

# RESPONSE TO THE MOVEMENT'S LIST OF DEMANDS

---

*Submitted by*

Alice P. Gast

Mohamed El-Aasser

January 15, 2007



# RESPONSE TO THE MOVEMENT'S LIST OF DEMANDS

January 15, 2007

---

We, the President and Provost, on behalf of Lehigh University's senior leadership, would like to acknowledge the initiative and thought that went into drafting the Movement's List of Demands. The document clearly demonstrates the interest in and commitment to creating an environment at Lehigh in which all of us – students, faculty, staff, and administrators – can excel, feel safe, and be ourselves.

The following response is a continuation of the ongoing dialogue between the Movement and the administration, as well as all members of the university community. We are fundamentally committed to sustainable change and we recognize that change must be infused in virtually every part of Lehigh life: curriculum, student life, classroom, offices, playing fields, etc. This response document is just one of many ways in which we will set the change in motion for the long term.

Readers will note that the term “demand” has been replaced with the term “proposal.” This change in language reflects the collaborative spirit at the heart of our discussions and decisions. By working together, we will be better able to identify core goals and approaches to achieving them. However, merely achieving the goal is not sufficient. We must also include thoughtful and robust support structures to ensure that the change is sustainable long after we have all left Lehigh.

The List of Demands organizes proposals into three categories: academic; social; and financial aid and recruitment. The following response echoes this convention, but reorganizes the proposals as they relate to communication, education, resources, financial aid, recruitment, and retention. The proposals were reorganized in order to address them within the Lehigh organizational structure.

Our response identifies changes and activities that we will adopt, those that we have identified and intend to address in a shorter time frame, and those that will require a longer time frame. The proposed changes should lead all of us at Lehigh to understand and promote all aspects of diversity that face our nation. We hope that these proposed changes will instill in each of us the desire to become proactive, to lead by example, to help others, and to achieve the overall goal of embracing a truly diverse society both within and beyond Lehigh. It is also our sincere hope that fostering intellectual diversity will become a part of each of our daily lives.

---

## ***1. Communication***

The diversity of the groups working toward change at Lehigh presents an opportunity to collaborate and build consensus; this may occasionally be complicated by competing interests and by differing expectations. This reality should not become the focus of our efforts, but rather a challenge that the campus community faces together. As President Gast said publicly during the open forum and in a meeting with leaders of the Movement, she will be scheduling a number of different venues for students to talk with her and with other senior leaders. Those venues include open office hours for students or small groups several times a semester.

The first open forum with the President and Provost was held in November 2006, with a number of students, faculty, and staff participating. We propose to hold periodic open forums for all members of the Lehigh community, at least annually, where we can continue our dialog about diversity issues. We believe that these forums should be co-sponsored by the student leadership and student organizations across campus, who all share interest in and responsibility for improving Lehigh. We will also meet in office hours or other scheduled meetings with the student sponsors to prepare for these open forums.

## ***2. Education***

Education about differences, inclusion, and accepting individuals should be a part of everything we do at Lehigh. One of the major tenets of creating sustainable change is to educate individuals about goals and outcomes and to continually reinforce them in various ways.

At Lehigh, education about diversity takes many forms and is not limited to experiences in the classroom. The term “diversity” covers socio-economic, gender, race, sexual orientation, religious, intellectual and ethnic identification. Life in a residence hall, involvement in clubs or on teams, and community service all contribute to a person’s diversity education. We recognize, however, that structured methods of delivery and multiple opportunities for engagement are also necessary.

Integrating a component exploring existing power hierarchies and prejudices in society into the First-Year Experience (FYE) orientation is a good idea. Leaders of the FYE program are developing this component for all members of the incoming class beginning in the fall of 2007. We will encourage these leaders to work with student representatives and other groups on campus to develop content, which can be tailored to include information about diversity resources on campus.

It is important to allow students to discover and explore diversity as a component of higher education, rather than as a compulsory exercise. For example, existing First Year initiatives such as the “Crash” film screening, South Bethlehem Experience, Volunteer Experience, and Culture Fest are optional. The components of the FYE that are required, such as the Selected Reading, have historically focused on aspects of diversity, but allow students to develop their own ideas and address those issues that are important to them.

---

With the exception of the FYE, the university does not have a core curriculum or general education requirements in place for all undergraduates. Including a mandatory, credit-bearing seminar for undergraduates across all colleges and curricula requires a great deal of planning and discussion and has an effect on a number of resources. At this time, it is not feasible to require a single standardized course for all undergraduates. However, there are a number of existing courses and seminars that emphasize diversity and differences that are part of the curriculum for a number of students throughout the university. An inventory of these courses is being completed as described in the appendix.

The goal behind the request to offer more courses and opportunities for students to become more aware of and educated about diversity, however, remains an important one and we would like to respond by committing the 2007 spring semester to identifying ways in which issues of diversity and differences can be broadly infused in our curricula, courses, and classroom discussions. This takes more thinking and planning than developing and instituting a single mandatory course. We are in the midst of an accreditation process that requires we review our curriculum and programs. We will ask the college deans to work with the Middle States Accreditation Team, as part of the curriculum evaluation, to integrate diversity into our educational programs as appropriate. They will also develop and implement the appropriate assessment tools to ensure *sustainable, tangible* outcomes in educating students about diversity.

To reach our shared goals, diversity must be a part of the educational fabric of the Lehigh experience, rather than the topic of a single course or seminar. Along with curriculum, college-wide and university-wide events complement and enhance a student's diversity education. We ask that the colleges remain diligent in their efforts to promote all college-specific and university-wide events, as well as resources and opportunities that are available for a wide diversity of students.

In addition to diversity education for students, the Movement also highlighted the need for diversity education for faculty. This need was embodied in the proposal to require faculty to include a Diversity Integrity Statement on their syllabi, indicating that they will respect the individuality of their students. A statement mandated by the administration would ensure that the proposal was implemented, but may not achieve the goal, which is to ensure that students feel comfortable and respected in the classroom. We submit, however, that discussion between students and faculty, perhaps culminating in a jointly drafted statement, would improve communication, build consensus, and achieve the goal. We stand ready to assist a student and faculty group to work toward this.

### **3. Resources**

We all know that new resources will be essential to sustain diversity activities on campus. We need to deal with these requests globally and with a thoughtful and financially sustainable approach. A number of studies and changes related to space planning and increased staff are currently under review or underway.

Centralizing all of the responsibilities for diversity into one office or unit is a concept that Lehigh, along with many other colleges and universities, is investigating. The University

---

Diversity Leadership Committee (UDLC) is taking on this analysis and has committed to making a recommendation to the President and Provost in 2007.

A review of needs within the Office of Multicultural Affairs is currently underway. In the fall of 2006, the graduate assistant workstation in the Multicultural Center was relocated to expand space available to students. Decisions on staffing arrangements will be finalized in the spring semester.

Student Affairs is currently reviewing the creation of a “Social Environment Improvement Fund.” By reallocating funds in the 2006-07 budget, the Dean of Students Office created a fund specifically designated to promote cultural, educational, and social campus opportunities by providing co-sponsorship funds to student clubs and organizations interested in planning and implementing events, programs, and projects in support of diversity in its broadest sense. Establishing such a fund on a permanent basis will be considered in light of the outcomes and recommendations of the climate survey report.

The Student Spaces Taskforce and appropriate offices have discussed and reviewed the concept of a Student Center. Currently, student spaces exist at the Ulrich Student Center, Lamberton, in the dorms, etc., but, in many cases, are underutilized. The reasons for this have yet to be identified and further review is necessary to determine what works and does not work in student spaces on campus, in pursuit of enhancements to existing space.

An Academic Director of the Joint Multicultural Program has been hired and is working closely with his colleagues in Student Affairs. The needs of the Joint-Multicultural Office activities are assessed and are being met on an annual basis. Additionally, we will hire a Director of LGBTQA Services and an office coordinator during the 2006/07 academic year to provide support to the LGBTQA student population.

Development and implementation of a structure for confidential reporting of bias and hateful acts is well underway and improvements to the current system are in place. The Confronting Intolerance website has been updated and provides expanded definitions and resources available to members of the university community. Acts of discrimination and intolerance are now posted on the Bias Response Team website. We are committed to making a multiplicity of means to report hateful acts and other forms of discrimination readily available to all.

#### ***4. Financial Aid, Recruitment, and Retention***

As the demography of American high schools shifts from a white majority to a more diverse population of strong achievers, Lehigh must position itself to continue enrolling talented students. With a search underway for a new Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, we have the opportunity to bring in a professional who can continue to guide us in these important areas.

For many years, Lehigh has maintained a commitment to recruit and select students for admission according to a broad definition of merit and without regard to financial need, to provide financial aid to make a Lehigh education affordable to students from a wide range of family circumstances, and to help students persist in their studies and earn their degrees. We are

---

constantly evaluating our strategies to achieve those ends and testing new approaches. Among the resources committed to this effort are: institutional financial aid expenditures that are more than 14 percent of the total University budget; staff and students in the Admissions Office who recruit students from multicultural backgrounds; additional funds have been committed on a continuing basis to support the needs of recruitment programs like Diversity Preview Days, the Diversity Achievers Program, the Multicultural Weekend, and the Diversity Delegates Program; and Financial Aid Office staff who are bilingual and provide targeted assistance to multicultural families in completing their financial aid applications. In addition, many faculty, staff, and current students commit their efforts to making admitted students feel that there is a place for them at Lehigh.

Increasing Lehigh's resources for scholarship support for undergraduates is one of the top priorities in Shine Forever: The Campaign for Lehigh, our current comprehensive fund-raising campaign. More than \$70 million in new scholarship endowments have been pledged during the campaign, making available additional resources to help provide need-based aid for students whose families otherwise would not be able to afford a Lehigh education. This aid includes support for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds in the region, the nation and the world. Lehigh alumni continue to be very responsive to the need for additional long-term resources for financial aid, and we will continue to raise funds for this purpose throughout the current campaign and beyond.

Over the years, Lehigh donors have provided a number of existing endowed scholarships targeted to students from Bethlehem and surrounding communities. We have taken steps toward greater promotion of these resources and more effective utilization of these scholarships in the recruitment of new students, particularly African American and Latino students from South Bethlehem and other Lehigh Valley communities. We will continue to augment these funds to make it possible for more local students to attend Lehigh.

A number of the other requests have been under review by various departments within the university and are highlighted in the appendix. For example, the Enrollment Management group is keenly aware of the current urgency to recruit and enroll a more diverse class and has begun an analysis of income and need levels during the 2006 and 2007 admission cycles to determine the best approach to addressing the question of income and merit aid.

## APPENDIX

January 15, 2007

---

### *DIVERSITY PROGRESS ORGANIZED by THEME*

#### EDUCATION

##### **For Current Students:**

- Course Inventory - The Student Diversity Task Force has begun to inventory all courses currently offered that include components of race, ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, cultural, religious, and other diversity-related subject matter. The timeline for completing the inventory is in time for fall 2007 pre-registration in late March. Those courses including this “diversity” component will be identified so that students may select them in time to build their fall ’07 schedule.
- New courses - Courses, such as “Black Issues in Higher Education,” have been developed by the collaborative work between Student Affairs staff and faculty members in the Africana Studies academic program. Additional courses planned for future years will require increased funding for Africana Studies and Latin American Studies.
- Greek Life Diversity and Inclusiveness Education Initiative - An outcome of the August 2006 retreat, the initiative will work towards making Greek life more inclusive and programming will focus on appreciating and understanding differences.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration 2006 - Events included a faculty roundtable focused on MLK’s “Beyond Vietnam” speech, an interfaith breakfast and speaker Rev. Al Sharpton. This year’s celebration will include a faculty roundtable discussion centered on the issue of poverty, an interfaith breakfast and speaker Dr. Eric Michael Dyson.
- Conversations on Race (CoR) - Participants address racial issues, challenges, and solutions in a guided dialogue program, which lasts for six sessions. Students across the university, including members of three fraternities and sororities, have taken part in the program. Additional sessions are planned for spring 2007.
- Umoja House - Promoted the house as a living-learning residence by co-sponsoring and promoting events there. Courses in the spring and fall semester were taught at the house, including Peoples and Cultures of Africa (Spring 2006) and African and African-American Art and Religion.
- Baccalaureate Speaker - Continued focus on diversity in selection process, past speakers included Cornel West, Seyyed Hussein Nasr, Martha Nussbaum, and Bishop John Shelby Spong. This year’s baccalaureate speaker, not yet announced, is an authority of religious pluralism and diversity in the Christian tradition.

### **For First-Year Students:**

- “Crash” film screening - Film screening on the University Lawn intended to provoke dialogue about diversity issues.
- South Bethlehem Experience (SBE) - Overnight pre-orientation experience for first-year students that introduces them to S. Bethlehem and its historical and cultural heritage.
- Volunteer Experience (VE) - A pre-orientation experience that allows incoming students to volunteer with community organizations.
- Culture Fest - A program designed to introduce students to the variety of cultures on Lehigh’s campus and beyond through social interaction.
- Selected reading - Kashuo Ishiguro’s Never Let Me Go was examined in terms of power hierarchies and in/out group dynamics. Students were asked to extrapolate the book to their lives and Lehigh experience.
- Post-orientation sessions - Students met with their orientation groups later in the semester to discuss inter/intrapersonal development issues as they relate to diversity.
- Lehigh Life Program - Students are exposed to topics (e.g. values/integrity and diversity/community) and then break into smaller discussion groups.
- Mentoring Program - Pairs first-year students from underrepresented groups with faculty members - mentors offer guidance and support. This program will increase recruitment efforts in the spring 2007 semester.

### **For Faculty:**

- Lehigh Lab Forum - A forum focused specifically on diversity in the classroom and opportunities to increase awareness of diversity. This program will be expanded in the Spring/Fall of 2007 to address more specific faculty concerns and needs.
- Formation of an LGBTQ Affinity Group - This faculty/staff group will work with the newly formed Gay and Lesbian Alumni (LUGALA) group to bring speakers and programming to campus.

## **RESOURCES**

- Director, Joint Multicultural Program - Jeffrey Fleisher assumed this role in fall 2005.
- Two new staff members for the LGBTQA Programs and Outreach - The University will hire a Director of LGBTQA Services and an office coordinator during the 2006/07 academic year to provide support to the LGBTQA student population.
- Web-based reporting of bias related incidents - This pending protocol will allow a person to anonymously submit a report on a bias related incident online.

*NOTE: Issues related to resources and space planning can be better assessed after examining the results of the Climate Survey.*

## **FINANCIAL AID, RECRUITMENT, and RETENTION**

### **Financial Aid:**

- Community Service Award - Students will be nominated by the admissions staff based upon information in their application for admission (e.g., essays, teacher or counselor recommendations). The awards will be need-based and the package will consist of a grant, a merit award to cover any loans in the package, and a work-study grant that should be used for work in community service. Up to 15 of these awards are anticipated in each incoming class. We will be working to make these awards more visible.
- Multicultural Scholarship Opportunities/Multicultural Events and Activities Flier - Currently in development, the flier will provide a listing of the various scholarships available to applicants from underrepresented groups and will highlight various annual multicultural events and heritage celebrations sponsored by The Office of Multicultural Affairs.
- Providing additional long-term resources for undergraduate financial aid is a major priority of *Shine Forever: The Campaign for Lehigh*, Lehigh's comprehensive fund-raising effort. Alumni, parents and foundations have pledged more than \$70 million so far towards an overall goal of \$100 million in new scholarship endowment for undergraduates. Many of these new funds give preference to students from diverse and/or socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds – from local, national and international high schools.
- The William Randolph Hearst Foundations recently awarded Lehigh University \$100,000 to fund scholarships for African-American and Latino students. This recent award doubled the existing William Randolph Hearst Endowed Scholarship Fund, established in 1999, to \$200,000.

### **Student Recruitment:**

- Budget increase - The budget of the Diversity Delegates Ambassador Program has been increased.
- Local Recruitment Efforts - Admissions and Financial Aid have inventoried several endowed scholarship funds that have a preference for students from the Lehigh Valley. Some of them specify, for example, Easton High School or have some other preference that would make them unusable for South Bethlehem, but there are several that would work. The offices are preparing a plan to make the availability of those scholarships known in the community and to better communicate with guidance counselors as well. In addition, they are preparing a similar plan to communicate the availability of scholarships for multicultural students (see above). South Bethlehem is at the intersection of those plans.

- Diversification over time

Ethnicity	Fall 2004		Fall 2005		Fall 2006	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Non-Resident Alien	NA	NA	131	3%	132	2%
African American Non-Hispanic	131	3%	112	2%	133	3%
Asian American	282	6%	252	5%	269	6%
Hispanic/Latino	112	2%	111	2%	165	4%
Native American/Alaska Native	12	0%	9	0%	7	0%
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific	1	0%	1	0%	2	0%
Other / Unknown	482	11%	306	6%	341	7%
White Non-Hispanic	3557	78%	3757	80%	3694	78%
Total	4577	100%	4679	100%	4743	100%

- Outreach pieces are sent to students identified through the Ventures Scholars Program, the National Hispanic Recognition Program, and the Ron Brown Scholar Program.
- A Support Services for Students with Disabilities brochure has been developed to outline services available to students who are considering attending Lehigh and who are substantially limited by a diagnosed disability.
- A Clubs and Organizations Information Sheet has been developed for prospective students during the recruitment cycle to promote the wide variety of extracurricular opportunities (e.g. language and culture, religious affiliation, environmental and political interests) that exist on campus.
- In an effort to attract the very best international students to campus each year, Lehigh submits an overview covering information on attending Lehigh including colleges, programs, degrees, admissions requirements, and more to American Universities and Colleges (part of the Private Colleges and Universities family) to be published (for a fee) in their annual magazine.
- Diversity Preview Day - A special one-day program (typically held in the fall) that is designed to provide prospective high school juniors and seniors with a glimpse of diversity at Lehigh, the many issues facing students as they enter and adapt to college life, and an opportunity to meet current students, faculty and staff.
- Diversity Achievers Program - A two-day program (typically held in the fall) that enables prospective high school seniors to become acquainted with the different cultures of the university, learn about the many resources Lehigh offers multicultural students, attend classes, enjoy meals with current students and faculty, and take part in various events sponsored by student organizations.
- Diversity Life Weekend - An opportunity for admitted students who are in the decision phase of their college search to become better informed about campus life and cultural diversity, meet faculty members, and participate in fun activities while visiting Lehigh's campus in April.

- Lehigh Valley Resources Guide - The Diversity Initiative website has been updated with information that highlights opportunities and resources to help prospective faculty, staff, and students learn about the Lehigh Valley.
- Online diversity chats - The Admissions Office conducts multicultural chats each semester (fall for prospects and spring for admitted students), and a broader diversity-oriented chat that would include spaces for various identities and affinities is under discussion.

**Student Retention:**

- Honor Network - An effort to educate students from underrepresented groups about possible honors and awards available at the university and to strive for them. This will include an informational part via pamphlets and a website, but also awards given to students with high GPAs at the Multicultural Affairs Awards Ceremony.
- Honor Network Dinner at Career Fair - Students awardees will be publicly honored at a special dinner at the Career Fair with employers present. This will provide an opportunity to publicly recognize these students as well as a unique networking opportunity.
- Fostering retention is a critical responsibility of the Enrollment Management team, which is awaiting the results of the climate survey before developing an approach to addressing retention of students of color.
- Outreach efforts - Emails and letters targeted at underrepresented students about Career Networking Receptions and Freshman Sendoffs to increase participation.