Sixth Annual Report on Diversity

In the sixth annual report on diversity, President Seligman said, “In the last six years we have learned a great deal. Numeric progress has been slow, but the numbers are just a starting point. We’ve made great progress in creating conversations that will help create as welcoming and inclusive and diverse campuses as possible. The evolution of our annual conference is a clear example of that progress. This year, it is also notable that our focus on diversity has extended into The Meliora Challenge, our University-wide capital campaign. These aspirations reflect the next step in our deep commitment to diversity.” (See www.rochester.edu/president/assets/pdf/DiversityReport2012.pdf.)

Third Annual Diversity Conference: Change the Conversation

On April 20, President Joel Seligman in coordination with the Office for Faculty Development and Diversity (OFDD) hosted the third annual University-wide Diversity Conference, titled “Change the Conversation.” More than 400 administrators, trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members gathered to discuss programs and policies related to issues of diversity and inclusion on Rochester’s campuses. The conference, which has seen a large increase in participation by not just members of the University, but also by alumni and the Greater Rochester community, was a daylong event that opened with a keynote address by Claude Steele, the Dean for the School of Education at Stanford University.

Steele is a distinguished author and expert on stereotype threat—the idea that students who belong to groups that have been negatively stereotyped are likely to perform less well in situations such as standardized tests in which they feel they are being evaluated through the lens of that stereotype. The all-day conference included three rounds of concurrent sessions featuring a total of 15 workshops and a poster session with 22 posters. The conference opened and concluded with remarks from President Seligman.

More information on the conference, including presentations, a video of the keynote address, and President Seligman’s opening remarks, can be found online (www.rochester.edu/diversity/annualconference).

Faculty Spotlight

Margarita Simon Guillory

Margarita Simon Guillory joined the Department of Religion and Classics in fall 2011 after graduating with a doctorate in religious studies from Rice University in Houston, Texas. She teaches courses in religion and popular culture, American religious history, and African Diasporic religions. Her research interests include American Spiritualism, identity construction in African-American religion, and social scientific approaches to religion. She has published articles in Culture and Religion and Pastoral Psychology. Her latest work, “Spiritually Repressed: Exploring the Historical Repression of African-American Women in Rochesterian Spiritualism,” will be included in a forthcoming edited multivolume series entitled The Spiritualist Movement: Speaking with the Dead in America and Around the World. In addition to her teaching and scholarly research activities, Margarita enjoys traveling and collecting 19th-century Black Americana picture postcards.

Joanna S. Wu

Joanna S. Wu is associate professor at the Simon School of Business. Her research spans many topics in accounting and finance, including the behavior of financial analysts, the implications of global accounting harmonization, and why mutual fund companies advertise their investment performance and how they compensate their investment advisors. Her most recent research was prompted by the recent financial crisis and examines the risk-taking behavior of large financial institutions. In particular, her research shows that banks downward “window dress” the level of their short-term borrowings at quarter ends when such borrowing information is reported in the public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission—which suggests risk-masking by the financial institutions. Outside work, Joanna enjoys spending time with her two kids and traveling.

If you know new or early-career faculty who should be part of “Faculty Spotlight,” please contact Maggie Cassie (maggie.cassie@rochester.edu).
Power, Privilege, and Difference

Allan Johnson, a sociologist and writer who has worked on issues of gender inequality and patriarchy, gave several presentations at the University in January. The University’s goal for Johnson’s visit was to help us move along the continuum from diversity and cultural competence efforts toward anti-racism and anti-oppression actions for social change. Johnson’s visit to Rochester was extended through the SOF Visiting Scholars mechanism. He was originally scheduled to talk to the Department of Psychiatry’s Grand Rounds only, but through the collaboration of eight schools and offices, he conducted five presentations and workshops during his visit to a variety of audiences: staff, faculty, students, and community members. He spoke about his research on examining systems of privilege and difference in our society.

Warner Diversity and Inclusion Committee Marks Five Years

The Warner School Diversity and Inclusion Committee is celebrating its fifth anniversary. Founding committee chair Nancy Ares, associate professor of teaching and curriculum, discussed the committee’s vision for the future of Warner and shared her take on diversity and inclusion in education on the Warner news page. Read more here: www.warner.rochester.edu/news/events/story/952/.

Mentoring

On March 22, the Office for Faculty Development and Diversity (OFDD) partnered with the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) to bring faculty from across the University together for a mentoring conference titled “Mentoring: Tales from the Front.” Broadly, the conference focused on character traits of a good mentor, the role of a mentor, knowledge and skills needed to be a good mentor, and the nature of the mentoring relationship. Denham Ward, chair emeritus of the Department of Anesthesiology, and Deborah Fowell, assistant professor in the Department of Microbiology, gave presentations.

The conference is part of an overarching effort to provide support for mentoring at the University. In January, OFDD also coordinated the second University-wide celebration of Mentoring Month, giving faculty and students the opportunity to thank their mentors through printable or electronic cards and videos. Mentoring information can be found at www.rochester.edu/diversity/mentoring.