Diversity Innovations and Project Leaders for Spring 2017

FiGLI: Alumni Mentoring & Shadowing Program (“F.A.M.S. Program”)

Primary Contacts: Winly Mai, Keri Fadden and Darnell Epps
This program will provide planning resources to propose an initiative to increase the social capital of first-generation college students and/or low-income (FiGLI) students. To decrease the barriers of unfamiliar workplace norms, behaviors and cultural cues, this initiative will partner FiGLI students with alumni mentors (including some first-gen alumni) from professional fields. Students will visit a mentor’s place of employment for a shadowing experience. Engaging alumni role models will expose students to the professional workplace norms and transferable “soft skills” that may be unfamiliar to FiGLI students. The opportunity to learn workplace norms and acquire skills will reduce barriers to entering a competitive workforce.

Total Well-Being Program

Principal Contacts: Kimberly M. Ferguson and Justin Adkins
The Total Well-Being Program assists students of color with learning lifelong skills to support a healthier lifestyle through critical evaluation and exploration of wellness concepts. This 10-week series will explore such topics as identity development, health and well-being, stress management, financial wellness, spiritual wellness, diet and fitness.

Fun Home: An Exploration of LGBTQ Themes

Principal Contacts: Mark Cosdon and Mariana Silva
The project focuses on the graphic novel and musical adaptation of *Fun Home* and builds collaboration across two courses including Professor Mark Cosdon’s FS 102 “The Contemporary American” and an independent group study offered by Professors Knupsky and Caballero and Instructor Mariana Silva. Students in both courses will study/discuss Alison Bechdel’s graphic memoir, *Fun Home*, which shares the story of the author coming out as a lesbian in a rural town of approximately 800 residents. The story explores themes such as coming out, gender roles and nonconformity, and being queer in a small rural community. Both classes will travel to Pittsburgh to attend a production of the musical. Two classes will organize and direct a community discussion to engage the community.

Philosophy in Different Voices

Primary Contact: Tal Correm
This initiative will find an Allegheny faculty-student group, “Philosophy in Different Voices,” for current students in the philosophy program and students who are interested in studying philosophy. The initiative is aligned with the American Philosophical Association’s mission to promote and support undergraduate study in philosophy with “focus on undergraduate students from underrepresented groups interested in studying philosophy—including people of color, LGBTQ people, women, people with disabilities, and people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds”. The goals of the Allegheny group are: 1) providing mentoring and resources for students; 2) pairing new majors and students with advanced students; 3) bridging curricular and co-curricular activities; and 4) giving faculty the opportunity to speak informally with students, share advice, and collaborate to create an inclusive learning community. As part of the program, we will bring a student ambassador of the Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI). We also plan to invite a local scholar — such as Kathryn Gines at Penn State, who is the founding director of the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers — to discuss inclusivity and diversity in the discipline and the larger academic community. These events will be open to all members of the Allegheny community. In addition, the group will meet for informal conversations over lunch.

Okay Students Now Let’s Get REFORMation: Conference on Prison Reform

Primary Contacts: Angela Mauroni and Ada Zech
The Student Alliance for Prison Reform will be holding a conference on April 1 in collaboration with various clubs and academic departments on campus. The goal is to raise awareness about injustices in prisons and the criminal justice system as a whole. Some panels may address topics such as women and gender issues, mass incarceration and its economic repercussions, issues surrounding juveniles and Native Americans in the justice system. The panels will consist of collaborative or individual presentations of research done in various classes. The speakers will focus on variety of issues, including issues of gender in prisons, the death penalty and solitary confinement.

Diversity in Islam

Primary Contacts: Baneen Al-Akashi and Tolossa Hassan
This project will host a three-day learning opportunity starting with “Islam 101” with a speaker (Dalia Mogahed) and a lunch with the speaker at the Prayer and Meditation (PAM) house; the second day will feature a talk about racial equality in Islam with a speaker (Sherman Jackson); and the third day will include a food cart event with the diversity clubs at the Campus Center.

Exploring Domestic Health Disparities: Native American Health and Social Justice

Primary Contacts: Steven Farrelly-Jackson and Caryl Waggett
This short course will focus on Native American Health and Social Justice as a pilot for a multi-year initiative focused on Exploring Domestic Health Disparities. Each year, the short course could evaluate specific North American subpopulations; the social and environmental
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determinants that contribute to disease disparities between the subpopulation and the population as a whole; and the complex challenges of reducing these disparities. This year the focus is on bringing prominent Native American health scholars to campus, each of whom brings a different disciplinary training to their understanding of community health for Native Americans. Global Health Studies, as the lead program, has recognized the critical importance of understanding health inequities within our own communities and across the country.

Diversity Innovations and Project Leaders for Fall 2016

Project Title: Neurodiversity: A Focus on Strengths
Principal Contact: Prof. Jennifer Foreman and students
This initiative represents an approach to neurological differences that is a fundamentally different way of looking at conditions that were traditionally pathologized. The goal is to create a community that fully embraces neurodiverse students, faculty, and staff. Student-faculty collaborative work will produce a presentation and handouts on neurodiversity that will be offered to FS instructors interested in using them in their classes to raise awareness and support for individuals with learning differences. The student-faculty collaborative will also host a concurrent reading circle to raise awareness of neurodiversity issues and examine the perceptions that have been traditionally held toward conditions like ADHD, dyslexia, autism, etc.

Project Title: Presentation on Diversity in STEM
Principal Contact: Prof. Caryn Werner
The initiative is to engage Prof. David Kung of St. Mary’s College for an interactive presentation and focused discussion on race and gender in the STEM fields. Prof. Kung has extensive experience with social justice issues in mathematics and has helped create programs to attract and retain underrepresented students in mathematics and science. His session is targeted to faculty and staff engaged in curricular and co-curricular work to enhance student learning and will help Allegheny think through new ways to provide inclusive education and student support.

Project Title: Culture 2 Culture (C2C) Peer Mentoring Program
Project Contacts: Lenee McCandless
The Allegheny C2C initiative was designed to explore different ways to provide an extra level of support for international students and will match current Allegheny students with incoming international students during their first semester. The initiative includes three goals: 1) increasing the connections between domestic and international students, 2) providing students with the opportunity to learn intercultural communication and mentoring skills and 3) creating a cohort of culturally aware individuals committed to forging a positive climate across campus. This fall’s initiative will incorporate preliminary feedback from mentors and mentees and prepare recommendations for possible institutionalization for future cohorts.

Project Title: Diversity and Inclusion Workshop Series (DIWS)
Project Contact: Stephanie Carson, Connor Racine (DIC), Marita Gilbert (CIASS), Rebecca Guanzon (Res. Life), Brian Saltsman (CIASS)
The proposed initiative is a collaborative work to bridge the gap in regards to community atmosphere, student experience, and the standards set by the Statement of Community. The Diversity and Inclusion Workshop Series aims to incorporate inclusivity workshops and trainings into every Allegheny College student’s learning experience, from orientation until their walk across the stage at commencement. This series would be a long-term commitment, expanding the student experience to truly encompass the standards the Statement of Community aims to create.

Project Title: “Shared Lives” Digital Diversity Project
Primary Contact: Ishita Sinha Roy with Michael Hurley and student partners: Sloane Prince and Shu Yi Tang
This project uses digital storytelling and social media to invite campus community members (staff/administrators, faculty, students) to tell, in their own words, a story from their lives/about their accomplishments that you would not be able to tell simply by looking at them from the outside. The creation of the digital wall of “Shared Lives” will create a more inclusive campus and engage in faculty-staff-student collaboration to expand the definition of diversity, producing a resource that can be used for educational and workshop purposes.

Innovation Projects and Project Leaders for Spring 2016

Project Title: Dr. Herbert Niles Speaker Series
Principal Contact: Connor Racine and CIASS staff
This pilot speaker series, named after Allegheny trustee Dr. Herbert J. Niles ’59, will bring student scholarship on diversity and inclusion to the public eye. Funds will support students to partner with scholars on and off campus to speak on panels and give academic talks. Over the course of the semester this pilot will bring scholarship on a variety of issues including daily transgender people’s experiences, race in athletics, and more.

**Project Title:** Rainbow-Research Celebration
**Principal Contact:** Hope Sims-Medley and Prof. Ryan Pickering
Funding will support a research symposium featuring the research on gender, sexual orientation, social norms, inclusivity, allyship, social justice, heteronormativity/heterosexism and homonormativity. The event will attempt to connect and unite the LGBTQ community and highlight the community’s research. Furthermore, the event will act as safe space to educate and create a dialogue concerning the issues facing the LGBTQ community at Allegheny.

**Project Title:** Student trip to see the play Detroit ’67
**Principal Contact:** Prof. Mark Cosdon
Students enrolled in CA 190, African American Theater and Drama will travel to Cleveland’s Karamu House, the oldest African-American theatre in the United States. They will meet with the theater’s administrative and artistic staff and study and see a production of Dominique Morisseau’s *Detroit ’67*. This prize-winning play is the story of Detroit in the most dramatic and creative year in the city’s history, set against a backdrop of urban riots, an escalating war in Vietnam, and the criminal justice system. Students will return to campus and to share their learning and to stimulate conversations about art, social history and current events.

**Innovation Projects and Project Leaders for Fall 2015**

**Project title:** “Independent Voices”
**Principal contact:** Linda Bills
Funding will support the “Independent Voices” project, which is converting alternative press literature on social movements to digital media that, once complete, will be made available to everyone. Funding allows Allegheny students, faculty, and staff immediate access to the materials once they are digitized.

**Project title:** Concepts of Intercultural Competence
**Principal contact:** Catharina Coenen
Funding will support a reading group of students, faculty, and staff who will explore concepts of intercultural competence through the discussion of short stories by Ursula K. LeGuin. The project’s authors encourage participants from the sciences in an effort to connect their course content with issues of diversity.

**Project title:** Supporting the Experiences of First-Generation & Low-Income Students
**Principal contact:** Aline Lo and Ryan Pickering
Funding goes toward a dinner to support and connect low-income and first-generation college students with alumni. This project builds on last year’s project, which created affinity groups for employees and students.

**Project title:** Culture 2 Culture Peer-Mentoring Program
**Principal contact:** Lenee McCandless
Funding will support the pilot of the Culture 2 Culture peer-mentoring program, the focus of which is to help international students transition to life at Allegheny. Culture 2 Culture pairs current Allegheny students with incoming international students in an effort to increase retention and create a more welcoming atmosphere.

**Project title:** Cross-Cultural Communication
**Principal contacts:** Jenny Kawata and Rehenuma Asmi
Funding will support the development of a cross-cultural communication seminar for interested faculty, staff, and administrators. Funds go toward the purchase of “Redundancia: A Foreign Language Simulation Kit” and workshops to explore issues associated with difficulties when communicating in a foreign country.

**Innovation Projects and Project Leaders for Spring 2015**

**Project title:** Social Justice series
**Principal contact:** valerie guerrero (second: Stephanie Carson)
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The Social Justice Series is focused on education. The developers of the workshop aim to build a community that has awareness of complicated topics such as sexism, homophobia, ableism, and racism. The workshops allow first-year students and others to learn what concepts such as social justice, privilege, micro-aggressions, etc. mean – and what members of the college community mean when they use these terms. The training, which takes approximately 60 minutes, is facilitated by individuals familiar with the topics. While this initiative focuses on students, organizers hope to develop a similar workshop or conversation for staff and faculty.

Project title: How we learned what we learned
Principal contact: Dan Crozier (second: John Christie Searles)
This initiative uses live theatre as a tool for learning about race, power, and privilege. Students from BLKST 100: Introduction to the Black Experience and COMRTS 380 Styles in Performance attended the Allegheny College production of Clybourne Park, which examines the ways we speak and have spoken about race, gender, and class in America now and for the last fifty years. These students and students from the Clybourne Park cast also attended August Wilson’s How I Learned What I Learned at the Pittsburgh Public Theatre. The same material is approached from both history and theatre, with a series of meetings to talk about what has been learned and to transform these dialogues into an evening of performance and discourse for the Allegheny community.

Project title: Supporting the experiences of first-generation and low-income students
Principal contact: Aline Lo (second: Ryan Pickering)
By promoting discussion and highlighting issues around the experiences of first-generation and low-income college students, this initiative enhances the conversations around social equity and diversity at Allegheny. The first step of this initiative is to create affinity groups for employees and students through a recruitment dinner in March and a Gator Day panel in April. The initiative will help students to identify allies and role models on campus that include their peers, faculty, and staff, as well as give faculty the opportunity to speak informally with students, share advice, and obtain information on what resources students may need. Future workshops and events will include the wider campus in order to directly contribute to long-term community transformation.

Project title: Women in Science mentoring
Principal contact: Ivelitza Garcia
Women in Science (WiS) is a faculty-led student support group at Allegheny College whose main focus is to encourage and support female students interested in pursuing a career in the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). WiS typically hosts one speaker event and two or three general meetings each semester. Events have included an invited speaker, open to all members of the Allegheny community, and roundtable discussions, in which graduate students, alumni, and faculty are invited to support and mentor Allegheny students. The WiS support group serves an important role in our community since women represent approximately 50 percent of the world population but only 25 percent of the STEM workforce.

Project title: Performing Blackness Performing Whiteness
Principal contact: Darren Miller
The Performing Blackness: Performing Whiteness exhibit in the Art Galleries examined constructions of racial identity to complicate popular rhetoric around race. The artworks interrogated oversimplifying binaries and destabilized the often unexamined position of “whiteness”. The show featured selected works by a small group of artists who explore race and other cultural constructions. The artists deployed visual texts in the service of asking uncomfortable questions, reflecting upon identity and asking the viewer to consider his or her own role in building, enabling, or perpetuating stereotypes. While racialized binaries may be limiting, they may sometimes offer safe and inclusive spaces for those within particular groups.

[Purpose: To stimulate community-based initiatives that will speed campus climate improvement. Funds are designed to encourage cross-campus collaborations to improve diversity and inclusion for long-term community transformation.]