

Diversity In Progress Newsletter

Published by the Office of Diversity and Academic Initiatives

Newsletter Summer 2004, No. 03

Inside this issue:

Mini-Conference	1
Spotlight on Diversity	1
President & Provost Corner	2
Diversity Scholarship Benefit	2
Service Learning in Memphis	2
Defining Diversity	3
A Dean's Voice	3
The Data Speaks	4

Upcoming Events:

- Jan. 27-28, 2005: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

First Mini-Conference on Diversity Recruitment & Admission

On Friday, March 12, 2004, over 60 Kent State University administrators and faculty braved a sudden winter storm to attend Kent State's First Mini-Conference on Diversity Recruitment and Admission, sponsored by the Office of Diversity and Academic Initiatives, the Office of University Counsel, and the Office of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs. In furtherance of Kent State's commitment "to becoming a model of institutional diversity at its best," participants gathered to share program successes and strategies for achieving diverse student recruitment.

President Carol Cartwright, in calling for continuous improvement throughout the University, reminded attendees of Ralph Waldo Emerson's observation that, "What we call results are really just beginnings." A panel comprised of Dr. John West, Interim Vice President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr. Gary Padak, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Terri Kent, Associate Professor of Theatre and Dance, Nancy Dellavecchia, Director of Admissions, and Eboni Pringle, Assistant Director of Admissions, discussed strategies and achievements within their programs, followed by a question and answer session moderated by Vice Provost for Diversity and Academic Initiatives, Dr. Steve O. Michael.



Angelo Ancheta, Esq.
Harvard University

Keynote speaker, Angelo Ancheta, Esq., Director of Legal and Policy Advocacy Programs for the Harvard Civil Rights Project, framed the dialogue within the context of recent Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action in university admissions. Noting the moral, political, as well as legal debates surrounding affirmative action, Ancheta stressed that university programs that strive for diversity may encounter resistance despite adherence to constitutional standards. He argued that a

university's responsibility to provide freedom for discourse and serve as a conduit for producing leaders, morally compels an expansion of campus diversity.

Ancheta commended Kent State for its clear mandate from the top along with strong university-wide leadership and encouraged continued self-assessment evaluating both the breadth and depth of initiatives. Thank you to all of the participants and sponsors for taking this most important step toward continued conversation and, please bring your thoughts to the next mini-conference.

Ann Anderson
Higher Education Administration

Kent State University: Spotlight on Diversity



Ann Penn
Director,
Affirmative Action

Ann Penn, Director of Affirmative Action, has been with Kent State for over a year after having been the Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity for 15 years at Case Western Reserve University. She received a degree in Business Administration from Myers University, and then a Master's in Psychology from Cleveland State University. Her responsibilities include all of Kent State's Affirmative Action Policies (monitoring, review, recruitment/hiring, and planning) and Equal Opportunity programs. Ann also maintains all statistics and reports related to Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, handles complaints related to discrimination, works with the Affirmative Action Council and facilitators, and oversees training in her areas of responsibility. Ms. Penn works closely with the Office of Diversity and Academic Initiatives as the goals and mission of the areas overlap; she is also a member of the Diversity Advisory Council. Ann is a great addition to Kent State University.

Erica Eckert
Higher Education Administration

President and Provost Corner



Dr. Carol A. Cartwright
President

Since the establishment of the Office of Diversity and Academic Initiatives, many diversity activities have become permanent features of our Campus. These activities include an annual minority faculty and staff reception, a diversity retreat for members of diversity advisory committees, retention meetings with new minority faculty, exit interviews, Martin Luther King Jr. celebration, diversity workshops, diversity-related mini conferences, the diversity scholarship dinner, and supplier diversity. All these activities, commendable as they are, will amount to very little without concrete progress in our institutional culture. While Kent State's climate impacts every member of the community, each of us has a role in transforming the culture by ensuring a more inclusive workplace, promoting civility among members of the community, and advocating the richness that only diversity can bring. Each of us has a role in making everyone feel welcome and appreciated.

In this Summer Issue of our Diversity in Progress, we thank those of you who have been working diligently and often privately toward a more positive and inclusive climate for Kent State. We encourage every faculty, staff, and student to continue to make diversity a top priority in our offices, classrooms, and research laboratories.



Dr. Paul L. Gaston
Provost

16th Annual Diversity Scholarship Benefit

On Saturday, April 17, 2004, following a celebratory drum processional into the festive ballroom, guests gathered for Kent State University's 16th Annual Diversity Scholarship Benefit Dinner & Awards Ceremony. James Bragg, a 1956 graduate of Kent State, accepted the 2004 President's Social Responsibility Award. Together with his cousin, Wayne Bragg, he helped create the Bragg Family Scholarship Fund to support minority students pursuing an education at Kent State University. Mr. Bragg charged today's students to stand firm in their personal convictions and to never let anyone determine who they are! He recounted, with profound gratitude, his experiences at Kent State that helped him to achieve his highest potential in life.

The 2004 President's Social Responsibility Corporate Honoree, Fifth Third Bank, received recognition for outstanding diversity initiatives including neighborhood outreach, the receipt of a U.S. Treasury Department grant to improve the financial literacy of low-income households, multicultural diversity training programs, and assistance to Kent State students.

Senior scholarship recipients, Erika Glenn, and Brian White, poignantly described their journeys to Kent State and expressed heartfelt appreciation for the generous financial support provided to them by donors.

President Carol Cartwright recounted with pride a ten percent increase in the number of underrepresented students on campus this year over the number attending Kent State in fall 2002. A four-fold increase in private funding for diversity scholarships from the fall of 2002 to the fall of 2003, allowed Kent State to substantially increase the number and amounts of scholarships awarded. President Cartwright shared her vision of Kent State's commitment to diversity within a broader national vision, reminding us of the pivotal roles of our students as leaders and the "rising stars" of tomorrow.

Ann Anderson
Higher Education Administration

Service-Learning in Memphis



A unique relationship between Kent State University in Ohio and Zion Christian Cemetery in Memphis began in the summer of 2001 when KSU Honors student Chandra Phillips traveled to Memphis to shoot footage for her Senior Honors Thesis project – a documentary about the life and work of Ida B. Wells. Accompanied by her faculty advisor, Professor Chris McVay, Chandra planned to film, among other things, the gravesites of the three African American businessmen whose 1892 lynchings prompted Wells to launch her passionate anti-lynching campaign in the Memphis *Freedom of Speech*. What Chris and Chandra found, however, was that Zion Christian Cemetery had been neglected for decades. Although the

15-acre cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is among the oldest black cemeteries in the country, the CME church has not had the resources for restoration. Confronted with overgrown paths, toppled headstones, litter, kudzu and other tall weeds, Chandra was unable after several hours to locate the three graves she was looking for.

Chandra completed her documentary without that specific footage, but Chris was haunted by the specter of the neglected cemetery. She put out a call to students, faculty, and others at KSU and in May of 2003 the first group of student volunteers traveled with Chris to Memphis to spend a long weekend working in Zion Christian Cemetery. Another group returned to the cemetery in October of 2003 to continue the project.

(Continued on Page 4)

We would love your feedback! Please contact us: diversity@kent.edu, or 330.672.2442

Kent State University, Kent State, KSU and Imagine are registered trademarks and may not be used without permission.

Defining Diversity—Selective Admission and Diversity

Can an academic program be selective and yet realize the goal of diverse student population? The U.S. Supreme Court thinks so and many educational leaders of this nation believe that diverse student population should be the goal of every academic program irrespective of its selectivity. This goal, however, presents two challenges: how should diversity be defined and what criteria should be used to realize the goal of diverse student population?

In the Winter, 2003 *Diversity In Progress Newsletter*, I discussed Kent State's approach in defining diversity. Our educational mission calls for a broad definition of diversity including differences based on but not limited to race, gender, religion, socio-economic status, age, sexual orientation, veteran, disability, ideological persuasions, and physical attributes. The more visible our differences, the more intentional we must become in our program and policy to accommodate, promote, and benefit from diversity. An atmosphere of acceptance and safety must be ensured for the hidden differences and should an individual choose to reveal these differences, he or she must not be subjected to discriminatory practices.



Dr. Steve O. Michael
Vice Provost

With respect to the criteria for realizing the goal of diverse student population, the Supreme Court, in its wisdom, granted deference to educational leaders with a caveat. While race may be a factor in admission decision making, our practices should not unduly truncate other's rights and our admission practices should also be linked to a predetermined goal of diversity and periodically reviewed to ascertain desired results. Our admission practices should not rely on simplistic, standardized scores solely; our admission practices should emphasize the educational benefits associated with diversity. The Supreme Court realizes that there is an educational framework as well as a legal framework- our preference should not be for the legal one at the expense of the educational one, but for a sound educational framework within the legal parameters prescribed.

In a nutshell, an effective admissions practice within a sound educational framework will have several features:

- a) It will be based on a predetermined diversity goal for the program;
- b) It will use a portfolio of works that suggest aptitude (e.g. essays, recommendations, description of background and how the applicant contributes to the diversity of the program, etc.);
- c) It will not rely solely on standardized scores;
- d) It will be monitored against unintended consequences;
- e) It will not be a quota system; and,
- f) It will be effective in producing desired diversity results.

Steve O. Michael

A Dean's Voice

This corner of the Newsletter features an interview with a member of the University community.



Joseph H. Danks
Arts & Science Dean

We generally dislike the word "goodbye" so we tend to miss its significance. Goodbyes bring finality to everything including life itself. Perhaps the best way to defy finality is through contributions that transcend our tenure, our life span. Undoubtedly, Dean Danks' contributions to the College of Arts and Sciences will linger on for a long time. Consider this: the Department of Psychology had only one female faculty in 1968 (no minority member). In 2004, 40% of the faculty are female, and there are 2 Asian, 2 Hispanic, and 1 African American faculty members. Obviously the department has gained much ground with gender diversity and still has a long way to go with ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, the College has moved from one or two minority faculty at the dawn of his deanship to dozens of female, African American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American faculty members at the dusk of his tenure. "There is still so much to be done, so much that could have been done, but I am delighted we made some progress," Dean Danks pondered aloud.

Joe Danks admitted that he is a long, a very long way from his root. He was born and raised in a small town in Illinois, a truly homogeneous town, "it had no blacks, no Chinese, no Hispanics, and frankly speaking had a reputation of being racist." But herein lies the transformational power of education, which converted a narrow religious socialization into the love for humanity and opened the mind to embrace differences. Dean Danks remarked, "I have seen the instrumental value of diversity; diversity strengthens educational value for all, it strengthens the country, and serves as the basis for enduring world peace."

Dean Danks observed that hiring faculty and staff provides the most significant opportunity for deans to reflect his or her diversity values. "I remind chairs, CAC, and search committees constantly about the need for diversity. I meet with every search committee to be sure this message is heard. I remind them that the definition of "best faculty" must include diversity broadly defined.... of course, with a special attention to the racial composition of the discipline and the population of Ohio.... I have never shied away from putting a search on hold until the pool is diverse...I have created a second offer for a minority where possible...and I ask search committees to give me names of top candidates without ranking them."

Dean Danks advises new deans and leaders, "Be clear and unambiguous in your diversity vision and message from the beginning and seize every opportunity to talk about it. Use the Office of the Provost, [and] the Vice Provost for Diversity and Academic Initiatives to achieve your agenda. It has worked for me. Without doubt, the future of our society lies in our ability to make diversity work for us."

Thank you, Joe Danks, for making a difference. Adieu and bon voyage.

Steve O. Michael

Kent State University, an equal opportunity employer, encourages applications from members of protected groups.

Service-Learning in Memphis, Continued from Page 2

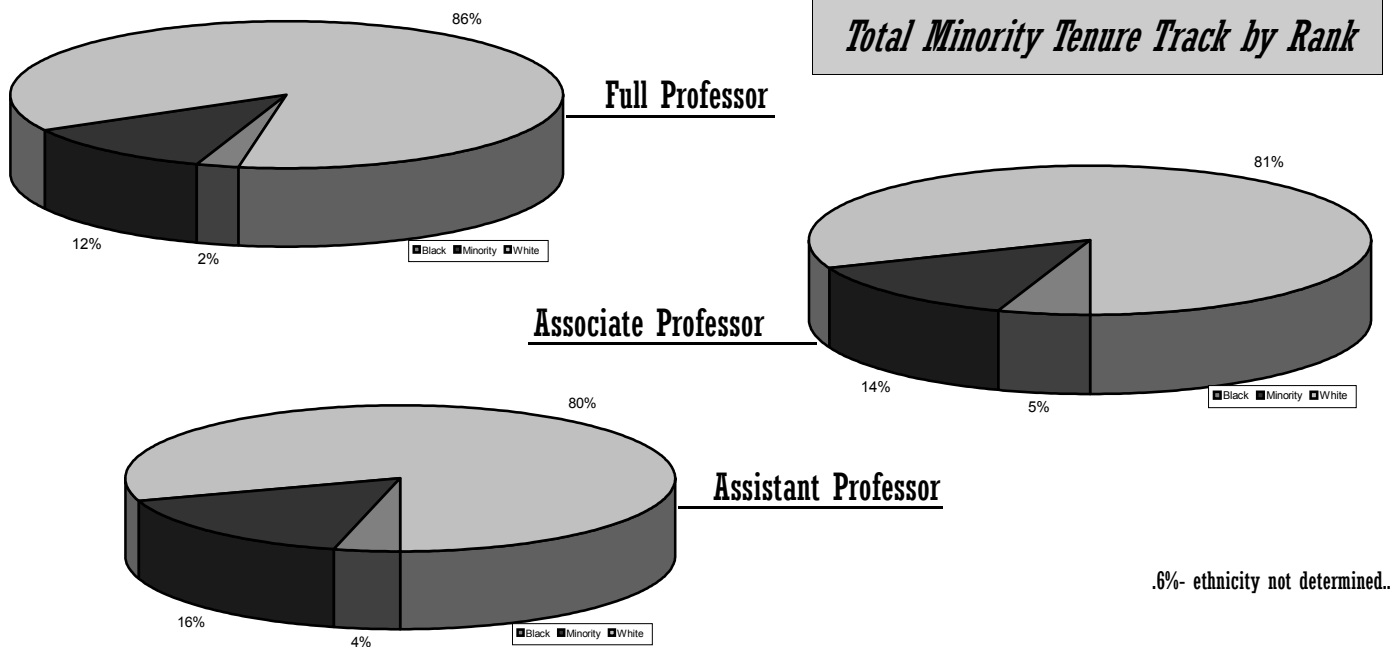
By spring break 2004 the volunteer group had grown to include 23 students from the Honors College, PAS, NAME (National Association for Multicultural Education), and the Stark and Trumbull Campuses.

The success of some endeavors is at once so broad and so intense it becomes impossible to measure. The engagement of KSU students in the restoration of Zion Christian Cemetery is just such an endeavor. While in Memphis, students have had to the opportunity to learn from encounters with community members and from visits to the National Civil Rights Museum. And they have made some significant discoveries as they have worked in the cemetery. Most notably, on the last working day of the spring break trip, students located the grave of lynching victim Thomas Moss – one of the three graves that Chandra Phillips was searching for two years earlier. In a moving tribute the students stood for a moment of silence at this symbolic headstone.

The relationship continues to grow and thrive as a new service-learning course, cross-listed in Honors and PAS, for spring semester will give students the opportunity to incorporated another dimension into this unique learning experience.

Vicki Bocchicchio
Honors College

The Data Speaks



PO BOX 5190 KENT OH 44242-0001
100301
Office of the Provost
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED