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Diversity takes center stage at SXU

SXU's core value of diversity was front and center last week as three different conferences involved faculty, staff, and students in considerations about welcoming and valuing diversity.

On April 1, Saint Xavier University faculty and staff members were among the participants at "Engaging Islam in Chicago Area Catholic Universities and Colleges Today," an inter-institutional conference focused on one aspect of religious diversity. A planning committee from the seven Catholic universities in Chicago and Joliet organized this conference.



On April 1 and 2, faculty and staff from all areas of the University convened for "Reverencing Diversity: Social Justice in Academe," a full day of presentations and interest sessions exploring the topic of diversity from a variety of perspectives. Sheila Wright, president of the Faculty Senate, and Renee Robinson, director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, took the lead in planning this University-wide Professional Development Day.

On April 3, a broad spectrum of student leaders at SXU gathered for "Leaders of Change," a two-hour workshop led by Art Munin, a national consultant on diversity and white privilege in higher education. The workshop facilitated dialogue about campus climate and empowered the participants to create action plans from a student perspective. The Diversity Action Team Student Affairs Subcommittee coordinated this program.

In the weeks preceding these events, the University's Diversity Action Team (DAT) began to assess the progress being made on the diversity goals and plans formulated in spring 2007 by each unit within the University. Hearing early reports on this assessment, Sister Sue Sanders, R.S.M., Ph.D., vice president for University Mission and Heritage and DAT convener, remarked that "it's quite encouraging to hear of efforts completed or underway to achieve the goals various units set for themselves last spring."

Currently, DAT members are compiling a report on these diversity efforts to share with the University community. Watch for it in a future edition of Saint Xavier Today or in your mailbox or via some other appropriate media.

