

# **The President's Commission on Diversity and Community 2011-2012 Report**

**Submitted by Kathleen Mapes and Tracy Paradis**

## **Commission Members**

Cathy Adams, Assistant Professor

Jim Aimers, Assistant Professor

Sadie Baker, Student

Susan Bandoni Muench, Professor

Irene Belyakov, Lecturer and ESL Coordinator (former co-chair)

Donte Bothel, Student

Alexandra Carlo, Staff psychologist

Teresa Walker Chan, AOP counselor

Michelle Costello, Librarian

Christopher Dahl, President

Becky Glass, Executive Assistant to the President

David Gordon, Associate Provost

Scott Hemer, Head Women's Basketball Coach

Harry Howe, Professor

Gabe Iturbides, AOP counselor

Daniel Jacques, Chemistry

Nikisha John, Student

Nick LaGrassa, Student

Ann Marie Lauricella, Assistant Professor

Maria Perpetua Liwanag, Assistant Professor

Gloria Lopez, Director of Affirmative Action

Kathy Mapes, Associate Professor, History (co-chair)

Nicole (Nykki) McCawthan, Residence Director

Dave Murray, Student

Susan Norman, Director, Xerox Center for Multicultural Education

Gina Ottolia, Student

Robert Owens, Professor

Tracy Paradis, Librarian (co-chair)

David Parfitt, Director of Teaching and Learning Center

Vishal Patel, Student

Julie Rao, Director of Institutional Research

Fatima Rodriguez Johnson, Coordinator of Multicultural Programs and Services

Jennifer Rogalsky, Associate Professor

Monica Schneider, Associate Professor, (former co-chair)

Farooq Sheikh, Assistant Professor

Atsushi Tajima, Assistant Professor

Annmarie Urso, Assistant Professor

Michael Venturiello, Student

Linda Ware, Professor

Diantha Watts, Staff Associate

Robert Wayland-Smith, Geneseo College Council

Peggy Wirth, Nurse Practitioner

## **Overall Direction and Emphasis of the Commissions' Work**

The President's Commission on Diversity and Community has been through a significant period of transition. Former co-chairs Monica Schneider and Irene Belyakov stepped down in Spring 2012 after many years of exemplary service. Due to their thoughtful and dedicated stewardship, the Commission made great strides over the past few years. Kathleen Mapes and Tracy Paradis, the current co-chairs, hope to continue in the path forged by Schneider and Belyakov. As in years past, the Commission continues to be concerned with reaching out to the wider community and developing action-oriented goals that reflect the College's mission statement and commitment to diversity. The Student and Campus Engagement subcommittee's "Real World Geneseo" (RWG) program continues as a centerpiece of these goals. As RWG plans for its fifth manifestation in January 2013, it can also reflect on its successes. RWG was chosen as the 2012 winner of the Outstanding Student Affairs Program, sponsored by the SUNY Chief Student Affairs Officer and the Office of University Life and Enrollment Management. The Professional Development subcommittee worked diligently to identify and address issues related to student mental health, the needs of international students, and faculty development related to diversity. Finally, though the Assessment and Diversity Plan subcommittee is waiting for the Strategic Planning Group to lay out action items for the Diversity Plan before it can develop an assessment plan, Diversity Commission members (past and present), members of the Strategic Planning Group, and various department chairs met in May for a day-long retreat to discuss the Diversity Plan, its goals and objectives, and how to move forward.

Below is a summary of the activities of each subcommittee as well as a list of recommendations for the next academic year regarding these programs and initiatives. The complete 2011-2012 subcommittee reports can be found in the appendices.

### **Summary of Activities: 2011-2012**

**The Student and Campus Engagement Subcommittee:** The Student and Campus Engagement subcommittee (SACES) has continued its excellent work overseeing and running the Real World Geneseo (RWG) program. Since its first incarnation in Spring 2010, RWG has provided numerous students with a safe, challenging, and transformative experience engaging issues related to diversity and community.

This past year a diverse group of students from varying racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds took part in RWG IV. The intensive retreat, which included seventy-six contact hours, provided an opportunity for students, faculty and staff to engage in workshops dealing with sexism, racism and classism. In addition to taking part in the retreat, students participated in a 1 credit reflective lab, engaged in eight weeks of classroom discussion, and enrolled in a related diversity course offered on campus. The RWG Assessment Team, made up of Dr. Julia Rao, Dr. Monica Schneider and Diantha Watts, are currently in the process of analyzing assessment data; however, initial results seem to confirm the subjective observations that the RWG program has given participating students a transformational experience that has resulted in close emotional ties and support from and with fellow RWG students. In addition, RWG students report that the experience has affected them long after the program has ended, as they have shared their critical insights with non-RWG students in classrooms and on campus more generally. As such, RWG is helping to foster a much broader discussion on diversity that benefits both participating students and their non-participating cohorts. Currently, SACES is planning for RWG V, with essential funding coming from a \$10,000 grant from the State University of New York's Office of Equity and Diversity. In addition, RWG V will be run in partnership with Monroe Community College,

thereby broadening the beneficial experiences beyond Geneseo to the wider regional college community.

In addition to its award winning RWG program, SACES has continued its oversight of the PATH Awards, including requesting nominations, reviewing nominations, and presenting the awards. The Path Awards represent an important public recognition of the efforts of individuals to the college's commitment to diversity. Finally, SACES has started to explore ways to create a mentoring program for students from underrepresented backgrounds as well as faculty and staff. Though these efforts are still at the exploratory stage, SACES looks forward to continuing this work in the coming academic year.

**The Professional Development Subcommittee:** In Fall 2012, David Parfitt assumed the role as Professional Development subcommittee chair. Based on the recommendations of the President, the Professional Development subcommittee addressed a number of pressing issues including student mental health, international students, and professional development and diversity. In conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), in January 2012 Melinda DuBois, the Director of the Health and Counseling service, offered two workshops presenting information from assessment data regarding the physical and emotional health of Geneseo students. The Professional Development subcommittee also met with international students in a free-flowing and open conversation regarding their experiences at Geneseo. The conversation revealed a number of issues that international students find troubling, including: feeling a sense of isolation on campus; difficulty knowing when professors' behaviors are inappropriate and/or unprofessional and with whom to speak about their concerns; and finally a host of issues related to test-taking as well as writing services on campus. Finally, the Professional Development subcommittee is beginning to work on identifying issues to be addressed in faculty/staff development programs as well as utilizing the expertise on campus regarding diversity to help foster discussions/workshops on diversity related issues and faculty/staff development.

**The Assessment and Diversity Plan Subcommittee:** The Assessment and Diversity Plan subcommittee is currently in the process of working with the Strategic Planning Group with the expectation of developing action items for the Diversity Plan's objectives. Once those action items are laid out by the Strategic Planning Group, the ADP can then begin to develop an assessment plan.

### **Recommendations for 2012-2013**

The Commission co-chairs conferred with subcommittee chairs to discuss past accomplishments and the future direction of the Commission in the coming academic year. In the first part of this section, we summarize the issues and recommendations that emerged regarding the Commission as a whole. In the second section, we present the recommendations for specific subcommittees.

#### ***Overall Direction of the Commission***

1. As the College increases its efforts to expand high impact learning practices for students as well as implement the goals outlined in Bringing Theory to Practice, the Commission should continue to play a central role to make sure that issues related to diversity remain central to the other institutional changes. More specifically, Commission members should be involved in the discussions regarding General Education revision currently taking place in the General Education Committee. In addition, the Commission should

continue its historic role of identifying diversity and community related issues throughout the campus community.

2. The Commission should seek to gain an even greater and integrated profile on campus by:
  - better publicizing its objectives, programs, and goals
  - making sure that the commission is represented in discussions and plans related to curriculum reform and innovation
  - working with already established committees, programs, departments and programs at the College that currently address issues related to diversity
  - co-sponsoring and supporting programs designed to address diversity and community related issues
  - inviting non-Commission members to work with subcommittees on specific issues
  - identifying and utilizing the expertise on campus and fostering more cross divisional and cross department collaboration
  - reaching out to students and student groups so that they see the Commission as a resource
3. The Commission should seek greater sources of financial support through outside grants including but not limited to the Consortium on High Achievement and Success (CHAS).

### *Specific Recommendations for the Subcommittees*

**Student and Campus Engagement Sub-Committee**, Real World Geneseo (RWG) project and PATH awards:

The Commission should continue to support and assist this subcommittee in providing sustainability of the RWG project, which includes the naming of a faculty member to instruct the INTD slot course and service learning components for RWG and its continued financial support.

Recommendations for the future SACES subcommittee should be as follows:

1. The Commission co-chairs and sub-committee chairs should work together to identify and recruit candidates for the RWG trainer program from faculty, staff, and student leaders early in fall 2012 in order to have a pool of candidates for training.
2. The retreat facilitators should continue to work on conducting the RWG trainer program for faculty, staff, and student leaders. This should take place preferably in October or some other convenient time during the fall 2012 for people interested in facilitating the retreat. The retreat facilitators should also facilitate the next retreat along with those who were newly trained.

3. The RWG assessment group should continue to collect baseline and post-retreat data of the RWG programs that are conducted as well as continuing to analyze and present the data collected on the RWG programs conducted in previous years.
4. The PATH award group should meet regularly to work on promoting awareness on campus, strengthening the positive regard for the award, and soliciting nominations.

Recommendation for the institution:

1. A continuing challenge for this subcommittee has been finding faculty willing to participate in the RWG activities. Faculty members are reluctant to become involved with RWG because of the intense time commitment involved. The institution could help our committee by legitimizing the work of RWG so that faculty members feel that their work will count as they lead into tenure or promotion decisions. If the institution could help by endorsing the RWG work as valuable towards faculty and staff career goals, this would help this subcommittee recruit and retain active members.
2. Another challenge faced by the facilitators is the need for effective professional administrative support for the time leading up to and running of the retreat weekend. Although the student assistants are a strong resource at the retreat, there is a need for a staff member or student intern to provide administrative support to collect and put together materials and make all the accommodations for the participants and facilitators at the RWG.

### **The Professional Development Subcommittee:**

We recommend that this subcommittee continue its efforts to provide meaningful professional development opportunities for all faculty and staff. The subcommittee should continue to work with and utilize the resources available through the Teaching and Learning Center as well as other venues across the campus. Specifically the Professional Development subcommittee should:

1. Continue its efforts to identify workshops/services faculty/staff would like to see offered.
2. Utilize expertise on the campus by identifying faculty /staff who could offer workshops on issues related to diversity and community.
3. Continue to meet with international students to come up with ways to address their numerous concerns, including but not limited to writing services.
4. Explore the possibility of developing a SAFE ZONE program for international and underrepresented students, modeled on the current SAFE ZONE program.
5. Encourage individual faculty to submit grant proposals to CHAS.
6. Highlight and celebrate faculty whose courses address diversity related issues and encourage those faculty to share their insights with fellow faculty/staff through workshops or brownbag conversations.

**The Assessment & Diversity Plan subcommittee:**

The Assessment and Diversity Plan subcommittee should continue to work with the Strategic Planning Group in developing action items for the Diversity Plan. Once that work is completed, the Assessment and Diversity subcommittee should develop an assessment plan. Equally important, the Assessment and Diversity Plan subcommittee should reach out to as many departments, divisions, programs, organizations etc. on campus to ensure that the Diversity Plan is well publicized. Finally, the Assessment and Diversity Plan subcommittee should address the decline in retention and graduation rates for minority students. Specific information regarding retention on a department by department basis would allow the Commission to begin to work with individual departments to develop plans to address retention issues.

## Appendices

- I. Student and Campus Engagement subcommittee report
- II. Professional Development subcommittee report
- III. Assessment and Diversity Plan subcommittee report

## **The Student and Campus Engagement Subcommittee Annual Report 2011-2012**

Submitted by Fatima Rodriguez Johnson and Susan Preston Norman

This year, the Student and Campus Engagement Subcommittee were able to accomplish three goals: implement RWG IV, present the annual PATH Awards and begin discussions on mentoring needs and models.

### **Real World Geneseo**

There were 22 students who participated in Real World Geneseo IV. The participants included 40% Caucasian, 60% individuals of Color (with African, Caribbean, Native American, and South East Asian being represented), 30% male/70% female, 50% Christian (Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Agnostic, and Atheist were also represented). Twenty-five percent of the participants were first year students and 75% sophomores and juniors. This year's program also included community experiences to the Islamic Center, Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley, and Diverse Bookstores.

We were very excited to have Prof. Ann Marie Lauricella join the facilitation team along with Tracy Paradis and Daniel Jacques as participant/observers. In effort to continue exploring issues of social justice and diversity, each student participant chose a connecting course or courses.

There were approximately seventy-six dedicated contact hours of interactive workshops on racism, sexism, classism and gender were offered to the 26 participants and 6 Geneseo staff/faculty at the RWG retreat. The Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3 data are being assessed by the Dr. Julie Rao, Dr. Monica Schneider and Dr. Diantha Watts (RWG Assessment Team).

Through participating in the 1 credit reflective lab, diversity focused connecting course, and 8 weeks of classroom discussion it was revealed that:

- (1) students report being transformed/enlightened by their RWG retreat experience
- (2) reflective lab has allowed students to stay close to their cohort and experience emotional support from their peers
- (3) students report speaking up/out in connecting courses and are being praised for sharing diverse attitudes and insights with non-RWG peers.

This year, Dr. Robert Owens assisted students with service learning proposals and forms. As Dr. Owens is no longer at the college, Dr. Dave Gordon will identify a faculty member to instruct the INTD slot course for RWG and service learning components. Susan Preston Norman and Fatima Rodriguez Johnson have been asked to coordinate the retreat component of the program.

The Student and Campus Engagement Subcommittee are planning for RWG V with a fourth \$10,000 grant from the State University of New York's Office of Equity and Diversity. The RWG V program will take place January 17-20, 2013 and will be in partnership with Monroe Community College. The committee will review the MOU on file to determine stakeholders, an information meeting with MCC will be held in August and Facilitator Training session will be held in October for all facilitators including RWG IV observers/participants.

This program would not have been possible without the support of the President's Commission on Diversity and Community, the Bringing Theory to Practice Committee, and SUNY's Office of Equity and Diversity.

## **PATH Awards**

The Student and Campus Subcommittee oversee the PATH awards as a part of its role within the commission. The PATH awards were created in academic year 1998-1999 to support Geneseo's commitment to: "Recruiting, supporting, and fostering the development of a diverse community of outstanding students, faculty and staff; respecting the unique contributions of each individual to the campus community; and developing socially responsible citizens with skills and values important to the pursuit of an enriched life and success in the world."

In consultation with Becky Glass, the following process was utilized:

1. A request for nominations was sent out to all faculty, staff, and students by Becky Glass.
2. A working committee reviewed nominations utilizing the developed criteria.
3. The working committee determined awardees.
4. The awards were presented at the annual leadership award's ceremony to Prof. Jennifer Katz and Jillian McPherson.
5. Fatima will work with Becky Glass to highlight the honorees with a photo and a description for the commission's website.

## **Mentoring Program**

Mentoring of students from underrepresented backgrounds continues to be an area of interest; however there is also a need to provide mentoring to all students. Faculty and staff from underrepresented backgrounds have expressed interest in a mentoring for their own benefit including being mentored by students in effort to improve their teaching and professional development. The faculty and staff development committee has also been having conversations regarding staff/faculty mentoring with Gloria Lopez.

One model that was shared at the Diversity Plan retreat was that of fellow CHAS Institution, Bryn Mawr College. Dr. Alison Cook-Sather is one of the leading scholars on student voice work, including *Learning from the Student's Perspective: A Sourcebook for Effective Teaching* (Paradigm Publishers, 2009), and *Education Is Translation: A Metaphor for Change in Learning and Teaching* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). Her recent publications focuses on the professional development model she has designed through which undergraduate students serve as pedagogical consultants to college faculty. This model appears in *To Improve the Academy, Curriculum Inquiry, Anthropology & Education Quarterly, the Journal of Faculty Development among others.*

Dr. Kathleen Mapes and Fatima Rodriguez Johnson recently attended CHAS sponsored Targeted Professionals Conference on mentoring and will be sharing this information with the committee as well.

The SACES has enjoyed a productive year and looks forward to the 2012-2013 academic year.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Preston Norman, Co-chair  
Fatima Rodriguez Johnson, Co-chair

**Report of the Professional Development Subcommittee**  
Submitted by David Parfitt

**Committee Members:**

Cathy Adams, History  
Jim Aimers, Anthropology  
Susan Bandoni-Muench, Biology  
Donte Bothel, Student  
Michelle Costello, Milne Library  
Maria Perpetua Liwanag, School of Education  
Nicole McCawthan, Residence Life  
Dave Murray, Student  
Jennifer Rogalsky, Geography  
Farooq Sheikh, School of Business  
Atsushi Tajima, Communication  
Linda Ware, School of Education  
Peggy Wirth, Student Health and Counseling

**Summary 2011-2012**

The President's Commission on Diversity and Community met on November 17, 2011, I was asked to chair the professional development subcommittee, and commission members selected their subcommittees on December 7, 2011. The first professional development subcommittee meeting took place shortly after the beginning of the spring semester – February 17, 2012.

This first subcommittee meeting revisited the President's response and charge to the Commission. In particular, we discussed designing faculty development programs in the area of diversity and community for continuing faculty members as well as new faculty members. We were also sensitive to the fact there are currently experts on campus in this area, and many courses and programs currently offered in the realm of diversity and community. We would like to bring those courses and programs to the forefront instead of necessarily re-inventing the wheel. To that end we came up with a survey to assess faculty needs. The survey was short, simple, and distributed to all faculty and staff via e-mail. We first asked what expertise individuals could share with the college community, and, second, what workshops/services they would like to see offered related to diversity. Although we did not receive a great number of responses, we did receive some good suggestions for future workshops that can be readily offered by members of our community such as:

- Religious Diversity: Sensitivity to Muslim Students in Course Content and Pedagogy
- Parental Perspectives on Inclusion and Access to Higher Ed Issues
- Cross-Cultural Competence
- Historical Background on Citizenship and Inclusion/Exclusion in the American Experience
- More participation in Opal Workshops offered by the G.O.L.D. Program

In addition, we received feedback on workshops people would like to see offered at Geneseo, including:

- Religious diversity

- Cultural competence  
(nice to see someone offered to do workshops on religious diversity & cultural competence as well as someone requested a workshop on these issues)
- Integrating diversity issues into curriculum in a natural, unforced way
- How faculty might be more involved in student recruitment
- Diversity metrics; what is a good diversity profile for Geneseo?
- Themed semester encouraging faculty to focus on specific diversity issues
- Review of challenges that minority students face attending Geneseo
- White privilege
- Ableism
- Racism
- Safe Zone Training
- Posse Foundation or some sort of buddy system

As a result of this needs assessment, the subcommittee will take the following actions. First, schedule diversity/community programs in the fall 2012 semester through the Teaching and Learning Center on the four specific workshops proposed by the Geneseo community members. Second, the subcommittee will work to organize professional development programs to address the needs mentioned in the survey results. Third, in order to get more feedback from the college community we will distribute the needs assessment again in a paper form and send representatives to department meetings to assess the specific needs of each department.

In the President's response to the professional development subcommittee, one program mentioned was working with international students. In order to organize such a program the subcommittee met with Irene Belyakov and a number of the current international students on campus to find out their specific needs. This was an illuminating discussion centered around how some students feel isolated on campus and in classes, problems they face in dealing with classmates and professors, and issues of fairness, test-taking, English language, and the speech buddies program. The subcommittee will continue to work with Irene Belyakov and consult with the international students in order to address the needs of this valued group on campus.

In late January, the Teaching and Learning Center worked with Melinda DuBois, Director of the Health and Counseling service to offer two workshops presenting the results of assessment on Geneseo student's perception of their physical and emotional health. The professional development subcommittee plans on continuing to work with Health and Counseling to develop a "mental health" report for our community.

Finally, the 2011 professional development subcommittee submitted a grant to the Consortium of High Achievement and Success (CHAS). This effort was spearheaded by Linda Ware for a professional development program titled "Critical Incidents, Critical Conversations, and Inclusive Pedagogies" (CiCCiP). We are currently waiting on the call for proposals from CHAS in order to revise and resubmit this grant.

**Report of the Assessment & Diversity Plan Committee**  
**President's Commission on Diversity & Community**  
**Spring 2012**

**Committee Activities:**

Following the recommendation of last year's Assessment Committee, the Assessment and Diversity Plan committees were combined for 2011-12. The membership of the two committees overlapped, and those who helped draft the plan would be helpful in developing assessment strategies.

Before developing an assessment plan, however, action items for the plan's objectives needed to be completed. Responsibility for this lay with the Strategic Planning Group, which decided to hold a late spring retreat to discuss action items.

Dr. Alma Clayton-Pederson, Senior Scholar at AAC&U and a national leader in diversity work, agreed to facilitate the retreat. Past and present members of the Diversity Commission, members of the Strategic Planning Group, and academic department chairs were invited. In all, thirty faculty, staff, and administrators attended the retreat on May 17, 2012, that ran from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The retreat produced several important outcomes. Dr. Pederson created a climate in which participants felt free to express their thoughts and feelings, resulting in a good exchange of ideas. Participants divided themselves into discussion groups, each of which created suggestions for action items for a goal in the Diversity Plan. Several groups also recommended making changes in the wording of goals and objectives. Finally, each participant made a list of three actions they will take personally to promote diversity on campus.

The next step will be to incorporate the recommended action items into the Diversity Plan. The 2012-13 Assessment Committee can then develop a corresponding assessment plan.

*Submitted by David Gordon*