

**COMMITTEE ON INTERCULTURAL AND GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011**

**Committee Membership 2010-2011:**

- Rochelle Calhoun, Dean of Student Affairs
- Herb Crossman, Assistant Director for EEO and Workforce Diversity
- J. Ginger Ertz, Museum Educator, Tang Teaching Museum/Art Gallery
- Cori Filson, Director, Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges (committee co-chair)
- Winston Grady-Willis, Director of Intercultural Studies/Associate Professor of American Studies (committee co-chair)
- Margaret Hegener, Coordinator for Students with Disabilities
- Barbara Krause, Executive Director, Office of the President
- Mariel Martin, Director, Office of Student Diversity Programs
- Peter McCarthy, Lecturer, Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work
- Dean Mendes, Associate Director of Admissions
- Sulin Ngo, Class of '11, SGA Vice President of Diversity Affairs
- Barry Pritzker, Director, Office of Foundation and Corporate Relations
- Julia Routbort, Director, Counseling Center

**Committee Membership 2011-2012:**

- Jovany Andujar, Class of '13, SGA Vice President of Diversity Affairs
- Rochelle Calhoun, Dean of Student Affairs
- Dung-Lan Chen, Associate Librarian
- Herb Crossman, Assistant Director for EEO and Workforce Diversity
- J. Ginger Ertz, Museum Educator, Tang Teaching Museum/Art Gallery
- Cori Filson, Director, Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges (committee co-chair)
- Margaret Hegener, Coordinator for Students with Disabilities
- Barbara Krause, Executive Director, Office of the President
- Mariel Martin, Director, Office of Student Diversity Programs
- Michael Ennis-McMillan, Associate Professor of Anthropology (committee co-chair)
- Dean Mendes, Associate Director of Admissions
- Barry Pritzker, Director, Office of Foundation and Corporate Relations
- Julia Routbort, Director, Counseling Center
- Additional student representative – TBA

**Introduction**

CIGU met twelve times (for a minimum of 80 minutes per meeting) during the 2010-2011 academic year, including two meetings to conduct exit interviews with graduating students of color. The committee continues to work to support Goal II of the Strategic Plan and to respond to specific incidents and events that impact issues of domestic and international diversity and concerns relating to inclusion and climate on campus.

**Topics of Discussion and Concern**

Topics and concerns discussed in the September CIGU retreat continued to inform our conversations and work throughout the year. Specifically,

- ongoing climate issues brought to our attention through exit interviews with graduating students of color and by reports from international faculty;

- the need to examine issues of bias and inclusion based on race, socio-economic background and sexual orientation;
- the importance of the Intergroup Relations (IRG) program to educating students, faculty and staff regarding issues around inclusion and diversity;
- the need to revisit the Cultural Diversity/Non-Western requirement and the timing of students' completion of this requirement;
- the lack of sustained progress in attracting and retaining faculty and staff of color;
- CIGU's role in the development and assessment of goals related to intercultural literacy (as outlined in President Glotzbach's November 2007 piece titled *Intercultural Literacy*).

This year CIGU continued its work in smaller sub-groups on the areas of assessment, international student/faculty/staff concerns, and climate and inclusion. Each of the sub-groups established concrete goals that focused their attention throughout the year. CIGU invited several guests to join our meetings to discuss these areas: Sue Layden, Associate Dean of Student Affairs, presented data from the CHAS climate survey; Ann Henderson, Registrar and Director of Institutional Research, presented findings from the NSSE survey; Mehmet Odkeon, professor of Economics, presented ongoing issues faced by international faculty. CIGU also met with SGA members in April to discuss their concerns regarding threats in the SkidNews directed toward specific community members.

Of specific importance is the work CIGU did in light of the Compton's incident and its aftermath in the spring of 2011. This situation took up much of CIGU's time and attention as it embodied many of the issues we have been struggling with – as a committee and a community – since CIGU was constituted in 2008. All of our spring meetings focused on concerns that came out of the incident; the incident's effect on various community cohorts; the response of the larger Saratoga community and the Skidmore campus to the events; the response to subsequent perceived attacks on individual supporters of the accused students; etc.

### **Initiatives/Programming Supported by CIGU**

- Intersections Series (October 2010-April 2011): With support from CIGU, Winston Grady-Willis developed and delivered a year-long series in which panels composed of faculty, students and staff examined how issues of race, gender, faith, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality and socioeconomic class affect and challenge members of the Skidmore community. The Intersections Series culminated in a campus visit by Cornel West in April 2011. While on campus Cornel West met with students and faculty and gave a public lecture titled "Race and Democracy in the Age of Obama."
- Workshop on Inclusive Hiring (October 2010): Winston Grady-Willis held a workshop to prepare faculty to conduct searches for open tenure track lines this year and to present best and worst practices and strategies for an effective search and hire. Note: CIGU discussed the need for similar training for non-faculty searches; however, a specific program is still not in place.
- Bias Response Group (BRG): BRG, a sub-committee of CIGU, targeted gender bias as their focus in 2010-2011. BRG continued to alert the community to bias incidents that occurred; they were particularly concerned with the escalation of violence, especially against students of color and LGBTQ students. They also worked with Campus Safety to improve interactions with students of color. ON October 13, 2010, BRG held a summit meeting with officials from Saratoga to share students' experiences downtown.
- Considering Difference Requirement: With the full support of CIGU, Winston Grady-Willis, as Director of Intercultural Studies, worked with Michael Arnush, as a representative of CEPP, to conduct an analysis of Cultural Diversity courses. The result was a proposal to revise the current language for CD course guidelines and a change in the name of the

- CD requirement from “Cultural Diversity” to “Considering Difference.” CEPP is likely to review the proposal during the fall semester.
- Teach In (February 2011): Winston Grady-Willis organized a community-wide Teach In in response to the Compton’s incident. Speakers presented a variety of views regarding the incident, including an overview of racism in the American justice system by guest speaker Gaspar Castillo, a defense attorney from Albany. Several Skidmore community members spoke of the historical and social context of racism and how those affect our perceptions of the incident and of the effects of the responses and threats from the community. Speakers from Skidmore included Janet Casey, professor of English; Mariel Martin, Director of Student Diversity Programs; Mason Stokes, chair of English; Jon Zibbell, professor of Anthropology; and Lisa Grady-Willis, professor of Theater.
  - Exit Interviews (May 2011): Professor Joshua Woodfork began conducting interviews five years ago with graduating students of color. This is an opportunity for students of color who will be graduating in May to talk about their experiences—what worked for them and what did not, both inside and outside the classroom—in an effort to gather information. Confidentiality is maintained; however, CIGU members present take notes in an effort to collect data that can be shared with the Skidmore community. Two exit interviews with 12 graduating students of color were conducted in May. (CIGU will issue a separate report in the fall.)
  - Statement to the Community (May 2011): CIGU’s work culminated in a statement to the community based on our growing concerns regarding the climate at Skidmore. Please see next section for details.

### **CIGU Statement and Recommendations (Appendix A)**

While the members of CIGU believe that serious institutional effort has been made to move forward with Goal II, we ended the year deeply troubled and considerably frustrated by the dialogue and actions related to diversity and inclusion that we witnessed throughout 2010-2011. The events and responses surrounding the Compton’s incident, as well as the departure of several colleagues who have been critical in our diversity initiative, have left many CIGU members questioning the feasibility of advancing Goal II. The statement CIGU presented to the community, and the recommendations CIGU presented to the president and IPPC, are the committee’s attempt to illuminate what we see as the major impediments to advancing Goal II in a significant and sustained manner. To reiterate what was expressed in the statement, CIGU believes Skidmore is at a crucial moment in our history in terms of our attitudes and actions regarding diversity and inclusion. As a community we must make real our stated commitment to these principles. We see our statement as a step toward this goal.

### **Conclusion**

As evidenced in the CIGU Statement of May 2011, members of CIGU ended the year discouraged by the events and faculty/staff departures that Skidmore experienced in 2010-2011. We are pleased to see that progress has been made on some recommendations; however, it is clear that much work needs to be done in 2011-2012 to reestablish the importance of Goal II as a community priority.

**Note:** The Annual Report was approved by CIGU on Tuesday, September 20, 2011, and it was reviewed by IPPC on Friday, September 23, 2011.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Committee on Intercultural and Global Understanding Statement to Community**

#### **Who we are:**

CIGU is a subcommittee of the IPPC (Institutional Policy and Planning Committee). We are charged with advising the President and other college offices and bodies regarding issues related to intercultural and global understanding. We are guided by Goal II of the College's *Strategic Plan*, which states:

We will challenge every Skidmore student to develop the intercultural understanding and global awareness necessary to thrive in the complex and increasingly interconnected world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The current members of CIGU include: Co-chairs, Cori Filson and Winston Grady-Willis; Rochelle Calhoun, Ginger Ertz, Meg Hegener, Herb Crossman, Peter McCarthy, Julia Routbort, Mariel Martin, Dean Mendes, Barbara Krause, Barry Pritzker, and Sulin Ngo.

CIGU sees our role as one of continuing to be involved in discussions regarding new institutional initiatives and offering support and guidance as appropriate. For example, CIGU understands that the College's Human Resources team has been working on a comprehensive campus-wide employee educational program on diversity-related issues, and we fully support that effort.

#### **What we do:**

CIGU meets monthly to discuss agenda items related to diversity issues on campus. We invite members of the community (including faculty, staff, and students) to meetings to help us better understand current issues, including: hiring, staffing, funding, curriculum requirements, and recruitment and retention data. For the last several years, we have conducted confidential exit interviews with graduating students of color. CIGU advises college officials on policy issues, practices, and procedures related to diversity, intercultural and global understanding, intercultural literacy, issues of campus climate, and other related matters. CIGU serves as a resource to the College officials charged with coordinating and implementing Skidmore's strategic efforts in those areas; CIGU also is authorized to introduce appropriate campus initiatives in these areas on its own accord, creating working groups or involving other offices as appropriate.

#### **What we see:**

CIGU understands that Goal II is an integral part of Skidmore's *Strategic Plan*, and we believe that the College has worked vigorously and with integrity in the last several years to implement that goal in a systematic and sustained way.

However, we have been particularly struck and troubled by the dialogue and actions related to diversity this academic year. In particular, after the community meeting which occurred on February 18, 2011, CIGU met as a group and we collectively decided to issue this statement. We believe that Skidmore is currently at a crucial moment in our efforts to become a diverse, inclusive, and interculturally literate campus -- a moment of considerable frustration, misunderstanding, and differences. Such moments of impasse occur when the stakes are high, when the College as a whole can either move away from the challenges that implementing Goal II involves or when we can acknowledge the real impediments that exist on campus and make changes in our daily practices—institutionally, professionally, and personally—in the interest of making Skidmore a truly diverse and welcoming place for all.

We are deeply troubled and particularly frustrated by the following three institutional dynamics that we believe impede real dialogue and hinder our collective progress in advancing Goal II. CIGU highlights them in this statement because we believe that unless we are willing to actually name these impediments, they will not change. These impediments are:

1. As a community, we do not hear or believe the stories that we do not want to hear or believe.

Over and over again, CIGU members and some other members of our community have been at open meetings and forums where students of color and/or LGBTQ students tell us in specific, detailed, and emotionally painful ways how they are marginalized on campus, in the classroom, and in the community of Saratoga Springs. In the last several years, we have also read multiple reports from the Bias Response Group about acts of violence that have targeted members of our community because of their sexual orientation and about verbal intimidation and harassment based on race, gender, sexual orientation and religion. During exit interviews with graduating students of color, CIGU and other community members have repeatedly heard themes of alienation, frustration, and disempowerment. We thank those students who have been passionate and courageous in speaking up about deeply painful experiences in public forums. In being honest and clear about their experiences, these students are right to demand the same honesty and clarity from their College.

Unfortunately, these troubling accounts are often heard again and again by a relatively small group of people who attend these meetings. And even more fundamentally troubling, we have been part of numerous conversations on campus where students' stories of alienation, frustration, and disempowerment are discounted or dismissed. We have heard "it's not so bad" or "it is getting better" or "that is just one person's version of reality." These types of comments come from a status of privilege that is neither acknowledged nor understood, let alone questioned. As a historically White institution of relative wealth, Skidmore needs to acknowledge more fully and honestly our historical context of privilege and the continuing effects of institutionalized racism, as well as the current campus realities of bias and marginalization. Without this acknowledgement, change cannot occur.

2. As a community, we need a clearer understanding of the urgency of diversity-related initiatives and a clearer path for decision-making.

We understand that educational institutions typically run by committee processes that can be slow, cumbersome and inefficient. CIGU is no different, and we have noted that we have been slower in bringing crucial issues to the fore than most of us would have wished, especially during this incredibly challenging semester. Of course, CIGU is part of a relatively new structure charged with leading the implementation of Goal II; that structure intentionally reflects the conviction that responsibility for advancing diversity-related initiatives must be located throughout the College. Moreover, although the charge from IPPC to CIGU clearly states that "CIGU may introduce appropriate campus initiatives on its own accord" (after consulting as appropriate), several of us are concerned that this authority is not recognized broadly across campus. CIGU believes that the strategic importance of Goal II must be reflected more deeply in the work of the College's shared governance structure. We further believe that student voices reflecting their lived experiences on campus must be heard in that shared governance work.

3. As a community, we must ensure that we create real institutional capacity to sustain the changes needed to support diversity and inclusion on our campus.

At Skidmore, we tend to highlight initiatives and programs that represent real change and that do move us forward in terms of meeting Goal II of the *Strategic Plan*. But, we often fail to acknowledge that these initiatives and programs frequently lack permanent funding, institutional infrastructure, or dedicated staffing. These programs, which can be both curricular and co-

curricular, are not institutionally incorporated in ways that will ensure they can survive past the presence of those committed and skilled individuals who have founded them.

This process—where we collectively point to programs and personnel who do represent progress towards meeting Goal II, without mentioning or addressing that their existence is often temporary—is deeply concerning and results in frustration and mistrust among many students, staff, and faculty who support the objectives of intercultural and global understanding. Also of great concern is that we seem content with this temporary structure and have not made progress toward significant permanent support of these initiatives.

What we suggest:

We believe that the following concrete suggestions would make a significant difference in resolving our current impasse.

1. Review the “diversity triad” structure and the supporting role of CIGU to determine whether any changes should be made. Particular questions should include budgetary support and any structural impediments to effectiveness.
2. Further institutionalization of IGR, including administrative staff support and course releases for faculty members involved in the program.
3. Further institutionalization of other programs proven to move the College forward with its diversity priorities.
4. Establish clear expectations that faculty members attend pedagogy workshops focusing on diversity-related issues in the classroom.
5. Develop selected faculty lines dedicated to diversity-related academic fields.
6. Provide tenure-line target of opportunity hires for individuals from underrepresented groups who exhibit promise in terms of teaching, scholarship and service to the College.
7. Reinstate the NYU Minority Dissertation Fellowship and Consortium for Faculty Diversity initiatives.
8. Include a full-day diversity training as part of the FYE program for both students and Scribner seminar faculty.
9. Review current support for international faculty members (e.g., support for visa issues, etc.) and provide an appropriate support structure that addresses issues of attraction and retention of this cohort, including a presence on the Skidmore Website.

**Note:** The statement to the community was submitted to President's Cabinet and IPPC on Wednesday, May 18, 2011, and disseminated to the community via the “everyone-list” on Tuesday, September 27, 2011. (The statement without the recommendations was disseminated to the community via the “everyone-list” on Thursday, May 20, 2011, and again on Thursday, September 8, 2011.)