

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences

Diversity-Related Accomplishment for 2007-2008

Submitted by Dean Sue Ott Rowlands

The College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences remains committed to creating and fostering an environment of inclusion through the recruitment and retention of a diverse body of faculty, staff and students. To that end, we work closely with the Offices of Equal Opportunity and Multicultural Affairs and rely heavily on our College Diversity Committee to provide leadership in this important area.

The CLAHS Diversity Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Bob Leonard and Interim Associate Dean Fred Piercy, continued its promotion of diversity in the College and University. After serving as College Diversity Fellow for the past three years, Dr. Leonard stepped down and was replaced by Dr. April Few who will serve as diversity fellow and chair of the diversity committee 2008-2010.



Dr. April Few, CLAHS Diversity Fellow



In the fall of 2007 I asked the CLAHS Diversity Committee to create for college-wide review and approval a College Statement of Commitment to Diversity. The following affirmation statement was approved by a unanimous vote of the Diversity Committee of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences on January 28, 2008. Unanimous approval followed by the CLAHS Administrative Council and the CLAHS Faculty Council. The statement was then widely distributed within the university committee and to our alumni. The statement reads as follows:

We, the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Diversity Committee, use the term "diversity" to mean the desirability and value of many kinds of individual differences while at the same time acknowledging and respecting that socially constructed differences based on certain characteristics exist within systems of power that create and sustain inequality, hierarchy, and privilege. The College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences is determined to eliminate these forms of inequality, hierarchy, and privilege in our programs and practices. In this sense, diversity is to be actively advanced because it fosters excellence in learning, discovery, and engagement.*

** These characteristics include, but are not limited to ability, age, body size and condition, class, color, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, geographical and cultural background, health status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status.*

The 2007/2008 CLAHS Diversity Committee was made up of 32 members: 19 teaching faculty, 4 faculty administrators, 2 staff, 6 graduate students, and 1 undergraduate student. This was the first year the committee operated as a standing committee of the CLAHS Faculty Association. The committee pursued several initiatives during the year and made significant progress in each area. We identified 4 specific goals for the committee's work during 2007-2008:

1. Develop strategies for strengthening diversity of CLAHS
2. Conceive and develop a proposal(s) for a new initiative(s) within CLAHS and submit to Dean's Office for consideration for funding
3. Integrate diversity with academic programs and initiatives
4. Tackle "difficult conversations" in public venues

The four charges led to the following accomplishments:

- The CLAHS Diversity Committee has undertaken a two-year development process for a **College Diversity Strategic Plan** (under the leadership of Dr. Peggy Meszaros) and has completed Phase One. This process is based on a bottom up approach. Phase One gathered reports from each department in the College, each stating a departmental diversity assessment and perspective. A nine-member sub-committee has been formed under Dr. Meszaros to review the department reports and begin building a college strategy based on department needs and realities, as well as diversity priorities and mandates of the University. The timeline for this process sets December 1, 2008 as a completion date for the College Diversity Strategic Plan, with College approval by March 15, 2009. Following the adoption of the College's diversity plan, each department will be asked to create or update its departmental diversity plan. This work is intended to be completed during the 2009-2010 academic year.
- At my request, the Diversity Committee conceived and designed a new **Departmental Diversity Grant Program** for which the College provided \$25,000 for grant awards. Five proposals were submitted for review by a sub-committee panel and four projects were granted funding. The four funded proposals for 2008-2009 are:
 - 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/Sociology - "Stage A Change: A Documentary Theatre Project on Classroom Climate" - \$5,629Reports from each of these projects will be gathered in the Dean's office and available for public review in the fall of 2009. It is my intention to grow the amount of funding allocated for this new program to \$75,000 by 2010.
- CLAHS and the Office of Multicultural Affairs have forged a partnership in which we are both committed to working on promoting a climate of inclusion and increasing diversity in our faculty and students. To that end, OMA has provided preliminary financial support for the pilot implementation of a **Faculty Retention Initiative**, conceived and developed by a CLAHS Diversity Committee Work Group. OMA has allocated \$30,000 for this initiative which will be implemented within the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. This project, independently developed, coincidentally parallels the findings and implementation of the

Report from the Task Force on Race and the Institution. It specifically addresses the issues that gave rise to that Task Force. This project is conceived in the context of several other areas of institutional inquiry that could be implemented in other colleges, departments, and administrative units. Working in close partnership with the Office of Multicultural Affairs, this project will provide a completion report for wide distribution within the university.

- The 2007-2008 **College Diversity Award** recognized the extraordinary contributions of Drs. April Few and Kwame Harrison to the University community.
- The CLAHS Diversity Committee undertook preliminary steps to build a **YMCA/CLAHS partnership for public forums on campus and in Blacksburg**, with a projected implementation date of AY 2009/10. This rather low profile action this year is the start of a “difficult conversations” initiative that has the potential of high profile events on campus and in the communities of Blacksburg and the New River Valley. It intends to position the College as a university leader in the intellectual life of the campus and surrounding communities. This project re-activates a university/YMCA partnership that extends historically back to the end of the 19th Century and takes advantage of the YMCA’s already established leadership in programming public forums in Blacksburg. It also looks to the College, its faculty, students, and staff as assets for the development of well thought out, well facilitated public discussions around issues of deep public concern.
- The College continues to support the work of **the Christiansburg Institute**. Although budget reductions forced us to discontinue graduate student support of the institute (through the student’s assignment to the diversity committee), I intend to reinstate this GA as soon as the budget picture improves.
- No direct action was taken with regard to the integration of diversity within academic programs and initiatives. However, considerable discussion took place amongst the Committee members. Consensus seems to suggest that the plan would best be predicated on identifying the multiplicity of diversity-related academic courses, programs, and initiatives that already exist within the College. Further consensus suggests the importance of any strategy to honor and respect the function of the College Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

In addition to the work of the CLAHS Diversity Committee, the College pursued additional diversity initiatives during the 2007-2008 academic year, including a number of new ones. Several of our efforts were, and continue to be, directed at increasing the diversity of our student body, particularly our graduate students. And although these programs target graduate students, we expect that they will create new pipelines for recruiting minority undergraduates as well.

Under the leadership of Drs. Few and Harrison, CLAHS engaged in an aggressive graduate student recruitment program designed to increase diversity in our graduate programs. I allocated \$10,000 to the program this year. Simply described, the **Coordinated School Visit Program (CSVP)** is a unique program designed to coordinate disparate efforts to recruit and retain minority graduate students in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHS). The Graduate Recruiting Office of the Graduate School saw enough promise in this pilot program to have already incorporated its model into recent NSF grant proposals. The purpose of the CSVP is four-fold: (1) to increase the overall number of applications from students who identify as members of underrepresented groups; (2) to specifically target promising students from underrepresented groups; (3) to implement effective retention strategies to integrate

these students into the Virginia Tech community; and (4) to establish and maintain strong connections with other diverse universities and potentially, high schools– connections which should prove fruitful in the years to come. The CSVP enjoys a partnership with the departments of Human Development and Sociology, the Graduate School, the Assistant Dean of Student Services' Office, the Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program, the CLAHS Dean's Office, the Office of Equal Opportunity, and the Provost's Office.

In its initial year, the CSVP successfully completed visits to seven minority-serving institutions in Virginia and North Carolina. Twelve faculty and graduate students connected with sister departments to attend classes, information sessions, and graduate school fairs. History, Human Development, Sociology, Theatre Arts, and the School of Education were the outstanding participating departments this year. We anticipate more departments from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences to participate next year as we tweak the logistics with the Graduate School and further connections with faculty and administrators from minority-serving universities. A first-year follow-up survey was conducted which will help determine how to better serve the needs and expectations of faculty in this process. Recently, the CSVP Implementation Committee met with faculty and administrators from the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute (VBI) and plans have been set into motion to partner with VBI next year. We anticipate the continued growth of the CSVP, and expect it to have a noticeable impact on the campus community in the years ahead.

A second graduate student recruitment initiative focuses on creating **Articulation Agreements between Departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)**. We are working on a plan to support collaborative partnerships between departments with graduate programs in CLAHS and similar departments at selected HBCUs with related undergraduate programs. In short, department chairs of CLAHS programs at Virginia Tech will work out department-level agreements with department chairs of undergraduate programs at HBCUs. (We are presently working with Hampton University on such an agreement.) While these agreements may involve a wide range of collaborative efforts such as faculty and/or student exchanges and research projects, ***one basic feature of all agreements is that the Virginia Tech graduate departments will agree to accept and provide a full two-year assistantship to a certain number of qualified HBCU undergraduate students applying to Virginia Tech sister departments.*** The specifics of each departmental agreement may differ from department to department. We hope that one or two departmental agreements can be developed in the coming year. These agreements will serve as prototypes for other departmental agreements to develop in subsequent years. Agreements may be developed immediately where departmental assistantships can be used to support these agreements. The Virginia Tech collaborators also will explore additional sources of assistantship support through Virginia Tech's McNair Program, Multicultural Achievement Opportunity Program (MAOP), the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, and the Graduate School.

The College has also committed to be a partner in the **Virginia-Nebraska Alliance** and is contributing \$15,000 over the next three years to that initiative.

An analysis of our **hiring trends** over the past five years shows that the diversity of our faculty hiring increases each year. During our 2007-2008 hiring season we attracted 560 applicants for our tenure-track positions. Of those, 276 were female candidates and 100 were minority candidates. Of the 15 hires we eventually made, 7 were women, 2 were Asian, and 2 were Hispanic. In our non-tenure track searches, we had 26 women and 9 minority candidates in a pool of 52. We hired 6 individuals, 5 women

and 1 Asian. With the help of the Provost's office, we funded a special diversity hire in the Department of History this year (Dr. Dennis Hidalgo, a contemporary historian working on the Caribbean).

Position Type	Total Apps	Female Apps	Minority Apps	Total Interviews	Female Interviews	Minority Interviews	Total Hires	Hires by Gender	Hires by Ethnicity
2005-2006									
Tenure-Track/Tenure	1270	477 (38%)	179 (14%)	107	50	17	21	F-10 (48%)	Non-W- 1 (5%)
Non-Tenure-Track	129	53 (41%)	17 (13%)	31	14	4	12	F-6 (50%)	Non-W- 1 (8%)
2006-2007									
Tenure-Track/Tenure	677	246 (36%)	155 (23%)	62	33	8	18	F-12 (67%)	Non-W- 2 (11%)
Non-Tenure-Track	296	151 (51%)	79 (27%)	45	31	3	20	F-15 (75%)	Non-W- 2 (10%)
2007-2008									
Tenure-Track/Tenure	560	276 (49%)	100 (18%)	50	21	7	15	F-7 (47%)	Non-W- 4 (28%)
Non-Tenure-Track	52	26 (50%)	9 (18%)	20	12	2	6	F-5 (83%)	Non-W- 1 (17%)

Ethnicity: A=Asian/Pacific Islander, B=Black, H=Hispanic, U=Unknown, W=Caucasian

As well, we were successful in a **retention offer** to Dr. Ananda Abaseykara and are working with Dr. Terry Kershaw and the Provost's Office to keep him here at Virginia Tech by strategically investing in the Africana Studies Program. Our retention offer to Dr. Antonio Vasquez was not successful, but due to the generosity of the offer he acknowledged our efforts and publicly affirmed the University's and the College's commitment to diversity.

Finally, our **College P&T Guidelines** were revised to include the appropriate language regarding a candidate's engagement in diversity efforts; departmental guidelines will be updated this coming year.

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
2007-2008 Diversity Committee Overview Report
Submitted to Dean Sue Ott Rowlands by Robert Leonard, Chair

The 2007-2008 CLAHS Diversity Committee was made up of 32 members (See roster in Addenda): 19 teaching faculty, four faculty administrators, two staff, six graduate students, and one undergraduate student. The committee met for 90 minutes, nine times during the school year, four in the fall semester and five in the spring, with approximately 10 members regularly attending. Several non-attending members served on sub-committees and/or other specific task assignments.

STRUCTURAL INITIATIVES

From the very outset in her new position, Dean Sue Ott Rowlands made her deep commitment to diversity and inclusion abundantly clear. She embraced the College Diversity Committee structure, called on its leadership to take action for improvement in diversity affairs, and made funds available to support carefully thought out implementation.

Fred Piercy, Interim Associate Dean for Outreach, External Affairs, and Diversity Initiatives, replaced Valerie Hardcastle in her Diversity Initiatives assignment and worked closely with Bob Leonard, College Fellow for Diversity. Piercy coordinated several diversity programs and initiatives. Leonard chaired the Diversity Committee and participated actively in several other arenas. The two met regularly to coordinate their activities and organize the Committee's meetings and actions.

This was the first year the committee operated as a standing committee of the CLAHS Faculty Association. Patsy Lavender, 07/08 Chair of the CLAHS Faculty Council requested that she be sent the approved minutes for each of the meetings, which she then forwarded to appropriate members of the Council and Association. At the end of the year, Leonard provided Lavender with a bullet list of accomplishments for the Diversity Committee, as a summary end-of-year report to the Council and Association. Lavender assumed responsibility for putting out the call for new members of the Diversity Committee for the following (08/09) Academic Year. Leonard provided Lavender with the list of departments without representation for 08/09, after finalizing who among the current (07/08) roster wanted to continue their membership and who wanted to rotate off. Leonard also provided Dean Sue Ott Rowlands with the bullet list of Diversity Committee accomplishments as support material for the Dean's end-of-year report to the Faculty Association.

ACTIONS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

COORDINATION OF DIVERSITY PROGRAMS AND ACTIONS WITHIN THE COLLEGE AND IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY AND OTHER COLLEGES

- Dean Sue Ott Rowlands introduced herself to the Committee in our first meeting of the year, and presented two charges for the committee to undertake:
 1. Develop strategies for strengthening diversity of CLAHS
 2. Conceive and develop a proposal(s) for a new initiative(s) within CLAHS and submit to Dean's Office for consideration for funding

These two charges joined with two the 06/07 committee had identified for 07/08:

3. Integrate diversity with academic programs and initiatives
4. Tackle “difficult conversations” in public venues

The four charges led to the following accomplishments:

- The CLAHS Diversity Committee has undertaken a two-year development process for a **College diversity strategic plan** (under the leadership of Peggy Meszaros) and has completed Phase 1.
 - This process is based on a bottom up approach. Phase One gathered reports from each department in the College, each stating a departmental diversity assessment and perspective.
 - A sub-committee has been formed (Sue Farquhar, April Few, Rosa Mayorga, Rick Shingles) under Meszaros to review the department reports and begin building a college strategy based on department needs and realities, as well as diversity priorities and mandates of the University.
 - The timeline for this process sets March 15, 2009, as a completion date for the College Diversity Strategic Plan, with College approval by June 1, 2009. The subcommittee will use the full committee as a first line of review during the development of the plan.
- The Diversity Committee conceived and designed a **Departmental Diversity Grant program** (under the leadership of Rachel Holloway, with a sub-committee group of Jane Abraham, Tom Howard, and Marjorie Norton) for which the College has provided \$25,000 for grant awards. Five proposals were submitted for review by a sub-committee panel (Jane Abraham, Rosa Mayorga, Yasuo Miyazaki) Four projects were granted funding.
 - 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/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 of 2009.

- The CLAHS Diversity Committee developed and widely circulated a **statement of how it uses the term “diversity”** and how this usage connects to the values of the university. The statement was developed by a subcommittee (Ann Kilkelly, Katrina Landon, Rosa Mayorga, Marjorie Norton) under the leadership of Jean Elliott. The “Definition of Diversity,” approved by unanimous vote of those present at the January 28, 2008, meeting of the Diversity Committee and corrected by unanimous vote of those present at the February 18, 2008, meeting of the Committee reads as follows:
 - We, the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Diversity Committee, use the term "diversity" to mean the desirability and value of many kinds of individual differences while at the same time acknowledging and respecting that socially constructed differences based on certain characteristics exist within systems of power that create and sustain inequality, hierarchy, and privilege.* The College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences is determined to eliminate these forms of inequality, hierarchy, and privilege in our programs and practices. In this sense, diversity is to be actively advanced because it fosters excellence in learning, discovery, and engagement.
*These characteristics include, but are not limited to ability, age, body size and condition, class, color, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, geographical and cultural background, health status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status.

- The CLAHS Diversity Committee undertook preliminary steps to build a **YMCA/CLAHS partnership for public forums on campus and in Blacksburg**, with a projected implementation date of AY 2009/10. This rather low profile action this year is the start of a “difficult conversations” initiative that has the potential of high profile events on campus and in the communities of Blacksburg and the New River Valley. It intends to position the College as a university leader in the intellectual life of the campus and surrounding communities.
 - This project re-activates a university/YMCA partnership that extends historically back to the end of the 19th Century.
 - It takes advantage of the YMCA’s already established leadership in programming public forums in Blacksburg.
 - It looks to the College, its faculty, students, and staff as assets for the development of well thought out, well facilitated public discussions around issues of deep public concern.
 - Dean Sue Ott Rowlands has expressed her keen interest in this potential initiative and partnership, and asks the Committee to work with the YMCA to make it happen.
- The Office of Multicultural Affairs has 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).
 - This pilot project will be implemented within the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. The Faculty Retention Initiative concept statement can be found on the final two pages of this report.
 - This project, independently developed, coincidentally parallels the findings and implementation of the Report from the Task Force on Race and the Institution. It specifically addresses the issues that gave rise to that Task Force.
 - This project is conceived in the context of several other areas of institutional inquiry that could be implemented in other colleges, departments, and administrative units.
 - Working in close partnership with the Office of Multicultural Affairs, this project will provide a completion report for wide distribution within the university.
- The 2007/08 **College Diversity Award** recognized the extraordinary contributions of Drs. April Few and Kwame Harrison to the University community.
- No direct action was taken with regard to the integration of diversity within academic programs and initiatives. However, considerable discussion took place amongst the Committee members. Committee members present for the discussion were in general agreement (no vote taken) that the favored approach to integrating diversity in the curriculum is for diversity to be incorporated broadly in many courses students take and to avoid requiring students to take a particular diversity course. Regarding the latter, there was general agreement that we should not promote the development of a new diversity course that would be required for all undergraduates. Not only are there already many courses in our college that incorporate diversity, it is not possible in one course to address all important diversity issues. Without an actual vote or poll, the Committee seemed united in a continuing interest in pursuing this charge. We feel that next year the Committee needs to develop a well-considered plan and a strategy to forward it within our College. Consensus seems to suggest that the plan would best be predicated on identifying the multiplicity of diversity-related academic courses, programs, and initiatives that already exist within the College. Further consensus suggests the importance of any strategy to honor and respect the function of the College Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

Other areas of 07/08 Committee activity include:

- Associate Dean Piercy attended committee meetings and coordinated several College diversity related initiatives. Specifically, he:
 - Oversaw the faculty search processes (including certifying search committees and candidate pools, and collecting and distributing to campus interviewees a packet of materials that included information about our community, the university, and diversity related initiatives and services (e.g., disability services, dual career services, family friendly policies);
 - Coordinated the Diversity Award process;
 - Coordinated the new Departmental Diversity Grant Program;
 - Coordinated the New Faculty Mentoring program ; and
 - Supported diversity initiatives and concerns in his liaison role with the College deans and department heads.
- College Fellow Leonard chaired the Diversity Committee and served on other committees and boards
 - Periodic meetings of the Chairs of College Diversity Committees
 - Board of the Christiansburg Institute
 - Oversaw progress of Campus Climate Research Work Group 06/07 Recommendation
- A dialogue begun in AY 06/07 between the Committee and the Black Caucus waned in 07/08, for lack of initiative on either side of the exchange. It is an area that should be re-activated.
- In AY 06/07 the administration of the Diversity Research Small Grant program was transferred from Peggy Meszaros, a College volunteer, to the Office of Multicultural Affairs. Likewise, the administration of the Summer Graduate Diversity Research Fellowship was transferred from a volunteer base to the Office of Multicultural Affairs. While these administrative shifts seemed, at first, to represent a significant step for the institution, moving Virginia Tech's commitment to these diversity programs from dependency on faculty volunteers to paid staff, AY 07/08 proved to be less encouraging. The Office of Multicultural Affairs did not call for proposals for either of these programs in this academic year, to the dismay of the Committee. Further, the annual Diversity Research Conference, originally conceived in the College and implemented by College volunteers but more recently managed by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, was discontinued. The Committee Chair has voiced his concerns about the discontinuance of these programs at the February meeting of the Chairs of the College Diversity Committees. Vice President Kevin McDonald has expressed a similar concern about the lack of communication with this Committee on these matters and has said he would meet with us in the fall to re-open the dialogue about these programs. The Committee intends to continue to serve an oversight function for these programs.
- Several Committee Members served on the University Commission for Equal Opportunity and Diversity, and/or are University Multicultural Fellows
- Committee Member Rick Shingles served as liaison with CLAHS Undergraduate Diversity Certificate program
- Committee Members Katherine Allen, Toni Calasanti, and Patricia Wright served as the Diversity Award sub-committee.
- The Dean continued the practice of providing a Graduate Assistant to the Diversity Committee in AY 07/08, understanding that the principle responsibilities of that GA were to assist the conduct of business of the Committee meetings (take and distribute minutes) and to provide clerical office assistance to the operations of the Christiansburg Institute. This service was understood as a long time commitment of the College to support Christiansburg Institute, paralleling the agreement that the College Fellow for Diversity serve on the Christiansburg Institute's Board of

Directors. Sociology graduate student Efua Akoma admirably filled this GA position for the year. It came as a significant disturbance to all concerned that budget cuts for 08/09 required the discontinuance of this GA assignment to the Committee. A discussion with the Dean yielded a clarified awareness of the history of the College's commitment to CI and an agreement to seek to restore this GA assignment in the future.

- A portion of the meeting agendas for the final two or three meetings was devoted to considering the 08/09 year. The Committee reached agreement that, while substantial progress has been made on all four annual agenda items this year, the same four items remain paramount for 08/09:
 - Integrate diversity within academic programs and initiatives
 - Tackle "difficult conversations" in public venues, in partnership with YMCA
 - Develop strategies for strengthening diversity of CLAHS, in context of building a CLAHS strategic plan under leadership of Peggy Meszaros
 - Conceive and develop proposals for new initiatives within CLAHS, monitoring, reviewing, and revising the first year implementation of the Departmental Diversity Grant Program.

FORUM AND INCUBATOR OF DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

- The **[classified] project**, originally created as a performance piece called **[classified]: untold stories of Virginia Tech** for a performance run in the spring of 2007, had a significantly extended life under the auspices of the CLAHS Diversity Committee, and the Department of Theater Arts. Committee member and project director Megan Carney was invited to a number of national conferences to present on the project.
 - She spoke on the "Theater and Community Dialogue" panel at the 2007 Annual Conference of the Theatre Communications Group, Minneapolis, MN, June 2007.
 - She presented at the 2008 Oral History and Performance Conference, New York City, NY, March, 2008
 - A paper she co-wrote with her project partners was accepted for presentation at the National Community Arts Convening and Research Project, Baltimore, MD. March, 2008, and has just recently been published on the Community Arts Network (CAN) Web site www.communityarts.net.
 - She is currently scheduled to present the project as part of the Virginia Tech cohort panel at the 2008 Imagining American Conference, Los Angeles, CA, October 2008.In addition to these presentations, Ms Carney is preparing a Web site collection and analysis of the **[classified] Project** postcard responses to the performed material. The show included the gathering of "postcards," 3x5 cards with comments from audience members, which became part of each ensuing performance and cumulatively amassed some 250 observations and suggestions from students and other community members. This Web site will be linked from the CLAHS Diversity Committee Web page and will serve as a way to continue the campus dialogue generated by the project. The project also continues as a practical workshop for campus audiences.
 - This fall '08, the Biology faculty has requested a **[classified] project** workshop for their start-of-the-semester retreat.
 - These workshops are available under the on-going project leadership of Bob Leonard, CLAHS Diversity Committee and Theater Arts.

COMMUNICATION WITHIN COLLEGE

- Associate Dean Piercy assumed practical responsibility for keeping the Dean informed, beyond her regular receipt of meeting agenda and minutes.

- The diversity poster sessions, initiated in the Spring 06 Diversity Summit and College Faculty Association meetings, were not continued in the 07/08 year. Despite strong, positive feedback in S'06, the lack of continuation is due primarily to over-commitment and lack of leadership oversight.
- Began reviewing and updating the Diversity web site within the Virginia Tech, CLAHS site. Much more can and should be done by next year's CLAHS Diversity Committee.

SERVE AS A "LISTENING POST" FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY CONCERNS AND "HOT SPOT" ISSUES

- Heard a presentation from Jennie Reilly on the function and service of the Office of American Disabilities Act. The context of this presentation was the receipt of some concerns by physically challenged employees in the College. Following the presentation, the Committee worked with Associate Dean Piercy to develop and submit a letter to Dean Ott Rowlands requesting her assistance in seeing that the university considers a more efficient, empowering, supportive system of addressing funding requests for ADA accommodations.
- Heard a presentation from Gail Billingsley, Executive Director of the Blacksburg YMCA. This marked the official start of a potential partnership between the College and the Y.

THINGS LEFT YET INCOMPLETE

- Monitor and advise 08/09 Faculty Retention Initiative pilot project, funded by Office of Multi-cultural Affairs and implemented in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.
- Follow up on 2.18.08 letter to Dean requesting a streamlined process for funding ADA requirements. Coordinate follow up with Associate Dean Fred Piercy.
- Pursue re-establishment of GA for Diversity that will provide clerical assistance to the Committee and to Christiansburg Institute.
- Assist Dean's Office in Departmental Search processes. Historically the Committee has had the responsibility for three functions with regard to the search process in College faculty hires.
 1. Maintain and disseminate a one-page information sheet about diversity and multi-cultural matters for each department to include in any packets that departments may provide for candidates.
 2. Maintain Diversity Committee membership as a roster of people available for departments to invite to social functions during candidate interview. Use of this roster is entirely at the will of each department.
 3. Prepare, maintain, update, and disseminate to all departments a set of talking points on matters of diversity and multi-cultural learning communities at Virginia Tech to be used as a guide in all on-campus interviews.

Materials for these functions have been completed and have been in the hands of the Associate Dean. There may be some need to update the materials. It is not clear, as of June, 2008, which Associate Dean will handle faculty search processes and how to get the diversity materials to that Associate Dean.

- Committee discussions on Homophobia and other aspects of campus harassment and hatred resulted in a recommendation to SAFE-WATCH and the Dean's office that CLAHS faculty be provided the same laminated cards of contact names and numbers that are carried by campus police. This has yet to be actualized, since these cards apparently do not exist in the Police Department despite our understanding that they did.
- The 06/07 Committee, with former Associate Dean Hardcastle's guidance and assistance, reviewed the ABD program implemented several years ago and recommended its re-activation. The University is considering this recommendation. However, this recommendation is currently tabled due to uncertainty of the success of this program over the longer term.

- Follow-up on the “Difficult Dialogues” initiative as proposed to the Ford Foundation in spring of 2005. Though not awarded, the initiative is well worth continued pursuit. The decision to continue to include this area as a basic direction for the committee with the Blacksburg YMCA in 08/09 should forward this effort.
- Continuation of “Joining Communities” training initiative originally developed and produced in 04/05 by Committee Members Katherine Allen and Ann Kilkelly. The **[classified]** project overtook this effort in 06/07. 08/09 may offer an opportunity to re-visit the “Joining Communities” training initiative.
- Buy-in and collaboration with College of Sciences. The regular meeting of the Chairs of College Diversity Committees is currently the best venue for building this relationship.
- Vice President for Multicultural Affairs Kevin McDonald is proving to be an ally and aid to the College and its Diversity Committee. He is overtly interested in finding ways for improving the integration of the College efforts with those of the University. The Chairs of College Diversity Committees meet regularly, coordinated by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. This is becoming an important forum for integration of programs and sharing of diversity information around the University.
- Areas of interest raised in previous committees
 - Benchmarking w/ peer institutions that address racially/culturally isolated circumstances
 - How can we address the paternalistic culture of our institution?
 - What are the strengths of our college in matters of diversity? How to build on those strengths?
 - What are the defining communities of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences?
 - CLAHS as stimulator/provocateur of the intellectual life on campus
 - The YMCA connection with “difficult conversations” is an out-growth of this area of interest
- Continuing subcommittee needs
 - Strategic Planning Sub-committee under Peggy Meszaros. April Few 08/09 Diversity Committee chair. Does she want to stay on sub-committee? Sue Farquhar has retired. Rosa Mayorga may not be available to serve in the Fall of 2008. This leaves Rick Shingles as the only known sub-committee member, as of June, 2008.
 - CLAHS Diversity Award – coordinated by Associate Dean.
 - Review Panels coordinated by Office of Multicultural Affairs for Faculty and Graduate Student Granting Programs: Summer Graduate Diversity Student Fellowship; Diversity Research Grants program- currently not offered for proposal submission.
- Agenda for 08/09
 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 under leadership of Peggy Meszaros
 4. Conceive and develop proposals for new initiatives within CLAHS, monitoring, reviewing, and revising the first year implementation of the Departmental Diversity Grant Program.

ADDENDA TO 07/08 OVERVIEW REPORT
Concept Paper: Implementation Plan for the Faculty Retention Initiative
(Finalized 5-9-08)

Project Goal: The goal of this project is for three departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences to enter into a partnership with an external consultant to develop innovative, transferrable practices to support better ways to retain faculty, particularly underrepresented faculty. With the external consultant, select departments will reflect on strengths and challenges of present departmental practices, policies, and climate issues and decide what they want to keep doing, modify, or initiate to support and improve faculty retention.

Participatory Model: This project employs a Participatory Action Research model. Participatory models have the following advantages:

- Groups can come up with better ideas together than can one person in isolation;
- People are more committed to what they have helped shape;
- Group efforts toward worthwhile goals breed high morale; and
- People like to work in a place where their ideas are taken seriously.

In short, an external consultant will involve bold departments that are open to self reflection in important discussions, will help them see current departmental practices through new eyes, and will facilitate the identification of best practices to help the departmental partners reach the project's goal.

Who will Take Part? Three CLAHS Departments will self select for this innovative initiative. We seek bold departments willing, with the help and input of an external consultant, to reflect on their current practices – what they do well and not so well --- regarding practices and climate that inform how they retain faculty, particularly faculty from underrepresented groups. These departments will become beta groups in this pilot project, committing to being partners with the external consultant in an action – reflection – action process, toward the goal of transforming their department into a more hospitable world where faculty can survive and thrive.

How Will These Participating Departments Be Identified? A call for participants will go out from Dean Ott Rowlands in Fall 2008 to all CLAHS departments to seek those willing to partner in this initiative. Each potential participating department will answer several questions intended to help the steering committee decide upon those departments that will make best use of the initiative.

What is the Role of the External Consultant? A professional knowledgeable about retaining diverse faculty and the use of Participatory Action Research methods will meet with each participating department to help it develop and enact a plan to reflect on current practices and what the department might do to improve on these practices. This professional will help bring out insider knowledge, but will also represent a second set of eyes to raise difficult questions and facilitate discussions that will result in productive changes. We envision the participating departments buying into these changes by virtue of being an integral part of the process of change themselves.

How Will This Initiative be Evaluated? The outside consultant will provide final reports for each beta department related to lessons to be learned and potential actions to be initiated. He/she may also include other accountability measures in consultation with the department. Just as the discussions and subsequent changes will be participatory, so too will the evaluation process have participatory elements.

Are There Any “Next Steps” Envisioned For this Program After This First Phase? After a year of implementation and after program evaluation has taken place, the steering committee, in consultation with the external consultant, will identify lessons learned that could be folded into a possible Phase 2 of this process that may take place in future years. Phase 2 will involve additional departments taking part in the process outlined above, and the sharing across campus (and perhaps nationally) of innovative practices coming out of Phase 1.

Is There a Steering Committee to Oversee this Project? Yes, the working steering committee includes Bob Leonard, April Few, and Kwame Harrison. The chairs of the various college diversity committees, along with Kevin McDonald, Vice President for Multicultural Affairs and Equity will be invited to serve an oversight role. The liaison to the dean’s office will be Fred Piercy.

Who will be the Outside Consultant? We are currently working with the Office of Multicultural Affairs to identify an appropriate outside consultant. This person has yet to be named. We anticipate developing a short list of highly competitive applicants by the end of the summer. The three participating departments will join the Steering Committee, Fred Piercy, and Kevin McDonald to make the final selection. Good “chemistry” with the departments is a crucial element in the success of this project.

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