

College of Arts and Sciences

2008/2009 Diversity Report

The College of Arts and Sciences supports the diversity plan of Ferris State University through the activities and initiatives sponsored by individual faculty, auxiliary operations, departments, and the college detailed below by department.

THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

The College of Arts and Sciences, through the diversity committee, continues to work on the following major diversity initiatives from last year:

- Apply to Host a Threatened Scholar during the 2011/2012 Academic Year

The committee has contacted the Scholar Rescue and continues to work with the organization to line up a scholar. Host institutions must provide matching funds, which may include salary, housing, and meal plans, and must provide funding to secure an appropriate visa, generally a J1 visa. The RSF provides \$20,000 for travel and stipend.

- Collaboration with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning on the Bridging Campus Classrooms: Connecting Diverse Students Initiative

This initiative is designed to link Ferris State University faculty and their students with faculty and students from colleges and universities, via web-based video conferencing and other asynchronous or synchronous technology-based activities, that are comprised, predominantly, of students who have different ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural histories and identities. The engagement itself is intended to facilitate student learning in subject or content areas, while also increasing students' knowledge of perspectives, experiences, beliefs, and cultural histories and identities that are different from their own.

The following new diversity initiatives were added to the College of Arts and Sciences Diversity Committee's Action Plan this year:

- The creation of a multidisciplinary action community to "Transform Stigma Surrounding Mental Illness" The primary goal of the committee is to raise awareness of the faculty, staff, and students about the fact that people in all aspect of society, including our university, are functioning in a healthy manner with mental health disabilities. Speakers, seminars, monthly social gatherings, movies, and panels will be used.
- Conduct research on the inclusion of minority and staff on the campus. The research will move from a qualitative pilot study of racial minority faculty in the Fall of 2009 to a quantitative analysis of racial, sexual, disabled, and religious minority faculty and staff. The goal is to locate strengths to retain, and weaknesses to counter.

- Coordinate efforts with Admissions, Academic Affairs, and Minority Student Affairs to support the recruitment of Native American students.
- Conduct research to estimate the size of our student population who are caregivers of children, discover their needs and unique difficulties obtaining resources at Ferris, locate and advertise existing campus resources to this population, and advocate on their behalf.
- Collaborate with the Native Wild Rice Coalition to support the multicultural learning experiences of wild rice camps in Lower Michigan each September. These camps (several days long) will be open to faculty, staff, and students at FSU, and will occur off-campus in a natural setting adjacent to wild rice populations in Michigan. This diversity initiative includes research and education about Native American culture and natural resource management, with expert Great Lakes American Indian Wild Rice instructors as well as American Indian participants (and non-Indian participants) from across Michigan.
- Nurture the development of diversity and inclusion objectives and outcomes for course syllabi across disciplines by working with the Center for Teaching and Learning's learning community coaching faculty who are including diversity and inclusion objectives and outcomes in their syllabi for the first time.

DEPARTMENTS IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

The following activities were supported by CAS and the Departments of Lang and Lit, Physical, Social, and Biological Sciences.

- Queer Conversations: Inclusive dialogues on LBGTQA issues
 - Events:
 - “What's Morally Wrong With Homosexuality?” a lecture by Dr. John Corvino, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Wayne State University in Detroit and nationally known speaker on issues relating to morality and homosexuality. Monday October 5th at 7:00PM
 - For more information about Dr. Corvino, please visit his website <http://www.johncorvino.com/>
- “Love Makes a Family” Exhibit at the Rankin Art Gallery. The exhibit includes photographs and interviews of families with LBGT members.
 - Exhibit runs Monday October 5th -23rd
 - Gallery Reception on Tuesday October 6th from 5:00PM to 7:00PM
 - For more information on the exhibit visit: <http://www.familydiv.org/lovemakesafamily.php>
- Screening of the film “Seven Passages” followed by a discussion with Reverend Jim Lucas. Tuesday October 20 in IRC 120
 - This film is an adaptation of the 2007 play “Seven Passages: The Stories of Gay Christians” written by Stephanie Sandberg, Professor at Calvin College in Grand

Rapids. The film presents real life stories of gay Christians and includes their varying interpretations of the seven Bible passages frequently referenced in discussions of homosexuality. The play was based on Sandberg's ethnographic interviews of over 125 gay and lesbian people from the West Michigan area.

BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

- **Our faculty incorporate diversity into their classes**
 - All new Biology Freshman are enrolled in FSUS 100 /HNRS 100 with Jenice Winowiecki. She has incorporated the following activities into this class:
 - David Pilgrim's movie and a visit to the Jim Crow museum.
 - A visit DSAGA
 - Presentation by WISE
 - From Roger Mitchell :
 - *During the freshman sequence, I discuss the overwhelming evidence that the biological sciences have provided supporting the idea of equality among human ethnic groups. I use evidence from population genetics that different groups are not significantly different, while discussing the recent origin of modern humans, which provides an explanation for this fact. I stress that the social sciences have addressed this issue far more directly, but I believe that these discussions have the potential to make minority students feel more comfortable within the biological and medical sciences. Since retaining minority students in the sciences can be difficult, I feel this is important.*
 - Faculty encourage their students to attend Diversity -related events. In some cases providing bonus points/ bonus assignments.
- **Our department has tried to recruit faculty** from under represented groups. Several faculty have taken a great deal of time to communicate with faculty post-interview to inform them of resources, community options, and generally provide a welcoming contact.

Our faculty are active in college and University diversity efforts

- University /College committees:
 - Mary Murnik has served on the university Diversity Planning Committee involved in the production of special programs for women (especially) with regard to the
 - Tres Vidas and Delores Huerta events on campus.
 - Several Faculty attend the Martin Luther King faculty in-service, Mary Murnik participates as a reader every year.
- Faculty and staff are trained as docents/facilitators for the Jim Crow Museum (Mary Murnik and Jenice Winowiecki)

- Several Department members belong /hold office in the Alliance of Ferris Employees (AFE).
- Scott Herron received a Diversity mini grant for a combined effort to build and maintain raised gardening beds that were handicap accessible

HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT

- The Department of Humanities provided broad support for Camp Idlewild of Michigan. This was a large project that included many faculty members and several students. (Grant Snider, Jill Jepsen, Diane Cleland, Carrie Weis, Harry Dempsey, Randy Groves, Trinity Williams, Cami Sanderson, Toni Baker, Kimn Carlton-Smith, and Gary Huey)
- Grant Snider (Department Head) serves on Diversity Office Mini-Grant Committee and is a member of AFE.
- Brooke Moore (COMM), Donna Smith (COMM), Jill Jepsen (ART), and David Schrock (COMM) all helped spread the spirit of inclusion through their Communication Counts Program. In response to a request from a local school they created a program called "Communication Counts" which addresses bullying between high school students, both on-line and face to face. Many times students get into conflicts because of their differences and they gave insight into how to handle these conflicts effectively. This program was presented to the entire high school class of Chippewa Hills, Crossroads Academy, and Morley Stanwood over the past year and a half.
- The Rankin Art Gallery supported Diversity efforts by hosting the following events:
- Oct. 2008 Diversity Art Exhibit: Native American Collection - exhibit, lecture & demonstration series, dinner. A traveling exhibition has been created from the art and was exhibited at the William Bonifas Fine Arts Center from Sept – Oct of 2009
- Charter High School Art Competition - exhibited the work of Ferris sponsored Charter Schools including competition with monetary awards and luncheon ceremony to include presentation from Kendall recruiter May 2008
- Solo Exhibition by Rufus Snoddy - African American artist creating works dealing with the theme "separate but equal" addressing social and racial issues Sept 2009
- Exhibition "Love Makes a Family" sponsored by a grant offered through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and hosted by the Alliance of Ferris Employees - including lecture presented by John Corvino from Wayne State University followed by a dinner for the AFE October 2009
- Received funding from mini-grant through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to host exhibition of works created by Fred Weston - an African American artist living with HIV - to include lecture/presentation about HIV, writing workshops, and presentation by Fred Weston. Fred is a FSU alumnus and organized the first African American fraternity on campus - for their 49th anniversary they will be honoring him during his visit to campus in conjunction with the exhibit.

- Sandy Alspach (COMM) is working this semester on the Martin Luther King Jr. Week Planning Committee, and have involved one of our majors, Andy Manardo, in this work.
- Grant Snider is scheduled to facilitate two sessions of the 'white privilege' activity designed by Peggy McIntosh during the week of Jan. 18, 2010. He continues on the list of facilitators for the Jim Crow Museum and participated in a 'refresher' session during Faculty Week this August. Last April he organized and facilitated a session at the Equity in the Classroom conference in Oakland based on our work with the JCM.
- Stephanie Thomson (COMM) submitted and received a diversity grant and coordinated efforts to bring Dolores Huerta to campus. She has served on both the CAS Diversity Committee and on the Arts & Lectures Senate Committee. On both committees she has worked to advance programs on mental illness awareness, Hispanic issues, and other diversity concerns.
- Tom Jorsch (HIST) supported the “Queer Conversations” project by incorporating the film “Seven Passages” into his HIST 331 course (American Cultural History to 1865)
- The Theatre Program (Katherine La Pietra) has programmed *Personals* as its Spring semester musical production
- Susan Morris (HUMN) serves as Educational Director of the Jim Crow Museum.
- Barry Mehler (HIST) received a diversity mini-grant to host a debate on immigration issues.

LANGUAGES & LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

- From the beginning of Fall 2008 to the end of Fall 2009 members of the Department of Languages and Literature have sponsored a number of events and served in professional capacities that promote diversity. These include language conversation tables, field trips, community lectures, various holiday celebrations, and committee memberships. The following list is a summary of the types of activities in which faculty engaged:
- The French faculty members Dan Noren and Nell Hill hosted regular conversation tables every Friday at Bigby Coffee. They also put on at least five French film nights, three African dinner parties, three film night soirees with French food, and a Mardi Gras party. The faculty have also recently taken students to Chicago to view French art at the Art Institute and hosted a French Immersion Weekend at Portage Lake Camp in Onkama, Michigan. Most recently, the French holiday party was held in conjunction with the Spanish department at St. Paul’s Parish Center.
- The Spanish faculty members Steve Symmes, Ana Davila-Howard, Gustavo Rodriguez-Moran, Eric Warner, and Gitte Hansen hosted regular Spanish tables at El Burrito Loco and monthly Spanish films. They also hosted a Cinco de Mayo celebration and a two holiday parties. The faculty was especially active in the local community this last year with Anna Davila-Howard giving presentations on Hispanic culture at area schools and for the Humanities Council. She also worked regularly with admissions to give presentations for large groups of Hispanic students who visited the campus. Symmes taught Tango lessons for a local dancing club. Most recently Eric Warner initiated a

board-book project with Michigan Migrant Headstart. Rodriguez-Moran and Anna Davila-Howard also have recently submitted a proposal to conduct a study abroad this Summer in Spain.

- The department also has faculty who have taken on other leadership roles that encourage diversity. Betty Stolarek serves on the CAS Diversity Committee, and Rebecca Sammel is a leader in the Globalization Initiative as well as the Critical Encounters lectures. John Caserta also will be taking a group of students to Italy, something he has been doing for over 20 years.
- Our departmental colloquium hosted by Katherine Miller's presentation "Rewriting the Body: Gender Narratives and the Transsexual" and Bernadette Fox's presentation "Fostering a Comfortable Environment for ESL and International Students in a 'Regular' Classroom."
- Lastly, the department co-sponsored events in the "Love Makes A Family" series during the Fall 2009. For details please see the Biology Department report.

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

- The Baldwin After-School Tutoring Program links Ferris students who are pre-service mathematics teachers with Baldwin elementary and high school students who need assistance with their study of mathematics.
- The S-STEM program (scholarships in science, technology, engineering and mathematics) made possible through a National Science Foundation grant written by Hengli Jiao, continues to assist underrepresented students.
- Hengli Jiao has recently submitted an additional grant intended for scholarships for underrepresented students majoring in mathematics.

PHYSICAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

- Along with most other departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, this department co-sponsored October events in the "Love Makes A Family" series, including the lecture on "What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?" lecture by Jon Corvino. See the Biology Department report for details.
- Along with the Math Department and Biology Department, this department provided several workshops, labs, and mentors for local high school students in the Math/Science/Technology Center—and providing many local students (all of whom are rural and many of whom are female) with opportunities in math and science not often found in larger population centers.
- One of this department's members, Piram Prakasam, is one of the leaders of the university's Globalization Initiative.
- Three members of this department (Piram Prakasam, Dan Adsmond, and Gary Hiel) are bringing diverse speakers onto campus through the efforts of Critical Encounters.

- One of the department's professors provided several lectures around Michigan and across the country on the chemistry of fermentation, highlighting different processes and styles of fermentation around the globe (including Germany, Peru, Chile, England and the U.S.).
- One member of this department is involved in a multi-institution collaboration with students from Flint MI and New Orleans on an environmental science project.

SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

- Christine Bailey conducted, with students, interviews with World War II veterans in the Upper Peninsula. This was coordinated through PEP.
- Jim Van Treese consulted for the Education and Career Counseling Center regarding disability accommodations. He now serves on the Disability Academic Review Committee.
- The Jim Crow Museum has had 2,198 visitors since January 1, 2009. This included 93 groups, including classes, schools (e.g., Covert H.S.), colleges and universities (e.g., Kent State), companies (e.g., Yoplait), and others (e.g., Eagle Village). The Traveling Exhibits were booked by 7 organizations (e.g., Alverno College).
- Multiple Social Sciences professors brought students to the Jim Crow Museum.
- Gerald Matthews published a book entitled *Issues on Race and Gender Politics: Antebellum to Present*. It has been adopted by the Social Work Program for specific courses.
- Bonnie Wright has her SSCI 310 class conduct research student parents at Ferris with a focus on how their needs are served by Ferris. Topics included housing, entertainment, financial aid, etc. They worked with Dean Potter.
- Mike Berghoef again traveled to El Salvador to investigate possible internships sites for Social Work students. He has very recently submitted a Study Away course in collaboration with GVSU.
- Mike Berghoef continues to work on 3 grant-funded projects:
 - Exceptional Merit Grant for healthy aging
 - Hartford GeroEd Baccalaureate Experiential Learning Grant promoting direct experience with student and aged adults
 - Hartford GeroEd Curriculum Development grant for infusing gerontological content into the SCWK program curriculum
- Social Sciences professors Wendy Samuels and Mike Berghoef provided presentations about the Jim Crow Museum.
- Tony Baker and Mike Berghoef gave a presentation about anti-racism pedagogy at the annual meeting of the Latino Social Workers Organization.
- Social Sciences faculty encouraged attendance at the various GLBT functions/presentations provided this year at Ferris.

- Multiple members of the Social Sciences Department have worked with the Ferris Alliance.
- Shawna Sampson-Mauldin has chaired the Diversity Mini Grant Committee
- Bonnie Wright now chairs the CAS Diversity Committee

DIVERSITY CHALLENGES IN THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

- The biggest challenge related to diversity in the College of Arts and Sciences remains recruiting and retaining a diverse student, faculty, and staff population.
- A second issue that continues is the need to coordinate the offering of diversity events and activities on campus. It has been brought to the attention of Diversity Committee members that at times there are multiple diversity activities scheduled at the same time. A central location for scheduling and promoting diversity events might minimize competing events.