

Muhlenberg College

Five-Year Diversity Strategic Plan

Six-Month Update, April 20, 2015

The Diversity Strategic Planning Committee identified six over-arching goals for the College's new diversity plan. Five of these were identified by the Committee members during their work together, and a sixth was added in response to suggestions from the community. Initiatives supporting these goals were also suggested by community members as well as members of the Committee. The Committee worked with relevant faculty, staff, and students to determine the one-time start-up costs of initiatives, and ongoing costs.

It is important to remember that the initiatives funded or otherwise included in this plan do not represent the universe of diversity initiatives and efforts at Muhlenberg, but new, incremental initiatives that will supplement existing efforts and resources. It is also important to note that many of these initiatives support multiple goals. These interconnections will be indicated in the summary of goals and initiatives below.

Goal 1: Cultivate a campus community that is supportive of inclusion, justice and social equality

- 1.1 Institute on-line diversity training for all College employees.
2015: Four online diversity training modules are in the process of being reviewed. Costs for each of these options are being gathered as part of the review process.
- 1.2 Install gender-neutral bathroom signage and develop a reference map of GNB locations on campus.
2015: Representatives from Plant Operations and Residence Life met with two DSPC students, Director of Disability Services and Director of Counseling to discuss appropriate signage. In some areas temporary signage exists while an agreed upon permanent sign is developed. The City of Allentown Building Code does not currently recognize gender neutral bathroom signage. An alumnus is working with the City to enact a change. The group will meet with the alumnus who is currently working with the City. Signage recommendations will then be implemented by Plant Operations.
- 1.3 Upgrade software and policies to make it easier for transgender students to change their names on IDs and in some College records.
2015: The Registrar has been investigating allowing students flexibility with the use of a variant first name since last spring. The creator of Capstone was approached and verified that it would not be difficult to use a "nickname" field currently in the system and rename it as a "Preferred Name" field. On

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Thursday, February 19, 2015 a group of individuals representing several Muhlenberg offices met to discuss how the implementation of this change would affect them. There was universal support for the initiative. Currently, information is being collected concerning which reports should use the "Legal" name and which should use the "Preferred" name. The intention is that students in the Class of 2019 coming to campus in June will have the option of declaring a preferred name in addition to their Legal name, and that upperclass students may do so when they return in the fall.

- 1.4 Communicate gender-neutral housing policies for first-year students more effectively to ensure that all incoming students are aware of their options.

2015: The Office of Residential Services is in the process of working on language to add to their website and housing preference form for first year students to request gender neutral housing as an option. For fall 2015, the change in policy will appear on the ORS website, but not on housing forms. First-year and transfer students will be able to indicate that they are interested in gender-neutral housing by e-mailing the ORS staff, who will work individually with these students.

- 1.5 Include in every employee (faculty and staff) job description the expectation that employees will actively foster inclusion, justice, and social equity in their work; include assessment of personal efforts in these areas in annual performance appraisals.

2015: The following line will be added to all job descriptions as they are updated: All employees are expected to support Muhlenberg's commitment to function as a diverse, caring, inclusive community. Manager and Staff Associate appraisal forms have been revised to include language covering inclusiveness.

Goal 2: Actively recruit and retain a student body with increasing numbers of students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups

- 2.1 Create the position of Assistant Director of Multicultural Life to support expanded programmatic initiatives related to diversity and multicultural life. (Also supports Goals 1 and 6)

2015: A national search has been launched for an Assistant Director of Multicultural Life. The Multicultural Center Director will conduct interviews at the annual meeting of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators in March. A search committee has been assembled and will begin to evaluate the applicant pool with the intent of having three or four candidates participate in on-campus interviews. The successful candidate will begin on July 1.

- 2.2 Expand the Emerging Leaders Program by adding a second cohort. (Also supports Goal 1)

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- 2015: Through collaboration with the Office of Admission, a second cohort of Emerging Leaders will enter as members of the Class of '19. Staff advisors/mentors are needed to support these students. Members of the Division of Student Affairs and Office of Admission will be asked to volunteer for these positions. Planning is underway for a second First Year Seminar.
- 2.3 Provide a limited number of stipends to support participation in MILA courses and Alternative Break programs by students otherwise unable to participate because of financial constraints. (Also supports Goal 1)
- 2015: In Spring 2015, 13 students were awarded stipends of either \$1000 or \$1500 to defray the expense of MILA travel courses. These students will study in the following nations: Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Italy and Greece. Each student submitted an application and the awards were made on the basis of demonstrated financial need.
- 2.4 Expand bilingual resources for the recruitment and support of international students.
- 2015: Additional budget and staffing support allowed for more aggressive international recruitment this year, including two on-site recruitment trips to the Pacific Rim (China and Vietnam). International applications are up, and we now have commitments from 26 international students via both Early Decision and Regular Decision with more anticipated. An *ad hoc* committee has been formed to deal with support issues, ranging from initial arrival and pre-orientation program to meals during breaks to academic support and advising, surrounding the international students who are choosing to enroll at Muhlenberg.
- 2.5 Provide one-time support for a "Voices Heard" initiative, engaging alumni from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups to define and develop events and programs that support, engage, welcome, and celebrate both students and alumni from these communities who may be feeling disenfranchised and disengaged.
- 2015: The Office of Alumni Relations, along with a working committee comprised of representatives from admissions, communications and public relations, the Multicultural Center, Student Services and the Wescoe School, planned and executed "A Celebration of Diversity: Past, Present and Future" for over 50 alumni and students of color in October 2014. In February 2015, a survey was designed and emailed to all alumni asking them to self-identify their interest in receiving communications, invitations and information on events and programs focused on issues of diversity. To date the Office has received close to 400 responses. An event tied to student programming for Queer Week to bring together LGBTQ students and alumni took place in March 2015.
- 2.6 Provide one-time support for a partnership between the Wescoe School and the Office of Multicultural Life to create a mentoring program in which Wescoe School students and alumni who are members of traditionally underrepresented groups serve as life and career mentors for day students affiliated with Multicultural Life.

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2015: Representatives of the Office of Alumni Relations, the Multicultural Center and The Wescoe School met to begin work on creating a process and procedure for the mentoring program. A decision was made to focus on students who are part of the Emerging Leaders program at Muhlenberg as initial mentees. Alumni from both Wescoe (who will be identified by staff and faculty there) and Muhlenberg (who have either self-identified or who the Development staff will recommend) will serve as the pool of candidates for mentors.

2.7 Develop appropriate assessment protocols in cooperation with the Dean of Institutional Assessment and Academic Planning to assess recruitment, enrollment, and retention patterns.

2015: Building on the assessment work done as part of DSPC planning and the on-going Middle States Self-Study, the Admissions staff will continue to work with the Dean of Institutional Assessment and Academic Planning to track recruitment, enrollment, and retention patterns for the overall student body and for targeted subgroups. In tandem with this work, we will continue to use desegregated student survey data and student focus groups to provide explanations for trends across student populations.

2.8 Continue to pursue and expand partnerships with organizations that can help increase student diversity (e.g. Prep for Prep, TEAK, Schuler Scholars, Princeton PUPP, Philly Futures, etc.).

2015: This initiative had been underway prior to the Diversity Strategic Plan, and is being expanded and enlarged every year. The College has partnered for a number of years with such community-based organizations as Prep For Prep, TEAK, NJ Seeds, Princeton PUPP, Schuler Scholars and others. A year ago, we joined the College Greenlight program, which connects us to over 400 community-based organizations across the country. We are now working with College Greenlight to develop a "top 40" list of CBO's to target for on-site recruitment and personalized cultivation. In addition, the admissions staff is working with individual high schools, such as Brooklyn Collaborative and North Star Academy (Newark, NJ), to develop relationships that result in multicultural application and enrollment growth.

Goal 3: Actively recruit and retain more faculty and staff from those racial and ethnic groups that have had limited access to careers in higher education

3.1 Assess recruitment, hiring and retention patterns of candidates. Implement policies and training for search committee members to enhance recruitment of racially and ethnically diverse candidates.

2015: A three-step process has been developed:

- 1) The Office of Human Resources (HR) will provide data on faculty and staff hiring by race, gender and occupation to the Institutional Research (IR)

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Office for entry into IPEDs. Benchmark data on our faculty and staff have been added to the IPEDS HR survey since 2012.

- 2) IR will enter data on an annual basis.
- 3) Before the entry of new data, the dean of institutional assessment will meet with HR in order to confirm retention of faculty and staff hired in previous year(s) by checking raw data against IPEDs data. The dean will then analyze and report patterns, conferring with vice president for HR, provost and associate dean for diversity.

3.2 Continue to build a strong relationship with the Consortium for Faculty Diversity as a means of identifying and recruiting more diverse candidates for faculty openings.

2015: Of the four CFD Fellows appointed for the 2014-15 academic year, all attended the national CFD conference at Macalester College accompanied by the College's CFD mentor and Provost. Two of the four have been appointed to tenure track positions beginning next year at Muhlenberg. The third has accepted a second-year CFD fellowship at Muhlenberg, and the fourth was offered a two-year fellowship at Muhlenberg, but declined in order to accept a tenure track position at another institution.

Goal 4: Strengthen the depth and complexity of teaching and learning about diversity

4.1 Implement a Muhlenberg Intergroup Dialogue Program derived from the University of Michigan's model. (Also supports Goal 1)

2015: The Intergroup Dialog (IGR) planning team consists of over a dozen faculty and staff. The team will engage in a planning retreat in late May. The three topics on the agenda for that retreat will be: 1) discussion and decisions about foundational documents (mission, vision, values and goals) for the IGR program at Muhlenberg; 2) discussion and decisions about a 2015-16 IGR pilot program for students, faculty and staff; 3) discussion and decisions about a training program for those who will lead the IGR pilot program.

4.2 Provide additional funding to expand Martin Luther King Week with interdisciplinary programming that deepens the engagement of the campus community with social justice issues. (Also supports Goal 1)

2015: The College celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. week with several events planned in conjunction with the Center for Ethics, the Office of Multicultural Life, Africana Studies, Student Activities, the Office of the Chaplain, Hillel and the Black Student Association. This college-wide effort was led by the Acting Director of Africana Studies and the Director of Multicultural Life.

4.3 Provide one-time support for inclusive pedagogy programming through the Faculty Center for Teaching. (Also supports Goal 1)

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2015: Over fifty faculty and staff participated in a March 2015 workshop facilitated by outside consultants. The program focused on issues of race and equity both inside and outside the classroom. In post-workshop assessments, the majority of participants indicated that the session helped them reflect on how their own identities affect the work they do at the College and provided a better understanding of how race and campus climate affect student learning. Faculty and staff expressed an interest in attending programs that would provide concrete strategies to support diversity and inclusion.

- 4.4 Provide one-time support for a three-phase program supporting faculty development and curricular development of academic programs addressing transnational, multicultural, and global subjects of social justice and equality. (Also supports Goal 1)

2015: The Stuart Hall group has convened two times this semester: one introductory meeting, and another meeting with Phi Beta Kappa speaker, Jeffrey Alexander. In each session, 7-10 faculty members were present. In the first session, two of Hall's works were discussed, while in the second session, Alexander's work on "culture and sociology" were discussed in tandem with cultural studies. There will be two additional sessions before the end of the semester, and we will be focusing on Hall's work on multiculturalism, hybridity, and race.

Some the key questions discussed will include: how to develop an inclusive approach to the concept of culture in research or teaching; how or where to do we take the lessons from Hall on identity-related work; how do we theorize about the role of culture and its production.

Members of the group expect these readings and discussions to inform their teaching in terms of conceptual approaches (updating and renewing) and influencing how they go about "teaching topics/issues on race, multiculturalism" in a more global integrated fashion. The impact can be seen in terms of readings, topics of discussion in courses, assignments, course development.

Goal 5: Engage more deeply with the diverse communities of Allentown and the Lehigh Valley

- 5.1 Create a Muhlenberg-Allentown Promise Program that will annually provide at least one full-tuition scholarship for a qualified student from the Allentown School District High Schools (Allen, Dieruff, Roberto Clemente Charter) and Allentown Central Catholic High School. This program would be comparable to the College's current commitments to the Say Yes to Education Program, the Afghan Girls Fund, and the Open a Door Foundation. (Also supports Goal 2)

2015: We are hopeful that we will have a candidate from the Allentown School District for this full-tuition scholarship program this year. We are planning an aggressive campaign to market this opportunity to students in the Allentown School District for the coming admissions cycle.

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5.2 Create a supplier/vendor diversity policy.

2015: A Supplier Diversity Purchasing Policy has been created and will be part of the revised Purchasing Manual.

Goal 6: Assign responsibility for the measurement, assessment, and coordination of diversity initiatives

6.1 Create the position of Associate Dean for Diversity Initiatives to ensure that diversity initiatives and progress toward diversity goals are both coordinated and regularly assessed. (Also supports Goals 1, 3, and 4,)

2015: Dr. James Peck, Professor of Theatre, has been appointed to a renewable two-year term as Associate Dean for Diversity Initiatives.

6.2 Provide one-time funding for a consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of all college policies and processes to determine which are exclusionary, discriminatory, or supportive of unearned privilege, including: admissions and financial aid policies, housing policies, student health insurance requirements, campus transportation, hiring, vendor selection, etc. (Also supports Goal 1)

2015: The Vice President for Human Resources has consulted with a local alumnus and a Trustee in search of a consultant to review Muhlenberg's existing policies. Two hundred policies have been identified, although only fifteen to twenty of these policies will need to be reviewed for "best diversity practices."