

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

I. Policy and Definition

Founded in 1891, Seattle University is the largest and among the most diverse independent universities in the Northwest. As set forth in the University's Mission Statement, Seattle University is dedicated to educating the whole person, to professional formation, and to empowering leaders for a just and humane world. Seattle University is committed to achieving excellence as the premier independent university of the Northwest in academic quality, Jesuit Catholic inspiration, and service to society.

The University has determined that, in addition to its importance for achieving educational excellence, emphasizing diversity as a matter of institutional policy is an integral component of Seattle University's Jesuit Catholic identity. Respect for all human persons and their differences was central to the experience and teachings of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and is today integral to the Jesuit belief and value systems.

Additionally, students learn better in a diverse educational environment, and they are better prepared to become active participants in our pluralistic, democratic society once they leave such a setting. As with members of the Society of Jesus themselves, Jesuit schools have traditionally fostered inclusion and openness toward experiences and ideas that are diverse. Achieving and engaging diversity among students, faculty, and staff is a cornerstone of that tradition and Seattle University's institutional policy.

Consistent with its Jesuit Catholic identity and academic judgment, the University shall continue to recruit, admit, retain, and graduate students who meet the University's requirements for academic success and who bring to the University a variety of talents, backgrounds, experiences, and personal characteristics, including but not limited to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic background, and geographic origin. The means of achieving and promoting this diversity shall remain flexible, and the manner in which race, ethnicity, and gender are to be considered shall meet standards evolving in federal and state law.

The University's measure of what constitutes a diverse student body may, and should, change. Accordingly, to achieve its educational goals, the University has rejected selection processes for admission and for other academic programs that do not permit individualized assessments. Instead, the University engages in holistic processes that evaluate each student as an individual, using a number of criteria to identify those who can best contribute to, and benefit from, membership in the academic community and its various programs.

II. Diversity As a Central Tenet of the University's Jesuit Catholic Tradition

Cultivating a more diverse and inclusive community is critical to furthering Seattle University's Jesuit Catholic identity. Inclusive excellence is how we live out our educational mission as a Jesuit Catholic university. The following are just a few examples of how diversity informs and fosters the University's Jesuit Tradition:

History of the Society of Jesus. In the 1530s, Saint Ignatius of Loyola assembled a group of University of Paris students who were different from himself with regard to social class, age, and nationality. This group called themselves the *Compañía de Jesús*. The companions took vows of poverty and pledged to stay together and serve Christ and the world, after earning their degrees. A little over a decade later, the *Compañía*, later translated to the Latin *Societas*, established the first Jesuit school in Messina, Sicily. Since then, the Society of Jesus has

become known throughout the world for its educational mission, pursuant to which it founded Seattle University. An explicit part of this mission is educating people for world citizenship, which requires a focus on diversity and inclusion.

Cura Personalis. Meaning care of the whole person. This fundamental value of the Society of Jesus involves three concepts, according to Brian McDermott, S.J.: treating people as individuals and honoring their unique worth; caring for the “whole” person (including physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health); and taking into account people’s backgrounds, including their family life, nationality, and culture.

People for Others. Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus from 1965 to 1981, employed the phrase “Men for Others” in a 1973 presentation. Fr. Arrupe thoughtfully challenged the alumni of Jesuit schools and universities to engage in the struggle for justice and to protect the needs of the most vulnerable. Today, this phrase has evolved to the more inclusive “People for Others,” and its spirit is evidenced in Seattle University’s promotion of community-based courses; local, national, and international service projects, justice programs; and student-led service and justice organizations.

Education for World Citizenship. As Fr. Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, explained in his 2018 speech, “The University as a Source of Reconciled Life,” diversity is central to the Society of Jesus’s educational ministry:

Educating people for world citizenship involves recognizing diversity as a constitutive dimension of a full human life. This means experiencing cultural diversity as an opportunity for the enrichment of human beings. We want to educate human beings who are able to feel that they are members of humanity because they have become critically aware of their own culture (inculturation); who are capable of joyfully recognizing the culture of other human beings (multiculturalism) and relating to others, becoming enhanced by the variety of which their own culture is a part (interculturality). Interpreted in this way, universality can provide the impetus for social justice, fraternity, and peace.

Working toward a more diverse and inclusive campus is thus wholly aligned with Seattle University’s values and identity as a Jesuit Catholic university. Embodying inclusive excellence is reflected in our history, our present, and our future. Under the University’s *Reigniting Our Strategic Directions* Goal 4 – Promoting Inclusive Excellence, we are committed to creating a place where all who live, learn, and work at the University can thrive. This pervasive approach of creating an institution for thriving means that we are intentional in our efforts not only to foster belonging, but also to enhance the atmospheric conditions and expand the networks of support for learning and developing as whole persons.

Anchored in and animated by our Jesuit Catholic educational mission, we aim to facilitate our students’ discovery and growth as people for and with others in an ever changing and complex world. Because diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral to our Jesuit Catholic character, our values, and to the transformative education we provide, we are working to strengthen our institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion structures and systems of accountability to ensure progress with impact. Accordingly, inclusive excellence advances the University’s mission-aligned and student-centered approach to diversity that all students will enjoy the benefit of university membership as whole persons and contribute to the educational excellence at Seattle University.

III. Educational Benefits of a Diverse Community

The University expects the impact of a diverse community on academic and co-curricular programming to be beneficial to our students, the institution, and the environment in which they both function. Seattle University inspires students to learn, lead and serve in a diverse and changing world. Opinions rendered by a diverse community further the University's educational goals by challenging traditional educational practices and arrangements, and by contributing new perspectives to the curriculum and other scholarly pursuits. The University believes that classes of students from diverse backgrounds, taught by faculty of varied backgrounds, results in a richer and better educational experience. Ultimately, our graduates will have a significant impact on business, education, the arts, law, and sciences for generations to come. We must create a learning environment enriched by diversity on campus so our students will be prepared for professional careers and positions of leadership, and for successful and productive participation in a heterogeneous democracy and global economy.

Everyday experience and empirical studies suggest that the educational benefits and outcomes of a diverse community on academic and co-curricular programming include the following:

An enriched educational experience. Students who interact with diverse peers and take courses that advance multicultural perspectives show enhanced critical thinking skills; tend to be more engaged in learning; report higher self-assessments of their academic, social and interpersonal skills; are more likely to be involved in community services programs; and are more likely to remain enrolled, and to aspire to advance degrees after graduation.

Promotion of personal growth. Diversity challenges stereotyped preconceptions; it encourages critical thinking and it helps students learn to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds.

Promotion of cross-cultural understanding. Education within a diverse setting prepares students to become good citizens in an increasingly complex, pluralistic society; it fosters mutual respect and teamwork; exposes students to common goals and values critical to many occupations; and it helps build communities whose members are judged by the quality of their character and their contributions. It also helps students understand why people of diverse backgrounds interpret the same information differently.

Enhancement of America's economic competitiveness. Sustaining the nation's prosperity in the 21st century will require us to make effective use of the talents and abilities of all our citizens, in work settings that bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

The University recognizes that diversity's positive effects do not automatically accrue from a simple focus on numerical representations of various populations within our University community. Rather, diversity produces benefits through thoughtfully structured policies and programs designed to support and facilitate interaction among students as part of the academic and co-curricular experience. These include outreach and enrichment; recruitment; financial aid; scholarships; general education diversity course requirements; programs designed to improve retention; and to cultivate a learning environment, in and out of the classroom, which enhance the individual and collective experiences of the campus community.

IV. Periodic Review

Diversity is not an end result, but a means of achieving a concrete set of educational objectives. Accordingly, the University shall periodically review its diversity-related policies and programs to determine their achievements, and to adjust them as necessary to further those objectives.