

## **Presidential Task Force on Diversity Summary Report**

### **Introduction**

The Presidential Task Force on Diversity was convened in January 2004. President Peggy Williams provided the Task Force with the following charge:

The Task Force should closely review the Ithaca College Institutional Plan and make recommendations about “next steps” to assure consistent progress towards the College’s goal of “creating a campus environment that accepts, reflects, and celebrates diversity.” As part of their process, task force members should review any/all reports from the Planning and Priorities Committee about accomplishments to date.

The Task Force should examine and evaluate what efforts are currently in place at Ithaca College which promote or address the institutional diversity priority. In doing so the Task Force should make recommendations as to how the College could better coordinate its efforts, reduce overlap, and improve the effectiveness of our efforts. For this review the Task Force should examine what is working well and should be continued, as well as what has been less effective and needs improvement or should be discontinued. In addition, the Task Force was asked to identify new efforts that need to be developed to ensure the achievement of our diversity goals.

The Task Force began its work at the beginning of the spring of 2004 semester and met regularly on a biweekly basis throughout the semester to fulfill its charge. The Task Force reviewed information from the Ithaca College Institutional Plan related to the Diversity Priority. Information which was gathered from the roundtable discussions sponsored by the Institutional Planning and Priorities Committee from the 2002-2003 academic year was provided to the Task Force members for their review. The Task Force also invited a number of individuals to make presentations and share relevant information related to their efforts to accomplish the College’s diversity goals. Based on the information provided by the presenters and an analysis of this information, the Task Force has attempted to summarize the status of Ithaca College’s present efforts and make recommendations for next steps to ensure that Ithaca College continues to make progress in achieving the four goals related to the diversity priority in the College’s institutional plan.

The Task Force spent the fall 2004 semester writing its draft report to President Williams. An initial draft of the report was presented to President Williams on January 31, 2005. However, because of bias-related incidents which occurred on campus during the spring 2005 semester and the campus community’s concern about these incidents, President Williams asked the Diversity Task Force to reconvene and review the draft report in light of these incidents and evaluate whether any changes or additions to the report needed to be made.

### Task Force Membership:

Brian McAree (Co-chair), Vice President for Student Affairs and Campus Life

Nancy Pringle (Co-chair), Vice President and College Counsel

Larry Shinagawa, Associate Professor and Director of the Center for the Study of Culture, Race and Ethnicity

Terry Martinez, Director of the Center for Student Leadership and Involvement

Traevana Byrd, Director of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity

Martha Turnbull, Director of Human Resources

Ellen Staurowsky, Professor, Sport Management and Media

Raquel Wright, Student Representative (Spring 2004)

LaToya Fulton, Student Representative (Spring 2005)

## The Ithaca College Institutional Plan

### Diversity Priority

**Goal #1: Increase the diversity of the Ithaca College population-students, faculty, staff and trustees-with regard to age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, and religious belief, and ensure equity in admissions and employee positions.**

#### Students

A review of enrollment trends during the last eighteen years at Ithaca College reveals a progressive increase in the numbers of African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American (ALANA) students each year. During the late 1980s, the percentage of incoming first year ALANA students grew from 3.6 percent in 1986 to 5.3 percent in 1990. In the fall of 2003, the percentage of incoming students that identified as ALANA increased to 10.5 percent. One of the outreach programs that is credited for the increase includes “An Inside Look” program. The addition of the “Martin Luther King (MLK) Scholarship” Program, which brought in the inaugural class of MLK Scholars in 2002, targets students of color who are academically exceptional.

In the Spring of 2002 the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) implemented the “Ithaca Achievement Program” (IAP), a community of learners dedicated to personal and academic success. ALANA students who choose to participate in IAP take part in a wide variety of educational, cultural, social, and community service activities to enhance their success.

In cooperation with the State of New York, Ithaca College also sponsors the New York State “Higher Education Opportunity Program” (HEOP) as part of OMA’s student services. HEOP provides access to college for selected students whose prior academic experience does not reflect their true academic potential.

Prospective ALANA students continue to be drawn to Ithaca College because of the creation of the Center for the Study of Culture, Race and Ethnicity (CSCRE). The opportunity to take course work in ethnic studies has the potential to enhance the academic engagement of students of color at IC.

Additionally, the presence of multicultural student organizations on campus, such as the African Latino Society, the Asian Culture Club, the Native American Culture Club, and the IC Journal of Culture, Race, Gender, and Ethnicity Club, are viewed as potential resources for prospective students considering Ithaca College.

### **Faculty/Staff**

In the fall of 2001, the College underwent a comprehensive review of its search and selection procedures. As a result of the new procedures, the College's efforts to diversify its work force have increased. In addition to revised search and selection procedures, the development of discipline-specific recruitment strategies for faculty and staff has increased during the last three years.

The development of the "Ithaca Initiative" program in 2002 marked the transformation of how recruitment efforts are implemented at the College. The program is a source of financial support for departments throughout the faculty and staff recruitment process, as well as a way to cover the expenses of certain initiatives that are intended to enhance the likelihood of the retention of a newly hired ALANA faculty or staff member.

The proportion of new full time ALANA faculty has significantly increased since the Ithaca Initiatives began in 2002. The percentages have gone up to at least 20% of all new faculty hires, with an all time high reached at 26.3% in the fall of 2003. New staff appointments have also increased (9.1% in 2001, 17.1% in 2002, 14.3% in 2003, and 28.6% in 2004.)

### **Trustees**

Since adoption of the Institutional Plan, the Board of Trustees has appointed eight new trustees. Racial diversity continues to be a challenge. This is an area requiring additional planning and strategizing.

**Goal #2: Retain faculty, staff, and students from underrepresented groups.**

### **Students**

Several programs are in place to support the needs of ALANA students during their four years at Ithaca College.

Academic support is provided to HEOP students in more than a dozen subject areas by academic consultants. In addition, program counselors provide students with academic and career guidance as well as assistance with personal and financial aid concerns.

OMA conducts a three week summer institute for first year students.

OMA also provides a valuable service to the entire campus community by providing and supporting programming which explores diversity through many different approaches.

The creation of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Resource Center has also served as a valuable resource by providing instructional materials, consultations with an experienced director, and support for individuals from the LGBT community on the Ithaca College campus. The Center has been very successful in conducting programming that attracts very accomplished speakers and educates the campus community to look beyond the pre-conceived notions related to the LGBT community.

The establishment of the CSCRE in 2001 has created opportunities for students to explore, through the curriculum and research projects, the complexities of living in a multicultural, multiethnic, and multiracial world. This is exemplified by the student scholarship published by the *IC Journal of Culture, Race, Gender, and Ethnicity*.

In spite of these many efforts, there is clear evidence that we need to do much more in order to have a positive impact on retention. In the spring of 2004, the first Campus Cultural Climate Survey for students was implemented at Ithaca College. This instrument was distributed to all undergraduate students with the goal of assessing our students' multicultural experiences at Ithaca College and what positive and negative variables effect student satisfaction in learning. A 49% response rate to the survey was realized. While 92% of the respondents expressed overall satisfaction with Ithaca College, only 53% gave IC an "A" grade in efforts to create a safe learning environment that accepts a diverse student body. Thirty one percent of respondents felt that they had been discriminated against at IC and nearly half (44%) acknowledged that there is racial/ethnic conflict or tension on campus. Fifteen percent of the respondents stated that they had to consider leaving Ithaca College due to their feelings regarding campus climate as it relates to diversity and multiculturalism. The survey will continue to be extremely helpful in guiding the College's efforts to make our campus community as welcoming and supportive as it can be to our ALANA students and promote the appreciation and celebration of multiculturalism.

### **Faculty/Staff**

With an increase in the number of ALANA faculty and staff, the College undertook several initiatives aimed at providing a welcoming environment for new hires and current faculty and staff.

The College has continued its participation in the Diversity Consortium whose aim is to bring together human resources and affirmative action professionals from several of the major employers in Tompkins County to strategize ways to assist and support ongoing diversity efforts. This group has worked to develop an online directory for new members of the local community that will identify minority owned businesses and resources in the community-at-large. On campus initiatives have included luncheons and receptions for both new and current faculty and staff. In the last two years, there have been several presentations by the Cornell Interactive Theater (CITE) to faculty, staff and administrators. The goal of these productions has been to create dialogue around issues of race and other differences with the hope of continuing to educate and enhance the campus climate around diversity issues. Also to this end, Traevena Byrd, Director of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity, has conducted Cultural Competency Workshops upon request from departments and divisions on campus.

In spite of these efforts, improving retention remains a significant challenge, particularly among faculty of color. At the department level, work remains for administrators, chairs, and faculty to address the barriers that serve to impede the ability of new hires to not only succeed, but feel appreciated and valued. Until ALANA faculty members are encouraged to believe that they are part of the fabric of the institution, we run the risk of losing those who we have worked so hard to recruit here.

**Goal 3: Create a campus environment that accepts, reflects and celebrates diversity.**

In recent years, Ithaca College has taken the initiative to create a number of new centers and programs aimed at meeting the needs of ALANA and other underrepresented students, promoting a greater understanding of diversity issues, and enabling the campus community to appreciate and celebrate diversity.

Ithaca College established the CSCRE in 2001. The purpose of the Center is to prepare students to meet the increasingly complex demands of living in a multicultural, multiracial, and multiethnic society. The courses offered by the Center focus primarily on the experiences of groups traditionally marginalized, underrepresented, or misunderstood in our society as well as in our curriculum. In the fall of 2005, the Native American Studies minor was approved. Work is ongoing to complete development of additional minors in Africana New World Studies, Asian American Studies, and Latino Studies. CSCRE is also developing a comparative and theoretical major in this area-American Multicultural Studies. The Center has had a strong and successful program of faculty development and intellectual engagement in the form of the CSCRE Faculty Fellows Workshop and Lecture Series.

OMA continues to sponsor a variety of programs each year to assist ALANA students and promote academic success, raise awareness of diversity issues, and promote the celebration of diversity on campus.

In the fall of 2002, the Office of Residential Life, in cooperation with OMA and the Office of International Programs, created a new living/learning option for students in Terrace 2. The H.O.M.E. program offers students the opportunity to live in a culturally diverse environment where they can experience, discuss, and learn about cross-cultural and global issues.

The first class of Martin Luther King Scholars arrived in 2002. This program was developed to recruit the “best and the brightest” ALANA students in the country to come to Ithaca College. The program has been a resounding success in its first two years. The third class of scholars was welcomed in the fall of 2004. Ongoing funding for 60 scholars has been secured through the Ithaca College budget process.

OMA, in cooperation with the Office of Residential Life, created the Practice and Education in Student Affairs (PESA) program in 2002-2003. This program is designed to provide ALANA students who are interested in pursuing a career in Student Affairs with the opportunity to learn more about the field and prepare them for the postgraduate experience in Student Affairs. To date, three ALANA students have participated in the program.

The Bias-Related Incidents Committee (BRIC) was created in the spring of 1997 to help improve communication on campus about the occurrence of bias-related incidents, dispel rumors about such incidents, and educate the campus community about the unfortunate fact that such incidents do occur and detract from the importance and significant value that the College places on diversity. BRIC hoped that its efforts would increase sensitivity, reduce apathy, and help create a more inclusive environment on campus for our underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. Although BRIC achieved many of its goals, controversy surrounded the group's efforts in recent years. The Committee, especially use of bias alerts, drew negative criticism from the campus community (and beyond) for their perceived attempt to restrict speech more than as a vehicle for educating others about the negative effects of bias-related incidents.

The LGBT Resource Center has been a great addition to the campus in attempting to meet the needs of our LGBT community. A coordinator position for the Center was also created, and was changed from a part-time to a full-time position in the fall of 2003.

In recent years, Ithaca College has made many advances in improving the accessibility of its facilities and programs for students and employees with disabilities. Several buildings have undergone renovations in restrooms and classrooms and many entry ways have had automatic door openers installed. Assistive living devices are now available in several auditoriums, including Ford Hall, Emerson Suites, and Dillingham Center. The Office of Academic Support Services for Students with Disabilities has expanded to accommodate the growing numbers of students who self-disclose that they have a disability and need accommodations. The "Environmental Access Initiative" program is an innovative model for providing disability awareness training to staff members at Ithaca College. Individuals representing various departments have engaged in experiential learning seminars facilitated by the Office of Affirmative Action and EEO and led by outside consultants.

A number of efforts have also been developed to educate staff, faculty, and students about the needs of underrepresented students, including:

- Coordination of theme months through the academic year (i.e. Black History Month)
- Sponsorship of the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) Train-the-Trainer Workshop. NCBI teaches a select group of campus participants the range of skills that are necessary for providing influential leadership to end discrimination, reduce inter-group conflict, and build multi-group coalitions.
- Continuing sponsorship of the Professional Symposium during Homecoming Weekend each year. The Symposium provides the opportunity for alumni of color to network with ALANA students and assist them in their career decision-making process.
- The Cornell Interactive Theater Ensemble conducted a diversity session for ALANA students and faculty to explore classroom climate through theater and dialogue.
- Presentation of cultural competency workshops by Traevana Byrd, Director of Affirmative Action and EEO.
- Creation of more cultural diversity electives as part of the curriculum.
- Training and workshops addressing disability issues have been offered to members of the campus community via audio conferences and CITE.

**Goal #4: Collaborate with off campus communities, from nearby metropolitan areas to sites abroad, to advance diversity.**

Currently there are numerous efforts which afford Ithaca College the opportunity to collaborate with off campus communities, with particular attention given to efforts that advance our diversity initiatives.

**Educational Partnerships**

The Frederick Douglass Academy (FDA) partnership has been an example of a hallmark program since its formation. Ithaca College formally established a relationship with FDA in 1998. FDA is a public middle/high school in Harlem that enrolls nearly one-thousand students most living in severe poverty. Ithaca College and FDA have forged a valuable partnership. Workshops have been presented at FDA by Ithaca College faculty and teacher education students that target specific academic needs of FDA students and offer enrichment opportunities. Ithaca College has assisted FDA in the development of its television studio, student newspaper, and computer laboratory. In addition, summer scholarships have been offered to FDA students to attend the Ithaca College “Summer Program for High School Students.”

A second example of an educational partnership is the “Invisible History Project,” an effort to create a film about the Southside Community Center. The project, sponsored by the Cinema and Photography Department and the Office of Multicultural Affairs brought community history into the Dewitt Middle School curriculum by developing material to accompany the documentary and to bring students out of the classroom and into the community to shine light on the often overlooked cultures of the surrounding area. During the 2004-2005 academic year, CSCRE and the Cinema and Photography Department have sponsored a similar project that focused on the Asian Community in Ithaca.

Individual faculty members have taken great initiative to develop their own collaborations. For example, Jack Rossen, Associate Professor of Anthropology, and a group of local activists set up an organization called “Strengthening Haudenosaunee American Relations through Education (SHARE).”

Additionally, Baruch Whitehead, Assistant Professor in the School of Music, has created a program that brings together faculty and students from Ithaca College with young people in the Ithaca College community and beyond. The Community Unity Program is primarily a collaboration of Ithaca College and the Southside Community Center that provides low-to-no-cost music, media and arts education to youth of limited resources, especially African, Latino, Asian, and Native American (ALANA) youth. Community Unity is now two years old, having started as a free, after school music program for elementary grade youth. The program added a summer session in 2004 with partial support by Park Foundation. An after school video production program for middle school youth was added this year, and this will remain a part of the program, summer 2005 and thereafter.

**Service in Community**

Numerous faculty and staff members across campus lend their time and expertise to the community through active service on community boards. Agencies such as the Ithaca Latino Civic Association, the Ithaca Asian American Association, the Greater Ithaca Activities Center, the Southside Community Center, Offenders Aid and Restoration, and Challenge Industries, to name a few, represent numerous diverse constituents.

The recently instituted Coordinator of Community Service and Leadership Development position in the Center for Student Leadership and Involvement (CSLI) serves as a central clearing house for exploring opportunities for community service. Students are doing great work in the local schools serving as tutors, providing other services and educational programs for the community. Further work will provide a resource for faculty members willing to use service learning as a pedagogical tool in their courses.

Ithaca College is also a member of the Diversity Consortium of Tompkins County. The Diversity Consortium is a group of local professionals concerned with improving diversity in the workplace.

The College has also had an active representation on the Tompkins County Work Force Investment Board, Tompkins County Area Development, and the Chamber of Commerce. The work of these organizations is interrelated and recognizes the economic and social value of attracting and developing a diverse workforce.

### **Task Force Recommendations**

The high level of commitment that the Ithaca College community has had towards diversity efforts during the last three years have brought us closer to fulfilling the goals of the institutional plan. While there is much work to be done, the Task Force is optimistic that its review of current initiatives and programs will help charter a course for the College to continue its progress.

#### **What is working well and should be continued?**

- Integrate assessment related activities into ongoing efforts to demonstrate program effectiveness in obtaining institutional goals.
- Repeat the Campus Cultural Climate Survey on a regular basis in order to assess the campus environment regarding diversity efforts and how we are supporting our ALANA students.
- Develop a similar survey for faculty and staff and implement it on a regular basis. This will provide us a mechanism of continuous review and assessment regarding diversity and multiculturalism and will be useful to senior management and the President.
- Measure the effectiveness of the National Coalition Building Institute. If results are favorable, then the program should expand the number of individuals who are trained using this model. These individuals should then conduct more programs in residence halls, staff council, faculty council, student government, administrative assembly, divisions and departments.

### **What is not working well and needs improvement or should be discontinued?**

- Develop a useful model for understanding the meaning of diversity in the various contexts at Ithaca College. This recommendation should not be misinterpreted to mean that there needs to be a specific definition of the term “diversity.” However, an official policy statement is necessary to clarify Ithaca College’s process for developing diversity standards in a given situation. This statement would serve as the basis for a process or model useful for answering future diversity questions.
- Continue the College’s commitment to providing a learning environment that values and promotes critical thinking, freedom of expression, and cultural and intellectual diversity. The College should continue to provide and reinforce the importance of providing opportunities for all members of the campus community to explore different viewpoints, ideas, and perspectives in and out of the classroom. In this way, community members will be enriched and provided with the tools and opportunities to enhance their search for the truth.
- Discontinue the Bias-Related Incidents Committee (BRIC) as well as the use of Bias Alerts. The Alerts were clearly not achieving BRIC’s goals in recent years. Further, the activities of BRIC resulted in the community debating issues of free speech rather than focusing on the importance of inclusiveness, civility, safety, and acceptance and celebration of differences.

### **What new efforts need to be developed to assure the achievement of our goals?**

#### **Recommendations:**

- Explore the development of an on-line/electronic reporting mechanism which would allow bias-related incidents/hate crimes to be reported and provide the campus community with a vehicle for finding out what is occurring on campus.
- Create an institution-wide Diversity Committee to coordinate the efforts of the College, ensuring that the goals and implementation strategies contained in the institutional plan are being achieved. The Diversity Committee should use the student climate survey as a springboard for developing ongoing planning and programming to address the issues that surface in the survey. The committee could also be responsible for providing direction to campus-wide committees and other groups.
- Designate Martin Luther King Day as an official holiday for students, faculty and staff. The College should be closed with the exception of special programming and recognition of the holiday. Students, faculty and staff should be encouraged and supported in engaging in volunteer service within the larger community.
- Implement a Diversity requirement at Ithaca College. Its passage will send a clear signal to our alumni, students, regional community, and national community that we take seriously the importance of multiculturalism and diversity in shaping our students to become global citizens capable of engaging in a fast-changing and increasingly interdependent world. The Diversity Task Force has completed a sample model for possible implementation at Ithaca College.

- Modify the current performance review and compensation processes to include evaluation of the effectiveness of supervisors at all levels in the area of diversity management, recruitment and retention. Create incentives for managers to reach specific goals as well as accountability for managers who fall below expectations.
- Create an ALANA “early warning system” for students who may be experiencing personal or academic difficulties.
- Improve the participation and visibility of ALANA graduates in the Alumni Association to provide additional opportunities for student networking and possible mentoring.
- Develop strategies for the Office of the Provost to work with deans and department chairs in the education of faculty regarding different learning styles and intercultural differences.
- Engage faculty in the development of methods for incorporating diversity in the curriculum.
- Establish a formal mentoring program for new ALANA faculty hires that will create a support system for new faculty of color.
- Engage in long range planning with the goal of improving universal access to key facilities on campus including, but not limited to the Hill Center, Dillingham Center, and Friends Hall.
- Provide specific training to raise awareness and understanding about disability access and compliance issues.

**Closing Remarks:**

Diversity and multiculturalism are concepts that appear to be valued by nearly every student, faculty, and staff member at Ithaca College, although few people can articulate what these terms mean or why they are important. Much has been achieved since the Institutional Plan was adopted and many, including external constituencies and organizations, have responded positively to the College’s efforts. However, this report reveals that there remain areas for improvement to be addressed in order for the College to reach the goals that have been set and to sustain a true commitment to diversity. We believe the recommendations provide guidance for what will be critical “next steps” on our continuous efforts to build a campus environment that accepts, reflects and celebrates diversity.

May 2005