

Timeline Overview Preamble

Established in the mid 1850s, the University of Maryland, College Park is an historically white public research institution. Like many such American universities, especially those in the southern United States, College Park actively resisted desegregating into the 1980s, when it was found to be in non-compliance with federally mandated desegregation as required by the decision in *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* in 1954.

Almost concomitant with this finding, College Park retained its first (and, to date, only) African American President (at that time called a “Chancellor”), John Slaughter. Among the multitude of things that President Slaughter did to turn College Park from an institution regionally known for its actively racist resistance to change into one nationally recognized for its extraordinary demographic diversity, was to expand the charge of the campus Office of Human Relations Programs (OHRP) from an exclusive focus on mere legal compliance with equity mandates to include pro-active diversity education for faculty, staff, and students.

By the early 1990s, College Park’s deliberate recreation of itself as an increasingly diversity-friendly campus became important enough for OHRP to include a presentation documenting the campus’s transformation in this regard as a part of its diversity education efforts. This presentation, called, “**The History of Diversity at Maryland,**” was built around a “**timeline**” which marked major achievements in the university’s movement from entrenched racism toward progressive antiracism and multiculturalism.

Shortly thereafter in 1994, OHRP became College Park’s institutional representative in the Ford Foundation-funded Campus Diversity Initiative effort. Through OHRP, College Park, one of only ten original Diversity Initiative campuses across the country, received over \$1,000,000 during a seven-year period to develop itself as a national model institution for its comprehensive equity and diversity work. As a part of this funding, OHRP coordinated the campus in committing its equity and diversity model to print in the *Diversity Blueprint: A Planning Manual for Colleges and Universities* monograph.

With the American Association for Colleges and Universities’ (AAC&U) publication of this monograph in 1995, OHRP became the organizing entity for College Park’s campus-based “Diversity Blueprint” visits from teams of senior administrators from colleges and universities across the country and around the world interested in coming to the universities to learn more about our model in face-to-face meetings with the array of individuals whose work the monograph highlighted.

In late 1999 and early 2000, the College Park campus was plagued by a number of hate crimes. These incidents led to the development of a campus-wide Hate Crimes Awareness Week initiatives, organized around the theme of “Building Bridges: Looking Back, Moving Forward.” As a part of that week, OHRP expanded the History of Diversity at Maryland timeline presentation into a “**Traveling Timeline Display.**”

In 2003, taking the Diversity Blueprint visits one step further, OHRP coordinated the development and piloting of the “Institute on Implementation and Institutionalization”—also known as “the I3”—a seven day intensive Diversity Blueprint visit type of experience for middle and senior level campus equity and diversity professionals. Sixty individuals from the College Park campus contributed their expertise to the I3.

This 2005-2006 academic year marks the 150th Anniversary of the College Park campus. OHRP’s contribution to the plethora of events earmarking this milestone is a substantially expanded iteration of the

Traveling Timeline Display and accompanying, even more highly detailed, website cataloguing and, ultimately, “**Celebrating 150 Years of Equity and Diversity at Maryland.**”

It is important to note that the expanded timeline display and website include both due attention to the negative history of de facto segregation and associated intentional racism on the College Park campus in the past, the impacts of which, unfortunately, continue today. Resultantly, this new timeline and website also call the College Park community to pay on-going attention to areas of continued equity and diversity weakness, so that these areas may—one day soon—be transformed into areas of additional strength.

The focus on *Celebrating* 150 Years of Equity and Diversity is a variation on a previous OHRP event titled, "A Celebration of Equity and Diversity: Say it Loud, Say it Proud!" From this vantage point, reference to the campus African American community is clearly elicited in order to intentionally highlight the past-present connection through which all equity and diversity efforts at College Park must be honestly and openly viewed if we are to realize our multicultural vision through the practice of our pluralistic mission.

-- **Christine Clark**, Executive Director, Office of Human Relations Programs