

Vincent: Frohnmayer says campus diversity development will continue

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Vincent stressed that even with his departure, progress will be made on the plan because it is a University effort.

"I've always made it clear that this is not the Greg Vincent plan," Vincent said.

"I would hope that through a coalition of the University Senate, the Student Senate and central administration will take the lead and move this forward ... I think that we need to appoint a point person, which I think could very well be a faculty member, who can move this forward," Vincent said.

With the plan's draft, Vincent said the University now has a set of staff, faculty and student recommendations with which to work.

"I believe that those recommendations should now be considered by the entire campus community and refined and revised so that we can develop a final plan that the campus can begin to implement," he said.

He said the campus community has given great feedback on the plan. Considering the University's fiscal realities, some of the recommendations might have to be scaled down, but Vincent said the Diversity Work Group that developed the plan felt it "would rather put everything out there" and allow the community to decide what should be prioritized.

"I felt the administration has been very supportive of this process ... and will continue to do so in my absence," Vincent said.

"We're obviously very sorry to lose Greg," University President Dave Frohnmayer said. "He's provided great leadership in helping to advance our awareness of diversity issues."

Frohnmayer said this work will continue and that the University Senate has created an Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity. He said that in a committee meeting Monday the group discussed how to increase avenues that will ensure inclusion of more voices in diversity planning. Considering the depth of concern the plan's creation generated, Frohnmayer said there is a need to engage in more community conversations before implementing any plan. University officials had previously said the plan would be ready for implementation as early as fall.

"We will be designing a process to make sure every voice is included," he said. "We're stepping back from

anything that would be regarded as a hard deadline."

The University administration has not yet made any decisions on future plans for Vincent's position, Frohnmayer said.

Vincent's decision to leave the University comes at a time when diversity issues are in the spotlight. In the past month, students in the College of Education have rallied in protest against alleged racism in that school. And during winter term, the campus dealt with claims of an unsupportive campus climate that was not welcoming to people of different gender orientations.

The University must still face up to various challenges including finding ways to expand diversity efforts that may require more resources in a fiscally-constrained environment and making sure that marginalized groups feel included in all aspects of campus life, Vincent said.

ASUO President Adam Petkun, who is in the Diversity Work Group, said news of Vincent's departure left him "kind of stunned."

"I'm disappointed because this year under his leadership we've made a lot of progress," Petkun said. He added that Vincent had been a "lightning rod" in pushing for change and a lot of the energy behind working for the plan had been channeled through him.

He said he hopes shared sentiments about working on diversity will continue.

"I am afraid that the process itself might stall," Petkun said. "(But) I think one way or another someone will step up."

Speaking on the impact of Vincent's departure on the five-year plan, ASUO Multicultural Center Program Advisor Steven Morozumi, who also sits on the Diversity Work Group, said "it's an upsetting situation."

"I don't think it's a good thing, I think it's a very bad thing," Morozumi said. He said Vincent had demonstrated vision and leadership despite the "steep challenges" presented in developing a plan and the administration has to ensure there is renewed commitment to diversity issues after Vincent leaves.

However, Chicora Martin, the director of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Educational & Support Services Program, said she feels the University already has a good foundation and the people who remain

will stay committed to advancing the diversity plan.

Vincent's position at UT is also new and was created in 2004.

University of Texas President Larry Faulkner said Vincent has an "impressive record of achievement" in the UT release.

"Gregory Vincent is a national leader in campus community issues and will bring energy and imagination to this new position, which the university has created to make the UT campus an even more diverse and welcoming place,"

Faulkner said.

Aside from his vice-provost responsibilities in Texas, Vincent will also teach at the university's Department of Educational Administration. While excited about the opportunities in Austin, he said he is sad to leave behind some great colleagues.

"I wish this opportunity would have come later," he said.

He said he sees his success at the University as "being part of the solution."

"I believe that we've started the

process to create a meaningful diversity action plan and I believe that I've worked with my partners in various departments to help address issues of diversity in their respective departments whether it's faculty recruitment or diversity outreach and then making a better connection with the community," he said.

"This is not running from something, but moving towards something that works for me both professionally and personally," he said.

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Third annual women-centered celebration to inspire thought, dialogue and action in our community.

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