DIVISIONAL APPROACH / PHILOSOPHY REGARDING DIVERSITY

The Budget and Finance division includes four major functional units: Budget and Resource Planning (BRP); Business Affairs (BAO); Purchasing and Contracting Services (PCS); and Printing and Mailing Services. These four units serve the teaching, research, and public service missions of the university by:

- Providing effective, proactive, and responsive financial and business services;
- Promoting progressive and sustainable business practices; and
- Ensuring appropriate stewardship of the university’s resources.

In fulfilling our mission, we interact with virtually every major university stakeholder.

The 2007 Budget and Finance Strategic Diversity Action Plan included a value statement that caused us to examine our division internally and externally. We aspired to “promoting an environment where different points of view and the ability to question are encouraged, valued and supported” and to “an organizational culture that is rich, dynamic, and open to change.” We also sought to integrate strategic actions in support of diversity as part of our overall planning and not to treat it as a “program” or incremental activity. Five years later, we reaffirm these values as we note that we have made progress toward our goals and also acknowledge that much work remains and will in fact never be “complete.”

DIVERSITY PLAN CONTENT AREAS

Developing a Culturally Responsive Community and Developing and Strengthening Community Linkages

Strengths

Purchasing and Contracting Services has led and coordinated three Reverse Vendor Fairs hosted by the UO in the past three years. This event focuses generally on enhancing and building relationships between the UO, other public agencies, and the vendor community and has been very well attended and received. A primary focus of the Fair is outreach to Minority, Women, and Emerging Small Business (MWESB) vendors, and the UO has facilitated registration of and participation by MWESB owners. PCS and BAO also partnered in development of a Substitute W-9 Form that allows vendors to self-identify as MWESB. This enhances UO’s ability to better understand participation by MWESB vendors in the university’s business. In addition to hosting our own event, we have also been active in other Oregon vendor fairs as part of our continued focus on building relationships with MWESB vendors and with businesses generally. An added benefit has been improved communication and understanding among major university departments that contract work to outside vendors. The division has actively participated in campus discussions and training opportunities related to diversity, including the UO Diversity Plan in Action luncheons.

Weaknesses

While the Reverse Vendor Fair has been enthusiastically received by the vendor community generally and by MWESB vendors, campus departments have been slower to embrace the Fair with the same
spirit. Substantial internal marketing efforts have been needed and engaged in to draw campus departments to the Fair, and we would like to see greater UO participation in future events. It is potentially problematic to express to vendors that MWESB outreach is an important university endeavor if it is not understood and embraced as such across the university community.

Improving Campus Climate

Strengths
The UO was recently nominated and selected by the Oregon Rehabilitation Association (ORA) Board of Directors to receive its 2011 Employer of the Year award. This award is given annually to an employer who demonstrates a commitment to job opportunities for people with disabilities. Collaborative efforts by PCS, Human Resources, the Knight Library, Campus Operations, and University Housing were key to this university recognition. The UO was recognized for its utilization of Qualified Rehabilitation Facilities for various services. In addition, all Budget and Finance departments worked with Disability Services when revamping departmental websites to ensure that the sites were accessible.

Weaknesses
As mentioned previously, Budget and Finance departments have a great deal of contact with a wide variety of constituencies. As such, our enhanced understanding of the campus climate and how we can be part of an inclusive and positive environment is key to our own success – and to the university’s. Our plan anticipated a divisional diversity planning committee that would be engaged in helping us do this, but we have not yet constructed such a group in a formal manner. We have made great strides in improving overall communication within the division and in promoting open dialogue so that concerns and thoughts may be aired, but a next step would be to formalize a diversity advisory committee so that we spend dedicated time focusing on topics around inclusiveness.

Building Critical Mass

Strengths
Budget and Finance departments implemented a number of systematic initiatives aimed at promoting diversity in our own workforce and at presenting a workplace culture that values diversity. These included diversity statements in every hiring announcement, and an additional statement in supervisory position announcements. We sought out and utilized diversity-oriented recruitment avenues for position announcements. The division also has a policy to conduct exit interviews anytime an employee leaves the organization so that we can better understand the work environment and look for opportunities to improve upon it.

Weaknesses
To date, our efforts have focused more heavily on employee recruitment. A next step forward will be to explore potential barriers to employee development and career growth. This was a goal in our SAP, but one that we have not to date addressed in a systematic way.

Developing and Reinforcing Diversity Infrastructure

Strengths
Budget and Finance departments have been active and enthusiastic partners in a number of key university initiatives promoting diversity. In addition to the value apparent in the initiatives themselves,
these provide important opportunities for us to engage in dialogue with and better understand our colleagues.

**Weaknesses**

Going forward, we need to be more intentional about actively discussing with our employees our diversity goals and our progress toward those goals. Our efforts have been focused on large projects, and those projects are important and beneficial. As we go forward, we will need to strike a better balance between this project focus and having more generalized and deeper conversations around diversity topics.