

# Diversity In Progress Newsletter

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## Upcoming Events:

- April 17, 2004. Diversity Scholarship Dinner
- Jan. 27-28, 2005: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

## "Homogeneity Sacrifices Educational Quality..." Provost Gaston's Speech

I was once asked to provide remarks at an "orientation" for faculty, staff and graduates of color. As I reflected on this assignment, I recalled that the word "orientation" originally referred to the proper placement of a church so that the window over its altar would face the east. "Orientation" is about getting pointed in the right direction.

And I realized that it was not my audience at that time that needed to be pointed in the right direction. Rather, it was my university that needed pointing in the right direction. My audience needed to *do* the pointing.

You are now my audience, and I now serve a much stronger university, but I want to suggest that you, too, have accepted an obligation to do the pointing. You are taking a major role in orienting the university, in helping it continue in the right direction. But you have a larger mission. If I may continue my architectural metaphor, you must also help to evaluate the evolving design of the building, to approve the width of its doors, to make sure more and more light gets in through the windows, and to find ways to ensuring that our students who enter are increasingly successful in finding what they need.

What do our students need? Through my work with the Association of American Colleges and Universities, I have grown to appreciate far more fully the close relationship between diversity and education effectiveness. Once such efforts as ours were based principally on personal values, ethical priorities, and a commitment to justice. These values are no less important today. But, behind our efforts now is also the solid evidence linking diversity to effective education.

It has become an incontestable fact that our students—all our students—benefit educationally from a learning environment informed by diversity. To be even more direct, universities must create diverse learning environments if they are to teach successfully, if they are to create real learning among their students. Those institutions that choose homogeneity make a critical sacrifice of educational quality, and students who choose educational environments that are not diverse, face an educational handicap.



By contrast, students who choose Kent State have the right to expect that we are committed to diversity in the same sense that we are committed to adequate technology, to clean residence halls, to a well-qualified faculty, and to healthful food. We must be diverse in order to be good. It is as simple as that. But I would be even more emphatic. Because of its willingness to become a leader in the commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, Kent State can *become* a national exemplar. . . .

. . . Kent State is fortunate in that its faculty, staff, and students of color support the principle that effective education is impossible without diversity. But we must continue to ask of ourselves the courage and the determination to look past the facades, past the good manners, past the assumptions, to identify and to address the remaining realities of misunderstanding, inattention, apathy, and reaction.

The University cannot ask that you bear the full burden of furthering its vision. But you are a vital part of the process by which that vision continues to come into being, for it is at its best a vision that asks all of us to strive for greater freedom, more genuine opportunity, and more effective learning.

It was Martin Luther King who said that "our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." Similarly, when we speak out, when we act about things that matter, we live in earnest. By your leadership as a member of the Diversity Advisory Council, you are speaking, you are acting, you are—in a word—truly alive!

Provost Gaston's Speech to the Diversity Council, 2003. To read more, please visit our website at [www.kent.edu/diversity](http://www.kent.edu/diversity) and click on the Diversity Newsletter link



## Nancy Gregory Joins the Office of Diversity and Academic Initiatives

In September 2003, Nancy joined the Office of Diversity and Academic Initiatives as the new Administrative Secretary. Her responsibilities include a variety of secretarial and office management tasks as well as managing Vice Provost Michael's appointment and meeting schedule to ensure the smooth operation of the office. Cont'd. on Page 2



President  
Dr. Carol A. Cartwright

## President and Provost Corner

The phrase "it takes a community" has been used so often that its effectiveness has diminished. Undaunted, however, I would argue still that an effective commitment to diversity really does require the active support of the full community. Diversification of our environment for learning depends on a chain with many links: funding for hiring and faculty support, conspicuous administrative leadership, a cogent and realistic plan of action, strong communications, and, above all, the personal commitment of everyone involved in faculty hiring, work with students, faculty professional development, and promotion and tenure review. Any weak link threatens the effectiveness of the university overall.



Provost  
Dr. Paul L. Gaston

Kent State is fortunate in the strength of its links, but we must never take the chain for granted. With the pull of a community behind it, we can lift the University to the higher plane of excellence that increased diversity will represent.

## Diversity Advisory Council Retreat

On Friday, September 26, 2003, over 60 University administrators, faculty, staff, and graduate students gathered to participate in the Diversity Advisory Council Retreat held at the Bertram Inn in Aurora. The retreat was kicked-off with remarks from Provost Gaston. As a participant observed: "These are perhaps the most powerful remarks about diversity from the administration. Dr. Gaston said no excellence without diversity." Dr. Kenneth Cushner facilitated a workshop on communication and engaged the participants in various activities to enhance their cultural lens. Dr. Steve O. Michael gave an uplifting presentation on the New Vision of Diversity at KSU, roles of members in the University Diversity Advisory Council (UDAC) and the Regional Diversity Advisory Council (RDAC), and charged each member with sharing the vision and maintaining a strong commitment to the challenging but rewarding work of inclusiveness.



The DAC Retreat at Bertram Inn

Gail Beveridge, Coordinator of Special Events for University Relations and Development, is a member of the UDAC who attended the retreat. The highlights of the day for Gail were Dr Michael's overview of the New Vision of Diversity and the plan for Kent State University, Dr. Cushner's workshop, and the moving remarks by Dr. Gaston. Gail stated that the population demographics of KSU were "an eye opener for me." She said this retreat reminded her "about how we have to keep in mind the uniqueness of each individual's background." She walked away "with a greater awareness of our socialization process and how being more open in my perceptions about people is important."

Dr. Eunsook Hyun, Associate Professor of Teaching, Leadership and Curriculum Studies, is a member of UDAC who reminds us through her comment just how important diversity is: "I hope that the ideology of KSU Institutional Diversity will become a reality for ALL. If we really want to see the results, we as members of the KSU learning community should 'truly' become 'democratically accountable leaders.'" Sandra Golden

## Nancy...Continued from Page 1

Prior to joining Kent State University, Nancy was a stay-at-home mom and a U.S. Navy Reservist. In February, 2003, she was recalled for active duty to serve in Naples, Italy, during Operation Enduring Freedom. Nancy served as an Administrative Specialist and also provided security on the base for four months. "Everyone has been so welcoming, and they've helped me to become acclimated to the University. There is also a world of opportunity and culture here that I'm looking forward to exploring," stated Nancy. Nancy grew up in Solon and later moved to Texas where she met her husband, Kenny. They have been married for 4 years and have a beautiful 2 1/2 year old daughter, Hailee. Kathy Horner

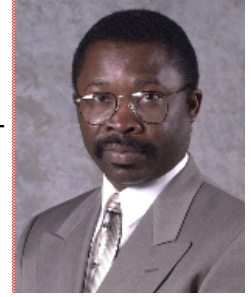
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## Defining Diversity

There are perhaps as many definitions of diversity as there are experts on the topic, and there are hundreds of so-called “diversity experts” today. Consequently, a credible institutional diversity program must ensure that the community has a reasonable agreement and understanding of how diversity is defined for the community. Here at Kent State University, the concept of diversity is predicated on what a university is and its role in our modern civilization. We believe that a university is a citadel of learning, charged with knowledge generation, transmission, and service to society. A university is a talent-driven industry, dedicated to knowledge discovery, personal growth, and societal transformation.



Vice Provost  
Dr. Steve O. Michael

Given this understanding, a credible university cannot be monotypic, provincial, or parochial. On the contrary, a progressive university is aggressive in embracing plurality of ideologies, heterogeneity of cultures and people, and an inclusive environment for all. Kent State University is an example of an institution that embraces an inclusive and comprehensive definition of diversity—a definition which entails ideo-diversity, domestic-diversity, and international-diversity.

We uphold diversity of ideologies as a means for knowledge discovery and transmission, and we are committed to domestic diversity as required by the 1964 and 1966 Civil Rights Acts, the 1963 Equal Pay Act, Executive Order 11246, 1967 ADEA, 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, etc. Specifically, Kent State University is committed to widening access to, improving the experience of, and enhancing the success of underrepresented students, faculty, staff, and the historically disenfranchised at all levels of the University system. We uphold international diversity as a means of ensuring that our graduates are fully equipped to function in an increasingly global society.

In conclusion, Kent State University’s concept of diversity embraces all humanity as it is—rich and poor, physically able and physically challenged, men and women, white and colored, large and petite, strong and weak, local and foreign, young and advanced in age without prejudice against sexual orientations, religious affiliations or cultural preferences. Our definition includes you and begs for your commitment and leadership in making Kent State University a model of institutional diversity for the nation. Thank you for playing your role.

Vice Provost Steve O. Michael

## A Dean’s Voice

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



Dean of Honors College  
Dr. Larry Andrews

So how did a Midwestern boy become an internationalist, a feminist, a xenophile, a linguist, and a strong advocate for diversity? For Dr. Larry Andrews, the Dean of the Honors College, the journey starts with his family who taught him to embrace and value all people, “I guess thinking back now, I cannot recall my parents behaving badly to people because they were different,” he said. With this background, Larry developed a penchant for the world of differences, a curious lifestyle that took him beyond his national borders, and an insatiable appetite for the foreign and the exotic. His intellectual quest took him deep into European Literature and Black Literature. Fascinated with black women’s writings, he no longer could escape the pain, the agony, the injustice that cries out through the pages of their works. “As a student I soaked in a lot and I grew bigger within,” Larry acknowledges.

Dean Andrews’ marks on Kent State’s diversity thrust are discernible to all. He was part of the leadership that enabled Kent State to adopt a 2-course diversity requirement for all undergraduate students. He continues to chair the University Requirements Curriculum Committee (URCC) that oversees the diversity requirements, and he ensures that his broad vision of diversity, “which embraces ideological, cultural, racial, gender, sexual, religious, socio-economic differences” is widely shared. “When a student wrote a homophobic insult on another student’s room door, I and all my staff signed a letter to all our Honors Plaza students that such behavior is unacceptable at the Honors College, thus reaffirming our collective values to them.”

Larry’s diversity work stems from an “absolute conviction to understand people who are different.” He is a firm believer in ensuring that university education provides not only the basis for people to develop this understanding, but also an avenue to challenge myths, misconceptions, and misapprehension we all have about each other. “Diversity work requires a relentless effort and sometimes a get-in-the-face-of-people approach to persuade and challenge people to enlarge their world,” he advises.

As the Dean of the Honors College, his current preoccupation includes diversifying faculty and staff. So the once Midwestern boy stepped out of his comfort zone and discovered the richness and the beauty of our world of differences and, more importantly, he discovered himself and his many talents that would have otherwise remained buried.

Vice Provost Steve O. Michael

## New Minority Faculty and Staff Luncheon

On Tuesday, October 7, 2003, we welcomed our new minority faculty and staff (hired between August 2002 and September 2003) to the Kent State University community. This luncheon was sponsored by the Office of Diversity and Academic Initiatives, the Division of Human Resources, and PAFSA (Pan-African Faculty and Staff Association).

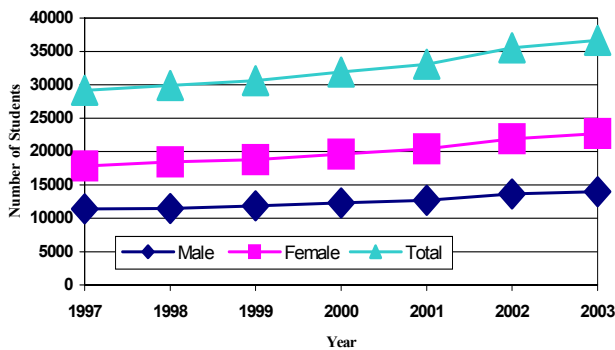
In her remarks to the new faculty and staff, President Cartwright explained the University's commitment to diversity, a point that was also echoed by Provost Gaston. Dr. Bessie House-Soremekun, Associate Professor in Political Science and Director of the Minority Business Program, recounted her experience as a minority faculty here at Kent State and encouraged the new faculty and staff to be involved. Vice Provost Michael charged the new faculty and staff to personally make a difference with respect to Kent State's diversity agenda.



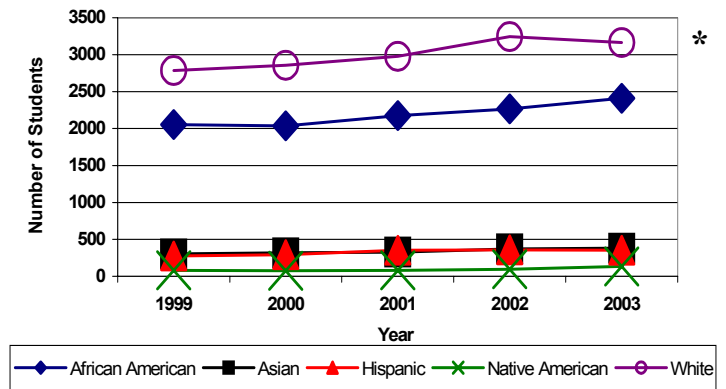
Dr. Anhalt, Dr. Zionts, and Provost Gaston

Cynthia Higgins, Program Assistant for the Upward Bound Program, attended the luncheon as a new staff member. She felt that "the luncheon was a warm welcome to integrating minority faculty and staff members into the Kent State University family."  
Kathy Horner

KSU STUDENTS BY GENDER



KSU STUDENTS BY RACE



\* —○— Data reduced by a digit for graphing purposes



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