

## University President's Panel on Diversity

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Topic Our Towns

Three of Utah's state university presidents talked about a growing minority population, the unique religious climate in Utah and lacking funds for minority programs at a panel discussion on diversity at Utah Valley State College on Tuesday.

William Sederburg, president of UVSC, said Utah is unique when it comes to diversity because of the strong religious and political majority.

Sederburg, who was joined by Ann Millner from Weber State University and Michael Young from the University of Utah, said he feels that one of the functions of higher education is to provide a "broad-based education with respect for everyone's viewpoints," including diversity in political and religious views.

One of the attendees at the event asked the panel members whether they thought diversity was somewhat subversive in a strong majority community, but Sederburg said he feels the majority of community members have been supportive of a broad-based and diverse education.

However, he said, "the broad majority of leadership is rather silent on these issues," which has allowed the strident voices opposing diversity to surface.

"I found the great majority of people here understand that the university needs to represent a variety of views," he said later.

Sederburg also spoke on how the lack of funding at UVSC, the most underfunded higher education institution in Utah, leaves the school without some of the support services and counseling available elsewhere.

"It leaves little room for enrichment activities on campus," he said

Young shared from his experience in the Ivy League and talked about how big-money schools can often fund their way out of diversity problems, a luxury he said Utah schools are not likely to have.

"We already do more with less than almost any higher education system I see," he said.

He stressed the importance of diversity, and said that students to a large degree teach each other, so "the more diverse the student body, the better the education will be."

Millner, who comes from a school in an area already rich in minority influence, talked about the difficulty in helping minority students not only enter school, but graduate.

She said one effort toward diversity on her campus has been trying to create support services for students and multicultural curriculum.

The panel was the first of its kind at UVSC, where 90 percent of student are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The discussion was part of the two-day "Conference on Educational Issues for the Next Decade: Diversity," which also included a student panel Tuesday and two panels and a keynote address Monday.

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