

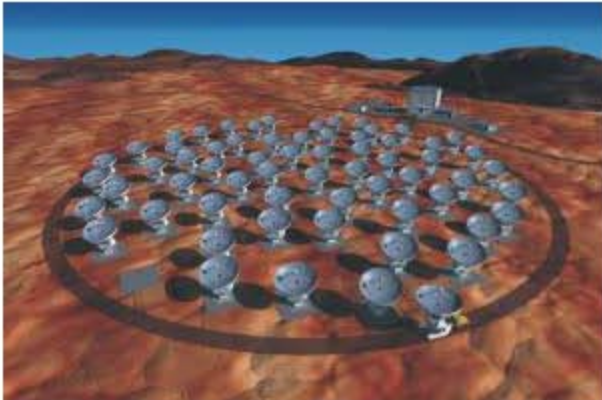


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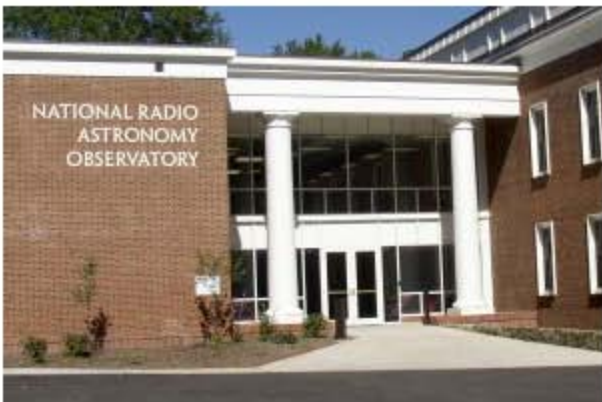
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# Diversity Plan

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# **NRAO Diversity Plan**

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# Introduction

For the past 50 years, NRAO has led the world in the field of radio astronomy. This success is attributable to the ability of the Observatory's people to constantly anticipate and adapt to changes in science and technology. As the Observatory begins its next 50 years, it does so as an International organization with the development of ALMA.

With facilities on two continents, NRAO works with people of different nationalities, cultures, languages and appearances on a daily basis. NRAO leadership has anticipated the need to adapt to this change and has taken action to increase the diversity within the Observatory. With an understanding that diversity must be apparent at all levels of the organization, especially within management, the Observatory Director has led an effort to recruit diverse members for his management team.

To create an environment within the Observatory that easily adapts and grows in diversity, as represented in the world in which its employees work, NRAO has developed this Diversity Plan. The principle focus of this Plan is to create a work environment that incorporates actions and behaviors which support diversity throughout the Observatory.

The success of this plan requires more than steps that may only bring about the appearance of diversity. How well people are treated, paid, coached, developed, promoted and afforded the opportunity to lead are critical to success. This requires the basic understanding that there are many "normal" behaviors that all people learn in their lifetime that must change because it can be offensive to others. Succinctly stated, diversity involves and supports everyone.

Above all, success requires a commitment from all members of the Observatory's management team to promote diversity in their actions and decisions, and be held accountable.

# Defining Diversity at NRAO

For NRAO to attract and retain a diverse complement of great employees, it must honor the full spectrum of diversity. To do otherwise risks alienating employees who do not fall within targeted demographic groups, but feel different or left out.

**Diversity Plan Definition of Diversity:** Diversity encompasses a person's unique characteristics and experiences, including, but not limited to, personality, communication styles, physical characteristics, and education. It also includes the EEOC regulations by encompassing the employment of females, minorities, veterans and people with disabilities, in support of NRAO's Affirmative Action Plan. These two elements of diversity are mutually inclusive.

From a practical view, diversity is the synthesis of many human resource-related laws and best practices. From a personal view, diversity is how we appear and behave towards the people we work with or those who seek our service. Diversity issues also vary among organizations and change over time, depending on local historical conditions.

## *NRAO Diversity Policy Statement*

Our employees, essential to our success, are to be valued, treated with respect, and have opportunities to work in an inclusive, multi-cultural and gender diverse environment.

NRAO staff and management are responsible and accountable for achieving the above goals.

## *NRAO Diversity Strategic Vision*

To enable diversity to thrive in all areas of the Observatory in a seamless manner, wherein diversity becomes a natural part of the way we think about work, in the decisions we make, and in our behavior towards others.

# Communicating NRAO's Diversity Plan and Management's Commitment

What does “diversity” mean to employees when they hear this word? What does it mean to managers when they hear that the organization needs to be more diverse and they need to lead this effort? In many instances, diversity becomes a personal matter because it impacts everyone in the workplace in some manner.

Effectively communicating NRAO's Diversity Plan and management's commitment is a critical first step. However, creating a system of two-way communication throughout the Observatory between management and employees is also critical to the success of the Plan.

Diversity communications processes will be developed with special focus on the following groups:

**Management** – Management holds the primary responsibility for communicating NRAO's Diversity Plan throughout the Observatory. Because the decisions and behavior of management are viewed by employees as the most telling form of commitment with regard to diversity, management's accountability in this area extends beyond written and spoken words. Diversity must be supported through their actions. Their effectiveness in this area must also be evaluated as part of their performance review. To support this group, effective manager/leadership training must take place.

**Employees** – Diversity programs traditionally focus on improving the organization's statistical appearance. However, employees play a major role in the success of the diversity because they contribute greatly to the work environment. They must therefore be made aware of their responsibility to support diversity in their dealings with people in their jobs.

**Job Candidates** – Communicating NRAO's commitment to diversity in all recruitment efforts must become commonplace. A job candidate should easily and promptly know that NRAO has a diversity plan and its management is committed to making the plan successful.

**Universities, Clients, Visitors and Public** – NRAO touches many people outside of the Observatory through its work with astronomers, universities, foreign nationals, the public, and its own education programs and initiatives. Diversity abounds within these groups. Every opportunity NRAO has to communicate with these people is an opportunity to communicate the Observatory's commitment to diversity – through what they see, hear and experience. It is also an opportunity to reach people who may want to work for the Observatory some day or know someone who would. For this purpose, NRAO publications, brochures and Website are prime communication sources.

# **NRAO's Three Elements of Success**

## ***First: Leadership***

Developing our managers to be strong leaders who are held accountable for their decisions and actions is the Diversity Plan's first major element of success.

In general, people behave according to the examples set by their leaders. If the leadership of an organization does not hold itself fully accountable for its own behavior and decisions, neither will its employees.

Expanding diversity within an organization requires changes in behavior and long-held practices that, on the surface appear harmless, yet act as barriers to diversity. Everyone develops his or her beliefs and biases over their lifetime. Being open minded enough to identify, understand and eliminate bias and how it imposes upon one's way of thinking is a person's greatest challenge. Nowhere is it more challenging to overcome this form of bias in an organization than in ranks of its leadership. In particular, leaders who are technically strong and play a vital role in the organization, but lack effective managerial skills, can impede the success of the best planned diversity program.

NRAO needs to develop and implement a management training program for anyone who supervises people, including those people who may be assigned to lead a team of employees on a given project.

Apart from needing management training, there are still actions that management can take to support diversity. Examples of these actions are:

1. Incorporate diversity goals in each manager's individual performance goals.
2. Incorporate diversity in NRAO's strategic planning process.
3. Promote, encourage and facilitate diverse representation and participation in meetings, seminars, recruiting trips and on committees.
4. Actively support diversity within and outside of the Observatory when representing NRAO.

# **NRAO's Three Elements of Success**

## ***Second: Employment***

NRAO is an equal opportunity employer that files an annual Affirmative Action Plan. The Observatory Director has led the way in diversity by hiring and promoting females and minorities on his management team and within the Scientific Staff.

Recognizing that employment efforts are already underway within the Observatory to improve the employment of females and minorities, there are further actions that can expand this effort across the Observatory, reach more diverse candidates outside of NRAO, and provide the support and tools needed to effectively manage the recruitment process. Planned initiatives are described below.

### **Expand the effort across the Observatory:**

Whenever there is a job opening in the Observatory, it is the hiring manager who holds the key to the level of effort that goes into finding and hiring qualified employees. This means that NRAO's ability to maintain compliance with EEO regulations along with its ability to find and hire diverse candidates lies in the hands of the hiring manager. Training managers to be effective hiring managers is therefore a critical step in improving diversity.

In addition to training, hiring managers must also have the support structure in place to be successful, requiring:

- Dedicated staff members in HR who focus solely on supporting NRAO employment;
- Clearly written employment policy and procedures for all Observatory hiring that are EEO compliant, support NRAO's hiring objectives, and are followed consistently;
- An effective recruiting outreach program that operates in a continuous improvement mode;

### **Reach more diverse candidates outside of NRAO:**

Every interaction with a person or group, whether it is direct or indirect, is an opportunity to recruit. NRAO staff, at every level, cannot overlook the impression of NRAO they convey to others. This is especially true when people visit an NRAO facility, attend an NRAO event, or deal with an NRAO employee on Observatory business. In addition to promoting this message throughout the Observatory, NRAO can attract candidates from this form of networking. One example would be instituting an employee referral program.

To effectively meet current hiring needs, NRAO must build a robust and diverse pipeline of candidates. This requires time, effort and money. It also requires the ability to look beyond traditional hiring sources used by the Observatory and learn what is needed to attract more diverse people, namely females and minorities. Major initiatives in this area include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying new sources that NRAO can use to reach diverse candidates, similar to *Diversity/Careers in Engineering & Information Technology* and *Women in Astronomy and Women in Physics*, which NRAO currently uses. (NRAO was recognized in May 2007 as “a Best Diversity Company by the readers of *Diversity/Careers* magazine and its website”);
- Establishing strong relationships with universities and associations that provide access to female and minority job candidates;
- Sending top NRAO astronomers to recruit for the scientific staff at recruiting events;
- Meeting with NSF Human Resources leader to discuss partnering at diversity recruiting events NSF participates in to maximize exposure and minimize costs; and
- Continuing NRAO’s minority coop and intern programs and targeted minority hiring initiative being led by the Observatory Director.

**Provide the support and tools needed to effectively manage the recruitment process:**

- Train all hiring managers;
- Provide dedicated HR support and guidance to the scientific staff hiring process;
- Implement a résumé management and applicant tracking system that allows candidates the ability to easily find and apply for jobs through NRAO’s Website, enables HR and managers the ability to effectively search all résumé for qualified candidates, tracks the progress of candidates through the hiring process, maintains documentation completed for each candidate during the employment process, and provides a means to evaluate the effectiveness of NRAO’s diversity hiring;
- Perform employment file audits to evaluate the effectiveness of diversity hiring in the employment process and identify areas in need of improvement; and
- Provide management with reports that evaluate the effectiveness of diversity hiring in NRAO’s recruitment and hiring processes.



# **NRAO's Three Elements of Success**

## ***Third: Retention***

Imagine you accepted a job with a foreign company and will be working at its headquarters located in its home country. You don't speak their language, are not familiar with the culture, there are only a few people like you there, but you don't work with them because they work in another department. Now, if your manager expects you to perform at the same level as your co-workers who are just as bright as you and feel right at home there, you would be working at a disadvantage because you would have to overcome these challenges just to be at-par with them. This is the challenge a "diverse" person feels when entering an organization where they are different from the norm and the organization has no support program in place to help them succeed.

Herculean efforts to attract and hire good employees can be lost if an organization cannot provide a work environment that keeps these people engaged, feeling respected, and provides them with an opportunity to grow and advance in their respective careers. Leaders know that retention is an important element in maintaining a productive workforce. Many organizations rely on basic forms of retention such as pay, benefits and location. Others go a step further by enhancing benefits, such as flexible work hours, convenience services and free parking. More challenging is holding managers accountable for retention, even though the employee's manager remains the top reason employees' leave an organization.

The best organizations know what they need to do to retain their employees because retention is a top priority and they take action. They invest time and resources into learning what is important to their employees and then act on this knowledge. As described in the opening paragraph, failure to understand, learn and act can cripple an organization's diversity effort due to a failure in "back-end" support. It is therefore imperative that retention become a top priority for NRAO.

Some of the factors that impact retention at NRAO are already known through direct feedback from individuals, such as the need to address lower-than-market salaries, remote locations, and poor opportunities for employment of the employee's spouse. Steps need to be taken to learn more in this area, which include:

- Conducting employee surveys;
- Understanding NRAO's social network;
- Examining best practices in employee retention;
- Developing methods of gathering employees feedback on matters of importance;
- Examining compensation relative to market pay and equal pay practices;
- Examining new benefits that support employee retention;
- Including retention in manager training program;
- Developing a new hire orientation program;
- Developing a mentoring program;
- Providing employees training and development opportunities; and
- Examining non-traditional incentives like flexible work arrangements, telecommuting, and remote worksites.

# **Transparency of Diversity within NRAO**

NRAO's strategic vision for diversity is a driving force in this plan: "To enable diversity to thrive in all areas of the Observatory in a seamless manner, wherein diversity becomes a natural part of the way we think about work, in the decisions we make, and in our behavior towards others." Although the Plan is designed to include specific programs and actions that target the hiring and successful employment of females and minorities, diversity must be inclusive of all employees and become ingrained in NRAO's operations and its work environment. It should not develop into program run by a committee that organizes diversity events, or a separate function within the organization that needs to be managed. Responsibility for making diversity happen within any organization clearly lies in the hands of management and how they lead the organization. NRAO leadership realizes this difference and will strive to achieve the higher standards it has set for itself and the Observatory.

# Diversity Plan Support

Supporting NRAO's Diversity Plan requires the involvement of all parties who have an ultimate stake in its success, especially those parties whose decisions and actions will directly impact the execution of the Diversity Plan goals. These support "drivers" are:

**Management** – The level of impact NRAO's Diversity Plan will have on the organization will be driven by management, regardless of funding. Taking responsibility for leading Diversity Plan efforts, as it relates to their respective areas of responsibility, falls upon all members of management. The Diversity Plan should also be included as integral part of NRAO's management meetings, Strategic Planning Process, etc.

It will therefore be necessary to keep all members of management informed of Diversity Plan initiatives, programs, communications, goals and progress. Performance expectations for supporting these efforts will be included in each manager's annual Performance Evaluation Plan form.

**Diversity Budget** – The level of funding support NRAO receives will impact the degree in which NRAO can execute the Plan. Many initiatives outlined in this plan require additional funding, which NRAO will begin to reference in the annual budget it submits to NSF. In addition, NRAO will work on developing innovative ways to find alternative funding sources through NSF grants and attempt to partner with NSF's diversity program efforts. NRAO's Human Resources Manager will lead and coordinate this process.

**Human Resources** – Many of the programs and initiatives that support NRAO's Diversity Plan require the support of the Human Resources Department staff. The HR Manager will therefore be the key person who provides leadership and guidance on the operational aspects of the Diversity Plan.

**Employees** – Employees play a significant role in supporting diversity. To gain their support, management must first answer the question, "What is in it for them?" Management needs to communicate and support this message in various ways, in a consistent manner. Not everyone will accept this message on face value. Management actions will be scrutinized to see if they really support diversity. If management actions are consistent with its message, trust will build and so will employee support.

**Diversity Committee** – The mission of NRAO's Diversity Committee is to assist the organization in developing and executing NRAO's Diversity Plan. Providing periodic feedback to management on the Plan and supporting it in their dealings with others are the two major contributions sought from its members.

The committee will consist of employees that, as a group, represent the diversity of NRAO. Location, staff, age, gender, race and marital diversity are some examples. Participation is voluntary and terms depend on the employee's needs. The Committee will encourage fresh perspectives by allowing others to join as current members volunteer to rotate off. The Committee's role should change as the Plan matures to adapt to the needs of the organization. The ultimate objective of the Diversity Committee is to work

itself out of a job. This objective is in direct support of NRAO's Diversity Strategic Vision.

For the Diversity Committee to become obsolete, support systems must be in place within NRAO to provide the organization with the oversight and feedback needed to support the Plan. This will happen when Observatory support programs and processes are in place (per the Diversity Plan) and employees, at the local and Observatory level, have open sources for employee input, discussion and feedback, which then gets acted upon.

# Diversity Plan Goals

The Plan's goals are designed to position the Observatory for long-term success. NRAO will use employment metrics to measure Plan success, which will conform to EEO regulations and reference to NRAO's annual Affirmative Action Plan. While employment metrics are important, periodic employee assessment on how the organization is adapting to its diversity initiatives will be NRAO's key diversity measurement.

**Goal 1: Make NRAO's commitment to diversity visible on a daily basis to its employees, visitors, community, students, and the public.** The internal action plan details the steps that management must take to ensure the success of this goal and will be the primary measures of success.

**Goal 2: Develop and execute an internal action plan that provides NRAO with the steps needed to expand diversity within the Observatory, including a timeline and funding requirements to determine which goals are achievable within a given fiscal year.** This Action Plan will be reviewed and updated periodically. The Action Plan goals for the remainder of 2007 and 2008 appear in the next section.

**Goal 3: Increase the diversity of NRAO's workforce through its employment actions, as measured against the available pools of female and minority candidates reported in NRAO's Affirmative Action Plan.** In accordance with EEO regulations and NRAO's Affirmative Action Plan, NRAO management will ensure that its employment actions afford equal opportunity to all employees. This includes taking positive steps in the hiring process to ensure that the candidate pool represents the diversity of the community of available candidates for each job. Where geographic limitations restrict the diversity of available candidates, NRAO will take additional action within and outside of the community, as permitted by NSF funding.

**Goal 4: Obtain the financial support necessary to achieve NRAO's Diversity Strategic Vision, as outlined in the internal action plan.** Additional funding is necessary for NRAO to achieve important initiatives.