

## Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity Climate Study

Since the University of California, Santa Cruz was established in 1965, it has often been described as a place of innovation and inclusiveness. This public image is a major aspect of self-promotion, as well as a prime engine for recruitment and retention at all levels. The Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity [CAAD] of the Academic Senate, with the support of the Office of the Chancellor, has undertaken a comprehensive study to consider the role that diversity plays in this concept of innovation and to further explore how a commitment to excellence through diversity should be sustained and expressed.

Proposition 209 fundamentally changed the State of California's relationship to Affirmative Action almost a decade ago, and the term "diversity" came then to describe our attention to issues of fairness and equity. This study focuses on how best to think diversity as a project of overall enhancement of the university, seeking to tell the story of how the different segments of our community understand and practice diversity through the daily interactions of campus life. It also builds on the work of previous campus reports, especially *Making Diversity Work* (1997), by evaluating the implementation of various recommendations designed to turn the challenge of Proposition 209 into a victory against discrimination and an occasion to expand, rather than reduce, efforts toward greater inclusion.

CAAD has four goals for this study: (1) to allow members of the campus community to engage in a serious conversation about the meaningfulness of the principle of "diversity" and our commitment to it; (2) to help create mechanisms to gather, centralize, and make uniform data collection relevant to assessing the campus' commitment to diversity goals; (3) to document current everyday efforts that support segments of our community and require both greater recognition and more consistent resources; and (4) to expose the campus to a larger, more integrated framework for thinking diversity in this historical moment by describing the interaction between research, climate, and representation.

In preparation for this study, CAAD gathered available data from campus analysts in various sectors and conducted a small number of interviews with individuals and focus groups, as well as considered its experience in campus matters over the recent period. This pre-review led to the development of the two major engines for the study—a series of November campus forums and the January launch of a web-based questionnaire targeting the entire campus population. A final report will be produced in winter 2006. All members of the campus community, including faculty, students, and staff, are invited to attend one of the November forums and are encouraged to complete the survey questionnaire. CAAD also welcomes the submission of further materials—reports, documents, letters—that would be helpful in our assessment of campus success, coordination, and impediments.

CAAD proposes a new level of attention to and coordination of diversity practices in line with recent efforts at the campus and UC-wide levels. The committee also hopes to enliven the dialogue that is necessary to give diversity efforts their meaning. Diversity issues have too often been assumed to cover only the narrow interests of a few at a time when the legal underpinnings of Affirmative Action are highly contested. But diversity's embrace of multiple differences—including race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, as only the most salient—suggests a more fundamental set of cultural interpretations and changes may be required. This study of the climate for diversity will facilitate a campus-wide process that can help to create a more welcoming environment for everyone.