

POSITION PAPERS
Diversity

Maria Brown
Diversity Position Paper

Bill Green
The "Precious Moment": A Statement on Diversity

Brad Holt
Some Thoughts on Diversity

Martha Johnson
Diversity

Mary Lou Williams
Vision: Augsburg/Diversity

**The Meaning of Diversity will be discussed on
October 16 at 3:30 in the Marshall Room.**

DIVERSITY POSITION PAPER

Maria Brown

October 1, 1996

One of the dangers inherent in trying to reflect on the position of diversity in the future of Augsburg College is the lack of consensus on the meaning of the term. Indeed, as noted in the Vision Development Report and reflected in numerous comments during the IPC process, it is one of the more contentious terms. Some have suggested avoiding using the term altogether.

I understand the term diversity to have arisen at a time in which it became too political or inflammatory to talk about racism, and this was the rather "Minnesota Nice" term that would not instantly raise hackles. If we talk about "diversity", perhaps people would listen a bit longer without being defensive. The comments from IPC and "Vision" suggest that this strategy, if perhaps useful at some time, fails at the task of producing non-defensiveness. Perhaps we are in the market for a new word, a task I could support as long as it does not simultaneously mean that we will water down the message. At root, however, I believe that whatever term is chosen will not remove the basic necessity to invent an effective and inclusive multicultural society. The United States democracy is known in many parts of the world as a place which honors all of its citizens and allows opportunities to all. Although those of us who live here can and do dispute the extent of this opportunity (and the likelihood of walking on streets paved with gold), we also have a unique opportunity to create a reality that in some way lives up to the fantasy. The invention is a daily task: "Every day in every way." There are few models and easy answers to fall back on. Race - gender - class - and many other "isms" remain a major challenge. Although some of the more overt manifestations of these "isms" are removed from law and practice, there remains a lack of information and understanding across diverse groups.

I would like for us to first focus on the positives to be gained from participating in a College that honors and works toward diversity. The terms "valuing diversity" or "celebrating diversity" have become almost cliches, yet these terms are central to my understanding. In contrasting the concepts of assimilation and cultural pluralism, for example, we can think of the gains and losses to the majority and minority communities for each. In assimilation (minority cultures become more like the majority), the majority culture maintains its status and power, as well as the ability to define the playing field. Its loss, however, is the richness of experience and wisdom from other cultures. Minority groups gain access to goods and services, as well as some larger system acceptance, while losing their cultural heritage in varying degrees. (I am reminded of a recent conversation with a friend who was raised Lutheran, while her family disregarded most of her father's Jewish roots. She has been exploring this heritage, and as we talked about the New Year's celebration and the holy days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I was introduced in a different way to the importance of forgiveness and the

responsibilities of the ones seeking and giving forgiveness. I was enriched by what was for her a new spiritual tradition.)

On the other side of that set of terms are the benefits and losses to cultural pluralism (honoring and recognizing the diversity of cultural traditions within a society). The majority culture gains the richness of the information and wisdom (not to mention great music, theater, and fun) of the diversity of its citizens. In order to do that, there is some loss of privilege and sole access to power. The minority group gains/retains its culture, but depending on social policy may lose some access to goods and services.

As I think further about the concepts of assimilation and cultural pluralism, I wonder about the daily struggle of people at Augsburg who see themselves and are seen as different (perhaps the most basic definition of diversity.) I hear frequent stories from women and/or students of color who note that they don't see themselves reflected in what is important at Augsburg, as defined by what is given attention: campus events, speakers and topics, syllabi and classroom experiences that reflect limited learning styles, texts that primarily reflect the experience of majority culture well-to-do males, a lack of critical analysis that includes the intersection of race, class, gender, etc. It is difficult to sort out differing people's reality; I for example think I address race consistently in the classroom. I get feedback from some (primarily majority culture) students who think I do too much of this, as well as challenges from some students of color that I am not knowledgeable enough and do not do sufficient cross cultural analysis.

I worry about the gifts that we do not invite, the things we never learn about each other, while caught up in what is normal for our own lives. How can we celebrate or value that which we don't have the information or inclination to ask about? Many of us have heard Garry Hesser describe helping students recognize: 1) what they know they know, 2) what they know they don't know 3) what they don't know they know and 4) what they don't know they don't know. One of the privileges for those of us with skin or class or gender (and other) privilege is not being forced regularly to struggle with what we don't know we don't know.

More overtly, it is easy to give offense by missing important cultural information. In working as a co-organizer (along with Michael Shock) for this August's visit of social work faculty and students from Japan Lutheran College in Tokyo, I feared violating some cultural taboo and never even finding out about it, as they might help me save face by not commenting. (Fortunately, both of our Japanese faculty colleague had gotten advanced degrees in U.S. institutions and were quite fluent and comfortable in English and with U.S. culture, so they helped us avoid pitfalls. I value this opportunity with the students and faculty to challenge some of my own stereotypes and lack of information.)

In doing the current literature review for my dissertation focussed on how students learn about diversity in the study of social work, one very useful theory base has been in the area of Contact Hypothesis. Originating in post World War II U.S. sociology and developed by Gordon Allport and others, the essence of the theory

suggests that contact is basic to change in attitudes by majority culture members toward previously discriminated against groups. Others went on to discover that contact alone was not adequate; in fact, some kinds of contact simply reinforced stereotypes. Helpful contact needed to include equal status, sanctioned or seen as important by authority, with benefits accruing from contact with high status members of minority groups. The message for Augsburg College may suggest how important our voices as faculty are in supporting or ignoring status issues, in choosing classroom consultants, in hiring, and the many other ways we communicate by commission or omission what is important.

One final concept from social work practice and literature by several local social workers (Joan Velasquez, Marilyn E. Vigil, and Eustolio Benavides) whom many of you may know (especially since Mr. Benavides has taught at Augsburg) is the concept of the bi-cultural continuum. It suggests that one important assessment process involves understanding the comfort and frequency of experience of clients in a continuum whose poles are majority culture (values, norms, and roles expectations) and the same issues within the various cultures of color. A Latino may speak fluent English, work in a majority culture institution, be involved in cultural events within the majority culture - in short function very comfortably in a second culture; a second possibility might be a person with very little English with Spanish as primary language, limited in job search due to language and cultural concerns, social situations only within the Latino communities. Wherever a person might lie on the continuum, the authors suggest that it is the responsibility of the social worker to meet the clients where they are, not expect them to move across the continuum to the social worker.

I find this a challenging idea. What are our expectations about where we meet students, staff, or for that matter each other as faculty? Do we wait for people to come to us? Do we continue to learn and challenge ourselves to make the first move, learn other contexts, other languages (at least to a friendly greeting degree). I realize in writing this that each year I promise myself I will learn how to do basic greetings in any language from which I have students if they are bi- (or multi-) lingual. I am once again falling short in this modest goal, although I have made some efforts.

In summary, if we say we are intentionally diverse, we need to follow through on that with joy at our gains, intentionality in our contact, and with willingness to reach out across numerous bi-cultural continua. We need to continue to challenge ourselves, while being forgiving about how ground breaking this work is with, given the lack of role models. We will have and have had times in which we fall far short of our goals. We also have successes at Augsburg in the area of diversity to be proud of, as well as areas where we are just beginning. There are certainly also places that we have not yet explored or indeed even know exist.

THE "PRECIOUS MOMENT": A STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

It was mid-July. I was in my office, bone-tired, sweaty, and quickly coming to the conclusion that my disheveled office would have to clean itself through Divine Intervention, when a former student of mine (I'll call him "Brian") -- a recent graduate and accounting major -- stuck his head in the door. In class he had sat quietly in the corner, poised to take notes but never writing a word, for he had seemed at once attentive and distracted, at once probing yet lost in the morass of inarticulateness. Our conferences had always seemed somehow incomplete. Still, I liked him. This time, however, I did not feel like talking. And judging from the way he stood at the doorway, I knew that he knew that I was impatient to go home, to end this school year, to avoid having to explain his grade. But he wanted to tell me something and it was very, very important. I cleared off the chair and gestured for him to sit. His eyes glanced about the room, his hands fidgeting as if struggling to hold onto something that kept slipping away. Finally, he found the words.

He told me that before he came to Augsburg, he had never known a black person. The suburban community from which he came was all-white and predominately upper middle class. His parents were decent people. He'd never heard them utter a racist remark nor behave in any manner that suggested that black people -- and poor people, in general -- should be feared and kept at a distance. He had been raised on a steady dose of *Sesame Street* and *Bill Cosby*, and he grew up to believe -- truly, profoundly believe -- that all people were created equal. Still, all mention of race in his home was treated with the fragility of his grandmother's glass menagerie. *Look, but don't touch, and always, always step lightly.*

He had lived in relative privilege and he felt that, with minimal effort, he would never have to deal with adversity. Upon graduation, a good job in his father's firm awaited. He had foreseen himself being able to leave his suburban home, jump in his car, glide down the interstate that would bring him into the heart of downtown, park on the ramp, walk through the skyway to the elevator that would zoom him up to his sunlit office where he could enjoy the panoramic view of the city far below: the good life, an insular life, a life that could lull him into complacency, into avoidance. He had anticipated that for him, up there, the problems of the city and his fears of its people would disappear in the cityscape backdrop that adorned his well-appointed, mile-high office.

He talked about a movie he had seen with his fiancée -- *Vanity of the Bonfires* -- and he explained the extreme discomfort he had felt when the Tom Hanks character wandered into Harlem one night, got lost and panicked. For "Brian" the scene had been the ultimate yuppie nightmare. The fact that it had haunted him made him feel ashamed. He told me that he had taken my course (and these are his words) "to deal with his questions... to deal with his fears," and he took the course option to volunteer in an inner city school.

From his weekly journals, I knew what he did at the school, with which kids he had worked, in what activities he had participated. I knew how startled he had felt at the unruliness and violence of the youngest kids, how hard it was for them to read the simplest sentence and comprehend the simplest story, how exhausted the teachers were

each day. Each entry had ended with a comment that depicted his frustrations. These kids, he often concluded -- many of whom he had come to care for deeply -- had no chance at a future. In many ways, his experience confirmed what he had imagined about the desperate nature of inner city life.

But then he told me something I did not expect.

In one of his entries, he had mentioned in passing that the older brother of one of his kids had come to school. The older brother's manner and style had been nothing short of threatening. Night or day, in the 'Hood or on Hennepin, the older brother indeed embodied the malevolence of the ultimate yuppie nightmare. But what my student hadn't written, and what he was here to tell me now, was a moment which had seemed unnoteworthy, but had subsequently grown for him into significance.

It had happened on the basketball court. Eight-year old "Raymond" had been having a hard day, fighting with classmates, crying all day, refusing to talk about what bothered him, and "Brian" wanted to spend time alone with him, talking with him, playing a fraternal game of one-on-one. At a point during their game, after he lifted "Raymond" high enough to get the ball through the hoop, the child surprised him when he suddenly turned to hug "Brian" tightly about the neck. As "Brian" hugged him as tightly, it was then when he noticed Big Brother watching them both from the corner of the playground. In that moment, for "Brian," the only thing that mattered was hugging and being hugged by this child, without self-consciousness, without fear. In that moment, he also sensed that he had connected with Big Brother, for their common interest was in "Brian's" arms.

It was at this point when I realized that something important had happened, not just with "Brian," but with me as well. Indeed, it was clear that he was becoming a young man who had learned to connect with people through the smallest of gestures, the most quiet of moments. But I got something as well, for in his moment, as he had relayed it to me, I, too, felt a renewed affirmation of hope which highlighted for me the exquisitely profound and symbiotic nature of my profession as a teacher. It was then when I realized just how much a freed spirit gives us all rebirth. In the final analysis, spiritual birth and rebirth of students and teachers, alike, is at the core of an education that values diversity.

Although our college *identity* remains basically Lutheran, Minnesotan, northern European and middle class, we have nevertheless succeeded in creating a diverse college *community*. In these combined traits, there is indeed considerable value. But it is in the very nature of a college campus that we can be no more than a world within a larger world whose rhythms, values and demons are different from our own. We therefore need not endeavor to replicate the fullness of diversity that exists in the larger community, for in doing so, we would be creating a world that is artificial and instilling within our students a false sense of security. Simply put, our task is to embolden our students to venture forth, confront the larger world, reflect on the experience with honesty, and find the words to describe what they feel. This is how we teach our students well. And this, in turn, is how we educators renew ourselves, by keeping our doors and hearts open for the moment when students return to share their precious moments.

- Bill Green, History Department

Some Thoughts on Diversity

by Brad Holt

As we discuss a Vision Statement for Augsburg College, imagining our own ideal college of the future, we seek wisdom and understanding of the variety of viewpoints in our community. These are offered from the perspective that I seek wisdom, rather than dispensing it, that I am on a way to wisdom, and ask you my colleagues to help me see more clearly. I am perhaps going to exaggerate a bit in order to provoke your responses. Therefore I will put my possibly controversial statements in bold, so you can shoot them down or massage them into shape.

1. Two major influences in my life have influenced my thinking on the relation of diversity and Christianity.

Two major life events have especially influenced my thought on this subject. The first was teaching in a theological college in Africa. My view of the world from a North American perspective was challenged and changed by nine years of interactions with Africans in Nigeria. The second was studying feminist views of Christianity after returning to this country. I saw that women have been silenced and their voices, in all their variety, had a right to be heard in church and society. In both of these periods of learning, I was stretched, and the compatibility of these two themes, diversity and Christianity, was affirmed.

2. There are different types of diversity, some desirable at Augsburg and some not.

We desire that many different sorts of people come to Augsburg as students, faculty and staff. We desire diversity of age, gender, class, physical ability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, culture. But we do not desire hardened criminals,

inveterate liars, persons unwilling to learn, sexual predators, drug dealers, etc. These too represent diversity in the human population.

So our task is to define the kinds of diversity we want and why we want them, in relation to the other major themes in the Vision Statement, especially "church connection" and "quality education." I think that it is possible to have all of these together, but we have to be clear about their relationship. It is possible that we could arrive at consensus, but perhaps not unanimity about the relative importance of each of these themes. This consensus is the goal of our total undertaking with these position papers and discussion of them.

3. The term diversity is therefore confusing, and popularly misunderstood.

Diversity is not an end in itself, and we do not value all kinds of diversity. In the minds of some, diversity simply refers to race, and the college is seen as diverse or not, simply on the basis of how many obvious people of color are present. Our racial diversity must be considered in the context of our location. If most of our students are "white Minnesotans" that may have to do with the facts that we draw about 85% of our students from Minnesota and that over 90% of Minnesotans are white. It is not hard to put a school or college down for lack of diversity with unrealistic goals. It would be unrealistic in Minnesota to expect Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans and European Americans to each have an equal number.

4. What we seek when using the term diversity is firstly to welcome a variety of people to this college. Secondly we seek an education which prepares students for the pluralistic world.

Perhaps a better word for what we mean in this regard is "inclusiveness." In seeking to include different peoples, the image is one of open arms, without a filter for only white, middle class students. This implies a curriculum and a faculty which develops attitudes

of mutual respect, understanding, tolerance of disagreement, and joyful celebration of those differences which enrich the whole community.

"Multiculturalism" according to one of its proponents, has two elements: "(1) understanding and valuing one's own cultural heritage, and (2) having respect for and interest in the cultural heritage of members of groups other than one's own." (see "Multiculturalism, Racial Justice, and Community," p.181 in Foster and Herzog, eds., *Defending Diversity: Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives on Pluralism and Multiculturalism* (1994))

The first of these two elements is sometimes forgotten. In my view, it is appropriate to celebrate the Scandinavian heritage of this college while also celebrating other cultures. It is appropriate that we have the Nordic Center along with the Global Center and InterRace on this campus.

There remains much work to be done for us on the faculty to include the voices of women and people of color in our syllabi and class discussions. We have made progress, not only in Theology but in other fields, but it is only gradually that the changes are being made.

5. The roots of Diversity and Multiculturalism can be seen in the Bible.

It was Jesus who went against the norms of his time to care for the sick, preach good news to the poor, discuss theology with women, and eat with sinners. His example, and his parable of the good Samaritan have been powerful forces in our society in shaping the ideals of fairness to all peoples, going beyond the limits of gender and race, and of attention to the poor. The New Testament also teaches that the church is for all peoples, classes, and both genders. (Since they are sinners, the practice of Christians has not met the ideals of the New Testament, so that both church and American society are loaded with racism, sexism, and all kinds of injustice.)

These are values which call for the hearing of marginalized voices, as multiculturalism does. It rightly advocates listening to (i.e. studying) the cultures of all peoples, the critique of all institutions and powers, and the lifting up of the poor by means of education.

6. But diversity can be understood as an ideology, which if carried to its extreme would deny the other values which Augsburg embraces.

There are some clear-thinking people who see that if diversity is our most prominent value, it will mean discarding our commitment to the Christian faith, in favor of a vague word like ecumenical or spiritual. After reading about the multicultural "takeover" at Stanford in 1988, I have come to realize that the acceptance of all peoples, which people of good will favor in the word diversity, can go to radical rejection of the values of Western Civilization by others who favor a certain ideology.

By ideology here I refer to the view that a rigid orthodoxy of belief and behavior should govern the college, forcing students into new racial ghettos. Paradoxically, this ideology is based on a relativist view of truth and a laissez faire view of ethics. By being selective about which cultures it will embrace, the ideology does not advocate a deep serious knowledge of any particular culture or race, but a relativist attitude to all. It advocates free speech only for those who are ideologically correct. It accepts persons of color only if their politics are correct. It does not show the ability to be self-critical. (see Sacks and Thiel, *The Diversity Myth: "Multiculturalism" and the Politics of Intolerance at Stanford* (1995))

The kind of diversity which we favor at Augsburg must fit the nature of the institution, our by-laws and mission statement. The entry of diversity into the mission statement does indeed call for needed changes in the life of the institution, but these changes must not be allowed to uproot the most fundamental commitments of the college, among which its church connection and commitment to quality are two.

7. Augsburg Community needs to diversify its understanding of Christianity.

We need to wake up and smell the coffee when it comes to understanding the faith on which this college was built. It is not simply a European immigrant faith, nor is it simply an aspect of the "dominant culture." Christianity is a global faith which calls for prophetic critique of this and all other dominant cultures. There will soon be more Christians in the southern hemisphere than in the North, more Christians of color than white ones.

In spite of the picture in our chapel and many others like it, Jesus was not a European, and his first followers were not Europeans. The Bible was not written by Europeans. Christianity made its first cultural transformations in the first century when it moved from a Jewish context to a Gentile one. It immediately spread in all directions to Asia, Africa, and Europe.

After several centuries, the Asian and African churches were eliminated or isolated, so that only in Europe did Christianity continue to expand. The faith became acculturated there. Then came a big mistake with tragic consequences. The Europeans decided that there was a necessary link between their own cultures and Christian faith. When they later spread that faith they insisted that new converts to Christianity adopt European culture along with the Good News about Jesus, thus damaging or destroying many indigenous cultures. (Of course there were other important factors in this process of destruction not connected to Christianity.)

Today we are seeing Christianity practiced in a variety of cultures around the world, some ancient, like the Copts of Egypt, the Ethiopian Orthodox, and the Palestinian Arab Christians, and others recent, like the indigenous expressions of African Christian music in South Africa and Tanzania, and Christian art in Japanese, Melanesian, and Yoruba traditions.

For too many of us Christianity has been seen as a right wing ideology which favors the Christian Coalition. This political pressure group has worked against the very values

which many of us Christians espouse. They have made the term Christian problematic for liberal people in ways that it never was before.

8. A radical understanding of Diversity can lead to a "Culture of Disbelief" in a church related college.

Steven Carter, the African American professor of law at Yale, has shown how the general culture of America (the "dominant culture"?) holds religious believers of all kinds up to scorn. Although the vast majority of Americans describe themselves as Christians (about 90%), the cultural leaders are making it impossible for people of any faith to speak about it in a public place. If you are religious you are either a wicked hypocrite or you are on the make, in it for the money.

"Sensitivity" and "comfort" are both good words, but each can be used to exclude public rituals and public conversations about the Christian faith. The culture of Augsburg should continue to be Christian, with chapel, prayers at Baccalaureate, Graduation and other events. Some will argue that such events do not show sensitivity to non-Christians, who may not feel comfortable with them. But if they are replaced with vague teachings which try to embrace all faiths and, the religious center of the college will have been lost, and the identity of the college changed. We welcome all people of good will who can respect the Christian tradition, even if they do not share in it; but that tradition should not be abandoned for the sake of some who do not respect it.

8. Augsburg must not join the many American colleges which have become secularized, on the basis of an appeal to Diversity.

The reasons have been many, as George Marsden told us in his convocation lecture three years ago, but most of the church related colleges in this country have been driven away from the church by government or by professional associations of the faculty.

When faculty are more devoted to their field than to the mission of the college, they will vote to first water down and then eliminate the church connection. It will be surprising to Marsden if we at Augsburg still have a strong commitment to Christianity in 40 years, given the pressures to abandon it.

9. It is the combination of the Church connection, Diversity, Urban location, and Quality which makes Augsburg distinctive.

We should not try to make ourselves over into a new Macalester or Hamline. These colleges barely pay lip service to their church connections. What makes Augsburg special is the combination of these features, not one alone.

Moving away from the church reduces the diversity of colleges available to students, some of whom want to study in a place where Christianity is taken seriously and it is OK to be a person of faith.

10. There is strength in the particular; true tolerance and understanding come in the midst of difference.

The Christian and the Muslim who sit down at the same table to share their beliefs, and to disagree, as well as to discover similarities, are in a position to respect and love each other in their differentness. They can agree that the differences are important, not merely trivial, and still be friends who work together for social justice. But some would relativize their beliefs, saying that all people believe the same thing, whether they realize it or not. Such persons may not have gone deeply into a tradition in order to appreciate others, but merely skim the surface, and do not appreciate the difference that a life lived in relation to God may bring.

11. My vision of Augsburg in 15 years is that it will be a place where the whole community understands and values the college's commitment both to Christianity and to diversity.

There will be many more people of color on campus than there are today. The European Americans will welcome students, faculty and staff of color. There will be more course offerings which either by name or by content deal with the non-European world. There will be about 50 % Lutherans, reflecting the population of Minnesota, among whom will be a number of people of color. (The joy of African Christianity will be noticed among the African students!) The college chapel will draw a significant number of students, faculty and staff for worship each day, in a style which welcomes all, and usually reflects Lutheran and other denominations of Christian tradition.

The Augsburg campus will be a place where people of faith can speak and study together. Being hosted by the Lutheran Church, all will be welcome and a lively discussion will take place among the various Christian denominations and the world religions, together with skeptics and atheists. Because the college is secure in its own moorings, in the Lutheran tradition, it can have the confidence to invite peoples of all faiths and no faith into dialogue.

And it can invite all disciplines and perspectives into conversation about the relevance of the Christian gospel for that field--Literature, Music, Physics, Psychology, Business, etc.. What it cannot agree to is that the conversation about the Christian Gospel should be hushed or put on the back burner by a doctrinaire ideology. By the time of graduation, every student of whatever background is aware of what that Gospel is, and has been introduced to the Scriptures from which it comes and the intellectual tradition which has evolved from it. Every student has been challenged to abandon racism, expand their cultural boundaries, and serve others in the USA and other countries.

Vision Statement, Position Paper:
Diversity

(drafted by Martha Johnson, Associate Professor, Speech/Communication
and Theatre Arts)

I. Accomplishments

Over the past several years, Augsburg has clearly made great strides in changing the college into a more diverse learning environment. Augsburg's leadership and accomplishments in the area of diversity have been recognized in larger academic and funding circles and in the metropolitan community.

Institutional commitment to diversity has been evidenced in many ways, most particularly in: the incorporation of intentional commitment to diversity into the college mission statement; the recruitment and retention of students of diverse backgrounds; the recruitment of persons of color onto the faculty; the creation of support programs for African American, American Indian, Asian American, and Latino students; the creation of a campus-wide Diversity Committee to coordinate diversity issues; the incorporation of gender and diversity issues into the General Education and larger curriculum; creation of the CLASS office; faculty development initiatives, workshops, and retreats.

However as we acknowledge and celebrate these accomplishments, we must examine whether--without significant change--we are prepared for the future.

II. Vision for the Future

Because of Augsburg's many efforts and accomplishments in the area of diversity, the college is in an excellent position to play a pioneer role in the creation of a new model for the multicultural college community of the future. The college must envision, work for and embrace a more pervasive, complex, and interrelated view of diversity, community, and education than it has at present. This view of diversity must be more personal and individual and at the same time more communal, and it must be creatively envisioned and implemented within the context of maintaining the college's ties to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

The following principles should guide our pioneer work in forging a new model for diversity and community:

- Diversity does not preclude unity. Support for diversity must be balanced by a transformation of the larger community so that it more effectively includes diverse individuals and groups. The college can no longer make diversity efforts without new and innovative community building efforts as well, or the result will be isolation and factionalism. Strategies must be developed to identify and create new principles for a strong sense of the larger college community, a community which is a melding, rather than a melting pot. The larger community must seek out ways to reach out to diverse campus groups. The college must search for innovative principles of unity in order to have true community--a community that enfolds the diverse cultural landscape. Diversity does not divide: as in nature it expands and enriches the whole.
- The new model for diversity and community will require a new effort from all diverse campus groups to reach out and find ways to connect with other groups and with the larger campus community.

- Transformation to a multicultural community is dynamic; commitment to diversity is an ongoing process: a community has never "arrived" at multiculturalism.
- A more diverse campus brings educational, social, spiritual benefit to all. Members of each diverse group are unique learning resources for members of any other group.
- A college commitment to diversity will mean an on-going transformation of individual sensibilities and sensitivities. Every individual--every student, faculty, staff, administrator-- will be responsible for creating a richly diverse, interconnected, discerning, culturally sensitive, and unified college community. Each member of the community will be responsible to guard against assumptions and stereotypes, and against the abdication of the responsibility for diversity onto others.
- A strong emphasis in a student's education will be 1. to learn to reach out to others who may be different, to discern heterogeneity within various subgroups, to appreciate and respect differences, yet build bridges; 2. to learn that difference often is an opportunity to learn, an opportunity to see one's values and beliefs in a new light, and to transform oneself for the better through involvement in a dialectic process.
- Diverse members of the college community will be empowered to take leadership roles in diversity/minority issues.
- The college's commitment to diversity is practical and reality based. As stated in the IPC document "Augsburg College: What Is and What May Be:" "...most of the increase in the number of high school graduates over the next decade will be from populations of color..."; and, "By the year 2000, one out of every three students will be a student of color." The college must create a community that attracts, welcomes, supports, and educates a diverse population.
- Given the demographic changes occurring in the United States and given the current thrusts towards a global community, if the college is to prepare students for service and leadership, students leaving Augsburg must be fully prepared to be leaders in a multicultural society.

III. Diversity and the College Mission

- The college's commitment to diversity is related to other key aspects of the college mission: service, high quality educational opportunities, faith and values of the Christian Church, the metropolitan setting.
- All diversity efforts and initiatives will be guided by the college's mission to provide high quality educational opportunities and to strive for academic excellence.
- In the college mission statement, intentional diversity is given equal weight to faith and values of the Christian church. Diversity and Christian values are not in conflict, but are in concert: the Christian values of love, justice and compassion will be at the heart of the college's vision of a multicultural community.
- When issues of diversity appear to be in conflict with Christian values, diverse voices will take part in the collaborative problem-solving process to resolve the issues.
- In order to attract and retain students from diverse religious backgrounds, the college will develop better ways to accommodate these students, while at the same time retaining clear ties to the Lutheran Church.

IV. Some Strategies Needed for the Future

Using the principles above, the college must build on its accomplishments in the area of diversity and with renewed effort seek out new strategic initiatives to expand its support of a diverse college community, particularly in the following areas:

- recruitment, welcoming, inclusion and retention of student, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds in regard to race, culture/ethnicity, religion, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, physical or learning ability, age, language
- expansion and diversification of the curriculum to include more courses that reflect non-European, African American, Asian American, Latino, Feminist, and other perspectives, issues and topics; and more courses covering in-depth aspects of intercultural awareness, communication and interaction
- creation of an inclusive, multicultural, interrelated, unified college community
- search for innovative, more effective student-centered teaching approaches more sensitive and more responsive to a multicultural student body
- planning and implementation of more proactive efforts to make community building and multiculturalism training part of a student's education
- development of ways to motivate every department and program on campus to create an individualized strategic plan for the department or program to be more inclusive in the areas of curriculum, enrollment, teaching methods, student activities, faculty-student and student-student interaction
- continuation and renewal of efforts to reach out to diverse communities in the metropolitan area, to forge new and innovative relationships

V. The Future: Service and Leadership

- By successfully creating an inclusive, multicultural, unified community, Augsburg will become a model for its own students in how to approach the future multicultural society; it will also become a model for other schools and universities.
- Augsburg will become a pioneer in the training of students to be leaders in a multicultural society.
- Augsburg will become a dynamic, progressive college pushing forward and facing the social realities of the next century.

Quote by David Henry Hwang, author of play *M. Butterfly*:

"M. Butterfly has sometimes been regarded as an anti-American play, a diatribe against the stereotyping of the East by the West, of women by men. Quite to the contrary, I consider it a plea to all sides to cut through our respective layers of cultural and sexual misperception, to deal with one another truthfully for our mutual good, from the common and equal ground we share as human beings.

For the myths of the East, the myths of the West, the myths of men, the myths of women--these have so saturated our consciousness that truthful contact between nations and lovers can only be the result of heroic effort. Those who prefer to bypass the work involved will remain in a world of surfaces, misperceptions running rampant..."

Vision: Augsburg/Diversity

Building on its history, its mission and its connection to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Augsburg has laid a foundation upon which it might actualize diversity in all facets of the College.

From its inception, Augsburg purposefully has made a commitment to service to the church and to the community. It, also, was committed to enrolling a student body which was representative of a broad section of the community. Although only males were admitted to Augsburg Seminary, the decision not to be "elitist" but to enroll a student body drawn from farmers, workers and businessmen was unusual in those days. In those days this provided a diverse group. These kinds of decisions became the framework for later decisions which enhanced the College's diversity.

In 1922 women were admitted. Still later, course offerings were expanded, a liberal arts curriculum adopted; the Seminary moved to Luther Theological Seminary; the college was accredited. Augsburg declined an opportunity to relocate and elected to remain located in a neighborhood in the core of Minneapolis, utilizing experiences within its urban location to enhance the classrooms. Today this community is home to persons and families from around the world. Augsburg is located in what might be termed an international community.

Programs such as the Center for Global Education, the Service Learning Program, the Center for Learning and Adoptive Student Services (CLASS), the minority student support programs, Weekend College and the graduate programs (MAL and MSW) have assisted the college toward its goal of being intentionally diverse.

Additional attention needs to be addressed for forward movement in becoming intentionally diverse. Diversity is inclusive rather than exclusive. Some, particularly those who use to have privilege and power, might feel threatened by efforts to become more inclusive; however, if steps are taken to stress the positive for everyone, these feelings/pressures might be alleviated.

The College needs to make a concerted effort to employ administrators, faculty and staff from a broader base of ethnic and cultural groups and persons with disabilities. The benefits of doing this are many fold. Faculty and staff provide students with role models and day-to-day personal contacts which tend to imitate the "real" world, lessening stereotypes. Interaction with persons different from oneself broadens one's perspectives and understandings.

Avenues should be found for expanding faculty and curriculum offerings to be more inclusive. The liberal arts have a western, male focus out of tradition, not necessity. The concept of liberal arts is open to differing perspectives, world views, experiences and thoughts. Faculty needs continued training which is geared to helping them expand their teaching beyond the traditional, to integrate changing thought, approaches and criticism in a respectful way. Much of what is deemed politically incorrect may have to do with the lack of integration of different histories, beliefs, accomplishments, perspective, etc. throughout the curriculum.

To those who might suggest that inclusion of non-western history, for example, is a corruption of the liberal arts, one must reply that it is a corruption of liberal arts to teach one perspective as if it is the only truth.

New technology has rendered us just minutes away from most points on the globe. The Center for Global Education which currently operates on the fringe of the campus, needs to be more prominent in relation to faculty and students. Ways need to be found to make the Center more viable to the total education program of the College. The same can be said for Service Learning. Faculty must receive additional training in effectively revising coursework to include these programs.

Augsburg needs to reconsider how it expends its limited resources; thus, reallocating them where possible to provide for diversity. Networking with other colleges and universities, community organizations, individuals, also are effective ways of acquiring training of faculty and of accessing additional resources.

Currently, Augsburg is an umbrella holding up diversity (Chakolis). The goal for tomorrow should be integration. To feel "welcome" on campus implies one is a guest. To feel "at home" on the campus is to belong.

Mary Lou Williams

