

**Presidential Task Force on Diversity  
Final Report  
May 2005**

---

## Table of Contents

---

Introduction .....	page 3
Goal One .....	page 6
Goal Two .....	page 9
Goal Three .....	page 11
Goal Four .....	page 15
Task Force Recommendations .....	page 17
<i>Ithaca College Institutional Plan, Diversity Priority (2001)</i> .....	Appendix A
<i>Ithaca College Institutional Plan, Synthesis and analysis of feedback from roundtables and retreats (June 2003)</i> .....	Appendix B
<i>Annual NYSED HEDS Report, Office of Institutional Research (2004)</i> .....	Appendix C
<i>Ithaca College Search and Selection Procedures (January 2004)</i> .....	Appendix D
<i>EEOC Survey Reports, Office of Institutional Research (2004)</i> .....	Appendix E
<i>Ithaca College Policy Manual Vol. IV, Section 4.4.1</i> .....	Appendix F
<i>Ithaca College Student Campus Climate Survey Executive Summary (2005)</i> .....	Appendix G
<i>Ithaca College – College Wide Diversity Requirement Presidential Task Force on Diversity Preliminary Report (2005)</i> .....	Appendix H

## 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 2004 semester and met regularly on a bi-weekly basis throughout the semester to fulfill its charge. The Task Force started by reviewing information from the Ithaca College Institutional Plan related to the Diversity Priority. See *Appendix A, Ithaca College Institutional Plan, Diversity Priority (2001)*. Information which was gathered from the round-table 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. See *Appendix B, Ithaca College Institutional Plan, Synthesis and analysis of feedback from roundtables and retreats (June 2003)*. This information included responses from the campus community about each of the four goals within the Diversity Priority and included perspectives on: a) what has been accomplished, b) initiatives that should be recognized, c) relevancy of the goal, d) enablers, e) barriers and f) remaining actions. This information served as a starting point for the Task Force in determining what “next steps” need to be taken to achieve the College’s goal to “create a campus environment that accepts, reflects, and celebrates diversity.”

In order to examine and evaluate what efforts are currently in place at Ithaca College that promote or address the Institutional Diversity Priority, the Task Force also invited a number of individuals to make presentations to the Task Force and share relevant information related to their efforts to accomplish the College’s diversity goals. Presentations were made by the following individuals on the topic area indicated.

<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Roger Richardson Assistant Vice President Student Affairs and Campus Life	Office of Multicultural Affairs
Edward Twyman Director of Multicultural Affairs	Office of Multicultural Affairs
Larry Shinagawa Director Center for the Study of Culture, Race, and Ethnicity	Center for the Study of Culture, Race, and Ethnicity
Larry Metzger Dean of Enrollment Planning	Recruitment and retention of underrepresented students
Traevana Byrd Director Affirmative Action & Equal Employment Opportunity	Recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty and staff
Rory Rothman Associate Vice President Student Affairs and Campus Life	Bias-Related Incidents Committee
Bonnie Prunty Director, Residential Life and Judicial Affairs	Diversity Awareness Committee

Presenters provided their perspectives on each of the following focus areas:

- What is working well and should be continued;
- what is not working as well and needs improvement or should be discontinued;
- what new efforts need to be developed to assure the achievement of our goals?

It should be noted that other members of the campus community expressed interest in the progress of the Task Force and offered input on a less formal basis. One individual, Roger Custer, representing the Ithaca College Republicans, requested an opportunity to meet with the Task Force to present his concerns about the issue of intellectual diversity and its relationship to the institutional plan. The results of the meeting are referenced as part of the Task Force Recommendations, which begin on page 17.

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. In arriving at the final recommendations, the

Task Force also took into consideration the activities and campus dialogue following multiple bias-related incidents which occurred on campus in the spring of 2005.

## **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 & Equal Employment Opportunity

Marty 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 Number One:**

**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 1980's the percentage of incoming first-year ALANA students (not including nonresident aliens) rose from 3.6% in 1986 to 5.3% in 1990. Focused recruitment initiatives of the Office of Admission during the 1990's increased the percentage of incoming ALANA students to 8.7% by 2000. Since the adoption of the Institutional Plan, the overall percentages have fluctuated within the range of 7.3% to 8.7% with the exception of the 2003-04 academic year. See *Appendix C, Annual NYSED HEDS Report, Office of Institutional Research (2004)*. In the fall of 2003, the percentage of incoming students that identified as ALANA increased to 10.5%. One of the outreach programs that is credited for the increase includes "An Inside Look" program, which brings accepted minority students to campus for an overnight visit. The greater emphasis on achieving higher matriculation from those who are already accepted has resulted in a first year class in the fall of 2003 that was more diverse than ever.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) administers the "Martin Luther King (MLK) Scholarship" program, which brought in the inaugural class of MLK Scholars in 2002. The program targets students of color who are academically exceptional and it supports the students' development with many enrichment experiences that take place outside of the classroom. In addition to their financial aid award, MLK Scholars travel abroad to conduct research, participate in community service and live, as freshmen, in the Housing Offering Multicultural Experience (HOME) program in Terrace 2 – a unique housing option offering a multicultural experience.

In the spring of 2002, 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. Students may join as entering freshmen, or as rising sophomores or juniors. IAP students who obtain or maintain a cumulative 3.0 or better grade point average for the academic year may be eligible to receive an Ithaca Achievers Grant of \$1,000 (renewable each year) to reduce the loan portion of their financial aid packages.

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 student services. HEOP provides access to college for selected students whose prior academic

experience does not reflect their true academic potential. HEOP students must meet both academic and financial guidelines set by the New York State Board of Regents. All entering HEOP first-year students are required to attend the OMA Summer Institute. Designed to strengthen learning skills, broaden academic background, and acquaint students with Ithaca College resources, this summer program provides a stimulating preview of college-level academic work.

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 coursework 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 Native American Culture Club, the Asian Culture Club, and the IC Journal of Culture, Race, Gender, and Ethnicity Club, is viewed as a potential resource for prospective students considering Ithaca College.

### **Faculty/Staff**

In spring 2001, the Office of Affirmative Action and Assistant College Counsel was restructured to the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). This restructuring occurred to place 100% emphasis on the work of affirmative action and equal opportunity. Traevana Byrd was hired in the position of Director of the office. The specific duties of her office include: assisting in the College's efforts to create a supportive environment for diversity, on-going development, monitoring and implementation of College search and selection procedures, and collaborative development of programs and training for faculty, staff, and students which address a diverse workforce.

In fall 2001, the College underwent a comprehensive review of its search and selection procedures. The process involved gathering input from various constituent groups and in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources (HR), a revised set of procedures was promulgated in spring 2002. *See Appendix D, Ithaca College Search and Selection Procedures (January 2004)*. As a result of the new procedures, the collaborative work of the Office of Affirmative Action & EEO and the Department of Human Resources, and the on-going education of search committees, the College's efforts at diversify its workforce 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 search and selection procedures require that a formal recruitment plan be submitted in advance of advertising for any position and it must state what efforts will be made to diversify the applicant pool. Search committees are trained to understand how to conduct their search legally and equitably, as well as how to incorporate affirmative action principles throughout. The definition of the "best qualified" candidate has evolved to require departments to think more broadly in terms of credentials and to consider a wider range of skill sets as potentially being appropriate to do a particular job. When an applicant of color emerges as a viable candidate in any search, the Director of the Office of Affirmative Action & EEO takes steps to ensure that the candidate is fully considered and treated fairly by requiring a detailed rationale for that candidate's exclusion.

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 activities that are intended to enhance the likelihood of the retention of a newly hired ALANA faculty or staff member. The types of activities that have been supported with this fund have included:

- Providing hiring bonuses and moving expenses for top recruits;
- supporting current IC faculty and staff with funds for attending conferences and other events that focus on ALANA issues for a particular discipline, with the specific purpose of network building for diversity recruitment;
- providing professional development opportunities to help new ALANA faculty become fully prepared and integrated into the department, including a reduced teaching load if necessary to assist in completion of a PhD;
- hiring consultants who can advise departments and develop strategies for better outreach;
- supporting extended or enhanced campus visits for candidates of color during the interview process;
- working with departments to provide collaborative support for initiatives or projects developed by new ALANA faculty.

Departments are encouraged to be creative and assertive in their attempts to develop innovative strategies for recruitment and retention. Maximum results rely upon individual departments doing their part to do aggressive recruitment and to educate themselves about trends within their disciplines. It is an institutional concern and as a result, the responsibility for positive outcomes is shared by all units of the institution. The proportion of new full time faculty hires who self-identify as Black (Non-Hispanic), Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander and American Indian or Alaskan Native has significantly increased since the Ithaca Initiative 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). See *Appendix E, EEOC Survey Reports, Office of Institutional Research (2004)*.

### **Trustees**

Since adoption of the institutional plan, the board of trustees has appointed eight new trustees including three women. Currently, women represent 39% of the board's overall composition. Racial diversity continues to be a challenge, and despite several attempts to cultivate trustee candidates from racially underrepresented groups, the board of trustees has been successful in making only one additional appointment

(student trustee) since formal adoption of the institutional plan. We recognize that this is an area requiring additional planning and strategizing.

**Goal Number Two:  
Retain faculty, staff, and students from underrepresented groups.**

---

**Students**

Several support programs are in place to support the needs of ALANA students during their four years at Ithaca College. The restructuring of the OMA and “Ithaca Opportunity Program” (IOP) reporting to one individual has served to enhance the services provided to ALANA students by way of support during their time at Ithaca College. During the academic year, 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. All HEOP first-year students meet weekly with one or more academic consultants and with a program counselor. After the first-year, students may consult with the academic support staff as needed and may be assigned regular meetings in order to strengthen academic performance requirements.

OMA conducts a three-week summer institute for first-year students. The institute provides a valuable and exciting preview of coursework at Ithaca College and offers noncredit enrichment courses, as well as academic success strategies. Besides an interdisciplinary academic experience, the program provides career related, cultural and recreational activities on the campus and in the Ithaca community. Ithaca College provides scholarships to cover the costs of the institute.

OMA also provides a valuable service to the entire campus community by providing and supporting programming which explores diversity through many different approaches. For example, OMA and the Park School of Communications have provided opportunities for faculty, staff and students to work collaboratively as observers and participants in the “Cinema on the Edge” series, which included a documentary about the Southside Community Center.

The creation of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, 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 pre-conceived notions related to the LGBT community.

Finally, 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. The response to the work of the center has been very positive and students have availed themselves of courses of study that address groups traditionally marginalized. CSCRE

has also been instrumental in coordinating programming for the College community in the form of an intellectually stimulating lecture series that attracts renowned speakers to the campus on issues of race, culture and ethnicity.

In spite of these many efforts, there is clear evidence that we need to do to much more in order to have a positive impact on retention. In the spring of 2004, the first Campus Climate Survey for students was implemented at Ithaca College, funded by the President's New Initiatives Fund. The survey was a collaborative effort of CSCRE, Student Government Association (SGA), OMA, Office of Institutional Research, and Cornell University's Survey Research Institute (SRI). 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 affect student satisfaction and learning. A 49% response rate to the survey was realized. An executive summary of the final report has been distributed to SGA, Staff Council, Faculty Council, and Administrative Assembly, and was placed on Intercom for all faculty and staff. An online version of the report will be available for download from CSCRE's website.

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. 15% of the respondents stated that they had considered 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. See *Appendix G, Ithaca College Student Campus Climate Survey, Executive Summary (2005)*.

### **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. To this end, the College has continued its participation in the Diversity Consortium whose aim is to bring together HR and Affirmative Action professionals from several of the major employers in Tompkins County (Cornell, IC, City of Ithaca, Tompkins County, etc) to strategize ways to assist and support on-going 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 spearheaded by the Office of Affirmative Action & EEO to create a welcoming environment have included luncheons and receptions for both new and current faculty and staff. These gatherings provide an opportunity for exchanges among all faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. Feedback from participants indicates the effectiveness of these events in establishing a welcoming environment for the new ALANA members of our community.

In the last two years there have been several presentations by the Cornell Interactive Theatre (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 has conducted cultural competency workshops upon request for departments and divisions on campus.

In spite of these efforts, improving retention remains a significant challenge, particularly among faculty of color. Whereas the institutional policies and procedures that have been implemented over the past few years have resulted in an increase in hiring of ALANA faculty and staff, the more complicated and difficult process of creating welcoming and supportive environments for these new hires cannot be achieved by legislative or procedural initiatives alone. At the departmental 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. Some examples of the unique challenges facing new faculty include departmental politics, the isolating nature of working in the various disciplines and departments, the dynamics of power as they play out in the peer review process, and the difficulty of creating positive mentoring relationships. Ithaca College must continue to bridge the gap between our rhetoric of inclusiveness and a lived reality of what that requires of all of us. 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 Number Three:  
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.

As mentioned earlier, 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. Through the establishment of academic courses and research projects, CSCRE provides opportunities for students to explore and analyze the nature of the interconnections of culture, race, and ethnicity within the United States and across the rest of the world. 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.

CSCRE has also developed partnerships with key centers, offices, and departments at Ithaca College, Cornell University, and SUNY Binghamton in order to better achieve its goals. Within the City of Ithaca, CSCRE has been asked to assist on diversity issues facing the Ithaca City School District (ICSD), conduct research for the Mayor's Office on the effects of civil service examinations in the career advancement (or lack of it) for minority and immigrant individuals, and to help develop minority community

and economic development projects with the Ithaca Urban Redevelopment Agency (IURA). In addition, CSCRE has sponsored film and discussion series on culture, race, and ethnicity and attempts to incorporate what is learned into the curriculum.

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, which this year has highlighted the theme of indigenous cultures and communities. Some long-term programmatic objectives that are continuing to be developed include: implementation of research and community projects; helping to revise the Ithaca College library system's method of cataloging materials related to diversity and multiculturalism; hosting of conferences on public intellectualism and critical race theory; developing a journal of ethnic studies; developing web-based methods of dissemination regarding ethnic studies, and creating a visiting scholars program on culture, race, and ethnicity.

In addition to the excellent work of CSCRE, 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 HOME 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. In addition to sharing a common residential experience, international students and students from the United States take a one-credit Multicultural Issues course taught by a faculty member who works actively with the Residential Life staff to provide multicultural programs in the residence hall. Programs have included international guest lecturers, information about study abroad options, cultural exchange dinners, as well as social and academic success programs. Students living in Terrace 2 also have the opportunity to remain in the residence hall over academic year break periods, a real advantage for our international students participating in the program.

As was mentioned earlier, 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 is designed for students of exceptional academic ability whose life and aspirations are to exemplify the ideals of Martin Luther King. Scholars are expected to participate in a wide variety of educational, cultural, and social activities. Travel is an important part of the scholars' experience. Annually, scholars travel domestically and internationally to broaden their knowledge of, and appreciation for, different cultures. In the first two years of the program, scholars have traveled to Brazil and Ghana. While on these trips, scholars do research on a variety of aspects of the host country's cultural, social, and political issues. The scholars present their research annually at the James J. Whalen Symposium. Scholars are also required to complete a minimum of 30 hours of community service each semester and implement a service learning project. In their first year, scholars also reside in the HOME program in Terrace 2, where they live with international students and gain a deeper appreciation for different cultures. As members of the HOME program, the scholars also participate in a multicultural studies course ("You and the Global Perspective") in order to increase their awareness of, and appreciation for, multicultural issues. 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 sixty 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 seminar program is designed to provide ALANA students who are interested in pursuing a career in student affairs with an opportunity to learn more about the field and prepare them for a post graduate experience in student affairs. To date, three ALANA students have participated in the program. One of these students will serve as an ALANA Fellow and be an assistant hall director at Ithaca College in 2004-2005 as a culminating experience of the PESA 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 its use of Bias Alerts, drew negative criticism from the campus community (and beyond) for their perceived attempt to restrict speech than as a vehicle for educating others about the negative effects of bias-related incidents. Some believed that the Alerts were having the effect of coming dangerously close to a speech code. Many also believed that the Alerts, with their generic descriptions of incidents, were not providing enough information or detail to significantly educate or impact the community. However, it was very beneficial to have a mechanism in place that allows for the reporting of bias-related incidents and hate crimes to the campus community. Without this opportunity, there is too great a potential for members of underrepresented groups to feel isolated, unsupported, and feel that they don't have a voice. It could also appear that the administration does not care to hear about such incidents and/or is covering up such occurrences, which is clearly not accurate.

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 position to a full-time position in the fall of 2003. The Center has served as a "home" for our LGBT students and has provided the necessary support which these students need in order to be successful at Ithaca College. The Center sponsors programs and workshops throughout the year; provides support, counseling services, and educational resources on LGBT related issues; and works closely with students and student organizations to address issues of importance to our LGBT community.

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 to restrooms and classrooms and many entryways have had automatic door openers installed. Assistive listening 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 number of students who self-disclose that they have a disability and need accommodations. It is becoming increasingly clear that optimal compliance will be achieved only if the commitment to

ensuring access is a campus-wide concern. Identifying and training key personnel in each department to serve as resources and liaisons is critical for meeting the College's long term goals.

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 & EEO and led by outside consultants. Each participant has applied their new knowledge by designing and implementing a service-oriented accessibility project that was directly beneficial to the participant's department.

In addition to the programs and initiatives already highlighted, a number of efforts have been developed to educate staff, faculty, and students about the needs of underrepresented students and introduce action steps that can be taken to create a campus community that accepts, reflects, and celebrates diversity. These efforts include:

- Coordination of theme months throughout the academic year (i.e. Black History Month) which highlight important issues within the ALANA community along with celebration of achievements.
- Sponsorship of the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) Train-the-Trainer Workshop which occurred on October 24-26, 2003. 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. After completing the workshop, the participants were invited to become members and trainers of the Ithaca College NCBI chapter. The chapter provides workshops to improve the overall campus climate for diversity and teaches skills in how to effectively change prejudicial attitudes and become powerful allies for one another.
- Continuing sponsorship of the Professionals 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. Panel discussions, workshops, and social opportunities are components of the program culminating in an awards banquet which recognizes the achievements of our ALANA students.
- In spring 2004, OMA also collaborated with Susanne Morgan, coordinator of the Center for Faculty Excellence, to have CITE conduct a diversity session for ALANA students and faculty to explore classroom climate through theatre and dialogue.
- Presentation of Cultural Competency Workshops by Traevana Byrd, Director of Affirmative Action & EEO.
- Creation of more cultural diversity electives as part of the curriculum. In addition, the School of Business introduced a diversity requirement for all Business

majors, and a diversity requirement was also instituted for all sport management and media majors.

- Training and workshops addressing disability issues have been offered to members of the campus community via audio conferences and CITE.

#### **Goal Number Four:**

**Collaborate with off-campus communities, from nearby metropolitan areas to sites abroad, to advance diversity.**

---

Campus–community partnerships are beneficial to the College in many significant ways. However, as current relationships have shown, these partnerships require commitment, communication, and time to grow. 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. At any given time, there are a variety of collaborative efforts between Ithaca College and Ithaca community members in progress. These efforts have been carefully cultivated by individuals and then woven into the fabric of the overall commitment to diversity.

Campus-community partnerships can be categorized by Educational Partnerships, which are formal arrangements that are reciprocal in nature and work toward the education of the intended audiences and Service in Community, which allow members of the community to become involved in the life of the community by sharing of their time and/or expertise.

#### **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 1,000 students, most living in severe poverty. Despite its challenges, FDA sends 95 percent of its graduates to college.

Ithaca College and FDA have forged a valuable partnership emphasizing collaboration on four goals:

- (1) To use the unique strengths and resources of each institution to enhance the learning environment of both;
- (2) to foster a deeper understanding of the issues facing minorities in education by crossing cultural, social, and economic boundaries to find ways of working together;
- (3) to let Ithaca College serve as a consistent “college presence” for FDA students and find practical ways to help with their stated goal of acceptance into college;
- (4) to provide Ithaca College teacher education students with hands-on experience in inner-city teaching, the model of a successful inner-city school and teachers, and encouragement to pursue teaching in this environment.

Over the years, a number of initiatives have been put in place to realize these goals. Workshops have been presented at FDA where Ithaca College faculty and teacher education students 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". The FDA students take part in classes and extra-curricular events, earn college credit, and experience a significant stay in a new environment. Summer workshops at Ithaca College have also been offered for FDA teachers and students in a variety of academic areas.

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 onto the often overlooked cultures of the surrounding area. Future courses will be designed with the intention of creating an arena in which typical subjects can be explored and viewed through stereotypes and the environment. During the 2004-05 academic year, CSCRE and the Cinema and Photography Department will sponsor a similar project that will focus 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). Rossen regularly has his classes work with fellow volunteers to promote opportunities for education and mutual respect between the Haudenosaunee and American people. The group's mission is to ensure a "mutually respectful coexistence that upholds the dignity, spirit and integrity of all people." Additionally, Baruch Whitehead, Assistant Professor in the School of Music, has created a program that brings together faculty and students from IC with young people in the community to learn about African drumming. This initiative connects the College with local community centers and has brought in a musician from Africa to Ithaca to help teach the art and techniques of drumming.

### **Service in Community**

Although we do not track volunteer service, anecdotally we are aware of numerous faculty and staff members across campus who 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 Activity Center, the Southside Community Center, Offenders Aid and Restoration, and Challenge Industries to name a few, represent numerous diverse constituents.

Ithaca College's visibility in the local community has increased as a result of faculty, staff, and students being encouraged to work and learn in the community. This increased involvement in the community brings new opportunities to collaborate with a broader range of individuals about diversity issues. The recently instituted Coordinator of Community Service and Leadership Development position in the Center for Student

Leadership and Involvement (CSLI) serves as a central clearinghouse for exploring opportunities for community service. Through the efforts of Deb Mohlenhoff, the CSLI will serve as the clearinghouse for both on and off campus constituencies to seek and/or post volunteer opportunities. As a result of this focus, students are doing great work in the local schools serving as tutors, and 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.

Through the efforts of Traevena Byrd and Vicki Estabrook, Director of Employee Relations, Ithaca College is 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. As was mentioned earlier, members are professionals from area colleges, community leaders, municipalities (City, Town, and County), public and private industry, and schools. This consortium aims to enhance awareness, networking, support and best practices of diversity and its benefits as an essential part of organizational success. Its primary objectives are to cultivate a continuous learning environment, promote a positive community image, and to serve as a liaison for diversity resources. Monthly meetings provide members the opportunity to nurture inter-organizational relationships and professional dialogue.

The College has had active representation on the Tompkins County Workforce Investment Board, Tompkins County Area Development, the Diversity Consortium, and the Chamber of Commerce. Through these organizations and other avenues, the College should continue collaboration with Cornell, Borg Warner, Cayuga Medical Center and other local employers with respect to developing employment, economic, and social opportunities. The work of these organizations is interrelated and recognizes the economic and social value of attracting and developing a diverse workforce. Through College representatives assuming leadership roles within these organizations there are many opportunities to further diversity goals to the mutual advantage of the College and the local community. Corporate America has been able to raise the bar by creating a business case for diversity. Higher education will compete for workforce talent in the coming years and those colleges and universities who lead the way on diversity issues will also be the ones to succeed in attracting and retaining the highest quality faculty and staff.

## **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 more work to be done, the Task Force is optimistic that its review of current initiatives and programs will help chart a course for the College to continue its progress. The charge given to the Task Force by President Peggy Williams called for responses to the following questions:

What is working well and should be continued?

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

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

These questions provided the framework with which the Task Force gathered information, evaluated its findings and developed its conclusions. The following recommendations are offered to ensure continued progress toward the achievement of the institutional plan priority of enhancing the diversity of students, faculty, and staff and creating a supportive environment and programs for the entire College community.

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

Throughout the review process, the Task Force was audience to various speakers who presented an overview of programs that were developed to advance and support the institution's diversity initiatives. Although the presenters shared subjective information and insights that these initiatives were working well, there is no empirical evidence that these efforts, in fact, are achieving their original intent. It is only through institutional assessments over a period of time that we will be able to make informed decisions regarding programmatic impact.

#### Recommendations

- Integrate assessment related activities into ongoing efforts to demonstrate program effectiveness in attaining 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?**

A theme that regularly emerged as the Task Force did its work centered on the issue of consistency. Many students, faculty and staff members are concerned by what they perceive as a lack of consistency regarding how "diversity" at Ithaca College is defined and managed. Our decentralized manner of coordinating diversity initiatives and programs, as well as our lack of a clarity regarding what we mean when we talk about diversity is an impediment to the full engagement of the campus community on diversity issues.

As part of the Institutional Plan, the definition of "diversity" covers a number of underrepresented populations in relation to age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual

orientation, physical ability, and religious belief. The groups covered under this definition are different from the groups covered under the College's Discrimination Statement. In addition, the College's affirmative action policies and practices focus on certain sub-populations covered by this definition, but do not address all of these populations. Various offices (including the Office of Admission) are seeking clarification to our conceptions of diversity in order to assist them in their efforts and to help guide future planning. The terms "multiculturalism" and "diversity" are used interchangeably in many documents and programs.

Also, in regard to the College's definition of diversity, a proposal ("The Case for Intellectual Diversity") was developed in the spring of 2004 by the Ithaca College Republicans requesting that the College consider the issue of "intellectual diversity" as part of its commitment to diversity. Roger Custer, the president of the Ithaca College Republicans, met with the Presidential Task Force on Diversity to share the proposal and discuss its key components. The Task Force noted that the proposal was a reinforcement of the obligations outlined in the Academic Freedom and Responsibility provision of the Faculty Handbook. See *Appendix F, Ithaca College Policy Manual Vol. IV, Section 4.4.1.*

At present, there is no one body on campus with an institutional charge or with recognized institutional authority to coordinate and synthesize diversity planning and programmatic initiatives. The diversity work of various organizations, committees, and departments are presently not integrated under one umbrella. Groups such as the Diversity Awareness Committee (DAC) and departments such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Affirmative Action & EEO, CSCRE, Residential Life, the LGBT Resource Center, and student groups (SGA, RHA, ALS, Prism, Created Equal, etc.), all have vested interests in various programs and agendas. Leaders of all of the offices need to work together to plan strategically for the leveraging of institutional resources toward achievement of the diversity goals of the institutional plan.

### Recommendations

- 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 inclusivity, civility, safety, and acceptance and celebration of differences. A recent open forum sponsored by the Diversity Task Force reinforced many of the feelings and perceptions just noted. Members of the campus community who were present applauded the intentions and goals of BRIC, but believed that the College should focus its efforts on education, and dialogue in and out of the classroom, in order to affect positive change.

- Evaluate the Diversity Awareness Committee (DAC) to determine whether it should continue in its current form with its present charge. The DAC presently serves as an outlet for various constituencies on campus who want the institution to address specific diversity issues and problems. Originally, the DAC was developed to sponsor educational programs to raise awareness on campus of diversity and related issues. However, with the excellent work being done by OMA, CSCRE, student clubs and organizations, departments, etc., the need for the committee to be a programming body has diminished. If an institutional Diversity Committee was formed, this new group may serve the role that the DAC does now. Therefore, the DAC may not be necessary. On the other hand, a group of this type may be beneficial to the institutional Diversity Committee for other purposes.

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

There is a critical interrelationship between each of the four goals within the diversity priority of the institutional plan. The success or failure in one area will naturally influence the success or failure of the others. The most significant correlation is that between recruitment and retention. For example, the development of a detailed retention plan that involves consideration of the campus and community environment is essential to ensure that any successful recruitment efforts are not in vain. Our ability to demonstrate good retention rates for students, faculty and staff of color will then have a positive impact on future recruitment. It is an important cycle that must be carefully considered so that resources may be distributed accordingly. Our greatest challenge will be the achievement of a truly inclusive environment for all members of the Ithaca College community. This can only happen when there is a fundamental cultural shift within each division and department campus-wide.

In order to create a campus environment that is welcoming and inclusive of diversity, it is essential to enhance the overall diversity of the faculty, staff and student populations. Reaching a critical mass of individuals from a particular underrepresented category is one stepping stone towards achieving success in each of the four diversity goals of the Institutional Plan. The focus in the last four years has been on recruitment. The institutional philosophy has unofficially been that building critical mass meant starting with getting people here. While we have been successful in the area of recruitment, we are losing those gains when we are failing to focus on retaining the diverse faculty, staff and students that we have. Concerns about poor retention of ALANA faculty, staff and students need to be addressed by proactively supporting the improvement of the cultural climate within specific areas on campus.

## 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. This reporting mechanism would be an option in addition to encouraging every victim to report bias-related incidents/hate crimes to the Office of Public Safety so a full investigation could take place and support for the victim offered. Other institutions of higher education have such reporting mechanisms in place and may serve as models for what can be developed at Ithaca College.
- 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 in recognition of the holiday. Students, faculty and staff should be encouraged and supported in engaging in volunteer service within the larger community on Martin Luther King Day.
- 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. Moreover, a focus on curricular advancements in the area of multiculturalism and diversity goes hand in hand with our College's commitment to sustainability, since diversity and social justice are essential to creating a sustainable environment for our global future. *See Appendix H, Ithaca College – College Wide Diversity Requirement, Presidential Task Force on Diversity Preliminary Report (2005).*
- 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. Results may be quantitatively measured by such things as hiring statistics, but results can also be measured by a qualitative assessment of programs, projects or initiatives that have had a positive impact on the College's diversity efforts.
- Create an ALANA "early warning system" for students who may be experiencing personal or academic difficulties. Build on the resources that presently exist in Multicultural Affairs to provide intervention and support.

- 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. Once the education takes place a relevant question should then be added to the faculty evaluation instrument addressing each faculty member's awareness and respect for different learning styles and intercultural differences.
- Engage faculty in the development of methods for incorporating diversity in the curriculum. It may be useful to create a resource directory of community experts at the local, regional, and national levels who can complement curricular diversity initiatives.
- Establish a formal mentoring program for new ALANA faculty hires that will create a support system for new faculty of color. This would provide a valuable resource to newcomers who may feel isolated by their colleagues as they struggle to adjust to the Ithaca community in general.
- 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. Presently, individuals with mobility impairments have difficulty accessing several buildings, services and programs.
- Provide specific training to raise awareness and understanding about disability access and compliance issues. Develop a faculty education program that will help them to better respond to the needs of disabled students in the instructional context. Develop a supervisor education program to enhance sensitivity and awareness, as well as the skills needed to effectively manage the collaborative process with employees needing accommodations.

### **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.