

Southern Oregon University Statement on Diversity

The strength of the curricular and co-curricular experiences are necessarily dependent upon a campus community rich with diversity of ethnicity, race, gender and gender identity, nationality, age, language, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, disability, and political affiliation. Without it, the reciprocity of the educational process is diminished.

This recognition—and appreciation—of difference requires all members of this academic community to seek knowledge and understanding through their own unique lenses as well as to embrace other perspectives and needs as they address the questions and issues put before them.

Southern Oregon University is committed to diversity. Specifically, SOU:

- 1. Is a welcoming community that is committed to inclusive excellence and celebration of difference;***
- 2. Pays close attention to the cultural differences learners bring to the educational experience which enhance the learning enterprise;***
- 3. Is focused on student intellectual and social development through the learning outcomes of knowledge, skills, responsibilities, and integrative abilities that a twenty-first century college graduate must achieve;***
- 4. Is committed to an environment that challenges each student to achieve academically and contribute to learning and knowledge development in partnership with members of the campus and the larger community.***

These commitments are clearly reflected throughout the University Studies curriculum, which requires students to achieve competencies in communication, critical thinking, information literacy, citizenship, social responsibility, diversity, and global awareness, in addition to coursework across the sciences, humanities, and social sciences. They are also reflected in the curricular and co-curricular focus on community-based learning and civic engagement, which require students to deeply understand and apply theory and skills to community and global issues.

These commitments also acknowledge that both students and the institution itself evolve in thinking, skill, and practice as the experience of difference becomes a source of excellence and an instrument of achievement.

Drafted June, 2011 by the Diversity & Inclusion Oversight Committee with input from twelve representative/constituent campus groups/councils. This statement is derived on work from: Milem, J.F., Chang, M.J., & Antonio, A.L. Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective, a publication of the Association of American Colleges & Universities' "Making Excellence Inclusive: Preparing Student and Campuses for an Era of Greater Expectations" initiative, Washington, DC, 2005.