

Mount Holyoke College Diversity Strategy Mid-Spring 2008 through Spring 2009

Using the four stated goals of the DCC Report, I offer here an ongoing strategy for our continued work in “educating a diverse community of women at the highest level of academic achievement”.

Root out Stereotyping and Insensitivity

Fast Track

1. Coordinate registration of at least 20 Mount Holyoke students, staff and faculty to the White Privilege Conference that will be held April 3rd-5th 2008 in Springfield, MA. (*As of 3/10/08 28 MHC persons are registered including 11 students, the incoming DOC, and staff from LITS, HR, Mental Health, ORSL, Health Services, Faculty, SAW, Center for the Environment, Admissions, and Ombudsperson.*)
 - a. Hold a pre-conference luncheon for all participants on March 27th with the goals of getting acquainted; coordinating transportation; and doing initial strategizing for how to implement conference education throughout the college.
 - b. Gather participants within two weeks after the conference for evaluation and debriefing.
2. Work with Office of Academic Development on planning “Difficult Dialogues” (**Completed**) and 2008 CHAS Meeting (*pending*).
3. Implement ROR (Recognizing Our Raggedness) Group for self-selected staff (no more than 8 persons) beginning February 2008. (*The Pilot group consists of 5 staff persons from 3 MHC departments. We are in the 4th week of the program.*)
4. Begin a systematic diversity assessment of Mount Holyoke College.
 - a. Investigate the possible use of the Equity Scorecard. (4/08)
 - b. Meet with Institutional Research to discuss possibilities. (4/08)
 - c. Meet with Student Conference Committee re: utilizing Senior Survey as a possible site for diversity-related questions.

Long Range

1. Support the Coordinator of Multicultural Affairs in the development of at least ten (10) Intergroup Dialogue groups by 2010 and conduct a research study on the effects of IGD upon MHC students and graduates.
2. In addition to creating more IGD groups, develop other venues for intentional dialogue among faculty, students and staff.
3. In September 2008 offer a voluntary TRANSITIONS Orientation program for dominant culture students who are either first years or sophomores to assist them in developing cultural competencies around understanding institutional racism, class elitism and white privilege.
4. Conduct a diversity climate assessment including focus group discussions and perhaps a web-based survey, and share results of such an assessment with entire MHC community in Spring 2009.
5. Broaden the scope of MHC’s diversity initiatives to include disability, gender, sexual orientation, class, race and the kaleidoscope of diversity.

Create a Climate of Achievement for All Students

Fast Track

1. Support the Coordinator of Multicultural Affairs in conducting a series of focus groups with ALANA students. This support will be both financial (providing dinners) and through the presence of the Director of Diversity and Inclusion as an observer. (*Focus Groups are set to begin the last Monday in March and continue through the Mondays in April. They will be held in Blanchard.*)
2. Collaborate with the Alumnae Association to develop one alumnae-sister mentoring network by Fall 2008. (DCC pg. 5, #5)
3. With MCCL, review Multicultural Course requirement; then share discussion results with the Academic Policy Committee. (3/26/08)
4. Work with the Office of Academic Development on planning 2008 CHAS Meeting with a specific eye to identifying pedagogical strategies for diverse learners. (DCC pg. 6, #1)
5. Work with planners of IIF Grant “Identity and Labels” to bring together domestic and international ALANA students for dialogues around difference.

Long Range

1. Promote inclusion of PLUM and Sistahs in Science programs in the “Campus Extravaganza” and “More for Sophomores” during Fall 2008 Orientation weeks.
2. Review and support ethnic studies program (DCC pg. 7, #6)
3. Meet with Faculty Advisors on ways to support academic excellence through use of cultural houses.
4. Develop best practices document among faculty to demonstrate ways in which their specific discipline engages students in the passionate intellectual development of their work.

Celebrate (Cultural) Diversity

Fast Track

1. Work with Communication Department to produce a Mount Holyoke Diversity poster, highlighting the various aspects of our campus’ diversity. (*In process; first meeting has occurred*).
2. Build diversity training into orientation program for all new staff and faculty.

Long Range

1. Begin discussion with DOC and Office of the President on feasibility of planning for a Hortense Parker Day, similar to the Otelia Cromwell Day at Smith College. (Otelia Cromwell Day is an annual event named for the first African-American to graduate from Smith College, in 1900. The event is celebrated with a series of presentations during the week of Otelia Cromwell Day, which this year takes place on Thursday, November 1.)
2. Work with Development Office and Alumnae Association on involving ALANA students in the Legacy of Diversity Campaign (*In process*)

Demonstrate Institutional Commitment

Fast Track

1. Secure jobs of Coordinator of Multicultural Affairs and Director of Diversity and Inclusion in 2008-2009 MHC Budget and beyond as permanent institutional positions.
2. Institute monthly meetings between President Creighton and ALANA Advisory Group in Cultural Houses.
3. Launch Director of Diversity and Inclusion Webpage and regularly update with current information about what’s happening with MHC Diversity initiatives, resources, etc.
<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/diversity/> (Completed 02/08)
4. Develop a Diversity Advisory Committee to do visioning and planning with Director of Diversity and Inclusion including 2 members of MCCL and 3-4 additional persons.

Long Range

1. Begin communicating about diversity at MHC using the language of “expectation” rather than encouragement. In other words, here at MHC we “expect” that our students, faculty, and staff will know certain information and behave in certain ways to create a climate of hospitality and tolerance for all.
2. Develop continuous opportunities for faculty and staff to both create and participate in diversity-related forums, dialogues, workshops, etc. To institute systemic change we must focus our attention on the part of the MHC community that doesn’t change year-to-year rather than primarily on the part that does; namely, our students.

“Diverse community is the touchstone of Mount Holyoke’s identity and will continue to be one of its highest aspirations in the twenty-first century. Diversity not only enhances the critical and moral education of Mount Holyoke students, but also represents our collective commitment to social justice, and to thinking deeply about issues of difference, pluralism, and community. We will seek out diversity as we build community. We will encourage students, faculty, and staff to talk about and across racial, ethnic, class, cultural, religious, sexual, and national differences, and we will internationalize the educational experience of all students to prepare them for citizenship and leadership in a complex, interconnected world.” Mount Holyoke Plan 2010