Chapter 5: DIVERSITY AT HAMPSHIRE

Statement on Affirmative Action and Diversity, 1996

MEMORANDUM
DATE: April 1, 1996
TO: Faculty
FROM: Affirmative Action Committee
RE: Draft Statement on Affirmative Action and Diversity

We hope to continue and expand a series of discussions that took place in the fall about a draft college policy on affirmative action and diversity. The attached draft has been discussed in our committee, at the dean's meeting, and in AdCom. We would like to thank the faculty, staff, and administrators who thus far have worked hard revising the draft and carefully considering its language. We now ask the broader community, to build on this work by reviewing and responding to the draft.

These conversations come at a time when affirmative action policies are under broad attack nationally. Some individuals on campus may also question the necessity of such policies. The question is a fair one, but the core principles of affirmative action--rigorously ensuring that all applicants for vacant positions are considered fairly and the commitment to nurturing and strengthening a diverse faculty and staff--transcend political battles and are embedded in the mission of the college.

How we carry out that mission, how we articulate it in a policy, however, needs the advice and participation of a broad cross-section of the college community, and eventually the formal endorsement of the Board of Trustees. Hence, we ask for your participation.

The Affirmative Action Committee, will convene two discussion groups to take place at 3:30 PM on April 9 and 16 in Franklin Patterson Hall. Faculty have been randomly assigned; please see the attached sheet for "assignments." Staff and students are encouraged to attend a discussion group of their choosing. We urge you to participate. Written comments on the draft can be submitted to Barbara Orr-Wise, HR. We hope that you will engage in this important process.

cc: Staff and Students

Affirmative Action Committee:
Christopher Chase, Pauline Carter, Margaret Cerullo, Chyrell George, Benjamin Oke, John Reid, Will Ryan, Alan Hodder, Norman Holland, Nancy Kelly, Michelle Murrain, Nelly Ramirez, Peter Rosa, Barbara Orr-Wise
Diversity/Affirmative Action Policy

I. Introduction
Hampshire's Affirmative Action policy is integral to the mission and goals of the college. It recognizes that a diverse community is essential to its overall educational goals, and sets forth the methods used to achieve that diversity and the standards of measurement it uses to assess whether it is achieving this diversity as one of its educational goals.

If Hampshire is to prepare young people for a lifelong process of self-education and creative and productive engagement with society, it must equip them to learn and work within a diverse community. Individuals who understand and appreciate diverse cultures will have a substantial advantage in their own lives. Countries whose populations possess these characteristics will have an equal advantage in a global economy and international community. To that extent, affirmative action programs are not simply sound social policy; they are sound economic policy.

II. Educational Program
As a liberal arts college, Hampshire College's mission is to develop the capacity of individuals to think clearly, critically and creatively; to judge wisely and to act humanely and responsibly; and to communicate effectively.

Hampshire's educational program carries out this mission by giving to students both the freedom and the responsibility to design their educational programs. Its essential features rest on the belief that students who have a responsibility for and an ownership of their education will grow more and accomplish more in that process than if they are passive participants.

Hampshire students design and shape their education through negotiation with faculty... This education leads to greater intellectual and developmental transformation for an individual over time than traditional forms of education where the student is often a more passive participant.

The second important characteristic of a Hampshire education derives from its interdisciplinary focus... In the process of designing their education, students cross traditional boundaries in many different directions and bring faculty together who themselves might never have elected to work together.

A third distinctive feature of Hampshire's educational program is the multicultural requirement, which goes beyond simply taking a course or reading a set of books. Students must relate their central area of concern and core body of work to an issue that relates to the Third World, domestic or international...
III. The Importance of Diversity
The complexity of such an educational program, the size of Hampshire, and the reality of scarce resources requires that the faculty and staff who implement this program must bring with them many attributes and also must contribute in not just one but several ways. For Hampshire to succeed in achieving its educational goals, it collectively must be diverse in many ways, including a faculty and staff that varies in race, gender, ethnicity, age, physical ability and sexual orientation. Diversity strengthens Hampshire's ability to meet the individual academic needs of each student by providing an array of perspectives and skills essential for students to understand the global dimensions of their world as well as the complexity of their own communities. Giving students direct experience with those whose backgrounds differ from their own strengthens their ability to think critically...

IV. A Policy to Ensure Diversity
A young college with limited resources but the ambition to be a national institution of the first rank cannot assume that the quality and the diversity it seeks in its community will happen as a matter of course nor can it allow any one appointment to advance only one goal. The college must take extraordinary steps to recruit the students, faculty and staff that it needs to achieve its mission and those it recruits must be extraordinary people.

The college has developed a support system to encourage faculty and staff search committees to engage in vigorous affirmative action searches. Key to this effort is the Affirmative Action Committee, appointed by the president and consisting of faculty, administration and staff. Also central to the success of the effort is the institutional goal-setting that the school deans undertake with the dean of faculty.

In an institution with limited resources, an interdisciplinary curriculum, and a need for faculty and staff who can support multiple goals, experience has taught us that one of the most effective means of achieving diversity while raising the quality of the faculty and staff and advancing multiple goals has been to pursue a policy of searches that have clearly defined, but multiple, goals, including enhancing the college's diversity...

V. Measurement of Success
Hampshire will measure its success by the extent to which it creates an educational staff and faculty that can deliver an appropriate education to its student body and that can help Hampshire achieve the diversity in its student body. The college will monitor its efforts to recruit and retain a diverse student, faculty and staff body. The greatest measure, however, will be whether we are developing in our students, and in the community as a whole, the attitudes about those who are different from ourselves that reflect openness, celebration, and understanding. Toward that end the college will continue to expand the programs it offers to achieve that level of openness and welcoming.
Queer Community Alliance Revitalized, 2000


If anyone saw the Homecoming parade this year you will know that the QCA is back in action with as much energy as ever. For those of you who don't know, the QCA is the Queer Community Alliance, a support group for people who fall under the umbrella term of "queer." The term was chosen in an attempt to include all non-traditional sex and gender identities: gay, lesbian, bi, trans, pan, queer, questioning, allied, or whatever other identification you choose for yourself. The signers for the QCA this year, Mothra Fenwick, Daniel Kang, and Rachel Stewart, are enthusiastic and trying to get programs up and going, as well as keep a community feeling and uphold the mission statement of the Alliance. The mission statement—"The QCA is comprised of individuals who support sexual diversity. We seek to foster an awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer issues and create a comfortable space for their discussion through social events and political activism both at Hampshire and in the community at large. The QCA is a safe place of confidentiality and respect. People of all sexual preferences are welcome and encouraged to attend our meetings."

The staff has chosen projects that they are interested in bringing into the Hampshire campus, weekly meetings and larger events. One event has already happened. National Coming Out Day, Oct. 11, was planned with programs and events for the entire campus, including silk screening for t-shirts, chalk messages on the walkways, and the Sister Spit performance in the Red Barn... Meanwhile they are still working on their more frequent programs. Jillian and Teresa are hosting Arts and Crafts night with t-shirt printing, postcard and paper making, and movies. Mothra is hosting a "Queer Questioning" group for anyone who is dealing with homophobia internally or externally, this includes heterosexual individuals who have questions about the alternative sexualities in peers or in themselves. Rachel is hosting a Bi/Pan Discussion group that will focus on the sexual issues of people who do not desire or identify with only one or even two genders. Ross is hosting Pillow Talk, a kinky discussion group aimed to be fun and informative. The main idea so far is a tupperware party with sex toys. There will be writing workshops and speakers brought in with the support of the local "leather" community. Daniel if focusing on Political Action. He wants to address the still occurring homophobia in our own Hampshire community and in spectrums around the world, bringing a more cultural awareness and issues of queers of color and discrimination... The QCA is also trying to schedule open hours in their space on top of Donut 4 in Greenwich, when people of any sexual orientation can come for advice, answers, someone to talk to, or just a safe and friendly space for people to hang out in....No matter what choice of sexual identity the QCA can be a resource for everyone.
Hampshire's Multicultural Center, 2001


Early in the morning of February 23, 1988, members of SOURCe (Students of Under-Represented Countries) took over the Dakin Master's house and the Dakin house office. Over the next two days, hundreds of students united in candlelight vigils, all-community assemblies, and a march to show their support of SOURCe members. The SOURCe students occupied Dakin for almost one week, because they wanted to show the administration how necessary it was for them to have a space where they felt safe and where they could talk about what was going on with them at any given time. They made a list of demands that included the hiring of more faculty of color, additional funding, and office space. Their demands were met and the Lebron, Wiggins and Pran Cultural Center came into being.

"Lolita Lebron was greatly involved in the Puerto Rican Nationalist Movement," according to Njieri Cruse. "In 1954, the movement made its final attempt to free Puerto Rico from U.S. colonialism through militaristic tactics. Lebron and her comrades proclaimed "Free Puerto Rico now," as they injured five U.S. Congressmen. She was arrested for this action and spent twenty-five years in the United States as a political prisoner. Roland Wiggins is a music professor and genius. He is also a pioneer in the area of education for black children." Dith Pran "was a survivor of war torn Cambodia. He was the subject of the highly praised film The Killing Fields. Pran, with his unique perception of the Far East and America, is a spokesman for Cambodian refugees around the world."

The Cultural Center is a "safe space where students of color and international students can come together to: 1) plan cultural and educational programs, 2) interact socially with other students like themselves, and most importantly, 3) have 'a home away from home,' where they can find support and guidance." The Center provides office space, resources, support and advisement.

Noah Guzman, a staff member at the Cultural Center, feels strongly of its place in the Hampshire community. "The purpose of the Cultural Center is to bring a sense of comfort to students of color that feel really alienated," Noah says. "But at the same time, that's not its only purpose." Noah and the rest of the staff at the Center are working really hard this year to make sure there is enough publicity and enthusiasm around campus to make the Multicultural Center what it's meant to be. Noah believes that "it should live up to its name as a Multicultural Center, and be an instrument to unite the entire community as one." The Center is not just for students of color and international students. "First and foremost, it's a place for students of color to come
and meet and talk about issues that relate to them on-campus, off-campus, and around the world. But also, if other students want to come and participate, that's even better because," Noah stresses, "the only way we're going to make a difference as a center and as a people and as a community on this campus, is as a unified community, all together." "Through an understanding of what 'cultural' means and represents," Noah tells me, "we can come to an understanding, a jump off point to really unify the community."

There is a lot going on at the Multicultural Center this year. Noah wants to run a cooking program of traditional Puerto Rican food, as well as a student film forum on Wednesday nights, "which is basically going to be a film workshop for students to come and share their work in a safe environment and get constructive criticism, as well as hands-on working in the lab, and learning techniques from each other." On Thursday nights, Tina Chan and So-Eun Lee run Asian night, where students can get together to eat Asian food and to learn Chinese. Wednesday and Sunday nights are study nights...

Groups that also work out of the Multicultural Center include PASA (the Pan-Asian Student Association), RAICES (the pan-Latino student organization), FISH (the Forum for International Students at Hampshire), SISTERS (the women of color and international women collective), UMOJA (the African and African-American students group), and JBs (the James Baldwin scholars and alumni). PASA meets every other Thursday; their next meeting will be on the 26th of October. RAICES will have their first meeting on the 23rd. FISH meets every weekend, either on Saturdays for a movie or on Sundays for dinner.

While the Multicultural Center is primarily for students of color and international students, it is open to and welcomes all interested students. The Center puts out a weekly newsletter that mentions all events they are sponsoring for that week. For those students who are not students of color or international students, you can find "The Weekly" in the house offices or in the leadership center.
Protest by Students of Color, 2002


On Saturday, April 20th, about eighty Hampshire students staged a peaceful protest at the Accepted Students Day lunch. When Greg Prince began his keynote speech, students silently lined up in front of the stage, wearing blue jeans and black shirts to show solidarity. Protesters had attached messages like "Ask," "Safe Spaces," and "Liberal does not equal anti-racist" was unrolled from the upper RCC. When Greg Prince finished speaking, a SOURCe representative read a statement urging accepted students to seek out information about racism and the experiences of students of color, international students, and queer students with Hampshire College. Accepted students were encouraged to speak to individual demonstrators when the lunch ended. The demonstrators then left the event, waited outside the RCC, and made themselves available to discussions with accepted students and their parents.

We cannot speak for all students of color, international students and/or queer students, but many people in these communities echo our concerns. We are using this forum to express some of the issues that concern us, as SOURCe members and students of color, on the Hampshire campus. Though we have recently focused on special interest mods, this action was not solely about housing...

Special interest mods are essential to the lives of many students of color, international students, and queer students on this campus. Though not all students in these categories need special interest mods, they function as important safe spaces. Special interest mods are sanctuaries from the ignorant questions, racist, sexist and herterosexualist comments, transgender discrimination, and tokenization that we face every day. Most of all, these mods, our homes, function as one of the few physical spaces we can claim on a campus where it often feels as if we have no place. While after extensive dialogue, student of color mods and the queer mod have been pulled out of the housing lottery, the Asian and Asian-American studies mod will only retain its designation for one year...

Special interest mods and the students who live in them are used to recruit prospective students of color. Each semester, these mods host groups of prospective students on Accepted Students of Color Day. Many current students of color at Hampshire were hosted by special interest mods, and later reported that this experience played a large part in their decision to attend Hampshire College. However, when faced with a lack of support for these spaces this year, these mods, in conjunction with the Cultural Center, chose not to participate in the events sponsored by Admissions...
Please note that the vast majority of white students are not expected to do anything at all for Accepted Students Day, while SOURCe and students of color are expected by the administration to host and put on programming for the accepted students of color...

It is not the responsibility of marginalized groups to educate the community and prove that discrimination exists even at Hampshire. Much of this discrimination becomes apparent in academic contexts. Racist, sexist, and homophobic comments are repeatedly made in our classes, and are frequently tolerated or simply not noticed by professors. We realize and appreciate that there are a number of faculty members who actively confront discriminatory remarks. However, some professors do not bring students who make such comments to task for the ways they have shifted the power dynamics in the class. This is partially because of the awkwardness of these situations, as well as the silence that surrounds prejudice and discrimination. All faculty need to develop and regularly practice concrete ways to make the classroom a comfortable environment for all students. Often faculty of color carry the burden of supporting students of color and international students, without receiving adequate support from or recognition by the administration...

We chose Accepted Students Day for our action because it is one of the few times when the administration and Admissions are reliant upon students to present a positive image of our campus. Certainly no one at Hampshire can deny that there are race issues at this school. It is not simply the presence of these issues, but the refusal of administrators to address them that drove us to act. We understand and appreciate the hard work that Admissions put into Accepted Students Day, and we support their efforts. Yet we could not pass up the only remaining opportunity this year to make our voices heard...

We find two things particularly troubling about Saturday’s action: Greg Prince applauded the protest, yet continues to ignore the needs of students of color, international students and queer students. Many Hampshire students still do not know what happened on Saturday, and are genuinely confused as to why students would be dissatisfied with their experiences of Hampshire College.

For this reason, we felt it necessary to spend four hours (perhaps better spent doing academic work) writing this letter to inform the Hampshire community about our motivations for participating in the weekend’s actions. In closing, we’d like to thank all those who stood in solidarity with us.
Censorship Debate at Hampshire, 2003

"Should we restrict certain content in printed materials?" Hampshire students were confronted with this question as they opened their mailboxes in mid-October to find a small notice about an approaching All-Community meeting. Community Council held this meeting as a result of students' concerns over the extent to which certain potentially offensive pieces may be printed and available to the wider community. Last spring, yet another free speech controversy arose after a few questionable pieces were published in *The Omen*, Hampshire's longest-running free speech paper. One of the two pieces was entitled "We Are Nothing," and was essentially a rape fantasy. In reaction to this material, a concerned student, Kate Purdy, submitted a proposal to Community Council asking that they withhold *The Omen*'s funding until an editorial board was created. Although Council eventually rejected her proposal last month, her plea did not fall on deaf ears. This particular All-Community meeting was subsequently intended for Council to gauge the Hampshire community's feelings and thoughts on the subject matter, and to gain a sense of direction in how to further proceed with this issue. The meeting was thus not solely about *The Omen*, but was instead about all printed publications, which includes flyers and all-community emails.

The...meeting finally started around 3:45 on Tuesday October 28 in the main lecture hall of FPH. By Hampshire standards, there was a substantial turnout of people for the discussion. The meeting was mediated by Stephan from the Leadership Center, who did a good job at allowing all students to express themselves one at a time.

As one could expect from such a charged environment, the discussion that ensued became progressively more heated as time went on...This stems from the fact that freedom of speech has always been a touchy subject. Everyone has his or her own opinion and definition of what "freedom of speech" entails. To what extent should speech be limited? Where do we draw the line? The sharp edges at first glance increasingly become blurred upon closer inspection. But just because the issue at hand is a difficult one does not mean that we should simply skirt around it. As Mike Ford shrewdly observed, "this is an important issue that deserves widespread community discussion."

After some opening remarks by Seth Jenson and Mike Ford, the general discussion opened up with observations about the nature of free speech. Peter Curtis, managing editor of the *Climax*, said that "part of free speech is getting offended," and that that is "a price worth paying." Another student named Josh seemed to agree, adding that
"everyone has different morals and values," and that being offended is "the burden of democracy and free speech..."

Since The Omen already has an editorial board, some of the discussion revolved around the possibility of creating a community editorial board that would oversee all printed materials that would be sent to the Hampshire population. This prompted the reminder that Non Satis Non Scire, the student handbook, restricts "prior restraint," and as Peter Curtis warned, "what else would a mandatory, campus-wide editorial board be?"

Another student also predicted that such a body would create an atmosphere that would be "oppressively politically correct." After all, exactly what would be deemed acceptable or not for public consumption? As Rebecca Costello later noted, "if we ban stories of sexual assault, then survivors can't tell their stories."

At this point, another student, Jennifer Rodriguez, explained that she wanted "a true perspective of what Hampshire is," explaining that a censored community would not produce a true perspective of all the various divergent perspectives that was contained within the community, adding that "just because something is painful doesn't mean it needs to be censored." Alli Hartley, an Omen signer, also shared how, when it comes to editing and screening various pieces before publishing, nothing is as it seems, and that "no one really knows what is offensive." She also said "I am personally offended at the idea of a community review board," and that she "has a right to know what people feel in this school," poignantly adding "I would rather know if some guy likes to rape girls, so I can stay away from him!"

Several students also expressed their concerns and criticism that Hampshire suffers from a significant general lack of sensitivity, particularly to the large emotive impact that pieces like "We Are Nothing" have, to which other students remarked that many other institutions are far worse off in terms of their social atmospheres. This in turn provoked debate as to what actions should be carried out that could reverse this trend. As one student named Dinah stated, "censorship doesn't breed sensitivity."

In the end, more questions were raised than answers given. This issue is, among other things, about "Community Norms," which are not static entities but are instead in perpetual motion, molded by each new generation of Hampshire students. Because of relative standards, anyone can get offended at anything, just as some students are probably going to be offended by this particular article. This debate is also over the issue of responsibility. Should authors or editors be held responsible, or should both share the burden?

What will ultimately come about as a result of this meeting is anyone's guess. There are many creative ways we as a community can go about handling this issue. As of the time of this writing, Community Council has not yet decided on a further course of action. Will an all-community vote ultimately settle this issue? Finding a solution that offends the least amount of people will be the hardest part.