

## **2002-2003 Report of the President's Commission on Diversity and Community**

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### **I. A message from Beth McCoy and Lenny Sancilio, Commission co-chairs:**

This report represents the hard work and independent spirit of the 2002-2003 Commission. We are especially grateful to Maria Lima (Diversity Development subcommittee chair) and Monica Schneider (Building Community subcommittee chair) for their leadership and perseverance.

*What we've done:*

The past year has been an active one for the Commission. First, the Diversity Development subcommittee crafted "If Not Now, Then When?" a position paper asserting that diversity ought to be "included as one of the criteria for faculty evaluation and hiring initiatives." (The paper's full text is included in this report.) Subcommittee members presented the position paper to the President's Task Force on Faculty Roles and Rewards during Spring 2003.

During the spring, the Building Community subcommittee served as the selection committee for the Vice-President's Grants for Building Community through Diversity, an initiative sponsored by Bob Bonfiglio and the Division of Student and Campus Life. The grant process resulted in many fine activities and projects that furthered the College's curricular and co-curricular goals. Additionally, the Building Community subcommittee began two significant campus conversations regarding the recruitment and support of outstanding students who contribute significantly to the development of a diverse community. In the first conversation, the subcommittee began to talk with the Admissions program about existing and future outreach plans to recruit, enroll, and retain ALANA students.

In the second conversation, the subcommittee began to investigate ways to support international students and students for whom English is not their original language. This section of the subcommittee's report outlines many unresolved questions about how to best support these students in their academic achievement. What all perspectives on the issue have in common, however, is the sense that this is an important area for the College to engage. Any formal initiatives in this area require the participation and coordination of many different College constituencies. It is likely, therefore, that work on this issue will continue in a formal committee that is outside the Commission's purview (although Commission members will still play an important part in the discussions).

In other Commission activity, work continued on the PATH awards, thanks to Debbie Hill's leadership. Tabitha Buggie-Hunt has agreed graciously to serve as this year's PATH awards chair.

Finally, in May, President Dahl presented Geneseo's statement on Diversity and Community to the College Senate, where it unanimously passed a first reading (it was revised in response to Senate feedback on 9 September 2003). The statement reads as follows:

*Geneseo holds among its core values the ideals of community and diversity.*

*Our community is defined as a group of faculty, students and staff who live and work together at Geneseo because they share common goals that are based on the ideals of higher education rooted in the liberal arts.*

*Although they share common goals, the members of the Geneseo community also differ in many ways. Diversity at Geneseo is defined in part as differences in individuals that are manifested in their race, ethnicity, national origin, language heritage, world-view, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, physical ability, learning style, geographic background, mental health, age, and relationship status.*

*Geneseo recognizes that the individuals who make up our community bring to it unique perspectives and knowledge that contribute to its richness and vibrancy.*

*Because Geneseo also holds educational excellence among its core values, it recognizes that its progress as a community toward such excellence is predicated on its ability to embrace both the diversity of its members and the vigorous exchange of their ideas.*

*Geneseo calls all members of our community to share responsibility for the ongoing work of continually recreating a sense of inclusion, belonging, and empowerment, so that together we will achieve our individual and collective aims, and experience the intellectual liberation that is at the heart of the educational enterprise.*

This important public presentation of the statement was the culmination of several years of writing, revising, and discussion among multiple College constituencies, including Central Council.

*Where we'd like to go from here:*

In the 15 August 2003 Chronicle of Higher Education,<sup>1</sup> Robert Shireman criticizes colleges and universities who see "diversity" as a matter of adding certain cosmetic details (e.g., courses, administrators) with the goal of having diversity eventually go away as a critical campus issue. As an alternative, Shireman recommends campus initiatives that, to borrow law professor Martha Nussbaum's words, exercise the institution's "capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions" (B12). "If [critical examination] is the goal," Shireman continues, "how does the curriculum help obtain it?"

How does a student's own background affect his readiness for the curriculum? Which students is the curriculum reaching effectively, and which might require a different approach? Institutions should help students from various backgrounds find themselves in the curriculum, affirming their identity, but then move all students toward a common connection to humanity as a whole" (B12)

Questions such as these are commensurate with Geneseo's own Mission and Goals. They also echo the kinds of questions that Ohio University's Christine Taylor asked of Geneseo staff, faculty, and administrators, and they are ones that apply to facets of College life beyond the curriculum. Indeed, at this crucial stage of Geneseo's development as a campus committed centrally to diversity, "critical examination of oneself and one's traditions" must be extended to all College activities, including disciplinary and departmental traditions and outcomes.

Towards these ends, we recommend that the following areas be considered for this year's Commission:

1. We advocate that the Building Community subcommittee continue to work with Admissions in order to better understand how the admissions process works. In addition to the well-formulated questions articulated in the subcommittee's report, we suggest adding the following questions: *What are Admissions' goals for recruiting and enrolling a diverse student body? How are these goals measured? What are all the avenues through which students enter the college? What are the criteria by which each avenue is evaluated? How are they supported and do they factor in to Admissions' goals for recruiting and enrolling a diverse student body?*

2. We recommend that Ohio University's Christine Taylor return to Geneseo to work specifically with Admissions and the Roles and Rewards Task Force. Taylor seems to be especially skilled not only at helping us to raise keen critical questions but also at encouraging us to make concrete plans for transforming those questions into action.

3. We recommend that research continue on campus climate for various College constituencies. Rose-Marie Chierici and Zhiming Zhao have established an important baseline for such research; continuing such research, however, is too labor-intensive for faculty without the time afforded by course release. Other options, then, must be explored. For example, could the Office of Institutional Research, with its resources and expertise, take the lead on this work? After all, we need answers to increasingly complex questions. President Dahl has identified gender as one important area of campus climate that needs to be researched. Additionally, it is also time for new research to be done in response to a question that both Christine Taylor and Robert Shireman raise: *What does it feel like as a student to be here?* Where Shireman, in particular, goes with this question is worth serious consideration:

At one campus I visited, a thoughtful student asked, "When will this be my campus, instead of someone else's campus that is trying to be a welcoming place for me?" In too many cases, the work that we have all done to deal with the issue of diversity has been much too shallow. Ethnic theme parties, films, and guest speakers can be important symbols, but they are a small part of what influences the campus climate" (B12).

We would like to emphasize that our inclusion of this quote does NOT minimize or criticize the important advancement that Geneseo has made in establishing the campus as a welcoming place. Rather, we include this quote because it drives home that welcoming-ness is only the starting block. It is not the finish line where diversity is concerned. In fact, we need to emphasize that there *is no finish line*. Rather, a commitment to diversity, to again borrow Nussbaum's words, means unceasing exercise of every campus member's "capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions." With the information that it can provide, an office such as that of Institutional Research can spur the College to keep that critical examination as central to its mission, in each decision, large and small.

4. We suggest that a Commission subcommittee be specifically appointed to collaborate with the Teaching and Learning Center. In particular, we suggest that this collaboration take on two projects:

a. Produce a series of interdepartmental faculty roundtable discussions about the rewards and challenges of engaging diversity in the classroom.

b. Disseminate the AAHE's "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" among all departments. Organize a series of forums among campus constituencies in order to generate discussion about

the principles. This could lead to something that has been suggested before:  
the posting of the Seven Principles in all Geneseo classrooms.

1. Shireman, Robert. "10 Questions College Officials Should Ask About Diversity." CHE (August 15, 2003): B10, B12.

## II. Diversity Development Subcommittee Report 2002-03:

### *IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN: A POSITION PAPER*

The central question from where the Diversity Development Subcommittee stands is clear: **HOW DOES ONE CONVINCING A VERY SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE COMMUNITY THAT THERE ARE ESSENTIAL CHANGES WHICH NEED TO OCCUR IN ORDER TO EDUCATE STUDENTS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?**

This paper calls for policy changes in the faculty reward system and campus-wide hiring practices: we are specifically asking that **diversity** be included as one of the criteria for faculty evaluation and hiring initiatives, diversity understood here under the parameters of the definition reached by the 1998-99 President's Commission on Diversity and Community. In order to prepare students for citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Geneseo faculty, staff, and students need to improve on their crosscultural competencies. We feel it is important to start with the faculty because their commitment to diversity would enhance the breadth, depth, and quality of research and teaching by increasing the variety of experiences, perspectives and scholarly interests on our campus. As Dan Strang's power-point presentation also emphasized, a more crosscultural competent faculty would provide a variety of role models and mentoring systems crucial in attracting, retaining and graduating a more diverse student body successfully.

We suggest the "Hiring Initiative to Promote and Enhance Diversity at Oregon State University" as a useful starting point for future campus-wide discussions on new procedures in hiring at Geneseo. They write:

- All individuals appointed to positions of leadership must demonstrate a commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity. This policy applies to all members of the University Cabinet, the President's Council, the Provost's Council, deans, directors, department heads and chairs, and all other leadership positions, including titles of assistant, associate, vice, and their equivalents.
- All other unclassified and classified positions will include a demonstrable commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity as a **preferred qualification**.

We have a compelling need to build a culture that welcomes and affirms diverse community members, supports diverse perspectives and worldviews, and diverse

ways of knowing, doing, and being. There is a direct relationship between excellence and diversity. [...] We must recognize that our students have different needs and perspectives, [...], our partners in business and industry have new expectations, and the communities with which the university interacts are different in many ways than those same communities were just a few years ago.

Like Oregon, let us embrace the definitions of excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College, a 2002 AAC&U National Panel Report, excellence for the 21<sup>st</sup> century implies an education that prepares all students for a diverse society, global interconnectedness, and the rapidly changing work environment. Colleges should aim to prepare learners who are *intentional*: who understand and participate in the process of learning; who create coherent connections among their courses and easily negotiate different environments. For intentional learners, intellectual study connects to personal life, formal education to work, and knowledge to social responsibility. Able to place themselves in the context of a diverse world, these learners draw on difference and commonality to produce a deeper experience of community (21-2).

In institutions that are *intentional* about achieving their missions and providing high quality education to all students, the infrastructure, processes, decisions, resource allocation, and culture will collectively and coherently communicate and advance that mission. According to Robert M. Diamond, **“the closer the match between the mission of an institution and the priorities as described in the tenure and promotion system, the more productive the faculty will be in helping the institution reach its goals”**: (1).

In his charge to the Task Force on Faculty Roles, Rewards, and Evaluation, President Dahl writes

as we have grown and changed as an institution, so too have the roles and expectations for faculty. It is time to reconsider faculty roles and rewards and our system of evaluation in light of these institutional changes. In its broadest sense, therefore, my charge to the committee is **to consider faculty roles and rewards at Geneseo and to design a system of evaluation and faculty development that is more closely aligned with the mission and identity of the College in the first decade of the twenty-first century.**

President Dahl also notes that aligning faculty rewards with institutional mission is central to achieving Planning Goal #2 (**“to recruit, support, and foster the development of a**

**diverse community of outstanding students, faculty, and staff”**) and thereby realizes our stated values as a College.

There is undoubtedly one issue that the Report on the 2001 Survey of the Campus Climate on Diversity Issues (submitted by Zhiming Zhao and RoseMarie Chierici) and Strang’s presentation on April 24th made clear, and that is the need for more diversity—in the peoples in the campus community, the curriculum, and student experiences. The issue of diversity appears in the Memorandum of Understanding (the section on Academic Program Directions emphasizes “diversity in the curriculum” as a goal), the Middle States Self-Study, the Strategic Planning Goals and Objectives, student surveys, to name only a few. However, not everyone agrees on the degree, the means to improvement, the urgency, or even on what diversity means for Geneseo. The students’ perception of their education in diversity, according to a recent survey done by SUNY System Administration, is however dismal. Geneseo ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of 28 campuses on the degree to which students felt the institution helped them to appreciate and understand issues of diversity. On the same survey, Geneseo usually ranked in the top four out of 28 on other issues of satisfaction, such as academic experience, faculty-student interaction. As the group that went to the AAC&U Institute on Campus Leadership for Sustainable Innovation (July 2001) concluded, there have been efforts to move forward on the issue of diversity, but they have been in spurts and starts and, as it always happens with isolated groups and not a concerted effort, the results have matched the effort. One of the suggestions the group brought back from the Institute was to align faculty roles and rewards with institutional mission.

Before moving any further, then, let’s establish some common ground as to what we mean by diversity here. Structural diversity refers to the numerical and proportional representation of students and faculty from different racial/ethnic group at each institution. A second type of diversity is characterized by the interactions that the whole campus community has with difference. Researchers argue the obvious: that structural diversity is a necessary precursor for diverse interactions to occur (Gurin). Gurin provides additional evidence regarding the ways in which diversity enhances learning for students. Students who reported higher levels of contact with diverse ideas and pedagogies and diverse peoples were more likely to show growth in their “active thinking processes” which were represented by increases in measures of complex thinking and social/historical thinking. *Crosscultural competence*, moreover, was identified as the most critical human resource need created by globalism. Bikson and Law argue that if colleges are to meet the challenges that are presented by an increasingly global economy, they will have to make changes in

many areas including the curriculum, extracurricular activities, enhanced faculty development, and innovative cooperation ventures with other colleges and universities around the world as well as with private industry. They offer specific recommendations:

Colleges should make better use of the cultural diversity already available in their student bodies and localities to cultivate global awareness and crosscultural competence... Colleges should provide faculty with incentives (and, if possible, with resources) to develop new courses or adapt existing courses to address globalism. Faculty currently receive strong signals that the only relevant performance criteria are publication records and teaching evaluations (qtd. in Milem 14-5).

To establish a compelling interest in educational diversity, then, a college must demonstrate clear, consistent internal policies and practices designed to facilitate such changes.

Actualizing the value-added educational benefits associated with diversity requires active engagement in institutional transformation. The evidence of the educational benefits of diversity cannot be challenged. Research evidence regarding the individual benefits of diversity suggests that diversity enhances student growth and development in the cognitive, affective, and interpersonal domains:

This educational benefit is universal in that all students learn from it, not just minority students. [...] Indeed, majority students who have previously lacked significant direct exposure to minorities frequently have the most to gain from interaction with individuals of other races (Millen).

The Subcommittee on Diversity Development has tried to find a model for incorporating diversity to faculty evaluation with no success. We did find interesting precedents for innovative processes for the evaluation of faculty. Colgate University's firm commitment to the integration of knowledge finds its way into all faculty personnel processes. New faculty hires get written expectations for interdisciplinary work. Third year review, tenure, and promotion decisions depend, in part, on interdisciplinary contributions. All dossiers must document participation in the interdisciplinary core curriculum, whose director votes on promotion and tenure (Greater Expectations 34). If interdisciplinary work can be a criterion, why not diversity? Remember that one of our core values is *innovation*.

In order to see change, we would like Geneseo's firm commitment to diversity to become evident in the reward system for college personnel. There are many ways in which this could be accomplished:

- some adjustment to Form H;

- adjustment in the criteria for sponsored professorships;
- reformulation of the processes for DSI;
- leaves
- other rewards

We are not suggesting that a question on diversity be added to the student evaluation form because there is not one question that is simple enough and yet comprehensive enough to capture all facets of diversity. What we are suggesting is that in the narrative we write to introduce our dossier we highlight the efforts we have made to integrate diversity in our teaching and service: it can be as simple as requiring students to attend development events on campus—something the Business School already does—or even better, sharing the experience with our students and bringing the complexity of what we have learned into the classroom.

A liberal education for the new century looks beyond the campus to the issues of society and the workplace, aiming to produce global thinkers. A quality liberal education prepares students for active participation in the private and public sectors, in a diverse democracy, and in an even more diverse global community (Greater Expectations 25). In its very essence, liberal education for the twenty-first century is diverse and inclusive in every way. It seeks out varied perspectives, crosses disciplinary lines, pursues wisdom from multiple cultures, and employs a range of teaching strategies (GE 27).

As the COPLAC Prospectus puts it, the educational environment for undergraduates is the foremost concern of the public liberal arts college: “Faculty are there, first and foremost, to serve students, both in the classroom and in advising and mentoring” (11). What also unites COPLAC are the collective educational missions that commit to providing superior liberal arts and sciences education to their students, “recognizing cultural diversity and intellectual diversity as **integral** to its educational program” (COPLAC Prospectus 2). As the COPLAC Prospectus further explains, in terms of student backgrounds, public liberal arts colleges tend to reflect the world as it is and as it graduates will find it.

After reading President Dahl’s 2003 Charge to the Diversity Commission, where he supports this position paper about **diversity as a value added to the criteria for faculty evaluation and development**, the Subcommittee on Diversity Development would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Task Force on Faculty Roles and Rewards and with the campus community to further discuss our ideas. As Provost Dixon emphasizes,

“if diversity is going to be a commitment for the Institution, it means a commitment for *everyone* at Geneseo” (conversation with Lima, 1/13/03 meeting).

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### III. BUILDING COMMUNITY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: 2002-2003

Members: George Anselme, Irene Belyakov, Robert Bonfiglio, Ralph Carrasquillo, Julie Caruccio, William Cook, Marie Henry, Don Marozas, Robert Owens, Michael Schinski, Monica Schneider (chair), Joseph Van Remmen

According to the College Mission Statement, SUNY Geneseo's goal is "to create an integrated learning-centered environment...[in which] the entire community works together to develop socially responsible citizens with skills and values important to the pursuit of an enriched life and success in the world." In pursuit of this goal, the College is "to recruit, support, and foster the development of a diverse community of outstanding students, faculty, and staff." This past academic year, the Building Community Subcommittee focused on two major issues regarding the recruitment and support of outstanding students who contribute significantly to the development of a diverse community. Specifically, the first issue pertained to the inclusion and support of international students and other students for whom English is not their native language. The second issue pertained to the recruitment, admission, and retention of students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds.

#### I. **Support of International Students & Students For Whom English Is Not Their Original Language**

**Major Issue or Concern Raised:** Currently, there is a lack of standardization and access of support services to all students for whom English is not their native language (including international students, some of the students entering via the AOP program, and recent immigrants admitted through traditional admissions). Depending on the avenue of admissions, students have greater or less access to support and resources both in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, there is currently no formalized or centralized mechanism for supporting faculty who wish to address the needs of these students in the classroom. The following recommendations were developed to address these issues and concerns.

##### A. **Integration of Services Related to Teaching and Learning**

The Subcommittee recommends the development of a center that integrates resources designed to provide a comprehensive system of support for faculty, students, and staff in their academic and professional development. This center should use a model similar to the one developed at Hobart and William Smith College, which incorporates direct student services, a teaching and learning center for both faculty and students, an ESL program, a multicultural affairs program, and a student disabilities office (see advertisement from the Chronicle of Higher Education, Appendix A). This center would not only standardize and increase the access of language support services for international and other non-native speakers of English, it would be consistent with our mission goal of creating an integrated learning-centered environment for all members of the college community, including students, faculty, and staff.

Recommendations and Specific Issues to Consider (based on conversations with Isom Fearn, Director of Access Opportunities Program)

The center:

- would encourage students, faculty, and staff to take an active role in their development, increasing a sense of power and responsibility

- would not only serve the interests of the current members of the college community but could serve as a marketing tool for recruitment
- could perhaps provide assessment for students (e.g., language skills) and support self-assessment for faculty and staff
- should incorporate continuous involvement from students, faculty, and staff
- should perhaps address issues related to cultural phenomena and English language dialects within the U.S. as well as ESL support services

### **B. Integration and Perhaps Expansion of Support Services Related to English Language Skill Development (including reading, writing, and speaking)**

Members of the Building Community Subcommittee met with Provost Barbara Dixon and Dean Susan Bailey to discuss potential ways to address issues pertaining to students for whom English is not their original language. Provost Dixon and Dean Bailey noted that the Provost's office, in conjunction with the Dean's office, was considering a coordinated program based on a skill development model that would be available to all students who are non-native speakers of English. This program would potentially involve hiring a full-time person to coordinate both speech and writing services. This program would also require examining the current relevant services and courses to determine how to best coordinate them into a comprehensive program.

The Building Community Subcommittee supports this proposal and recommends that this program be housed under the larger integrated center described in the previous section. The Building Community Subcommittee, with the help of Heidi Levine (Director of Student Health and Counseling) and Lisa Czerniecki, examined the types of ESL services and programs available at other institutions (see Appendix B). The types of services available varied widely from institution to institution. Having such a program at SUNY Geneseo would put the college ahead of the curve and would demonstrate our commitment to fostering the academic, intellectual, social, psychological, and interpersonal development of a diverse student body.

#### Recommendations and Special Issues to Consider

This program:

- should emphasize skill development rather than remedial help
- should incorporate support services and courses already in place. This process may require modification or restructuring of current services or courses.
- should be made available and accessible to all students. This program could be used to encourage all students to continue to develop their English language skills with an emphasis on students as life-long learners.
- should work in conjunction with faculty/staff and the courses they teach

### **C. Proposed Policy for Students Who Identify Themselves as Non-native Speakers of English**

The Building Community Subcommittee developed a proposed policy recommending that faculty give appropriate and reasonable consideration in lectures, assignments, and testing to students who have identified themselves as non-native speakers of English (see Appendix C). This policy could be implemented as part of the coordinated English Language Skill Development Program described above. The policy would be implemented only for students who self-identify as non-native speakers of English and who are actively participating in the English Language Skill Development Program.

This policy could potentially standardize and formalize the support available in the classroom for students for whom English is not their native language. In addition, it could provide formal support and guidance to faculty and staff as they try to meet the needs of these students in their courses. This policy could also serve as a mechanism for identifying students in need and matching them with a larger, more integrated program of services available through the College. Lastly, this policy could serve an important role in creating conditions in the classroom by which all students can learn.

It is important to note that there is precedence for this policy at our institution. This policy is actually a revised version of a similar policy, which passed on first reading at the final 1993-1994 SUNY Geneseo College Senate meeting. Due to an oversight, the Senate did not vote on a second reading of the policy in fall 1994. Consequently, the College never developed a formal standard policy on this issue.

Members of our Subcommittee met with Susan Bailey (Dean of the College), Tabitha Buggie-Hunt (Director of Disabilities Services), Barbara Dixon (Provost), Isom Fearn (Director of Access Opportunities Program), Mary Hope (Director of International Student Services), and Edgar Miranda (Director of Xerox Multicultural Teaching Center) to discuss this policy. The following issues and concerns were raised in these discussions.

#### Concerns and Special Issues to Consider

1. Should the policy be a recommendation or a requirement for faculty?

The Building Community Subcommittee recommends that the policy be proposed as a requirement for faculty to provide some standardization. However, we expect that most faculty members would provide reasonable consideration to self-identified students who demonstrated need, even if it was a recommendation and not a requirement. Some of the schools that we contacted (e.g., Ramapo College of New Jersey, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts) noted that professors at their institution were expected but not required to help students with minor needs, with different schools having different levels of compliance (see Appendix B).

2. How would a faculty member determine what are reasonable considerations? How could abuse of the policy be prevented?

A small consulting committee comprised of faculty and staff who are knowledgeable about ESL issues (e.g., Irene Belyakov, Bob Owens, Mary Hope) would develop guidelines or general criteria for assessing need and/or level of competency. This committee would also meet with the student to determine need and to make recommendations to the student regarding other services that the student should be using. If the student is not using the other services provided in the English Language Skill Development Program or is not willing to use those services recommended by the committee, then the student will be ineligible to request reasonable consideration in the classroom. Some requests (e.g., the use of a dictionary during exams) may not require going through the committee.

3. How would grievances be handled? What if a faculty member believes that the student should not receive special consideration or is not willing to honor a particular type of request? Would it make a difference if the policy were a recommendation or requirement?

Students in this situation would be expected to follow normal grievance procedures. The process would be more straightforward if the policy was a requirement.

4. Would allowing reasonable considerations for non-native speakers of English do them a disservice and slow down their English language skill development? Will they be at a disadvantage in graduate school or in their future jobs? These students may not have the same considerations in the future.

Students' English language skills are expected to improve over time. Moreover, different courses and different testing styles would require different types and levels of consideration. The reasonable considerations required would reflect this growth and change. This policy is intended to support students in their language skill development, but to also encourage students to develop those skills by using the support services available. For example, if a student has been receiving considerations across several semesters and has not changed his/her level of need or increased his/her participation in the Program, then that student's request may be denied. Moreover, the considerations addressed by this policy are intended to be moderate and very reasonable. These types of considerations (e.g., use of a dictionary or some additional time to process materials) are likely to be available to all graduate students and professionals. Nevertheless, the consulting committee could develop specific strategies for dealing with this issue.

5. How does this policy differ from the mandates for students with disabilities? If the Disabilities Office cannot mandate extra time or other considerations without legal documentation, is it fair to allow other students to have these considerations?

The accommodations required by the ADA are legal mandates that require documentation; these disabilities are not expected to change significantly over time and require accommodation throughout a student's academic career. The policy and the larger English Language Skills Development Program come from a skill development model rather than a disabilities model. The program and the policy are designed to address English language skill development and would be made available to any student who needs it. Students' language skills are expected to improve over time. Students will be made responsible for using the services available and for demonstrating growth over time. Students are not expected to require the policy for every course or throughout their entire academic career at the College. Nonetheless, this issue is an important one that needs to be further discussed in order to ensure fairness and equity for all students.

### Recommendations

1. A consulting committee comprised of individuals who are knowledgeable about ESL issues should be developed. This committee could be a subcommittee of the Commission or a free-standing committee.
2. One focus of the consulting committee could be to coordinate with relevant members of the college community in the development of an integrated English Language Skill Development Program available to all students.

3. A second focus of the consulting committee could be to finalize the proposed policy, coordinate efforts to meet with different departments to discuss this issue, and submit the policy to the SUNY Geneseo College Senate. If the policy passes, then this committee could be responsible for developing general guidelines for assessing need.
4. A third focus of the consulting committee could be to develop guidelines for faculty and staff regarding classroom pedagogy that addresses the needs of students for whom English is not their native language. These guidelines could be developed in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Center.

## **II. Recruitment, Selection, and Retention of Students from Traditionally Under-represented Groups**

**Major Issue or Concern Raised:** One major goal of the Commission is to support the College's efforts "to recruit, support, and foster the development of a diverse community of outstanding students, faculty, and staff." An important component of this mission statement is the recruitment and retention of students from traditionally underrepresented groups. In order to support the Offices of Enrollment Services and Admissions in these efforts, the Building Community Subcommittee was charged with educating themselves about the current practices being employed to increase contacts with, and applications and enrollments from underrepresented groups.

Members of the Building Community Subcommittee met with Bill Caren (Associated Vice-President of Enrollment Services), Kris Shay (Associate Director of Admissions), and George Anselme (Assistant Director of Admissions). Bill Caren provided some initial information about general outreach procedures as well as direct recruitment and admissions procedures. The primary focus of the discussion was on outreach programs involving faculty that have been used in the past (e.g., connections with Brooklyn Tech) and procedures currently being used both locally (e.g., Rochester, Xerox Center) and in other parts of the state. George Anselme also reported that his department will increase its emphasis on the Ambassador Program, which involves having current students go back to their high schools to recruit new students.

What emerged from this initial discussion was the realization that faculty, staff, and student involvement is crucial to the process. Specifically, as a college, we need to acknowledge the interconnectedness between different facets of the college and the importance of faculty, staff, and student involvement in the outreach, recruitment, and retention of students from traditionally underrepresented groups. Historically, outreach and recruitment programs that include faculty, staff, and student involvement have been successful in the past. However, these programs require a significant amount of time and dedication on the part of the faculty, staff, and/or students involved in the program. They also require a significant amount of support from the institution.

This past semester, another subcommittee of the Commission developed and presented a position paper to the Faculty Roles and Rewards Committee that emphasized the importance of rewarding diversity-related work and other contributions traditionally overlooked in the tenure, promotion, and DSI decisions. The Building Community Subcommittee strongly believes that the changes proposed in the position paper have the potential to directly impact the College's recruitment efforts regarding students from traditionally underrepresented groups. If faculty and staff were rewarded for their time, dedication, and commitment to fostering and supporting a diverse college community, more faculty and staff may be able to dedicate the time and energy needed to effectively recruit and retain students from

traditionally underrepresented groups. In this respect, community members from all three levels (i.e., staff, faculty, and students) would participate in and benefit from the development of an outstanding diverse community.

Nevertheless, the Subcommittee had only one opportunity to meet with members of Enrollment Services. Many questions remain about the specific outreach plans as well as the specific recruitment and admissions goals related to students from traditionally underrepresented groups. For example, what are the specific goals for the admission of students from traditionally underrepresented groups? What specific evidence is available to determine the success of the Admissions Department in meeting these goals? What role do faculty members play in the recruitment and admissions process? Is this something that should be changed? Does the Admissions Department have adequate resources to accomplish its goals regarding students from traditionally underrepresented groups? What does the Admissions Department need to accomplish its goals? The Subcommittee believes that continued discussions with members of Enrollment Services would provide a mechanism for understanding the process and for determining how the Commission may support Enrollment Services in their efforts to recruit, select, and retain students from traditionally underrepresented groups.