To: The Faculty Steering Committee  
From: The Committee on Diversity and Community  
Subject: Annual Report, April 24, 2013

The Committee on Diversity and Community is comprised of faculty, staff and students, and is charged with examining the health of our Williams community with respect to diversity and inclusion. In particular, the CDC examines issues and proposes initiatives with regard to the College's commitment to educate students for engagement with our increasingly diverse world. Over the years, the CDC has addressed issues associated with both curricular and extracurricular areas. These have included student retention and academic success, staff and faculty recruitment and retention, discrimination and sexual harassment/misconduct grievance procedures, admission and financial aid policies and practices, and student orientation and advising training. In addition, Williams Reads originated in and has been sponsored by the CDC. In 2012-2013, Dean Sarah Bolton and Professor Leslie Brown co-chaired the Williams Reads Committee and several CDC members participated on this committee.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the CDC met with different members of the Williams College community, including Steve Klass, Vice President for Campus Life. Steve provided CDC members with a copy of the Summary of the Bias Incident Response Task Force (BIRTF) Report and participated in a discussion on its contents and on the work of the Task Force. In addition, the CDC met with Lili Rodriguez, Director of the Davis Center, to learn about Davis Center projects and initiatives, and Doug Schiazza, Director, Office of Student Life, to discuss the neighborhood system, the ongoing evaluation of the system, and Baxter Fellows.

The CDC worked in three subcommittees during the 2012-2013 academic year. In order to facilitate an exchange of ideas among subcommittees, the CDC Co-Chairs developed a Glow site for committee members where relevant articles, documents, website links, and announcements were shared. The following describes the work of the individual subcommittees.

1. Subcommittee on Building Community  
Co-Chairs: Bilal Ansari and David Lee

Our subcommittee investigated ways to improve our campus community and began by discussing which aspects of campus life bolster the Williams community and which aspects weaken it. One area the subcommittee focused on involved community life in upperclassmen housing. In its current structure, opportunities to engage floor mates are limited. To change this, we opened a dialogue with Patty Leahey-Hays, Assistant Director for Student Involvement-Residential Programs, and discussed ways to facilitate interactions and interpersonal connections among students in dorms. One aspect of residential life that we focused on involved the ineffectiveness of the Baxter Fellow position, and the subcommittee engaged in a conversation with both Patty and Doug Schiazza, Director, Office of Student Life, about this issue.

The Office of Student Life listened attentively to our concerns and recommendations about concrete ways to improve upperclassmen campus life. We asked for more accountability of leadership, we asked for comprehensive leadership training, and lastly we asked that neighborhoods be actively engaged with the improvement of campus community at Williams
College. Below are the links to what resulted in our collaboration with the Office of Student Life. Here is what was rolled out with upper class residential life effective immediately and currently in development as a replacement of the old Baxter Fellow positions. Student Life is still working on a few details that will be rolled out over the coming few weeks into the summer of 2013.

In response to our request of more comprehensive neighborhood community engagement:

http://student-life.williams.edu/student-involvement/residential-programs/the-neighborhoods/

Leadership training:

http://student-life.williams.edu/student-involvement/residential-programs/the-neighborhoods/neighborhood-directors/

Accountable leadership:

http://student-life.williams.edu/student-involvement/residential-programs/the-neighborhoods/house-coordinators/

Active engagement with campus:

http://student-life.williams.edu/student-involvement/residential-programs/the-neighborhoods/neighborhood-reps/

During the 2012-2013 academic year, we also focused on exploring the necessary academic virtues to increase the capacity for engagement with the community. Specifically, the subcommittee researched the potential benefits of a pass/fail fall semester for first-year students. Peer institutions, such as MIT and Brown University, operate under a paradigm where pressure is temporarily shifted away from grades to the college experience, while still maintaining high academic standards. We felt that having a pass/fail fall semester might give first-year students a chance to acclimate more gradually to college and could potentially minimize personal/social problems that inhibit a student’s ability to succeed academically. In addition, a pass/fail fall semester might encourage first-year students to forge stronger connections between exploration and experimentation, and give students more time to engage each other respectfully in meaningful and controversial conversations.

2. Subcommittee on Student Life
Chairs: Mike Reed, Carly Valenzuela and Chalita Washington

We began the year by reviewing student life areas of interest as expressed by the CDC membership, organized them into categories by themes, and then tried to prioritize them according to perceived impact on the community. After prioritizing themes, we gathered background information to help establish a starting point and discern whether there were other offices or committees that were also addressing the same concerns and how much progress had
been made. Finally, based upon what had been accomplished and current efforts, we selected areas to pursue. Initially, members identified two concrete issues to be deconstructed throughout the year.

1) Academic performance of freshmen:
**Hypothesis:** There are certain populations within the Williams student body who are not aware of available resources and support with respect to academic life. Students within these groups are underperforming which has severe social, academic, and financial consequences. **Actions to Be Taken:** Request some data on academic performance. We would like to compare academic performance during the first year between 1) financial aid students vs. non-financial aid students and 2) first-generation students vs. non-first-generation students.

2) Financial Aid for Post-Williams Life
**Hypothesis:** Due to financial barriers, some students are unable to participate in essential aspects of career exploration that would prepare students for life after Williams. Specific examples of such forgone opportunities include unpaid internships, transportation to job interviews, suits for interviews, winter study courses (SPEC 21 via John Noble or Experiential Education WSP courses with Paula Consolini). Without the necessary support or resources to help students, these Ephs will be losing out on valuable experiences. **Actions to Be Taken:** Email Karen Cardozo, Director of Career Exploration—While the ad hoc committee that she formed is working to obtain an endowment, what steps can we take to assist her? Surveys? Reports? Can we create some resource guide to help students take advantage of career opportunities in the meantime?

**Development of a bias incident reporting website:**
Despite the focus on the previous two areas, the direction of the committee shifted after the occurrence of the bias incident where “all beaners must die” was written on a white board. The committee decided to work with the Bias Incident Response Task Force (BIRTF) to expedite the development of a web page to report incidents of bias and assault. We reviewed the preliminary work on the website done by the BIRTF and made additions and modifications to develop a draft website. The draft was presented to the Office of Communications that will begin work on the site this spring with a targeted launch date in August. The CDC will continue to work with the Office of Communications and BIRTF to assure that the draft site functions as a repository for incidences of bias and assault, and to alert the administration to respond to incidents where action and intervention is requested or deemed appropriate and necessary.

3. Subcommittee on Policy Review
Co-Chairs: Joan Edwards and Li Yu

**I. Introduction**
The Policy subcommittee carried on the momentum from last year to continue its work on the issue of bias as well as College policies that are associated with and affect diversity in our community. Our attention and efforts have been focused on the following four aspects.
Review of the Colleges Affirmative Action/EEOC policies. We completed the review and evaluation of the contents as well as presentation of the College Affirmative Action and EEOC related policies. In December 2012, we were informed that the long de-activated Affirmative Action Advisory Committee (AAAC) had been reactivated by President Falk. Thus we decided to put our findings together with detailed, action-oriented suggestions into a report (in Part II of this document), which has been sent to Peter Murphy, chair of the AAAC.

Policies related to Diversity in Admissions. We examined diversity related policies and practices of the College Office of Admission. We invited Ahmmad Brown, Diversity Recruitment Director, to share with us his insider’s view concerning the admission process and procedures that directly contribute to the building of diversity in the College student body. He gave a detailed description of the pro-active and effective recruiting strategies of their office.

The role of the social sciences in improving anti-bias policies. We explored how studies in the social sciences could potentially make our anti-bias policies better. We began by inviting Jeremy D. Cone, Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology, whose research focuses on judgments and decision-making, to share his expertise on studies of bias. He reported major findings in social psychology that we think should be taken into account in our College policies. Part III of this report includes a summary of findings and copies of reference articles that we believe would be beneficial to the College, especially those reviewing and revising our anti-bias policies. Based on studies we have surveyed, we put forward one urgent suggestion related to bias incident reporting. That is, because individuals most distant from a situation are most likely to adjudicate alleged violations fairly, reports need to bypass the chain of command and go to an ombudsperson or an independent investigator.

Ethos statement to establish goals and values of our community. In light of the most recent hate crime that happened on the heels of the Claiming Williams Day (Claiming Williams was on January 31st, 2013 and the crime happened on February 2nd, 2013), CDC members felt it important to have a clear ethos statement, which would provide a set of goals and values defining Williams College as a place committed to building a diverse community. Our subcommittee was charged with the task of creating this ethos statement. We decided instead to create “an Ethos Process”, to encourage members of the community not only to “talk the talk,” but also to “walk the walk” about diversity issues. Part IV is a copy of the Ethos Process (still a work-in-progress).

Part II: Memorandum to the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 19th, 2013

To: Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

From: Subcommittee on Policy Review, Committee on Diversity and Community (CDC)
Joan Edwards (Subcommittee Co-Chair), Danielle Gonzalez (CDC Co-Chair), Rhon Manigault Bryant, David Michael, Reema Sharma, Phonkrit Tanavisarut, Christian Thorne, Claire Ting (CDC Co-Chair), Carmen Whalen, Li Yu (Subcommittee Co-Chair)
Subject: Suggestions to the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee

Background:

From September 2011 to present, the CDC Subcommittee on Policy Review spent an enormous amount of time and energy reviewing the College’s Affirmative Action policies and the College’s communication of these policies to the College community and the world beyond. It has come to our attention that there are areas for improvement, especially in how the College communicates and presents its Affirmative Action policies in handbooks and on the Internet. As part of our review, we also evaluated the websites of several peer institutions with a focus on their presentation and content of the Affirmative Action and diversity related policies. What follows is a list of our findings and suggestions for solutions.

Findings and Suggestions:

Finding 1: Affirmative Action policies are detailed in both the Staff Handbooks and the Faculty Handbook, but with different wording. It is confusing to have more than one policy.

Suggestion 1: Combine the different statements into one overall policy and then define the specifics for each group separately.

Finding 2: The Affirmative Action Advisory Committee is listed in both the Staff Handbooks and the Faculty Handbook, but with different committee memberships. The Associate Director for Human Resources is on the AAAC for Staff and Administrators but not on the Faculty AAAC. The four presidential appointees “include representatives from all employee groups” in the Staff Handbooks and “include representatives from the following employment groups: members of the faculty, and the administrative staff and hourly employees” in the Faculty Handbook.

Suggestion 2: Form one universal Affirmative Action Advisory Committee at the College level. If necessary, form two subcommittees within AAAC that address issues related to staff and faculty separately. Ensure that the final committee membership is clearly, adequately, and consistently communicated to the College community and updated in a timely fashion.

Finding 3: A search using the keyword “Affirmative Action” on the College’s main web, directs the reader first to the main web page of the Office of Strategic Planning & Institutional Diversity. However, on that page, the term “Affirmative Action” cannot be found. Related policies are scattered on different web pages of the Office of Strategic Planning & Institutional Diversity and are difficult to locate.

Suggestion 3: Make “one-stop shopping” (or keyword search) for Affirmative Action and related policies, to be accessed through a central portal. We advise following the model of

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Wesleyan’s “Office of Affirmative Action” (http://www.wesleyan.edu/affirm/) to construct a centralized web-based clearinghouse for all the policies and resources related to Affirmative Action. The web site should include, for example, clear definitions of legal terms, legal documents related to AA policies, resources for help and support in hiring, links to resources for hiring, etc.

**Finding 4:** It is unclear how the College’s Affirmative Action policies relate to current laws.  
**Suggestion 4:** Provide more materials that will educate faculty, staff and students about the legal and historical background of the College’s Affirmative Action policies. The College’s position and commitment to Affirmative Action relative to the historical and legal background should also be clearly stated.

**Finding 5:** It is not clear to us how the College’s current Affirmative Action policies apply in the case of visiting positions. Some departments conduct a national search for visiting positions. However, others bypass the search process. These inconsistencies diminish the existing policies. The procedures associated with an informal search process are not at all transparent.  
**Suggestion 5:** Provide clear guidelines as to how the College’s Affirmative Action policies apply to the hiring of visitors. If we allow informal searches or a process that starts with a selected pool of candidates, we need to be transparent about these processes.

**Finding 6:** In all searches, a job candidate receives notification from the College to fill out an “Applicant EEOC Information Request Form.” See copy attached. The applicant is informed that his or her response “is voluntary, will be treated confidentially, and will be used only for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of our diversity and inclusion efforts.” (See attached copy of the form). However, in actual practice, in faculty hires responses are used for more than the purpose of “monitoring.” When hiring faculty, it has been used to identify minority candidates. We have two concerns with this. First, although this use is intended for proactive recruiting and is meant only to benefit minority applicants, we feel that we cannot ensure that information given to search committees will only be used positively. Second, we think it is important that if we continue to use it in recruiting, the language of the form reflect this use clearly.  
**Suggestion 6:** In addition to serious liability issues, the College should inform job candidates how the information obtained through the “Applicant EEOC Information Request Form” is actually being used.

**Finding 7:** In staff hiring, the system for compiling data from the “Applicant EEOC Information Request Form” is inefficient, often resulting in delayed reporting.  
**Suggestion 7:** In order to ensure consistency in and to effectively inform the search process, we recommend making improvements in how aggregate data are compiled and reported.

**Finding 8:** Based on anecdotal evidence provided by members of the sub-committee, there are sometimes inconsistencies in the hiring process that violate the
AA/EEOC policies. These include, but are not limited to, inappropriate comments, apparent or subtle discrimination against job candidates based on age, national origin, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. When such violations occur, there are no mechanisms for reporting and responding to such incidents.

**Suggestion 8:** The College needs to establish multiple reporting and responding procedures via HR, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, the Office of Strategic Planning & Institutional Diversity, and an ombudsperson to deal with reports of violations. We suggest that the College implements procedures that will ensure effective reporting and response mechanisms.

**Finding 9:** During the course of our discussions, it has come to our attention that the name of the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee may soon be changed to “Advisory Committee on Equity & Inclusion.”

It is not clear to us why the phrase “Affirmative Action” should be removed from the name especially since last August, Williams College, together with thirty-seven other private colleges submitted an amicus brief in support of the defendant in the Supreme Court case of Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin. In this brief, we state that “private, highly selective colleges have a compelling educational interest in enrolling broadly diverse—including racially diverse—classes, and cannot do so without taking the diversity they strive for into account.” This brief publically indicates that Williams College is among those institutions that support Affirmative Action. Although the intention of removing “Affirmative Action” from the title may be meant positively to indicate the College is moving forward and beyond Affirmative Action, it may be perceived as a weakening of the College’s support of Affirmative Action.

**Suggestion 9:** In light of the history associated with the phrase and because it is widely recognized, we strongly recommend the retention of “Affirmative Action” in the title. One suggestion is the name be “Affirmative Action, Equity and Inclusion” Committee.

**Concluding Remarks:**

We welcome the recent move that the College has made to reactivate the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee. We look forward to seeing it play a more active role in formulating and enforcing the Affirmative Action and EEOC policies on campus.
Our current Applicant EEOC Information Request Form is shown below.

Williams College
Applicant EEOC Information Request Form

Thank you for your interest in employment at Williams College. Williams College is dedicated to building a diverse and inclusive community, in which members of all backgrounds can live, learn and thrive. Consistent with this commitment is an effort to develop and attract a diverse pool of candidates. Therefore, we request your cooperation in completing the form below, which will assist us in accomplishing our objectives. Your response is voluntary, will be treated confidentially, and will be used only for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of our diversity and inclusion efforts. You are not required to complete this form and declining will have no adverse impact on your candidacy. Let me thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Michael E. Reed
Vice President for Strategic Planning

and Institutional Diversity

Williams College considers applicants for all positions without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, or military service.

Name

Position

Biology: Molecular Biologist/Biochemist/Visiting

From what source or publication did you learn of this opening?

Other Source

Gender

 Male  Female  Other  (Optional)

Race/Ethnicity

Ethnicity – Please select race/ethnicity. Select one or more.

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community attachment.

☐ Asian: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, SE Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

☐ Black or African American: A person having origins in and of the black racial groups of Africa.

☐ Hispanic or Latino: A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: A person having origins in any of the peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

☐ White: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Submit
Part III: The role of the social sciences in improving anti-bias policies.

To adjudicate cases of bias in a fair way, understanding how people process and perceive bias is critical. During the 2012-13 academic year our sub-committee reviewed studies in social psychology that study bias issues. These studies have important implications for how we might improve our anti-bias policies so that they are more effective. Below we summarize the main findings and the references documenting each finding.

RECOGNIZING BIAS
Bias is difficult to recognize because each of us has a bias blind spot and also can be influenced by motivated reasoning and the “illusion of objectivity”. The bias blind spot is where we can recognize bias in others but cannot see it in ourselves (Pronin 2006, Pronin, Lin & Ross 2002). A corollary to this is that people think they personally can rise above the fray to impartially judge a situation—but that others can’t. Motivated reasoning and the illusion of objectivity come into play when we investigate a potential case. For example, how thoroughly we investigate a potential case of bias depends, in part, on what we think the outcome should be. If we disagree with a conclusion, we may dig deeper. If we agree, we are more likely to look no further. In part, we may exploit the ambiguity of a situation to make it more palatable—we become intuitive lawyers (Baumeister and Newman 1994). References on the illusion of objectivity or motivated reasoning include papers by Kunda (1990), Kunda & Spencer (2003) and Baumeister (1994).

Indeed the closer one is to a situation, the more difficult it is to be unbiased. Another way of putting it is that the further one is from a situation, the better able one is able to recognize bias. This strongly suggests two modifications in our anti-bias policies:

1. Bypassing the chain of command and using an ombudsperson or an independent investigator would be most effective. Inherently reporting up the chain of command is problematic as those in command have a vested interest in finding “no bias.”

2. Having two independent assessments would be best. That way, you get two views and if bias comes into play, one person’s bias potentially can be countered by the other person.

In our discussions we asked how we might recognize bias and we discussed both the importance of clear evidence and of using comparative data (e.g., if groups or people are treated differently). Out-group homogeneity effects—viewing people in an out-group as homogeneous— also needs to be taken into account.

Literature Cited:


RESOLVING ISSUES OF BIAS

a.) The problem of defensiveness. No one wants to be seen as biased. When “called” on bias, the response is often defensive. Can we explore the literature on defensiveness and how to minimize it? Can we avoid the “boomerang” effect—that is, a response to defensiveness where a person argues with even more fervor—“digs in their heels.” There are two solutions to dealing with defensiveness to date:

1. Self-affirmation—that is, bolster other aspects of the self.
2. Take an outside perspective or consider the opposite. Think about how someone else might view the situation.

Papers by Dunning and Helzer 2012, Claude Steele (Emeritus, Stanford)

b.) Awareness of bias is not enough. One unexpected finding is that that to prevent bias and bias incidents, awareness is not enough. This finding would compel the College to be more proactive and more creative in providing training workshops that would not stop at the level of general education, but would push forward for more effective actions that prevent and deal with bias head-on.

c.) Reporting bias incidents could backfire. It is all in how you report it. People tend to conform to descriptive norms. If everyone is doing it, it must be o.k. Descriptive vs. injunctive norms.

Papers by Cialdini

Cialdini, R. (2007). Descriptive Social Norms as Underappreciated Sources of Social Control, Psychometrika, 72(2), 263–268


d.) Not apologizing makes you feel better (added 1 April 2013). Increases your feeling of status and sense of integrity. It makes you feel more empowered and increases your sense of self-worth.
Not wanting to apologize reinforces the bias blind spot—not seeing bias in self. How you bring about an apology is critical in getting an apology, which can be one remedy in a bias incident.

Listen to NPR Morning Edition:

http://www.npr.org/2013/04/01/175714511/why-not-apologizing-makes-you-feel-better


Part IV: Ethos Process at Williams College (Work-in-Progress)

4.1 Introduction

In its hiring statement, Williams College claims to be “committed to building a diverse and inclusive community where members from all backgrounds can live, learn, and thrive.”

On the home page of the Admissions Office (http://admission.williams.edu), the first thing that a prospective student sees is the statement “At Williams you’ll follow your passions and discover new ones along the way. You’ll be challenged to think, learn and do research in new and different ways. You’ll be part of an incredibly close-knit, diverse community. You’ll get to know your professors—really. You’ll be prepared for your first job—and your last one.”

How do we make it possible for everyone to “live, learn and thrive” in this “incredibly close-knit, diverse community”? The CDC Policy Subcommittee is working on the Ethos Process that will aid members of the Williams Community in achieving these outcomes.

Here is a list of key terms that have come up during our discussions. Members of the subcommittee feel that it would be easier to initiate dialogues and conversations if we develop a series of questions for the community.

4.2 Key Terms and Questions of the Ethos Process

Peer-to-Peer Accountability
What does it look like to be accountable to peers?
What does it mean to be accountable to peers?

Honesty
How can we ensure honesty in our interactions?
Does accountability increase honesty? If so, how can we increase accountability?
Do our anti-bias policies make those responsible accountable?

**Rupturing Silences**
How does remaining silent about incidents of disagreement, bias, sexual assault, etc. become detrimental to the life of our community?
Are there effective ways of rupturing silences that can promote a culture of honesty and genuine engagement?

**Humanizing Hate**
Are we doing enough to educate our community about “hate” incidents?
Are we sufficiently informed about the nature and impact of micro-aggressions, bias, stereotyping, prejudice, and discriminatory acts?

**The Role/Culture of Disagreement**
Should we do more to recognize that disagreements can be good?
What strategies can we collectively employ that engage disagreement head on yet remain respectful to all parties involved?
What are mediation processes that may help promote effective disagreement while simultaneously disrupting silence?

**Culture of Politeness**
How can we “get around” the culture of politeness, or the attitude of political correctness, civility, and “being nice” that can at times thwart necessary conflict and/or direct engagement?
How can we constructively disagree or “call” someone on their bias?
Are there ways to reduce defensiveness that would allow us to engage more openly?

**Williams Hospitality**
Although we are often rushing between classes, meetings, and events, what can genuine hospitality look like at Williams?
Are we fostering connections with others that are truly hospitable?
How do we balance hospitality with while simultaneously promoting respectful disagreement?
Respectfully submitted,

The Committee on Diversity and Community
Jaliz Albanese ‘13
Bilal Ansari
Jennifer Bees
Patricia Burton
Jennifer Chan ‘14
Joan Edwards
Diane England
Katherine Flanagan ‘14
Danielle Gonzalez, Co-Chair
Eva Grudin
Kris Herman (fall 2012)
David Johnson
Megan Konieczny
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David Lee ‘14
Rhon Manigault-Bryant
David Michael ‘13
Emily Nuckols ‘15
Michael Reed
Phonkrit.Saejia ‘15
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Beverly Williams
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