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

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.

While 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.

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-overflowed 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.

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

Putting WSU on the Map:

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 is under-represented in the general social-economic-political framework of the United States.

-WSU Guidelines for Diversity Courses, 4-5-2000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 9</td>
<td>MultiCultural Youth Conference featuring special guest speaker Jimmy &quot;Santiago&quot; Baca, a renowned poet and author. (Information, Annalane Arroyo, ext. 7331.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 17</td>
<td>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, Alfred Theatre, Free. (Information, Wangan Wanyatutu-Waigwa, ext. 7448.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>T.O.U.C.H. performance tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King. 5 pm, Ogden High School auditorium, Free. (Information, Wangan Wanyatutu-Waigwa, ext. 7448.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 20</td>
<td>Munch and March Freedom Celebration, 8:30 am, Marshall White Center, 222 28th St., Ogden (Information, Amber Olson, 731-4333)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Children's Movie Night. Special presentation of the movie, &quot;Our Friend, Martin&quot; 8:30 pm, Diversity Center (Information, Keith Wilder, ext. 6379).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 24</td>
<td>3rd Annual WSU Gospel Festival. 7:30 pm, WSU Astd Auditorium, Free. (Information, Cari Jennings at ext. 6431.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td>Jazz in the Skyroom, featuring &quot;The Upper Room,&quot; the jazz combo of the Second Baptist Church Gospel Choir, 7:30 pm, Skyroom. Free. (Information, Cari Jennings, ext. 6431.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 17-21</td>
<td>African American Emphasis Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 18</td>
<td>Soul Food Day at the Gallery, 11 am-1 pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 19</td>
<td>African American Film Festival, Wildcat Theater, 6-10 pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 20</td>
<td>Brain Bowl, SUB and the Lair. (Information, Services for Multicultural Students, ext. 7330)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 24-28</td>
<td>Disabilities Emphasis Week Events and activities TBA (Information, Sam Platt, ext. 8413)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 17-18</td>
<td>MultiCultural Leadership Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 24-29</td>
<td>Asian/Pacific American Emphasis Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 29</td>
<td>Luau—Polynesian Club (Information, Services for Multicultural Students, ext. 7330)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 7-12</td>
<td>Native American Emphasis Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 7</td>
<td>Sunrise Ceremony, WSU Duck Pond, 8-9 am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 10</td>
<td>Honors Issues Forum—Native American Banquet, 7-9 pm, the Gallery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 12</td>
<td>Pow Wow, Grand Entries, 1 pm and 7 pm, Ballrooms (Information, Services for Multicultural Students, ext. 7330)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 15</td>
<td>Holocaust Commemoration, featuring James Walter, Michael Marrus, Joe Crnic, and Tracey Callahan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 17</td>
<td>High School Seniors Banquet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1-5</td>
<td>Cinco de Mayo Community Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>WSU/SMS Graduation Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 13-15</td>
<td>Juneteenth African American Festival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

---

**The History of Diversity Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSU student senate introduced a resolution requesting that WSU incorporate a diversity course requirement for graduation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity requirement resolution passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WSU Diversity Requirements Survey**

Focus group surveys, administered in 2000, revealed the following:

- Ethnicity and culture were the most prominent issues raised in classes at WSU.
- Students rated most of the sample faculty as "successful" in providing students with an opportunity to reflect on group issues.

---

**Continued from front:**

**Putting WSU on the Map**

Here's just a sampling of their comments:

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

Other students disagree, however:

- "I've always had a generous and empathetic heart, but this class provided a great deal of information and facts to bring my head up to speed with my heart."
- "The things we talked about really made me 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 Kowaleski. And while there may be more than one way to accomplish the goal, both agree that WSU is further ahead than it was when the idea was born.

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

*Becky Oleson, University Communications*
Weapons of Justice:
WSU Professor Believes Education is the Best Tool Against Discrimination

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 between sexism and racism, ageism, homophobia, classism and other forms of discrimination.”

The goals of the women’s studies program fit in very well with WSU’s commitment to diversity, Powell says. “Both diversity 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 get angry at the messenger.” Does she get angry at students who get angry in the presence of new ideas? No. “It goes with the territory,” she says. “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 Remstein, University Communications

Community 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.

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).
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."

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 racial 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."

- 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 Cinich, drama teacher at Ogden High School and Tracey Callahan, WSU performing arts professor.

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

Diversity Works! is published by the Office of University Communications. We welcome story ideas and feedback from faculty, staff, and all of our readers.

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

Editor: Becky Oleson
Designer: Paula Airth