

Kaskaskia College Diversity Awareness Initiative

Kaskaskia College began its Diversity Awareness Initiative in fall of 2008 as one of three active action projects required by Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Kaskaskia College felt this project was important enough to make it one of its three main projects. The project itself is scheduled for completion in August 2010. However, the work of the project does stop in August 2010. The KC Diversity Awareness Initiative must (according to the principles of AQIP) include plans for institutionalizing the work of the project and must become a permanent part of the culture of the college.

The Diversity Awareness Initiative was built upon a strong foundation of diversity awareness already present at Kaskaskia College. Kaskaskia College has a proud tradition that includes an annual Celebration of Diversity event each spring. This event includes an evening of food from different cultures provided by the KC culinary arts program as well as a presentation from either a speaker or performer highlighting diversity. In addition, the college is proud of its annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Event. This event includes a breakfast and a speaker that honors the work of Dr. King. Both events are open to the public as well as the college campus and are two of the most popular and well attended events throughout the year.

Building on the solid foundation of diversity awareness, the Diversity Awareness Initiative has accomplished several other major goals towards institutionalizing diversity awareness in culture of Kaskaskia College:

- Expansion of diversity awareness in New Student Orientation
- Expansion of diversity awareness in New Employee Orientation
- Incorporation of diversity awareness in Student Athlete Orientation
- Campus wide attention to diversity in three college faculty and staff workshops; including a campus wide survey on diversity, break outs sessions to discuss how diversity awareness can be incorporate in an employees' individual work area or department and a speaker on diversity scheduled for a spring 2010 workshop.
- Diversity Awareness training for the Kaskaskia College Board of Trustees and the President's Cabinet with trainers from Chicago, IL
- Diversity training for one lead faculty member and staff member in diversity awareness. These KC employees will continue to lead diversity awareness training for the institution in the future.
- Diversity Awareness Initiative Proposals from faculty and staff for increased awareness action items for them on an individual level or within a department. These proposals ranged from changes in course curriculum to increased exposure to different cultures through the art on our college campus through an Art Club Celebration of Diversity Calendar listing all cultural days of celebration throughout the year.
- Future plans include campus wide training in spring 2010 during a faculty and staff workshop.
- Plans for the future also include a recommendation to the College for a new position on President's Cabinet and College Council to present diversity issues on the Kaskaskia College campus.