

## *Oakton Community College—Living Our Commitment to Diversity*

Oakton Community College has a clear, broad, and deep commitment to diversity. The commitment is founded on the belief that a diverse population of employees will most effectively serve an increasingly diverse district reflected in the student population at the College. The goals that we have set for ourselves most recently grew out of the process of self-study and the development of the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan: CHANGE MATTERS. We observe already the results of the changes effected and in two areas have recently received state and national recognition for our efforts.

### **Recent Recognition**

Within the last two weeks, Oakton's **Pan African Connection** was awarded the Illinois Community College Administrators Innovation Award for its exemplary work that benefits both students and the entire college community. One of the exemplary practices of this group that gathers members of the African Diaspora on campus was the **Pan African Summit**. The Summit, convened every other year, welcomes colleagues from around the state to come together at Oakton and to reflect on challenges and create strategies that will enable colleges not only to recruit but also to retain employees of color.

Focused on the central importance of student success and committed specifically to supporting students from under-represented to overcome the barriers to success, the College reorganized the student affairs area to include both a Director of Student Success and an Associate Vice President for Student Affairs whose is also the leader of the Office of Access, Equity, and Diversity. The College's responsiveness and leadership in diversity led most recently to an award by the **Historically Black Colleges and Universities CONNECT.com publication. Ranking #11 of 50 employers nationwide, Oakton Community College was recognized for its demonstrated "strength in HBCU student and alumni recruitment, brand penetration in the HBCU community, and relationship with HBCU organizations."**

### **Some Relevant History**

The recently recognized efforts were rooted and grounded in earlier efforts at the College. As far back as the 1990's, there was recognition in the college community that the district we serve and the students we enroll were changing and becoming more diverse. In response to this change, a group of faculty, staff, and administrators initiated the ACCORD Group. Operating less formally than a committee, members of ACCORD (A Community College of Respect for Diversity) raised our collective consciousness about the enriching possibilities of diversity through a wide variety of activities and programs over a period of nearly 10 years. A tangible reminder of their work is visible to all on Student Street—a very large poster designed by a student—celebrating the value of difference and emphasizing our common humanity.

The ACCORD Group morphed into a collective of faculty, staff, and administrators who called themselves Next Step. Their focus was on issues related to racism. At the same time, the Board indicated its interest in and support of the commitment of administrators to work intentionally to attract, recruit, and retain employees from under-represented groups. The Board members spoke often at their public meetings to articulate their commitment to diversity. Their expectations clearly required that the hiring processes for administrators, faculty, and staff were structured to ensure inclusivity and result over time in increasing diversity in the employee groups. We all shared the belief that the presence and visibility of faculty, staff, and administrators from under-represented groups would influence the College's ability to attract, retain, and support the success of students from those same groups.

As the College moved into self-study for reaccreditation (granted for another 10 years in 2007) and the development of its new strategic plan for 2008-2012—CHANGE MATTERS, the importance of the College's commitment to diversity expressed itself in major goals and objectives. Representative programs/activities undertaken by the administration with enthusiastic support of the Board include a full-day workshop entitled "Understanding Institutional Privilege and Building Culturally Competent Leadership." The workshop has led to further discussions of privilege on campus, particularly as privilege relates to race and color.

A committee of selected individuals from across the College (the Next Step Committee) has taken on a responsibility for development and sponsorship of programs that will broaden cultural competency across the College in an effort to mitigate and eliminate vestiges of institutional privilege at Oakton and therefore lead to true equal opportunity. Programs are presented to self-selected individuals training them on anti-racism. Included in the funding for the Next Step Committee was an opportunity for staff, faculty and administrators to participate in programs whose aim is to identify the nature, cause and presence of institutional racism.

The College implemented a strategic initiative as part of its CHANGE MATTERS plan seeking to make Oakton an anti-bias College. Part of that initiative funds anti-bias training for 80 percent of full and part time faculty, staff, administrators and student leaders by 2012. A team has been appointed to complete a College-wide analysis of policies and practices to ensure that anything that creates or contributes to institutional racism is eliminated.

The scope of responsibility of the Director of Personnel was expanded. In his role as Associate Vice President for Human Resources, reporting to the President, he was charged explicitly with the responsibility for leadership in the hiring processes across the College. He conducted training for members of search committees and other College personnel with responsibilities for hiring. He provided instruction on the screening of resumes and application materials with a culturally competent methodology. It is his responsibility to certify the hiring pools prior to scheduling first-round interviews. He

has also effectively re-designed the process of advertising open positions—and has organized and participated in Diversity Fairs.

Beyond the activities, programs, and awards and by far more important are the results. Oakton Community College has successfully moved to reflect the diversity of the district it serves. The profile of its employees as well as its students has changed. According to the demographics of District 535 as reflected in the 2000 Census reports, our employee profile reflects (usually exceeds) the distributions of the diverse population groups in our district.

**District Demographics**

District population	452,096
Male:	215,353 (47.6%)
Female:	236,743 (52.4%)

Non-adjusted Racial Demographics		Adjusted Racial Demographics	
White:	356,523 (78.9%)	White:	344,158 (76.1%)
Black:	23,135 (5.1%)	Black:	22,968 (5.1%)
Native American:	649 (0.1%)	Native American:	634 0.1%
Asian:	53,245 11.8%	Asian:	52,199 (11.5%)
Hawaiian/Pac. Isl.:	142 (0.0%)	Hawaiian/Pac. Isl.:	140 (0.0%)
Other:	9,333 (2.1%)	Other:	(see *)
Two or more races:	9,469 2.1%	Two or more races:	(see *)
Hispanic:	26,997(inc. above)	Hispanic:	26,997 (6.0%)

The total non-Caucasian population of the district is 95,573; 21.1% of the District’s population.

\*Demographics were adjusted in two ways: to fold the “other” and “two or more races” into categories we kept statistics on (at the same ratio as in the general population), and to segregate Hispanics from other racial categories (at the same ratio as in the general population) to avoid double counting as both Hispanic and another racial category.

## College Employee Demographics

<u>Position Category</u>	<u>Percent of Workforce</u>		<u>Year Ending</u>			
	<u>6/30/09</u>	<u>6/30/08</u>	<u>6/30/07</u>	<u>6/30/06</u>	<u>6/30/05</u>	<u>6/30/04</u>
Administrators						
Female	61.3%	59.4%	54.8%	54.8%	61.3%	60.0%
Non-Caucasian	16.1%	15.6%	12.9%	12.9%	12.9%	3.3%
Full-Time Faculty						
Female	60.8%	60.4%^	59.7%	59.3%	60.1%	59.7%
Non-Caucasian	14.7%	14.5%	13.0%	12.7%	11.8%	11.0%
Part-Time Faculty						
Female	49.6%	51.8%	49.2%	48.0%	46.9%	47.6%
Non-Caucasian	16.0%	16.1%	16.6%	13.6%	12.3%	9.6%
Classified Staff						
Female	64.3%*	60.7%*	62.1%*	63.0%	64.5%	64.4%
Non-Caucasian	27.6%*	25.7%*	25.3%*	22.3%	21.0%	21.8%

### CLASSIFIED STAFF EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS AND GROUPINGS:

<u>Position Category</u>	<u>6/30/09</u>	<u>6/30/08</u>	<u>6/30/07</u>	<u>6/30/06</u>	<u>6/30/05</u>	<u>6/30/04</u>
Professional and Non-Faculty						
Female	74.7%	73.9%	76.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-Caucasian	19.8%	20.7%	15.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Clerical and Secretarial						
Female	88.8%	78.2%	83.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-Caucasian	21.0%	22.4%	20.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Technical and Paraprofessional						
Female	60.0%	49.3%	55.9%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-Caucasian	32.3%	27.4%	29.4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Skilled Trades						
Female	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-Caucasian	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Service and Maintenance						
Female	11.6%	14.0%	14.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Non-Caucasian	49.3%	45.6%	46.5%	n/a	n/a	n/a

^ This figure reflects a corrected gender demographic.

\* Beginning with the 2007-2008 Affirmative Action Program year, underrepresentation is analyzed by the 5 employee classifications and groups that comprised "classified staff."

## Student Demographics

As the employee profile changed, so also did the profile of students reported in the race/ethnicity statistics from the last five IPEDS-based data reports from ICCB.

	Fall 05	Fall 09	Pct Change in Race/Ethnic Group Fall 2005 to Fall 2009
White non-Hispanic	7,839	6,323	-19%
Black non-Hispanic	524	2,064	294%
Hispanic	813	1,153	42%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1,844	693	-62%
American Indian or Alaska Native	20	35	75%
Race/ethnicity Unknown *	1	959	95800%
Non-resident alien *	1	860	85900%
IPEDS Total	11,040	12,087	9%

\* In Fall 2005 the individuals who did not provide race/ethnicity information on their applications and non-resident aliens were assigned to the White non-Hispanic category.

## Conclusion

It is evident that Oakton's work in the vineyard of diversity has begun to bear fruit. It is work that requires collaboration and persistence to achieve results. It is impossible to overstate the importance of Board support for this work, support which serves best when the Board articulates its expectations and encourages the efforts of the College community. It is work that takes a village and it is work that makes that village a better place for students and employees to labor and to learn.