



Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a highly selective private liberal arts college in Saint Paul, Minnesota, committed to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism and civic engagement. Nearly 70 percent of its 1,850 students, who come from every state and 71 countries, have graduated in the top 10 percent of their high school classes.

Macalester offers 37 majors and 34 minors in natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and fine arts. More than 69 percent of classes have fewer than 20 students. Of students from the United States, 13 percent are students of color. International students account for 14 percent of the student body. Tuition and fees average about \$34,000 per year, and the four-year graduation rate is 78 percent.

Learn more about Macalester at www.macalester.edu.

Macalester students lead faculty to create multicultural community

Macalester College's stated promise to its students is that it will "prepare people to become intellectually vital and productive citizen-leaders in a world that includes a multiplicity of cultures, perspectives and needs."

And so, the College will use the Bush Foundation's 2003 grant to become a more successful multicultural learning community. Creating this community was the vision of a grant series Macalester began in 1997 to deal with issues around race and diversity on its campus.

Roxane Harvey Gudeman, the program's co-director and a scholar of the psychology of difference, said that students raised the need for more attention to race and diversity but that administration and faculty also supported intercultural experience as a necessary component of a quality education and a requirement of the employment marketplace.

"Macalester attracts an idealistic student," Gudeman said. "They are sometimes more aware of our imperfections and where we're not fulfilling our promise than we are. They hold us to a very high standard. They saw a low population of domestic

students of color and perceived that the academic and social climate was chillier for students of color than for others. This affected their academic performance and also reduced opportunities for multicultural learning for everyone."

Ninety-four domestic students of color entered Macalester in fall 2004; at 23 percent of all domestic students, this was the highest proportion since 1970. Gudeman is confident that Macalester's faculty development program directly contributed to this increase as well as to faculty support for the creation of the Department of American Studies with a focus on domestic diversity.

In addition, the Department of Multicultural Life has been established with a mission to:

Integrate the ethos and values of historically under-represented peoples, discourses, thoughts, and ideas as a catalyst for transforming the traditional ways of doing the work of the College into a more inclusive model.

Start where you are, use what you have

The first Bush Foundation grant to focus on race and diversity was designed to:

- Encourage the personal development of the faculty members with respect to their own teaching and

Student participants in Macalester's Pluralism and Unity program



Associate Professor Leola Johnson and Professor Paul Solon are recipients of course development grants.

advising across racial, ethnic and other social differences.

- Provide opportunities for faculty to learn about and reflect on many facets of multicultural life and learning.
- Achieve a “critical mass” of faculty participants—enough to have a significant impact on the larger faculty culture.

Programs funded by the grant included the faculty development seminar, new course development, attendance at national conferences, research and travel focused on race and diversity, opportunities for all faculty and staff to discuss and learn about the grant programs, and the creation of a web page.

Gudeman also credits as good luck the timing of the Bush Foundation grant in relation to the College’s strategic planning process. “During the unusual and visionary planning process initiated by (former) President McPherson, the Bush participants had many additional venues for communicating with other faculty, staff and students about race and diversity.

“Macalester is doing a pretty good job regarding multiculturalism, relatively speaking, but there is still much to do and we need the help of multiple voices from different perspectives in recognizing what the needs are and in addressing them,” Gudeman said about the College’s year of planning. It took quick action by consolidating some programs and eliminating others to create an American Studies Department that incorporated the African-American Studies and Comparative North American Studies Departments to allow for expansion in new directions.

A number of faculty attended national conferences on race and diversity and brought back reports and insight to the rest of the faculty. There was discussion of Macalester’s exclusive focus on elite education. Junior faculty were awarded extra time to work on multicultural curricula. Kendrick Brown, a psychology professor, said, “I have nothing but good things to say. Instead of having two courses to teach that semester, I taught only my Understanding and Confronting Racism class. Begin able to concentrate fully on the material and dynamics pertaining to the class enabled me to create a much richer student experience. The course release allowed me to become a better teacher and scholar of issues of racial diversity.”

Diversity dollars spur thinking in all disciplines

Faculty participants in the Bush Foundation-funded seminar each received “diversity dollars” for research and travel that were restricted to the goals of the grant.

While some disciplines identified many opportunities, it was a challenge for the natural scientists to find ways to use their diversity dollars. They pooled their resources to support a weekend faculty development workshop for science faculty focused on support for and retention of students of color in science classes. They have since come together in their own seminar to read and discuss ways to attract and retain more students of color to their disciplines.

The activities, seminars and symposia catalyzed the multicultural center that is now a permanent part of our organization, Gudeman said. Administration now considers participation in the grant a plus in promotion and tenure consideration. There is also a renewed understanding that genuine academic excellence can be achieved only by respecting and learning from the plural voices of those with diverse interests, philosophies and social histories.

Student focus group reactions have been positive. They've noticed a tremendous difference in the classes offered on racism and diversity, as well as positive incorporation of this material in the more traditional classes.

Critical mass

Out of Macalester's 150 full-time and 60 part-time teacher-scholars, 65 faculty members participated in some way in the seminar and/or received diversity dollars. More than one-third of them held tenure or were on the tenure track. As a result, many participants have played a critical role in moving multiculturalism to a central position in the

curriculum, among the faculty and in the structure of the College.

The new grant cycle will allow Macalester to build on what it has learned. New programs will help faculty better understand the diversity within their own ranks. They will explore teaching and advising across social differences, as well as race differences, and work to understand the experiences and identities of their students outside the classroom. "We need to know more about their individual experiences within their community," Gudeman said. *

Roxane Harvey Gudeman (left) reviews the research of student Zarina Morais ('04). Harvey was the director of the first race and diversity grant and is the co-director of the current grant. She has been an adjunct professor of psychology at Macalester College since 1985.

