

Proceedings of the CCSU diversity conference

Kick-off speaker, Moises Salinas, newly elected Chief Diversity Officer: Dr. Salinas talked about his vision for a better campus climate. He hopes to improve education for our students – multicultural competence. His vision for our university includes making this a more diverse place, in terms of students and faculty. He wants to have a very aggressive affirmative action plan that will be enforced. He was happy that the search for the vice president of academic affairs was stopped because there weren't any diverse candidates in the finalist pool. He hopes to see increased resources for departments, employment, etc for diversity. Some suggestions: go to conferences to recruit people of color. We need to be more assertive in marketing ourselves. We want more representation and advancement in the areas of diversity. What hurts us is the 4-4 load. Peer institutions have a reduced load. We've had a number of indicators – from the satisfaction survey, etc. that a number of people are not happy with our climate. That is a problem in trying to attract good candidates. We will be assertive and not tolerate any of these isms. Want to make a tolerant climate. This is place where we need to promote and support diversity. He would like to see a GLBT center that provides support, research, events. Want to move towards multicultural competence. Our mission is to educate our students. We need to give our students the tools to be able to deal with a diverse world. The office of diversity & equity needs to support faculty with an infusion of diversity into the curriculum. Focus on skills, attitude, and exposure.

Panel 1: Heather Prescott (Women, gender & sexuality studies), Gustavo Mejia (A&S diversity committee, co-chair with Cindy White), Scott Hazen (Director Student Activities), Matt Ciscel (Ad hoc committee to talk about ways to improve language requirement & address diversity issues), Betsy Kaminiski (Women, gender, sexuality program & co-chair on the committee on concerns of women), Anne Alling (Chief human resources & committee chair search for chief diversity officer, administration perspective), Sue Sweeney (22 years – leader student development).

The panel started talking about issues with programming and a lack of communication. There is no master schedule for diversity. There needs to be coordination at the top end. There is a lack of leadership. There are a number of diversity committees and no one knows what the different groups are doing. Another panel member stated that he felt it was a good thing that a lot of people are working on this problem. Bottom up is helpful. A master calendar would be a useful tool. Otis Mamed could help with using the CCSU master calendar. It is an under-utilized tool. We need a person to coordinate diversity events so that there isn't overlap and duplication of effort and resources.

Another panel member talked about issues regarding P&T and pay equity. Look at the figures – there are problems retaining women of color, both at the administrative and faculty level. For students, where are their role models? Also, there is concern with the clerical staff – women who are in dead-end jobs without the ability to move up. Students – childcare concerns – can't come to class. GLBT student concerns. There needs to be improvement in counseling. Further, safety issues have received public attention. Sexual assault. 1/6 women students will be victimized by sexual assault in college. How are we handling sexual assault? Counseling and disability concerns. When the elevator breaks down, it takes 3-4 days to get it fixed. This is not within ADA compliance. What are we doing for students with mental health concerns?

Going back to 1988, there was 1 African American administrator on the entire campus. There weren't many African American students. There weren't any scholarships for students of color. Now there are 4 scholarships. Things have changed. We need to incorporate issues of diversity

in everything we do. We miss the mark if we do not. Athletics is part of the university. Harmony classic – brought players from N.C. and their bands. This is a week in September that culminates with a game. Encourage this as a week of reflection on issues of diversity. Challenge the faculty to infuse issues in curriculum on a daily basis. Since 1995, enrollment of people of color is either the same or declining. How do we serve as an example? Then you have a diverse society.

There is a lot of talk about perception with the administration. There are a lot of issues with trust and lack of trust among groups. The administration is very distressed about this. They don't know how it happened or how to fix it. Is it historical? There have been specific actions taken. It is important to move forward and stop problems. Need to start trusting each other. If there is always fighting, there is no way we can have shared governance. At the same, administration needs to be trustworthy.

White privilege operates and most faculty are oblivious to white privilege. One of the initiatives needed is to educate all about our own unconscious assumptions. Need to push ahead. What should we do versus looking at our own unconscious attitudes?

People's attitudes are unconscious. For example, years ago a supervisor would ask you to do something because you are black. Nothing happened. The same scenarios happen today and no one says anything about it.

Observation: this is a dynamic campus with high-spirited faculty. Professors and academics need to call themselves on the lack of civility. There are issues with counseling and a lack of services. There are faculty issues and recruitment. These are structural issues. Peer institutions can offer a 3 teaching load and more money. This hurts us. In this state with resource issues – no changes can be made. Their salary isn't bad. The climate issues are important in attracting faculty. These conversations are messy and painful – but necessary.

We need to deal with teacher trainers. What do we do here? We need to train them in how to analyze sub-conscious. We need to think about differences & we need to incorporate that thinking into the curriculum. Do we encourage diversity? Each of our specializations need to improve our society by incorporating diversity into everything we do. We need to think in terms of a holistic systemic frame of mind. We are currently not doing that here.

We need trust and respect. Things got off badly a couple of years ago with the P&T decisions. We are not retaining women of color. They are getting outside offers and we are not attempting to match. There is not respect for faculty and shared governance. If you want trust, we need respect.

The A&S committee on diversity looked at CCSU and came up with recommendations to the dean. Some questions include our honors program. How come it is not diverse? Do we not have students of color who are able to be in the honors program? We need a self-study.

There are so many opportunities missed to incorporate diversity into every subject, e.g., where does math come from? Many faculty do not see that as important.

There is a lack of commitment from the top administration. Do not see any plan to address diversity in a meaningful way. The president sent around 104 diversity issues. On the list were movies, plays, etc. Did not see any initiatives to engage the entire community. Need more than a

2-hour talk. People who need help do not participate. Institutional racism. Need radical changes if you want to change on campus. President needs to make a commitment.

U. of VT.'s president addressed diversity in all classes. All students must take 2 classes on multicultural issues. There is also an experiential component. Commitment needs to come from the talk.

We also need training within FYE courses. We just recently had FYE training and diversity wasn't even mentioned. Division requirements?

A proposal from the faculty senate diversity committee: d-diversity designation. Learning about diversity is more than themed. Includes a set of skills, attitudes, changes. At the pedagogical level – challenge assumptions. Need an experiential component. Issues are more encompassing.

Diversity issues stem from the faculty. They are publishing articles because they do not have role models in the faculty to show them the right way. How do we change people's minds? It is easier to challenge students than the faculty.

The people who need training within the faculty are not the ones getting the training. They distance themselves – they are absent. This is an example of white privilege. Not seeing proactive negativity – seeing white men not getting in the conversation. Seeing absence. Without participation, how do we engage or infuse culture in classes? What about a math class? Why is that important? Felt not important. There is a lack of commitment from the top administration. Do not see any plans to address diversity in a meaningful way.

What people aren't going to surrender than privilege? Better to say... how do we empower other students of color? Let's give those students a voice.

Look at ourselves. Do not try to change other people. Complacency festers what is happening here. We will make more change. Lost energy to focus on others. Problem is us. We see things. How do we change our own comfort zones? Developing individuals = filling souls, hearts, inspiring them to be better human beings. Be sensitive to others.

Panel #2: Antonio Garcia (ombudsperson), Ernie Markest (acting Chief of Diversity), Joanne DiPlacido (Faculty advisor to Pride), Antonio Easton (GLBT students liason to faculty), Sarah Rines (on a number of committees), Barrett McGee (help with Latin American Association, Mosaic, etc.).

The role models are here, but not enough and need more support. GLBT students are highly stigmatized. They get labeled as a trouble-maker if voice concerns. This groups needs to be much bigger. As long as that happens – we're always in minority. The more we talk about Central – about what we are about – serving all communities. We are teaching people how to not be racist. The entire campus needs to own this.

Coming from the top. The top will not solve all problems. This is a community issue Re-vamping chief diversity officer is a start. This job is at a new level. Moy has a wonderful vision for the university. Can't leave it for the people at the top. Current changes come from the faculty. We all need to move together.

We all need to own this. Need a vision and message from the top – say what that vision is and put resources to back it up. Money is needed for great initiatives. Student activities – retaining.

Problem retaining good students. FYE – lacking in area of orientation. There isn't a transfer orientation. We need summer overnight experiences before school start. These people RAs, student leaders, club officers – they are trained in multicultural issues. We are lacking with communication to our freshman.

Last 30 years – above curve in most universities. Closed pool – statements athletics. Top 205 gender equity, women's issues, student enrollment. Frustration at the top. Need more change.

We are doing something positive. Students are learning about diversity in their classes. There are several initiatives. President Miller wants our students to be exposed to multicultural issues. Jan 2009, 3 different groups will travel overseas (FYE). This type of initiatives could development foundation = diversity. The interim VP Students affairs – very active university. We have a high number of events- but we do not have enough audience. Few students attending. Believe these events are targeting faculty. We need more for students.

We have a high number of interests – not competing. Fixed amount of resources. Plan – we want money to do overnight orientation program. That has to be defended in light of millions of dollars of new requests. From a financial standpoint – ask yourself – is this a good idea? Our interests and needs must be coordinated fiscally.

We need to set priorities. We have set a priority, now we need money to back it up.

Sexual minorities: best practices. We've nothing to review except what PRIDE has done. The burden placed on students – they do all the programming on GBLT issues. This is a high amount of pressure to educate this campus. These students are educating their entire campus. This is a real concern. 10% of our students not making it. There is no support on campus. Recently, a roommate threatened to kill a student. Nothing happened. We need to take responsibility. Want programming for all students. Sexual minority students are underserved. Good news. Student activities – new UA working with our students.

Growing up... there was never fair representation for me – black and gay. Want kids growing up to have good role models. GBLT want supportive environment. GBLT and minorities of color need a supportive environment.

We have to do outreach. Conversations like this in residence halls. Lack of cultural understanding.

Work with Pride as well. Student activities GBLT students not been seen. What can we do now to make it better? Hired Tony to help. What can we do now to help? Also, on Mosaic Center committee – it is pretty inactive – 5 student run organization with the mission of promoting diversity and education. Taking strides to get more involved. Support Mosaic group. Encourage students to become more involved. See a number of students at lasso, but not same numbers at Mosaic. Need representative from other cultures. What can we do now?

These are common words used but different ways that we understand. We need common language and accessibility to services. We lost a number of students this semester because the university withdrew them because they didn't pay. If we do not know how to access money, then this is a barrier for the ability to remain in college. Programs – a good diversity program, but not serving itself. Miss boat if you do not include others not like you.

St. Patty's Day parade – there are mixtures of people. But if Africana groups have an event, only have African American there. Purpose? Serve needs larger than the university clubs and organizations on campus. Required to do diversity programs. Every organization does diversity training. They come to student government for money – for programs. Required? Many are not developmentally ready.

Equity study – buried in that list of 104 things. Wrote rfp – Anne Alling. President allocated \$30 K. Now the center for public so & res – Steve Klinger? Focusing on 2-3 things, P&T, Hiring, etc.

We need to educate the campus. Coverage of events taking place. No diversity in the campus newspaper. Angela Davis, profound scholar, comes to campus and the university newspaper does not cover it. We need to empower our writers to help spread the word about diversity. Also, campus TV – let's talk to Chad Valk. Let's use these events and channel them to the residence halls.

We need to bring the clubs together. Students of color are dropping out of high school. We need to recruit people of color. Took part in a Laso concert, Kwanza, they serve as recruitment events. Come to get educated – huge advantage. We lose a number of students because we do not support those students. We need to put resources to help students and to accommodate their needs.

Suggestion – student activities side – student groups are great programs, but how do we connect with faculty?

We need to be citizens. Lobby for our students. Lobby for the millionaire's tax. Governor Rell is coming for graduation. Let's lobby her. Our students cannot afford it. We are all citizens.

What is our priority? We need a new slogan that says who we all are about.

Break out sessions:

“Diversity Conversation”

Break-Out Session I – Increasing under-represented groups at CCSU

Sarah Rines, Michael Ansarra, Gustavo Mejia, Anne Alling, ?????

Recruitment

EOP/ConnCap-leadership charge three years ago. Shared budget to produce summer events and EP operational budget.

University initiative to have student recruit – liability to use students. Department cannot utilize this asset.

Athletics has students travel cross country-we should be ... to be able to use more TA. Difficulty using campus vehicles vs. person vehicles.

Events on campus to collaborate to work on recruiting because TAs. Etc. very difficult for students like EOP and LASO.

Honors Programs not sure of application and committee diversity? Would like more information on these Honors Programs and not sure how we are recruiting. UCONN is taking them.

Outgoing to campus of HS and other schools.

Students coming to campus from ... without diversity.

Outreach to let students know about the diversity

Admissions outreach program

Students no concept of diversity

Student went on road for admissions.

Issues of Financial Aid/Scholarships.

100% had green start @ a disadvantage.

Percentages of grants/loans

Family contribution misleading.

EOP students can afford tuition but not textbooks etc.

Communication of financial aid is not happening.

Institution needs to change to be more inclusive awareness of who are these students curriculum.

(V.R.) EOP asked to go into department and talk about diversity. Freshman asked them about their experiences and they were all negative. (Neg speak). Social Work – at risk students/req. to graduate.

Because of this need diversity outreach

EOP Students

Lunch room very segregated

Specific department not sensitive to their needs

Living practices

Sensitivity training

Lack of Coaching

Diversity needs to be embedded

Diverse initiative with department and clubs

Students of color – passion in profession. Poor advising happens – ½ way through and leaving.

Students need more awareness of education req. in order to stay in major.

Others institution – cultivated students of color to become students in the honors program.

Making sure a certain number of seats are filled by multicultural students

Affirmatively seek out

Have a bus of our students

Summer overnights

Yearly overnights

Community summer camp

FYE

UCNONN – Diversity Reg. to take a course to graduate.
All students need to see this.

Good thing – recruitment Larry Hall
Underrepresented meet 400-4K
Took out under rep admissions
Person and burden to everyone.

Students

Advising Center- major problems need for professions advising
Seems to need overhaul and that is happening

FYE-support for incoming needs to support diversity
 Components need to be connected
Financial Aid – lack of communication
 Students being worked with more and consistently
Students feel invisible
Under represented
Get involved and are not allowed
 Newspaper
 Radio All needing diversity
 Media board

“Diversity Conversation”
Break-Out Session II – Campus Climate

Carolyn Fallahi, Joanne DiPlacido, Scott Hazen, Matt Ciscel, Antonio Lozada-Garcia, Heather Prescott, ??????

- 1) No e-mail on Fridays to encourage face-to-face contact.
- 2) Encourage groups/organizations to combine in support of large events to cut down on so many events being scheduled opposite one another.
- 3) We need a listserv that supports intellectual discourse.
- 4) The new Chief Diversity Officer will need support from committed faculty and staff to have an impact.
- 5) Guidelines for the listserv.
- 6) Bring True Colors to campus should be a priority.
- 7) We need one central reservations office, monitored to make sure that it supports diversity programming for inside and outside groups.
- 8) Talk to Otis Mamud about tapping into the CCSU calendar. We can have our own diversity calendar on our website that automatically loads into the CCSU large calendar.

“Diversity Conversation”
Break-Out Session III—Diversity Education

Liz Aaronson, Mary Pat Bigley, Matt Ciscel, Tim Craine, Shelly Jones, Marisa Mealy, Gladys Moreno-Fuentes, Mary Anne Nunn, Moises Salinas, Susan Sweeney

- There are no ug courses for teacher candidates on teaching diversity except Mathematics and Diverse Culture—suggestion that all teacher candidates be required to take this course
- Two courses in the Psych dept.: Psychology of Diversity, and Cross-Cultural Psychology—a suggestion that all students be required to take this course, or develop a list of courses from which student must choose one
- Bring diversity to every class—example: in literature course specify the cultural make-up of the audience of the original work, so, in a survey course, by the end of the semester students would have had to consider things from a wide variety of perspectives. The role-playing is a kind of experiential learning
- Write up a statement on CCSU’s policy regarding diversity and print it on every single syllabus handed out on campus
- Take a holistic and systemic approach to diversity—seek out the initiators of the University of Vermont’s program and get pointers/tips from them
- A systemic approach will bring the need for faculty development, but we have many experts on campus already whose training we could tap
- Begin with making the design and teaching of courses integrating diversity voluntary; include incentives such as release time, stipend, limited course cap
- Organize those volunteering to teach courses incorporating diversity into a small teaching community, along the lines of the SOTL groups, so that they can share information and experience and prepare to disseminate their findings to a wider audience after a pilot experience
- Use the model of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)—Diversity Across the Curriculum would make it impossible for a student to go through even a semester without having the messages about diversity presented in multiple settings. “Nowhere to hide”
- Take the ‘nowhere to hide’ philosophy of DAC and apply it to faculty, administration, and staff as well as students. Make sure that the promotion of diversity **is** one of the very highest priorities by those at the top making decisions about the allotment of resources
- Re-examine the Foreign Language requirement, a traditional spot where students have confronted diverse cultures. Possible models: 2-year requirement rather than 1; 3-semester requirement rather than 2; have all students take placement exams as part of their entry to CCSU and require all students to take one course in a foreign language at the appropriate level
- Look for ways to promote both inter-disciplinary and community engagement opportunities for students
- Make sure faculty are aware of funds available for developing diversity projects
- Take advantage of the President’s gathering of faculty, staff, and administrators at the beginning of the Fall semester to bring appropriate speakers to campus and have break-out sessions across tiers of the institution. Consider having a second such gathering at the beginning of the Spring semester

Key note speaker: Dr. William Howe

When there are situations with the potential to get hurt, the brain shuts down. What makes it hard – The school climate – learning. We put pressure on kids when we put them on the spot. If they have a history of being hurt, going into pressure situation – do not respond well.

When we as parents send our children off on the bus in September, we hope that they will be okay. We know the things that could go wrong. The school climate is a terrifying environment. We know what could happen so it is hard for parents.

If you go into a school and read their mission statement, it often says something like, we want to educate the whole child. We want to raise kids – civic minded, great scholars.

Purpose: we want to educate kids – wrong. The primary responsibility is to keep kids safe physically and emotionally. Until kids feel safe, they do not learn at their optimum. This is all about success in school. Do we have an environment where every student feels safe?

But I'm preaching to the choir – we need your bosses. Even choirs need choir practice.

Dr. Howe handles complains from schools, approximately 8 or 9 per week. Parents call and say that their kids are being bullied. For example, an African American family – kid is called the “n” word repeatedly. The mother tells the principal – complains. The principal's response Get used to it, you'll be hearing the “n” word for the rest of your life.

A second example, a young African American girl – why can't I play with the girls after school? They tell her, because you are African.

At a university in CT, a professor taught a lecture about race and skin color. An Asian American asked about the lecture and how it applied to him/her, the professor pulled up his/her arm and said, look at your color – you don't have any problems.

These examples all occurred in the last 6 months in CT.

In a local state agency, Puerto Rican clerical folks are told not to speak Spanish.

Another example, a child missed 9 weeks of school because he was bullied because he is gay.

There is a large number of pointed prejudice and discrimination. We do not see it.

Recently school was fined for civil rights violation (systemic issues). The school district could not define sexual harassment.

After years of doing this, these are the lessons that he has learned:

- (1) training – an inservice training won't fix some people. Go forth and no longer be a bigot.
There are some people who should not be working with human beings.
- (2) Smart people can say and do stupid things
- (3) Smart people can implement extremely inappropriate policies
- (4) Some people do not want to change the system.
- (5) Don't presume for another culture how they think or feel.
- (6) Many people do not know how to effectively complain. CHRO – how to file a complaint. If do not file a complaint, then nothing changes. You want to try and resolve things on a lower local level. If not, TV news comes into the building.
- (7) The political climate now is that it is okay to do a number of uncivil things. Often wonder if we still have a constitution.
- (8) There are some people who do not know how to change or what to do.

Another recent example. A young French teacher would whisper in old French into a teenage girl's ears. She wrote it down and gave it to her father who was fluent in French. The teacher was propositioning the girl. This was brought to the principal who responded, it is really hard to find a good French teacher.

Current thinking: what can we do? Watching TV – Glory Road – about a college in Texas who recruits white male high school basketball players. The coach couldn't find enough good players, so he recruits African American students. They win the national championships. Go back to basics. Teach fundamentals. They learned fundamentals. Some people do know the basics. Assume everyone knows what you mean by play nice, be kind to each other. Go back to class and teach the fundamentals. How we should be with each other How we should act. How do you change people's attitudes? We can demand that we change their behaviors. Fundamentals of diversity ... all I really need to know I learned in Kindergarten (Folgen). Things like: play fair, share everything, do not hit, clean up own mess, don't take things that are not yours, say sorry, wash hands, flush. Message: consider going back and focusing on fundamentals. Do not assume that people understand. Know about civil rights laws. Know the organization's policies inside and out. Act immediately and decisively when laws/policies are violated. Hold ourselves and others accountable.

Surround self with someone negative ... you're a loser, not pretty, enough, failure, basic idea: get rid of those people. Have positive people in our life instead. Listen to those who are positive people. Think about who you would want to talk to if you only had 10 minutes to live. Talk to them – not the negative people.

To change policies, we must focus on small victories.