
**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
INITIATIVE FOR STUDENTS
EXTERNAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEE REPORT
MAY 2010**

**MEETING WITH CORE COMMITTEE & EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MARCH 13, 2010 MORNING**

On March 13, 2010, the Core Committee for the Diversity and Inclusion Initiative for Students met with an External Advisory Committee from 9:00am-12:30pm. The External Advisors include Jenna Bond-Louden '04, Columbia MBA student; Shirley M. Ramirez, Vice President for Institutional Planning and Community Engagement, Lafayette College (*and as of July 1, 2010, Dean of College at Middlebury College*); Joi D. Lewis, Dean of Student Life and Vice Provost, Mills College; and Kristen Renn, Associate Professor, Higher, Adult, & Lifelong Education, Michigan State University.

Prior to the March 13 meetings, members of the External Advisor Committee had received and reviewed the same Briefing Book that was used by the Core Committee. The Briefing Book contained a range of qualitative and quantitative data focusing on diversity and inclusion at Wellesley. During the morning session, the Core Committee shared with the External Committee their thinking behind the four strategic directions developed on February 13 (*by the Core Committee*). The Core Committee also shared their hopes and concerns moving forward. The External Advisory Committee shared their experiences and initial perspectives about how Wellesley College could move forward on these strategic directions.

**EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS - MARCH 13, 2010**

During the afternoon, the consultants met with the External Advisory Committee. With the Committee's understanding of the current situation provided by the Briefing Book and the morning presentation by the Core Committee, the Committee was charged to develop recommendations in two areas.

Charge to the External Advisory Committee

1. Structural changes in Student Affairs needed to support the Strategic Directions and Results recommended by the Core Committee.
2. Requirements for a senior level College position with diversity as part of the position's responsibilities.

Overall Recommendations from the External Advisory Committee

1. **Reorganization of Student Affairs.** Given our understanding of Wellesley College's current Student Affairs structure and the recommendations from the Core Committee, we recommend a reorganization of Student Affairs with a particular focus on the role of the cultural advisors. The Committee believes that the current structure of assigning individual advisors to individual cultural groups does not adequately meet the current needs of students nor will it effectively support the strategic directions and results recommended by the Core Committee. For instance,

as noted in the detailed recommendations, the current model fails to support the needs of other identity groups that may be smaller in numbers yet experience significant challenges related to their academic and co-curricular life at Wellesley, e.g. Native Students. This results in a persistent sense of inequitable treatment and access to resources based on identity.

We recommend redeploying the cultural advisor positions to be Directors of Intercultural Affairs with overall responsibility for working with and across cultural groups. The Directors would not be responsible for just one cultural group. The Directors would be responsible for consulting to all cultural groups as they address their distinct challenges as well as developing structures for inter-group collaboration and dialogue.

2. **Senior Level Position.** Our overall recommendation is that Wellesley College create a senior level position reporting to the President with responsibility for leading the integration of diversity across the institution including institutional planning, decision-making processes, policies, systems and structures within the institution. We strongly recommend that the word “Diversity” not be in the title of this position. The word diversity will communicate a smaller scope of responsibility and reinforce diversity as a “separate” function as opposed to an element that should be factor into every aspect of planning, decision-making, and academic and co curricular programming. In this report, we use the working title “Dean of Institutional Planning and Development.”

Detailed rationale for these recommendations is outlined in the next section of this report.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

We were asked to review Student Affairs' current organizational resources and structure and to recommend an organizational model that can effectively support achievement of the four strategic directions for Diversity and Inclusion for Students developed by the Core Committee. The four strategic directions are Student Success, Leadership Development, Affirmation and Collaboration, and Diversity and Inclusion Education. These strategic directions and results will require a different approach and organizational model for supporting students from historically marginalized groups while engaging a broader range of students and student groups from across the campus. Given the ambition of these strategic directions, we believe that a new organizational structure within Student Life should address the following criteria.

Criteria

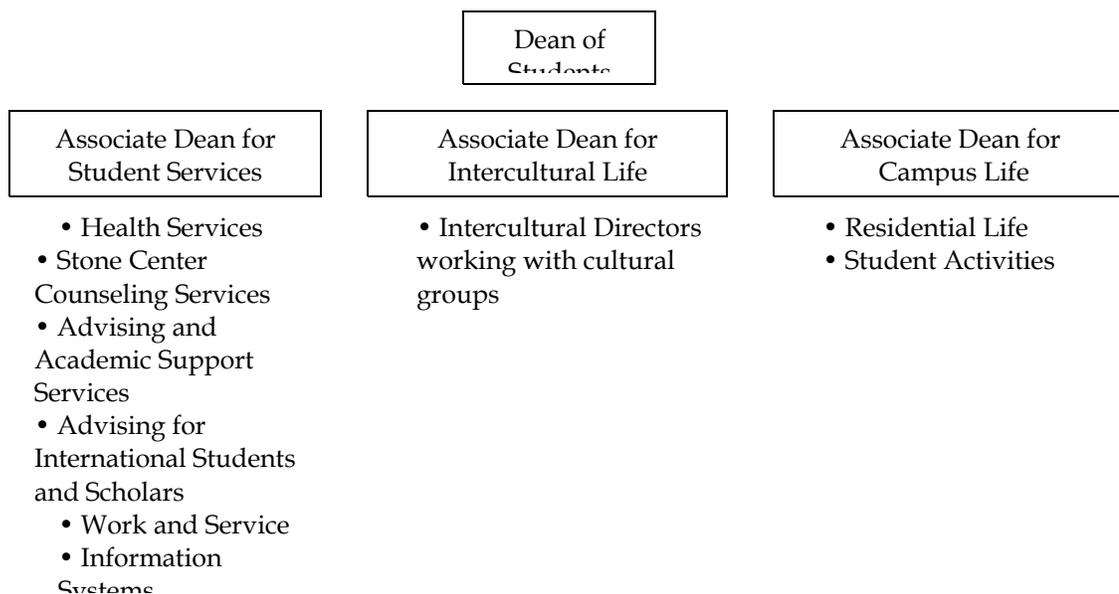
- Reframe the responsibilities of the cultural advisors to be defined by function and capacity rather than by cultural groups
 - Address perceptions of inequitable distribution of resources across cultural groups
 - Support the needs of currently underserved identity groups that may be smaller in numbers yet experience significant challenges related to their academic and co-curricular life at Wellesley, e.g. Native Students
 - Address issues or opportunities related to multiple identities not currently addressed
- Reframe professional staff's focus to consulting and advising cultural groups and away from individual case management and lower level administrative support
 - Focus on developing student leaders to lead and manage cultural organizations
 - Provide a baseline of administrative support to cultural organizations
- Develop professional staffs' ability to facilitate intentional connections across differences and expand capacity for building unlikely allies
 - Serve as student advocates and address campus climate issues
 - Identify and leverage opportunities for coordination, collaboration, and synergy among cultural programs
- Provide structures and systems for on-going proactive dialogue about world views, power and oppression, multiple identities and intersections, and build community among students who are excited to make connections as they explore these questions
 - Ensure that students develop their leadership capacity to engage in conversation

on a variety of subjects, from social justice to identity issues

- Assist in mobilizing resources needed to enhance student success within curricular and co-curricular experiences through strong connections and collaborations with faculty and other administrative functions
- Address the perception of some students that the burden of doing diversity works falls primarily on students. Make visible how the responsibility is shared among staff, students and faculty.
- Strengthen explicit collaborations with Class Deans and the Dean of the College as they provide careful guidance, advising, and follow-up to meet the unique needs of each student
- Collaborate with Student Activities to provide access to cultural competency training for all student organizations
- Assist with the planning and implementation of divisional programs, for example, orientation and residential life student staff training

Recommended Organizational Changes

We recognize that there may be a number of organizational models that Wellesley could develop to satisfy the criteria stated above. We also understand that fiscal realities and aspects of Wellesley's culture must be factored into any organizational redesign. We do believe that the following organizational model would address the stated criteria. It represents our best thinking with the amount of time and information available for our deliberations.



A. Fewer direct reports to the Dean of Students.

- Currently, the Dean of Students has eight direct reports

including an Executive Assistant. As a result, we imagine that the Dean is often pulled into day-to-day operations leaving little time for strategic planning, identifying cross-functional initiatives within Student Life, and building needed partnerships with faculty and other administrative offices to enhance students' experience at Wellesley.

B. Three Associate Deans reporting to the Dean of Students.

- With three leaders working as a team with the Dean, there will be more opportunity to creatively leverage expertise and experience from within all of Student Life; to develop cross-functional communication and information systems that can more effectively support the needs of individual students and interests of student groups; and to proactively develop programs or services.

1. Associate Dean for Intercultural Life.

- We recommend creating an Associate Dean for Intercultural Life. Specifically, we recommend redeploying current human and financial resources now used to support Wellesley's cultural groups, specifically Students of African Descent, Latina Student Group, Asian-American Student Group, and LGBTQ Student Group. These resources will be reallocated to support intercultural life that encompasses student leadership development, cultural organization support and programming, and intercultural interactions.

Current Deficiencies with Cultural Advisor Model

- Based on our review of briefing materials provided as background information for this Initiative, the current structure and role of the cultural advisors does not fully address the needs of their respective constituent groups. Both advisors and students report being overworked and burdened by the administrative and programmatic functions of the cultural groups. Advisors report having little time to proactively advise and are often pulled into administrative support roles. Students report that time investments in their cultural groups negatively affects their academics and reduces the amount of time for interacting with other groups. Given limited resources, it will be difficult to address this level of organizational and personal stress with the current model.
- Additionally, the current model fails to support the needs of other identity groups that may be smaller in numbers yet experience significant challenges related to their academic and co-curricular life at Wellesley, e.g. Native Students. This results in a persistent sense of inequitable treatment and access to resources based on identity.
- As noted in the results of recent focus groups, students are increasingly claiming the multiple aspects of their identities as significant and worthy of exploration. Within the Student Life Division, there are no structures, systems or staff models in place to address issues or opportunities related to

multiple identities.

- Given the demands put on the advisors, there is little time for student leadership or organizational development for cultural organizations. As noted in the briefing documents, student groups are often not effectively lead or managed resulting in frustration, unintended exclusionary behaviors, and inefficient use of available resources.

In Support of the Strategic Directions

- The Core Committee developed four strategic directions to guide Wellesley's collective efforts for the foreseeable future. Within the Leadership Development Strategic Direction, three of the desired results are:

Multicultural competency should be the cornerstone of all student leadership training programs.

Students successfully use inductive and deductive reasoning to understand diverse perspectives, to resolve conflicts that occur between individuals and groups, and to work in culturally diverse groups toward a common goal.

Leadership development will more explicitly integrate students' multiple identities and their intersections.

- Within the Affirmation and Collaboration Strategic Direction, two of the desired results are:

The College supports all students from historically marginalized groups by providing effective multicultural advising and resources.

All students appreciate their individual strengths and characteristics and understand aspects of their social identity that lead to self-acceptance as well as empathy and appreciation for others.

- To support these results, we recommend establishing an Associate Dean for Intercultural Affairs and recasting the positions of the current cultural advisors.

Associate Dean for Intercultural Life – Primary Responsibilities

- The primary responsibilities of the Associate Dean for Intercultural Affairs is to programmatically support student leadership development; strengthen student cultural organizations' ability to set direction and manage themselves; consult to cultural groups as they address their distinct challenges; create structures for inter-group collaboration and dialogue; implement cultural competency training for students; and provide baseline administrative support for cultural organizations.
- This position would take leadership in creating intentional connections across differences and expand capacity for building unlikely allies. This position would hold space for both organizational leadership and individual leadership in terms of community and Intercultural Life. Multiple-identities would be central in the development of the mission and goals of this role. There will be a much greater sense of resources both human and financial and less of a fragmented approach. It would be extremely critical for the work of this Office to be intricately

connected to both the curricular and co-curricular programs.

Directors of Intercultural Affairs – Primary Responsibilities

- Based on our review of the briefing documents combined with our own experiences, we recommend that there be three Intercultural Directors reporting to the Associate Dean for Intercultural Affairs. All directors would be responsible for working with all students and clubs and organizations to increase their capacity for creating an inclusive and multicultural community and fostering students' individual development. The key responsibilities for the position of Intercultural Director should include:
 - Develop student leaders using a research-based model that can be continually assessed and strengthened;
 - Consult on managing and sustaining student cultural organizations;
 - Provide access to resources on campus and off campus to address specific challenges related to students' identities and cultural backgrounds;
 - Develop and coordinate faculty and staff coalitions/resources that can help support and advocate for the needs, challenges and interests of specific identity/cultural groups;
 - Provide access to skills development – advocacy, communication, and cultural competence;
 - Coordinate training efforts and forums for dialogue with a focus on bringing groups together to dialogue about culture and identity;
 - Consult on cross-group collaborations to foster a greater sense of connection and community campus-wide;
 - Work closely with other Student Life staff and faculty in support of proactive and coordinated efforts for academic advising;
 - Advise student leaders and their cultural organizations on programming efforts;
 - Build and sustain institutional knowledge in support of student cultural organizations.
- The Office for Religious and Spiritual Life is perceived as an effective model for creating space and programming for groups representing different religious denominations and cultures. Our sense is that this Office should be part of Intercultural Life.

2. Associate Dean for Student Services.

- Understanding that there are different types of services for students, we recommend consolidating direct student services under one Associate Dean. By direct services, we mean those services that students seek out to support their academic, emotional and physical well being. While this organizational change

- will streamline resources, the primary rationale is that significant synergies and value can be created, e.g. shared, accessible data about students; proactive team approach to identifying and outreaching to students who may be at risk; innovations in programs to address academic and health needs. There is an opportunity to implement a more integrated and holistic approach to supporting individual students intellectual, emotional and physical health.
- We believe that the Associate Dean of Student Services and her/his staff will be critical and central to efforts related to the Student Success strategic direction. Their ability to develop proactive strategies and coordinated responses in supporting each student's "academic excellence and personal preparedness" is essential to student success. The services we recommend be included are Health Services, Stone Center Counseling Services, Advising and Academic Support Services, Advising for International Students and Scholars, Work and Service, and Information Systems.

3. Associate Dean of Campus Life

- The Associate Dean of Campus Life has overall responsibility for residential life and student activities. While our knowledge about the current structure of these functions is minimal, our sense is that little needs to structurally change in this area. However, through a strong collaboration with the Associate Dean of Intercultural Life, there is an enormous opportunity to coordinate resources and develop high impact initiatives that will help Wellesley realize the Strategic Directions for diversity and inclusion.

**SENIOR LEVEL OFFICER OVERSEEING DIVERSITY
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Criteria

- Restructure to meet changing needs.
 - While many colleges have made great strides in diversifying their student bodies, institutional structures typically have not been realigned to meet the new demands. The “diversity function” is typically on the margin of the institution with responsibility for supporting historically marginalized groups and cultural group programming. These support services have been incredibly important for students because they have needed a safe place to deal with their experiences of isolation within their academic and co-curricular lives. For instance, as noted in the briefing comments, students at Wellesley can experience insensitive treatment from faculty in and outside of the classroom, a lack of curriculum that reflects their cultural backgrounds, and lack of recognition students’ investment in co-curricular leadership.
- Structure diversity and inclusion within core functions.
 - Given that most diversity functions on college campuses, e.g. multicultural centers, do not have the power, influence or resources to effect fundamental change related to the academic or co-curricular experience, they are left with a “shore them up” model for students from historically marginalized groups. This model simply prevents well intended institutions from achieving their desire to support all students’ success and truly build an inclusive culture.
- Move diversity and inclusion efforts from the margins.
 - An underlying principle of our recommendation is that diversity be fully integrated into the core strategies, systems and structures of the institution. Diversity should be an integral part of students’ residential, co-curricular and academic experience. To achieve this integration, we recommend that they this senior level position hold the title of Dean or Vice President with support from the Board of Trustees and President to hold faculty and administrators accountable for achieving diversity benchmarks.

Recommendations

A. Create a senior level position

- Our overall recommendation is that Wellesley College create a senior level position reporting to the President with responsibility for leading the integration of diversity into institution planning as well as decision-making processes, systems and structures within the institution. We strongly recommend that the word “Diversity” not be in the title of this position. The word diversity will communicate a smaller scope of responsibility and reinforce diversity as a “separate” function as opposed to an element that should be factor into every aspect of planning, decision-making, and academic and co curricular programming.

Dean of Institutional Planning and Development

In this report, we use the working title “Dean of Institutional Planning and Development.”

Associate Dean for Intercultural Development	Associate Dean for Assessment & Faculty Development
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In addition to the Dean, there would be two Associate Deans with responsibilities the following responsibilities.

1. *Associate Dean for Assessment and Faculty Development*
 - This Associate Dean would have the following areas of responsibility.
 - Faculty Hiring, Retention and Promotion, Faculty Fellowships Curriculum Development
 - A Center for Teaching, Learning and Research that would be the vehicle for faculty development and student learning / assessment
 - This Associate Dean would take the lead in integrating diversity into the outcomes associated with the position’s responsibilities. The goals would be to more fully develop a diverse and culturally aware faculty, multicultural curricula, and effective academic support for students from all backgrounds.
2. *Associate Dean for Intercultural Development*
 - Through research, data analysis and development of methodologies, this Associate Dean’s position would focus on developing the institutional capacity needed to more fully support a multicultural and diverse student body. This Associate Dean would work closely with both faculty and Student Life to develop and implement policies, processes and programs to further integrate diversity values into the core of the institution.
 - Policy Development. This function would be an extension of institutional research and planning. It would be implemented in a way that factors diversity issues and principles into policy implementation.
 - Intercultural Development. Related to Intercultural Affairs in Student Life, we see this Associate Dean leading the efforts to develop research-based programs for faculty, staff and student development including multicultural competency training, training in difficult dialogues, and leadership development programs for staff, faculty and students. The goal is to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies needed by faculty, staff and students to lead and participate in an intellectual community that is inclusive, can dialogue constructively, and values differences. This Associate Dean is responsible for working with faculty and student life to develop long term institutional capacity to support and leverage an extraordinary diverse community.

○ This Associate Dean would be responsible for researching and developing these programs for use by faculty, students and staff. For instance, the Associate Deans in Student Life would rely heavily on utilizing these research-based programs to support their efforts, e.g. conducting dialogue sessions, leadership development from a multicultural framework, cultural competency development. This Associate Dean would also work closely with her/his peer (*other Associate Dean*) to integrate these research-based programs into faculty development, curriculum development, and student assessment / learning.

OVERALL REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS

Thinking about the appointment of a senior level officer position (*Dean of Institutional Planning and Development*) and a reorganization of the Student Affairs Division, we noted that the following actions could increase the likelihood of success of moving diversity and inclusion to an entirely new level at Wellesley College.

1. The development of a Community Pledge focused on civility and student accountability could be one way to develop an understanding that all members of the Wellesley community have a role to play in fostering an inclusive community where all students can experience success and achieve their academic goals.
2. Clarity about roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities
3. Every senior staff member needs to be part of the conversation.
4. Senior staff must be willing to negotiate sharing of power.
5. The College needs to look deeply at the role of academic advising and at how effectively the role of academic advising is supporting the success of all students. The Provost will need to be in lock step with the Dean of Institutional Planning and Development.
6. The “achievement gap” needs to be re-linguaged with a focus on student success. Any student admitted to Wellesley is already a high achiever. The questions are how to redefine success in the context of a multicultural and diverse institution and how to support each student in achieving success in her own right while at Wellesley.
7. Wellesley should assess the implications of using a bell curve as it relates to supporting the success of all students.
8. The Board of Trustees and President will need to devote resources to the Dean of Institutional Planning and Development and Student Life.
9. The College has to have the willingness to eliminate or redeploy positions.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In reviewing the briefing materials, we learned that there is a strong desire among Wellesley community members to rethink physical space for cultural groups and inter-group collaborations. In a summary of the focus groups held across campus in November and December, it was reported:

While not wanting to take away space for various cultural groups, focus group participants would like to have a physical space that could be used to bring students together from across campus. Many referred to such a space as the Wellesley College Multicultural Center in which the individual spaces for all cultural groups could be located.

Students would like to see policies and practices that create time, space and incentives for students to reach beyond one identity group and work together.

As a result, we entertained the following options for rethinking space in support of intercultural life at Wellesley College.

Three Physical Spaces

- Multifaith Center. From what we have read and heard, the Multifaith Center seems to work well as a location used by individual faiths as well as a place for inter-religion dialogue and programming. The Center provides spaces for regular gathering for all of Wellesley's religious communities. The Center also serves as a place to engage community members in programs on interfaith understanding, dialogue, and conflict resolution with opportunities for constructing meaning through spiritual reflection and practice.
- Multicultural Center. We recommend either renovating an existing facility or building a new space that will provide space for individual cultural groups as well as space for joint programming and inter-group dialogue and collaborations.
- Center for Gender Identity and Expression. We are surprised that there seems to be little visible focus on gender identity and expression. We believe that it is important to make "what does it mean to be a women's college?" more central to the Wellesley experience. We suggest the College explore the possibilities of deepening its partnership with the Wellesley Center for Research on Women. There is an opportunity to be more intentional about leveraging the expertise of the Center for Research on Women in ways that support gender identity and development.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

We recommend that Wellesley take several short term actions that reflect responsiveness to the issues raised by students, staff and faculty in this process and demonstrate heightened institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion at Wellesley.

1. Hire a Senior Level Officer who has diversity in her/his portfolio and *not* in her or his title.
2. Reorganize Student Affairs in a way that addresses the criteria we outlined earlier in this report.
3. Pilot a residential program, *Live and Learn*. Perhaps this program could be piloted with 1st year students that would place students from different cultures onto 2 residential floors. As members of this intentional community, students would learn how to have difficult dialogues with help from trained Resident Directors and Directors of Intercultural Affairs.
4. Increase the visibility and presence of the President and officers at events planned to advance diversity and inclusion. Create forums that will provide an opportunity for further developing an inclusive culture and sense of community at Wellesley College.
5. As this current initiative concludes, it is essential to have a plan in place for determining how and if the Core Committee will be utilized moving forward.