



# COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

**T**hree years ago the Franciscan Health System of Cincinnati, Inc. (FHSC), made a concerted commitment to diversity for three important reasons:

- First and foremost, creating and fostering a multicultural environment will enable this Catholic multi-institutional system to fulfill its mission of serving all in need.

- Second, a multicultural environment will help FHSC prepare for the changes forecasted by Workforce 2000, including an aging population made up of greater numbers of women, minorities, and immigrants.

- Third, from a business point of view, developing a diversity program has many tangible benefits, including increased productivity, an empowered work force that has a strong sense of ownership, the ability to attract "the best and the brightest," and the achievement of true total quality management.

FHSC's president/chief executive officer, R. Christopher West, provided the impetus for the organization to embark on this journey. In part as a result of his participation in Leadership Cincinnati (a yearlong training program for selected corporate and civic leaders), West developed a vision in which diversity would be the key to a major cultural shift of the organization. An intensive diversity retreat for the Management Council (the system's leadership team) initiated the process.

## *A System's Diversity Program Prepares It For the Future*

BY CAROLE  
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### DIVERSITY STEERING COMMITTEE

FHSC's first formal step in addressing diversity took place in April 1993 when the system formed a Diversity Steering Committee. The Management Council created the committee as a means of establishing an infrastructure for a healthy, multicultural environment. The committee was composed of a broad-based group of 36 employees, representing management as well as line employees, from differ-

**Summary** Three years ago the president/chief executive officer of Franciscan Health System of Cincinnati, Inc., developed a vision in which diversity would be the key to a major cultural shift of the organization.

In April 1993 the system formed a Diversity Steering Committee to establish an infrastructure for a healthy, multicultural environment. The committee outlined two key objectives: to develop consensus around a vision of diversity for the organization, and to conduct research to determine the organizational culture with regard to diversity issues.

By 1994 diversity had become one of the system's 10 strategic initiatives, and a Diversity Department had been added to the corporate structure. The Diversity Steering Committee developed a three-year management action plan that includes seven major goals:

- Demonstrate the corporate commitment to diversity
- Educate, train, build, and support a diverse organization
- Communicate the importance of diversity
- Create a diverse work force
- Track diversity progress
- Establish accountability for diversity implementation
- Build loyalty with diverse external customers



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The International Marketplace celebrated the diversity of cultures represented in the FHSC family. Entertainment was provided, and food, clothing, and jewelry were sold in a festival atmosphere on the grounds of Providence Hospital in August 1994. Employees, physicians, volunteers, and their families enjoyed the festive event.

ent cultures, races, and backgrounds.

From the inception, the committee was assisted by a team of consultants from J. B. Reid & Associates, a Cincinnati-based management consulting firm specializing in diversity, strategic planning, and training.

The Diversity Steering Committee outlined two key objectives: to develop consensus around a vision of diversity for the organization (desired state), and to conduct research to determine the organizational culture with regard to diversity issues. The research process lasted approximately nine months and included the following components:

- A review by the Human Resources Policy Committee of all 90 human resources policies to determine whether there were barriers to diversity.
- A quantitative study of internal and external customers to identify perceptions about the FHSC environment. Both one-on-one interviews and focus groups were conducted to obtain viewpoints from physicians, volunteers, and current and former employees.
- A 70-question survey mailed to 300 employees asking about a range of diversity issues from gender and race to religion, sexual preference and manage-



ment versus nonmanagement status.

• Participation in a benchmarking study sponsored by the American Productivity and Quality Center's International Benchmarking Clearinghouse. FHSC compared its diversity plan and programs with those of "best of practice" companies, including AT&T, Hallmark, Texas Instruments, the Royal Bank of Canada, Herman-Miller, and the Federal Reserve Bank.

### MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

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Diversity Steering Committee studied the results from its extensive research process and developed a three-year management action plan. This was subsequently reviewed by the senior managers at a diversity retreat and then approved by the Management Council. The plan includes seven major goals, and progress has been made in reaching each of them.

**Goal 1: Demonstrate Corporate Commitment to Diversity** FHSC has committed financial and human resources to ensure that all employees, physicians, volunteers, and auxiliaries receive basic and continu-

ing diversity education.

FHSC was recently selected and included in a national publication featuring companies considered models to emulate in diversity (Julie O'Mara, *Best Practices Agencies and Companies in Managing Diversity*, Veterans Health Administration Department of Veterans Affairs, May 1995).

**Goal 2: Educate, Train, Build, and Support a Diverse Organization** To date, more than 3,000 of the system's 3,300 employees have attended Diversity 101, a mandatory full-day introduction to understanding diversity and its significance to FHSC. Three additional mandatory classes have been developed: 102, 103, and 104 (for managers only). These progressive courses delve more deeply into diversity issues such as stereotyping, inclusion/



exclusion, and conflict resolution.

**Goal 3: Communicate the Importance of Diversity** Progress on the diversity goals, as well as information on diversity events and issues, is continuously communicated via employee meetings; the employee weekly and monthly newsletters; and volunteer, physician, and other newsletters. At "culture of the month" celebrations, employees learn about the history, customs, traditions, and food of various cultures.

In addition, the FHSC Speakers Bureau is in the process of adding a diversity component. Employees have been recruited and trained to give presentations to the community on various diversity topics.

**Goal 4: Create a Diverse Work Force** FHSC has developed and begun implementing a voluntary Affirmative Action Plan to achieve a more diverse workplace. A special emphasis has been placed on increasing the numbers of minorities in professional, technical, and managerial job categories.

Groups of employees within the system organize activities highlighting diversity. For example, FHSC's Americans with Disabilities Team organizes a weeklong celebration for ADA Week each October. Minorities Interested in Networking and Enrichment (M.I.N.E.) is one of the most active of several affinity groups at FHSC. Composed primarily of African-American employees, the group organizes several annual events, including a Martin Luther King celebration, a Black History Month banquet, and an International Marketplace.

**Goal 5: Track Diversity Progress** FHSC has continued to survey employees, volunteers, and customers on a formal and informal basis about FHSC's climate with regard to diversity. Diversity is now a standing item for all department meetings. Tracking progress on the Diversity Management Action Plan has helped identify accomplishments as well as opportunities for improvement.

Every department is required to have its own diversity plan and to give quarterly progress reports on identified goals. FHSC continues internal and external climate surveys that measure attitudinal changes with regard to diversity. The system also



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participated in an international benchmarking study that allowed it to measure its practices against other leading organizations.

**Goal 6: Establish Accountability for Diversity Implementation** As of 1995, diversity has been formally included in the performance appraisal process. Specific indicators and behaviors have been defined for managers and employees (see Box).


**Goal 7: Build Loyalty with Diverse External Customers** In 1994 FHSC chose to become a major sponsor of the 1995 Applause Magazine Imagemaker Award, which recognizes African-American citizens who have had a significant impact on the Greater Cincinnati community. In addition, the system has become a cosponsor of numerous ethnic celebrations and events throughout the year.

FHSC is currently making plans to expand its use of minority vendors.

#### SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS

In the next five years diversity in the work force and among customers will help FHSC achieve and maintain a competitive edge in the Greater Cincinnati area. But while the business benefits of diversity are significant, the most important outcome is that the system is realizing its mission.

Many positive results are occurring. Relationships are being built across cultures, ethnic lines, social classes, ages, and races. It is a journey of self-discovery and major cultural change. □

 For more information about the diversity efforts at FHSC, call Carole Cornelison or Emory Livers in the FHSC Diversity Department, 513-451-7364.

## ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DIVERSITY

### EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Displays actions and attitudes that support diversity.
- Earns trust and confidence of co-workers, and provides constructive feedback to others willing to openly discuss and disclose feelings.
- Is usually proactive regarding diversity issues.
- Addresses diversity skill issues for self and group. Positively discusses diversity issues and takes appropriate action.

### MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

- Views diversity as a company asset and responsibility.
- Seeks diversity in business and the market.
- Creates a climate that facilitates a valuing of diversity.
- Takes a proactive stand in resolving diversity issues.