

To: Faculty and Staff

From: Alejandra Molina, Chair
Commission on Inclusive Excellence

Date: September 23, 2008

Overview

During the Spring 2008 semester, the Commission on Inclusive Excellence (CIE) continued to find ways to increase its understanding of inclusive excellence and to communicate that understanding to the wider campus and to the Geneva community. Highlights of the semester were the Listening Forum in January and a presentation by Dr. David Harris of Cornell University in April. In August, Dr. Daryl Smith of Claremont Graduate University met with members of the Commission to assist in the development of a strategic plan to guide the Commission's work for the coming years. The Commission will continue to communicate to and engage participation of the wider campus in its vision of Inclusive Excellence.

Update on Activities initiated in 2008

- A) The **Listening Forum** held on January 21, 2008 was an all-day event designed as an opportunity for participation in an all-campus conversation. Some highlights of the day were:
1. An estimated 400 persons---mostly students---participated.
 2. Overall, the climate of the Forum was hopeful with many students expressing their appreciation for the opportunity to share their experiences.
 3. One consistent theme was that the campus community needed something---a cause, a common concern, a source of pride---to rally around; students were open to the possibility that the issue of equity and inclusion was that "something".
 4. Participants were mindful that it was difficult to change a system and that it would take time.
- B) On April 4, 2008, **Dr. David Harris**, Deputy Provost, Vice-Provost for Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology at Cornell University gave a presentation to members of the Commission on Inclusive Excellence on the Teagle Foundation Report (2007) that challenged colleges and universities to carefully reexamine their diversity programs with a special emphasis on outcomes and assessment. He also shared information about Cornell's approach to building quality programs in diversity and inclusion issues
- C) CIE engaged a **consultant, Dr. Daryl G. Smith**, Professor of Education and Psychology at the Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California. Dr. Smith has served as a consultant on evaluation, planning, and diversity at a variety of colleges and universities (www.cgu.edu/pages/938.asp). Dr. Smith was on campus August 21 and 22, 2008 helping CIE members to find ways to move forward towards achieving inclusive excellence more quickly and thoroughly at HWS. Her recommendations included the following three focus areas: (1) the

necessity of **monitoring progress** across all aspects of campus structure; (2) the crucial importance of the **use of data**, especially disaggregated data and the necessity of having data centralized and available to all campus components; (3) the attention given to the **structure and role** of the Commission, especially the development of delegating tasks outside of the Commission itself

For the academic year 2008-09

- A) Based on Dr. Smith's recommendations, CIE will develop a **Strategic Plan** to guide its efforts towards realizing its vision of commitment to "...fostering an intellectual and engaged community that values and celebrates a wide spectrum of differences."
- B) CIE will explore ways to build on the enthusiasm generated by the **Listening Forum**.
- C) CIE will continue to engage the **participation of faculty, staff and students** in the work of CIE through its contacts with the DESJ committee and with the student governments. CIE will also develop more contacts in the larger **Geneva community**.
- D) The CIE **Website** will be launched.

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