



Office of  
Diversity, Equity  
and Inclusion

# DIVERSITY Counts

Spring 2013 • Volume 1 • Number 1

## OUR PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

- > Empire State Diversity Honors Scholarship Program (ESDHSP)
- > Faculty Diversity Program (FDP)
- > Graduate Diversity Fellowship Program (GDFF)
- > Native American Initiative (NAI)
- > Explorations in Diversity and Academic Excellence (EDAE)
- > Doctoral Diversity Fellowships in STEM (DDF-STEM)
- > Replications (REPLIC)
- > Access to Success (A2S)

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. . . and more!

## Diversity in SUNY . . . The Promise of the Future

Welcome to our inaugural *Diversity Counts* newsletter! Within these pages, you will learn about several of the exciting activities occurring on our campuses as well as some of the initiatives sponsored by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI). I am proud to mention that ODEI has been engaged in a number of collaborative efforts across SUNY with an eye toward providing opportunities for professional development, best practices in STEM education, and supporting campus-based events on various levels. In each endeavor, we hope to strengthen the intersections between diversity and academic excellence and promote inclusion.

Advocating for diversity throughout SUNY is a top priority and one that is always at work in the programs and services we offer as part of our mission and vision. Diversity in SUNY resonates throughout our strategic plan and the University's core values. As the population of our great state continues to change, our student body will reflect the emerging demographics. Ideally, our faculty and staff can also be responsive to the goals of inclusion that help students advance toward degree completion and fulfill their dreams and aspirations.

Our programs and services reach out in many directions to serve all sectors of the University, as well as underserved communities throughout our state. ODEI is helping to create opportunity for many diverse students across SUNY, by administering the Empire State

Diversity Honors Scholarship Program, Explorations in Diversity and Academic Excellence, the Graduate Diversity Fellowship Program, the Faculty Diversity Program, Doctoral Diversity Fellowships in STEM, the STEM Replications Program, the Native American Initiative, and Access to Success. We provide campuses with funds to help develop innovative programming that builds cross-cultural competence to enable our graduates to compete in a complex, globalized society upon completing their education. In addition to these funded programs, we strive to support access to higher education for other segments of our diverse statewide population. Earlier this year, ODEI assumed oversight responsibility for the Office of Opportunity Programs and the University Center for Academic and Workforce Development (UCAWD). These two very dynamic entities are responsible for a host of programmatic initiatives that are helping transform lives throughout the University and the state.

With UCAWD's careful stewardship of the Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs), SUNY has built bridges into many low-income urban communities. Whether students are academically underprepared or financially disadvantaged, these academic and vocational programs provide learning opportunities for underserved youth as well as adults ages 16 and older. In every sense, the academic and vocational opportunities provided through the EOCs positively impact regional workforce develop-



**CARLOS N. MEDINA**  
Associate Provost and  
Associate Vice Chancellor for  
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

ment, economic growth and help sustain SUNY's pipeline initiatives. For instance, UCAWD's Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking Labs (ATTAIN) consist of over 30 locations statewide to promote digital parity and inclusion for all eligible New Yorkers. ATTAIN provides access to computer-based software applications training such as Microsoft's Office Suite for students. Through training, counseling and individualized assessment, UCAWD provides a career ladder for its students. Through collaborative efforts with local municipalities and business partners, UCAWD offers customized educational programs that may lead to future college enrollment in SUNY. In this sense, its work is critical to the strategic priorities of SUNY's robust pipeline initiatives. Annually, more than 35,000 residents are served through the ten EOCs and two

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## Campus Life Grows Through Diversity Programs

Among the many transformative experiences of college, some are in classrooms and the dialogue that takes place among students and faculty, but many of the most memorable experiences recall a time or event when students are highly engaged in an activity within their academic community. Through ODEI, many campuses are now offering programs to celebrate diversity and increase global awareness of cultural differences. As you read this issue of the *Diversity Counts* newsletter, we hope you will learn about the impact of some of the ODEI programs taking place at several campuses. The

Explorations in Diversity and Academic Excellence program is one example of the ways that campuses have triggered growth for students and prompted faculty to reexamine their curricula in view of the ever-changing diversity on many University campuses. Programs on diversity also add to the abundant choices that entice students to reach out and touch the world. New perspectives, friends and ideas open the way for student engagement in topics as diverse as social justice, race, sexual harassment, bullying, gender, human rights and many other topics that affect

human interaction. In college environments, teachers are learning how to be more inclusive. Student affinity groups are advancing tolerance and a sense of place for wide-ranging interest groups. The creativity of campus leaders to embrace diversity and reach out to different campus populations amplifies the intentional effort to build cultural sensitivity and interactions that will help students recognize that diversity counts in all aspects of life. SUNY has embraced a broad vision of diversity, knowing that the ability to adapt to a complex world will be a key factor in student success.

## SUNY System Affirmative Action: Laying the Groundwork for Growth

An office representing Affirmative Action for SUNY has further expanded the role of ODEI. Gloria Lopez joined ODEI in July 2012 to serve as the SUNY System Affirmative Action Officer, responsible for guiding and supporting campus communities on issues relating to affirmative action, Title IX, and laws relating to protection of civil rights. She serves as a resource to SUNY leaders, faculty, staff and students to assure effective complaint procedures to address unlawful discrimination; assists campuses in identifying, recruiting, and retaining candidates and in ensuring that those candidates are afforded equal consideration; and assists in fostering institutional awareness and commitment to diversity goals for appointment and promotion.

Gloria embarked on a "listening tour" in Fall 2012, visiting many campuses to connect with campus officers

serving in similar roles. She has established a dialogue with each of these campuses, assessed the needs campus officers expressed and reflected on what system-wide actions might best support their growth. Campus officers, the System-wide AAO officer and ODEI hope to forge new collaborative relationships. To date, Gloria has visited 13 SUNY campuses and hopes to complete many more campus visits in 2013.

ODEI views this groundwork as a critical element in developing training and addressing the needs of the AAOs, ADA coordinators and Title IX coordinators.

As an effort to expand our ability to update campuses on concerns and issues, we have also updated the Affirmative Action email listservs for the state-operated and community colleges. These email listservs help to foster communication among the campuses on affirmative action issues. If you have a question about how



GLORIA LOPEZ, J.D.  
Affirmative Action Officer

other campuses handle an affirmative action issue, please write to the list.

By working closely with the AAOs and other stakeholders, we hope to create webinars to keep the AAOs up to date on trends in affirmative action, create regional groups to discuss issues relevant to the particular campuses, create a speakers list of individuals willing to talk about relevant topics, and conduct training on Title IX. We will be reaching out to the AAOs for assistance in leading a webinar or sharing some of your best practices.



### Diversity: No Small Matter for "System-ness"

Every campus has an individual vibe which helps to infuse diversity in classes, programs and conferences. No "one size fits all" approach will satisfy the personality and focus of diversity. Through the SUNY Strategic Plan, diversity is embedded in "Six Big Ideas" that help express how transformative diversity efforts can be throughout SUNY.

## Chief Diversity/Affirmative Action Officers Conference, Spring 2013

An emphasis on diversity has never been stronger at SUNY, and that very fact has raised questions: "What is diversity planning?" and "How can we make change happen?" To help campuses with these concerns, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) developed a two-day conference uniquely designed for SUNY's Chief Diversity and Affirmative Action Officers. Participants selected workshops from a carefully crafted program, relevant to the day-to-day management of campus responsibilities in developing and managing diversity programs, including issues of affirmative action and disability. Over 100 participants gathered, some networking for the first time in an interactive series of workshops which drew administrators, Title IX coordinators, Human Resource personnel and interested faculty from 45 SUNY campuses.

This year, for the first time, ODEI welcomed a number of community college officers who hope to strengthen affirmative action and strategic diversity initiatives on their campuses. The depth of experience of those presenting allowed participants to recognize the progress that has come about both nationally and within SUNY with regard to affirmative action and inclusion. To kick off the conference events, SUNY Board of Trustees' Chairman H. Carl McCall personally welcomed every participant with a hearty handshake as they gathered for the day. The conference opened with an overview of Title IX by Deborah Slaner Larkin, Executive Director-Retired of USTA Serves. She explored the history of Title IX and the litigation that expanded its scope and relevance to issues in higher education. That same evening, David Lavallee, Executive Vice Chancellor and

Provost, joined the gathering for a pre-dinner reception and recollected the many transformative programs that have helped SUNY become a more inclusive university. Dr. Lavallee's commitment and dedication to higher education and his support of ODEI was recognized with an award.

For the dinner presentation, University at Albany President Robert Jones spoke eloquently about carrying the mantle for diversity throughout his personal career. His story demonstrated the power of small steps taken over time to make change happen.

Conference topics ranged from building a diverse campus climate, crafting a strategic diversity plan, eliminating health inequities, disability issues, opportunities for achieving cultural competence through internationalization, investigating claims of unlawful discrimination, and Title IX issues.

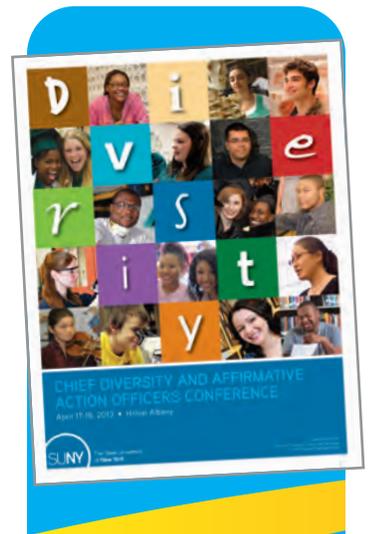
A review of the conference evaluations determined that presenters did a very effective job conveying best practice strategies, case study examples, and providing tools to support campus efforts in diversity and affirmative action. Approximately 89% of the respondents agreed that their campus would be likely to implement the practices discussed at the conference. A plenary panel on recruitment and retention also received positive feedback with the majority (74%) of the respondents stating they could apply the concepts presented to their work.

Overall, the conference fulfilled its goal of uniting SUNY's Chief Diversity and Affirmative Action Officers to collectively share ideas and promote change throughout the system. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is committed to assisting and working in partnership with

all of the officers to continue this dialogue.

Next year's conference will build upon this year's success to continue addressing matters that delve into the heart of equity, inclusion and affirmative action.

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Top: Veronica Henry, CDO, Farmingdale State; Maxine Thompson, CDO, Upstate Medical University; and Karen Jones, CDO, Buffalo State College.

Middle: Dr. Phil Ortiz, Mary Morton and Sonja Givens, Empire State College.

Bottom: President Robert Jones, University at Albany.

## Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award



**SUNY System Administration recognized for its work in diversity**

*Insight Into Diversity*, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education, announced that SUNY System Administration and The College at Brockport were recognized as 2012 recipients of the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) award. The HEED award recipients were selected on the basis of exemplary

programs and initiatives on all aspects of diversity including gender, race, ethnicity, LGBTQ status, and programs for the disabled and veterans.

A special award category for SUNY System Administration was developed to recognize its strong leadership role in promoting campus initiatives throughout its 64 campuses.

### Travel Abroad Scholarships

What student does not want to experience life in another culture? The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) hopes to implement a matching grant award for students to expand their awareness of global initiatives in their area of study and experience culture outside the United States. In cooperation with Study Abroad Advisors, students will be able to compete for stipends up to \$1,000 that campuses will match to enable semester or summer study abroad in approved programs coordinated with the Office of International Education at their respective campuses.



DIVERSITY COUNTS

## The Real World Geneseo Project

The Real World Geneseo (RWG) project has built diversity awareness on campus by creating cohorts of student "Allies" and "Activists." The program helps students to tackle difficult discussions. In January 2010, a team of educators at SUNY Geneseo received an ODEI grant to implement the RWG project. Over the past four years, hundreds of real-time video reflections to guide essential conversations in the development of "Allies" and "Activists" have been recorded. Students with diverse identities contemplate the meaning of living in a diversity society in the 21st century. Each of the following themes were explored:

- **Investigating the meaning of privilege, and what it means to be privileged as a member of the dominant culture**—Many majority students admit to being blissfully unaware of disenfranchised individuals who are excluded from their own communities at Geneseo.
- **Unpacking privilege**—Majority students learn to question the roles that power and privilege play in life. They often ask, "What if I weren't born with privilege, would my lifestyle be impacted?"
- **Unearned privilege**—Many of the RWG participants assess their self-worth grounded in the belief that the standard

of living and lifestyle they enjoy is the end result of the blood, sweat and tears of their parents efforts. Others will struggle and attempt to deny the role of power and privilege in the success of their family.

- **Reevaluating their identity within the context of a larger community that they care about**—Once the group starts to validate the notion of unearned privilege, students may begin to reevaluate their own self-worth.
- **Social inequity**—The group begins to realize the origins of social inequity. Some individuals start thinking about how they can deploy their privilege, power and resources to challenge social injustice.
- **Legitimize feelings of hurt within the community**—Hearing the stories of other people's bias-related suffering seems to help individuals to legitimize their own strong emotions over similar events. The conversations may lead to feelings of consensus and empowerment.
- **Other marginalized groups suffer**—Some individuals also start making connections for the first time with the suffering of other marginalized groups such as gays and lesbians that they may have been prejudice against. This helps them expand their un-

derstanding and acceptance for queer and transgendered individuals that may have been a taboo subject for them.

- **Ending silence**—When individuals reflect on bias-related events, they may recognize patterns of behavior and failure to oppose bias actively by not speaking out. The conversations help students learn how to be less passive in the face of prejudice.
  - **Learning about the cycle of socialization**—Non-majority individuals realize how sheltered some majority students are from their reality and the need to educate those who have not had exposure to a minority culture. One student cited a change of heart in "working with clueless people, rather than getting ticked off and writing them off as ignoramuses."
- Over the past four years, in addition to other efforts that Geneseo has made to improve diversity outcomes, Real World Geneseo has helped create new student allies and activists. RWG is part of the dialogue to help change thoughts, feelings and beliefs about culture, diversity, themselves, and others.

## Experiments: Old Westbury's Oral History Project

by CAROL QUIRKE  
Associate Professor of American Studies and Experiments Project Co-Director

In 1965, when the SUNY Board of Trustees proposed an experimental college on a former Long Island Gold Coast estate, the Board did not know that the experiment would result in one of the most diverse liberal arts colleges in the nation. Founded under the guidance of Harris Wofford, a civil rights and Peace Corps advisor from John F. Kennedy's administration, the college opened its doors in 1968. Its mission: to provide educational relevance, a curriculum developed in partnership with students, independent study and community action education. 1968, a year of tumult internationally, proved a difficult year to open a college. The small college community struggled to cohere, ultimately closing its doors three years later. That experiment led, however, to the current College at Old Westbury—a college with a self-conscious commitment to a diverse student body.

This commitment, derived from students and faculty, demands that the college's social justice mission include

enrolling a student body reflective of the New York metropolitan area's heterogeneity, a commitment the College's second president, John Maguire, embraced. He also explained that the college enrolled students "previously bypassed by higher education," adopting an informal "30:30:30:10 plan" and sought pluralism so that different demographic groups, African-American, Latino, White American and Asian, had a voice in the college. "It was big enough that no one would feel left out, but it wasn't so big that one group ruled the others." When the college reopened in 1972, the first catalog also articulated a commitment to "culture learning." Maguire was an early proponent of "multi-culturalism" to ensure students' awareness of their engagement in a larger world. The catalog also emphasized "life learning," presaging SUNY's 21st century vision. As Patrick O'Sullivan, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs notes, "Since the College's first classes convened in 1968, SUNY Old Westbury has embraced diversity as one pillar of its educational philosophy.

As our current mission states: *"Old Westbury weaves the values of integrity, community engagement and global citizenship into the fabric of its academic programs and campus life. In an environment that cultivates critical thinking, empathy, creativity and intercultural understanding, we endeavor to stimulate a passion for learning and a commitment to building a more just and sustainable world."*

He continues, "At Old Westbury, student learning arises from classroom rigor and peer interaction that bridges social, cultural and linguistic differences. The Old Westbury Oral History Project captures the early idealism and initiatives that resulted in one of the nation's most diverse liberal arts colleges."

*Experiments: Old Westbury Oral History Project*, directed by American Studies faculty, is a digital archive of oral histories and primary documents that preserve the challenges of Old Westbury's diversity and make its history available to the Old Westbury community, SUNY, Long Islanders, and other higher

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Old Westbury's project is a digital archive of oral histories and primary documents that seeks to distill the possibilities and challenges of Old Westbury's diversity.

## Mentoring: Impact on Diversity

One of the questions we face is how to achieve success in teaching. What is important in the development of students? As a practice, we have learned that mentoring students has enormous benefits for retaining students and inspiring their careers.

At Rockland Community College (RCC) and many other SUNY schools, a strong mentoring presence is part of the learning cycle. The idea of students leading other students is captured in President Clifford Wood's quote: "We

stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us." The RCC program trains students to be mentors themselves. Additionally, RCC has been recognized as a learning community and has received a \$2 million Title II grant to support peer mentoring, tutoring and establish priorities for student success. A component of the program is a first-year activity to encourage self-awareness and the courage to be a distinct voice in a sea of unfamiliar faces and situations. To acclimate to a diverse

and new environment, students are encouraged to explore their relationship to the changes they experience. Based on the 2007 film, *Freedom Writers*, this activity focuses on writing or creating to "Find Your Vision" within the areas of tolerance, respect, social justice, perseverance and creating equity. Actress April Hernandez inspired this project which recognizes diversity and celebrates its expression.



What race do you identify yourself as?

- Asian
- White
- African American
- Hispanic
- Native American

Human

## Bridging and Bonding through Diversity

Creating settings that enhance an appreciation of diversity should be a systematic, intentional process on our campuses. Students and faculty often move toward an understanding that each person they come into contact with is truly an individual who has been shaped by his or her culture of political, economic, religious beliefs or family system. Yet students tend to congregate in more homogeneous and racial groups to

sustain identity. What steps can be taken to encourage multicultural communities with a strong sense of belonging and participation in activities and programs to expand social tolerance and accept individual difference?

Standards of Cultural Competence for Health Care offer much guidance on how to bridge cultural differences that are relevant to all diversity and inclusion programs. These standards include:

- › Promoting and supporting attitudes, behavior, knowledge and skills to work effectively with each other and with clients/students/patients in a culturally and linguistically diverse environment.
- › Arranging for training and ongoing education to serve a diverse audience.
- › Informing the community about ethnic and cultural concerns and the resources available to the public.

## Old Westbury's Oral History Project . . .

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education stakeholders. To date, the project has videotaped five alumni, three faculty members and two former presidents.

The lessons and opportunities of diversity raised by oral history interviews include:

- › **Breadth of diversity.** SUNY Old Westbury students were racially diverse. But there was also great class, gender and age inclusivity. Many white students were working class, the first in their families to attend college. Many women were returning to college after raising families. This mixture was particularly rewarding in the classroom. Participants discussed learning to see the diversity within their groups, the confronting of crippling norms of what constitutes male/female; black/white that operate not only within the larger society, but within non-dominant groups as well.
- › **Deliberativeness.** Diversity succeeded because the college's commitment was renewed over time. This consciousness extended to recruiting a racially and gender diverse faculty, even in the sciences. Departments

not insisting on diversity as a value or departments that began as primarily white had greater difficulty recruiting outside their own demographic group.

- › **Flexibility:** Length to degree is increasingly considered a touchtone of success, but faculty insisted that student success be measured by their capacity to achieve at the highest levels, while acknowledging students' divergent academic backgrounds. "Self-pacing" methods for laboratory work facilitated student growth, as did deepened discussion on social and political matters in humanities and social sciences classrooms, which drew on student diversity. One narrator's statement, "Wide on Entrance; Narrow on Exit," acknowledged the limits of students' educational backgrounds, with an overarching commitment to educational excellence.
- › **Interdisciplinarity:** Diversity promoted interdisciplinary dialogue. The College offered early courses on scientific racism that brought together social science and science faculty. It was one of the first colleges in the nation to

develop successful women's studies courses. Diversity fed curricular innovation.

- › **Life-Changing:** Students and faculty described the college as a life-changing experience. Lessons in interracial dialogue, in grappling with experiences and opinions diametrically opposed to students' own, extended from the campus to students' families and to their careers.

Participants also acknowledged challenges.

- › **External perception:** Old Westbury's high proportion of non-traditional college students led faculty to believe it had to fight the perception that the college was not committed to excellence.
- › **SUNY Old Westbury's** funding was a major source of concern for faculty, who believed that lower levels of funding to the college, along with budget cuts in the past two decades, made educating a diverse student population more difficult.

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# Buffalo State's Anne Frank Project: Performance and Theater for Social Justice: Overcoming Intolerance in Today's World

Theatrical portrayal in AFP rehearsal (top), performance (middle), and Rwandan immersion experience (bottom).

"How wonderful it is that we need not wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." This piece of Anne Frank's wisdom is the driving force behind Buffalo State's social justice initiative, *The Anne Frank Project* (AFP). The genesis of the project is a 2006 theater department production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* where the horrors of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide were woven into Anne's Holocaust story of Jewish persecution. The goal was to make a universal statement about the nature of genocide. The result has been an explosion of local, national and international diversity programming throughout the year. The fuel for this intense growth is threefold: The fiery, world-changing passion of Buffalo State students, the inspired learning environment of Buffalo State and the unflinching support of SUNY's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

After the successful 2006 show closed, there was a collective desire for more. Theater Professor and AFP Director Drew Kahn presented the production's process at the International Diversity conference in Amsterdam—and again, the response to the play as a vehicle for diversity education was met with great enthusiasm. Next, Professor Kahn applied for and received an ODEI sponsored Exploration in Diversity and Academic Excellence grant to fund a one-day conference where the wisdom of Anne Frank would be used as a starting point for the intense examination of intolerance and genocide. Buffalo State faculty, staff and local community members presented an interdisciplinary array of interactive workshops and performances. The kinesthetic nature attracted

over 1,000 students to the inaugural event—they were not just learning a new inclusive vocabulary; they were *practicing* it. The Anne Frank Project was born.

Now in its fifth year, the conference is a Buffalo State diversity ritual spanning three days and featuring scholars, artists, activists, educators and students from all over the world. Last year's conference welcomed nearly 5,000 attendees. "The AFP allows our students to not only understand the notion of diversity, but to have a 'lived experience' of diversity and the experiences of others in this world," says Dr. Karen Jones, Buffalo State's Chief Diversity Officer. "The AFP brings diversity to life."

The AFP is more than a conference. AFP in the Schools programming brings conflict resolution curriculum to Buffalo high schools. Buffalo State College students become teaching artists as they lead the process of using theater as a tool for social justice. This past January, AFP took its second group of students to Rwanda to visit genocide memorials, orphanages, refugee camps, schools, theaters and survivors. "I feel like I came back a better person. I was inspired by the stories of the people I met there," says Buffalo State theater student Deonna Dolac.

Thanks to the support and belief of the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the AFP is more than a play and more than shelved theory—it is an active expression of the diverse and inclusive values of Buffalo State and the SUNY system. "We campus administrators can learn much from our students who share stories of their transformation through the Anne Frank

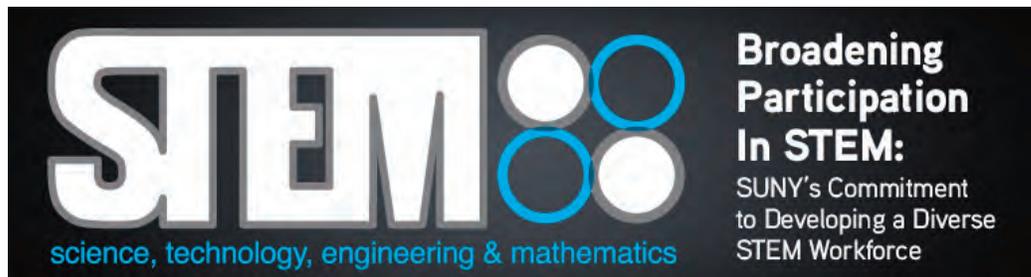


Project," comments Buffalo State's Chief Information Officer Don Erwin. "I am inspired to use more storytelling as a way to help build a shared sense of purpose and an understanding of the value each of us brings to Buffalo State and the students we serve. AFP is a powerful experience for our students and the rest of us benefit from seeing their experiences through their eyes." Learn more about the project at: [www.theannefrankproject.com](http://www.theannefrankproject.com).

## SAVE THE DATE: October 10-11, 2013



STEM Conference  
Keynote Speaker  
Dr. Sylvester James  
Gates, Director of the  
Center for Particle  
and String Theory,  
University of Maryland  
and National Medal of  
Science Recipient.



This conference will bring together experts who will present the best means to increase the enthusiasm of diverse students for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

disciplines and professions, as well as provide programs that demonstrate success in increasing access, retention, and graduation of diverse student populations in STEM majors.

(Sponsored by the SUNY Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

Online registration is open at [www.suny.edu/provost/stem](http://www.suny.edu/provost/stem). Please register and submit proposals through this portal.

### SAVE THE DATE:

October  
10-11, 2013

STEM  
Conference at the  
Hilton Albany

## Highlights from Farmingdale's 3rd Annual STEM Diversity Summit

On March 19, 2013, several hundred junior and senior high school students came through snow, sleet and rain to mount their STEM posters in Roosevelt Hall at Farmingdale State College promptly at 8 a.m., a testament to the dedication of their teachers and the diligence of the STEM students themselves.

This STEM Diversity Summit was an exceptional example of crowd-sourcing—where many disparate groups and people come together all at once to share their enthusiasm for ideas or activities and connect with other schools, students and faculty. Poster presentations encircled the room, with students standing by to guide you through their findings. Yes, earthworms were dissected; the properties of lycopene in tomatoes were celebrated; the health benefits of chia seeds were extolled, and the excitement of 3-D printing was demonstrated. But what this event truly conveyed was the commitment of students engaged in STEM endeavors.

Diversity in STEM was celebrated not just around the many fascinating topics presented but on the ways Long Island colleges have leveraged the STEM pipeline and curriculum to build networks and collaborations among public schools, university curricula and potential employers.

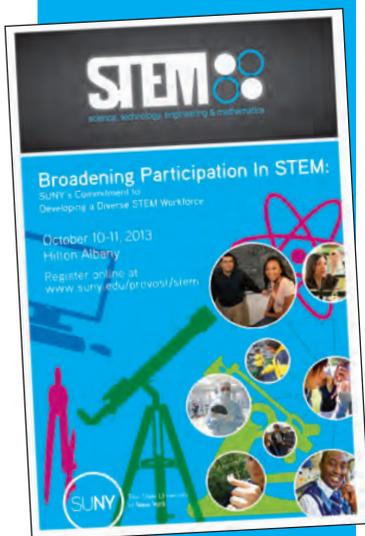
Dr. Veronica Henry, Executive Assistant to the President and Chief Diversity Officer at Farmingdale, orchestrated the day's activities with introductions by President Hubert Keen and Sister Jane Fritz, who engaged everyone with projections for many new jobs in cloud computing and computer applications.

A consortium of Long Island colleges and public schools working together has helped students become more familiar with new career fields and the skills that are most valued in the workplace. One such area was additive manufacturing, introduced to faculty and administrators attending as a growth industry for employment for those with an interest or aptitude for technology.

Dr. Hazem Tawfik, Director of the Institute for Research and Technology Transfer, moderated a panel on the importance of manufacturing in our world, especially where industrial materials (ceramics, polymers and resins) allow the perfection of inexpensive prototypes to propel industry.

STEM endeavors reach across Nassau and Suffolk counties, with support from many participating corporations, including Adecco, Motorola, CA Industries, Long Island Jewish Hospital, and non-profits. The Cradle of Aviation Museum has partnered with companies to offer science and STEM programs, promoting science enterprise with area students.

Energized by participation and recognition, we hope that the success of this diversity initiative will carry students far and wide. As Dr. Seuss said, "Oh, the places we will go!"



## Farmingdale's Social Justice Research Institute

For many of us, a Saturday priority in springtime might mean working on a garden or raking out oak leaves stubbornly enmeshed in the branches of our shrubs or finishing a paper for the end of the semester. But instead, several hundred attendees chose to cultivate their awareness of diversity issues through the lens of experts by attending the Social Justice Diversity Summit at Farmingdale State College on April 20, 2013.

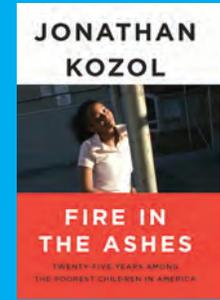
This summit helped an attentive audience gauge the pulse of social action programs on behalf of women, environmental justice, as well as gender and immigration issues with a focus on Long Island. This event was organized through the diligent efforts of Professors Miriam Deitsch, Angela Jones, and the Chief Diversity Officer, Veronica Henry, with the support of ODEI and many local contributors. Strong attendance demonstrated that a forum on social issues helps us realign our priorities despite hectic lifestyles which may insulate many of us from the harsh realities in the lives of our neighbors and those in adjacent or nearby communities. Dr. Animashaun Ducre made compelling arguments on housing discrimination resulting from urban renewal and redevelopment. Dr. Daniel

Altshuler depicted the relevance of fixing the immigration system, and Stacey Scarpone reminded us that much work still needs to be done to improve the status of women in the workplace. Hofstra Professor Dr. David Powell helped us to recognize issues in the world of gender expression and gender identity, setting the stage for lively discussion in small groups.

The keynote speaker, Jonathan Kozol, a tireless proponent of education opportunity for disenfranchised children, inspired us all. Gauging his audience, Kozol asked, "How many of you have taught?" and almost everyone raised a hand. But a moment later, he asked: "How many of you want to go into teaching?" Only three or four of the many people in the room raised their hands in response. This disconnect reflects the status of public school teaching as a profession. He underscored how demoralized teachers have become through ever-increasing accountability and evaluation, including the costly No Child Left Behind legislation requiring remedial interventions to raise test scores. His own teaching experience is a testament to the ability of one committed educator in changing the life course of a child in an impoverished neighborhood in the Motthaven section of

the Bronx. In his latest book, *Fire in the Ashes* (2012), Kozol recounts the stories of his relationship with inner-city and poor children who have succeeded despite staggering odds, often attending public schools in hellish neighborhoods. After more than fifty years writing and teaching about the social inequities of our education system, Kozol's personal stories of children he has loved and nourished, awakened the responsibility we all share for building better futures for our children. Although Mr. Kozol spoke in a new facility against a backdrop of sunshine and spring flowers, the urgency of his stories and the need for committed teachers to serve even the poorest school revitalized the resolve and compassion of all those who cheered him through a standing ovation.

Programs like the Social Justice and Diversity Summit at Farmingdale help campuses share in the responsibility to act on issues locally. This summit gave us opportunities to help build a better future for others through the organizations and programs on Long Island, and it also underscored the impact that individual contributions can make in building a more equitable future for all those we encounter in and beyond our classrooms and curricula.



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### Some Readings . . . Food for Thought

*The Roles of Population, Place, and Institution in Student Diversity in American Higher Education* by Rachel S. Franklin in journal *Growth and Change*, March 2013

*Keeping Diversity at the Center of the STEM Higher Education Agenda in 2013* by Dr. Lorelle Espinoza, in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* online at <http://diverseeducation.com/article/51041/#>

*Diversity Across the Curriculum: A Guide for Faculty in Higher Education* edited by Jerome Branche, John Mullennix, and Ellen R. Cohn, published by Anker Press, 2007

*Managing Diversity (Re)Visioning Equity on College Campuses* edited by T. Elon Dancy II, published by Peter Lang, 2008



## GDFP—Building a Generation of Scholars

Some may say the impact of SUNY's Graduate Diversity Fellowship Program (GDFP) is unsurpassed, because it has supported scholarship and academic excellence for more than 25 years. Substantial numbers of graduate students are funded through the program each year to pursue their master's, doctoral or professional degrees.

From its inception in 1987, this SUNY-wide program has broadened access on behalf of graduate students while upholding demanding criteria in academic scholarship. The SUNY Board of Trustees saw this as critical to the future of SUNY and voted to create the program as an outgrowth of a study entitled: "The Challenge and the Choice, Investing in Graduate Education and

Research in the State University of New York." Today, GDFP still adheres to its original mandate.

In the 2012-13 academic year, the fellowship program supported 500 students and has become one of several graduate study opportunities offered by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI). ODEI has been able to expand the GDFP program, and 25 of our state-operated campuses now participate. The commitment and participation of the SUNY campuses has been strong, and those involved in this program attest to the impetus this opportunity provides by making their graduate education both more affordable and more inclusive. The level of financial support and administrative collabora-

tion that campuses add to this effort help make GDFP one of ODEI's most durable and successful partnerships in diversity.

To date, the program has helped several thousand master's, doctoral students and professional candidates graduate from a wide ranging array of disciplines, both in the liberal arts and sciences. The beauty and simplicity of this program lies in the recognition that with these financial incentives, SUNY has contributed to the academic success of a future generation. We can all look forward to the contributions these graduates will make as they take off their academic mantles and apply their skills and knowledge in the world at large.

## Diversity in SUNY . . . The Promise of the Future

Continued from page 1

outreach centers. To be sure, UCAWD has developed a legacy for programs that enrich the lives and academic aspirations of families and communities throughout the state.

In the Office of Opportunity Programs, you will find SUNY's flagship student access and support program, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). Since its inception, the EOP has proved that interventions and support services are effective. Students in EOP have achieved a graduation rate of 57.2% in SUNY's four-year colleges. In doctoral degree-granting institutions in SUNY, the graduation rate has risen to 66%, exceeding national graduation rates. EOP has graduated over 60,000 students who might not have otherwise been able to achieve a college education. In the 2012 academic year, more than 3,100 EOP students achieved a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Among the

graduates of EOP programs, you will find physicians, teachers, attorneys, and many other professions, including a college president!

In addition to these programs, I am reminded of a key figure in New York State's legislature, Assemblyman Arthur O. Eve. As a junior state legislator in 1967, his vision and tireless support gave further force to the principles of access and opportunity to those less fortunate. Recently, the Honorable Assemblyman Eve (retired), turned 80 years of age. We honor him and the legacy he inspired, which he continues to champion to this day.

ODEI continues to advocate for the cradle-to-career success of students and the strategic priority of providing access to higher education for all New Yorkers. Raising the commitment to programs that stimulate inclusion and academic excellence has helped

SUNY merit the distinction of being the sole public university system to receive the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award in 2012. [see story on p. 4]

As the diversity of New York's college-going population increases, so too will the need for new and creative avenues to support next-generation students within SUNY. The groundwork for our future work has been laid by the committed leadership that values the role diversity plays. ODEI will continue to advocate and support efforts on behalf of all New Yorkers in their quest to succeed through higher education. Our passion for this challenge is inspired by the increased diversity of faculty, staff, students, and programs throughout SUNY, as well as the many ways they can utilize their talents to sustain New York's legacy as the Empire State.

*Charles Medina*

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Advocating  
for diversity  
throughout  
SUNY is a  
top priority  
and one that is  
always at work  
in the programs  
and services  
we offer as part  
of our mission  
and vision.  
”

## Reshaping a Culture of Inclusion at UAlbany

The University at Albany has made great strides in the past five years to better support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) students on campus. Christine Bouchard, the Vice President for Student Success, remembers: “When I became Vice President in 2007, our campus took the LGBT Friendly Campus Climate Index and received 2.5 stars out of 5. Right then I knew we had much work to do in order to better support our LGBTQ students.” Bouchard launched a small group that included University students and staff to begin identifying ways to better support LGBTQ students.

Web pages were built so that students could find LGBTQ friendly clubs, career information, housing support, community resources and helpful FAQ’s. Realizing some areas of the university posed a particular challenge for LGBTQ students, such as housing for transgender identified students and financial aid questions for those students who have come out and lost family support, LGBTQ friendly contacts were identified in those and many other offices across campus so that students would feel more comfortable accessing needed support services. A Safe Space Training program was inaugurated across campus to activate faculty, staff and students as advocates, knowledgeable of LGBTQ culture and support services.

Across the University, one department after another stepped up to offer support and within one year, the LGBT Friendly Campus Climate Index was improved to 4 stars.

By spring 2009, the University celebrated its first-ever Lavender Graduation to honor LGBTQ and Allied graduates and alums for their contributions to the University culture. The graduation was spearheaded by the students themselves and has since become a UAlbany tradition. That same year, UAlbany established the first University-wide LGBT Advisory Committee and a Gender and Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC). This standing committee meets regularly to talk about campus climate and make recommendations to the Provost and Vice President for Student Success and provides a working guideline to help further improve life for LGBTQ students and inclusion across campus.

The Gender & Sexuality Resource Center has quickly become an integral part of our University community—packed full of students at all times of day and night—providing student employment, cross curricular internships, resources to research on LGBTQ topics and just an everyday safe space for students to hang out and be themselves. Last year, the Department of Residential Life established a Gender Inclusive housing program, which allows students to

choose their roommate without regard to sex. While this housing option is open to all students, it also provides an additional incentive for transgender and gender nonconforming students to seek out UAlbany as their learning and living environments.

Academic departments are involved and making their own inroads towards curriculum inclusion as well. The Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department offers an LGBT minor with an internship component and course offerings that span across curriculum. The School of Social Welfare’s Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) project is now in its fourth year. This project works to enhance the clinical skills of graduate students working with LGBTQ clients and their families by providing field placement in the Capital District Pride Center. This spring, the School of Criminal Justice held a symposium on Justice and Multiculturalism which explored justice in its relation to gender, sexuality and violence.

The University’s efforts have drawn recognition to the campus. This past October, the Capital Region Pride Center presented the University with their highest honor, the Harvey Milk Award. Harvey Milk, the first openly gay elected official in a major U.S. city, was shot and killed in San Francisco because he was gay. He was a graduate of the Class of 1951 at UAlbany. Harvey’s story and photo has been featured across campus alongside many other trailblazing alums as part of the Reaching Higher Achieving Alumni Recognition Campaign. Milk’s contributions are an inspiration to students at UAlbany, and many LGBTQ students consider him a personal hero.

Continued on page 12



Carlos Medina, ODEI; Courtney D’Allaird and Emma Suarez, UAlbany; and Shane Windmeyer, Founder, CampusPride.org.

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## Chief Diversity/Affirmative Action Officers Conference, Spring 2013

Continued from page 3

How many people do you know who have graduated or attended a SUNY school? Probably many, with many more to come. Send us your ideas to support diversity in SUNY, your stories and your view of diversity in SUNY by email to: [ODEI@suny.edu](mailto:ODEI@suny.edu)



ODEI Office Members and SUNY System leaders at CDO/AAO Conference: left to right: Ken O'Brien, President, University Faculty Senate; Gloria Lopez, Affirmative Action Officer, ODEI; Elizabeth Carrature, Associate, Research and Program Development, ODEI; Edelmira Reynoso, Program Staff Assistant, ODEI; Carlos N. Medina, Associate Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor, ODEI; David K. Lavallee, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost; Bobbi Hardman, Administrative Assistant, ODEI; Joseph Skrivanek, Replications Project Director, ODEI; and Phillip Ortiz, Diversity Advisory Council Member and Chair, Diversity Committee, University Faculty Senate.



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The Office of Diversity,  
Equity and Inclusion  
(ODEI)

SUNY System  
Administration  
State University Plaza  
Room T501  
Albany, NY, 12246

Phone: 518-320-1189  
Fax: 518-320-1155

[www.suny.edu/  
provost/odei](http://www.suny.edu/provost/odei)

Carlos N. Medina,  
Associate Provost and  
Associate Vice Chancellor  
for Diversity, Equity  
and Inclusion



## Reshaping a Culture of Inclusion at UAlbany . . .

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Vice President Bouchard credits the students with pushing these initiatives forward. For the past 40 years on the University at Albany campus, there was only one student club and a handful of LGBT student leaders supporting themselves. Due to the institutional changes the University at Albany has made with regard to these programs, policies and practices, there are now six diversified student clubs supporting LGBT identities, including a club for transgender students, students of multicultural heritage and one lesbian founded multicultural sorority. LGBT leadership

positions for students have grown from five to over forty.

The Safe Space program has trained over 350 faculty, staff and students as active allies and advocates. Serving as its coordinator, Courtney D'Allaird has been a consistent activist building on three years' work as a graduate assistant helping to frame and build the The Gender & Sexuality Resource Center. Each month, some 1600 students utilize the center's services and the interactive intercultural LGBT programming it provides.

Vice President Bouchard acknowledges there is still much to be done. But UAlbany

is proud of what has been accomplished by working hand in hand with student leaders to make the campus a better place for the students today and for future students seeking lifestyle alternatives and solutions. There is a clear sense that the culture of silence has shifted greatly and is being replaced by a culture of institutionalized support and inclusion. Faculty, staff and students are intent on continuing to improve the campus climate. Respect for the value and individuality of every person is being woven into the fabric of life throughout the University at Albany.

*The State University of New York is the largest comprehensive university system in the United States, educating approximately 468,000 students in more than 7,500 degree and certificate programs, and nearly 2 million in workforce and professional development programs, on 64 campuses. There are nearly 3 million SUNY alumni worldwide.*