

DAC Newsletter:



The Diversity Climate Survey

In spring 2012, Diversity Action Committee ran its first Faculty Diversity Climate Survey. This spring, we are running the survey again, with the support of Institutional Effectiveness, and including not only faculty but also administrators and staff. A report from the 2012 survey is available upon request.

The results from the new survey will be presented at our DAC Open Forum Meeting, to be held on April 1 at 5.30-8pm in The Norm.

Keith Wilhite, Assistant Professor of English and a member of DAC, reflects on the work he did with the first survey:



In her recent book, *On Being Included*, feminist theorist Sara Ahmed writes that "diversity as a term seems ubiquitous." Ahmed's more salient point, however, is that while the language of diversity is everywhere, in practice the commitment to diversity often encounters resistance. The idea that diversity might be everywhere and yet somehow never quite realized became clear to me as I helped to compose the 2012 Diversity Climate Survey Report. That survey sought to gauge faculty perceptions regarding the general climate on campus for diverse populations, institutional support for diversity, and the competing demands of work-life issues. We also gave the faculty several opportunities throughout the survey to offer open response feedback. Working with Dr. Ruth Kassel and Dr. Arindam Mandal to produce the report, I took on those open responses, trying to craft a representative, coherent, and concise narrative of faculty concerns. It was a solitary but illuminating task, immersing myself in over 10 single-spaced pages of comments that ranged from encouraging observations to constructive criticism to vitriol. Studying the survey opened a window onto a more complex and engaged community at Siena College, but also a contentious and, at times, resistant campus. This, more generally, has been my experience serving on DAC: I am both inspired by my colleagues' passion and commitment and thrown off balance by an undercurrent of "diversity fatigue." This is not to suggest that my experiences belie the commitment to diversity at Siena; rather, I simply mean to suggest that more work is needed. In spring 2013, I helped to facilitate a Food-for-Thought conversation on the Survey report. It was a promising moment of dialogue across faculty and administration, but it also pointed toward a need to further such interactions. To quote Ahmed again, to talk about diversity is to engage in a "hopeful performative" speech act, in which talking about diversity serves as motive for action. I look forward to further conversations as we continue the difficult work of raising awareness about diversity and creating a more inclusive campus.