

# ACS Mellon Foundation Faculty Renewal Grant Final Report

**Kelly P. Weeks**  
Centenary College of Louisiana  
[kweeks@centenary.edu](mailto:kweeks@centenary.edu)  
(318) 869-5183

**Infusing Diversity into the Curriculum and the Campus: A Multi-Campus Initiative**  
Kelly P. Weeks (Centenary College), Beau Weston (Centre College), Sarah Worth (Furman University), and Mistie Germek (Rhodes College)

**Workshop held October 1-3, 2010 at Rhodes College**

**Amount Awarded: \$12,000**

## **Report**

The goals of the workshop entitled “Infusing Diversity into the Curriculum and the Campus: A Multi-Campus Initiative” were stated as follows in our proposal:

- 1.) to hire a professional facilitator to present a two-day workshop giving faculty tools needed to teach diversity issues in classes in a variety of academic disciplines.
- 2.) to provide faculty and diversity officers tools needed to effectively deal with diversity-related conflicts and issues that come up in class or on campus.
- 3.) to develop a group of faculty and diversity officers who are committed to training other faculty and diversity officers on their campuses using the learning tools they have acquired.
- 4.) to foster the relationship between faculty members and the Office of Diversity at each institution, which will help these constituencies encourage and support each other as they work towards creating institutional cultures that truly value diversity.
- 5.) to foster relationships among individuals at a variety of ACS schools so that they can continue to offer support, encouragement and ideas to each other as they develop their classes, interact with their students, and continue the diversity initiatives at each school.

In order to meet these goals, the coordinators hired Dr. Frances Kendall to facilitate a weekend workshop on diversity in the classroom. We invited a faculty member and a diversity officer from each ACS school. We had representatives from nine schools attend. Davidson, Hendrix, Millsaps, Centenary, Rhodes, Rollins, Centre, Furman and Sewanee had representatives there. Hendrix sent two faculty members since their diversity officer couldn't attend and Rhodes' faculty member had to back out at the last minute due to family issues

Although Dr. Kendall has written a book about diversity in the classroom, her main specialty is diversity awareness and white privilege workshops. Prior to the workshop, Dr. Kendall developed several worksheets on privilege which were completed by participants before arriving at Rhodes. She facilitated conversations throughout the weekend about how our privileges affected our relationships with each other and with others at our schools. We often discussed racial differences, differences in sexual orientation, differences in rank or power at the institution, etc. The discussions were in depth and emotional. We also spent some time discussing how to approach administration and cabinet members at our schools about diversity issues, as well as how to convince other faculty about the need for diversity initiatives on our campuses. Most participants seemed to get involved in the discussions and get something personal out of it. We recognized areas in our lives where we could still use work. We talked in depth with the other person from our school, so we could really discuss issues affecting the individual campuses.

Therefore, it seems that Dr. Kendall focused on developing the relationships between faculty and diversity officers, with a little focus on power and politics on college campuses. She didn't ever get us to a point to discuss diversity issues in our classrooms or how to practically deal with difficult conversations or issues on campus or in the classroom. Therefore, I would say that we accomplished goals 1, 4, and 5 really well. In addition, the discussions we had could begin to address Goal 2, but not directly. We didn't really discuss Goal 3 much at all.

Most participants seemed satisfied with the result of the weekend and were inspired to plan another similar workshop.

### **Quantitative Evaluation of the Workshop**

Although the Davidson participants left before the evaluation, we did pass out an evaluation at the end of the workshop. The quantitative portion of the evaluation included 13 questions about the workshop and the rating scale was from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The overall rating for the workshop was a 4.3/5.0. The raw data for the quantitative evaluation are attached in Appendix A.

From the questions asked, the participants agreed most strongly (above 4.5 average score) on the following three:

- This workshop was valuable for me personally
- I plan to meet regularly with workshop participants
- The instructor was knowledgeable about the content.

The following four questions had an average score lower than 4.2:

- This workshop will make me a better diversity advocate on my campus
- This workshop gave faculty members useful tools that they needed
- This workshop gave multicultural directors useful tools that they needed
- I plan to keep in touch with faculty members from other ACS schools.

However, the lowest average score was a 3.42, which is still a pretty high score. Therefore, I would conclude that the participants were satisfied with the workshop overall.

## **Qualitative Evaluation of the Workshop**

The qualitative portion of the evaluation gives more insight into what the participants liked and didn't like about the workshop. It included four open-ended questions. The questions and specific comments are attached in a document entitled Appendix B.

When asked what they plan to do with the information learned in the workshop, the comments centered on three main themes: systemic work and relationship building on campus, introspective/personal work, and practical ideas for the classroom.

An example of the systemic work was one participant who said that he/she planned to "consider ways to be more knowledgeable about the system/schools structure that work against diversity in order to know what I'm up against" and another said, "I want to initiate a faculty discussion. I want to meet with the president about more crossover between faculty and student life."

An example of a comment related to personal/introspective work was that one participant planned to "Evaluate my areas of responsibility and my personal relationships."

Some examples of classroom ideas were as follows: "In the classroom, I will focus on the correct use of own privileged/power," "Add film on whiteness to course on race", and "Develop programming to do this work with the other faculty and staff."

When asked what the best thing about the workshop was, participants agreed that the discussions with other faculty and diversity officers was very useful, as was the list of reading suggestions and the discussions on privilege.

When asked about how to improve the workshop, the comments centered on the lack of time, the structure of the workshop and the kind of work done.

Finally, participants were asked whether they would recommend a workshop like this to others at their schools. Almost all participants said they would, and they would like higher administration to attend as well. One, more critical comment was "To those who haven't done much personal work on privilege - yes, for others - no, I don't think it got at how to change/work within the systems for those who have already been doing the personal work."

## **Lessons Learned**

We learned several lessons from the first workshop. We learned that we probably overestimated how much we could actually cover in one weekend. We learned that we needed much more time to really cover everything. We learned that it is extremely useful to have faculty and staff spend quality time together discussing issues of campus life, and we learned that we would like to do this type of thing more often. We decided that this was a foundational workshop, dealing with personal privilege and breaking down barriers. Several of us decided to immediately start working on a second workshop to go even deeper into the issues we deal with on our campuses and in our classes.

## **Impact on Campuses**

A follow up evaluation was emailed to workshop participants. In the email, we simply asked how the participants had used the information from the workshop in the past 6 months. We asked if they had any thoughts on the usefulness of the workshop as well. Representatives from four schools responded to this email.

At one of the ACS schools, the participants reported that, the workshops have really impacted the way they approach diversity initiatives on campus. The faculty member and the multicultural director have decided to meet bi-weekly to discuss policy issues on campus and to begin to improve relationships with upper administration. They also discuss strategies for working within the power system a to get things done. We often refer to our discussions at the workshop as we work through issues at our campus.

The significant impact on a second campus was solidifying the relationship between the diversity officer and the faculty member that attended. Since this workshop, they attended another diversity related workshop as well as attending the second Mellon workshop in April. They say they will also work together to engage the faculty in more meaningful discussions and initiatives around the issue of diversity in the classroom.

Participants from a third school said that meeting other people who have a commitment to diversity in our region was the best part about the workshop. However, they were quite critical of the workshop facilitator, saying that she “had her own interests, often drawing on outmoded or irrelevant examples, and who did NOT deliver content related to the clear interest we had in curricular innovations and improvements. Being harangued about black women hating it when white women cry was but one example.” They suggested that they will continue to work on diversity issues, but nothing has really changed as a result of the workshop.

Finally, a participant notes, “The first workshop with Frances Kendall was a great opportunity for me to build a deeper connection and relationship with a long term tenured faculty. I learned the importance of recognizing and paying attention to my college's "inclusionary and exclusionary history". Frances taught me and my colleague a lot of valuable practical (theory based) skills and tools to navigate the difficult work and slow movement around inequity and injustice on our campus. I would have loved for Frances to point out as "teachable moments" when faculty were exercising of their privilege, ranks and power. Some faculty did not understand or value or connect the diversity officers' roles and responsibilities.”

## **Dissemination of Results**

We wrote a short article for the Palladian about the workshop done in the fall. Many of us kept in touch over the year to discuss the second workshop and we invited more faculty and diversity officers to attend it. As we discussed plans for the second workshop, we also kept each other up to date about what was going on in our own schools. We suggested readings, exercises, etc. that we found as we worked on our own campuses. Since this workshop was more of a foundational and awareness-building weekend, it is difficult to disseminate the results. We plan to do a more formal dissemination of results for the second workshop.

The main result of the first workshop is that we built relationships between faculty and staff and we planned to follow this workshop up with a second workshop more focused on campus activities, including classroom projects.