News About
the Diversity Movement
at Weber State University

Spring 2003 • Vol 1, No 2

Diversity WORKS!

Welcome to Diversity Works!

The second issue of WSU's biannual newsletter turns our attention to the continuing challenges faced as we search for more substantive and enduring ways to support diversity as a critical attribute and core value of students' experience and faculty/staff professional vitality.

While national trends affirm that diversity efforts are celebrated in a variety of ways, many universities are taking a closer look at this issue.

A few years ago, WSU joined with two other state institutions to require at least one course that meets general education's diversity guidelines.

Early student feedback from pilot surveys indicates that students generally value a course related to diversity. However, an important question remains: Are diversity-related courses genuinely impacting and preparing students to deal with social issues?

It is clear that WSU's assessment effort is in the early stages of this evolution—and much work remains to be done. But every story must have a beginning, and I'm proud to be affiliated with colleagues and students who have demonstrated a strong commitment to help us move forward.

Please share your thoughts, experiences and reactions with us as we journey toward achieving cultural competency at WSU and in the world. We're all in it together, so let's enjoy the ride!

– Forrest Crawford, assistant to the president for institutional diversity

Putting WSU on the Map:

Diversity Course Requirements Progressing Slowly But Steadily

If you've ever been a parent, or even just gotten in the car with children for a journey of any distance, you've surely felt the frustration at the inevitable question: "Are we there yet?"

It's true of any situation that is drawn out over time, says Brenda Kowalewski, professor of sociology and member of Weber State University's diversity steering committee. When it comes to measuring our progress in terms of both fostering an inclusive environment on campus and graduating insightful, accepting, open-minded individuals who can respectfully agree to disagree on issues of diversity, Kowalewski says we're making progress.

"We're in a preliminary, investigative, inquiry phase of this journey. The diversity courses are making a difference, but we've still got a long way to go."

-Forrest Crawford

A Little History

Several years ago, courses on diversity weren't required at WSU. But they were quickly becoming the norm at campuses across the nation; an independent study found that nearly 60 percent of colleges and university already had diversity course requirements. Students, sensing an overwhelming need to promote understanding of diversity issues in society, created a resolution in 1995 urging WSU faculty and staff to do the same.

In 1997, the resolution passed, and today students can choose from among 47 approved courses that range in topic from "Elements of Culture" to "Psycho-Social Medicine." But coming up with an approved list wasn't easy. For one thing, there was ample hesitation in asking already-overwhelmed instructors to add yet another course to their teaching list. For another, many questioned whether one three-credit course could really prepare a student to become "culturally competent."

With that in mind, the diversity steering committee decided to establish some guidelines for what a diversity course should cover, then see which existing courses already met those guidelines. "The point wasn't to construct new courses, nor was it to overburden students with additional general education requirements. So we had to look at what was already being offered and whether those courses could be modified to meet the requirement," Kowalewski says.

The Results

Preliminary feedback from students suggests that, while some are taking what they've learned in the classroom and applying it to the way they approach people who are different from themselves, others question whether one class can truly make a difference. *(continued next page)*

DIVERSITY REQUIREMENT CRITERIA

To meet WSU's diversity requirement, a course must: "have human diversity or multiculturalism as a major aspect of the class and also must be directly relevant to present day society, as demonstrated by the syllabus and student assignments."

In addition, the course must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The course is comparative in nature (multi-cultural or cross-population).
- The course treats multiple aspects of diversity and/or culture (such as race, gender, age, class, etc.) in a single area of study (such as the American West, the health care setting, political behavior, etc.).
- The course is specific to a particular group of people or culture that is not present or under-represented in the general social-economic-political framework of the United States.

-WSU Guidelines for Diversity Courses, 4-5-2000

Diversity Calendar
SPRING 2003

COMMON GROUND:
A monthly forum to focus on education, information and diversity resources on and off campus. Snacks will be served and feedback is encouraged.

TASTE FOR DIVERSITY:
A monthly performance and food sampling to provide informal exposure to the world of diverse foods, dance, arts, etc.

SESSIONS@UB240:
Set up like a coffeehouse series, visitors and on-campus staff can take the microphone each month and bring an eclectic tilt to the diversity of music, art, poetry and history. Beverage & snack provided during the noon-1 p.m. hour.

RELIGION AND ETHICS:
A weekly forum to explore the religious diversity of WSU's campus community, nation and world. Hosted by the Diversity Center every Tuesday from 12:30 - 2 pm.

STOP THE HATE:
A national program that has become a model for change across the nation to send the message of zero-tolerance as it relates to hate and hate crimes.

INTERFAITH READING GROUPS:
Open to students, staff, and the community, this group meets every Thursday from 2:30-3:30 p.m. to explore the diversity of religious books. Books are provided based on participation.

Submit your calendar items for the fall issue of *Diversity Works!* via e-mail to roleson@weber.edu

january	Jan. 9	**MultiCultural Youth Conference** featuring special guest speaker Jimmy "Santiago" Baca, a renowned poet and author. (Information, AnnaJane Arroyo, ext. 7331.)
	Jan. 17	**T.O.U.C.H.** (Teens of Ogden United for Community Harmony) **performance tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King**, 12:30 pm, WSU Browning Center, Allred Theatre. Free. (Information, Wangari Wanyatetu-Waigwa, ext. 7448.)
	Jan. 19	**T.O.U.C.H. performance tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King**, 5 pm, Ogden High School auditorium. Free. (Information, Wangari Wanyatetu-Waigwa, ext. 7448.)
	Jan. 20	**Munch and March Freedom Celebration**, 8:30 am, Marshall White Center, 222 28th St., Ogden (Information, Amber Olson, 731-4333).
	Jan. 22	**Martin Luther King Children's Movie Night**, special presentation of the movie, "Our Friend, Martin" 6:30 pm, Diversity Center (Information, Keith Wilder, ext. 6379).
	Jan. 24	**3rd Annual WSU Gospel Festival**, 7:30 pm, WSU Austad Auditorium. Free. (Information, Caril Jennings at ext. 6431.)
february	Feb. 2	**Jazz in the Skyroom**, featuring "The Upper Room," the jazz combo of the Second Baptist Church Gospel Choir, 7:30 pm, Skyroom. Free. (Information, Caril Jennings, ext. 6431.)
	Feb. 17-21	**African American Emphasis Week**
	Feb. 18	**Soul Food Day** @ the Gallery, 11 am-1 pm.
	Feb. 19	**African American Film Festival**, Wildcat Theater, 6-10 pm.
	Feb. 20	**Brain Bowl**, SUB and the Lair, (Information, Services for Multicultural Students, ext. 7330).
	Feb. 24-28	**Disabilities Emphasis Week** Events and activities TBA (Information, Sam Platt, ext. 6413).
march	Mar. 17-18	**MultiCultural Leadership Retreat**
	Mar. 24-29	**Asian/Pacific American Emphasis Week**
	Mar. 29	**Luau—Polynesian Club** (Information, Services for Multicultural Students, ext. 7330).
april	Apr. 7-12	**Native American Emphasis Week**
	Apr. 7	**Sunrise Ceremony**, WSU Duck Pond, 8-9 am.
	Apr. 10	**Honors Issues Forum**—Native American Banquet, 7-9 pm, the Gallery.
	Apr. 12	**Pow Wow**, Grand Entries, 1 pm and 7 pm, Ballrooms (Information, Services for Multicultural Students, ext. 7330).
	Apr. 15	**Holocaust Commemoration**, featuring James Waller, Michael Marrus, Joe Crnich, and Tracey Callahan.
	Apr. 17	**High School Seniors Banquet**
may	May 1-5	**Cinco de Mayo Community Project**
	May 6	**WSU/SMS Graduation Reception**
june	Jun. 13-15	**Juneteenth African American Festival**

Continued from front:

Putting WSU on the Ma

Here's just a sampling of their comments:

- "I believe I have always been understandi others; I don't believe a diversity credit ca teach anyone anything about tolerance."
- "My values and beliefs were not affected much from this class."
- "...A majority of the class's comments re affirmed why I held some stereotyped vie

Other students disagree, however:

- "I've always had a generous and empath heart, but this class provided a great deal information and facts to bring my head u speed with my heart."
- "The things we talked about really made think about the way I view the world."

Get in, Sit Down and Hang on Tight

There's still a good distance to go, say both Crawford and Kowalewski. And while there be more than one way to accomplish the go both agree that WSU is further ahead than i was when the idea was born.

"Ultimately, the answer is that we're not th yet," Crawford says. "We need to continue t revise the courses, get feedback from studen and faculty, and use the data in a way that strengthens the teaching and learning proce But we are moving closer to the goal, we're headed in a positive direction, and we're co mitted to staying the course."

– Becky Oleson, University Communications

The History of Div

1997
WSU student senate introduced a resolution requesting that WSU incorporate a diversity course requirement for graduation.

1998
Diversity requ resolution po

1997 1998

WSU Diversity Requirement

Focus group surveys, administered in 2 revealed the following:

- Ethnicity and culture were the most prominent issues covered in classes at
- Students rated most of the sample fa as "successful" in providing students v an opportunity to reflect on group issu

Weapons of Justice:
WSU Professor Believes Education is the Best Tool Against Discrimination

Photo by Cox Photography

Sandra Powell is the coordinator for WSU's women's studies program and a professor of business administration at WSU.

Sandra Powell witnessed discrimination and injustices toward women and girls at an early age. As a junior high school student, she decided education would be her best weapon against inequality and prejudices.

As a result, Powell came out of the University of Utah in 1992 armed with a bachelor's degree, a law degree, a master's degree in business administration and a doctorate. She even based her doctoral dissertation and subsequent work on justice theory and perceptions of fairness.

"My current interest is in the rights of elderly women in our society," says Powell, who joined Weber State University's business administration faculty in 1990 and is coordinator of WSU's women's studies program.

Women's studies is the study of women, past and present, from many cultures, classes, sexual preferences, ethnicities and religious orientations. "Women's studies looks at the causes and remedies for all kinds of oppression and marginalization—not just that arising from sexism," she says. "We see the interaction betwee sexism and racism, ageism, homophobia, clas- sism and other forms of discrimination."

> "Women's studies looks at the causes and remedies for all kinds of oppression and marginalization—not just that arising from sexism."
> -Sandra Powell

The goals of the women's studies program f in very well with WSU's commitment to diversit Powell says. "Both divers ty and women's studies are dedicated to having everyone's ideas sought and respected."

What's it like inciting inclusiveness for a living? "Unfortunately," Powell says, "when people see oppression, they often g angry at the messenger." Does she get angry students who get angry in the presence of ne ideas? No. "It goes with the territory," she say "I try to see anger as a sign that someone is paying attention."

Powell says she seeks to raise the consciousness of her students and inspire them to activism. "If everyone does just a little bit to make this campus better informed and friendlier," she says, "it will eventually become the inclusive community that we envision."

– Barbara Bernstein, University Communications

ty Requirements at WSU:

1999
Working collaboratively with the Academic Affairs Diversity Action Team, under the auspices of the assistant to the president for diversity, the WSU faculty senate established guidelines for courses meeting the diversity requirement.

2000
WSU developed a survey to solicit feedback from students in diversity courses.
WSU's Teaching and Learning Forum, along with the Office of Diversity, sponsored a series of faculty focus groups designed to provide clarity to the pilot instrument and diversity-related pedagogical issues.

2001
Pilot survey administered to WSU students enrolled in diversity courses.

2003
Currently, 47 courses, ranging in topic from anthropology's "Culture area studies" to Radiologic Technology's "Psycho-social medicine," qualify under this designation.

1999 2000 2001 2003

vey

- Forty-four percent of student respondents believed that a considerable amount of time was devoted to culture and ethnicity.
- Fifty-nine percent of respondents felt they were sympathetic to others' differences.
- Ninety percent of respondents felt the class environment was a safe and comfortable place in which to explore issues of difference.

Where We're Going From Here:

In the new year, WSU will expand its assessment to include additional diversity courses, and to organize forums and reflection meetings to receive ongoing faculty and student feedback. We will also review the broad definition of diversity, the standards and procedures used for determining what qualifies as a diversity course, and will present an update report to the WSU Faculty Senate (Fall 04-Spring 05).

Diversity Conference:
Speakers Present Blueprints for Cultural Competence

For many students, Weber State University's fourth annual Diversity Conference on Oct. 25 was a wake-up call on the biases of society as well as their own.

Keynote speaker Johnnetta Cole, president of Bennett College in Greensboro, N.C., said respecting differences helps to build cultural competence. "Today we are still judging people by the color of their skin, by the shape of their bodies, by the amount of their material wealth, and by their age. These are totally irrelevant attributes. What counts is the content of their character."

"Today we are still judging people by the color of their skin, by the shape of their bodies, by the amount of their material wealth, and by their age. These are totally irrelevant attributes. What counts is the content of their character."

-Johnetta Cole

The long-term social and economic health of our nation depends on respect and opportunities for all, Cole said. "The U.S. economy can't afford the social and economic costs of color-coding our citizens," she said, noting that by year 2040 one-half of the U.S. population will be people of color, giving new definition to the word "minority."

"Over the years I've learned so much about my own biases, which I didn't know I had," said Bobbie Henderson, a senior in sociology who attended the conference. "To really relate to another culture, we have to live that culture."

Henderson, who is Caucasian and married to an African-American man, said each individual has to be motivated to be more culturally competent. "It's the responsibility of all the students to take what they learn (at the conference) and make the world better."

On a larger scale, a morning panel of five students described their journeys to increased cultural awareness. They were asked to describe a situation where they wished they had been more culturally competent, or open to people from other cultures.

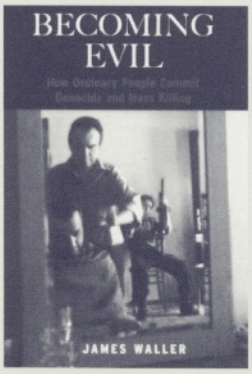
The conference also helped students like Nathan Black, a junior in technical sales, think about cultural issues that aren't on the table every day. "This is useful information for anybody, to help you understand how your background influences the way you deal with people," he said.

Another speaker, Daniel Hernandez, associate vice chancellor of community development for the Texas A&M University System, encouraged attendees to become facilitators of relationships by stepping out of their *nacio*, or comfort zone. When meeting someone from another culture, you should mentally and spiritually leave your culture by becoming objective and asking questions about the individual's culture, Hernandez said. "We have to look to understand each other first. We may see the same facts, but we don't necessarily see the same truths."

Johnetta Cole is the president of Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina.

– Ellen Rantz, University Communications

Mark Your Calendar:
9th Annual Holocaust Memorial
Tuesday, April 15th



Join us for the keynote speech, dramatic presentation and additional speakers and workshops. This year's featured speaker is James Waller, author of *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. Other presenters include Steven Allen Carr, film historian presently at the U.S. Holocaust Museum, Michael Marrus, historian on the Holocaust from the University of Toronto, Joe Crnich, drama teacher at Ogden High School and Tracey Callahan, WSU performing arts professor.

**Faculty, consider adding this event to your spring syllabi.*

For more information contact Barry Gomberg, ext. 6240, Oliver Griffin, ext. 6781 or Sandy Sowerby, ext. 6548.

WEB ADDRESSES

The Diversity Center: **www.weber.edu/Diversity**

Services for Students with Disabilities: **www.weber.edu/ssd**

Services for International Students: **www.weber.edu/sis**

Services for Multicultural Students: **www.weber.edu/sms**

Nontraditional Student Center: **www.weber.edu/nontrad**

Services for Women Students: **www.weber.edu/sws**

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Send submissions and comments to mailcode 4025; e-mail roleson@weber.edu, or call ext. 6347.

Editor: Becky Oleson
Designer: Paula Airth