

From Every Nation—3 Themes

MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

When the original *Comprehensive Plan for Integrating North American Ethnic Minority Persons and Their Interests into Every Facet of Calvin's Institutional Life* (1985) was formulated, the college's primary focus of concern was North America—specifically, the United States. Over the intervening years, that focus has broadened dramatically. Thanks to increased migration and mobility, many once homogeneous communities are taking on an increasingly international flavor. The number of different nationalities, ethnicities, and cultural traditions to be found within Calvin's student body and faculty continues to multiply. Foreign travel and study have become commonplace; students

increasingly find careers with international agencies and multinational businesses, both here and abroad. The college continues to expand its engagement with individual and institutional partners across Asia and Africa as well as Europe and South America.

If we are serious about equipping ourselves and our students to become effective agents of renewal and shalom in contemporary society, we owe it to ourselves as well as to our global neighbors, here and elsewhere, to improve our abilities to build community, understanding, and justice across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines—in dorms, classrooms, the workplace, the church, and the public arena.

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ANTI-RACISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To the extent that racism is ultimately a matter of systemic and institutionalized misuse of power, an effective strategy to promote racial justice requires addressing each of the three dimensions of misdirected power identified previously:

1. structures and practices that disempower and control the persons at whom they are aimed;
2. structures and practices that allocate power and privilege to the dominant racial group;
3. structures and practices that implant notions of superiority in the hearts and minds of white people.

In order to combat institutional racism, this revised Comprehensive Plan, now known as *From Every Nation* or *FEN*, emphasizes the need for enhanced accountability. When there are persons of color occupying positions of authority, there will be greater potential for identifying ways in which power is being misused for racist ends. Therefore, many of the goals, strategies, and recommendations in this plan seek, implicitly or explicitly, to achieve structural changes that will hold the college more accountable to individuals and communities of color and also to empower

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RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION

A theme of *FEN* is the need to pursue the twin purposes of reconciliation and restoration. This theme finds expression, for example, in suggested strategies for training faculty, administration, and staff of the college not simply to confront personal and institutional racism, but, more importantly, to become active agents of racial reconciliation.

Although there are many possible models of reconciliation, the posture of self-emptying undergirds this revision. This

posture cannot simply be legislated or engineered. Like many of the virtues enumerated in the rationale for the new core curriculum, it is something that is largely “caught, not taught.” If members of the faculty, administration, and staff truly become agents of reconciliation, they will also serve as powerful models of reconciliation for students.

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THOUGHTS ON BEING THE INTERIM DEAN—MICHELLE LOYD-PAIGE

What a difference a few months make. In late April 2006, I was looking forward to wrapping up the spring semester, taking a break from teaching for the summer, and returning in the fall to my ideal slate of courses. My mother has always told me that if I want to make God laugh I should make plans. God must have needed a good laugh because in August of 2006 I became the **interim** dean for multicultural affairs.

I had never seriously considered becoming the dean for multicultural affairs because I was perfectly happy in the classroom and, perhaps more selfishly, I saw the position as too time consuming and the job description too lengthy. So how did I end up as the interim dean? God laughed at my *perfect* plan. When the last search for a dean for multicultural affairs did not result in the filling of the position, then Provost Carpenter asked me if I would consider being the interim dean. I told him I would have to pray about it because it would not be my first, second, third, or fourth choice. I prayed for direction, heard that heav-



enly chuckle, and knew what I was to do.

The job description, influenced by the *FEN* document, is lengthy. There is no way that I can do everything at once. The best way to accomplish a big task is to begin with a set of do-able goals. My priorities and goals for fall 2006 revolve around what I believe to be the most pressing concerns. I've listed them below because I believe it is important to be transparent and accountable ... even as an interim dean. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me at lopa@calvin.edu.

- Adaptation to the Dean's Office
- Reorganization of the Multicultural Affairs Committee (MAC)
- Planning for spring 2007 evaluation

of the Off-Campus program

- Review of CCE mandate and requirements – (Possible evaluation in spring)
- Collection of reports for *MAC State of the College Report*
- Implementation of *FEN*-related faculty development initiatives
- Planning for *FEN*-related faculty development
- Assessing hiring and retention of faculty (and staff) of color
- Update relevant print/electronic communication
- Planning summer 2007 Consultation of Afro-Christian Scholars in Higher Education
- Planning Summer 2007 Seminars in Christian Scholarship – “Transforming Voices: Worship and Preaching Among Afro-Christian Women”
- Regular communications with Dept. Chairs
- Regular communications with Calvin community

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On September 27, 2006, I, along with the Provost's Office, had hoped to host a campus-wide reception for Dr. Barbara Omolade to publicly say “Thank-you, for the leadership provided as the first dean for multicultural affairs.” Unfortunately, for various reasons, Barbara was unable to attend the reception. Barbara still lives in the Grand Rapids area and is working with several initiatives she supervised as dean, most notable the Consultation for Afro-Christian Scholars in Higher Education.

In the short time that I have served as the interim dean for multicultural affairs, I have come to more

deeply appreciate the task that first faced Dr. Omolade **and** the work of those who stepped up to the plate to assist Dean Barbara when she needed to take time off from work due to illness in 2005. While there were many people who offered assistance, I want to especially thank Edward Miller, Randal Jelks, Rhae-Ann Booker (who was the assistant dean for multicultural affairs for the 2005 – 2006 academic year), Heidi Rienstra, and Dawn Crook. Dawn had been Barbara's administrative assistant from day one. She has tracked budgets, drafted documents, arranged schedules, and facilitated the production of the MAC report. By

mid-October Dawn will have transitioned into a new position, administrative assistant for the dean for research and scholarship.

Thank you Dawn, Heidi, Rhae-Ann, Randal, and Edward you have all shown the love of Christ and the heart of a servant. You have exemplified what a Christian community is all about. Thank you, Barbara, for being the first dean for multicultural affairs and to everyone who helped her to move Calvin College closer to becoming a truly multicultural and ant-racist community.

MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Several months of the year have special designations. Some have several designations (October is Clergy Appreciation Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month); while some months have no nationally recognized designation (January and April). One of the components of multicultural citizenship is an awareness of other cultures, as well as one's own. Every future edition of this newsletter will highlight campus and local celebrations that coincide with the special designation of that month. However, because January and April do not have special designations, I have come up with designations that reflect the mission and heart of the campus. January will be *Multicultural Citizenship Month* and April will be *Dutch Heritage Month*.

Sept. 15-Oct. 15: **Hispanic Heritage Month**
October: **National Disability Employment Awareness Month**
November: **National American Indian Heritage Month**
December: **Universal Human Rights Month**
January: ***Multicultural Citizenship Month***
February: **Black History Month**
March: **Irish American Heritage Month**
April: ***Dutch Heritage Month***
May: **Asian Pacific Heritage Month**
June: **Pride Month**
Aug. 15–Sept. 15: **Appreciate Diversity Month**

NEXT MAC REPORT

The Multicultural Affairs Committee will begin collecting information for 2005-2006 within the next few weeks. Our timing is a bit delayed this year because I wanted to wait until my new administrative assistant was in place. Thank you for your patience.

Additional Multicultural Events at Calvin include:

- Oct. 12: **“Understanding the DARFUR Crisis”** lecture by Leif Manger, Chair, Social Anthropology Dep., Univ. of Bergen, Norway
7:30-9:00pm, Chapel Undercroft
- Oct. 13: **Aspirando Alto Conference**
75 Latino 7th-10th graders from Central High, Burton Middle schools, and Potter's House Christian Middle and High schools will come to campus for a weekend full of activities.
- Oct. 15: **World Food Day**
noon-3:00pm, DeVos Lobby
- Oct. 20: **Fridays at Calvin**
30-35 students from Gary, IN will be visiting on campus
- Oct. 27: **“The Music of the African Diaspora”** lecture by Brainerd Blyden-Taylor, conductor of the Nathaniel Dett Chorale
10:30-11:20am, Fine Arts Center Room 125
- Oct. 27: **The Nathaniel Dett Chorale**
The first professional choral group in Canada dedicated to Afro-centric music of all styles (tickets required).
8:00pm, Calvin Fine Arts Center
- Nov. 9: **Engineering Department**
22 students from Creston HS will be visiting the dept.
- Nov. 10: **“In What Sense was Nietzsche a Christian?”** lecture by Slavoj Zizek, philosopher and cultural/literary critic
6-10pm, Seminary Auditorium
- Nov. 13: **“How Immigration is Changing the Face of American Religion”** third annual Byker Chair lecture by Jose Casanova
3:30pm, Meeter Center
- Nov. 13: **“La dernière bande (Krapp's Last Tape)”** French play by Samuel Beckett (tickets required).
7:30pm, Gezon Auditorium

If you have events that you would like included in our next newsletter, please email details to multiculturalaffairs@calvin.edu.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

The West Michigan College and University Presidents Implementation Group is hosting a faculty reception on October 24 from 4 – 6pm at Davenport University – President's Room 415 E. Fulton, Grand Rapids. Nanette Reynolds, EdD will facilitate an informal conversation about anti-

racism efforts for and by faculty on college and university campuses in West Michigan – “Strategies for Anti-Racism Engagement on our Campuses.” Reynolds is the former director of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and has served as a diversity consultant for many

institutions of higher learning in the state. This is a great opportunity to share best-practices, network, and become re-energized for the work. RSVP by October 18 to Sara Park at park@hope.edu.

3 Themes of *FEN* (cont.)



MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP...

Given the increasingly global environment in which we find ourselves, the scope of the Comprehensive Plan cannot be limited solely to relations between the college's traditional constituencies and those sisters and brothers referred to in the original plan as "North American ethnic minorities." The plan must also take account of the much wider spectrum of peoples and tribes that make up the body of Christ, in Grand Rapids and around the world. At the same time, however, the fact that the college is located where it is, in the United States, means that all endeavors to promote cross-cultural justice and understanding are inevitably affected in some way by this nation's peculiar racial history and dynamics. Hence, while the scope of the plan may expand, its basic thrust and focus remain unchanged.

ANTI-RACISM AND ACCOUNTABILITY...

those who have previously been disempowered in ways that will permit Calvin College to operate in an actively anti-racist manner.

This emphasis on institutional racism and accountability should not be taken to mean that the specific anti-racist approach presented here represents the only way to analyze or address the issues in question. As a matter of both academic freedom and Christian liberty, faculty, staff, and students have the right to debate specific assumptions, conclusions, and suggested policies and to offer alternative analyses and alternative means of accomplishing particular goals. Mutual accountability for the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan does not preclude, and in fact encourages, multiple ways of promoting justice and contributing to these goals.

We're on the Web!

Visit our website:

www.calvin.edu/go/multicultural

Once there, you may download future issues of [Talking Points](#) or the full-text [FEN](#) document.

RECONCILIATION AND RESTORATION...

Restoration—the establishment of a genuinely multicultural community—is hardly a new emphasis; it is inherent in the bold vision of the original *Comprehensive Plan for Integrating North American Ethnic Minority Persons and Their Interests into Every Facet of Calvin's Institutional Life* (1985). That plan proposed specific implementation strategies and measurable goals for achieving such a community; it also emphasized the need for specific administrative authority and responsibility in working toward these goals. *FEN* continues to advocate strategies for institutional restructuring, but it shifts the emphasis from boldness to earnestness: rather than setting out specific quantitative goals and objectives, it establishes general policy directions, while assigning operational responsibility for establishing specific criteria and monitoring compliance to designated committees and administrators.



The goal of racial reconciliation and restoration—a goal that rests upon an active commitment to identify and root out racism—remains paramount. In the words of the original *Comprehensive Plan*, we must continue to strive toward "integrating North American ethnic minority persons and their interests into every facet of Calvin's institutional life." At the same time, as noted earlier, we must recognize that this North American focus is only part of the larger commitment to justice and multicultural community that is incumbent upon us as citizens of an increasingly interdependent global society and a truly global Kingdom of God. In the pursuit of this commitment, there is no need to pit one set of goals against another. The sensitivities and attitudes engendered by a focused commitment to anti-racism should work to foster genuine multicultural community not only for "North American ethnic minority persons" but also for international students and faculty, and even for white students and faculty who may have felt alienated by Dutch-CRC exclusionism in the past. And the pursuit of restoration in racial and cultural relations should work to reinforce, even as it is reinforced by, the pursuit of restoration in other areas such as gender and class relations.