Diversity Community Council

For the sake of both its neighbors and its students, WSU recognizes the need for close ties with the larger community. In our diversity initiative, we have nurtured strong academic and cultural partnerships with community groups. This issue of Diversity Works highlights some of these relationships.

The Diversity Office invites community input through the Diversity Community Council (DCC), which was created in 1991 as WSU sought input from the community’s minority leaders.

As our diversity initiative has evolved, so has the DCC in its composition and role. The present council represents a cross-section of the community, with members from Hill Air Force Base, the Marshall White Community Center, local religious organizations, community-based agencies, and business and industry.

The DCC initially served as the community voice concerning the direction WSU should take in its diversity initiatives. In 2000, that role expanded to include these goals:

1. To advise the President’s Diversity Office to help promote a high-quality university environment for WSU’s diversity of learners.
2. To serve as a resource for initiatives designed to celebrate, support and challenge the campus community to work together toward achieving the university’s diversity mission.
3. To explore innovative approaches to fostering meaningful partnerships between the campus and the community.

The DCC does not make policy but serves to advise, represent and connect with the larger community in WSU’s diversity efforts. With its members serving as respected role models for WSU students, the DCC’s function will no doubt continue to evolve as WSU itself evolves.

-Wangari Wa Nyatetu-Waigwa, Interim assistant to the president for institutional diversity

Partnerships Abound Around MLK Holiday

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, named after the 1964 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, for many, stands as a symbol of peace and civil rights. Weber State University supports this celebration through various community partnerships.

Diversity Center Activities

Munch and March kicks off at 8 a.m. on Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 17, in downtown Ogden with a breakfast at the Marshall White Community Center. The “march” section of the event follows, with the community taking a walk to the Ogden Amphitheater for short talks from a variety of people about King’s influence. WSU provides doughnuts for those that make the four-block trip.

The activity’s purpose, however, extends further than acknowledging King’s influence, said Keith Wilder, WSU’s Diversity Center coordinator.

“I think the main thing is to build solidarity between the university and the community members,” Wilder said.

Previous speakers have included WSU student body presidents, Ogden City mayors and WSU administrators.

In addition to Munch and March, the Diversity Center will feature a display about King the week of Jan. 17. Also, the public is invited to attend a viewing of the animated film, “Our Friend Martin,” at 5 p.m. Jan. 20 in the Diversity Center.

TOUCH

Traditionally, Teens of Ogden United for Community Harmony (TOUCH), a WSU-sponsored program, has been held the same week as the Martin Luther King Holiday. This year, however, the program has been moved to Feb. 10 as a lead-in to WSU’s African-American Emphasis week.

Started in the fall of 1999, TOUCH is designed to showcase local teens of diverse backgrounds in a performance of the arts. TOUCH adviser Wangari Wa Nyatetu-Waigwa of WSU started the program because she wanted all ethnicities to feel connected to Martin Luther King Day.

“I wanted it to involve teenagers because I thought that is a very vulnerable group,” Wa Nyatetu-Waigwa said. “I thought it would be nice to showcase them doing something positive for the community.”

The group begins meeting weekly in August to prepare for the performance of cultural dance, song and theater in February. Many participants have never been involved in any performing arts prior to joining TOUCH.

On Feb. 10, TOUCH will showcase its work through a WSU performance. The group will perform at noon in the Austrad Auditorium, Val A. Browning Center. There also will be a performance for the community the following week; call Wa Nyatetu-Waigwa at 626-7448 for more information.

“Martin Luther King’s message is for all of us,” Wa Nyatetu-Waigwa said. “TOUCH was started to help people see that.”

-Above: Singer at TOUCH performance.

-Travis Clemens, University Communications
Calendar

January 16: Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Downtown Ogden (Contact the Diversity Center for more information)
January 17: Munch and March. Downtown Ogden (See story on Page 2)
January 28: Annual WSU Gospel Music Festival. 7:30 p.m., Browning Center's Austad Auditorium, free, all ages welcome
February 2: Jazz in the Skyroom, featuring Joe McQueen and Friends. 7:30 p.m., SUB's Skyroom, free, all ages welcome
February 5: "V-Day - Until the Violence Stops," a fund-raising presentation of Eve Ensler's "Vagina Monologues," as part of a national college campaign to end domestic violence. 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., SUB's Wildcat Theater. $15/$10 for students. Proceeds will be donated to the Ogden Community Connection's Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Center.
February 14-18: African-American Emphasis Week
February 28-March 4: Hispanic Emphasis Week
March 21-25: International Awareness Week
March 26: International Student Banquet
April 4-9: Native American Emphasis Week
April 9: Native American Pow-Wow
April 11-16: Asian/Pacific Emphasis Week
April 15: Real Life Film Series presents three showings of "Schindler's List" as part of WSU's Annual Holocaust Observances. Call Student Activities at 626-6349 for details.
April 16: Intercollegiate Luau
April 20: Convocation speaker Zev Kedem, one of the people saved by Oscar Schindler, will speak about his experiences as part of WSU's Annual Holocaust Observances. Noon, SUB Ballroom.

WEB ADDRESSES
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www.weber.edu/Diversity
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www.weber.edu/ssd
Services for International Students:
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Student-to-Student Program Reveals Possible Career Path

Daniel Judd, a winter 2004 graduate of Weber State University, may have found a possible career path when he started working with the Student-to-Student program in the fall of 2003.

"I'd like to find a situation similar to what I'm in now, where I'm teaching a subject to Spanish-speaking students," Judd said. "I think something like that would be fun."

The Student-to-Student program, which began in the fall of 2003, gives WSU students a stipend, assigns them a class in the Ogden School District (OSD) and sends them off to help tutor and mentor students. The program started because WSU president F. Ann Millner and OSD superintendent Catherine Ortega wanted to find ways to help students prepare for college.

"It's a bridge to the university," said Roberta Blain, Student-to-Student specialist at WSU. "We're hoping that the students, throughout their high school and middle school years, will include a plan for taking the right kind of classes they need, to get where they would like to go for the career they dream about."

One area that both sides realized needed improvement was mathematics. "They (OSD and WSU) decided that math is a subject that's very difficult for students," Blain said. "As they get up to the university level, a lot of them are not prepared."

This year there are seven WSU students mentoring 105 OSD students. All of them are tutoring in mathematics. WSU also tracks the students who were in the program last year to see how many of them end up in college.

Judd, who works as a math tutor at WSU, learned Spanish as an LDS missionary, which has also proved beneficial for students in Ms. Mary Courney's ninth-grade math class at Ogden High School.

"There are a few students in the class I'm in that don't speak any English, and the teacher doesn't speak any Spanish," Judd said. "So I've been able to help them out and get them to understand their course work."

In order to help the students understand the preparation necessary for college, the mentors provide tours of WSU and give presentations about the college experience. The Ogden High students attended WSU's Major Fest in November as part of the Student-to Student program.

"Our tour was so great," Courney said. "It gives the kids the opportunity to see what's outside the inner-city. They loved the nice dorm rooms."

Judd has enjoyed helping Courney's math class.

"I've noticed that with some of the Spanish-speaking students, if I don't help them out, sometimes they'll just sit there and not do anything because they don't have any idea, really, what's going on," Judd said. "When I help them, they get into it, they understand the materials, and they get their assignments done."

Judd discovered the program through another student, who suggested he try it since he tutored math and spoke Spanish. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a minor in Latin American studies after fall semester.

"You do get paid for it, but it has the feel of volunteer work," Judd said.

- Travis Clemens, University Communications

Daniel Judd mentors math students of the Ogden School District.

TAPT: Promoting Diversity Among Public School Faculty

For Shalise Stapp, a 2004 WSU graduate in Spanish, the Teacher Assistant Pathway to Teaching (TAPT) program was a great help in getting her certified as a teacher.

"I think I've always wanted to be a teacher," said Stapp, who worked as a substitute teacher for the Davis County School district.

TAPT, which began in 1996 at WSU through a government grant, is an integrated effort by the university and local school districts to promote diversity among the faculty in local schools, assisting those who speak a second language to become certified teachers. WSU's program director, Jose Ball, meets with the local school districts and, depending on the funding available, allows a certain number of participants from the Davis, Weber, Ogden, Box Elder and Morgan school districts.

"This is not a program that's watered down," Ball said. "They have to take the same courses as anyone else at the university."

Participants in the TAPT program are required to give community service, maintain a 3.0 GPA, obtain an English and a Second Language minor, and pursue licensure as a teacher. In return, participants receive a support system through the TAPT program that helps ensure their success. Financially, they receive help with tuition and fees, as well as $23 per credit hour for books.

Participants also receive support from the program administrators. Before starting the program, they are given a weeklong training session from Ball and his staff to ensure they understand what's expected. Once they start the program, they have monthly meetings with the participating teachers as well as Ball. The monthly meeting this past December recognized three new graduates who received degrees and became certified.

Since 1996, 42 participants—many of whom had to deal with family and work obligations along the way—have finished their degrees and become certified teachers through TAPT. "We do the best we can in the state," Ball said.

STEP Forward for Diversity

Another WSU program that focuses on diversity is the Science, Technology, Engineering Program (STEP). STEP is a national program that encourages women and ethnic minorities to pursue degrees in science, technology and engineering fields where these groups are generally underrepresented.
Where worlds overlap, connections are made.

This point, made by Harvard professor Diana Eck in her speech on religious pluralism at the 6th Annual WSU Diversity Conference, struck a chord with associate history professor Kathryn MacKay. According to MacKay, who heads the Office of Academic Service Learning, the statement could just as well apply to students’ experiences in service-learning projects.

“It’s not just about getting students out of the classroom,” MacKay says. “It’s about getting them to another place, another world, and having that world overlap with their own.”

Service learning offers many benefits: The local schools and community programs WSU students work with receive much-needed volunteers, while the students are able to put their knowledge to practical use and learn from the experience. These real-world interactions may also expand students’ perspectives.

“Most service-learning experiences broaden students’ diversity horizons,” says Brenda Marstellar Kwakewski, an associate professor of sociology whose students often work with Youth Impact, an after-school and summer program for Ogden children. “My students are most often meeting people from different socioeconomic and racial/ethnic backgrounds. And other projects go beyond raising awareness about classism and racism, dealing with issues related to age, gender and disabilities.”

Colleen Garside, a communication instructor, has organized projects where students worked with disabled children and helped local elderly residents with yard work. She has fostered a partnership with Ogden and Weber after-school programs, and many of her students have worked with CARES: Children at Risk Extended School.

“It’s great to read the papers my students write about their experiences,” Garside says. “They never realized how diverse people are, and they now think about things like different income levels and ethnic backgrounds. If they’ve been working with Spanish-speaking kids, they have an appreciation for how hard it can be to try to learn in a new language.”

These are all examples, MacKay says, of those “overlapping worlds.”

“Our students are finding those places where they can make connections,” she says. “They’re giving knowledge and gaining experience; they’re curious, learning and reflecting. They wouldn’t get there except by going out into the public school systems and community agencies, where they find themselves considering worlds and experiences they wouldn’t have otherwise.”

As service learning increases in popularity at universities across the country, MacKay believes WSU has a solid core of supporters in the faculty and administration. “I’ve read that if you can get 10 percent of the faculty interested, it ripples out from there,” she says. “We’ve got our 10 percent.”

Of course, there is room for more, and MacKay encourages other faculty members to look into whether service learning would fit in their courses. “It doesn’t work for every class and every professor,” she says. “Generally, the faculty who are most interested are the ones who do this in their own lives – they’re engaged and active in the community.”

Another challenge is that “this isn’t anything we’ve taught to do,” MacKay says. “Sometimes the students are guinea pigs, and sometimes projects don’t work. But this is an area where faculty are very generous in sharing ideas.” Also, she says, there is a growing amount of academic literature about service learning in different disciplines.

Faculty members who are interested in learning more can visit the Office of Academic Service Learning Web site at programs.weber.edu/oasl, where there are links to resources such as principles of good practice, stipend applications, sample contract forms and Utah and national Campus Compact sites. The office, located in the Shepherd Union Building, Room 419A, has a collection of related literature and materials.

MacKay heartily recommends talking with others who have incorporated service learning into their courses. “That’s how I learned,” she says. This summer’s Civic Engagement faculty retreat in August also would be a good opportunity to learn more.

MacKay says she’s proud of WSU for the support the university gives to faculty who want to engage in service learning: “We are progressive,” she says. “We want to participate in the larger conversation, be mindful and help instructors grow. It’s exciting.”

- Jennifer Phillion, University Communications

Continued from page 3

STEP, a partner to the secondary-school program Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA), offers scholarships to students who decide to continue with the program in college. It also provides opportunities to further explore students’ fields of interest.

Nisha Parry, program director for WSU’s STEP chapter, said that STEP works as a pipeline for students that have been involved with MESA to continue to be involved in learning about science, technology and engineering fields.

Recently, STEP students traveled to Salt Lake Community College for a career and scholarship fair. Work-readiness seminars and job shadowing opportunities have also been provided by corporate sponsors in order to enhance students’ education. Approximately $20,000 in scholarships is provided each year by STEP’s 12 industry partners.

“We like to think of the industry partners as the third link in the program,” Parry said. “Once the students decide to major in a field like engineering, these employers are there to hire them.”

There is no fee to participate in STEP; Parry only asks that if students sign up, they stay involved.

Part of WSU’s mission is to “evaluate and embrace the diversity of its members.” TAPT and STEP not only promote diversity at WSU, but they lend a helping hand to the community as well.

- Travis Clemens, University Communications