



Dear Colleagues:

As many of you know, W&J is participating in a Teagle Diversity Project. This message is designed to provide an overview of the project—and to solicit your suggestions for how we might enhance the climate for diversity at W&J.

What is the Teagle Diversity Project? W&J has received funding from the Teagle Foundation for a three-year (2009-2011) collaborative effort to enhance diversity both in and out of the classroom. The other schools are Ursinus College, Goucher College, McDaniel College, and Washington College (MD)

Why should we study diversity? National research indicates that engagement with diversity increases student learning—especially in liberal arts environments. Several W&J assessment findings show that some of our first-year students are not convinced that diversity is important when they arrive. Not surprisingly, these students do not engage with students who are different than they are. As they are leaving W&J, these students are reporting that they are even less convinced that diversity is important.

What is our main goal in this project? We want to enhance the climate for diversity at W&J. Our colleagues in various offices (Academic Affairs, Human Resources, and Admissions) will continue their efforts to attract, recruit, and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and student community. Our goal is to support current activities and to identify new opportunities that will make W&J a more “diversity-friendly” community—in which we engage our differences respectfully and charitably. As our climate becomes more welcoming of diversity, we do hope that our recruitment and retention efforts will bear even more fruit.

What are the central elements of the project?

- Talk and Action. We have a Home Team (see below) that will be hosting campus conversations about diversity in order to identify and implement diversity initiatives across campus. We want to make our campus more friendly toward (and supportive of) diversity. As we have these conversations, our goal is “Action First” in order to transform our campus.

- Collaboration between Academic Affairs and Student Life. The Teagle Diversity Project is one example (of many) in which Academic Affairs and Student Life are working together to engage our students as “whole students.” We are looking to share information and coordinate efforts so that students are receiving consistent messages and rich opportunities.
- Team Visits. During each year of the grant, we will host a Visiting Team from one of the collaborating schools, and we will be sending a team to visit one of the other schools. This year, we will host McDaniel (February 7-9) and visit Goucher (February 21-23).
- Diversity Scholars. Each year of the grant, there is funding for a W&J student and a W&J professor to do summer research on a diversity-related project. The students will then present their work at Ursinus’ annual conference of student research.
- Data Analysis. As part of the grant, the participating schools added diversity questions to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Throughout the grant, we will be sharing data and analyzing the results together.

Who is representing W&J in the Teagle Diversity Project?

- Planning Team: Anthony Fleury, Charlie Hannon, Byron McCrae, Teanca Shepherd, Catherine Sherman, Jim Sloat, Mark Swift
- Home Team: Mike McCracken, Patrick Schmidt, Sharon Taylor, Vicki Staton, Lisa Hamilton, Valerie Gregor, Glenn Gutierrez, Carla Myers, Katy Rowley, Addie Simon, Quinton Thorne, Adil Qarni

What have we been doing so far? The Home Team has been meeting regularly to identify action items. We have compiled a calendar of diversity-related events on campus (attached to this message), begun drafting of a proposal for a Diversity concentration in the curriculum, developed a diversity WIKI site to facilitate communication, and begun exploring options for placing international students with domestic students before they arrive and during breaks.

How could I get involved? We are looking for diversity initiatives that can be implemented quickly; we would welcome your ideas. Please send your suggestions either by replying to this message or by contacting any member of either the Planning Team or the Home Team. We plan to provide periodic updates on our progress, and we would welcome your assistance as we host the visiting team from McDaniel in February.

If you have any questions about the Teagle Diversity Project, please let us know (either by responding to this message or by contacting any of the Planning or Home Team members).

Sincerely,

Jim Sloat—on behalf of the Teagle Diversity Project Home Team