

Running Head: Importance of Diversity

Is the Importance of Diversity as a Part of a Liberal Education Being Internalized by Grand Valley State University Students?

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Abstract

Within the last couple of years Grand Valley State University has begun looking into the diversity on campus. Though there have been leaps and bounds over the last few years, most still feel that more needs to be done. This project's research was done to focus on how severe the problem was with Grand Valley's diversity program according to the students. The general consensus is students feel there is action being done, yet it could be extensively better. Another emphasis of the research was based on GVSU being a liberal arts college and how it has effected growth in diversity. Diversity is highlighted within a liberal education, and through focus groups and other research it is evident that Grand Valley State University needs to extend and increase their programs in diversity on campus.

Approximately four years ago, the administrators at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) noticed an emerging trend that there was a difference in expectations and understanding of what Grand Valley truly is – a liberal arts education university. The administrators and educators at Grand Valley decided to investigate this further and determine what needed to be done for students to better understand the importance of their liberal educations. In 2004, GVSU came to the conclusion that because faculty and student expectations were not aligned with the goals of a liberal education, “learning outcomes were not what they should, or could, be.” GVSU’s mission, values, and vision (see Appendix 1) clearly layout goals it is dedicated to strive towards. In reality the administrators know that students are not fully engaging in these three ideals, however, they do know that they are valuable and should be initiated more (Grand Valley State University, 2004).

After holding Intergroup Dialogues, focus groups, and surveys, they ended with various recommendations or suggestions as to what can be done to improve the students understanding and appreciation. These areas of improvement became goals that GVSU outlined in their 2004 Greater Expectations Institute narrative (Grand Valley State University, 2004). In this narrative, the administrators put forth the initiative “Aligning Student and Faculty Expectations”. The goals include being able to articulate the value of liberal education and bringing about positive changes in the entire student community.

However, if the students are expected to articulate liberal education’s value, then they must include the importance of diversity. Liberal education, by definition, introduces and examines diverse perspectives on any subject (Schneider, 2003). A successful liberal education will further teach students how to engage and evaluate competing ideas and different perspectives while learning to form their own. All the different types of people on Grand

Valley's campus bring to the classroom a different background, perspective, or way of thinking, and opening your eyes to those different aspects will benefit you as a person, student, and citizen of society.

The researchers looked through this material from the past few years and focused on the importance of diversity as part of a liberal education and whether it was being internalized by Grand Valley State University students. One aspect that the students recommended improving on was addressing the campus' diverse climate better. The Intergroup Dialogue report, which was conducted in the winter of 2005, clearly states that the students want intercultural awareness to be integrated into the fabric of the institution (Frerichs, 2005). Some of the students believed that diversity was not truly valued, others admitted that if they are not really "ok" because sexual orientation, race, etc. on campus, they can't fully be integrated into the learning community. In order to better promote and appreciate diversity, students suggested that: there needs to be more done on both recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty, the work of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Affirmative Action Task Force should be supported and extended, and opportunities must be provided for students to work with other students different from themselves (Frerichs, 2005).

Method

For the research on the importance of diversity in regards to a liberal education on Grand Valley's campus, the researchers first began by culminating a survey of about 10 questions. The questions asked about involvement in multi-cultural events on campus and also how people truly felt about diversity, and if it was important to them. After the survey had been completed, it was time to actually get out there and talk to students. The researchers decided to conduct two different focus groups, one containing a group of Caucasian students, and the other group with a

more culturally diverse background. They decided this because they did not want certain people from particular ethnic groups to shy away from saying things they might want to say, due to the presence of another ethnic group. However, the second focus group was unable to be completed because no one was able to attend. The focus group was asked similar questions as the survey. The researchers wanted to know if people really believed that diversity was that big of an issue on Grand Valley's campus, or even at all. Questions were again asked about student involvement in multi-cultural events on campus and also if they, as students, believed diversity was an issue that was hindering students in obtaining a liberal education. As the research was being gathered, the researchers wanted to do some secondary research, using the CLE readings on blackboard. The two that helped the most was the one about inter-group dialogue and also the greater expectations narrative.

The researchers conducted primary research because there is no one more qualified to evaluate the effectiveness of the campus' attempts to keep cultural diversity at GVSU than the actual students. Students are the ones seeing the signs throughout campus and reading the advertisements everywhere. They are the ones attending and not attending events on campus focused on any type of diversity, not just multi-cultural. The students are also the best people to evaluate how effective diversity is as a part of their liberal education. By conducting primary research, the researchers would be getting first hand information from the target audience.

Participants

In the first focus group, there were 6 Caucasian Grand Valley Students, 3 females and 3 males with different majors, some including Psychology, International Relations, Business and Accounting, Film and Video, and Physical Therapy. For the second focus group, no one was able to attend.

Apparatus

The focus group was set up in a meeting room in Kirkhof. The moderator was behind a podium at the front of the room and the participants were seated in a half circle around the moderator. There were refreshments set up at a table in the back of the room. There was also a video recorder to tape the focus group, and the researchers made sure that each participant signed a waiver that granted them the right to use it.

Procedure

The moderator began by introducing the subject of the focus group and the members of the group. He made sure that all the participants knew their rights. He let them know they could leave at anytime, and promised them anonymity. He then began by posing a question, waiting for responses and discussion and then following up with questions that kept the flow of the subject. After each question posed in the focus group, it was open forum to anyone who wanted to speak. After a person began to speak, hands were raised to minimize interruptions. If the group began to get off topic, the moderator casually introduced the next question or topic. Some participants were encouraged to speak, or asked if they had anything to say, just so it could be guaranteed that everyone had a chance to express their opinions.

Results

Secondary Research

Several surveys were done in the previous semester that shed light on issues of diversity. During the previous surveys, it was found that the term “diversity” applies mostly to cultural differences, race and ethnicity, and religious differences (Grand Valley State University, November 2005). Difference of opinion, gender differences, and sexual preference were also part of diversity, but less students designated these terms than the previous (Grand Valley State

University, November 2005). When asked to agree or disagree with the statement “Diversity is needed to enhance your college experience” thirty-five percent strongly agreed, forty-two percent agreed, seventeen percent neither agreed nor disagreed, five percent disagreed, and one percent strongly disagreed (Grand Valley State University, November 2005). In another question, a forty-five percent majority said that diversity was very important to the concept of a liberal education, while forty percent said it was somewhat important, and thirteen percent said it was neither important nor unimportant (Grand Valley State University, November 2005). When asked to agree or disagree on the statement “Grand Valley State University is helping students develop the skills necessary to live and work in a culturally diverse society,” the forty-eight percent majority agreed with the statement (Grand Valley State University, November 2005). From the surveys done in the previous semester, it was determined that diversity is important on campus. The research group picked up from where the previous classes left off and used this and further research to find out how diversity was being internalized.

Primary Research

The first part of the primary research was the focus groups. Two focus groups were conducted on separate days. While the first group consisted of Caucasian Grand Valley students and the second group consisted of non-Caucasians, both groups were asked the same basic questions. Based on responses, certain follow-up questions differed slightly. The groups were first asked how they felt about diversity on campus. The research group was searching for the opinions of students as to whether the Grand Valley State University campus is or is not diverse. While some mentioned that the campus is moderately diverse, some said it was far from as diverse as it should be on a college campus. One student held the location of Grand Valley’s campus responsible for the lack of diversity by saying, “There’s not enough diversity, which is

understandable. This is a west Michigan school and west Michigan is not a diverse place. It's the 'bible-belt.'" Another person responded by stating, "I've seen more diverse places, but it's not completely lacking in diversity." One opposing viewpoint was "Diversity is not just a race, its whole spectrum of things. If you look at it that way, there is a lot of diversity on campus already." When looking at the broader picture of the effect of diversity on campus, one student commented, "I'm worried about more diversity. If we're already having problems, what is going to happen when there is more diversity. Can people handle it?"

The focus groups moved to diversity events on campus. It was mentioned that most events on campus effectively attract students by food and music. In terms of events for diversity, one student commented that although one particular event enticed students by food, the event lacked real discussion about diversity. The group agreed that events for diversity need to find a way to be fun and meaningful, as well as attracting students with food and music. One student commented "The Martin Luther King Jr. walk that took place this year was wonderful. It was cool to see everyone join in and do that walk." Another student commented on a Christian choir concert he attended just a few days before the focus group, "I don't practice much religion, but going to that let me see how other students are."

Later, students were asked to comment on how diversity has or has not changed their lives at Grand Valley State University. One student commented, "It wasn't until I was thrown into a situation, until I was the minority in the area. I just found a way that we were similar." One person who did experience diversity prior to college, the student said "I think some people are very naïve about [diversity] and I cannot believe the things going on are happening." Another student said they had been in many diverse situations prior to attending Grand Valley State but suggested that incoming freshman need to be more aware of the importance of diversity and

work towards tolerance. “There should be more awareness and programs started within the living centers,” that participant stated.

When commenting on how effective Grand Valley’s advertise is for diverse events, one student said, “I think [Grand Valley] is doing a good job, but every [group] is trying to get their point across. Sometimes, it could be a sense of overload on events. People stop paying attention when they have so many other things going on.” As the conversation continued, many suggestions came up on how to improve the advertising for diversity events. Laker Village was brought up as a problem area where few advertisements reach students. Another suggestion was that pillars be put in place where students commonly walk to and from class that could be covered in fliers and posters. The Grand Valley student channel, some students agreed, was a great place for catching students’ attention. It was also suggested that to increase opportunity to see the Grand Valley student channel, there should be televisions placed in hallways or in lobbies. Another student said the giant bulletin board in Kirkhof should not remain in a hidden place. It should be out in the open where anyone passing through Kirkhof will see it. One student brought up the problem that students who have classes at the downtown campus may feel more disconnected from campus events and do not hear about them as much as students at the Allendale campus. The intention for improving advertising, as most of the students agreed, was that if more of the campus as a whole participated in events, tolerance and knowledge would spread about diversity.

The importance of diversity in a liberal education was the last thing discussed in both focus groups. One student commented, “Diversity is part of a well rounded education. Being well rounded is supposed to help us with the real world. We’re going to encounter diversity in the real world and we need to jumpstart that in college.” Another student agreed with this,

stating, “It’s rare that you won’t deal with diversity in the working world- in business especially. Our world is getting smaller.” An opposing student mentioned that, “If you choose to live in an un-diverse area after college, the present college years is as diverse as it’s going to get.” While some students agreed with this comment and others still agreed that diversity will still happen later in life, it was agreed by both sides that to learn about diversity there must be diversity on campus.

The second part of the research group’s primary research was the survey sent to 3,000 Grand Valley students picked at random. While there were 31 questions, the research group focused on the questions regarding diversity. Diversity on campus was discussed. Only seven percent of students surveyed strongly agreed with the statement that Grand Valley State University is a diverse campus. While thirty-five percent agreed with the statement, twenty-nine percent disagreed with it (Grand Valley State University, April 2005). In another question, it was reported that forty-three percent of students said it was very important to attend a college that embraces diversity, while thirty-five percent said it was somewhat important (Grand Valley State University, April 2005). Other questions focused on the impact that diversity has on students. When asked to agree or disagree with the statement “I feel that diversity has a positive impact on my education,” twenty-nine percent strongly agreed, forty-six percent agreed, nineteen percent neither agreed nor disagreed, four percent disagreed, and three percent strongly disagreed (Grand Valley State University, April 2005). While eight percent strongly agreed and thirty nine percent agreed that Grand Valley State University is helping students develop the skills necessary to live and work in a culturally diverse society, thirty percent neither agreed nor disagreed, and nineteen percent disagreed with four percent strongly disagreeing (Grand Valley State University, April 2005). Students were asked how much diversity has changed their life. Forty percent of students

reportedly had been changed quite a bit, with fifty-six percent being changed a little, and twenty-nine percent not being changed at all (Grand Valley State University, April 2005). When asked how students' views of diversity (appreciation for different races, cultures, and opinions) had changed since enrolling at Grand Valley State University, seventeen percent changed quite a bit, fifty-one percent changed somewhat, and thirty-three percent had no change (Grand Valley State University, April 2005). Students were also asked on the impact of diversity by stating how respectful of diversity in others had changed since enrolling at Grand Valley State University. Out of students surveyed, fifty-six percent reported they had become more respectful. Since enrolling at Grand Valley State, forty-one percent reported no change in respect and three percent reported less respect of diversity in others (Grand Valley State University, April 2005). The final area students were surveyed in concerning diversity was the importance diversity plays in receiving a liberal education at Grand Valley State University. Forty percent of students said giving knowledge of diverse topics is very closely related to the concept of a liberal education, while forty-six percent said it was somewhat closely related (Grand Valley State University, April 2005). Twenty-eight percent of students said embracing a diverse group of students very closely related to the concept of a liberal education, while forty percent said it was somewhat closely related and twenty percent said it was neither related nor unrelated (Grand Valley State University, April 2005).

Discussion

Research has shown little insight as to whether or not diversity is being internalized at Grand Valley State University. By previous surveys, the recent one done by the research group, and the focus groups conducted, it has been determined that diversity is an important concept in a liberal education. Reasons why diversity is not being internalized arose through focus groups.

Suggestions for improving the promotion of diversity events as well making them more effective were presented to the research group. The survey gave insight on the impact of diversity on students' lives and how diverse the campus is.

During the focus groups, the primary reason for the lack of meaningful diversity experience was found to be the lack of diversity on campus. When one student pointed out that western Michigan is called the "Bible belt" it started the interesting discussion of this campus lacking diversity. The researchers felt this is a slight misconception of the student's perspective of the campus' diversity. By labeling the area the "bible belt," it narrows diversity down to only conservative ideals. Diversity is not only religion; it includes all aspects of a person that makes him/her different from someone else. This might be why the student felt there is a lack of diversity on campus.

On the other hand, the person that said diversity is whole spectrum of things had a more accurate concept of diversity. The researchers felt that perhaps not enough students on campus feel this way about diversity. If more students realized that diversity can be more than just race or religion, they would see the diverse climate that is already on campus.

The discussion continued to debate that in order for students here to learn about diversity and respect it, there must be a diverse climate in which to live in. Twenty-nine percent of students disagreed with the statement that Grand Valley State University is a diverse campus. With the thirty-five percent majority agreeing with the statement, there is hardly a big gap between the two opposing sides. While forty-three percent of students reported that it was important to attend a college that embraces diversity, such as this one, the researchers found in the focus group that the majority of students did not feel embracing diversity is part of Grand Valley's liberal education. One student said it best, that to learn about diversity, Grand Valley

State University must find a way to make the campus as diverse as possible. As the groups suggested, there needs to be a way for Grand Valley to attract a more diverse student body.

It was assumed by people in the focus group that to gain experience in diversity it means to go to on campus diversity events. There were many suggestions as to how to improve the diversity events on campus. Some members of the focus group shared felt that when attending diversity groups, the groups sponsoring the events just offered free food, and the event was not as in depth as it should be. They suggested making these events more meaningful and educational. When forty-one percent of students said there was no change in their respect for diversity in others, the researchers concluded that there is a need to make diversity events more meaningful.

Improving the promotion of diversity events was another key suggestion made by the focus group. Their main concern was reaching students both on the Allendale campus and the Pew campus. Students attending the Pew campus feel disconnected and don't hear about the events going on at the Allendale campus. The researchers feel that promoting events only on the campus they are held at is not effective. Having promotion for both campus on both campuses would increase their awareness and participation in these events.

Most students in the focus group agreed the Grand Valley State University does an excellent job providing a variety of diversity events, however, one participant suggested that living centers should incorporate more about diversity. If diversity is exposed to freshman as soon as they enter this university and as they continue to live on campus, it may be an easier transition than doing it later in their college career. Perhaps living centers can provide more diversity experience by actually living with other groups of people than just going to a campus event about diversity. From the survey, only thirty-nine percent agreed that Grand Valley State

University was helping students develop the skills necessary to live and work in a culturally diverse society, with a close thirty percent saying they neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. The researchers believe that this thirty percent may not have experienced freshman living centers due to transferring after freshman year or commuting to the campus.

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Appendix 1

Strategic Planning Grand Valley's Board of Trustees approved the following February 14, 2003.

VISION

Grand Valley State University is a public institution with a local, regional and state commitment, and a global perspective. We are dedicated to providing our students with the highest quality undergraduate and graduate education.

Teaching in the liberal tradition, whether in general arts and sciences or the professional degree programs, has always been at the heart of Grand Valley's educational mission. A liberal education acquaints students with the tradition of humane values and the heritage, problems, and perspectives of their own and other cultures. It transcends the acquisition of information and rests on scholarship and the open exchange of ideas. Students learn to think for themselves as they develop the skills of inquiry, reflection, critical analysis, dialogue, and expression. At Grand Valley State University, the values of liberal education permeate all programs and areas of study.

A broad education rooted in the arts and sciences provides students with the general knowledge and skills necessary to participate intelligently in public discourse. Grand Valley State University is also dedicated to educating students to become competent professionals in their chosen fields. These ideals co-exist within our institution, and together they inspire graduates not only to pursue their own success and well-being but also to positively influence their communities, their professions, and their world.

Grand Valley State University is characterized by and known for superior student-centered teaching and learning. Our diverse environment promotes the development of intellect and creativity through teaching, scholarship, service, and a vibrant campus culture. Realizing this vision will result in a broad national reputation for excellence.

MISSION

Grand Valley State University educates students to shape their lives, their professions and their societies. The university contributes to the enrichment of society through excellent teaching, active scholarship and public service.

VALUE STATEMENTS

**At Grand Valley State University,
We Value:**

Effective Teaching

Our highest priority is to offer outstanding teaching in all of our undergraduate and graduate programs. The teaching culture of Grand Valley State University is characterized by the continual development of excellence in the classroom, the recognition of multiple ways of learning, and the accessibility of faculty to students. In order to nurture the habits of intellectual growth, we seek to instill in our students curiosity as well as the love of learning. Students

acquire new knowledge and explore its application through research, artistic expression, and scholarly activity. We value the vigorous engagement of students in the classroom and other learning environments.

Liberal Education

Grand Valley State University is committed to providing each student a broad educational experience that integrates liberal learning with preparation for career or profession. Liberal education begins with encountering the great ideas of diverse traditions in the humanities, the creative and performing arts, the natural and social sciences and mathematics, and is an essential part of all of our professional programs. We value the liberal ideals of critical thinking and preparing students for lifelong learning. The practice of liberal learning develops the skills of inquiry and reflection, which guide students to think for themselves, gain self-knowledge, and make ethical judgments. Such learning can inform individual and collective actions and prepare students for the responsibility of local, national, and global citizenship.

Scholarship

Scholarship is an essential component of the university's mission as an institution of higher learning and community service. Excellence in teaching at the university level depends upon active scholarship by faculty members. Through basic and applied research, artistic expression and performance, and other forms of scholarship, faculty members contribute to the development and application of knowledge, and create a dynamic environment for learning. Active scholarship may include collaboration of faculty and staff with students, business and labor, government, and community organizations. In this way, the benefits of a liberal education can extend beyond classroom walls to lifelong learning and partnerships between the university and its diverse communities.

Diversity and Community

A range of thoughtful perspectives is necessary for open inquiry, liberal education, and a healthy community. Recognizing this, we seek and welcome a diverse group of students, faculty and staff. We value a multiplicity of opinions and backgrounds and seek ways to incorporate the voices and experiences of all into our university. We value our local community and embrace the participation of individuals and groups from Michigan, the nation and the world. We also encourage participation in educational opportunities abroad. In order to foster a healthy and diverse environment, we will act with integrity, communicate respectfully, and accept responsibility for our words and actions.

Service

We at Grand Valley State University value the collaboration of faculty, staff and students with external partners in addressing mutual interests and regional needs. The university offers the communities it serves resources and inspiration in their own lifelong pursuit of knowledge. Faculty and staff are encouraged to contribute their expertise and service to the university, their disciplines' professional organizations and the community. Students are encouraged to be active citizens, to become active service providers, and to take part in various service learning and volunteer opportunities in the community and abroad.

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Appendix 2

Focus Group Notes from April 5th, 2006

How do you feel about diversity on campus

- Pretty diverse, I've seen more, but some people can't handle it because of what's been happening. Don't get enough diversity at home, out of comfort zone and can't handle it. It needs to be handled more in highschools/middle schools. It's not talked about
- Not enough diversity. Which is understandable- west mich. School, west Michigan not diverse place. East side more diverse. I'd like to see more. International relations is my major, I'd like more diversity in campus before I get out in the real world
- I'm worried about more diversity. If we're already having problems, what is going to happen when there is more diversity. Can people handle it?
- We need to learn more about it before college. Train people about diversity as soon as possible. If they didn't get it earlier, thrust them into it as soon as possible. Why wait until work force
- Diversity is not just race. Look at it as a whole spectrum of people. If you look at it like that, there is a lot of diversity on campus already

How often do you attend events on campus enforcing diversity

- International relations, I'm a part of this group and I attend many events on campus. As many as I can.
- How effective is promoting these events? Free food/live music attracts people but it didn't talk about the culture. It's a start, but these events need to get more in depth. Free food attracts people.
- Chinese new year was a good event. It was a little taste of the culture but it did get in more in depth.
- It needs to be an event for diversity, it has to be shallow to attract people, it needs to be fun. Sit down and learn history about Chinese won't attract
- East Michigan more diverse. Here, west side, not as many Arabic or Chinese. It's harder to bring people to these events. There has to be something to drag people in.

How much has diversity influenced you GVSU experience

- Choir- real Christian choirs, that's an experience. You get to see someone's whole religious experience. I don't practice much religion, but going to something like that lets you see how some students are. It was really emotional and into the whole thing. It was something to see to see someone care so much about something/religion
- MLK Jr. Day- there was a mass of people from the clock tower walking all over campus. It was wonderful. Huge group. Cool for our campus to see everyone join in a do that walk.

How have your views of diversity and others changed after coming to GVSU

- I'm taking US Diversity, it has not changed me, but it has opened so many doors. You've learned about a lot of different people, Everyone would benefit from a class like this. You look at your views a lot more

- It wasn't until I was thrown into a situation, until I was a minority in an area, you have to find a way to find a similar thing between those people. You have to be willing to make it work- you can't be hostile about it.
- Even if you are the minority, you can't think that you are above people and look down on them
- It goes to how they were raised, and in school. Being not able to handle it in a situation
- Before I came to GVSU, I moved around, I'm pretty ok with other people. I think some people are very naïve about it. Incoming freshman need to be aware. I can't believe stuff like that still happens but it does
- "Remember the titans" do that to freshman. Set them up with complete opposite people. Something like that might help people out from the state
- Not enough of the minority to go around... that may night work.

What diversity promotions have you seen around campus

- I've noticed some of the holidays, Cesar Chavez/MLK/Chinese New Year, its important to get to know
- Empathy dinners- diversity can be handicaps, too. You have to realize that. Dinner – free food, they give you different disabilities to make you realize what someone else's life is like. It could make people think twice about looking down on someone else

Is GVSU doing enough of this?

- I think they are doing a good job. It is hard to promote it when most is anglo saxon. I'm always seeing different events in hallways or Fresh Food. I think they are promoting good, but its difficult to play to certain audience.
- Groups doing other things besides diversity have a better chance. Everyone is trying to get their point across. Could be a sense of overload on events. People stop paying attention. They say "forget it" and stop paying attention to events. Don't want to spend the time
- I wouldn't mind going. Its hard to find time. I am doing homework. So much going on, they know about it, but sometimes you just can't get to them.
- GVSU really promotes getting into an organization, trying to do homework and meetings. Try to get more groups to sponsor events
- Some events are not advertised enough. Laker Village not advertised. Promote, more effort, whole campus involved in events and it might get more response.
- Put fliers in different apartments. Some events just spring up and not know about it
- Pedestals where people tape fliers on the way, walk ways to class. ****
- Grand Valley channel – list events going on later on in the week.
- Two problems- may not stop and watch for events. No TV in room. Freshman only get it or on campus people. Only a third of campus population may get it. My old college there were TVs everywhere. Very effective if they did it. End of a very long hallway, give them chance to read a few slides. Place them effectively and it would work
- Always downtown, don't have a lot of fliers. Unless I'm in line or from friends. Need to promote downtown better. I find out too late.
- Put big boards out somewhere. Postings more
- Put big tackboard in middle of Kirkhof lobby. Where it's at, its hidden

Would you join a group not specific to certain group

- There is one. Cloud Nine. I haven't been but planned on it.
- Brand new organization.
- Think it's a good start? Yes, very good start. Reason I wanted to go was I read an article in Lanthorn. Their whole basis was to promote diversity. Everyone is African American in group- lets promote our own culture? Wanted to see what their purpose was.
- 1st Lanthorn addition should put spotlight to see each organization. Multicultural edition of Lanthorn. Flyer from each organization and little synopsis. Might help.
- Would freshman jump right in first week of classes? It would take time, if they held on to paper
- Night that every group goes into gym.
- Freshman dorms, RAs in groups. MA assistances, that's their job.

How important is diversity to liberal education

- I think it's very important. We're in the bible belt, there's no diversity. We need more education in bible belt. Getting it out there is very important for us
- In terms of liberal education, well rounded education, I think the well rounded is supposed to help us for real world. We're going to encounter diversity in real world and we need to jump start that in college
- This is the real world, this could be as diverse as it is going to get. You could move to a very un-diverse area.
- If they want to promote more diversity and have it benefit, they need to attract students from diverse areas. To gain more diversity, they need more diverse students. It is hard to go deeper if there isn't diverse students. Its going to be the same bible belt without.
- It's rare that you won't deal with diversity in the working world. In business especially. Our world is getting smaller. Even if you put yourself in un-diverse area, you will still have to deal with it later.
- You can learn something about yourself. Maybe you would like someone else's culture than your own. If we had more diversity, they learn more about themselves. They could learn that their culture isn't right for them. People might be interested in them by just being exposed to them

Appendix 3

Moderator's Script, April 5th, 2006

WELCOME:

Hello everyone, my name is (name) and I'm a student here at grand valley state. Thank you for coming in today. I will be leading our discussion about Diversity here at GVSU. (Introduce rest of group).

TIMETABLE:

We will be here for about one hour. We have brought some food and drinks for you to enjoy during this discussion, and at anytime you are welcome to excuse yourself to use the bathroom (point out where bathroom is)

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATIONS:

You all have been chosen today to help us discover how GVSU students feel about diversity on and off campus. Everyone in today's group has been chosen as an acquaintance of at least one of our group members because they value your opinion and know your input will be valuable to our research.

We are also giving everyone name tags. (Name) will now pass out name tags. Please write your first name or a nickname name on the tag with the marker. Please make it legible so that everyone here may address you appropriately. With your permission we would like this discussion to be videotaped. (Name) will now send around consent forms for you to sign; if you would not like this to be taped please let us know.

I'd like to emphasize that the information shared today is entirely confidential. The discussion will be videotaped and the transcript of the tape will be summarized in such a way that no individual can be identified.

Discussion Rules:

For the remainder of this discussion we would like to lay out some ground rules to keep this discussion flowing steadily and without any disruptions.

1. Please do not talk out of turn or interrupt anyone who has the floor.
2. Respect everyone's time and limit your input to a minimum so that everyone may have a chance to express their opinion
3. Please respect the organization of this discussion and let us handle any interruptions ourselves
4. Lastly, do not be afraid to express your full opinion, we value your thoughts and hope that you will share both disagreement and agreement in all aspects of this discussion.

TURN ON TAPE: I'd like to open the discussion with introductions. Let's go around the group beginning with (name). Please state your name, position and how long you have been attending GVSU and anything else you'd like to mention.

QUESTION/DISCUSSION PERIOD: Diversity is defined as: Differences in race, ethnicity, language, nationality, or religion among various groups within a community, organization, or nation.

Question: How do you feel about diversity at GVSU? Why?

Question: How often do you attend events on campus that emphasize diversity?

Question: How effective do you feel Grand Valley's efforts are towards promoting diversity on campus?

Question: How much has diversity on campus influenced GVSU experience?

Question: How have your views of diversity in others changed since attending Grand Valley

Question: What diversity promotions have you seen around campus? Is GVSU doing enough?

Question: Would you join an organization on campus that promotes diversity that is not specific to a single group, but is open to all types of students?

Question: How important is diversity to the concept of liberal education Why?

CONCLUSION: I'd like to again thank you today for all your valuable input. If you have any future comments please send them to me at (address/email/phone).

Appendix 4

CAP 115 Classes CLE Survey, April 2005

Liberal Education Survey

Report created on: Apr 25 2006 3:40PM

1. When you hear the term "liberal education" which of the following words/phrases come to mind? (check all that apply)		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Diversity of race or ethnicity		149	44%
Scholarship		31	9%
Diversity of opinion		210	62%
Community service		43	13%
Deep involvement in studies		78	23%
General education classes		201	59%
Free thinking		176	52%
Theme classes		109	32%
Open minds		184	54%
New ways of learning		159	47%
Balanced education		169	50%
Love of learning		59	17%
Co-curricular activities		51	15%
Higher learning		109	32%
Faculty involvement		65	19%
Artistic expression		123	36%
Critical thinking		146	43%
Problem solving		105	31%
Other		41	12%

2. As opposed to a technical/vocational education, how closely do you agree with the following statement: "A liberal education is more important?"		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Strongly Agree		46	14%
Agree		115	34%
Neither Agree nor Disagree		111	33%
Disagree		56	17%
Strongly Disagree		9	3%
Total		337	100%

3. How closely, if at all, do you feel each of the following statements relates to the concept of a liberal education?					
	1 Doesn't relate at all	2 Somewhat unrelated	3 Neither related nor unrelated	4 Somewhat closely related	5 Very closely related
1. A liberal education is learning for the sake of learning	5% 16	17% 56	24% 81	42% 143	12% 41
2. A liberal education helps students better understand perspectives of their own culture and other cultures	1% 5	7% 23	10% 35	51% 172	30% 101
3. A liberal education provides students with the knowledge and skills to intelligently participate in public discourse	2% 6	4% 15	17% 56	52% 176	25% 85
4. A liberal education gives students knowledge of diverse topics	1% 3	3% 10	10% 35	46% 155	40% 134
5. A liberal education is focused on the open exchange of ideas	1% 5	6% 21	16% 54	45% 151	31% 104
6. A liberal education embraces a diverse group of students	3% 10	9% 30	20% 66	40% 136	28% 94
7. A liberal education begins with an encounter with the great ideas of diverse traditions in the humanities, the creative and performing arts, the natural and social sciences and mathematics	2% 7	5% 18	16% 52	41% 139	36% 119

The top percentage indicates total respondent ratio; the bottom number represents actual number of respondents selecting the option

4. Which of the terms or phrases listed below describe your liberal education experience at GVSU (check all that apply)?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
General education classes		258	76%
Themes		203	60%
Diversity		151	45%
Appreciation for others' points of view		167	49%
Appreciation for arts, music, theater, or other cultural pursuits		155	46%
The opportunity to study abroad		111	33%
The opportunity for self-expression		129	38%
Other		45	13%

5. Do you think that the courses Grand Valley provides as general education requirements are essential to your educational experience?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Yes, all of the requirements are essential		10	3%
Yes, most of the requirements are essential		68	20%
Yes and No, some of the requirements are essential, some are not		194	58%
No, most of the requirements are not essential		61	18%
No, none of the requirements are essential		4	1%
Total		337	100%

6. How often, if at all, is the concept of a liberal education mentioned or discussed by your professors?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Very often		7	2%
Often		61	18%
Somewhat		95	28%
Not very much		139	41%
Never		36	11%
Total		338	100%

7. How much time, in an average week, do you feel a full time undergraduate student, taking fifteen credit hours, should spend preparing for all of his/her classes (including reading, studying, writing, etc.)?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
0-5 hours		24	7%
6-10 hours		104	31%
11-15 hours		111	33%
16-20 hours		72	21%
21 hours or more		27	8%
Total		338	100%

8. In a typical semester, how many papers of three pages or more do you think a student with 15 credit hours should be expected to complete?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Zero		5	1%
1-3		118	35%
4-6		168	50%
7+		47	14%
Total		338	100%

9. How much do you agree or disagree with the following:					
	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
<i>The top percentage indicates total respondent ratio; the bottom number represents actual number of respondents selecting the option</i>					
1. How much do you agree or disagree that working in groups with other students (team projects, term papers, study groups, etc.) is valuable to your learning?	8% 27	19% 65	20% 69	37% 125	15% 51
2. Think about what you learn and how it relates to real life. How much do you agree or disagree that being able to use classroom knowledge in real world situations is an important part of your academic experience?	1% 3	4% 13	11% 37	47% 160	37% 125
3. In general, how much do you agree or disagree that professors expect too much from students in terms of coursework?	6% 20	22% 74	35% 117	27% 91	11% 36

10. In general, do you feel challenged in your coursework at GVSU?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Yes		307	91%
No		30	9%
Total		337	100%

11. How important or unimportant are the following:

	1 Very unimportant	2 Unimportant	3 Neither important nor unimportant	4 Important	5 Very important
<i>The top percentage indicates total respondent ratio; the bottom number represents actual number of respondents selecting the option</i>					
1. How important or unimportant is having a say in your education by contributing to the design of class policies, projects, and discussion?	2% 7	4% 12	14% 49	54% 182	26% 88
2. How important or unimportant is analyzing, applying and making judgments about ideas, theories and other information to your academic learning?	1% 4	3% 9	14% 46	53% 178	30% 101
3. How important or unimportant is memorizing facts, ideas or methods (from your courses or readings) to your academic learning?	7% 24	24% 81	25% 84	36% 122	7% 25

12. How well do you think Grand Valley has prepared (or is preparing) you to succeed in the following areas (for life after college)?

	1 Very Little	2 Some	3 Quite a bit	4 Very Much
<i>The top percentage indicates total respondent ratio; the bottom number represents actual number of respondents selecting the option</i>				
1. To speak clearly and effectively	11% 36	40% 134	38% 130	11% 38
2. To write clearly and effectively	4% 12	21% 70	48% 162	28% 93
3. To learn effectively on your own	5% 16	20% 67	51% 173	24% 81
4. To understand yourself	13% 43	34% 115	35% 118	18% 61
5. To solve complex, real-world problems	7% 22	38% 127	45% 153	11% 36
6. To work well with others	5% 17	29% 99	43% 146	23% 76

13. How important or unimportant do you feel it is for faculty to be involved in the following areas of your college experience?

	1 Very unimportant	2 Unimportant	3 Neither important nor unimportant	4 Important	5 Very important
<i>The top percentage indicates total respondent ratio; the bottom number represents actual number of respondents selecting the option</i>					
1. Discussing your career plans	2% 6	4% 12	13% 45	55% 187	26% 88
2. Providing support to help you succeed academically	0% 1	2% 7	4% 15	41% 137	53% 178
3. Helping you cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	7% 23	28% 95	34% 116	22% 76	8% 28
4. Advising you about class choices	1% 5	2% 8	6% 19	48% 160	43% 142
5. Discussing ideas, concepts or theories with you outside of a classroom environment	2% 7	7% 23	18% 62	50% 167	23% 78
6. Working with you on activities other than coursework (committees, student life activities, etc.)	6% 20	14% 46	30% 101	40% 134	11% 36

14. Do you participate in (or attend) any of the following campus sponsored activities or organizations? Check all that apply

	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Intramural sports	80	27%
Varsity sports	49	16%
Student government or political organizations	17	6%
Student clubs or organizations (Alternate Spring Break, Climbing club, etc.)	127	42%
Sporting events	151	51%
Sororities or fraternities	11	4%
Dances or other social activities	69	23%
Community council supported events	33	11%
Plays, dance, music or other theatre performances	131	44%
Popular music concerts	94	31%
Choir or band concerts	48	16%
Art exhibits	58	19%
Lectures	137	46%
Other school sponsored activities	101	34%

15. What obstacles, if any, might be in the way of your participation in (or attendance at) such organizations or activities? (Check all that apply)		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Work		215	64%
Not enough time		287	86%
Lack of familiarity/knowledge of organizations/activities		149	44%
No transportation		40	12%
Not interested in organizations or co-curricular activities		75	22%
Other		59	18%

14. Do you participate in (or attend) any of the following campus sponsored activities or organizations? Check all that apply		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Intramural sports		80	27%
Varsity sports		49	16%
Student government or political organizations		17	6%
Student clubs or organizations (Alternate Spring Break, Climbing club, etc.)		127	42%
Sporting events		151	51%
Sororities or fraternities		11	4%
Dances or other social activities		69	23%
Community council supported events		33	11%
Plays, dance, music or other theatre performances		131	44%
Popular music concerts		94	31%
Choir or band concerts		48	16%
Art exhibits		58	19%
Lectures		137	46%
Other school sponsored activities		101	34%

15. What obstacles, if any, might be in the way of your participation in (or attendance at) such organizations or activities? (Check all that apply)		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Work		215	64%
Not enough time		287	86%
Lack of familiarity/knowledge of organizations/activities		149	44%
No transportation		40	12%
Not interested in organizations or co-curricular activities		75	22%
Other		59	18%

16. What effect, if any, do you feel co-curricular activities or employment have on your studies?					
	1 extremely harmful effect	2 somewhat harmful effect	3 no effect one way or the other	4 somewhat beneficial effect	5 extremely beneficial effect
1. Co-curricular Activities	2% 8	13% 43	49% 164	29% 97	7% 24
2. Employment	7% 22	46% 155	29% 99	14% 47	4% 13

17. On average, how many times in a given month would you say you use or participate in each of the following:						
	1 0	2 1-2	3 3-5	4 6-8	5 9-11	6 12+
1. Field House	37% 124	11% 37	13% 42	11% 38	7% 25	20% 68
2. Writing Center	81% 271	15% 50	2% 6	1% 2	1% 2	1% 3
3. Math Lab	91% 304	4% 13	3% 9	1% 2	1% 2	1% 3
4. Language Lab	80% 264	6% 19	6% 19	5% 16	1% 3	3% 11
5. Kikhof Activities	45% 150	33% 108	13% 43	5% 16	2% 7	2% 8
6. Library	25% 83	34% 114	16% 52	9% 30	6% 19	11% 36
7. Computer Lab	12% 40	15% 51	16% 53	13% 44	13% 42	31% 104
8. Tutoring Center	89% 297	5% 18	2% 6	2% 5	1% 3	1% 4
9. Career Services	77% 255	17% 56	4% 13	2% 5	1% 2	0% 1
10. Advising Resource Center	74% 245	19% 62	5% 17	1% 3	2% 5	0% 1

18. How important or unimportant is it to your education to attend a college that embraces "diversity"?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Very important		146	43%
Somewhat important		118	35%
Neither important nor unimportant		43	13%
Somewhat unimportant		22	7%
Very unimportant		9	3%
Total		338	100%

19. Please rate the following:					
	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree not disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
<i>The top percentage indicates total respondent ratio; the bottom number represents actual number of respondents selecting the option</i>					
1. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I feel that diversity has a positive impact on my education."	3% 9	4% 12	19% 63	46% 156	29% 97
2. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Grand Valley State University is a diverse campus."	8% 26	20% 68	22% 74	35% 118	7% 22
3. How much do you agree or disagree that Grand Valley State University is helping students develop the skills necessary to live and work in a culturally diverse society?	4% 13	19% 63	30% 103	39% 133	8% 26
4. Do you agree or disagree that diversity is an important factor in a liberal education?	2% 7	4% 15	17% 56	46% 154	31% 104

20. How much has diversity on campus influenced your life?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Quite a bit		49	14%
A little		190	56%
Not at all		99	29%
Total		338	100%

21. How much, if at all, would you say that your views of diversity (appreciation for different races, cultures, opinions etc.) have changed since enrolling at GVSU?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Quite a bit		56	17%
Somewhat		170	51%
No Change		109	33%
Total		335	100%

22. Would you say you have become more or less respectful of diversity in others since attending Grand Valley?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
More respectful		190	56%
No change		137	41%
Less respectful		10	3%
Total		337	100%

Now, just a few questions for classification purposes

23. What is your sex?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
male		85	25%
female		254	75%
Total		339	100%

24. How old are you?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
18-19 years		105	31%
20-21 years		128	38%
22-23 years		64	19%
24-25 years		15	4%
26+ years		27	8%
Total		339	100%

25. What is your ethnicity?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Caucasian		312	92%
African American/Black		4	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander		12	4%
Hispanic		2	1%
Native American		1	0%
Middle Eastern		0	0%
Multiracial		5	1%
Other		3	1%
Total		339	100%

26. What is your class standing?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
freshman		65	19%
sophomore		74	22%
junior		86	25%
senior		114	34%
Total		339	100%

27. Are you a full-time (12+ credits) or part-time (11 & under credits) student?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Full time		308	91%
Part time		29	9%
Total		337	100%

28. Are you a transfer student?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Yes		94	28%
No		245	72%
Total		339	100%

29. Do you have a job?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Yes		245	72%
No		94	28%
Total		339	100%

30. If yes, about how many hours a week, on average, do you work?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
1-10		61	24%
11-20		98	39%
21-30		58	23%
30+		35	14%
Total		252	100%

31. Do you live on, near (within 1-2 miles) or off campus?		Number of Responses	Response Ratio
On		122	36%
Near		70	21%
Off		147	43%
Total		339	100%

