

Center for Women's InterCultural Leadership Grant Report Template

Activity/Program Title: Conference: Association of American Colleges and Universities
2004 Diversity and Learning Conference
Democracy's Compelling Interest
Nashville, TN

Activity/Program Dates: October 21-23, 2004

Number of Attendants: 4, 1 advisor and 3 students

Which of the following CWIL goals do you think this activity/program met?

- Bringing Diverse People Together/Crossing Boundaries
- Thinking in New Ways About Women's Leadership
- Enriching SMC Environment for the Development of Women Leaders
- Serving as a National Resource for Change

How did this activity/program meet the goals you checked?

The 2004 Diversity and Learning Conference allowed the participants to bring back resources that could be used at Saint Mary's to enrich the environment for the development of women leaders in the following areas:

Information for the Student Diversity Board: The three students who participated in the conference were all members of the Student Diversity Board with two of these students being executive board members. These students noted that the most helpful workshops for their board positions included "Maneuvering the Postsecondary Education Maze for Students with Disabilities", "Risk, Resiliency, and Retention: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender College Students", and "The Posse Program: A Strategy to Advance Diversity in Higher Education" because these workshops gave them resources from other schools who had programs that Saint Mary's does not. The students noted that they felt empowered to be able to bring this information back to campus to use in their leadership roles.

Preparation for the theme for the 2005-2006 academic year "Who Counts in America": In preparation for the theme for the 2005-2006 academic year, I, as the assistant Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, found the following keynote presentations very helpful: Diana Eck's "Democracy and Religious Pluralism", Patricia Williams "Compelling Interests That Shape Race and Education in America", and Kati Haycock's "Closing the Performance Gap, Kindergarten through College". I have taken information from all of these presentations to use in planning for the 2005-2006 academic year. I have found this information helpful to have as a resource for the student multicultural clubs. I will give these resources to them as I help to build the club members awareness of different issues.

Please describe any new collaborations (on or off campus) that resulted from this activity/program.

The Diversity and Learning Conference has provided a number of contacts with which the Office of Multicultural Affairs plans to build collaborations. These resources include connecting with the National Initiative for Women in Higher Education (NIWHE) regarding scholarship and fellowship information for students, connecting with Kati Haycock, Director of Education Trust, and connecting with the Pluralism project through their quite extensive on-line resource library.

What were the highlights of the activity/program?

The conference highlights for the students was obtaining information that they could use for the Student Diversity Board. The highlight for me as the Assistant Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs was the keynote presentation: “Closing the Performance Gap, Kindergarten through College” by Kati Haycock, Director of the Education Trust.

What would you do differently next time?

The students who attended the conference from Saint Mary’s all expressed surprise that most of the other participants were administrators and faculty. Their reflections (which are attached to this report) demonstrated that they were able to meet the challenge of going beyond their comfort zone to communicate with the faculty and staff and at the same time, work to make connections with the few other students who did attend. While the three students were given the pre-conference information that had been sent from AACU, next time I would stress that AACU programs were predominately attended by faculty and administrators. Also, I would work next time on having the students attain a list of participating institutions and encouraging them to make an initial contact with other students whom would be attending.

What are the next steps for this activity/project?

While the conference part of the project is done, the next step is to continue to use the materials when planning programming and making contacts.

Please share any success stories that resulted from this experience:

Please see the attached reports from the students who participated in the conference. These reports reflect that the students were able to use the information that they gathered from the conference to strengthen their leadership skills and to increase their knowledge of what other school are doing.

If you did a program evaluation please attach a summary of the results.

A program evaluation was not done.