

**The President's Commission on Diversity and Community  
2010 – 2011 Report**

**Submitted by: Monica Schneider and Irene Belyakov**

**Commission Members**

Sadie Baker; student

Irene Belyakov; Lecturer and ESL Coordinator (co-chair)

Donte Bothel; student

Alexandra Carlo; Staff Psychologist, Student Health and Counseling

Michelle Cost

**Overall Direction and Emphasis of the Commission's Work**

For the past two years, the Commission has been focused on identifying the most ef

Quantitative data was collected before and after the retreat for both the RWG2 and the RWG3 program to assess the potential benefits of the program across different samples of students. Analyses conducted on the quantitative data collected before and after the RWG2 program replicated the results found for students who participated in the initial RWG1 program. The RWG assessment team is currently in the process of analyzing the data obtained before and after the RWG3 program.

Implementation of the RWG program has required a significant amount of dedication and commitment on the part of SACES members. The amount of time that they have dedicated to the training of facilitators and the implementation of the various RWG programs is extraordinary. They have worked diligently in coordination with students,

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3. The Commission should continue to identify ways in which the College could most effectively utilize the resources and support available through the Consortium on High Achievement and Success (CHAS).
4. The Commission should continue gaining more visibility so that the college community will come to see the Commission as a resource and touchstone for diversity and community related issues. To accomplish this goal, the Commission needs to clearly define its role and effectively communicate that role to the larger college community. This may include: supporting the web link on the diversity webpage for the Commission, marketing the Commission by communicating to the community how the Commission may help them accomplish their goals, using already existing forms of communication (e.g., GSTV, allstaff-l) to invite input and to provide information about the Commission's current activities, and providing annual updates to the College Senate and the Student Association about the Commission's activities.
5. The Commission should increase its efforts to invite, include, and reach out to members of the college community in ways that help support individuals and groups who are feeling alienated and unsupported in the community.

### *Specific Recommendations for the Subcommittees*

**Student and Campus Engagement Committee**, Real World Geneseo project and Path awards:

The Diversity Commission should assist this subcommittee in providing sustainability of the RWG project, which includes where the project will be housed and its continued financial support.

Recommendations for the future SACES subcommittee should be as follows:

- (1) Duties of the SACES committee members could be organized around subgroups responsible for the different SACES activities: a)

- (3) The curriculum development group should meet to create a template for the Extreme Learning Course that would combine three elements: transformational experience, academic coursework, and service learning. The template should be sent to the college faculty senate for deliberation and approval during the 2011-2012 academic year. When approved, the 1-4 credit Extreme Learning Course will be offered to students during the fall 2012.
- (4) The RWG focus group and service learning follow-up subgroup should arrange for the focus group meetings and service learning for RWG participants.
- (5) The RWG assessment group should continue to collect baseline and post-retreat data of the RWG programs that are conducted as well as continuing to analyze and present the data collected on the RWG programs conducted in previous years.
- (6) RWG grant writers should meet during the year to write grants to fund future RWG programming.
- (7) The PATH award group should meet regularly to work on strengthening the award program and soliciting nominations.

Recommendation for the institution: One of the challenges of this subcommittee has been finding faculty willing to participate in the RWG activities. Faculty members are reluctant to become involved with RWG because of the time commitment involved. The institution could help our committee by legitimizing the work of RWG so that faculty members feel that their work will count as they lead into tenure or promotion decisions. If the institution could help by endorsing the RWG work as valuable towards faculty and staff career goals, this would help this subcommittee recruit and retain active members.

### **The Assessment & Diversity Plan Subcommittee:**

In the coming year, the Assessment and Diversity Plan subcommittees should continue to function as one subcommittee. Many of the Assessment committee members were involved in developing the Diversity Plan. These same people can be recruited to help develop the assessment measures for the plan.

Second, it is necessary to set a firm date for the launch of the Diversity Plan as soon as possible. The Assessment and Diversity Plan subcommittee needs to work closely with the Strategic Planning Group to determine the most feasible date. Once the date has been selected, the Assessment and Diversity Plan subcommittee could then develop the assessments for the plan by launch date.

Third, it has also been suggested that the presentation of the Diversity Plan be thoughtfully framed. Otherwise, it would be easy for the Diversity Plan to be perceived as just another item on the to-do list, instead of truly institutionalizing the College's



plan to present a workshop series working with the TLC that will begin with an example from an integrative approach at Temple University curriculum work and universal design. They will promote examples of curriculum-based diversity concerns as one of several core features of a campus committed to capitalizing on diversity.

The Professional Development subcommittee recommended that the curriculum be assessed to ensure that alternative perspectives and paradigms are considered in equal measure—contemporary approaches to the curriculum are often the consequence of explicit efforts to be inclusive of diverse knowledge sets. However, this issue will probably be addressed by the Assessment and Diversity Plan (ADP) subcommittee as part of their work. Thus, we encourage members of the Professional Development subcommittee who are interested in this issue to collaborate with members of the ADP subcommittee.

- (4) Identify other diversity-related issues that are relevant for the campus and develop workshops designed to facilitate communication (e.g., ableism, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.)
  
- (5) As a way to support faculty, identify the patterns of selecting speakers for campus events and link them to existing coursework for full impact. Specifically, this subcommittee should create a list of faculty that describes their interest and efforts to integrate diversity into their courses. If these names are readily available, we can contact these faculty members when certain speakers are on campus and help them to connect them to their course work.
  
- (6) Identify faculty who embed diversity in their courses as exemplars of the strength of diversity —



We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the Commission for all of their hard work and dedication, especially the chairs of the various subcommittees who have provided such effective leadership in the process. It is both a pleasure and a privilege to work with a group of individuals who are so committed to making a positive difference in our community.



## **Report of the Student and Campus Engagement Subcommittee: Real World Geneseo project and PATH awards**

Submitted by Susan Norman and Fatima Rodriguez Johnson

### **Committee Members:**

Donte Bothel, Student

Nikisha John, Student

Garry Morgan, Area Coordinator, Residence Life

Susan Preston Norman, Xerox Center for Multicultural Teacher Education

Gina Ottolia, Student

Robert Owens, Dept. of Communicative Disorders

Vishal Patel, Student

Fatima Rodriguez Johnson, Office of Multicultural Programs & Services

Isaiah Tolbert, Resident Director, Residence Life

Annmarie Urso, School of Education

### **RWG Assessment Researchers:**

Monica Schneider

Julie Rao

Diantha Watts

SUNY Geneseo staff and faculty co-facilitated the RWG 2 retreat for 14 students during the October break, October 9-October 12, 2010. The retreat was similar in content to RWG 1 with the addition of an outdoor low ropes course to do trust and team building activities. During December 15-17 2010, SUNY Geneseo held a train the trainer conference whereby Robert Jones trained 8 faculty and staff in the Diversity curriculum for the RWG retreats. With this training three SUNY Geneseo staff and faculty led the first all Geneseo facilitated retreat for RWG 3 that took place January 13-16, 2011. The retreat for RWG 2 and RWG 3 consisted of thirty-eight dedicated contact hours of interactive workshops on racism, sexism, religious bias, classism and ableism. The RWG 3 retreat was offered to 24 students and 3 Geneseo staff/faculty participant observers. All student participants were assessed using pre-retreat and post retreat on-line surveys. Students also documented their journeys during the retreat by making video diaries. Both retreats were followed up by diversity focused connecting course and group meetings about the impact of RWG retreat. Focus group discussions from RWG 2 reveal the following benefits (1) students report being transformed/enlightened by their RWG retreat experience (2) reflective lab has allowed students to stay close to their cohort and experience emotional support from their peers (3) students report speaking up/out in connecting courses and being praised for sharing diverse attitudes and insights with non-RWG peers.

During the Spring 2011, the SACES members met to consider the Path nominations from across campus. 5 awards were given, three to students and two faculty/staff members: Fiona Harvey, Statsia Monteiro, Rejoyce Owusu, Nicole McCawthan, and Linda Ware.



## **Report of the Assessment & Diversity Plan Committees President's Commission on Diversity & Community**

Submitted by Julie Rao

### **Committee members:**

Alexandra Carlo, Health & Counseling  
Celia Easton, Dean of Residence Life  
A. Scott Hemer, Head Women's Basketball Coach  
Harry Howe, Professor of Accounting  
Gloria Lopez, Director of Affirmative Action  
Polly Radosh, Dean of the College  
Julie Rao, Director of Institutional Research  
Farooq Sheikh, Assistant Professor, School of Business  
Kathy Trainor, Staff Associate, Student & Campus Life  
Julie Rao, Co-chair  
David Gordon, Co-chair

### **Committee Activities:**

The Diversity Plan was presented to the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) late last academic year. The SPG added reviewing the Diversity to its agenda for this academic year. SPG finished its review of the Diversity Plan in the spring semester. The intended goal of the Assessment Committee was to develop the assessment outcomes for the Diversity Plan. With the delay in getting the plan through the SPG, the Assessment Committee never met.

The Diversity Indicators were updated and are included with this report.

Our suggestions for next year's agenda would be to combine the Assessment and Diversity Plan committees. Many of the Assessment committee members were involved in developing the Diversity Plan. These same people can be recruited to help develop the assessment measures for the plan.

Another idea for next year is to set a firm date for the launch of the Diversity Plan. The Assessment subcommittee would then have to develop the assessments for the plan by launch date. It has also been suggested that the presentation of the Diversity Plan be thoughtfully framed. It would be easy for the Diversity Plan to be perceived as just another item on the to-do list, instead of operationalizing the College's commitment to diversity and community. Commission members and members of the Diversity/Assessment subcommittees could serve as presenters of the Diversity Plan to

The Office of Institutional Research has starting looking at outcomes for cohorts on a unit record basis. They have made use of the Student Clearinghouse Services to obtain information on students' transfer patterns. These unit record files, stripped of identifying information, were shared with Professors Edward Drachman and Monica Schneider. They have worked with students to analyze the data and presented their results to the Committee on Inclusive Excellence. The Committee will use some of their results to

**Report of the Professional Development Subcommittee**  
Submitted by Linda Ware

**Committee Members:**

Michelle Costello, Reference and Instruction Librarian  
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completely erased from the campus despite the active student leadership by Pride Alliance and Students Educating Against Ableism (SEAA).

### Diversity in Community contexts

There exist several female community members who as dairy farmers offer local examples of empowering representations of women in our community; there exist women who join their husbands as laborers in the fields and on dairy farms; there are several women in business in Livingston County who merit recognition along with those who represent the strength of all forms of diversity that typically fall outside the venues for recognition on our campus.

### **Recommendations 2011-2012**

- Action: Curriculum integration

This follows on the point that students continue to stress their awareness of the lack of integration of diversity concerns within the curriculum. An integrative approach to curriculum planning that accounts for race, class, gender and disability appears to be limited to specific courses.

- Action: Design for All

Curriculum support could be advanced through planning with the college on a “design for all” strategy (Universal Design for Learning) that takes into account varied pedagogical approaches augmented by sophisticated technology usage. A “Design for All” framework (universal design) invites serious consideration of the question, “Who is excluded by our instruction?” We will present a workshop coordinated by the Teaching and Learning Center based on an integrative



while the work of others on campus proceeds as if diversity concerns were “optional”—the work for some, but not all.

•Action:

We hope to advance diversity as a measure of human wealth. Simply put, Geneseo would be a less interesting place were it not for the opportunity to mine multiple forms of diversity needed on our campus. \_\_\_\_\_ was submitted for funding through the Faculty Project Initiation Grants but it was not funded. The project evolved from the discussion of diversity representation presented above, but narrowed the focus to disability in an effort to propose a manageable idea to the Research Council. However, the project merits a second look with revision that would address diversity writ large across the campus.

•Action: Normative accounting of exclusion.

Utilize existing evaluation data (Julie Rao) to map diversity and cultural concerns to identify the following:

- 1) Visual markers that represent disability across campus ( \_\_\_\_\_ );
- 2) Identify faculty who have attempted to embed diversity in their courses as exemplars of the strength of diversity writ large—and **HIGHLIGHT** their efforts perhaps in the Lamron or from a webpage with a link to something catchy like “Diversity Does It” or “Contextualizing Diversity”—just a few examples to consider.
- 3) Identify the number of students who graduate without taking any targeted courses—

contacts could have been made and Dr. Ben-Moshe's time on campus would not be limited to a single issue presentation. This was accomplished in the second event supported by Fatima Johnson's office when Eli Clare, a Vermont based poet and disability/queer activist was invited to present during Cultural Harmony week. This recommendation came from a Women's Studies student who encountered her work in a textbook for a course and from a documentary screened in a WS 100 course. During his stay Eli presented to three sections of CURR 320, and to a combined class with Professors Katz and Blood, in addition to his lecture/workshop on embodiment in the example of the queer, disabled body that filled Newton 201.



collaboratively with students who have completed Real World Geneseo (RWG<sup>1</sup>). For this project, RWG students will be afforded leadership opportunities working with faculty who have convened over the years in similar interrogations of privilege and power teaching on a campus that historically has a white majority among students, faculty and administrators<sup>2</sup>. These overlapping experiences will be examined to address local concerns in a context that is informed by broader understanding to sustain and promote cultural diversity at Geneseo. In addition, senior faculty who address cultural diversity in their teaching and their scholarship or are interested in broadening their knowledge about these issues will be encouraged to participate. In sum, we aim to structure more than an “amorphous, homogenized construction of whiteness” (Simon, 153) as the problem, but at the same time, we seek to probe beneath the academic “nod to diversity” (Ware, 2009).

**Project design:** CiCCiP will support monthly workshops with student/faculty teams who will examine attitudes, assumptions and practices linked to instructional vignettes that challenge non-mainstream perspectives specific to race/ethnicity, gender, ability, religious and socioeconomic differences. “Critical incidents” (Tripp, 1993) linked to classroom practice have been discussed among the members of the President’s Commission on Diversity and the College who have undertaken action to address race and sexual assault training campus wide. CiCCiP will seek greater articulation of cultural difference in the safe space that faculty who are prepared in advance can provide through the use of “inclusive pedagogies” in the classroom (Adams, et. al, 2007). Participants in the first meeting will identify “critical incidents” they have experienced at Geneseo as the springboard for the development of collaborative research to delineate inclusive pedagogies and a shared response to oppressive and exploitative social relations. These vignettes will be co-authored by faculty and student teaching assistants who will work closely with faculty to complete directed study research framed within the Geneseo context. Junior faculty of color and those with lived diversity experience who are new to campus will be recruited to participate as it has been reported that “teaching against the grain” (Simon, 1992) and their efforts to challenge the status quo curriculum can result in a sense of isolation that is akin to that experienced by students. These faculty members are likely to have encountered inclusive pedagogies in graduate school, and as a consequence, they often offer course work that closely aligns with this proposal. The collaborative research projects produced through this project with students who are

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<sup>1</sup> This weekend-long transformative retreat brings together a diverse group of students to explore personal issues of privilege, power, class, race, gender identity, and “ableism” as each affects academic and co-curricular life on campus. RWG has become a keystone in the development of a structural response to promote campus diversity in collaboration with Academic Affairs faculty and staff and Student and Campus Life staff.

<sup>2</sup> The college has two active committees organized through the national network of Bringing Theory to Practice that include several faculty who authored this proposal. In addition, the campus has organized two campus teach-in days that entail a year of study on a given topic in advance of a full day teach-in. In 2007-2008, we addressed Race and presently we are participating in discussion of issues related to sexual violence that will culminate in a Sexual Assault Training teach-in in 2011. Faculty members associated with this project are active members in both initiatives.

under-represented in the production of academic research will be featured at Geneseo's