



## COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

Board of Supervisors

**DATE:** August 30, 2002

**BOARD MEETING DATE:** September 10, 2002

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson *RJG*  
**SUBJECT:** Diversity in Leadership Initiative Report

### Recommendation

Accept report and establish the Commission as recommended in the report

### Previous Board Action

Adopted Resolution No. 64882 Endorsing and Supporting the Diversity in Leadership Initiative.

### Discussion

In 2001, Supervisor Jacobs Gibson facilitated a session at the Progress Seminar presented by the Redwood City • San Mateo County Chamber of Commerce. The topic was "Leadership Diversity: Does It Matter?" It was apparent during those sessions that there was a keen interest by the participants to further examine the issue and to identify a strategy to increase diversity amongst leaders in San Mateo County. As a result of discussions and commitments made at the Progress Seminar, the Diversity in Leadership Roundtable was formed.

Many notable leaders from throughout the County met during the past year to develop the attached report. Included were City Council members from San Carlos, Redwood City, Daly City, San Bruno, and San Mateo; President and board members of the Community College District; board members of the Sequoia High School District; administrators and board members from prominent profit and public-benefit organizations such as Sun Microsystems, Oracle, SBC Pacific Bell, San Mateo County labor organizations; elected officials; and San Mateo County Department Representatives.

### Visioning Alignment

The Diversity in Leadership Initiative keeps the commitment of realizing the potential of our diverse population and goals number 1, Our diverse population works well together to build

strong communities, effective government and a prosperous economy, and 2, Civic engagement – including voting, public service, charitable giving, volunteerism and participation in public discussions of important issues – is uniformly high among the diverse population. The Initiative contributes to this commitment and these goals through the recommendations presented in this report.

### **Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund.

CC: John L. Maltbie, County Manager

Diversity in Leadership Initiative  
Report to San Mateo County Board of Supervisors  
September 10, 2002

**What can be done to promote diversity in leadership in San Mateo County?**

**I. Background**

Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson facilitated sessions at the Monterey Progress Seminar on "Leadership Diversity, Does it Matter?" in 2001. It was apparent during those sessions that there was a keen interest by participants to further examine the issue and brainstorm ways to increase diversity among leaders in San Mateo County. Therefore, the Leadership Diversity Roundtable was formed. The group convened in June 2001.

In November 2001 at the request of this group, the County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution endorsing the continuing efforts of the renamed Diversity in Leadership Initiative. The group was charged with developing a plan which would identify methods, activities, and actions which could create an environment that fosters participation in leadership roles (throughout San Mateo County) by all segments of the community. The plan was also to include information about specific milestones or benchmarks needed to determine success and suggested outreach within the County.

The group, chaired by Supervisor Jacobs Gibson and staffed by Legislative Aides from the offices of Supervisors Rich Gordon, Mark Church, and Jacobs Gibson, reconvened in February 2002 and has met monthly since that time. The group is comprised of representatives from private industry, County government, local cities, public benefit organizations, commissions, and the education community and is facilitated by staff from the County's Employee and Public Services Department.

This is the first report of the group.

**II. Discussion**

**Approach and Structure**

In the initial meetings the group agreed upon the definition of diversity, selected a structure, and defined its purpose. The group concluded that "diversity" translated to "full inclusion." Utilizing this definition, the group identified their initial charge:

- 1) to identify and suggest methods for supporting and increasing inclusion of community members with more diverse cultural, social, economic, or historically underrepresented backgrounds in leadership roles;
- 2) to identify and suggest methods for creating an environment that encourages inclusion; and
- 3) to develop a process to recruit and engage potential leaders.

Three subcommittees were formed to accomplish the charge. Their purpose statements and focus areas follow:

### Unity: Engage, Encourage, Educate (UE3)

The UE3 Subcommittee was created to identify and create open processes that support dialogues about shared concerns among various stakeholders. The focus is on identifying existing or potential forums which bring together people from various segments of the community to engage in dialogues about issues relevant to San Mateo County. Additionally this subcommittee is looking at methods to enhance participation and attendance by people who traditionally may have not engaged in these programs.

### Empowerment: Fostering a voice for all communities

The Empowerment Subcommittee was created to establish methods to recruit, develop, engage, and retain existing leaders. The focus is on suggesting policies and identifying programs that empower members from all communities within San Mateo County. In addition, this subcommittee is working to identify and evaluate existing leadership programs and their effectiveness (or lack thereof) with underrepresented communities. In the case of a lack of successful programs, new programs would be suggested.

### Systemic: Recognizing and removing barriers to leadership diversity

The Systemic Subcommittee was created to identify overt and covert barriers encountered during the process that one goes through to be appointed or elected to boards, commissions, councils, or other leadership bodies within the County. The main focus is on mapping processes, identifying potential barriers, and suggesting alternative approaches and paths to overcome those obstacles faced by persons from various segments of the community.

## **III. Ongoing Discussion Points**

- It could be beneficial to have a group or organization that empowers individuals from all demographic groups to pursue leadership positions. One activity for members of the group is serving as mentors.
- It is imperative that we look at all areas of diversity and not limit our focus to simply looking at race and gender.
- When examining leadership roles, we should look at various arenas including but not limited to public office, public-benefit organizations, government, and the private sector.
- There is a need to consider diversity as a positive value and not as a negative problem.
- Leadership is a choice, not a position. Barriers to participation need to be identified such as language, cost, and time constraints.
- There is a need to learn how to reach out to leaders within the various communities and engage them.
- The answers that typically surface when people are asked “Why do you want to be a leader?” are: 1) power, 2) influence, 3) ability to make changes, 4) to help develop other leaders, and 5) ability to make a difference in the community. These answers may help identify methods of inclusion

## **IV. Activities Completed**

- Selected Supervisor Jacobs Gibson as chair of the group
- Created an e-mail discussion list to inform group members of meetings and topics being discussed

- Assigned Legislative Aides as staff support to the group
- Selected facilitation support for the group
- Held nine meetings
- Researched local groups involved in leadership development activities
- Invited representative from three leadership development groups to discuss their programs
- Conducted initial research into the issue of barriers
- Identified links between initiative and Shared Vision 2010
- Discussed current county demographics
- Began planning for initial forum in a series of conversations with elected officials

#### **V. Findings to Date**

There are several existing leadership programs that have been discussed to date:

- 1) Leadership Program of the Redwood City, San Carlos, and Belmont Chambers of Commerce
- 2) Leadership Program of the North County Chambers
- 3) Leadership Program of the San Mateo Area, Burlingame, and Foster City Chambers of Commerce and the Town of Hillsborough
- 4) San Mateo County's Citizen's Academy
- 5) Peninsula Community Foundation's Leadership Curriculum
- 6) Parent Quality Institute
- 7) Young Latino Leaders
- 8) Leadership MidPeninsula
- 9) San Mateo County Youth Commission
- 10) Congresswoman Anna Eshoo's Student Advisory Board

The outreach to these and other groups will continue.

- There is a need to continue to consider diversity as a positive value in as many documents and activities as possible, and we need to create a strategy for visibility.
- There is a need to encourage more youth to become interested in civic engagement.
- There is a lack of community focused, artistic, and sufficient notification regarding vacancies on boards and commissions.
- One effective method for recruiting and engaging potential leaders is by identifying people who are currently active in schools, programs, and public-benefit organizations that serve our diverse populations.
- Some general obstacles to participation in formal leadership roles include language barriers, the loss of privacy, the exorbitant cost of campaigning, the lack of sufficient salaries for officeholders, the hours of official meetings, and huge time commitments.

- Barriers identified with some of the existing leadership programs are the high cost to participate and that most programs are in English. Only one program reviewed conducts their leadership development program in both English and Spanish.

## VI. Suggestions/Recommendations to Date

- The Board of Supervisors should establish an ongoing commission as an outgrowth of this Initiative to address diversity in leadership and consider expanding that commission's role to address other community and human relations issues throughout San Mateo County. Also to charge the commission with continuing to gather and develop information for the Board to respond to or act upon.
- Utilize **Shared Vision 2010**, specifically goal number one, *to realize the potential of our diverse population* as one source (resource) for measures of success in increasing diversity in leadership (i.e., monitoring voter turnout in diverse versus less diverse cities).
- Understand that some success measures will not identify certain aspects of diversity unless individuals identify themselves as part of a group that is traditionally underrepresented (i.e., ethnic/cultural background).
- Measure inclusion by the number of people running for public office or applying for commissions from traditionally underrepresented groups.
- Measure inclusion by the number of people elected to public office, serving on commissions, or holding leadership positions in other organizations from traditionally underrepresented groups.
- Actively recruit and engage potential leaders.
- To recruit for vacancies on boards and commissions, include community-based organizations that provide services to traditionally underrepresented groups for assistance in disseminating information.
- Vacancy notices should be published in ethnic publications and in other languages.
- Identify and evaluate leadership programs in the schools; The key is to engage youth, i.e. Young Latino Leaders.
- Identify additional programs that empower people in all communities.
- Consider people from all communities when developing policies and procedures.
- Charge the group with continuing to gather and develop information for the Board to respond to or act upon.

- Host additional forums to continue the dialogue regarding this issue.
- Study recruitment efforts of grassroots community-based organizations that identify and utilize leaders at the neighborhood level.
- Continue to identify and support programs at the community level that empower and include people with leadership qualities.
- Encourage existing and retiring leaders to mentor new leaders.
- Go beyond just encouraging participation; facilitate such participation. For instance, instead of just inviting youth to attend a conference, pay for their attendance and escort them to the event. Better yet, involve them in planning of the event.
- Offer scholarships for enrollment in leadership programs.
- All programs should be language and culturally sensitive to participants.

#### **VII. Planned Next Steps**

In response to the need for forums, the Diversity in Leadership Initiative Group under the direction of Supervisor Jacobs Gibson and with the support of the Commission on the Status of Women, the League of Women Voters, the Mid Peninsula YWCA, Women in County Government, and additional sponsors will host the first in a "Series of Conversations," on Diversity in Leadership with elected officials.

Canada College President Rosa Perez will facilitate the event scheduled to take place at 9:30 a.m. on October 26, 2002 at Notre Dame de Namur University. Peninsula TV will be taping the program that features an open dialogue between Congresswoman Anna Eshoo and State Senator Jackie Speier (both former members of the Board of Supervisors) and current Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson. Immediately following the dialogue, panelists who are elected or appointed officials representing various segments of San Mateo County will discuss their paths to leadership with the audience.

#### **VIII. Invitation to Increase Participation**

The working group would like to expand to include members sensitive to issues within various communities.