

What is SUU's Diversity Context?

September 27, 2001

Introduction

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect toward goals of access, learning, and understanding. Achieving these goals may require changes of attitude and behavior. More than a condition, diversity means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing individual differences in accomplishing goals of access, learning and understanding. These differences can be along the dimensions of ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and other ideologies. In higher education, there are also differences of academic preparation and aptitude. Diversity is about the exploration of these differences—and the improvement of academic preparation and aptitude—in a positive and nurturing environment.

As a community of learners, what unites faculty, staff and students at SUU is far more important than what differentiates us. It is within a context of learning opportunities that people develop understanding for each other and for tolerating the rich dimensions of diversity within each individual. Diversity can build mutual respect and an attitude of forbearance with tolerance one for another regardless of the doctrines and philosophies which one may espouse. Disagreement occurs with respect and civility. Tolerance, a hallmark of diversity, expresses acceptance and respect toward the personal differences that are inevitable in the beliefs and conduct of a diverse population. Tolerance requires addressing issues in a noncontentious manner. But tolerance does not require abandoning values or standards on political or public policy choices. Tolerance is a way of reacting to diversity, not a command to insulate it from examination, and not a means of contradicting or abandoning value positions.

Development of student aptitudes, understanding of academic disciplines, and application of writing, mathematics, study skills and career planning—all are dimensions of diversity in an academic institution. Establishing the context of academic diversity may help shape programmatic responses and other efforts to assist student success.

Diversity Context

According to standards of the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, in both its operations and its accountability to external stake holders, the University is expected to have policies and practices consistent with the mission related to equity of treatment, nondiscrimination, affirmative action, and other means of enhancing access to education and to the building of a diverse educational community. Are such policies in place and current? How does the institution demonstrate building a diverse educational community in its service region? What are the dimensions of ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, physical abilities,

religious beliefs, political beliefs, sexual orientation, academic preparation, and other ideologies in SUU's service area? What information can be provided on students and faculty?

Ethnicity

Appendix A, derived from the 2000 federal census, summarizes county population by race in Utah with a subtotal for 14 northern counties and 15 southern counties. Over 70% of SUU's enrollment is drawn from the 15 southern counties of Utah. The southern area of the state is the designated service area for SUU according to policies of the Utah State Board of Regents.

Table 1, Percent of Ethnicity Population and SUU Student Enrollments and Faculty, Fall 2001, summarizes the ethnicity "baseline" of the state, service area, and SUU.

Table 1
Percent of Ethnicity Population and SUU Student Enrollments and Faculty

	Total	White	Black/ African American	American Indian & Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	Other Race	Hispanic
Utah	107%*	89.0%	1.0%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	4.0%	9.0%
Southern Utah Counties	103%*	91.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	5.0%
SUU students (Utah residents, southern counties)	100.1%	92.5%	0.5%	1.0%	0.7%	0.4%	1.6%	1.7%
SUU faculty	100.0%	96.6%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%

*Total will be greater than 100% because census respondents could identify more than one race.

Source: Third-week student information for Fall 2001, 2000 federal census data compiled by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, IPEDS 2000 report.

Appendix B, Ethnicity Analysis of Applicants for Admission, Fall 1999 to Fall 2001, begins a pattern of data analysis and fall-to-fall comparability for applicants to SUU. These data help in the understanding of ethnicity in admissions and enrollment management.

Generally, one would expect SUU resident student enrollments and the faculty composition to mirror the general population of Utah's southern counties, SUU's service region. This may be an appropriate objective for diversity of student access to education at SUU. Enrollment management would need to include more Hispanic

and American Indian students, should the University adopt such an objective. Similarly, faculty recruitment approaches would need to change to better mirror the demographics of southern Utah.

Gender

Gender information is collected in census, ACT and student databases. Table 2, Percentage of Utah Population by Gender and SUU Student Enrollments and Faculty, summarizes the percentage distributions in the latest databases.

Table 2
Percentage of Utah Population by Gender and SUU Student Enrollments and Faculty

	Total	Male	Female
Utah	100.0%	49.7%	50.3%
Southern Utah Counties	100.0%	49.5%	50.5%
SUU enrollments (Utah residents, southern counties)	100.0%	44.5%	55.5%
SUU faculty	100.0%	70.0%	30.0%

Sources: SUU Third-week Reports, Statistical Abstract of Utah, 1996.

Generally, one would expect SUU resident student enrollments to mirror the general population of Utah’s southern counties, SUU’s service region. This may be an appropriate objective for diversity of student access to education at SUU. Similarly, the recruiting and retention of faculty, according to regional and state distributions, would require more women to be added to faculty ranks.

Age

In Fall semester 2001, enrolled students whose age ranged from 16 to 70. Table 3, Percentage of Age Distribution of Utah Population and Fall 2001 SUU Student Enrollments and Faculty, summarizes the percentage of age distribution for the State of Utah, 15 southern counties of SUU’s service area, and SUU students and faculty. Groupings parallel those of the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget.

It would be a national anomaly for SUU’s student enrollment and faculty to reflect age distributions of the service area and of the state. As a traditional university campus, SUU’s students are in the 18-34 segment of the population, with some out-reach programs attracting non-traditional students in the 35-plus age group.

Table 3
Percentage of Age Distribution of Utah Population and Fall 2001 SUU Student Enrollments and Faculty

Age	<u>Total</u>	<u>0-.4</u>	5-14	15-19	20-24	25-44	45-64	65 & Over
Utah	100.0%	9.8%	21.3%	8.8%	8.0%	29.0%	14.3%	8.7%
Southern Utah Counties	100.0%	9.2%	24.8%	9.4%	5.4%	23.7%	15.0%	12.5%
SUU students (Utah residents, southern counties)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	31.1%	46.8%	18.4%	3.6%	0.0%
SUU faculty	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.3%	69.3%	2.4%

Rows may not add due to rounding.

Sources: 1990 Federal Census, Statistical Abstract of Utah, 1996.

Using the latest data from the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget and looking at the 18-34 year old cohort of Utah population, significant increases are projected for Utah higher education institutions. In southern Utah counties, an increase of 74.6% is anticipated as the 18-34 year old cohort grows from 40,364 in 1990 to a projected 70,487 in 2010. In northern Utah counties, an increase of 27.8% is anticipated, from 436,974 in 1990 to 558,260 in 2010. Significantly, the increase of the 18-34 cohort in real numbers in northern Utah counties is four times that projected for southern Utah counties, resulting in a marketing challenge for the University.

Socio-Economic Status

For more than two decades, economic data have validated differences between northern and southern Utah counties using per capita income as the primary indicator. Based on the latest income data, in 1999 per capita income in the 14 northern Utah counties was 22% percent higher than in the 15 southern Utah counties. Average per capita income was \$21,731 in northern Utah and \$17,776 in southern Utah. This continues a economic pattern that requires students from SUU’s service area to secure more financial aid and other support in order to enroll at SUU and progress toward graduation.

Other indicators of diversity of socio-economic status are the latest ACT data on enrolled freshmen, although this indicator includes enrolled freshmen regardless of geographic location. Table 4, Estimated Total Family Income Before Taxes, is derived from ACT data reported annually as part of a class profile.

Table 4
 Estimated Total Family Income Before Taxes,
 ACT Class Profile Report, 2000-2001

Range	SUU Responses		National Responses Received	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$18,000	20	3.1%	220	3.5%
\$18,000 to \$24,000	28	4.4%	295	4.7%
\$24,000 to \$30,000	41	6.4%	352	5.6%
\$30,000 to \$36,000	59	9.2%	427	6.8%
\$36,000 to \$42,000	58	9.0%	543	8.7%
\$42,000 to \$50,000	74	11.5%	702	11.3%
\$50,000 to \$60,000	74	11.5%	857	13.7%
\$60,000 to \$80,000	86	13.4%	876	14.0%
\$80,000 to \$100,000	45	7.0%	410	6.6%
More than \$100,000	34	5.3%	422	6.8%
No response	134	20.9%	1133	18.2%

Physical Abilities

Difficulties with physical and learning disabilities are self-reported, generally based on student need. No statewide population detail provides information on physical abilities. However, in the 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey, administered each year to new freshmen, disability responses both at SUU and at national four-year public, medium-selective, colleges were reported. Table 5, 2000 CIRP Institutional Summary on Disabilities, summarizes the results.

Table 5
2000 CIRP Institutional Summary on Disabilities
Percentage of Respondents

Disability	SUU–828 respondents	National Four-year Schools
Hearing	0.7%	0.6%
Speech	0.1%	0.2%
Orthopedic	0.2%	0.4%
Learning disability	2.2%	2.3%
Health-related	1.6%	1.0%
Partially sighted or blind	2.2%	0.9%
Other	1.2%	0.9%

Source: 2000 CIRP Summary

Anecdotal information from campus support offices may supplement these data. Commentaries from the staff in student support services validate that learning disabilities are the most common physical challenge for some students.

Religious Beliefs

Given its location, history and traditions, SUU student enrollments should expect to have dominant representation from the LDS Church. Survey and anecdotal information collected over the years validate that the dominance occurs and, in fact, is both a marketing attraction of the University and a parental/student expectation. SUU, “a sanctuary,” was a marketing theme intended to communicate values, safety, a sacred place of learning, even a “religious reserve” in the minds of new students and parents. Most students applying to SUU have a strong religious background that is generally recognized among faculty and fellow students. From a business perspective of the market and service area, SUU would be diminished (enrollment, public perception, public opinion, parental support) if the notion of sanctuary–values education, religious faith–were negated.

Table 6, Percentage Religious Denomination Distribution of Utah Population and Fall 2000 SUU Enrollments, summarizes religious belief among declared adherents in the State of Utah, southern Utah counties, and at SUU.

Table 6
 Percentage Religious Denomination Distribution of Utah Population and Fall 2000 SUU Enrollments

Age	Total	Catholic	Jewish	LDS	Protestant	Other
Utah	81.9%*	2.8%	0.06%	75.6%	3.5%	0.03%
Southern Utah Counties	81.4%*	2.2%	0.0%	75.5%	3.7%	0.0%
SUU students (Utah residents, southern counties)	100.0%	1.0%	0.0%	77.2%	1.7%	20.0%

Sources: Fall 2000 Third-week Report.

*Churches and Church Membership in the United States, 1990. These data are from the latest edition.

Percentages do not total 100. Percent is total adherents in the total population.

Political Beliefs

Until 1994, the Utah Tax Commission published a schedule of political party preferences by county based on taxpayers within the counties. This publication has been discontinued. Similar information is not collected on SUU students. Identifying political diversity in the state has been further impeded by the open primary system and the variability of declaring membership in a political party. Taxpayers and voters alike have not been required to declare political affiliations. This tradition was changed in 2000, and beginning with the 2002 election season, declarations will be made and recorded. About the best indicator of statewide political beliefs is polling data.

In January 2001 Valley Research, Inc., a polling and opinion research firm in Salt Lake City, examined political affiliation and reported the findings to the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget. Based on a statewide poll of registered voters, researchers found that approximately 45% considered themselves Republicans, 21% Democrats, 19% Independent and 15% other political affiliations. County detail and SUU student detail on political beliefs cannot be reliably determined.

Responses from SUU’s CIRP 2000 survey of freshmen are described in Table 7 and are compared to those at other four-year institutions:

Table 7

2000 CIRP Institutional Summary of Political Views
Percentage of Respondents

How would you characterize your political views	SUU-800 Respondents	National Four-year Institutions
Far left	2.5%	2.5%
Liberal	12.5%	21.1%
Middle-of-the-road	53.4%	59.8%
Conservative	30.5%	15.6%
Far right	1.1%	1.1%

Sexual Orientation

Reliable data on sexual orientation as a dimension of the population of Utah and its counties and of SUU enrollments is not collected. An undetermined number of people in Utah’s population and at SUU have a sexual orientation different from others, but this study is without the information.

Academic Preparation

Numbers of unduplicated students participating in remedial, tutorial, and student development programs provide details on levels of support for students in one or more disciplines or skills, such as mathematics or writing. But the broadest indicators of difference in academic preparation include ACT scores and grade point averages.

Table 8, ACT Composite Score Frequency Distribution, compares SUU’s class profile for Fall 2000 semester to the national ACT responses. SUU’s average ACT composite score was 21.0; the national average was 21.6. The array of distribution of scores follows:

Table 8

ACT Composite Score Frequency Distribution,
ACT Class Profile Report, 2000-2001

Score Value	SUU Responses		National Responses Received	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
36	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
35	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
34	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
33	2	0.3%	15	0.2%
32	4	0.6%	27	0.4%
31	7	1.1%	46	0.7%
30	8	1.2%	88	1.4%
29	14	2.1%	101	1.6%
28	22	3.4%	152	2.4%
27	22	3.4%	207	3.3%
26	32	4.9%	307	4.9%
25	43	6.6%	343	5.5%
24	52	8.0%	424	6.8%
23	51	7.8%	457	7.3%
22	69	10.6%	502	8.0%
21	56	8.6%	543	8.7%
20	20	3.1%	551	8.8%
19	60	9.2%	586	9.4%
18	56	8.6%	548	8.8%
17	39	6.0%	436	7.0%
16	30	4.6%	352	5.6%
15	20	3.1%	249	4.0%
14	10	1.5%	157	2.5%
13	3	0.5%	80	1.3%

12	3	0.5%	43	0.7%
11	1	0.2%	16	0.3%
10	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
9	0	0.0%	1	0.0%

Among enrolled students, the ACT composite score quartile values were: 25th percentile: 17.9; median: 21.5; and 75th percentile: 24.3.

The average grade-point average (GPA) of entering freshmen has essentially been 3.4 for four years. Among freshmen entering Fall semester 2000, GPAs ranged from a low of 1.70 to 4.00. The mean was 3.44.

Policy Review–Faculty and Staff

In 1990 the University adopted a policy on affirmative action. The policy described three objectives for the Affirmative Action Program of the University: (1) to further develop and maintain equal employment opportunity for all personnel; (2) to eliminate all traces of discrimination in employment practices because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, or disability; and (3) to develop a work force which reflects an equitable distribution of minority group members and women at all levels of employment and throughout all departments of the university based upon the availability of minorities and women within the appropriate labor market.

Since 1990, case law on affirmative action has largely affected admissions practices at universities. A review of current case law and institutional practice may be appropriate regarding employment practices, to bring current policy up-to-date as needed. As some universities have re-examined existing policies, affirmative action and equal opportunity have: (1) been made part of a broader, diversity focus, such as at Washington State University and Utah State University, or (2) the term “Affirmative Action” has been dropped in favor of policies on nondiscrimination and equal opportunity, such as at the University of Utah, CSU Stanislaus, and Central Washington University (recent policy revision in 2000).

Policy Review–Admissions

Like nearly every post-secondary institution in the nation, SUU has adopted and published in its official publications a nondiscriminatory statement. On page four of the official catalog, a general policy statement reads:

Southern Utah University is committed to policies of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity, and pursues affirmative action in all programs, activities, and employment with regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, status as a disabled individual, religion, status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. Evidence of practices not consistent with these policies should be reported to the Office of the President of the University, 586-7702.

On page 14 of the official catalog, an admissions policy states:

Southern Utah University will admit applicants without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin or disability.

Admissions policies of nondiscrimination are in place and current, comparable to similar policy statements at other institutions.

Conclusions

1. The University is expected to have policies and practices consistent with the mission related to equity of treatment, nondiscrimination, affirmative action, and other means of enhancing access to education and to the building of a diverse educational community. Are such policies in place and current?

Admissions policies are in place and current. Faculty and staff policies are in place, but may need revision.

2. Does the institution demonstrate building a diverse educational community in its service region? What are the dimensions of ethnicity, gender, age, socio-economic status, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, sexual orientation, academic preparation, and other ideologies in SUU's service area? What information can be provided on students and faculty?

Development of a diverse educational community at SUU occurs passively and with emphasis on individual and programmatic support. For students, there is no marketing or recruiting focused solely on under represented minorities (although admissions applications are not discouraged), but once enrolled, individual tutoring, group activities, and programs of student support services are abundant and generous. Scholarship support for under represented minorities is currently limited, but the capital campaign has targeted scholarships for increased access to higher education. For faculty and staff, there are no overt efforts to develop a work force which reflects an equitable distribution of minority group members and women. Faculty search committees rarely consult resources that might aid in attracting qualified women; recruiting is generally left to public advertisements and the response of interested applicants. Similarly for staff positions, the response of people in the marketplace constitutes the pool of applicants.

The above tables define the University's diversity context by describing the statewide, service area, and campus population from variety of dimensions (e.g., ethnicity, gender, age, etc.). Clearly, the context of diversity at SUU has dominant and homogeneous strands: ethnicity (white), age (traditional college ages, 18-34), socio-economic status (middle/upper middle class), religion (LDS), political beliefs (conservative-moderate), and academic preparation (average to slightly above the national average). The homogeneity of the campus and service area obligate the University to be more proactive than what otherwise might be required in its diversity approach for access, learning, and understanding.

SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY
ETHNICITY ANALYSIS OF APPLICANTS FOR ADMISSION

Appendix A

Percent Change Fall 2000	10.00%	-6.25%	47.83%	-13.98%	91.67%	-4.17%	-8.18%	-4.12%	60.16%
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Fall 2001	Unspecified	American Indian/ Alaskan	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Hawaiian/ Pac. Island	Other	White	Total	Total Non-White Applicants
Graduate	2	1	2	1	2	0	0	85	93	8
Transfer	40	14	6	10	21	8	4	951	1054	103
New Freshmen	74	17	23	18	44	12	17	1793	1998	205
Other Freshmen	23	4	21	3	7	1	1	443	503	60
Other Students	7	8	8	2	6	2	1	442	476	34
Total	146	44	60	34	80	23	23	3714	4124	410

Percent Change Fall 1999	-20.00%	-36.63%	-20.69%	-7.00%	-40.00%	140.00%	-8.69%	-9.26%	-17.42%
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Fall 2000	American Indian/ Alaskan	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Hawaiian/ Pac. Island	Other	White	Total	Total Non-White Applicants
Graduate	0	1	3	1	1	0	98	104	6
Transfer	12	22	9	18	5	6	1005	1077	72
New Freshmen	18	23	5	47	5	14	1972	2084	112
Other Freshmen	4	15	3	14	0	3	414	453	39
Other Students	6	3	3	13	1	1	556	583	27
Total	40	64	23	93	12	24	4045	4301	256

Fall 1999	American Indian/ Alaskan	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Hawaiian/ Pac. Island	Other	White	Total	Total Non-White Applicants
Graduate	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	0
Transfer	15	30	7	15	11	5	952	1035	83
New Freshmen	15	27	13	46	6	3	2144	2254	110
Other Freshmen	3	36	3	23	1	1	410	477	67
Other Students	17	8	6	16	2	1	914	964	50
Total	50	101	29	100	20	10	4430	4740	310

SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY
 ETHNICITY ANALYSIS Appendix B
 27-Sep-01

SUU Fall 2001 Headcount Enrollment

	Am Indian				Hawaiian/ Pac Islander		Non-Resident/ Unknown	Total
	Alaskan	Asian	Black	Hispanic		White		
	63	42	31	103	26	5,635	195	6,095
Percent	1.03%	0.69%	0.51%	1.69%	0.43%	92.45%	3.20%	100.00%

**General Population, 2000 Federal Census:
 Fifteen Southern Utah Counties**

Beaver	51	36	10	236	NA	5,689		6,022
Carbon	178	181	115	3353	NA	17,198		21,025
Emery	53	55	5	355	NA	10,605		11,073
Garfield	77	12	3	61	NA	4,144		4,297
Grand	238	45	28	553	NA	7,368		8,232
Iron	882	199	86	778	NA	27,613		29,558
Juab	123	18	6	147	NA	7,514		7,808
Kane	97	41	11	186	NA	5,828		6,163
Millard	220	155	4	648	NA	11,430		12,457
Piute	10	2	0	27	NA	1,445		1,484
San Juan	7315	54	20	667	NA	5,665		13,721
Sanpete	292	380	76	1314	NA	20,133		22,195
Sevier	384	46	15	525	NA	17,708		18,678
Washington	1231	712	163	2290	NA	81,203		85,599
Wayne	39	2	14	63	NA	2,283		2,401
Subtotal	11,190	1,938	556	11,203		225,826		250,713
Percent	4.46%	0.77%	0.22%	4.47%		90.07%		100.00%

Top Feeder Counties

Iron	882	199	86	778	NA	27,613		29,558
Salt Lake	7,726	31,645	9,863	75,345	NA	801,009		925,588
Washington	1,231	712	163	2,290	NA	81,203		85,599
Utah	2,580	6,953	654	16,269	NA	346,997		373,453
Beaver	51	36	10	236	NA	5,689		6,022
Davis	1,455	5,774	3,591	13,697	NA	228,544		253,061
Garfield	77	12	3	61	NA	4,144		4,297
Millard	220	155	4	648	NA	11,430		12,457
Sevier	384	46	15	525	NA	17,708		18,678
Sanpete	292	380	76	1,314	NA	20,133		22,195
Subtotal	14,898	45,912	14,465	111,163		1,544,470		1,730,908
Percent	0.86%	2.65%	0.84%	6.42%		89.23%		100.00%