

DAC 2007-2008 Report

Kay Fowler and Ruma Sen, Co-chairs

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I. Ombudsperson

The most significant goal established last year by the Diversity Action Committee and the Minority Faculty and Staff Association (working separately and together) was the creation of a new position for an Ombudsperson for Diversity. President Peter Mercer approved the position in Fall 2007 and a search committee chaired by Ed Eloi of MFSA with representatives from DAC (Virginia Bonnet, Pat Chang, Sue Zhang, and Christine Kormowski McCohnell) and from MFSA (Ed Eloi, Warner Wada, and Marta Vides) as well as Rosa Mulryan (a former DAC member) conducted an extensive search, brought half-a dozen final candidates to campus and held open campus meetings. **The search has borne fruit and we are very pleased that John Woods will be assuming the role of Ombudsperson for Diversity as of June 2, 2008.** The DAC is inviting MFSA and John Woods to meet together at the upcoming retreat June 16, 2008 to explore ways that we can collectively assist in making this position and initiative a success.

II. Campus-wide events

A. Second Diversity Convocation: On Monday, Jan. 28, 2008 at 6-7:30 p.m. the Second Diversity Convocation was held in SC 219 (with overflow rooms set up in SC 136-138). The speaker was Dr. Terrence Roberts, a psychologist and one of the Little Rock Nine. Arrangements and preparation for the event were done by the subcommittees on Curriculum/Pedagogy and Scholarship/Research, chaired by Yvette Kisor and Paula Straile-Costa. Vernon Walton, chair of the Board of

Trustees which sponsored the event welcomed the community, followed by Peter Mercer, President. Regina Clark of CA introduced the speaker and an audience of about 350 responded well to Terrence Roberts' talk. Follow-up sessions (facilitated by DAC members Kathy Zeno, Karl Johnson, Shirley Knight, Mandy Restivo, Amy Bravo, Pat Chang, Ruma Sen, Kay Fowler, and Paula Straile-Costa plus John Yao) were provided for faculty (2 sessions), students (3 sessions), and staff (1 session).

B. Co-sponsored events. DAC has co-sponsored and promoted several events throughout the year (some of these specifically in response to the Jena 6 events) including Lynn Manning with OSS, Maxine Hong Kingston with Women's Center, Diane Wilson, with ADP and others. We will be continuing to develop and to co-sponsor various diversity-focused events throughout the coming year including several with the Office of Specialized Services.

III. Training and Events

A. For Students:

First Year Training: DAC member Kathy Zeno of ASB developed a 90-minute training module on diversity for First Year Seminar students and all First Year Seminar students underwent this training. DAC members (Rena Bacon, Kay Fowler, Shirley Knight, Pat Chang and Kathy Zeno) facilitated the large sessions. First Year Staff members and Peer Facilitators facilitated the breakout sessions and interactive exercise that followed.

Difficult Discussions for Students: Under the aegis of the Intergroup-Intragroup Relations subcommittee, chaired by Mandy Restivo a number of Difficult Discussion sessions were provided or students including:

Karen Booth, Cahill Center, Let's Talk About (and Think about) Our Talk About God

Bernard Roy, AIS, Difficult Conversations about Immigration

Karl Johnson, SSHS, Racial profiling in 21st century

Diversity Awards and Celebrating Our Diverse Achievements: Several recognitions for diversity initiatives and achievements have been developed. The Inter-group/Intra-group subcommittee last year helped introduce the Diversity Award for a student organization to the Dean's Dinner. This year the Celebrating Diverse Achievements committee has introduced a new event to recognize the achievements of students of color again in keeping with the recommendations of the Inter-group/Intra-group committee.

Second life: A new initiative to create a simulated diversity exploration led to the formation of a new subcommittee to explore the use of the virtual reality tool: "Second Life". The subcommittee, chaired by Pat Chang, included Shirley Knight, Missy Long, Debra Stark, Paula Straile Costa, Stephen Jablonsky met this spring and contacted Brian Regan from Semper International. Following this discussion, they agreed that Second Life certainly has merit as both a diversity

and academic tool and at their request, George Tabback agreed to fund the \$850 island "purchase" and \$150 "lease fees" from his ITS budget as well as providing a student "techie", Jeffrey F. Delos Santos, who agreed to help develop specific applications. The group is proceeding rapidly with developing Second Life for Ramapo with the hope that this can be rolled out in Fall 2008/ Spring 2009.

B. For Faculty/Staff

Dangerous Discussions/Faculty Resource Center. The subcommittees on Curriculum/Pedagogy and Scholarship/Research chaired by Yvette Kisor and Paula Straile-Costa continued developing and sponsoring The Dangerous Discussion series through the Faculty Resource Center. Several programs were held throughout the year for faculty and staff including:

Nancy Carr and Judy Green, OSS, "Psychological Disabilities"

Jim Morley, SSHS, "Contemplative Pedagogy"

Nancy Carr, "Accommodations for Students with Disabilities"

David Greene, Emeritus, SSHS "Class in the Classroom"

Charles Carreras, AIS, "Dangerous Discussions: Talking with our Students about Mexican-U.S. Border and Immigration Issues"

C. For DAC and others

Diversity Training: Mandy Restivo and Missy Long (along with others from the Inter-group/Intra-group Relations subcommittee) pursued the objective brought forward last year by that group and by the Policies and Procedures subcommittee (chaired by Michael Riff) to provide diversity training to DAC members on campus. The Inter-group/Intra-group subcommittee explored over the past year and a half various training options, developed the needed funding, and agreed to select the National Coalition Building Institute to provide diversity training to about 30 Ramapo people (including interested DAC members) in a 3 day session tentatively scheduled for early Fall, 2008. This was ratified by the full DAC membership and approved by Peter Mercer.

D. For Security

Anti-bias training: The Policies/Procedures subcommittee pursued the question of training in particular for Security personnel to develop anti-bias measures. Michael Riff and Vincent Markowski, Co-Chairs of the subcommittee, report what has already been implemented:

-Security staff have all been required to complete the Attorney General's training package on the identification and handling of bias incidents.

-Record keeping and reporting have been aided by the acquisition of a new incident tracking system

-One of the supervisors who attended an ADL-sponsored program held in conjunction on the identification and monitoring of hate groups is training his colleagues accordingly.

Recommendation: A team from the Bergen County Prosecutor's office and the State Police should be brought in to brief the OCAs on the identification and reporting of bias incidents.

IV. Curriculum

Disability Studies minor: Christine Komorowski McCohnell has been working on developing a full Disability Studies minor and has made progress with the support of DAC and Jennefer Mazza, Dean of AIS. Work on this initiative will continue over the next year.

V. Interface

A. Communication: The co-chairs of DAC have been meeting with Peter periodically throughout the year discussing various issues. Among them was the question of the current state of campus communication and the distress that information about upcoming events (such as Maxine Hong Kingston) are not being widely distributed on an early and timely basis due to the decision to centralize all communication through one edited source which does not provide information until the day of or the day before an event is to take place – if it is included at all. We are requesting that DAC be granted permission to directly distribute to the campus information on events, initiatives, and diversity information.

B. Transfer Students/Enrollment Management: The subcommittee on Student Recruitment/Retention (chaired by Rena Bacon) did a great deal of work in the fall with Jackie Skrzynski, Danny Jean and others assessing the needs of transfer students and the way to better support these students. They then shifted the focus to Enrollment Management issues and invited involvement and discussion with Ricardo Ortegon, Enrollment Vice Provost and Peter Rice, Director of Admissions. Peter Rice attended the October meeting of DAC and gave us an introduction to some of the issues. At the invitation of Ricardo Ortegon various DAC members (Mike Ricciardi, Karl Johnson, Suzy Rachouh, Sue Zhang, and Kelly Dolak) joined the work of the subcommittees of the Strategic Enrollment Management Task Force. Ricardo Ortegon met with the full DAC in March to carry that conversation further and presented a detailed powerpoint presentation on the status of the enrollment management effort to date. We have invited Ricardo Ortegon to join DAC for next year and he has agreed to do so.

C. Middle States: DAC met in April with Jennefer Mazza and Miki Cammarata, Co-Chairs of Middle States to discuss Middle States and ways that DAC could help with this effort. In response to their invitation DAC will be selecting representatives to the Middle States committee.

D. Campus-Police Interaction: Concerns about several events on campus involving Mahwah police and minority organizations has led to several discussions among DAC members. DAC wishes to reiterate its urgent invitation

to Mahwah Police Chief to join DAC and to work with the committee on issues of diversity and police-campus relations and interaction.

E. Assessment Testing: The DAC committee met with Provost Beth Barnett in April to discuss her concept for instituting an assessment instrument for testing in General Education courses. Various concerns were aired about the purpose of such testing and possible implications for diversity and various alternative forms of assessment were discussed. Provost Barnett stressed that no final decision had yet been made and DAC looks forward to continued discussion with her about this.

F. International Education: DAC is concerned with issues that have arisen in the Office of International Studies and has requested the opportunity to have a DAC representative serve on the search for the new Executive Director of International Education, in keeping with the decision last year to include DAC representation on searches that had a broad campus impact.

VI. 2008 Retreat:

Annual DAC Retreat, June 16, 2008:

Proposed schedule:

9-10:15	Discussion with President Peter Mercer
10:30-12	Discussion with John Woods, Ombudsperson and MFSA
12-1	Lunch provided by President Peter Mercer
1-2:15	Breakout subcommittees report and plan
2:30-4:00	Discussion of report and goals, plan for next year.

VII: 2008/2009:

Leadership: Rena Bacon, TAS will replace Kay Fowler as Co-Chair working with Ruma Sen, CA who will continue as Co-chair. Edna Negron will replace Rena Bacon as chair of the subcommittees on student recruitment/retention and on faculty/staff recruitment/retention. Kay Fowler will rejoin DAC in Spring 2009 when she returns from sabbatical.

Third Diversity Convocation Speaker: The subcommittees on curriculum/pedagogy and scholarship/research chaired by Yvette Kisor and Paula Straile-Costa have identified as next year's diversity convocation speaker, Cherríe Moraga. Cherríe L. Moraga is a playwright, poet, and essayist whose plays and publications have received national recognition. She is the co-editor of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* and the author of *Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó Por Sus Labios* (1983/2003) and *The Last Generation* (1993), and 2 memoirs: *Waiting in the Wings* and *Send Them Flying Home: A Geography of Remembrance*. Arrangements are now underway.

Ramapo Lecture Series on Diversity Perspectives in 21st Century: Ruma Sen and Kay Fowler will co-teach a 4-credit Ramapo Lecture Series in Spring 2009.

Cherrie Moraga will be the first guest speaker of the series and will be followed by other guest speakers. Ruma and Kay are currently working on arranging for speakers and for funding through such groups as the Foundation and the Schomburg.

Web: Next year the DAC web page will be redesigned and moved to a different server.

VIII. Membership:

Diversity Action Committee Implementation Team:

Kay Fowler, Faculty, SSHS, Co-Chair, kfowler@ramapo.edu
 Ruma Sen, Faculty, CA, Co-Chair, rsen@ramapo.edu
 Rena Bacon, Faculty, TAS, rbacon@ramapo.edu
 Virginia Bonnett, Support Staff, TAS, vbonnett@ramapo.edu
 Amy Bravo, Professional Staff, Cahill Center, abravo@ramapo.edu
 Pat Chang, Acting Vice Provost for Budget and Personnel, pchang@ramapo.edu
 Paula Straile-Costa, Faculty, AIS, pstraile@ramapo.edu
 Karl Johnson, Faculty, SSHS, kjohnson@ramapo.edu
 Yvette Kisor, Faculty, AIS, ykisor@ramapo.edu
 Shirley Knight, Library Faculty, Library, sknight@ramapo.edu
 Missy Long, Professional Staff, Office of Specialized Services,
 mlong@ramapo.edu
 Vincent Markowski, Chief, Security, vmarkows@ramapo.edu
 Christine Komoroski-McCohnell, Adjunct Faculty, AIS, ckomoros@ramapo.edu
 Edna Negrón, Faculty, CA, enegron@ramapo.edu
 Jonelyn Rae P. Planillo, Student Rep/SGA
 Mandolin Restivo, Acting Director of Student Activities and the Women's Center,
 mrestivo@ramapo.edu
 Michael Ricciardi, Director, Athletics, mricciar@ramapo.edu
 Michael Riff, Director, Center for Holocaust Studies, mriff@ramapo.edu
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 Jose Vallejo, Professional Staff, Admissions, jvallejo@ramapo.edu
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 Tanya Washington, Professional Staff, Residence Life, twashin1@ramapo.edu
 Kathy Zeno, Faculty, ASB, kzeno@ramapo.edu
 Sue Zhang, Professional Staff, OIRP, xzhang@ramapo.edu

DAC Subcommittees: 2007-2008

Subcommittee membership is open-ended and a growing number of Ramapo community members are participating within subcommittees.

- * Curriculum/Pedagogy: Co-chairs Paula Straile-Costa and Yvette Kisor,
 pstraile@ramapo.edu, ykisor@ramapo.edu
- * Research/Scholarship: Co-chairs Paula Straile-Costa and Yvette Kisor,
 pstraile@ramapo.edu, ykisor@ramapo.edu

- * Recruitment/Retention: Students, Chair, Rena Bacon, rbacon@ramapo.edu
- * Recruitment/Retention: Faculty/Staff, Chair, Rena Bacon, rbacon@ramapo.edu
 - * Intergroup/Intragroup Relations: Chair, Mandolin Restivo, mrestivo@ramapo.edu
- * Policies and Procedures: Co-Chairs, Michael Riff and Vincent Markowski, mriff@ramapo.edu, vmarkows@ramapo.edu
 - * External Outreach: Co-Chairs, Virginia Bonnett and Amy Bravo, vbonnett@ramapo.edu, abravo@ramapo.edu
 - Planning/Assessment: Co-Chairs, Missy Long and Sue Zhang, mlong@ramapo.edu, xzhang@ramapo.edu
 - * Second Life: Chair, Pat Chang, pchang@ramapo.edu