal necessity of accommodating disabled students was further established by the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. (Standard 1 recognizes the right of religious institutions to select students and faculty on grounds of religious conviction. Similarly, the

* In speaking of ethnicity, the Commission follows the dictionary definition of "ethnic" as "characteristic of a religious, racial, national, or cultural group."

provisions regarding identifying and meeting the learning needs of women do not bar institutions from choosing to admit students of only one gender.) The Standards make no mention of sexual orientation. Institutions accredited by this Commission follow varying policies, based upon institutional mission and religious conviction, with respect to the admission and employment of persons of different sexual orientations. However, all institutions are obligated to adhere to the Commission Standard 1.B on respect for persons, including policies against harassment, and to provide due process procedures to resolve individual grievances. Within the spirit of the Standards, each institution should provide an affirming and supportive environment to all persons within its community.



Office of the President

November 23, 1992

Michael F. Goodman, Chair
Academic Senate
Humboldt State University
Arcata, CA 95521

Dear Chair Goodman:

This will serve to inform you that I have forwarded and commended to Sister Magdalen Coughlin, Chair of the WASC Commission Committee on Diversity, a copy of the Academic Senate resolution on the WASC Policy Statement on Diversity (#05-92/93-EX).

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alistair W. McCrone".

Alistair W. McCrone
President
AWM:js