# Defining Diversity: A Continuing Challenge

*By Eileen T. Bender, Professor of English, Indiana University South Bend, and Former Director, IU Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching*

Two years ago, when Charlie Nelms, Indiana University vice president for student development and diversity, invited IU's Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching (FACET) to lead a new university-wide initiative to infuse diversity and equity into the classroom, campus, and curriculum, the members of FACET's Steering Committee were excited by the opportunity. We were also faced with new questions. What was the best way to involve Indiana and Purdue faculty leaders in this challenging initiative? Another concern was campus engagement. If FACET's Leadership Institute was to be the incubator for campus diversity programs, how would the campuses support the ongoing work of their faculty leadership teams?

Because of the scope of the initiative, we also needed to forge new partnerships: between IU and Purdue, and between FACET's Leadership Institute and the Enhancing Minority Achievement conference, hosted annually by Indiana University Kokomo. Meeting with the IU Academic Officers Council in spring 2000, we discussed the long-term goals of this initiative, as well as the plans for its first phase. AOC members offered strong support and commitment. But they also raised another question: how would we approach the task of defining "diversity"?

We knew there was a compelling logic to that question. If IU and Purdue campuses were determined to fashion, implement, and assess the success of a number of new diversity initiatives, wasn't it necessary to begin with a common understanding of what we meant by diversity itself? The way our own institutions have defined diversity has changed over the years. At Indiana University 15 years ago,

supporting "diversity" meant increasing representation of certain "underrepresented groups": i.e., African American and Latino American students, faculty, and staff. In the late 1980s, using that definition and supported by a Lilly Endowment planning grant, the IU President's Minority Enhancement Council set up numerical goals (as distinguished from the quotas of the previous decade) for those two demographic groups, along with a reporting system to assess campus progress. Such an approach, based on the definition of "diverse" as "numerically more representative," was being followed at universities across the country. It was also reflected in early curriculum reform efforts.

Further, using that definition called for new efforts in recruiting and retaining African American and Latino students, faculty, and staff. It was soon clear, however, that simply setting numerical goals was not enough to achieve cultural and racial diversity. Campuses needed to become more hospitable to "diverse" students, not only in but beyond the classroom. Again, the Lilly Endowment took the lead in broadening the scope and definition of diversity initiatives, funding programs at public and private colleges and universities to improve the campus climate for African American and Latino students, staff, and faculty. Such funding encouraged Indiana campuses to create advocacy offices, and to sponsor social and

educational events to celebrate and raise awareness of other cultures.

Despite these efforts, current educational statistics tell us that African American and Latino students, staff, and faculty remain underrepresented at Indiana and Purdue universities as compared with the composition of the communities we serve. In this sense, defining diversity in terms of numerical "representation" still makes sense. But the failure to meet most quantitative goals also demonstrates that broader and deeper academic and social initiatives are needed to bridge the educational divide.

However, although we have not yet reached numerical equity, our initial efforts have led to significant changes on our campuses. One is a change of perspective, registered in expanded definitions of diversity. The increasing collegiate participation among African American and Latino individuals has caused other underrecognized groups to command and to receive new attention through academic and social programs.

And although we still lag behind in "minority" representation, we have redefined our student body as a "new majority," diverse not only in racial categories but in terms of religious belief, physical and learning disability, sexual preference, national and geographical origin, socioeconomic class, and graduate and undergraduate status.

> *If IU and Purdue campuses were determined to fashion, implement, and assess the success of a number of new diversity initiatives, wasn't it necessary to begin with a common understanding of what we meant by diversity itself?*

# Diversity Initiatives of the Purdue University Schools of Engineering

*By Dorothy M. Simpson-Taylor, Director, Diversity Resource Office, Purdue University*

## WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW

The Purdue University Schools of Engineering, with support from DuPont, began offering diversity forums in January 1998. The objectives of the forums are to effect a positive change on Purdue's overall climate and to understand the benefits of a diverse climate that includes more minority and female engineering students and faculty members. The series includes one race-focused forum and one that is gender-focused. To date, 119 Engineering faculty members—out of a total of 270—have participated.

While systemic change is difficult to quantify, it is obvious that the forums have already made a significant change (see the article "Purdue diversity forums help make a world of difference" on page 5). For example, several faculty members have organized to discuss how they can be leaders in the change process. This leadership has resulted in a comprehensive diversity action plan endorsed by Dean Richard Schwartz and the formation of the Diversity Action Committee (DAC) to implement the plan. Reporting to the dean, the DAC is identifying ways to strengthen and expand our existing Minority Engineering Program (MEP) and Women in Engineering Program (WIEP); developing new initiatives for faculty and graduate students who are outside the scope of MEP and WIEP; and helping the dean implement a long-range diversity plan.

Another clear impact of the diversity forums and other initiatives has been the increased sensitivity of engineering search committees regarding the need for additional women and minority faculty members. During the 2000–2001 academic year, out of 21 new faculty members, six were women and one was African American. While the 2001–2002 hiring is not yet complete, already three women and two African Americans have accepted faculty positions. The Schools of Engineering are pleased that Linda Katehi has been appointed as the new dean beginning January 1, 2002.

The Schools of Engineering are committed to continuing the diversity forums, expanding existing programs and developing new follow-up programs, providing administrative support, and finding the necessary financial resources.

## WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Purdue Schools of Engineering recruitment efforts have been directed at increasing the number of women and minority engineering graduate students and faculty (less than 10% of the faculty are women and a dramatically smaller percentage are underrepresented minorities) and in cultivating awareness and support for diversity within the faculty.

Purdue Engineering is a national leader for its recruitment, retention, and graduation of undergraduate minority and female engineering students. Previously, however, only a few faculty have been involved in this effort. Also, our focus was on individual undergraduate students, who we reached through the Minority Engineering Program and the Women in Engineering Program. Both programs have been emulated at colleges all across the country. But while these programs have been highly successful in building a pool of interested and academically qualified engineering students, attracting them to Purdue, and nurturing them to successful graduation, leadership from the faculty is critical to accomplish the following goals:

1) enlarge the precollege pool of interested and qualified minority and female students headed to engineering;

2) increase the numbers of graduate and undergraduate students enrolling and graduating from Purdue Schools of Engineering;

3) increase the number of women and minority engineering faculty members; and

4) improve the university and Schools of Engineering climate in order to provide the best education and environment to students, faculty members, and staff.

As a result of improved representation of women and minority in engineering and a climate that respects and nurtures all members of the academic community:

1) majority students will graduate with positive gender- and race-related experiences, and will become employees who will contribute to improved work environments;

2) the overall quality of engineering education and research at Purdue will significantly improve; and

3) Purdue Schools of Engineering will be a recognized leader in diversity, becoming the engineering school of choice.

## WHERE WE'RE HEADED

The diversity initiatives of the Purdue Schools of Engineering are critical to the schools' future. While they represent a significant undertaking and are costly in terms of time and money, our dean and the members of the DAC are committed. We plan to continue the forums; create additional opportunities for faculty, staff, and student development; and continue to support and expand the MEP and WIEP programs. Alumni support and corporate gifts are crucial partnerships that will become increasingly important as we work to involve more faculty and aggressively expand our diversity efforts. It is our hope that all engineering faculty and staff will attend the diversity forums. This participation will not only benefit our existing community, but also will bring to it the best, brightest, and most diverse students and faculty members. ●

# Examining the Four Dimensions of Multicultural Teaching

*By Susan Sciame-Giesecke, Interim Dean, IU Kokomo School of Arts and Sciences*

Throughout our work in the diversity initiative, we have asked faculty to begin the job of transforming their courses. Many times the faculty response has been, "what do you mean?" or "how do I begin?"

At the 2001 Indiana Faculty Leadership Institute, our facilitators, Christine Stanley, assistant professor of higher education and associate director, Center for Teaching Excellence, Texas A&M University, and Mathew Ouellett, associate director, Center for Teaching, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, introduced us to a model that answered these questions.

The Four Dimensions of Multicultural Teaching Model (Jackson, Adams, and Marchesani, 1988) provides an excellent place for faculty to begin their curriculum transformation process. The model suggests that there are four interrelated dimensions that faculty must consider as they infuse diversity and equity into their courses.

## Four Dimensions of Multicultural Teaching Model

**Faculty**
- Know oneself
- Monocultural↔multicultural socialization
- Examine assumptions and stereotyped beliefs
- Mentor students

**Course Content**
*Explicit messages*
- Use a curriculum of inclusion
- Represent diverse perspectives
- Draw examples and illustrations from diverse life experiences

**Teaching Method**
*Implicit messages*
- Examine the culture of the classroom
- Broaden your repertoire of teaching methods to address multiple learning styles
- Classroom norms that emphasize respect, fairness, and equity

**Students**
- Know your students
- Monocultural↔multicultural socialization
- Examine assumptions and stereotyped beliefs

Adapted from Jackson, Adams, and Marchesani, 1988, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

## FACULTY: KNOW ONESELF

As faculty we must reflect on our own beliefs and attitudes. Marchesani and Adams suggest that we need to assess our comfort and skills in various cross-cultural situations, take responsibility for obtaining knowledge about the cultural backgrounds of our students, and become more aware of the impact our socialization and learned beliefs have on our interactions with students from different social and cultural backgrounds.
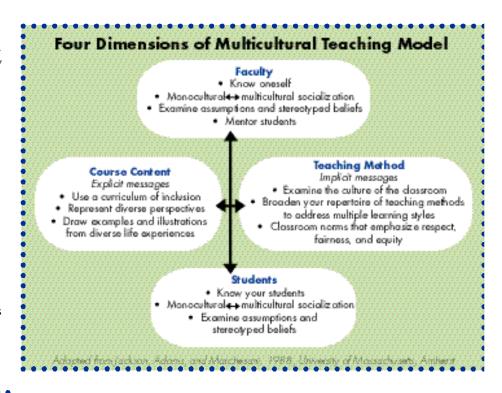
These steps are important primarily because we are only one generation removed from legally sanctioned educational segregation, and many faculty grew up or are currently living in monocultural home, educational, and community environments.

## STUDENTS: KNOW WHO THEY ARE

Students experience the classroom environment very differently because they come from unique social and cultural groups. Faculty must respond by assessing these students and responding to their individual learning needs.

## COURSE CONTENT: WHAT WE TEACH

Marchesani and Adams call for faculty to develop curricula so that the course content (themes and issues), the course materials (texts and assignments), and the sources of knowledge (theorists and authorities) we validate and emphasize reach beyond the current European traditions of thought and male authorities to include the contributions, experiences, and perspectives of the traditionally marginalized but increasingly visible members of society.

## TEACHING METHOD: HOW WE TEACH

Marchesani and Adams argue that effective teaching in the multicultural classroom depends on the teacher's willingness and ability to develop a flexible repertoire of teaching strategies to maximize the match between the cultural and learning styles of students.

This model provides a good framework for faculty members beginning the transformation process. It should enable them to organize the effort and continually assess their progress toward multicultural teaching. ●

## REFERENCES

Jackson, B. W., "A Model for Teaching to Diversity" (paper presented at a faculty and teaching assistant development workshop, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, October, 1988).

Marchesani, L., Adams, M. "Dynamics of Diversity in the Teaching-Learning Process: A Faculty Development Model for Analysis and Action," in *New Directions for Teaching and Learning: Promoting Diversity in College Classrooms: Innovative Responses for the Curriculum, Faculty, and Institutions*, ed. M. Adams (Winter 1992, 52), 9-19.

# Faculty Views on Transforming the IPFW Curriculum

*By Jeanette Clausen, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne*

Three faculty focus groups were convened in November 2000 to collect information and opinion about transforming the Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne curricula to include more diversity content.

Focus group participants were recruited through printed and e-mail announcements to faculty, chairs, and deans, as well as through phone calls to some faculty members. In all, 19 faculty members participated, representing departments ranging from biology to modern foreign languages. Participants were asked to respond to four questions, announced in advance of the focus group meetings:

1. What diversity issues are central to teaching and scholarship in your discipline?

2. Describe the need for diversity transformation of your discipline's curriculum.

3. What do you think it would take to accomplish diversity transformation of your discipline's curriculum?

4. What kind of support would you need in order to make meaningful progress toward such a transformation?

Faculty members were free to define diversity as appropriate to their disciplines. Common concerns and recurring themes reflect faculty perceptions of our specific institutional context (e.g., student body, administration, and faculty roles and rewards) and of discipline-specific issues.

## TRANSFORMATION ISSUES

In the focus groups, several faculty members commented that it is difficult to teach about racial and ethnic diversity when the student body lacks such diversity. A majority of IPFW students come from northeast Indiana. Only five percent of the student body is African American, and the percentage of other minorities is even lower. Few minorities or women major in the sciences and technologies, and international students are concentrated in a small number of programs. Faculty members also commented that it is difficult to discuss socioeconomic differences—which are present in the student body but not recognized as "diversity." This latter point suggests an action step for the IPFW Diversity Council: socioeconomic status is in fact included in the diversity definition promulgated by the council, but that definition has apparently not permeated the consciousness of the campus community.

Several faculty members also commented that lack of awareness and/or racism on the part of majority students can make the classroom uncomfortable for minority students. The success of faculty attempts to address such attitudes depends somewhat on the discipline: particularly in the professional programs, students are often focused on skills and technical aspects, tending to see psychosocial content as "fluff." Faculty members acknowledged their need for teacher training about issues that are outside the comfort zone. Facilitating such training is a goal of this year's Leadership Team.

## THE BIG PICTURE

Diversity transformation of the curricula presents different challenges according to discipline. Some faculty members said that in their discipline, diversity content has not yet been mainstreamed into textbooks (even though the research exists), while for others diversity is at the heart of what is taught. A geology faculty member pointed out that in his discipline, the curriculum does not necessarily include attention to human beings, making it more difficult to imagine a transformed curriculum. Faculty members wanted to see models for a transformed curriculum in their discipline or in related ones. They tended to agree that it can be a struggle to balance "the basics" of the discipline with diversity content. The perception that "the basics" do not necessarily include diversity hints at the magnitude of effort required for meaningful change.

Looking beyond their own disciplines to the curriculum as a whole, faculty members agreed that diversity content cannot be concentrated in one course or even a few. The general education program should be a vehicle for diversity awareness, so that students hear the message throughout their college experience. During the coming year, the IPFW General Education Subcommittee will discuss the need for a stronger diversity component.

## SUPPORT AND REWARDS

Faculty members wanted better access to information—knowledge of campus resources and opportunities to learn from each other—as well as training on a range of topics, including teaching techniques, learning style preferences, and awareness and sensitivity training. In addition to models of what has been done elsewhere to transform curriculum in specific disciplines, they wanted a theoretical framework for understanding diversity transformation.

A need for administrative support was also expressed—specifically, encouragement from chairs and deans for curriculum transformation as well as support from central administration for getting diversity work into the reward system. At the same time, faculty members emphasized the need for support "from below." Faculty members who have already transformed their courses or are getting ready to do so need to make this part of daily discourse, so that the diversity initiative is not perceived as a mandate from on high. Recognizing the amount of work to be done, faculty members said that they would like incentives such as curriculum development grants, release time for research (with or without financial support), and research assistance. The Leadership Team will attempt to identify sources for such support.

# PURDUE DIVERSITY FORUMS HELP MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

*By Thiwasha Harper, 1996 graduate of the Purdue University School of Chemical Engineering and member,*
*National Society of Black Engineers*

My name is Thiwasha. It's a nice, unique name and always a discussion point.

It is also the first hurdle I face as I prove myself as an African American woman, a Purdue chemical engineering graduate, and a plant engineer for Elanco Animal Health, a division of Eli Lilly and Co. at Tippecanoe Labs in Lafayette, Indiana.

People make assumptions from hearing my name. People I've known for years still mispronounce it or call me something different. How would you feel if people couldn't get your name right or did not take the time to learn it? Small as it may seem, this is one example of how racial assumptions can lead to insensitivity, exclusion, low expectations, or worse.

Beyond the white robes and skinheads, there are less overt forms of racial, gender, and ethnic bias much harder to isolate and eliminate. Imagine people expressing surprise at your academic accomplishments because you are an African American or being praised because you possess strong leadership skills "for a woman."

Even in 2001, people are not used to seeing a minority woman engineer in my position. But things are changing. In 1998, the Purdue Schools of Engineering began a long-term commitment to develop awareness and sensitivity to minority and gender issues when Dean Richard Schwartz initiated a series of diversity forums. Since then, more than one-third of Purdue's 270 engineering faculty have participated in one of these programs.

About 20 to 45 people participate in each of the intense diversity workshops, which are directed by trained national facilitators. These two-day, off-campus seminars enable open and sometimes painfully honest dialogue among participants. The goal is to teach each dean, department head, faculty, and key staff member to take individual responsibility for fostering an environment of inclusion and diversity in the Schools of Engineering—and beyond. These workshops are sponsored by Purdue and supported, in part, by DuPont, DaimlerChrysler, Eli Lilly and Co., and Procter & Gamble Co., companies that value and receive value from a diverse work force.

Minority Purdue alumni are invited to share their collegiate and professional experiences as well.

Earlier this year, I was invited to attend one of the diversity workshops. The program content presented us with cultural and historical information about Native Americans, European Americans, African Americans, Asians, Latin Americans, and various international groups. We explored how different cultures view the world and saw a glimpse of the world from inside the skin of other races and ethnicities.

No topic was taboo. There was time to talk, listen— and soul search. We heard:

• Resentment from the Middle Eastern professor who fled persecution in his homeland only to be presumed to be a terrorist on multiple occasions at various international airports simply because of his ethnic and racial profile.

• Bemused resignation and resilience from an African researcher seeking information at a library and then misidentified as a bothersome grad student—not the highly sought, brilliant educator and administration candidate that he was.

• Confusion from a well-meaning white Midwestern male staff member who experienced "minority status" at length for the first time, and his shock of recognition at the prejudice inherent in power and privilege by virtue of being born a member of the culturally dominant group.

• Patience and hope from an Israeli professor who measures the painful process of positive social and moral change by millennia instead of months, years, or decades.

We learned that despite some earnest, if uneven, efforts to eradicate the fear of difference from the human heart, racial prejudice and gender bias are often expressed by people of good intention and embedded in all our cultural institutions. We learned that the best intentions— without respect and understanding—can create terrible results. We learned that the only way to change behavior is to change attitudes. Perhaps most importantly, workshop participants learned to listen to each other without interruption.

In our diversity, we found common ground. In our commonality, we learned to accept, embrace, and even celebrate our own and each other's differences.

And almost everybody learned how to pronounce my name. (That's "Ta-WA-sha.")

What we learn, we teach. Those who teach at universities are the key to a welcoming and diverse world. They teach tomorrow's leaders. Companies such as DuPont, an original supporter of the diversity initiatives, and my employer, Eli Lilly, encourage these types of workshops because they want their newly hired graduates to be prepared to enter business with the skills and attitudes that promote diversity.

As an alumna, I will do my part by returning to Purdue every chance I get to support the people and programs that helped me succeed. Based on my experience, I can tell tomorrow's engineers that programs like Purdue's diversity workshops are helping make a world of difference. ●

## Defining Diversity
*continued from page 1*

Clearly, our shifting definitions of diversity reflect the impact of earlier diversity initiatives on the academy and the wider society. By focusing on representation, all of us have learned that numbers *do* matter: our increasingly diverse student and faculty population has brought new visions and voices into the academy, creating new disciplines and fields of study, influencing our music, and enriching our language and even our diets!

But we can also see that those initial definitions of diversity were structured not only quantitatively, but also antithetically, as a series of majority/ minority divisions and "we"/"they" oppositions. In this new century different definitions and new initiatives are emerging, based on a more complex idea of cultural pluralism—which is not monolithic but includes each of us. Similarly, although special commemorative or celebratory events were and are intended to teach needed lessons of tolerance, they have also led to a principled critique of formerly unexamined "norms" and privileged enclaves.

Taking stock of where we are, it seems we have indeed failed to establish one fixed and common definition of diversity against which to plot our individual and collective successes and failures, or use to characterize our progress and our unmet challenges. But our apparent confusion may also be a hopeful sign. Our changing *redefinitions* of diversity embody an important, ongoing process of cultural change, and mark a shifting, expanding view of the nature of diversity itself. And as our view changes, new issues confront us in the academy, building on but different from the challenges we confronted before. In this sense, defining diversity once and for all is possible only if we decide to settle for the status quo.  ●

## Faculty Views
*continued from page 4*

Faculty focus group members also emphasized that rewards for diversity work must be written into departmental, school, and campus increment policies and promotion/ tenure documents. At first, the Leadership Team was surprised by these comments. Curriculum development, after all, is a well-established category for documenting faculty productivity, so why must work done for diversity transformation of curriculum be written into promotion/tenure documents? Probably the concern reflects the fact that, too often, a spoken or unspoken message is communicated that diversity goals must not compromise "quality." Seen in this light, the suggestion that rewards for diversity work be spelled out in relevant documents makes perfect sense.

The IPFW faculty focus group discussions were invaluable, and identified issues that will serve as a blueprint for action for several years to come.  ●