

**Philosophy Department Diversity Plan Progress Report**  
**Submitted by Prof. Claudia Mills, Departmental Diversity Representative**  
**January 31, 2007**

The Philosophy Department has had an unusually active year regarding diversity concerns, as a result of both the mandated climate survey and an unusually committee group of graduate students, who have organized regular meetings of the diversity committee and spearheaded a number of diversity initiatives. Here is our report.

**IMPROVING CLIMATE**

The departmental climate survey revealed that the great majority of respondents in all groups (undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty) felt either satisfied with the department or "neutral" about it. The narrative portion of the survey did uncover that students who were politically conservative or Christian often felt marginalized within the department. We have not taken any specific steps to address this concern, except for calling attention to it in a discussion at a department meeting.

A number of our courses deal with political philosophy and philosophy of religion, and these classes do tend to attract primarily liberal/questioning students, which could make more conservative and traditionally religious students feel uncomfortable, but we know of no formal way to address this problem.

**STUDENT ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY**

**Undergraduate students:**

Here we have taken the following steps, from our diversity plan:

- 1) We now have two undergraduate advisors, Dr. Sheralee Brindell and Dr. Dan Sturgis.
- 2) We held a teaching workshop for our graduate instructors on teaching about issues of race and class, conducted by Instructor Lisa Bates, who teaches very successfully in these areas.
- 3) We discussed the creation of a new undergraduate course, Philosophy 2280, Philosophy and Race, to attract more diverse students and create interest in this important area of emerging scholarship. (Note: paperwork to establish the course was submitted in fall of 2006).

**Graduate students:**

- 4) We discussed funding graduate students over the summer to work with Prof. Alison Jaggar to create a graduate-level course on philosophy and race. (Note: this initiative did take place, and the seminar was taught by Prof. Jaggar in fall of 2006).
- 5) We continued our program of graduate student mentoring.

**DIVERSE FACULTY AND STAFF**

A committee of graduate students and faculty was created to research promising African-American moral and political philosophers we might be able to approach for our open position in values. (Note: this committee's work resulted in a number of possible candidates being invited to

apply, including one who became a finalist for the position, although the Department ultimately voted to make an offer to a different candidate.)

We also committed ourselves to making special efforts to bring in "diverse" speakers to campus. African-American philosopher Charles Mills spoke at a phil. department colloquium in March. (Note: in spring 2007, Prof. Ajume Wingo will be joining our department as a visiting fellow.)

### **CHIEF OBSTACLES**

The chief obstacles we face to increasing diversity in our department is that philosophy has traditionally been a discipline that has not attracted many students of color, and so produces relatively few faculty of color. We have appreciated being offered "special opportunity" funds to try to recruit such faculty.