

**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
2008-2009 DIVERSITY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT  
Submitted to Dean Sue Ott Rowlands by April L. Few, Chair**

The 2008-2009 CLAHS Diversity Committee was comprised of 26 members (20 teaching faculty, two faculty administrators, two staff, two graduate students). The committee met seven times during the school year (four in the fall semester and three in the spring), with approximately 6-10 members regularly attending. Several non-attending members served on sub-committees and/or other specific task assignments. Meeting days alternated between Tuesday and Wednesday, with Wednesday having the highest levels of attendance. Dean Sue Ott Rowlands attended the first CLAHS Diversity Committee meeting of the academic year and she shared her vision for the College, including the building of new graduate program for Africana Studies.

**DEAN'S CHARGE TO THE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE**

In the *College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Diversity-Related Accomplishment for 2007-2008*, Dean Sue Ott Rowlands outlined a four-point agenda for the College to accomplish in 2008-2009:

1. Integrate diversity within academic programs and initiatives;
2. Tackle "difficult conversations" in public venues, in partnership with YMCA;
3. Develop strategies for strengthening diversity of CLAHS, in context of building a CLAHS strategic plan; and
4. Conceive and develop proposals for new initiatives within CLAHS, monitoring, reviewing, and revising the first year implementation of the Departmental Diversity Grant Program.

Several members of the CLAHS Diversity Committee have played a role in moving the College toward the Dean's vision of diversity-related opportunities and tasks. The actions and accomplishments of Diversity Committee members reflect three of the four agenda goals for enriching diversity, broadly defined, in the College.

**ACTIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOWARD TARGETED GOALS**

**GOAL 1: Integration of Diversity within Academic Programs and Initiatives**

***Opportunity to Act as Consultants to Undergraduate University Curriculum Transformation***

April Few invited Susanna Rinehart, Assistant Provost for Liberal Education and University Studies, Shelia Carter-Tod, and Kevin McDonald, Vice President of the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI), to report on the status of **undergraduate university curriculum transformation initiative** that integrates diversity-focused curriculum, currently entitled, "Human Diversity and Community" on October 22, 2008. Rinehart revealed that there is a two-part requirement for undergraduate students. This may include the requirement for undergraduates to attend diversity events as part of a course that exposes students to diversity or to participate in community service, possibly through undergraduate research. Possible

faculty incentives to buy into this diversity-related initiative include: faculty stipends; merit increases; documentation in promotion and tenure dossiers and faculty annual reports; CEUT teaching awards; and faculty learning communities and/or groups.

There is an overall goal that every department meets the established learning goals that are being developed by Rinehart's and Carter-Tod's working group of 15 recruited members. The learning goals include: perspective-taking; empathy; historical legacy of inclusion and exclusion; civil discourse; active listening tolerance; civic values; studying commonalities and differences; examination of privilege and prejudice; social agency and change; and developing and understanding diverse social groups. CLAHS departments are primed to be leaders in this undergraduate curriculum transformation as so many of our courses serve university core courses and constitute the general core.

Vice President McDonald remarked that the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) is looking forward to assisting in supporting the implementation of faculty development workshops in early Summer, 2009 in order to pilot the new curriculum by Fall, 2009. The 15-member working group will work with consultants, who will include CLAHS Diversity Committee members.

The response from attending Diversity Committee members was very positive and supportive. One committee member suggested that we need to be careful in making sure that the new curriculum is integrated with the greatest degree of acceptance from faculty. Many attending committee members volunteered to act as consultants.

### ***Opportunity to Act As Change Agents for Promotion and Tenure Process***

During the November, 2008 diversity committee meeting, Ann Kilkelly introduced the idea of diversity committee members participating in an “**Imagining America**” workshop. Imagining America is a national consortium of colleges and universities committed to public scholarship in various disciplines. Imagining America challenges institutions to address the meaning and value of public scholarship in the tenure and promotion process. Imagining America is inclusive of scholarship that focuses on the intersections of race, gender, culture, poverty, and oppression and multiple venues of translating that scholarship into “publishable” outlets that count in the tenure and promotion process. Workshop attendees used the Imagining America Tenure Team Initiative report, “Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University” to think about how this report can be a useful template toward changing our institutional culture for tenured faculty, untenured faculty, and the future professoriate.

Workshop attendees included several administrators, graduate students, and faculty from Virginia Tech, Bellarmine University, Northern Kentucky University, Syracuse University, University of Kentucky, and Western Kentucky University. Virginia Tech Discussion/Focus group leaders included Shelli Fowler (Engaged scholarship: Broadening the Definition, Making the Case), April Few (Diversity and Public Scholarship), William Huckle (Leadership and Public Scholarship), and Megan Carney (The Future Professoriate Identifying Current Challenges and Possibilities for Change). Each focus group was audiotaped and hopefully, Kilkelly will report on the success of this workshop in Fall, 2010.

### ***Opportunity to Change Campus Climate by Evaluation of Retention Practices***

The Office of Equity and Inclusion provided preliminary financial support for the pilot implementation of a **Faculty Retention Initiative**, conceived and developed by a CLAHS Diversity Committee Work Group (Bob Leonard, April Few, Kwame Harrison, and Marian Mollin). Leonard served/serves as Chair of this Work Group Steering Committee. Dr. Damon Williams was hired as our consultant for this project. Williams is Vice Provost for Diversity and Climate, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's chief diversity officer. He holds a doctorate in organizational behavior and management from the University of Michigan and is nationally recognized in the areas of diversity, leadership and organizational change. This pilot project was launched in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences with three departments—Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management, History, and Interdisciplinary Studies in Fall, 2008.

Faculty from each participating departments volunteered to serve as Faculty Team Leaders in this participatory action project. For AHRM, Julia Beamish, Irene Leech, and Jihyun Kim agreed to serve. History's team included Dan Thorp, Beverly Bunch-Lyons, and Randy Schiffler and IDST's team included Sam Cook, Betty Fine, Barbara Ellen Smith, and Peter Schmitthenner.

At the time of this report, Williams has met with members of the Faculty Retention Initiative Steering Committee, Kevin McDonald, Ray Plaza, Fred Piercy, Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research and Director of College Diversity Initiatives, and faculty of the participating departments. Williams has completed the second round of interviews.

### ***Opportunity to Fulfill Land-Grant Mission as Community Partners***

Jean Elliott requested a meeting with Associate Dean Piercy and April Few to provide the Diversity Committee with a forum to discuss possible faculty research and/or outreach collaboration with a local grassroots community group, the **Citizens' Network of New River Valley** (CNNRV). Few invited two representatives from the group, Dr. Ben Dixon (former Vice President of Multicultural Affairs of Virginia Tech) and Dr. Jim Dubinsky (English) to February, 2009 Diversity Committee meeting.

As quoted from the CNNRV handout, the purpose of the CNNRV is “to promote the examination of fundamental causes underlying societal, environmental, and economic challenges to the community” and to “facilitate public dialogue on common or consensus issues” toward the end of identifying those best practices for improving the societal, environmental, and economic status of the New River Valley.

Diversity Committee members were very supportive of this opportunity. Elliott will continue to serve as a CLAHS Diversity Committee liaison at the CNNRV meetings.

### **GOAL 3: Development of a CLAHS Diversity Strategic Plan for Strengthening Diversity**

Peggy Meszaros served as chair of the **CLAHS Diversity Strategic Plan** at the request of Dean Sue Ott Rowlands. The Steering Committee included Mido Chang, Jean Elliott, Rachel Holloway, David McKee, Rick Shingles, Michele Kim, April Few, and Fred Piercy and Debra Stoudt, CLAHS Associate Dean, as Ex. Officio members. The committee reviewed the University's Principles of Community and Strategic Plan, the recommendations of the Task

Force on Race and the Institution, CLAHS faculty and student demographics, as well as diversity plans (strategies and mandates) from CLAHS departments and other universities. The first draft of the CLAHS Diversity Committee Plan was presented and reviewed by the CLAHS Diversity Committee in November, 2008.

#### **GOAL 4: Revision of Diversity Award and Departmental Diversity Grant Program RFPs**

Associate Dean Piercy revised the RFPs for both the **CLAHS Diversity Award** and the **CLAHS Departmental Diversity Grant**, a program that has been funded in the amount of \$25,000.

The recipients of the 2008/2009 CLAHS Departmental Diversity Grant award presented culminating reports at the March, 2009 Diversity Committee meeting.

- Theatre Arts - "Virginia High School Performing Arts Visit Program" - \$2,805
- Philosophy - "A Diverse Graduate Applicant Pool" - \$4,995
- History - "Segregated Public Schools in Southwest Virginia" - \$10,000
- Theatre Arts and Sociology - "Stage A Change: A Documentary Theatre Project on Classroom Climate" - \$5,629

Reports from each of these projects will be gathered in the Dean's office and available for public review in the Fall, 2009.

Three proposals were submitted for review this year.

- Apparel, Housing, and Resource Management - \$10,000
- Music – "Imani Winds Guest Artist Residency" - \$15,720
- Philosophy – " 'Ethics and Democracy:' A Lecture Series, Public Outreach, and Recruiting Program" - \$6,150

An addendum listing this year's recipients and awarded amounts will follow shortly as the assigned CLAHS Diversity Committee subcommittee is still reviewing these named proposals at the time that this report has been submitted to Dean Ott Rowlands (March, 2009).

#### **OTHER 2008/2009 CLAHS DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS / ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- As liaison to the Diversity Committee, Associate Dean Piercy attended committee meetings and university diversity-related events, and coordinated several College diversity-related initiatives. Specifically, he:

- Served as PI for the Faculty Retention Initiative and represented the College in the development and implementation of the initiative. He also developed the IRB protocol.
  - Coordinated and revised the RFP for both the CLAHS Diversity Award process and the CLAHS Departmental Diversity Grant Program.
  - Coordinated the New Faculty Mentoring Program.
  - Supported diversity initiatives and concerns in his liaison role with the College deans and department heads.
  - Reviewed CLAHS Diversity Committee agendas with the Diversity Committee Chair and provided meeting minutes to committee members when necessary.
  - Participated as both a panelist and a focus group member for the Imaging America Workshop on February 27, 2009 in the Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown.
  - Attended the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Diversity Summit, LGBTQ Communities: Exploring Issues and Building Alliances on February 27, 2009 in the Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown
  - Served as a panelist for an Advance VT panel on faculty mentoring;
  - Presented to MAOP graduate students on “Writing for Publication.”
  - Nominated Bob Leonard for the CLAHS Diversity Award.
- Katherine Allen served as the CLAHS representative to the Virginia Tech Minority Serving Institution Advisory Council. Allen also volunteered to serve on the Awards/Recognition subcommittee of the Virginia Tech Minority Serving Institution Advisory Council.
  - The CLAHS Diversity Award subcommittee was comprised of Katherine Allen (chair), Toni Calasanti, and Kwame Harrison, the former CLAHS Diversity Award co-recipient.
  - The CLAHS Departmental Diversity Award subcommittee was composed of Marjorie Norton, Mido Chang, Damion Waymer (chair), and Audrey Kemp Burnett.
  - Bob Leonard served as the chair of the Faculty Retention Initiative Steering Committee.
  - The 2008/2009 CLAHS Diversity Award subcommittee recognized the extraordinary and tireless contributions of Bob Leonard to the University and community.
  - As CLAHS Diversity Fellow, April Few:
    - Chaired the CLAHS Diversity Committee.
    - Attended meetings of the Chairs of College Diversity Committees.

- Served on the Faculty Retention Initiative Steering Committee, a role deriving from prior volunteer service on the Campus Climate Research Work Group with Bob Leonard, Kwame Harrison and Marian Mollin.
- Served on the CLAHS Diversity Strategic Plan, co-authoring the Access and Success part of the document with Rick Shingles.
- Served on the CLAHS Strategic Plan Steering Committee.
- Met with Kevin McDonald, Vice President of the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) and Karen Eley Sanders, Assistant Provost and Director of Academic Support Services, to reconfigure the Coordinated School Visit Program five times this year. Kwame Harrison, co-founder, also attended these meetings. Reconfiguration includes future assistance from the Virginia-Nebraska Alliance, the OEI, and the Virginia Tech Graduate School.
- Met with Dean Karen DePauw to discuss additional funding for the Coordinated School Visit Program (stipend, a 10-hour GA position).
- Collaborated with the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute and College of Veterinary Medicine in minority recruitment efforts under the auspices of the Coordinated School Visit Program.
- Served as a faculty panelist of the New Faculty Mentoring Program panel on “DeMystifying the Tenure and Promotion Process” on January 28, 2009.
- Invited representatives from the Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program and the LGBTQA Resource Center to share resources with committee members.
- Recruited volunteers to serve on CLAHS Diversity Committee award committees.
- Invited Ben Dixon (retired) and Jim Dubinsky (VT English) of the Citizen’s Network of New River Valley to seek research and outreach collaboration and partnerships with this grassroots community-capacity building group of academic faculty, community leaders, and business owners.
- Attended the opening of the LGBTQ Resource Center.
- Attended the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Diversity Summit, “LGBTQ Communities: Exploring Issues and Building Alliances” in the Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown on February 27, 2009. Noted racial/ethnic insensitivity spoken by panelists and reported this unfortunate and unchallenged insensitivity in an evaluation survey.
- Participated in a diversity focus group of the Imagining America workshop facilitated by Ann Kilkelly, a CLAHS Diversity Committee member, in the Graduate Life Center at Donaldson Brown on February 27, 2009.
- Wrote a letter of support for Bob Leonard to be the 2008/2009 recipient of the CLAHS Diversity Award.

### **FUTURE TASKS TO PURSUE 2009/2010**

- The CLAHS Diversity Committee Chair will continue to participate in the 08/09 Faculty Retention Initiative pilot project and provide follow-through with any recommendations or activities related to “public” outcomes (Some outcomes will be treated as “in-house documents” and thus, confidential by participating departments and steering committee members).
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee Chair will highlight public outcomes from the Faculty Retention Initiative in the next Diversity Summit poster session.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee Chair will take on new responsibilities outlined by the new CLAHS Strategic Plan and CLAHS Diversity Strategic Plan.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee Chair will work with Kevin McDonald and Karen Eley Sanders to engage the Virginia-Nebraska Alliance connections in order to create prospective graduate student pipelines for the Coordinated School Visits Program and the College.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee Chair will maintain a working relationship with the OEI in order to integrate CLAHS-generated diversity initiatives that reflect goals of the CLAHS Strategic Plan and CLAHS Diversity Strategic Plan.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee Chair will recruit volunteers to review and update the Diversity web site within the CLAHS website.
- Members of the CLAHS Diversity Committee may offer their service as consultants for the Undergraduate University Curriculum Transformation Initiative.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee will serve as a “listening post” for college and university concerns and “hot spot” issues.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee will pursue the re-establishment of a GA to Christiansburg Institute.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee will serve as a resource to the Dean’s Office in departmental faculty search processes. The committee members may be available to meet with incoming candidates upon request of the Dean and department chairs.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee will follow-up on the possibility for undergraduate, graduate, and/or faculty research collaboration with the members of the CNNRV. Perhaps, this connection is the new face of the “Difficult Dialogues” project.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee will follow-up on the revitalization of an ABD program to cultivate a pipeline of minority hires. This task is presently listed as a goal and/or action in the new CLAHS Diversity Strategic Plan.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee will continue to coordinate CLAHS diversity awards.

