



DAC Newsletter:

What is DAC? Who is DAC? Why is DAC?

Diversity Action Committee (DAC) is a committee composed of faculty and students of Siena College, working together to increase knowledge of diversity and to effect positive change within the Siena community concerning issues related to gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, and disability on campus. Its purpose is to provide information and new perspectives on these issues; to improve personal and working relationships among our community, notably raising awareness of and acting in prevention against sexism, racism, ageism, classism, heterosexism, ableism and other forms of categorical prejudice and discrimination in support of the College's Human Rights policy; and to deepen knowledge and appreciation of diversity through integrated courses and focused programs. Inclusivity is a value and a practice we foster that benefits all of us in an educational setting.

Supporting Academic Affairs initiatives on diversity is absolutely essential for student retention, faculty retention, and to affirm broad faculty "buy-in" to create a culture of diversity in keeping with the mission of Siena College. We are a broad-based, college-wide academic committee with four student representatives, elected representation from all three schools, and standing members who are the directors of the International Studies minor, the Multicultural Studies minor, the Women's Studies minor, and Academic Community Engagement (ACE). Therefore, we are uniquely situated to foster diversity within the College from the Academic Affairs division. DAC is committed to partnering across Schools, Disciplines, Divisions, and with the broader community. All of our DAC representatives have research, teaching, and service expertise relevant to creating a culture of diversity.



Our first year as a committee was devoted primarily to mapping the field about issues of diversity at Siena College, and to begin the work of addressing some of these issues. Members of DAC were in conversation with the President, Vice Presidents, and all three Deans, alongside almost twenty individuals and offices on our campus, and several key figures from neighboring campuses. 168 faculty members participated in our first Diversity Climate Survey, and others attended our Town Hall Meeting or one or more of the many events we hosted throughout the year. We conducted a student logo contest, awarded six Curriculum Diversification Fellowships for faculty, and established a Student Fellowship to be awarded to two students each year to support diversity related work and initiatives. Finally, DAC co-sponsored several lectures and events, and contributed to diversity workshops and trainings such as Safe Zone/Ally training with the Damietta Center, a Recruitment and Retention workshop with Renee Baker (RIT), and a well-enrolled two-day intense workshop on Inter Group Relations (IGR) at the end of August 2013.

A copy of the full report of our activities as well as a report on our findings from the first Diversity Climate Survey are available upon request. You can also visit our website for more information about our mission and activities: www.siena.edu/dac. In the weeks to come, we hope to give you a better sense of who we are and what we do, through these newsletters. For now, we hope that you have seen our calendar of events, and that you will take a moment to participate in our second Diversity Climate Survey.

Sincerely,

Laurie Naranch and Fanny Söderbäck, Co-Directors of DAC

