

Niagara University
College of Education
Diversity Committee Annual Report, 2008-2009
April 15th, 2009
Prepared and submitted by Dr. Lisa Kilanowski-Press

A. Committee Charge

To ensure that the curriculum, field experiences and assessments in all programs in the College of Education meet diversity outcome standards; ensure that faculty and staff are knowledgeable about diversity with access to current theory and practice; and ensure that faculty and candidates represent the balance of diversity inherent in our goals. * *Includes international opportunities and study.*

Standard 4: Diversity

The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in P-12 schools.

B. Membership

The Diversity Committee for the 2008-2009 academic year was comprised of College of Education faculty, including: Drs. Lisa Kilanowski-Press (Chair), Shannon Hodges, Walter Polka, Susan Sze, Sylvia Valentin, Michael Zambon, Ms. Carol Beebe, Ms. Pat Fowler, and Mr. James D'Angelo.

C. Objectives for 2008-2009

1. The main focus the committee's work is on the assessment of diversity. The committee seeks to collect diversity assessment data from all programs in the College of Education with clearly defined indicators of how diversity is assessed and provide evidence of multiple assessments of candidates' knowledge and skills in diversity.
2. Continue collaboration with Office of Multicultural & International Student Affairs (MISA) in holding panel discussions (one per semester) with guest speakers from Buffalo Public Schools and Niagara Falls City School District.
3. Examination of existing partnerships and establishing new partnerships with high schools to create awareness of the College of Education programs and career opportunities in education.

4. Invite guest speakers on diversity issues during the academic year.
5. Explore collaboration with other auxiliaries such as CCTL and FQPD to plan and/or support diversity related events.
6. Include diversity building exercises during College of Education meetings throughout the academic year.

**D. Activities and Accomplishments of the Committee (August 2008
- April 200)**

1. The primary focus of the Diversity Committee's work this academic year involved data collection supporting attainment of NCATE Diversity Standard 4b: Experiences Working with Diverse Faculty. Specifically, the group sought to quantify and explicate the experiences and expertise of College of Education faculty in regards to diversity consistent with the scope of Standard 4, including cultural and ethnic diversity, diversity in sexual orientation, as well as diversity in learning and educational needs, among other forms. Data collection efforts were historical in nature and focused on the period of August 2006 to August 2008. At present, data have been collected from over 20 faculty; collection efforts will continue until the close of the academic

year until the work of all College of Education faculty has been accounted for.

- An online survey was designed by the Diversity Committee and administered to faculty, providing them the opportunity to identify their historical research and service experiences involving diversity.
- Following data collection, data will be analyzed and submitted to the College of Education in exhibit format.

2. The Diversity Committee, in conjunction with the Office of Multicultural and Student Affairs (MISA), planned and sponsored an education panel discussion entitled "Instructional and Intervention Career Opportunities for Education Students". The panel discussion was held on March 26, 2009, between 4:30 and 6 p.m.; the discussion focused career opportunities emphasizing the education of students from diverse cultures and/or with diverse educational needs (Appendix B).

3. Members of the Diversity Committee participated in a number of campus, community, and national diversity related events and initiatives, including conference presentations, service, and awareness activities.

Examples of activities engaged in by members are listed

below; a complete listing by faculty member can be found in Appendix C.

- a) Established a September 08 - 09 comprehensive school-university partnership with BPS #131 The Academy School - a high needs, urban district school
- b) Offered two graduate level credit-bearing courses to faculty on-site at The Academy School in the critical area of literacy
- c) On-going collaboration between Assistant Dean for External Affairs, TLQP Director, five College of Education faculty and The Academy School administration and staff
- d) Initiated a classroom research study to assess the impact of select engagement and literacy strategies on student attendance, engagement, and achievement at the Academy School
- e) Scheduled undergraduate student tutoring of Academy #44 students
- f) Two faculty members conducted GESA Training (four hours) at The Academy School - a high needs, urban district school
- g) One faculty member designed and presented a 3 hour workshop on RTI (Response to Intervention),

an initiative designed to advance the skills of low achieving and academically at-risk students; the workshop was conducted for school superintendents, administrators, directors of special education

- h) Under the advisement of TLQP Director, inservice teachers conducted action research in research-based practices in student engagement with diverse students at The Academy School grades 7-12 school
- i) One faculty member presented at the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Annual Convention regarding school psychologists preparation for work with lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth
- j) The same faculty member again presented at the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Annual Convention regarding transgender youth
- k) During sabbatical leave (fall 2008), one faculty member worked with two kindergarten classrooms (three days a week) from August to October 2008 in Moca School District in Moca, Puerto Rico.

- Students were culturally and linguistically diverse. School day is from 8am to 3 pm. All students receive free lunch. Schools were located in rural communities.
 - The experience provided the faculty member with exposure to practices in Early Childhood in diverse settings and insight into the teaching of English as a second language in Puerto Rico.
- 1) The same faculty member developed and administered a questionnaire to ESL (English as a second language) teachers, k-12 in a school district in the northern region of Puerto Rico.
- This questionnaire examined the attitudes towards teaching ESL, current practices and areas for future professional development.
 - Administered to 61 teachers; 46 teachers returned the completed survey; faculty member is currently in the process of scanning forms to analyze data
 - A faculty member completed a manuscript ***"Assessing Cultural Sensitivity in Elementary Education Preservice Teachers"***. It presents findings of a study on diversity. It will be

submitted within the next week for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

- Analyzed data of a diversity study completed in summer 2008. Findings of the study were presented at the AACTE conference in Chicago, Illinois on February 7, 2009. A manuscript "***Examining Cultural Diversity Awareness in Elementary and Secondary Preservice Teachers***" will be finalized and submitted for publication.

m) **Another faculty member presented at the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (Dallas, Texas).**

- Topic: *Teacher educators and diverse learners: Bridging the contemporary cultural disconnect to educate the whole student.*
February 13, 2009.

- Topic: *Cultural diversity and public school governance: Key legislative acts and legal decisions affecting identity development.*
February 15, 2009. (Clinic Session).

n) Authored the article Polka, W., Litchka, P. & Davis, S. (2008). Female superintendents and the professional victim syndrome: Preparing current and aspiring superintendents to cope and

succeed. *Journal of Women in Educational Administration*; 6(4), 293-311.

o) One faculty member authored several articles related to diversity; examples included

- Sze, S., & Cowden, P. (in press, 2009). Assistive Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation. *University Readers*,
- Sze, S., & Cowden, P. (2009). Educational Resources for Special Needs: 300 Inclusive Activities. *Pearson Merrill Publishing*. ISBN
- Sze, S., & Cowden, P. (in press, 2009). What about My Child? *Trafford*. ISBN
- Sheeran, T., **Sze, S.**, Smith, R., Rinaldo, V., Huang, J., Heaggans, R., Cowden, P., & Vermette, P. (in press, 2009). Fusions: An Approach to Multicultural Awareness and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Learning. *VTR Publishing*. Lewiston: NY.

p) Another faculty member authored an article surrounding school psychologist awareness of neuromuscular disorders.

q) Yet another faculty member authored two pieces on the profession of counseling and self-care,

featuring discussions of diversity and multiculturalism.

E. Updates to the College Strategic Plan

Goal 1 Objective 1 c. Analyze candidate performance and field experience data related to diversity on an annual basis.

Outcome: Based on committee work during the 07-09 academic year, program areas continue to revise their conceptualization and operationalization of diversity assessment. Several program areas have submitted draft revisions for review this summer. The committee is currently reviewing faculty scholarship and service data in the domain of diversity.

Goal 1 Objective 1 d. Provide opportunities for faculty with expertise in diversity to instruct/co-teach for critical modules. Outcome: no progress to report.

Goal 1 Objective 2 b. Create partnerships with urban doctoral institutions and historically black/Hispanic colleges for teaching fellowships and exchange opportunities: Outcome: No progress to report.

Goal 1 Objective 2 c. Establish in-residence positions within the College of Education. Outcome: No progress to report.

Goal 1 Objective 4 b. Expand study abroad programs. Outcome: No progress to report.

Goal 1 Objective 5 d. Removed during 07-08

Goal 5 Objective 3 a. Increase percentage of faculty/staff providing services to schools and agencies. Outcome: Two faculty are GESA trained and provide workshops for teachers in the Buffalo Public Schools; In collaboration with TLQP, faculty regularly provide services and consult to the Academy School 44.

Goal 5 Objective 3 d. Co-create partnership activities based on mutual need and specific outcomes tied to student performance.

Action 1: explore summit of high needs schools. Outcome: no progress to report.

F. Target Initiatives for 2009-2010

1. Main focus will continue to be on assessment of diversity. Collect diversity assessment data from all programs in the College of Education with clearly defined indicators of how diversity is assessed and provide evidence of multiple assessments of candidates' knowledge and skills in diversity.
2. Continue collaboration with Office of Multicultural & International Student Affairs (MISA) in holding panel discussions (one per semester) with guest speakers from Buffalo Public Schools and Niagara Falls City School District. Content should be varied and focus on diversity in all forms. Emphasis should

be placed on recruiting speakers and professionals from the local community for the purpose of these panel discussions.

3. Examination of existing partnerships and establishing new partnerships with high schools to create awareness of the College of Education programs and career opportunities in education.
4. Explore collaboration with other auxiliaries such as CCTL and FQPD to plan and/or support diversity related events.
5. Include diversity building exercises during College of Education meetings throughout the academic year. Emphasis should be placed on engaging in brief diversity building activities at the beginning and end of the College meeting.
6. Increase awareness of diversity related issues through the dissemination of current information/issues in diversity via email once per month.
7. Provide recognition for faculty members in the College of Education who make significant contributions to diverse individuals, or engage in a strong degree of scholarship, research, or service in the domain of diversity.

G. Appendices

Appendix A. Faculty Diversity Data

Appendix B. College of Education/MISA Panel Information

Appendix C. Committee Member Diversity Summaries

Appendix D. Meeting Minutes- On File with College of Education