



## Diversity at Ferris State University

### MCO Diversity Review

Fall, 2012

#### **I. List and describe the major activities that your division or college is doing related to diversity and inclusion.**

MCO advertises for faculty positions in the optometric professional print and on-line resources it has historically used. In addition, flyers and word-of-mouth are used at the annual Academy of Optometry meeting to inform potential applicants and generate interest in the position. MCO has in recent history been successful at generating diverse interest through use of these sources. MCO has established relationships with community health clinics in Baldwin and Grand Rapids that enables our students to work with patients from diverse backgrounds. The MCO faculty routinely discusses with our students how certain conditions tend to be more prevalent in patients of certain backgrounds so that our graduates are well prepared to treat patients with diverse backgrounds.

#### **II. Identify diversity successes.**

Two of the last nine faculty hires have been racial minorities and six of the last eight faculty hires have been females. It is anticipated that the applicant pool for future faculty positions will contain a minority population consistent with if not better than the profession as a whole. MCO coordinated an EYEDOC summer educational program that targeted exceptional high school students of under-represented minority students. This program exposed this targeted population to the field of optometry and specifically to MCO in hopes of future recruitment into the program. Unfortunately, this program ran for only one summer due to lack of human resources.

#### **III. Identify diversity challenges. Offer solutions.**

There is a very small pool of potential optometry faculty members across the country that would add to the diversity at MCO other than females. Optometry as a profession has a very small percentage of racial and ethnic minority practitioners.

As for students, we have little or no resources to target the recruitment of minority students that qualify for our program. The general demographics of our location and the size of Big Rapids is also a challenge. Along with this, some of our minority applicants are hesitant about coming to MCO/FSU/Big Rapids due to a perceived lack of cultural diversity. Strategies to address these challenges are listed in the next section.

**IV. Offer a major diversity initiative to be led by your division or college.**

1. Hire and utilize a dedicated student recruitment/ development officer to develop and implement strategies to attract and admit under-represented minority students.
2. Utilize dedicated student recruitment/ development officer to repeat the EYEDOC program targeting exceptional high school students of under-represented minority students.
3. Work with the Diversity and Inclusion Office at FSU to develop scholarships for under-represented minority students.
4. Increase interaction with the National Optometric Association (NOA).  
Mission Statement of the NOA:  
"Advancing the Visual Health of Minority Populations"