

**COMMITTEE ON INTERCULTURAL AND GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011**

**Committee Membership 2010-2011:**

- x Rochelle Calhoun, Dean of Student Affairs
- x Herb Crossman, Assistant Director for EEO and Workforce Diversity
- x J. Ginger Ertz, Museum Educator, Tang Teaching Museum/Art Gallery
- x Cori Filson, Director, Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges (committee co-chair)
- x Winston Grady-Willis, Director of Intercultural Studies/Associate Professor of American Studies (committee co-chair)
- x Margaret Hegener, Coordinator for Students with Disabilities
- x Barbara Krause, Executive Director, Office of the President
- x Mariel Martin, Director, Office of Student Diversity Programs
- x Peter McCarthy, Lecturer, Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work
- x Dean Mendes, Associate Director of Admissions
- x Sulin Ngo, Class of '11, SGA Vice President of Diversity Affairs
- x Barry Pritzker, Director, Office of Foundation and Corporate Relations
- x Julia Routbort, Director, Counseling Center

**Committee Membership 2011-2012:**

- x Jovany Andujar, & O D V V , SGA Vice President of Diversity Affairs
- x Rochelle Calhoun, Dean of Student Affairs
- x Dung-Lan Chen, Associate Librarian
- x Herb Crossman, Assistant Director for EEO and Workforce Diversity
- x J. Ginger Ertz, Museum Educator, Tang Teaching Museum/Art Gallery
- x Cori Filson, Director, Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges (committee co-chair)
- x Margaret Hegener, Coordinator for Students with Disabilities
- x Barbara Krause, Executive Director, Office of the President
- x Mariel Martin, Director, Office of Student Diversity Programs
- x Michael Ennis-McMillan
- Dean Mendes, Associate Director of Admissions
- x Barry Pritzker, Director, Office of Foundation and Corporate Relations
- x Julia Routbort, Director, Counseling Center
- x Additional student representative ±TBA

**Introduction**

CIGU met twelve times (for a minimum of 80 minutes per meeting) during the 2010-2011 academic year, including two meetings

**Topics of Discussion and Concern**

Topics and concerns discussed in the September CIGU retreat continued to inform our



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review the proposal during the fall semester.
- x Teach In (February 2011): Winston Grady-Willis organized a community-wide Teach In in UHVS RQVH WR WKH & RPSWRQ¶V LQFLGHQW 6SHDNHUV SUHVHQW incident, including an overview of racism in the American justice system by guest speaker Gaspar Castillo, a defense attorney from Albany. Several Skidmore community members spoke of the historical and social context of racism and how those affect our perceptions of the incident and of the effects of the responses and threats from the community. Speakers from Skidmore included Janet Casey, professor of English; Mariel Martin, Director of Student Diversity Programs; Mason Stokes, chair of English; Jon Zibbell, professor of Anthropology; and Lisa Grady-Willis, professor of Theater.
  - x Exit Interviews (May 2011): Professor Joshua Woodfork began conducting interviews five years ago with graduating students of color. This is an opportunity for students of color who will be graduating in May to talk about their experiences <sup>2</sup> what worked for them and what did not, both inside and outside the classroom <sup>2</sup> in an effort to gather information. Confidentiality is maintained; however, CIGU members present take notes in an effort to collect data that can be shared with the Skidmore community. Two exit interviews with 12 graduating students of color were conducted in May. (CIGU will issue a separate report in the fall.)
  - x Statement to the Community (May 2011): & , \* 8¶V ZRUN FXOPLQDWHG LQ D VWDWH community based on our growing concerns regarding the climate at Skidmore. Please see next section for details.

### **CIGU Statement and Recommendations (Appendix A)**

While the members of CIGU believe that serious institutional effort has been made to move forward with Goal II, we ended the year deeply troubled and considerably frustrated by the dialogue and actions related to diversity and inclusion that we witnessed throughout 2010-2011. 7KH HYHQWV DQG UHVS RQVHV VXUURXQGLQJ WKH & RPSWRQ¶V LQFLG several colleagues who have been critical in our diversity initiative, have left many CIGU members questioning the feasibility of advancing Goal II. The statement CIGU presented to the community, and the recommendations CIGU presented to the president and IPPC, are the FRPPLWWHH¶V DWWHP SW W R the major impediments to advancing Goal II in a significant and sustained manner. To reiterate what was expressed in the statement, CIGU believes Skidmore is at a crucial moment in our history in terms of our attitudes and actions regarding diversity and inclusion. As a community we must make real our stated commitment to these principles. We see our statement as a step toward this goal.

### **Conclusion**

As evidenced in the CIGU Statement of May 2011, members of CIGU ended the year discouraged by the events and faculty/staff departures that Skidmore experienced in 2010-2011. We are pleased to see that progress has been made on some recommendations; however, it is clear that much work needs to be done in 2011-2012 to reestablish the importance of Goal II as a community priority.

**Note:** The Annual Report was approved by CIGU on Tuesday, September 20, 2011, and it was reviewed by IPPC on Friday, September 23, 2011.



We are deeply troubled and particularly frustrated by the following three institutional dynamics that we believe impede real dialogue and hinder our collective progress in advancing Goal II. CIGU highlights them in this statement because we believe that unless we are willing to actually name these impediments, they will not change. These impediments are:

1. As a community, we do not hear or believe the stories that we do not want to hear or believe.

Over and over again, CIGU members and some other members of our community have been at open meetings and forums where students of color and/or LGBTQ students tell us in specific, detailed, and emotionally painful ways how they are marginalized on campus, in the classroom, and in the community of Saratoga Springs. In the last several years, we have also read multiple reports from the Bias Response Group about acts of violence that have targeted members of our community because of their sexual orientation and about verbal intimidation and harassment based on race, gender, sexual orientation and religion. During exit interviews with graduating students of color, CIGU and other community members have repeatedly heard themes of alienation, frustration, and disempowerment. We thank those students who have been passionate and courageous in speaking up about deeply painful experiences in public forums. In being honest and clear about their experiences, these students are right to demand the same honesty and clarity from their College.

Unfortunately, these troubling accounts are often heard again and again by a relatively small group of people who attend these meetings. And even more fundamentally troubling, we have from a status of privilege that is neither acknowledged nor understood, let alone questioned. As a historically White institution of relative wealth, Skidmore needs to acknowledge more fully and honestly our historical context of privilege and the continuing effects of institutionalized racism, as well as the current campus realities of bias and marginalization. Without this acknowledgement, change cannot occur.

2. As a community, we need a clearer understanding of the urgency of diversity-related initiatives and a clearer path for decision-making.

We understand that educational institutions typically run by committee processes that can be slow, cumbersome and inefficient. CIGU is no different, and we have noted that we have been slower in bringing crucial issues to the fore than most of us would have wished, especially during this incredibly challenging semester. Of course, CIGU is part of a relatively new structure charged with leading the implementation of Goal II; that structure intentionally reflects the conviction that responsibility for advancing diversity-related initiatives must be located throughout the college. However, several of us are concerned that this authority is not recognized broadly across campus. CIGU believes that the strategic importance of Goal II must be reflected more deeply in the work of the college. Their lived experiences on campus must be heard in that shared governance work.

3. As a community, we must ensure that we create real institutional capacity to sustain the changes needed to support diversity and inclusion on our campus.

At Skidmore, we tend to highlight initiatives and programs that represent real change and that do move us forward in terms of meeting Goal II of the *Strategic Plan*. But, we often fail to acknowledge that these initiatives and programs frequently lack permanent funding, institutional infrastructure, or dedicated staffing. These programs, which can be both curricular and co-

curricular, are not institutionally incorporated in ways that will ensure they can survive past the presence of those committed and skilled individuals who have founded them.