

**The President's Commission on Diversity
Academic Year 2010-2011
Report and Recommendations
Prepared by Megan Birch and Whitney Howarth, Co-Chairs**

2010-2011 Commission Members

Megan Birch, co-chair
Lexi Casale
Tamara Cocchiarella
Elaine Doell
Michael Fischler
Wilson Garcia
Rev. Judith Gooch
Jen Green
Whitney Howarth, co-chair
Kyle O'Neil
Filiz Otucu
Heidi Pettigrew
Ashley Phillips
Delilah Smith
Clarissa Uttley
Francis Williams
James Whiting

2011- 2012 Commission Members

The following members would like to continue their work on the PCD.

Megan Birch
Michael Fischler
Wilson Garcia
Jen Green
Whitney Howarth, Chair
Kyle O'Neil
Filiz Otucu
Delilah Smith
Francis Williams

Mission Statement

Plymouth State University strives to create an environment that values and supports diversity, equity, and inclusiveness across our community. We are dedicated to providing learning experiences and fostering the constructive discussion of a range of opinions in order to promote enhanced understanding and respect for all people. PSU prepares students to participate respectfully and responsibly in a pluralistic society. The President's Commission on Diversity works with and supports other campus groups to advance our university's goals for diversity.

Strategic Plan

The PCD contributes to the University's Strategic Plan, advancing diversity-related goals and priorities.

Goal 1.Excellence: Plymouth State University demonstrates excellence and the highest quality in all endeavors.

***Priority 1.5:** Cultivate Plymouth State University's commitment to being a more vibrant, inclusive, and multicultural community by diversifying the student body, faculty, and staff; and by developing curricula and regularly assessing policies and programs to enhance an understanding of and respect for all people.*

Goal 2. Student Success: Plymouth State University provides exceptional undergraduate and graduate academic experiences that meet the needs of the state and region, enhance students' intellectual, ethical, and civic development, and prepare students for active engagement in their professions and society.

***Priority 2:** Provide and improve access to rich and holistic academic and student development programs that foster intellectual and social growth and prepare students to be productive citizens of the world.*

***Priority 2.3:** Prepare students to live in an increasingly diverse world and global community*

Overview

This year the PCD focused on the following goals.

- I. *Expanding Commission membership, especially community and student representation.*
- II. *Supporting diversity-related initiatives and programs on campus through and distribution of funds and shared use of the diversity window.*
- III. *Conducting student focus groups to assess campus climate and perceptions of diversity.*
- IV. *Updating and increasing the visibility and usefulness of the PCD Web site and/or establishing a blog or list-serv to share information about diversity related events and ideas among all diversity-related campus groups (and any other interested groups).*
- V. *Bridging relationships between campus efforts to support multicultural (domestic) and international diversity.*

Ongoing Work, Achievements, and Recommendations

Goal I: *Expanding Commission membership, especially community and student representation.*

This year we extended invitation to two people, one of whom, Dr. Francis Williams accepted.

Unfortunately, we continue to struggle to achieve full attendance at most of our monthly meetings. One member resigned in the middle of the year and many members were unable to attend regularly or at all. As noted last year, we recognize that there are a myriad of possible and valid reasons for not attending meetings, but poor attendance negatively impacts the PCD's ability to meet its goals. Following through with last year's recommendation to invite members to renew their commitment on an annual basis, we asked members at the beginning of the year and the end of the year whether they wanted to continue to serve on the Commission.

The following members would like to continue their work on the PCD: Megan Birch, Michael Fischler, Wilson Garcia, Whitney Howarth, Chair, Kyle O'Neil, Filiz Otucu, Jen Green, Delilah Smith, and Francis Williams

We recommend focusing on recruiting new members, especially students and community members. Current members have suggested the following people:

Sara Stewart, Minister Starr Unitarian Universalist Church; Jane Bjerklie-Barry, Office of Dean of Student Affairs, Int'l Student Services; Carol Perkins, Board of Trustees of the University System of New Hampshire; Gonzalo Isidro-Bruno, Director of ELS; Debra Regan, Director of Office of Global Education
Student Diversity Fellows

Goal II: *Supporting diversity-related initiatives and programs on campus through and distribution of funds and shared use of the diversity window.*

(1) Funding Requests:

10/26/10	To Grad Studies; Community Cinema	\$250.00
10/26/10	To HUB; Support Fall Events	\$200.00
10/27/10	Support International Week Events	\$300.00
3/17/11	Erin Davies/Guest Speaker	\$50.00
4/11/11	Support Diversity Institute Program	\$175.00

Balance as of right September 28, 2011: \$ 1021.42

In addition to funding and supporting events from outside groups, at the end of last semester, the PCD formed a sub-committee to develop and facilitate diversity related events of our own. We recommend this sub-committee continue this work to plan an event for Spring 2012.

(2) Diversity Window Display 2010- 2011:

September- October	“What are you reading?”
November	International Week
February	Black History Month
March	Women in World Development Class
April	Sexual Assault Awareness Month/ Violence Against Women Around the World
May	Diversity Fellows

Some members of the PCD question the benefit of a “diversity window,” questioning the message relegating representations of diversity to a single, isolated window might send. We recommend continuing this discussion to determine the best use and representation of diversity.

Goal III: *Conducting student focus groups to assess campus climate and perceptions of diversity.*

During 2010- 2011, the Campus Climate Assessment Subcommittee has been actively collecting data from students and faculty on the perceived level of acceptance, belonging, and safety of persons self-identifying as members of a minority group. Through both surveys and focus groups, the sub-committee has meet with students from several minority groups: LBGTQ, Majority females, majority males, International students, ESL students, and students of color. In the fall of 2010, and again in the fall of 2011, this sub-committee met with faculty members to discuss their experiences on campus and in the larger Plymouth community and to enlist their assistance in recruiting students for our survey. This data has been compiled into a brief account of our activities with the data currently being added to and analyzed. It is expected that this work will continue throughout the next year to accumulate a more thorough understanding of personal experiences on the PSU campus.

Goal IV: Updating and increasing the visibility and usefulness of the PCD Web site and/or establishing a blog or list-serv to share information about diversity related events and ideas among all diversity-related campus groups (and any other interested groups).

The Technology and Communications Sub-committee worked with Public Relations to transfer the PCD website from its current content management system to Wordpress (the content management system utilized by most of the PSU website). PR transferred the system during Summer 2011. The site is now listed on Plymouth's A-Z Directory. We plan to continue to update and correct the site, providing links to diversity related events and groups across campus. We recommend exploring the possibility of developing and maintaining a blog or list-serv.

Goal V: Bridging relationships between campus efforts to support multicultural (domestic) and international diversity.

Members of the PCD worked with Deb Regan, from the Office of Global Education, and others to apply for the American Council on Education Initiative, "At Home in the World." Though Plymouth State's proposal was not selected for the initiative, working on the proposal established a dialogue and collaboration between diversity/ multicultural education and internationalization. The proposed projects included

- A common campus-community book which not only relates to diversity and globalization but also to other campus values, such as sustainability or rural landscapes;
- A narrative/ oral history project focusing on diversity in New Hampshire, which could begin to counter the myth that diversity exists beyond our community, state, nation;
- A exploration of how general education, specifically First Year Seminar, might

- support global and multicultural education;
- The development of centralized physical and intellectual space on campus which could cultivate communication and encourage collaborative across campus groups, a space able to provide academic and personal resources for students, as well as an enhanced visibility of our campus' priority to globalization and equity.

Summary of Recommendations

- Recruit new members, especially students and community members.
- Develop and facilitate PCD initiated campus programming.
- Complete and publically present research related to campus climate.
- Develop plan to respond to research findings related to campus climate.
- Continue to update and correct the site, providing links to diversity related events and groups across campus.
- Explore the possibility of developing and maintaining a blog or list-serv.
- Follow-through and further develop projects proposed for the "At Home in the World" Initiative, including
 - A common campus-community book which not only relates to diversity and globalization but also to other campus values, such as sustainability or rural landscapes;
 - A narrative/ oral history project focusing on diversity in New Hampshire, which could begin to counter the myth that diversity exists beyond our community, state, nation;
 - An exploration of how general education, specifically First Year Seminar, might support global and multicultural education;
 - The development of centralized physical and intellectual space on campus which could cultivate communication and encourage collaborative across campus groups, a space able to provide academic and personal resources for students, as well as an enhanced visibility of our campus' priority to globalization and equity.