



BLUEPRINT
MAY, 2006

INTRODUCTION

During spring 2004, a group of faculty and staff convened to recommend creating an avenue for addressing issues of diversity at Wagner College. Therefore, they met with the Provost to discuss their concerns and provide suggestions:

- implement a campus-wide diversity initiative.
- form a committee to facilitate this initiative; students, faculty, and staff should comprise the committee.
- begin a systematic campus-wide discussion, facilitated by the committee that focuses on diversity related to student, staff and faculty recruitment and retention, the campus climate, student learning and issues related to the surrounding community.

As a result of this meeting and after much discussion with other faculty, staff and students, a Diversity Action Council (DAC) was formed and entrusted with the following charge:

1. Advise and report to the Provost on issues related to diversity; more specifically to:
 - a. Identify ways to strengthen relationships with diverse communities outside Wagner College.
 - b. Suggest activities, curricular and co-curricular, that further address issues of diversity throughout the campus.
 - c. Recognize and honor exemplary actions and individuals that contribute to a supportive campus climate.
 - d. Suggest additional approaches to recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students from underrepresented groups.
 - e. Bring to the appropriate faculty standing committees suggested changes that fall within the faculty and/or the Faculty Handbook domain.
2. Investigate the following questions:
 - a. How can Wagner College take steps to increase diversity and retention among faculty, staff and students?
 - b. How can Wagner College foster a campus climate that welcomes and supports individuals from underrepresented groups?
 - c. How can Wagner College further integrate diversity content and issues across the curricula?

- d. How can Wagner College take steps to increase breadth and depth of Wagner connections with underrepresented groups throughout New York City?

The committee is comprised of nine people: three faculty members, three administrators, and three students, and they worked to survey the current climate and make recommendations for the future to support the mission and vision of the College.



CO-CHAIRS:

Ruta Shah-Gordon, Associate Dean for Student Development
B.N. Kumar, Assistant Professor Education Department

MEMBERS:

Amy Eshleman, Assistant Professor Psychology Department
Shaohua Hu, Assistant Professor Government & Politics
Kimberly Marsh, Assistant Athletic Director
Susan Rosenberg, Coordinator of Graduate Activities
Jessica Ford, Undergraduate Junior
Gwendolyn Moore, Undergraduate Junior
Armand Valdes, Undergraduate Junior

Blueprint Submitted: May 17, 2006

Wagner College Mission

Approved by the Trustees and the Faculty, May 2003

Wagner College prepares students for life, as well as for careers, by emphasizing scholarship, achievement, leadership and citizenship. Wagner offers a comprehensive educational program that is anchored in the liberal arts, experiential and co-curricular learning, interculturalism, interdisciplinary studies, and service to society, and that is cultivated by a faculty dedicated to promoting individual expression, reflective practice and integrative learning.

Diversity Action Council Mission

Approved by the Diversity Action Council, May 2006

In the spirit of furthering the mission and goals of the college, the Diversity Action Council (DAC) seeks to foster awareness, inclusiveness and celebration of diversity to create a comfortable and inviting campus climate. Aligned with the national conversation, diversity includes, but is not limited to, differences by race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, region, age, language ability, socioeconomic status, or any other underrepresented group on Wagner College's campus.

BLUEPRINT:

The Diversity Action Council spent the 2005/06 academic year assessing the current campus climate on issues of diversity. For this purpose, it conducted a campus-wide survey, appraised current course offerings, formed a focus group with students, and interviewed the following members of the campus community: Study Abroad Coordinator, Chair of Academic Policy Committee, Admissions Director, V.P. of Enrollment Management, V.P. for Academic Affairs, Director of Human Resources, Associate Athletics Director, Director of Corporate and Foundation Grants, Director of Alumni Affairs, and Director of Communications.

Based on information gathered, the following goals are proposed:

RECRUITMENT

CURRENT CAMPUS CLIMATE – Based on the information the DAC gathered, it is recognized that concerted efforts have been made to increase diversity among faculty, staff, administration and students. Yet it is acknowledged that more efforts are desirable.

RECOMMENDATIONS – The DAC recommends the following:

To increase the applicant pool of:

Faculty/Staff/Administration

- The formation of the Diversity Hiring Resource Team (DHRT) to establish a unified hiring system. The DHRT, consisting of members of DAC and Human Resources, would assist with the writing, circulation and placement of advertisements, networking and the development of interview questions and resources.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC in concert with the Provost and Human Resources
 - TIMELINE – Established by August 2006 and implemented by September 1, 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Responses from equal opportunity survey cards
 - Participation in departments’ hiring processes

Students

- Create additional need-based scholarships to support economically disadvantaged students through the capital campaign.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – President and Board of Trustees
 - TIMELINE – Established for the start of the capital campaign
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Establishment and contributions toward a scholarship fund
- Partner with an ethnically diverse high school and connect their students to Wagner faculty.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – Provost and Vice Provost
 - TIMELINE – One partnership established for 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Establishment of a partnership
 - Increase of admission applications from the partnership
- Recruit and train underrepresented groups of alumni to attend high school “College Nights” and campus Open Houses to welcome underrepresented groups of students to our campus.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – Admissions, Alumni Relations, Career Development
 - TIMELINE – Training completed by the end of fall 2006 for recruitment in spring 2007
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:

- Training of ten alumni from underrepresented groups
- Increased representation at appropriate recruitment events

RETENTION:

CURRENT CAMPUS CLIMATE - Based on the information gathered, we recognize that the current campus climate is welcoming of increased diversity. Successful efforts have been made this semester to make the campus more inviting. For example, Kairos House Chapel was transformed into a daily place for Muslim prayer, in addition to all existing functions the Chapel serves to other religious groups. Present efforts also include co-curricular programming for theme months, theater nights (e.g., diversity play), Academic and Cultural Enrichment (ACE) events, Mosaic Coalition, Celebrate Diversity, French Film Series, Jewish Culture Series, and actions to change the climate such as increased opportunities for recently formed student groups, e.g., Nubian Student Union, Hillel, Muslim Student Association, Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Student Movement and continued support for Allies, Amnesty International, Wagner Christian Fellowship and both College Democrats and College Republicans.

While we applaud these individual efforts, the DAC feels there is the need for a central office to coordinate these initiatives and create a greater institutional commitment to diversity. From the evidence gathered, the DAC finds this to be essential to a more inclusive campus culture.

RECOMMENDATIONS – The DAC recommends the following:

- Establish a Connections Program where students, alumni, staff, and faculty can gather monthly for food and discussion. While designed to hear the voices of underrepresented groups, these events will be open to all. Ideally, the first session will be led by National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) trainers.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC and Alumni Relations
 - TIMELINE – Commencing November 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Attendance and feedback at meetings

- Create a visually inviting, supportive environment, and value difference by commissioning students’ and faculty’s art work, displaying books in the library and the bookstore, and using the electronic board to display a weekly diversity quote.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC, Provost, Art Department, student organizations, library, bookstore
 - TIMELINE – October 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Evidence of appropriate displays

- Establish a multicultural center to encourage cross-cultural conversations. Ideally located above Public Safety, with a satellite office in the new residence hall, the center houses a resource library, offices, a lounge, and a kitchen available for use by various groups.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – Provost, the DAC
 - TIMELINE – June 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Space allocation
 - Budget to purchase library resources
 - Furniture, computer, printer, office and kitchen supplies provided

- Hire a full-time director and graduate assistant to coordinate and develop a comprehensive diversity program, and both new positions would work collaboratively with the DAC to strengthen the mission of the Council and implement the new initiatives.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – Provost
 - TIMELINE – Position posted spring 2007, start date fall 2007
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Persons hired

- Recognize excellence in areas of diversity work by publishing articles in the *Wagnerian*/local newspapers; highlighting individual/group contributions on the web; and establishing awards highlighting diversity initiatives at the faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate student levels.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC, Provost, Communications Department
 - TIMELINE – Fall 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Articles in the *Wagnerian*
 - Press releases around issues of diversity to local newspapers
 - Maintain the DAC web pages
 - Establish and disseminate guidelines for awards to be given in spring 2007

CURRICULUM:

CURRENT CAMPUS CLIMATE – The DAC recognizes that Wagner College has an Intercultural (I) and American Diversity (D) component in the general education requirement and the First Year Program incorporates conversations around diversity. The expansion of the Study Abroad programs and the newly developed “Expanding Your Horizons” program has increased opportunities for faculty and students to explore issues of diversity away from Wagner’s campus. The Academic Policy Committee (APC)

shares with the DAC that they are reassessing the current core requirements and encouraging professors to re-designate appropriate courses as (I) or (D).

RECOMMENDATIONS – The DAC recommends the following:

- The DAC will work with APC to consider the possibility of modifying the standard to designate the (I) and (D) courses.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC and APC
 - TIMELINE – Request invitation to APC meeting in early fall 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Evidence of careful consideration through minutes of meeting

- The DAC will encourage academic departments to increase (I) and (D) course offering within disciplines.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC, Department Chairs, Provost
 - TIMELINE – Fall 2007
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Comparison of number of offerings prior to and after conversations

- The DAC will explore with APC the possibility of developing multi-disciplinary minors in diversity, e.g., American Diversity and Global Issues.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC, APC
 - TIMELINE – Spring 2008
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Minors presented to APC

- Re-establish programs with schools abroad, e.g., Braegger’s Institute; American University of Paris, etc.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – Provost, Vice-Provost, Study Abroad Coordinator
 - TIMELINE – Fall, 2007
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Student exchanges within these programs

- Create scholarship opportunities for economically disadvantaged students to participate in “Expanding Your Horizons” program.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – President, Board of Trustees, “Expanding Your Horizons” Coordinator
 - TIMELINE – Established for the start of the capital campaign
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Funding established

- Establish an Office of Internationalization with a full-time administrator to coordinate such activities as Study Abroad, “Expanding Your Horizons”, visa applications, faculty exchanges, etc.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – Provost, Study Abroad Coordinator, “Expanding Your Horizons” Coordinator
 - TIMELINE – Position posted spring 2008, start fall 2008
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Person hired

DEVELOPMENT & PROGRAMMATIC:

CURRENT CAMPUS CLIMATE – The DAC recognizes current efforts to address issues of diversity on campus and through connections to local communities. In addition to the initiatives previously mentioned, the DAC acknowledges the established relationships with the local communities made by the Student Government Association, Omicron Delta Kappa National Honor Society, Experiential Learning, Career Development, academic departments, etc. to foster civic engagement. A multicultural office would be able to support current efforts and assist in establishing new initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS – The DAC recommends the following:

- Sponsor a notable speaker on campus once a year and invite the local community.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC, ACE, Human Resources, Communications Department
 - TIMELINE – Fall 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Speaker brought to campus spring 2007

- “Train-the-Trainers” workshop with National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) for a core group of faculty, staff and students during the fall semester. The trainers will facilitate further workshops on campus, e.g., for new hires, student organizations and residential floors.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC, Human Resources
 - TIMELINE – Fall 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Workshop held fall 2006 for “Train-the-Trainers”
 - Further workshops spring 2007

- Establish a Diversity Retreat for a group of approximately 20 faculty, staff and students – Tuesday, February 20, 2007 on an off-campus site.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC, Human Resources
 - TIMELINE – Plan retreat fall 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Retreat held spring 2007

- Establish “Community Time” on Thursdays, 4:15 – 6:00 for workshops, events, speakers, etc., around issues of leadership, development and diversity. Opening plenary sessions could include *The Color of Fear* or *Skin Deep*.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – Provost, Committee of the Whole
 - TIMELINE – Proposal presentation spring 2007
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Establishment of community time for fall 2007

- Work with Debating for Democracy and Project Pericles to further awareness on issues of citizenship.
 - RESPONSIBILITY – The DAC, Debating for Democracy and Project Pericles
 - TIMELINE – Fall 2006
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Collaborative work

- Create annual grants to support faculty/staff/student diversity initiatives. (Guidelines to be established.)
 - RESPONSIBILITY – Provost, the DAC
 - TIMELINE – Spring 2007
 - ASSESSMENT – Based on the following:
 - Guidelines established
 - Grants distributed fall 2007