



A Statement of Philosophy on Diversity

Preamble

Valparaiso University's commitment to diversity derives from its mission: Valparaiso University, a community of learning dedicated to excellence and grounded in the Lutheran tradition of scholarship, freedom, and faith, prepares students to lead and serve in both church and society.

Diversity is integral to the University's commitment to provide a compelling education. The key components of this commitment include an unwavering dedication to *pursue excellence in education*; create a *just campus community*; and *prepare students to lead and serve in a global society*.

Excellence in education requires diversity so as to foster

- the capacity to see human experience from the perspective of others who encounter and interpret the world in significantly different ways;
- the open exchange of different beliefs, experiences, and values so that individuals acquire the necessary critical skills that will serve them throughout their lives; and
- the broadening and deepening of the educational experience and the scholarly environment, so that students and faculty have the resources to participate in an increasingly complex and pluralistic world.

A just campus community requires diversity so that its members learn to be fully attentive to the needs of those who challenge their comfort zones. In this way, the University provides the model and the resources for future leaders who will engage with the larger world in creating other just communities.

In order to *prepare students to lead and serve in a global society*, the University must embrace diversity so that its members learn how the world is knit together by threads of mutual dependence and how innovation and solving of complex problems require effective use of diverse perspectives and diverse talents.

Definition

Diversity is defined broadly as those differences in humankind that stem from diverse backgrounds, ideas, values, and physical and mental characteristics. The definitions of diversity continue to evolve. For the present institutional context, diversity includes, but is not limited to, age, ethnicity, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disabilities, socio-economic status, and national origin.

We believe that to become a truly welcoming and inclusive community, the University should strive to actively engage with differences, with full recognition of the mutual interdependence of all humanity.

We also affirm a very strong ongoing commitment to those sections of our society that have suffered from historic discrimination and underrepresentation in institutions of higher education and continue to be disadvantaged such as US minorities like African-Americans, Native-Americans and Hispanics, to name a few prominent examples.

The Statement has been adopted by the Diversity Concerns Committee, University Council, Faculty Senate, Student Senate and the Salaried Concerns Committee.