

insights

For a Diverse Campus Community

Swastika hate crimes prompt responses

Are these “swastikas” new? Different? More hateful?

*By Associate Professor Joseph E. Edelheit,
Director, Religious and Jewish Studies*

Once again SCSU is forced to consider the reality that there are persons in our midst who want to get our attention with their bigotry. I was not shocked that a swastika was scratched into a wall or a bathroom stall. I am not horrified that there is a new and virulent attack on Jews and others on campus. I assume that on any given day, in many universities and colleges we would find this and other vulgar acts of vandalism. I assume this as a fact of the times in which we live. I also assume that on any given day people on this campus and so many others will utter equally vulgar terms and hateful sentences to persons because of their color, orientation, abilities, religion and ethnic community. Simply put, at age 61, after 35 years of being a rabbi, a public Jewish educator, I assume that we will find anti-Semites if we really look for them.

I make these statements not to add my unique cynical salt into wounds. I make them to affirm that this act or that act of anti-Semitism or homophobia

Cont., pg. 2

ALL HAVE STAKE IN ENDING HATEFUL ACTIONS

By Earl H. Potter III, President

The discovery of swastikas carved and drawn in the Multicultural Center of Atwood, residence hall restrooms and other sites sent shockwaves through the campus. A strong learning community responds to assaults on its well-being with action and reflection. We have done both. Leaders across campus have reasserted our institutional commitment to eradicate acts of hate and bigotry within the campus community, and we have taken steps to lift up and reinforce our common values of equity, respect and decency. Wide spread discussions across the campus continue.

We say we strive to be a welcoming place for all our students, faculty and staff – a place where people from all cultures, religions and traditions can come to study, to teach or to serve our learning community without fear or intimidation. These senseless, outrageous expressions of hatred are counter to this resolve. Every single one of us has a stake in combating the despicable actions that contaminate our environment and undermine our educational mission. As long as there is one person who feels they have the right to express their hate in public acts of vandalism – no matter how many hundreds of us

Cont., pg. 2

Free speech demands open discussion

*By Assistant Professor of German Bernard Reuter,
Director, Center for Holocaust and Genocide Education*

During the last eight days I have had a lot of opportunities to get to know many SCSU community members better, including the public forum for discussion of swastikas on campus that I facilitated on Nov. 21. I also have talked to many people in the wider community of St. Cloud, and I would like to say it has all been a very reassuring experience and has proved how important it is to have well functioning means of communication about crucial issues.

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What is Insights?

The *Insights* electronic newsletter was introduced in April 2004. Joseph A. Edelheit, the original convening editor of this new resource for the St. Cloud State University community wrote the following welcome, which is worth repeating as we reintroduce the newsletter with its first new edition in a year:

Welcome to INSIGHTS, a new electronic newsletter at SCSU that will raise topics and create conversations. At first glance, the last thing we need around here is another “talking head” about ideas, especially provocative ideas. So allow me just a moment of your

time to put INSIGHTS into perspective.

During the recent past, the university has been put under bright lights about various diversity issues. Those bright lights have created their own polarizing effects, so we thought that a newsletter like INSIGHTS might be valuable. Our goal is to provide diversity information throughout our campus community so that issues are illuminated in a necessary fashion but without all the “bright lights.” Beyond the important function of passing on critical information that affirms our community

as safe and responsive, this newsletter’s purpose is to stimulate conversations about how the many ideas about diversity are experienced in real life. ...

The very title of the newsletter is both an invitation and a promise. We invite you who want to join in the often risky process of sharing an “insight,” or new idea that comes from within. We promise that what we share is for the purpose of encouraging our readers, always ourselves, to think about the topics in different ways, in the hope that we will gain that most precious

gift, a new way of knowing ourselves and others - having an insight.

Editor’s note: That first edition in April 2004 featured articles about various symbols on our campus. This latest issue also explores the issue of the unwelcome and hateful symbol of the swastika that has defaced our campus in recent weeks. All past issues of INSIGHTS are available for viewing at: <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/affirmativeaction/resources/insights>.

Are these “swastikas” new?, cont. from pg. 1

cannot be ignored, but neither can each and every act be illuminated with equal horror. Our world continues to defy our best efforts of becoming an interdependent community. I do not want people coming out in support of “Jews” any more than I am sure that persons of color expect whites to affirm their support only when there are acts of racism. This experience is NOT about anti-Semitism. Swastikas are vulgar symbols of historic hatred. Everyone who acknowledges that history must be offended, just as I am offended as a man, husband, father, brother and friend when women are dismissed and assaulted as “female objects.” We are still trying to build that interdependent community in which hatred of one group immediately offends all groups. We are still learning that if we remain in our specific groups with which we identify...if we are first and always victims within those groups, then we are not trusting that we are really members of a community.

All have stake, cont. from pg. 1

abhor these acts – we will continue to experience these assaults on this community.

The University has responded swiftly to these actions with thorough and ongoing investigations of each unwelcome act of hate-motivated vandalism. Safety alerts urging members of our community to come forward with information have been widely circulated. Meetings offering support to students who feel threatened and forums encouraging discussion and education have been extended to residence halls and groups across campus.

We must do more. I call on every individual in our campus community to join me in denouncing these hateful actions and to dig deep into your memory to think about any event or action that might help solve these crimes. We will not tolerate continued behavior of this nature.

Free speech demands, cont. from pg. 1

The issues at stake are a serious matter. I think that the students in my class represent well the spectrum of opinions that are out there about the issue of swastikas on our campus - everything from “no big deal” to “very big deal,” or “these people should get help and education” to “expulsion, if they are students.”

At our public forum last week people expressed similar statements, demonstrating that swastikas in public spaces pose a threat to every minority and identity. What is important to me is that we respect all opinions and sentiments - because when we deal with swastikas we are dealing with non-logical offenses that naturally trigger strong feelings.

In Germany, where the symbol of the swastika has a much more concrete meaning than here, nobody would doubt that this symbol stands for outright anti-Semitism, Nazism, racism, and xenophobia. And whereas in Germany the display of the swastika is outlawed for being a clear affiliation with fascism and thus threatening democracy, it is subject to free speech in the United States.

This week I was fortunate enough to join a World War II veteran and speak jointly to an American Legion gathering right here in our neighborhood. National identity and historic loyalties can be a complicated matter, but what unites people is clearly the collective decision on what is right and wrong. This group in particular was worried about the incidents with the swastikas on our campus. They were clearly happy to hear that the University is well capable of dealing with the problem.

The right to free speech requires us as individuals to respond with even more free speech and to demonstrate what it is that we believe in. Hideous graffiti with Nazi symbols offends us all, no matter what majority or minority we belong to. I urge you to talk and discuss with your colleagues and fellow students, to make it clear what you think about the symbol. Symbols of hate and racism have been appearing recently around the country. This is a social problem, not the problem of one town, so our society as a whole is tested.

We have to connect to the community around us, especially in times when the present is challenged by signs of the past. If we don’t learn from the past, we cannot prevent the mistakes of the past from returning. We cannot open up to the world through the Internet and benefit from globalization without accepting responsibility for the past. Students and all individuals are more challenged ethically today because the “entire world” is indeed connected and affected.

Study-abroad students capture winning photos

Below are the top three award-winning photos from the 2007 photo contest open to SCSU study-abroad students

The essays were written by the photographers.

"La Catedral," by Stephanie Perri, senior, Chile program. Winner of People's Choice Award and first place in Faculty/Staff Judging



What does 5 million years of history feel like? It feels like layers upon layers of formed and partially eroded marble that creates magnificent geographic formations that can only be reached by a small boat in the eighth region of Chile. During my two-week road trip in the south of Chile along the Carretera Austral (rural highway), I was fortunate to see and touch one of earth's stunning natural creations: 5 million year old marble in the shapes of small caves that appeared to float upon the water. These marble caves are called Capillas de Marmol, meaning "marble chapels" because of their unique structures resembling small chapels. . . .

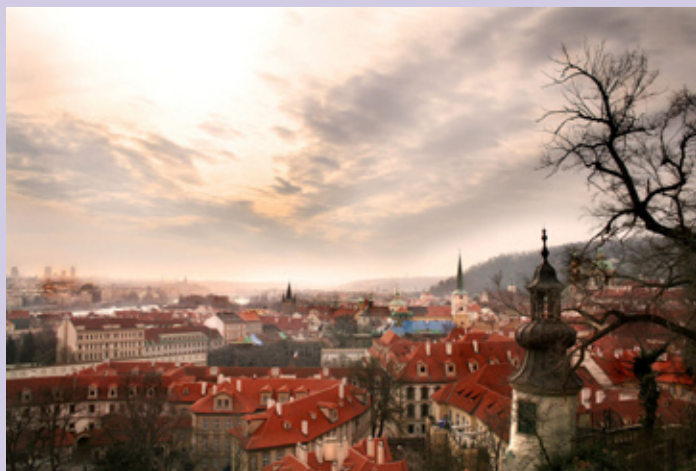
This marble cave is titled La Catedral, meaning "The Cathedral" because of its extraordinarily large size. Over the many years, the waves of the lake combined with the wind have eroded pieces of the marble, making it possible for people traveling in boat to be able to go through parts of the marble cave. All of the different shades of blue and white marble on top of the clearest and calmest lake surrounded by the beautifully snow-capped Andes Mountains make up the most spectacular spectacle I have ever seen, one that is extremely difficult to come by.

"Peace in Prague," by Anna Vaverko, junior, Czech Republic program. Tie for second place Judges Award



On the fourth anniversary of the American invasion of Iraq, people in 60 cities around the world gathered in central locations to protest the war and appeal for peace. On March 17th, people in Prague joined the people of New York, La Paz, Sydney, Rome, Toronto, Mumbai, Bogota, Mexico City, Nairobi and many others to form a gigantic human symbol of peace and disarmament. The gathering took place in the heart of the city, where people from Czech Republic and many other nations stood in the shape of a giant peace symbol holding torches and singing, praying, and uniting. This photo is of two passionate protesters.

"Winter in Prague," by Anna Vaverko, junior, Czech Republic program. Tie for second place Judges Award



Prague is said to be one of the most beautiful cities in the world. With its beautiful architecture, cobblestone streets, and church steeples, it certainly is a city like no other. This photograph captures the city's unique skyline and colorful rooftops on a peaceful winter day from Petrin Hill, a favorite park in the city's historic district. Soon after this shot was taken, trees in the park and around the city exploded with bright pink blossoms and copious leaves, making such a clear and distant view impossible. The university at which I studied was located near to where this photo was taken - in the heart of the most picturesque part of Prague.

Students of color face obstacles to retention

EDITOR'S NOTE: Freddie J. Walker, Associate Director, Multicultural Academic Support Center, recently completed a study of the recruitment and retention of minority students at St. Cloud State University for a doctorate from St. Mary's University of Minnesota. He here shares some of his conclusions and recommendations:

Retention, not recruiting, of students of color has become the greatest challenge facing St. Cloud State University and other American institutions of higher education. This study compared freshman students of color with white students on the variables of grade point average, retention rate, and social, academic and financial obstacles they encountered at SCSU during the 2005-06 academic year.

Students of color are more likely to drop out than white students and these students usually suffer greater financial losses and a lower retention rate.

Three constructs seen as obstacles in this study were: social obstacles, the feeling of not being fully accepted or being able to take full advantage of the university environment and culture; academic obstacles, inadequate academic preparation resulting in alienation or inability to perform on tests and other measures; financial obstacles, lack of resources from family or scholarships, grants, loans.

Students responding to an online survey demonstrated that freshman students of color have a lower retention rate (69.4 percent) than freshman white students (72.8 percent) from fall 2005 through spring 2006. The survey also found a lower cumulative GPA for students of color (2.5) than for white students (2.72) over the same period.

The survey also found that students of color encountered significantly more social and academic obstacles during their freshman year than white students. However, the survey found no statistical

significance between the two groups in terms of financial obstacles. The online survey was distributed to 1,903 entering freshmen with 428 respondents. (Response rate: 22.5 percent)

Other researchers have found that financial obstacles do separate the two groups. These researchers have examined several factors relating to retention, including campus climate, academic preparation, the student's educational goals, institutional commitment, social and academic integration, financial aid, and the student's welfare.

In 2004, a Minnesota Higher Education Service Office study found that Minnesota's students of color still lacked equal access and opportunity. For example, there remained large gaps in access to post-secondary education for students of low-income families. These barriers, the study found, included "lack of adequate financial resources, inadequate academic preparation, lack of college and career awareness, little or no parental college going, and language differences."

Despite commitments by SCSU and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, Minnesota faces long-term challenges in higher education funding. New resources statewide will be scarce and tuition will continue to climb.

Affordability of higher education was still a barrier to access for low-income students in 2004. Currently, Minnesota's public higher education system does not have the resources for everybody. Thus, Minnesota needs to reform its systems

of higher education with clear priorities for its changing demographics and finding ways to improve efficiency and affordability for all Minnesotans.

This study also found that knowledge about freshmen student retention at SCSU can have significant impact on strategies for recruitment and retention, particularly for students of color at SCSU.

Administrators and educators who have accurate information about student retention can make more informed choices in implementing recruitment and retention plans.

We recommend that similar research continues so administrators can use more thorough data to analyze relationships among the social, academic and financial constructs that affect students. Similarly, a longitudinal study based on the existing research can focus on changes over time related to retention of students of color and white students attending St. Cloud State University.

To our readers: What do you think St. Cloud State is doing right to attract greater numbers of students of color and international students (enrollment of domestic students of color up 29 percent from fall 2006-2007 and numbers of international students increased 6.3 percent), and what more should we be doing to change or improve our recruiting and retention efforts for diversity? If you'd like to offer your ideas to share in the next issue of Insights, please send them to: Insights@StCloudState.edu.

College ESL program adds dimension to campus diversity

By Julie Condon, Coordinator, College English as a Second Language program

A new student at St. Cloud State University can feel a little lost in a sea of more than 16,000 people. Imagine how much more challenging that is for those who have just arrived from other countries and are not yet comfortable with the English language. For these students, services of the College English as a Second Language (ESL) Coordinator, Julie Condon, will be very important. Condon serves international students as well as U.S. permanent residents.

First, understanding the differences between these two groups of students is important, as they have different admission processes and requirements within the university. The largest group of students served by College ESL is international students. SCSU currently has 1,040 international students. They have come to the United States for the sole purpose of studying at SCSU. They receive student visas to enter the United States after being admitted to SCSU, and they are expected to return to their country of origin after graduation and one year of work unless they change their student status. As part of their admission process, they are required to prove minimum academic English proficiency. Upon arrival at SCSU, the College ESL Coordinator administers a required ESL Placement test and enrolls them in ESL Writing/Reading and Listening/Speaking courses according to the result. All new international students are also required to take a one-credit Administrative Orientation course, taught by Julie Condon. Thus, all 1,040 of them know her and should feel comfortable visiting her office. Undergraduate students also take a two-credit Cultural Orientation course in the ESL program.

The other group of students served by College ESL is U.S. permanent residents and citizens, who have entered the United States as immigrants and refugees. The main difference between this group and the international students is that permanent residents were already living and working in the United States before deciding to become students. They apply to SCSU through the same process as the majority of SCSU students. One current difficulty is that these students are not required to prove academic English proficiency,



especially if they are nontraditional students. Thus, they seek the services of the ESL Coordinator voluntarily through referral. This situation is expected to change for those students entering SCSU in fall of 2008, when a new Assessment for Course Placement process is expected to begin.

In either case, students who are non-native speakers of English visit the College ESL Coordinator for language testing and class placement as well as a other advice such as how to begin the admission and financial aid process and how to register for classes. Numbers of international students throughout the United States and at SCSU recently recovered to pre-9/11 levels. Meanwhile, the number of U.S. permanent residents and citizens for whom English is a non-native language continues to grow at SCSU. Because the academic language needs of this group are not currently systematically assessed, the actual number is not known, and undoubtedly, some students' needs are going unmet.

Prior to 2002, College ESL courses served only international students. Then, Somali immigrants began to move to St. Cloud in larger numbers, and the first Somali prospective ESL student visited Julie Condon's office. It quickly became obvious that the academic language needs of recent immigrants were not being met. As a result, Julie Condon and John Grether secured a \$30,000 Otto Bremer Foundation grant to assist in adapting to meet the group's needs. Positive results included St. Cloud State University assuming financial responsibility for the services outlined

in the grant. This, in part, became the College ESL Coordinator position. At the time of the grant application, the College ESL Coordinator was a fixed-term, or temporary, faculty position without an official job description. Since that time, the College ESL Coordinator was established as a staff position in the MSUAAAF union beginning in fall semester 2004. Service to immigrants was included in the job description. Though the majority of those U.S. permanent residents or citizens served in College ESL are still Somali, others have come from these countries: Ethiopia, Congo, The Philippines, Sudan, Palestine, Guinea, Jordan, Vietnam, Russia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Korea, Ivory Coast, Mexico, Kenya, Togo, Chile, Nepal, Peru, Liberia, Gabon, China, Uzbekistan, Uganda, Columbia, Belarus, Yemen, Cameroon, Venezuela, Brazil and India!

Currently, the St. Cloud community has a need for ESL classes geared toward preparing recently immigrated adults for higher education. A gap exists between District 742's Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes, which teach basic English for living and working, and College ESL. Though SCSU does have an Intensive English Center (IEC) which offers courses of that level, it is not designed as a developmental program for which student financial aid can be used to pay. Local educators need to examine the models in place at large metro schools such as Minneapolis Community & Technical College, Century College, and North Hennepin Community College. Collaboration between local high schools, ABE, St. Cloud Technical College, and SCSU is needed to meet this need.

RAINBOW FLAG

symbolizes pride in diversity

By Heidi Aldes, Interim Director, SCSU Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Services

The Rainbow Flag first appeared as a symbol for the GLBT community in 1978 at the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Freedom Day Parade. The community needed a community symbol that could be used year after year.

The designer, Gilbert Baker, was inspired by the black civil rights groups and the hippie movement. Baker, with the help of some volunteers, hand stitched and hand dyed two flags for the parade. These handmade versions were flown in the 1978 Gay Freedom Day Parade.

This flag, in its original form, had eight stripes with each color representing a different component of the community. Pink for sexuality, red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sun, green for nature, turquoise for art, indigo for harmony and violet for spirit.

Baker soon approached San Francisco's Paramount Flag Company about mass producing and selling his "gay flag." Unfortunately, Baker had hand-dyed all the colors, and because the color "hot pink" was not commercially available, mass production of his eight-striped version became impossible. The flag was thus reduced to seven stripes.

In November 1978, San Francisco's gay community was stunned when the city's first openly gay supervisor, Harvey Milk, was assassinated. Wanting to demonstrate the gay community's strength and solidarity in the aftermath of this tragedy, the 1979 Pride Parade Committee used Baker's flag. The committee eliminated the indigo stripe so they could divide the colors evenly along the parade route - three colors on one side of the street and three on the other. Soon the six colors were incorporated into a six-striped version that became popularized and that, today, is recognized by the International Congress of Flag Makers.

Although the Rainbow Flag was initially used as a symbol of pride only in San Francisco, it has received increased visibility, and can be seen all over the world. The Rainbow Flag reminds us that ours is a diverse community - composed of people with a variety of individual tastes of which we should all be proud.

*Sources used for this article were found at Quatrefoil Library in St. Paul, and include: "Vexed by Rainbows", by Paul Zomcheck, in "Bay Area Reporter" (June 26, 1986); "Rainbow Flag" in "The Alyson Almanac" (1989); and "The Rainbow Flag", in "Parade 90: San Francisco Gay/Lesbian Freedom Day Parade and Celebration" (June 24, 1990).

Foot sink one more way of serving students

By Ed Bouffard, Interim Director, Atwood Memorial Center

As the coordinator for a variety of campus service areas, including Atwood Memorial Center, I have spent a lifetime trying to help assure the quality of experiences for all our guests, clients, students, and/or customers. Perhaps this explains why I did not understand what the big issue was when Atwood was recently thrust into the national limelight because of a slight change in our facility.

The "big" issue was that Atwood had used student fees to install a foot sink in 2001 to improve customer safety. At that time, we had a growing population of around 200 students that exhibited a particular behavior that was unusual in our experience.

In addition to washing their hands like everyone else, they also washed their feet. Because we do not have showers in our building, they had to wash their feet in hand sinks. This activity resulted in the spilling of water on the floor and making the bathrooms less safe for everyone.

Our solution was simple: Install a sink that was convenient for washing feet and asking students to use that rather than the hand sinks.

How did this simple act of tweaking a facility to meet the needs of a sizeable group of customers and the safety of all get so blown out of proportion that it was actually discussed on the O'Reilly show on Fox TV?

The answer was also simple: The students in question were Muslim and their habit of washing their feet was part of a ritual they perform before praying.

The immediate reaction of people who question this decision is that we are using government dollars to give special privileges to Muslims over Christians. This would be a legitimate concern if it were a religious space dedicated to one religion over another, but we are talking about a sink, not a mosque.

Because of its shape, the foot sink area is also excellent for filling water containers for large events and for crafts. In addition, all the funds used to fund this sink are raised from student fees, not tuition or tax dollars. No group made any special demands on us, and, in fact, our only considerations had been safety and customer service.

Atwood recognizes that the Constitution prohibits the University from promoting particular religions. However, the Constitution also protects the right of students to form affiliations or organizations centered on religious beliefs. As a student-funded center, Atwood is charged with serving the needs of all SCSU student organizations, including religious student groups.

Religious student organizations routinely request to use the Atwood Student Union facility for meetings and/or prayer events. This past year the University had one Muslim and 12 Christian student associations. In 2006, 454 room reservations were made by Christian groups and 55 reservations were made by the Muslim Student Association.

None of the meeting rooms where the organizations gathered for religious reasons has ever been modified to serve one religious group over another.

A small, quiet meditation room next to the student cultural center opened in 2007. It is open to all students and staff who need a quiet retreat.

In 2006 Atwood Center added a Public Celebrations Case and Display area that also was acquired with student funds. The area has a Christmas tree decorated by different campus Christian groups. It has also displayed items from Jewish, Baha'i and Muslim student groups.

According to its mission, SCSU exists to provide an education that not only prepares students to embark on a career, but to live successfully in our society, a society that is becoming increasingly diverse. Part of that education is to understand the different races and cultures represented by people who may live in your neighborhood or work side-by-side with you.

My major question to those who object to the foot sink is why a facility that is helpful to one group of students should be seen as taking away from the rest. It is not like we have removed hand sinks; in fact, we still have 55 of them in the building.

Cultural Diversity Committee Helps University Achieve Goals

By Susan Moss, Director, Affirmative Action Office

Founded in the early 1990s, the Cultural Diversity Committee is an advisory committee to the president to assist in the achievement of cultural diversity objectives at St. Cloud State University.

The committee also has a role in realizing the objectives of the cultural diversity initiative of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. Specifically, it makes recommendations on the allocation of cultural diversity funds, coordinates such funded activities, and reports its accomplishments, while monitoring and assessing the progress of funded cultural diversity activities.

Current guidelines include the following areas of emphasis:

- Students of color recruitment,
- Students of color retention,
- Faculty of color recruitment and retention.

Consistent with MnSCU goals, the Cultural Diversity Committee solicits proposals from faculty, staff, management, and students that address cultural diversity. Requests for proposals are called for and the committee meets to evaluate whether the proposals meet the above objectives.

Funding is then determined by the committee for each proposal that meets the basic criteria and objectives.

In Spring 2007, the following priorities were focused on:

- Promotion of the retention and success of students of color that leads to higher graduation rates,
- Activities that promote creation of employment and/or financial aid for students.

Following is a summary of grants awarded for proposals submitted for 2007-08:

| | |
|----------|--|
| \$985 | Michael David & Carolyn Williams, College of Education-"In Praise of Women of Color" event initiative |
| \$1,018 | American Indian Center: alternative spring break service trips |
| \$978 | American Indian Center: weekend retreat |
| \$1,000 | American Indian Center-NANAINA conference. |
| \$1,500 | Darlene St. Clair, Multicultural Resource Center-Programming collaborations with student organizations (CAAS and HSO) |
| \$800 | Darlene St. Clair, Multicultural Resource Center-"Creating Connections with Community Youth" |
| \$1,700 | Hmong Student Organization: fall and spring Hmong week activities |
| \$2,500 | Hmong Student Organization: Hmong College Day |
| \$3,500 | Hmong Student Organization: Hmong Night |
| \$5,000 | Hmong Student Organization: Hmong national conference |
| \$695 | Asian Students in Action: ASIA Pacific American Conference |
| \$4,000 | Asian Students in Action: Midwest Asian American Student Union Conference |
| \$1,077 | Asian Students in Action: ASIA Social Justice Week |
| \$10,000 | Multicultural Student Services: Students of Color Employment Initiative |
| \$4,000 | MEChA-National Conference |
| \$1,800 | MEChA-National Assoc. for Chicana and Chicano Studies Conference |
| \$2,110 | MEChA-National Coordinator Council Rep funding |
| \$4,000 | African Students Association: ASA Pan-African Conference |
| \$730 | African Students Association: ASA College Day |
| \$6,000 | Council of African American Students-Big XII Conference on Black Students |
| \$3,888 | Lindgren Child Care Center: Students of Color Employment |
| \$8,000 | Sports Facilities & Campus Recreation: Students of Color Employment |
| \$2,460 | Eddah Mutua-Kombo, Communication Studies: "Communicating Common Ground" project between CMST, Technical and Apollo High schools. |
| \$1,500 | Somali Student Association: SSA Pan African Conference |
| \$3,000 | Somali Student Association: SSA Day events |
| \$3,200 | Steve Casanova, Ethnic Studies: Students of Color Study Abroad (US & Mexico) |

There are several ongoing projects that received funding as follows:

| | |
|----------|---|
| \$17,000 | American Indian Center Programming |
| \$16,000 | College of Ed/Office of Cultural Diversity-Leadership Project |
| \$30,000 | Ethnic Studies/Math-Science-Computer Camps |
| \$25,000 | Ethnic Studies/Pipeline Project |
| \$500 | Kaleidoscope literary journal |
| \$25,500 | Multicultural Student Services-Advanced Prep Programming |
| \$15,000 | Multicultural Student Services-Celebrations |

Committee members are: Shahzad Ahmad, Debra Carlson, Stephen Clark, Semya Hakim, Robert Johnson, Jim Knutson-Kolodzne, James Nicholson, Jane Olsen, Mahmoud Saffari, Tami Spry, Luke Tripp, Ray Tsai, Linda Williams, and student representative Amer Lam. The Office of Affirmative Action administers the committee's budget and staffs the committee.

Does diversity defy definition?

By Owen Zimpel, Director Student Disability Services

Over the years I have been involved in many varied conversations about diversity. Some of these were stressful and not very productive, while others were thoughtful and helpful. The one sure-fire guarantee is that the number of definitions of diversity will match or exceed the number of people in the room.

Recently I have served on a number of search committees. Involvement in search committees has exposed me to even more definitions of diversity. Some have been simplistic and somewhat rudimentary, while others have been well thought out and nuanced.

Those definitions on the monochromatic side of the spectrum see diversity as literally a black-and-white issue. While racial identity is a huge element in the diversity picture, it is not the only element. To say that racial identity is the only element of diversity is almost as insulting as saying, "Oh, that race, they all think that way."

Somewhere in the middle we find those who may be taking a more pragmatic view and endorsing the inclusion of "protected classes." Protected classes, under our MnSCU IB1 policy, include race, sex, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, and status with regard to public assistance, and membership or activity in a local human rights commission. Now we are getting a little closer to where we need to be.

Those who cast the diversity net far more widely include factors such as socioeconomic background (more nuanced than just public assistance). This may even include attitudes derived from economic experiences of parents and grandparents. I know I still have attitudes toward spending money that were influenced by my early years with parents who were born during the Great Depression, and they had parents who survived raising a family during the same depression.

Why stop with country of origin? Differences within our own country can be quite significant. I lost track of how many times I was called a Yankee when I was doing my master's and doctoral work, and that was only as far south as southern Illinois! Even within Minnesota, you can find regional and area influences that shape people's attitudes. Iron Range Democrats and Minneapolis Democrats could give

you very different thoughts on a number of issues, but they are all just Democrats. Right?

On one search I was happy to be working with some folks who had backgrounds and experience in special education. We agreed pretty quickly that disability and work with those who had disabilities counted as some diversity-related experience. Even within a group of people who have disabilities, there can be great diversity. Things may look pretty accessible to someone who has a mental illness, or a learning disability, but to the person who actually needs wheelchair ramps and door openers, things may be quite different.

As a larger group, we talked about what we felt the value of diversity would be. A fresh eye, with a different perspective seemed important. We even had a professor who looked at where the candidate got the doctorate as a diversity factor. "We do not want the whole department to be from the same school." It may seem trivial to some, but where we got our education will impact the point of view we bring to difficult issues.

Does diversity defy definition? Maybe it does. In my world, the wider and more inclusive the definition, the better. For those of you who disagree – what a perfect demonstration of diversity of thought!

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INSIGHTS welcomes your ideas for making this new publication a more comprehensive and interactive tool for communication about diversity issues and activities on the SCSU campus. Please contact Insights@StCloudState.edu if you have suggestions or comments, if you want to react to one of our articles, or if you want to write or suggest a column.

www.StCloudState.edu/affirmativeaction/resources/insights

Web-based training on workplace discrimination offered

By Susan Moss, Director, Affirmative Action Office

"Preventing Workplace Discrimination" is an overview of the laws – in plain language, not legalese – affecting public employees and employers. It addresses sexual harassment, disability, race and age discrimination and all other forms of prohibited discrimination based on the Title VII (nondiscrimination in employment) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

Following is the link to this web-based training - http://training.newmedialearning.com/top_level/stcloudu/index.htm

Two segments provide a full acquaintance with nondiscrimination requirements applicable to SCSU as a public institution: (Part A) Preventing Employment Discrimination, (Part B) Preventing Sexual Harassment

Each segment takes about one hour to complete. Each segment contains a drop down menu that allows you to take the training at different times and to stop and start up again as your schedule demands. This is available on a 24/7 server and can be accessed from any compatible computer with Internet access at any time.

The self assessment at the end of each segment can be taken more than once. The module is interactive with hot linked definitions of any legal terms used and links to synopses of the major court cases that have, over 40 years, shaped the definition of employment discrimination. It also links to pertinent SCSU policies and procedures and is another professional development opportunity for you to consider.



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