

Diversity Coalition Report for 2003-2004

Participants:

Festus Addo-Yobo- Africana Student Services
Lucia Barker-Medical School
Mary Cameron-Equity Education & Services Coordinator
Lea Carr-American Indian Learning Resource Center
Dan Corbett-Department of Education
Penny Cragun-Access Center
Drew Digby-Department of Journalism
Lisa Huntley-Academic Support and Student Life
Ruth Leathers-School of Pharmacy
Angela Nichols-Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Services
Susana Pelayo-Woodward-Hispanic, Latino, Chicano Student Services
Deborah Petersen-Perlman, Office of Equal Opportunity Director
Tom Powers-Department of Political Science
Paul Ranelli-School of Pharmacy
Karin Robbins-International Student Services
Rick Smith-American Indian Learning Resource Center
Koua Vang-Southeast Asian Student Services

The primary accomplishment of the 2003-2004 Diversity Coalition was the UMD Eracism Project on October 22 from 5-8 p.m. in Montague 80 at UMD. This project began with a Public Forum exploring the existence of racism on campus and in our local communities. Using short video clips from the PBS series "Matters of Race" to identify specific topics related to racism, regional facilitators from the broader Duluth community helped small groups dialogue about and offer input on these important questions:

- " Does this problem exist in the Duluth-area community?
- " Does this problem exist in our colleges?
- " If the problem does exist, what can we do about it?

All members of the committee participated in the planning and coordination of the event. Karin Robbins arranged for music as participants gathered in Montague Hall. Festus Addo-Yobo, Lea Carr, Dan Corbett, Drew Digby, Angela Nichols, Tom Powers and Susana Pelayo Woodward took part in the actual program as facilitators and inspirational speakers.

The small groups reported back on the strategies they have developed which formed the basis for action-based activities as the next stage of the ERACISM Project.

We invited a number of community members to participate as small group leaders and panelists. Among the participants were Maxine Taylor, Duluth Police Chief Roger Waller, ISD 709 representative Bruce Watkins, ISD 709 Desegregation Committee member Portia Johnson, NAACP members Carl Crawford and Claudie Washington. Students from the various Multicultural Learning Resource groups participated in a moving

closing program coordinated by Lisa Huntley.

Moving from Racism to Eracism requires increased awareness of issues of racism, public dialogue about these issues as they relate to the region and campus, commitment to the ideal of respectful inclusion of all people in a productive and culturally rich environment, and development and implementation of an on-going action plan to accomplish this. The Public Forum on October 22 at UMD was a major step in this process. Food for this event was provided at no cost to the over 200 participants from UMD and the broader Duluth Community.

The Coalition met throughout the rest of the fall and during the winter semesters to try to coordinate follow-up programs. We had hoped to develop an anti-discrimination proclamation to be signed on by various constituent groups within the Duluth Community, including the City of Duluth, Duluth Police, ISD 709, UMD, etc. This project didn't reach fruition because we had difficulty coordinating the various constituency groups.

We were working with the Chancellor's office to invite Bishop Flynn to speak, but this effort never moved forward.

We have planned a positive norming campaign, which we still hope to implement this fall. This campaign will include the development of positive norming posters and UMD-wear which carries the message of zero tolerance for discrimination.

Our spring event was a very well attended panel discussion (about 150 students) on Gay Marriage coordinated by Tom Powers held on April 15 in Solon Campus Center 120. Participants included Earl Austin, Northland Gay Men's Center, Larry Knopp, UMD Geography Department, Ashley Lundstrom, UMD Student, Bruce Mork, UMD Sociology-Anthropology Department, Beth Olson, Gay Parent and Tom Powers, Dept. of Political Science (Moderator).

We hope to establish a few more projects for this coming year including a major speaker, an advertising campaign identifying our diversity, and the positive norming campaign.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Petersen-Perlman, Director
Office of Equal Opportunity