Introduction to Carleton College’s Statement on Diversity

A subcommittee of the Diversity Initiative Group (DIG) has since October 2005 been hard at work on a draft of a Statement on Diversity for the College. The purpose and scope of the proposed statement is to define “diversity” and explain its importance to the educational mission of Carleton.

The statement is prepared in the spirit of a preamble, a broad statement of principles that reflects the institutional commitments of Carleton to diversity. It is a preamble to a host of existing policy statements on non-discrimination, curriculum, multicultural education, and hate speech. (Complete list of related Carleton documents at the bottom). Indeed, these documents are meant to follow the diversity statement (preamble) in the formal presentation of Carleton’s approach to diversity.

Kaaren Williamsen-Garvey, chair of the DIG subcommittee, and members Carolyn Fure-Slocum, Djara Meehan, Al Montero, and Alisa Sanchez ('06) presented a preliminary draft of the diversity statement to the full DIG in November. After receiving substantive and editorial suggestions, the subcommittee went to work on preparing an array of forums where the diversity statement may be presented. These meetings will provide the wider Carleton community with opportunities to comment on the spirit and text of the document.

February 13 Faculty Meeting
February 13 CSA Meeting, SH 251, 7pm
February 15 Open meeting especially for staff, AGH, Noon-1:30
February 23 Open meeting, SH 251, common time
March 2 Open meeting especially for students, SH 251, 7pm

We would certainly like to see you attend one or more of these meetings so that the discussion of this most important document receives the fullest possible airing. If you cannot attend, we would still like to hear your ideas and suggestions. You may contact any of the subcommittee members with those.

DIG Subcommittee
- Carolyn Fure-Slocum (Chaplain), cfureslo@carleton.edu
- Djara Meehan (Assistant Dean of Admissions), dmeehan@acs.carleton.edu
- Al Montero (Associate Professor of Political Science), amontero@carleton.edu
- Alisa Sanchez ’06, sancheza@carleton.edu
- Kaaren Williamsen-Garvey (Director of the Gender and Sexuality Center), kwilliam@acs.carleton.edu
Additional Information

Related Carleton Documents
Once this statement is finalized, supporting documents may also need to be updated and revised. We suggest the following documents accompany the diversity statement as supporting documents.

1. Carleton Non-Discrimination Statement
2. Diversity statement from Admissions
3. Community Standards Policy (Student Handbook)
4. Curriculum
   a. "Discrimination and Academic Freedom" (1990)
   b. "Multicultural Education Goals for the Curriculum" (1994)
5. Hate Crimes Policy (1999)

Diversity Statements from Colleges and Universities
We studied diversity statements from the following 11 institutions:

Amherst College, Columbia University, Duke University, Harvard University, Princeton University, Stanford University, the University of Pennsylvania, Swarthmore College, Wellesley College, Williams College, and Yale University.
Carleton College’s Statement on Diversity

The purpose of Carleton College is to provide a liberal education that equips students with the skills - critical, intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical – they need to lead a fully realized life in a diverse and changing world. A Carleton education recognizes that the world’s people are heterogeneous in their race and ethnicity, political and social worldviews, religious and spiritual understandings, language and geographic characteristics, gender, gender identities and sexual orientations, physical abilities, age, and social and economic classes. Carleton students must encounter this diversity to learn how to engage it; they must learn how to engage it in order to be full, creative persons. Carleton has a responsibility to educate people from all backgrounds, preparing them as democratic citizens and agents of change.

The core principles of a liberal education at Carleton are based on a culture of mutual respect that provides a welcoming environment for the free expression of diverse points of view. We wish faculty, staff, and students to feel welcomed in all learning spaces, and we recognize that some intellectual conversations are difficult and require sensitivity. In the pursuit of creating a culture of respect within a diverse community and a free and open marketplace of ideas, Carleton educators and students ought to ensure that all individuals feel welcomed and safe in our learning spaces.

At the same time, pursuit of a liberal education often involves discomfort. Our students grow when their established views are challenged and they gain an opportunity to rethink deeply held assumptions about the world. A Carleton education enables students to engage in self-reflection. It trains them to enhance their listening and communication skills, their empathic understanding. And, in turn, it allows students to synthesize different ideas, develop creative solutions for challenging problems, and learn to apply these ideas and solutions as leaders for change in the world.

A community that fosters diversity of thought and an open exchange of ideas can only emerge from the presence and engagement of individuals with different backgrounds and worldviews. Because creative and talented people come from many places and have many backgrounds, Carleton College is dedicated to the attracting and retaining of a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. These principles will constantly sustain the enriching learning environment that defines the institution and its place in the world.