

**RU Engaged 2009-2010**  
**Broadening Our Horizons: Creating an Inclusive Environment**  
**April 27, 2010**

Approximately 27 participants attended the final conversation of the 2009-2010 RU Engaged series in the Owl's Nest on Tuesday afternoon April 27<sup>th</sup>. The session was facilitated by Drs. Jim Newell, DeMond Miller and Christy Faison. Dr. Faison opened the session by providing a summary of the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 series that resulted in input into the University's strategic plan and a newly approved definition of shared governance. She reminded those in attendance that RU Engaged is intended to provide a venue for every member of the Rowan family to have input and share in conversations that affect the future of Rowan. She then summarized the perceptions of campus climate discussed at the last RU Engaged session. While over 80% of the participants felt that Rowan was a comfortable place for all faculty, staff and students prior to the RU Engaged conversations, less than 52% continued to feel that way after sharing in the stories and experiences of students and staff who participated in the sessions.

Dr. Newell then walked the group through an explanation of 'diversity vs inclusivity' and shared the committee's perceptions and observations which included the following:

- 1. The perception of how inclusive we are depends on one's individual experience.*
- 2. The perception of how diverse we are depends on one's individual experience.*
- 3. On the surface things at Rowan University are very good, but some feel that if you scratch below the surface there are things such as "self segregation", "underlying tension", "ostracism" and "exclusion" that are more targeted toward sexual orientation.*
- 4. Sometimes students feel like they are "frozen out" of study groups based on race in many majors and based on gender in certain male dominated majors.*
- 5. The perception is that there is a large underserved Hispanic population in the South Jersey region that is barely touched.*
- 6. SES-Socioeconomic Status- perceived insensitivity in the classroom is an issue for some students.*
- 7. EOF is used as the primary vehicle for recruiting minority students.*
- 8. Members of the GLBT community feel that ostracizing or excluding them is more acceptable than other issues of diversity.*

Dr. DeMond Miller provided reflections on the role of academic privilege (What role does this play in promoting inclusivity?), preconceptions (Who comes to our campus?) and social justice (Is RU committed to social justice?) Small groups seated at tables were then asked to react to a series of questions. The groups were given twenty minutes for discussion, and then tables were asked to report out. A summary of the responses appears below:

1. In light of previous observations and perceptions, what are Rowan University's responsibilities and opportunities?
  - a. To be a safe place
  - b. To promote integration of diversity of student experience outside the classroom
  - c. Through curriculum reflect diversity of the human experience
  - d. Integrate diversity and social justice
  - e. Accessibility
  - f. Open communication and dialogue; institutional leadership and accountability
  - g. Monitor policies
  - h. Survey freshmen and seniors to see what they have gained
  - i. Provide resources, not just lip service
  - j. Review hiring practices
  - k. Make use of residential learning environment, orientation program, student groups
  - l. Faculty/staff modeling 'inclusive' behavior
  - m. Create opportunities through service learning and civic engagement
  - n. How about a diversity minor?
  - o. Make Diversity a Rowan Day topic
  - p. Increase awareness of current programs
  
2. How should Rowan serve the underserved populations in South Jersey?
  - a. Through mentoring programs with RU students and high schools and middle schools to create a pipeline. We also need to connect with community colleges
  - b. Encourage faculty to make more use of technology by putting materials on Blackboard and decreasing costs of purchasing texts
  - c. Have alumni sponsor programs to sponsor a student – to assist with costs and materials
  - d. Expand summer bridge programs to help make students familiar and comfortable
  - e. Conduct surveys and research to determine the needs of those not coming to RU
  
3. How should Rowan become more diverse?
  - a. Through recruitment and retention
  - b. Develop a hiring plan
  - c. A strategic plan which includes an enrollment management component
  - d. Reach out to veterans, disabled, GLBT, commuters, high achieving minorities
  - e. A program to encourage females in engineering, science and math
  - f. Do something to attract Latino students

4. How could Rowan become more inclusive?
  - a. Better coordination and collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs
  - b. Look at the residential vs. commuter population
  - c. Student groups target the same populations in their programming, encourage them to expand their reach
  - d. Collaborate on events
  - e. Through sports – have teams adopt special needs children
  - f. What about an RU Engaged course?
  - g. Take what we are getting from these sessions and implement changes

Dr. Faison concluded the session by thanking all participants. She informed the group that the committee was considering tackling discussions of Rowan's mission statement for upcoming conversations and asked everyone to stay tuned.....