

## **DAC 2008-2009 Report**

Ruma Sen and Rena Bacon, Co-Chairs

### Action Items:

1. Ramapo Lecture Series: Diversity Perspectives, & Diversity Convocation, Spring 2009
2. Diversity Advocates Training, Summer 2009 and on-going
3. Disability Studies minor, approved for Spring 2009
4. Collaborative activities:
  - a. Enrollment Management
  - b. Faculty Resource Center
  - c. Holiday Observances survey

### **Ramapo Lecture Series: Diversity Perspectives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

This lecture series was offered as a 200-level, Topics in Social Science course in Communication Arts by Kay Fowler, SSHS and Ruma Sen, CA in Spring 2009. The DAC sponsored lecture series received financial and institutional support from various sources at Ramapo College. There were about 40 students registered for the course, and the lectures were attended by the Ramapo community, as well as the local community.

The format of the lecture series included a lecture each week, with discussion sessions with the two sections of the course for the rest of the class time. The lectures themselves (scheduled from 6:30-7:45 p.m. including a 15 minute Q&A session) were open to the entire Ramapo community and the community beyond Ramapo. The discussion sections were limited to students enrolled for the 4-credit course. A guest Ramapo facilitator each week introduced the speaker and led the question/answer session. During the discussion session which followed the speaker, students were divided into groups of 30 and one group met with one of the course instructors and the guest speaker for further discussion; the other group met with the other instructor and the guest facilitator for discussion.

The series investigated and explored a variety of topics relevant to the theme of diversity perspectives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Guest speakers each week presented on a specific aspect of diversity and offered a range of viewpoints, disciplines, and approaches depending on the speakers' scholarship, experience and interest. The lecture series opened with the second annual Diversity Convocation, featuring award-winning playwright, poet, and essayist Cherrie Moraga. Her lecture was titled, "The Tenacity of Hope: The Requirements of Social Change, from the Intimate to the Institutional." The Diversity Convocation and associated events were organized by Paula Straile Costa, AIS and Peter Campbell, CA.

Other speakers included:

Philip Gourevitch, *"Human Rights and Genocide: The Past Century's Lessons for Better and for Worse,"*

Dr. Cyrus Ellis, *"Deconstructing the 2008 Election through the Dynamics of Individual, Institutional, and Cultural Race-based Beliefs,"*

Houda Abadi, of Abraham's Vision, *"Empowering Transformation: Relations within Jewish and Muslim Communities,"*

Dr. Vijay Prashad, *"The Campus of My Dreams: Race after Jim Crow and before Freedom."*

### **Diversity Advocates Training**

With an aim to meet the Training-the-trainers component of the DAC Implementation Plan, a 2-day training of 26 members of the campus community was held on May 19-20, 2009. Participants included faculty, staff and students who were screened by the I&I committee, along with the trainers, Jasmina Josic and Jinous Kasravi. Approximately 20 participants attended the workshop (at least for one day) and about 10-15 advocates continue to attend the follow-up sessions.

The goal of the two-day Diversity Advocate Training was to increase the intercultural proficiency of the campus by providing training to a targeted group of individuals (faculty, administration, students) that will assist them in recognizing their own cultural identity, identifying difference and the impact difference can have when working across groups of people, increase their motivation and comfort-level to interface with difference, and develop practical tools to work in their organizational community toward Ramapo College's vision of having an inclusive campus. The training was built around the literature focusing on intercultural and multicultural education, and has included theoretical and practical sections to educate the participants about the notion of "difference" and the issues arising when dealing with difference, cultivate an understanding of how to talk about difference (intercultural/cultural), raise awareness on issues of power/privilege, and raise awareness of the role of an Advocate.

The first portion of the training has focused on increasing knowledge and motivation, as well as practice the skills needed for work with other individuals; the culminating portion of the training was applying the learned knowledge and skills into the practical plan (Action Plan) for engagement in the Ramapo's community. As intercultural competence is a developmental process, the participants will meet again in October to follow-up on where they are currently in their development, what have they accomplished, and how they plan to engage others on-campus in the dialogue or activities. The participants (Advocates) have also agreed to a one-year commitment, a period during which they will stay in active communication with other Advocates. The Advocates will meet on the first Wednesday of each month.

### **Disability Studies Minor**

Christine Komorowski-McCohnell, Co-Chair of the Curriculum/Pedagogy subcommittee, and Adjunct Faculty in AIS led the charge of developing the Disability Studies Minor. She worked in collaboration with faculty across campus including, Edna Negrón, Marta Vides and Mike Fluhr. This committee developed a document outlining the mission statement, goals, objectives, and a two-year plan for the students in the minor. This document includes the list of courses that can count for the minor, along with courses that were developed specifically for the minor. The materials developed are now housed with Dean Hassan Nejad of the School of American and International Studies. In developing this minor, along with the implementation of the Africana Studies Minor and Latino/a Studies Major, one of the important targets of the DAC Implementation Plan has now been completed.