

Diversity Statement

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My career has been filled with working with a wide variety of groups and individuals. This paper will share my experiences serving diverse populations, and my efforts to expand the diversity of the institutions where I serve.

In my current position as Director of a 2-plus-2 campus based on the campus of Moberly Area Community College, expanding the diversity of our student population has been a very high priority for this office. When I arrived in Moberly our student population was entirely made up of white adult transfer students. After a five year effort we now have a good representation of African Americans, Latin Americans, first generation students, traditional four-year students, and non-traditional adults. I am particularly pleased that we have been able to develop a solid group of retirees returning to school. This is one of my highest personal priorities as the Boomer generation transitions out of the workforce into new and unexplored areas of community service. This effort was the result of the expansion of online courses and degrees into the rural areas of Northern Missouri, focused recruitment, and reaching out to meet the individual needs of widely diverse student populations. Training and information provided by the National Academic Advisors Association (NACADA) and an emphasis on prospect tracking and enrollment management played a key role in this effort.

As a faculty of music and humanities at Lincoln University of Missouri I was keenly aware of issues of diversity. Lincoln is the HBCU of Missouri. As a faculty member most of my students were African Americans from Kansas City or St. Louis mixed with students from very small towns or rural areas of the state. This classroom diversity required the adoption of a variety of teaching methods suited to their differing levels of preparation and skill sets. Also, while at Lincoln I served on the Board of the Heritage Group which sponsored bilingual workshops and festivals for local immigrant populations. I also worked closely with the university radio station KJLU in the promotion of jazz and made many presentations to local school groups on the history of jazz.

In my final year at Lincoln University I served as Coordinator of Humanities. In that post I endeavored to develop a teaching team that was representative of the population demographics of the University. My first act as coordinator was to hire two new faculty members: an African American for English and a woman for the visual arts. Further, I integrated my tutoring team to better meet the writing and study assistance needs of our students.

At the University of Central Arkansas our department had an aggressive Asian recruitment effort in place. At UCA I was engaged in teaching a significant number of students from India, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Japan. I hired a Malaysian work study student for the Music Computer Lab who turned out to be an excellent worker and quick study in technology.

As a professional musician I have worked with individuals of many races and creeds. I have performed in a wide range of musical organizations including jazz, funk, soul, R&B, country, Latin, horn bands, orchestra, opera and musical theater. Many of my most successful gigs have been with mixed race bands that have included African, Latin, and Asian Americans. I have also served as a musician in a wide variety of religions settings ranging from very conservative evangelical groups, churches who practice mainstream theologies, to centers focused on new age liberalism.

For me the bottom line is that “Diversity” is as important a concept to the Modern Renaissance as “Humanism” was to the European Renaissance (circa 1450 – 1600). Developing strong relationships with others of different cultural, ethnic, and religions backgrounds is at the very core of the values that our world must now consider as a cross-cultural truth. This highly positive global development will, in my view, be at the heart of significant changes perpetuated by the global renaissance that our world is now experiencing. In fact, I believe so deeply in this concept it is one of the primary themes of the musical that I am currently composing.