

**THE DIVERSITY COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT  
OF  
THE ASSOCIATION FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**A REPORT PREPARED BY  
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**DECEMBER 28, 2006**

**The purpose of this report is to assess The Association for Conflict Resolution's level of diversity competence, identifying the organization's specific stage of multicultural development.**

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## **I. PROJECT HISTORY**

Lauren N. Nile, (Consultant) was hired on July 6, 2006 to perform a diversity assessment for The Association for Conflict Resolution.

## **II. ASSIGNMENT**

A. Conduct 40 telephone interviews of all members of the Board of Directors, all members of ACR's Diversity and Equity (D&E) Committee, several Chapter Presidents and Section Chairs and staff members.

- The consultant called and emailed 55 people, contacting most twice.
- The consultant conducted a total of 38 interviews
- The consultant was contracted to conduct 20-minute interviews, however, each interview averaged 35 minutes.

B. Review and analyze up to 150 pages of ACR documents. The consultant reviewed and analyzed the following ACR documents:

- Policy and Procedure Manual
- By-laws
- Power Point Presentation: "The Lens, Voice and Resource for Diversity and Equity"
- Diversity and Equity Policy
- Diversity and Equity Problem-Solving Procedure
- Diversity and Equity Network Point Person Welcome Letter
- Diversity and Equity Network Letter to Diversity Point Person inquiring about interest in facilitation a discussion on racism and conflict resolution or other diversity and equity topics at the annual conference.
- Diversity and Equity Committee Report to the Board of Directors dated September, 2005
- Board of Directors meeting minutes dated March 11, 2006
- Chapter/Section/Committee Diversity and Equity Survey
- Document describing the history of the Facilitated Discussion on Racism
- 2006 Annual Conference Proposal From

C. Develop 10 survey questions which ACR will post online for the benefit of those Chapter Presidents and Section Chairs who did not have an opportunity to participate in a telephone interview with the consultant.

The following is the entire content of the online survey developed and submitted by the consultant:

“The purpose of this survey is to provide to those Chapter Presidents and Section Chairs who did not have an opportunity to be interviewed for ACR’s diversity assessment, an opportunity to participate at this time. The results of this survey will be included in the final diversity assessment report.”

Your cooperation in completing this survey will be greatly appreciated by the members of ACR’s D&E committee.

Thank you for your help in this important matter.

Please note the following:

- In this survey, 5 is a high score and 1 is a low score.
- In questions 2 and 3 below, diversity is defined in choice A-F.
- On a one-to-five scale, please rate:

1. Your familiarity with ACR’s D&E Policy

2. The diversity of your membership in terms of:

- |                 |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Race _____   | D. Disability _____         |
| B. Gender _____ | E. Sexual Orientation _____ |
| C. Age _____    | F. National Origin _____    |

3. The diversity of your Leadership circle in terms of:

- |                 |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Race _____   | D. Disability _____         |
| B. Gender _____ | E. Sexual Orientation _____ |
| C. Age _____    | F. National Origin _____    |

4. Your Chapter or Section’s attempts to increase the diversity of its membership.

5. Your Chapter or Section’s attempts to diversify its leadership circle.

6. Your Point Person’s efforts to oversee the implementation of the Diversity and Equity Policy.

7. How many times per month do you speak with your Chapter or Section’s Point Person about D&E matters?

8. Is you Point Person a member of your Chapter’s or Section’s leadership circle?

9. Interactions among members of my Chapter/Section are free of subtle bias.  
5=Absolutely 4=Strongly Agree 3=Agree 2=Agree Somewhat 1=Disagree

10. All members of my Chapter or Section feel equally welcomed and valued. Use same scale as in 9 above.

The consultant submitted that online survey to ACR on December 16, 2006. There were administrative and technical errors in the posting of the online survey that resulted in some survey question being combined and others deleted. Therefore, the posted online survey was not the online survey originally developed by the consultant and the survey data received were not reliable. A corrected online survey was not posted due to assessment project deadlines.

#### D. Present Results of Diversity Assessment at ACR's Conference

On Wednesday, October 25, 2006, the consultant presented the results of the diversity assessment to ACR's leadership team at the organization's annual conference in Philadelphia, PA.

E. Analyze and prepare a written report on all data collected from the interviews, documents and online survey, identifying ACR's stage of multicultural development using the Jackson/Hardiman Model for Assessing Stages in the Development of a Multicultural Organization. This is that written report. See the assessment section below.

### **III. Assessment**

The chart in Appendix One describes six stages of multicultural development in which organizations may exist and operate. It is the consultant's opinion that the Jackson-Hardiman Model for Assessing Stages in the Development of a Multicultural Organization is best suited for use in workplaces, i.e., environments in which people are present on a consistent basis allowing first-hand observation by the person doing the organization's cultural assessment. ACR, by contrast, is a membership organization with Chapters, Sections, and Committees all across the country. For that reason, it was impossible for the consultant to make personal observations on which to base her evaluations. In this assessment, the consultant's evaluation of the organization's level of multicultural development was totally dependent upon her review of documents and upon telephone conversations, with no independent corroboration gained from first-hand observation. In other words, whatever information the consultant did not gain from documents, she relied on interviews to obtain. Relying on interviews in that manner, however, is not very dependable because the consultant received a wide range of answers and opinions to almost every question. Thus, the answer to most questions depended on to whom the question was asked, which thus puts the reliability of this assessment in question.

As indicated in the chart, an organization's level of multicultural development is determined by:

- A. Its level of organizational diversity
- B. Its values
- C. Its practices
- D. Its policies
- E. The level of its awareness, and
- F. The quality of its climate

Each of the above indicators will be considered in turn.

### **A. Organizational Level of Diversity**

ACR is a membership organization with a very small staff, a Board of Directors, and members-at-large who are in Chapters, Sections, and Committees across the country. Each is considered below:

#### **1. The Staff**

ACR's staff have been very diverse for some time, with until recently, a management team of three, one of whom was a non U.S. born woman of color.

My evaluation regarding the level of diversity of ACR's staff, specifically in terms of religion, ethnicity and languages, is that as of October 25, 2006, ACR's staff was a multicultural body, i.e., there was a balanced representation of religious, ethnic and languages groups at all levels of the staff. Other areas of diversity, i.e., age, disability and sexual orientation, were not commented upon.

#### **2. The Board of Directors**

Every single interviewee who commented upon the diversity of ACR's Board of Directors indicated that the Board has done an excellent job of being diverse in terms of both race and gender. Many people commented that that has been the case since the merger.

My evaluation of the diversity of ACR's Board of Directors is that it is also a multicultural body, one in which there is a balanced representation of all social and cultural groups at all levels.

#### **3. The Membership-At-Large**

I heard two comments from a number of interviewees which I believe may accurately describe the status of the diversity of ACR's members in its Sections and Chapters across the country.

The first thing I heard quite a number of times from different interviewees is that they really do not know how diverse the membership of their Chapter or Section is because they have no mechanism for monitoring it. What often accompanied that comment was a request for ACR to develop such a mechanism so that they could indeed keep track of their Chapter or Section's diversity.

The second comment that I heard a number of times is that the Chapter or Section being discussed during the interview is diverse by indicators other than race. Based upon those and other comments from members of the organization, my evaluation of the diversity of ACR's membership-at-large is that excluding race, it is a Compliance Organization, i.e., many Chapters and Sections are slowly increasing the diversity of their membership, but most of the diversity is at the bottom of the organization, not in the leadership circle. The lack of diversity in the leadership of Chapters and Sections is, however, by necessity, not design, since the individuals who bring diversity to a Chapter or Section would be new to it and thus unlikely to be in a leadership role. It would be prudent for Chapters and Sections to identify methods of diversifying their memberships more rapidly.

Looking now at race specifically, my evaluation is that most of ACR's Chapters and Sections are "Clubs", i.e. organization in which there is little or no racial diversity and no initiatives in place to increase racial diversity.

Having made that observation, however, two additional points need to be made in order to be fair. The first is that some of the Chapters and Sections that have little racial diversity may reflect the demographics of their geographic area. Second, some Chapter Presidents and Section Chairs said that they would sincerely like to increase the racial diversity of their members, but did not know how to go about doing so and needed and desired help from the Diversity and Equity Committee in this area. Finally, there also were some Chapter Presidents and Section Chairs who did not see the importance of diversity and, judging from their comments, did not value it.

## **B. Values**

The fact that in terms of its values, ACR is a multicultural organization is beyond question, meeting the Jackson-Hardiman definition of such an organization "To a tee." According to that definition, in terms of its values, an organization is a multicultural organization if, "The organization has a mission and value statement that expressed a value for the full inclusion of the cultural groups in the organization." The fact that ACR has a Diversity and Equity Network and an extremely comprehensive diversity and equity policy, speaks unequivocally to the level of commitment that the organization has in principle, to ensuring that it is diverse.

The following are some of ACR's value statements that express the value that the organization places on diversity:

## 1. D&E Policy:

A. ACR is committed to D&E in its membership structure and organizational work. A culturally diverse organization is one that recognizes, supports, values and utilizes people's differences and similarities in support of the organization's goals and objectives. Diversity and equity mean recognizing and working to eliminate injustices in access, process and consequences of ACR's efforts to strive to meet the needs of diverse members and stakeholders.

B. ACR encourages and promotes participation, accessibility, active representation and leadership from diverse populations including but not limited to races, ethnicities, nation origins, languages, genders, sexual orientation, economic statuses, school or organizational locations, physical abilities, ages, religions, educational types or levels and perspectives. Further, ACR actively implements equity and affirms diversity in its work, including its publications and standards and its board, staff programs, Chapters, Sections and committees.

C. In order to promote diversity and equity in ACR and the conflict resolution field, ongoing self-examination is essential. We are committed to discussing and implementing fairness and openness in our values, procedures, conceptual frameworks, and structures. All persons participating in ACR programs and activities are a part of this endeavor.

D. Each Committee, Task Force, Chapter, Section and any other group within ACR shall elect or appoint at least one Diversity and Equity Point Person. The D&E Point Person(s), in consultation with other Point Persons will make up the ACR Diversity and Equity Network, and oversee the implementation of the commitment to diversity and equity. Each Chapter and Section shall, in consultation with its own Point Persons, report each year to the ACR Diversity and Equity Committee on its activities to support and demonstrate its commitment to this Diversity and Equity Policy.

From ACR's By-laws:

2. Article 17, Section 17.3(c) governing Qualifications for Directors and Presidents-Elect: "The Governance Committee shall seek to nominate candidates who reflect.....ACR's commitment to diversity and equity."
3. Section XII (L) (2) of ACR's P&P Manual: "Chapters will strive to welcome a diverse membership into their orgs and into the field of ADR." In the selection of nominees for Chapter leadership, Chapters will work actively to encourage a diverse leadership group, based on ACR's D&E Policy.
4. Section XII (L) (3) of ACR's P&P Manual requires the election or appointment of a Chapter Diversity and Equity Point Person(s), in consultation with the D&E Network to oversee the implementation of the ACR's D&E Policy.

5. Section XIII (D) (3) of ACR's P&P Manual requires Chapters to submit to the D&E Committee, an annual D&E Report describing the Chapter's activities to support and demonstrate its commitment to ACR's D&E Policy, as well as the Chapter's concerns for the work that needs to be accomplished in the coming year.
6. Section XII (D) (3) and Section XII (L) (1) (D) of ACR's P&P Manual requires that all Sections file a report to the D&E Committee on its activities, showing the Section's support and commitment to ACR's D&E Policy as well as its concerns for the work that needs to be accomplished in the coming year on this priority.

The consultant, in 16 years of working within the field of cultural diversity with hundreds of organization, knows of no other organization that has expressed the value that diversity has for the organization in terms that are as clear and unequivocal as those used in ACR's mission and value statements. ACR is to be highly commended for its written commitment to diversity.

### **C. Practices**

This is the area in which ACR performs worst. Interviewee after interviewee, Board members, D&E Committee members, Chapter Presidents and Section Chairs all told the consultant that while ACR has very impressive and comprehensive diversity and equity policies, the organization as a whole does not act on those policies. Chapter Presidents and Section chairs expressed needing direction and guidance from the D&E Committee in implementing their diversity requirements. In addition, many often simultaneously reported that not only were they not receiving direction and guidance from the D&E Committee, but that in addition, they weren't receiving much communication of any kind from the D&E Committee, including welcome letters to newly-appointed Point Persons and responses to emails and calls.

It is the consultant's view that in general, ACR does not fit into any of the Jackson-Hardiman boxes in the above chart's "Practices" column. The most obvious observation that can be made regarding ACR's diversity practices is that notwithstanding its admirable diversity policies, the organization is ostensibly almost totally lacking in taking specific, measurable steps complete with goals and timetables, to increase either its diversity or its diversity competence. Further, it is the consultant's opinion that the very inability to engage in such specific actions that prevents ACR from living its diversity vision.

With regard to its treatment of the D&E Committee specifically, the consultant's view is that ACR is an exclusionary organization, i.e., it engages in practices that discriminate against members of "minority" groups. That conclusion is based upon statements made to the consultant by members of the D&E Committee.

## **D. Policies**

See the “Values” section above.

## **E. Awareness**

It is the consultant’s opinion that ACR does not fit into any of the Jackson-Hardiman categories in the area of awareness based upon the vastly differing views of members regarding every question asked. Many of the members showed what may be thought of as a very advanced level of diversity awareness while others’ comments indicated what may be described as very or perhaps fairly low awareness.

There are many members of ACR who are highly aware of both the importance of diversity to the organization and of the challenges that the organization faces with respect to diversity. Simultaneously, there are many members who in addition to not being committed to diversity as an organizational value, believe that ACR is mis-directed or mis-guided for even paying attention to the issue. For that reason, the diversity awareness of ACR’s membership is a real “mixed-bag.”

## **F. Climate**

All Chapter Presidents, Section Chairs and staff members reported that whatever kind and degree of diversity existed, the relationships among the people in their Chapter, Section or in the staff, were all very positive. Based upon those comments, the consultant judges those particular bodies to be multicultural organizations. Some members of the D&E Committee, however, reported that subtle bias does exist in segments of the organization but that people are not aware of and do not see it. Those segments of ACR for which that is true, (i.e. Chapters, Sections and Committees) would of course not be multicultural bodies. The consultant, however, has no information on how prevalent such subtle bias may be in ACR’s bodies and thus can make no assessment of the diversity climate of ACR as a whole.

## **G. On-Line Survey Analysis**

The consultant submitted the online survey to ACR on December 16, 2006. There were administrative and technical errors in the posting of the online survey which resulted in some survey questions being combined and others being deleted. Therefore, the posted online survey was not the online survey originally developed by the consultant and the survey data received were not reliable. A corrected online survey was not posted due to assessment project deadlines.

## **IV. Recommendations**

### **A. To ACR's Leadership**

1. Schedule a meeting to discuss the quality of the relationship of ACR's leadership team with the Diversity and Equity Committee and how it may be improved, focusing on both specific appreciations and requests of the Committee.
2. Schedule a professionally-facilitated meeting with the Diversity & Equity Committee to discuss the results of said meeting and to listen to the D&E Committee's appreciations and requests of the leadership team.
3. Schedule a meeting to be attended by ACR's leadership team and the D&E Committee to discuss the recommendations and other matters of this report, including how widely this report will be disseminated and whether it will be posted on ACR's website.
4. Have the D&E Committee make a presentation to ACR's leadership team on a regular basis, perhaps bi-annually.
5. Make the D&E Committee a part of the leadership training at every conference.
6. Act on the challenge that both the membership and conference fees are too high for many individuals.
7. Provide diversity training for all Chapter Presidents, Section Chairs and Committee Chairs on the necessity of both diversity and diversity competence for ACR.
8. Respectfully communicate to the Board, all Chapters, Sections and Committees that the ACR staff is very dedicated, works extremely hard and should be related to as professionals and with respect, and further, that their input should be listened to, considered and valued.

### **B. To the Diversity & Equity Committee**

1. Schedule a meeting to discuss the quality of the Diversity and Equity Committee's relationship with ACR's leadership team and how it may be improved, focusing on both specific appreciations and requests of the leadership team.

2. Attend a professionally-facilitated meeting with ACR's leadership team to discuss the results of said meeting and to listen to the leadership team's appreciations and requests of the D&E Committee. (This is the same meeting referred to in number two of the recommendations to ACR's leadership team.)
3. Develop clear, specific and obtainable goals for the D&E Network Point Persons.
4. Communicate those goals to the entire ACR membership.
5. Pursue distribution of a Diversity and Equity survey which can be used by Chapters and Sections to keep track of the diversity of their membership.
6. Continue assignment of a D&E Committee member who has primary responsibility for servicing particular Chapters and/or Sections and/or Committees.
7. Establish a policy requiring each Chapter, Section and Committee to develop at the beginning of the year, an annual D&E Plan for submission to the D&E Committee by a particular deadline. The plan should include the name, number and email address of the Chapter, Section or Committee's diversity Point Person, its diversity goals and for each goal, the specific strategies for achieving those goals, person responsible for implementing each strategy, and timetables. It may greatly help the Chapters, Sections and Committees to have an annual plan template from which to work. Said template, (which would include the four categories mentioned above, i.e., first, goals; second, the strategy or strategies that will be used to accomplish each goal; third, the person or persons responsible for implementing the strategy or strategies; and fourth, the date by which the goal will be accomplished); should be developed by the D&E Committee. [Possible goal areas include diversifying the Chapter, Section or Committee's membership; diversifying the Chapter, Section or Committee's leadership; identifying and contracting with diverse conference speakers; planning diversity-related activities for the annual conference; and providing diversity education for the Chapter, Section or Committee's membership] See Appendix Two.
8. Inform Chapters and Sections of the following three things:
  - a. The new requirement of submitting an annual plan to the D&E Committee
  - b. The deadline for submission of the plan

c. The name of the D&E Committee member who has been assigned to their Chapter, Section or Committee and the availability of that person to help with the development of their plan.

9. Review all submitted D&E plans and help the Chapters, Sections and Committees “Fine tune” them as stated in the current D&E Committee framework.
10. Provide on-going support to the Chapters, Sections and Committees in implementing their Diversity Plans as stated in the current D&E framework.
11. Provide training for Diversity Point Persons in carrying out the technical aspects of their responsibilities as stated in the current D&E Committee framework.
12. Be conscious of and committed to non-racial areas of diversity.
13. Be conscious of an equally committed to equity.
14. Appoint one Committee member to be the liaison to one ACR staff member on diversity issues and have that liaison meet with the diversity staff person about specific things they both need from the other in order to work together effectively.