



Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care: Closing the Gap

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Dr. Louis W. Sullivan and Dr. Joycelyn Elders

On November 1, 2003, UWM's Multicultural Affairs Department, in partnership with the Cream City Medical Society, held a Town Hall Meeting on Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care. The goals of the Town Hall Meeting were: 1) raising awareness about the severity of the disparities in access and quality of health care; 2) discussing strategies for addressing these disparities; and 3) developing a plan of action with policy implications designed to close the gap in health care.

Participants were given the opportunity to share more action ideas for improving the quality and deliverance of health care to reduce these disparities. The audience found the event to be informative and engaging. Some of the suggestions from the audience were:

- Increase access to quality health care.
- Use mass media to educate the public about health care problems and prevention strategies.
- Educate students at a young age about living a healthy lifestyle.
- Continue the dialogue on this subject until the gap has been closed.

“The key to solving racial inequities in health care lies in educating people about how to be healthy, former U.S. Surgeon general Joycelyn Elders told participants in a Milwaukee town hall meeting Saturday. “We can't tolerate ignorance,” Elders said. “We've got to tell them more than to say, ‘No,’” said Elders, “We've got to teach them how to say, ‘No.’”

Amy Hetzner
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 11/02/03

Dr. Cornel West Returns to UWM

In the aftermath of the war in Iraq and last year's Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action, Dr. Cornel West returns to UWM as part of the Distinguished Lecture Series to discuss these pressing topics. Dr. West, a prominent scholar and best-selling author, will appear on **Thursday, April 15 at 5:30 p.m. in the Union Wisconsin Room** to give a lecture entitled “It Matters: Affirmative Action, Race, and World Peace.”

It has been said of Dr. Cornel West that to understand him, you have to hear him speak. Widely acknowledged as an electrifying live personality, West is a lecturer not to be missed. So get your tickets today to see the man who has been called “one of the most authentic, brilliant, prophetic, and healing voices in America.”

Tickets for this lecture may be purchased in advance at the UWM Bookstore, 414-229-4201, or at the door if tickets are still available. Ticket prices are \$15 for students and \$25 for faculty, staff, and the general public. This event is sponsored by the Department of Multicultural Affairs, UWM Union Sociocultural Programming, UWM Union Programming, Harley-Davidson, Milwaukee Urban League, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Milwaukee Idea, UWM Roberto Hernandez Center, UWM Cultures and Communities Program Office, UWM Center for Urban Initiatives and Research, UW System Institute on Race and Ethnicity and Project Equality.

For more information please contact Victoria Pryor at 414-229-3704 or by email pryor@uwm.edu.

The Epiphany is a semesterly newsletter published by the Department of Multicultural Affairs. To make comments or suggestions, please call (414) 229-5566.



UWM Students Attend AMSLC Conference

Twenty-three UWM students and three staff members attended the American Multicultural Student Leadership Conference (AMSLC) on October 24-26, 2003 at UW-La Crosse. Of these students, eleven presented their prose, artwork and research studies, and four moderated at the conference. In addition, four students and one staff member were recognized for their service to the community.

Of the students who submitted papers for competition and subsequently selected to present, 8 won cash out of sixteen awards presented at the conference! This was an incredible accomplishment for our students since the process was juried by an independent panel of judges from UW-Madison. The UWM winners were: **Tomás Garrett** (Second Place in Research/Race & Ethnic Category), **Toni Tavita**

Robinson (Third Place in Research/Race & Ethnic Category), **Deb Becker** (First Place in Research/Open Topic Category), **Leah Adeniji** (Third Place in Research/Open Topic Category), **Lisa Bemus**, Honorable Mention in Research/Open Topic Category), **Damani Sekou Hill** (First Place in Visual Arts Category), **Adebisi Agoro** (Second Place in Visual Arts Category), and **Ewurama Hayford** (Honorable Mention in Creative Writing Category). Six of the eight winners are Ronald E. McNair Scholars.

Task Force on Race and Ethnicity

During Spring 2002, the African American Faculty and Staff Council held several meetings to discuss UWM's goal of becoming a premier urban university. To advance the goal requires the development of a talented workforce reflecting the diversity of the urban community. The result of the discussion was a proposal to establish a task force.

On November 1, 2002, former Chancellor Zimpher commissioned the Task Force on Race and Ethnicity with the charge to identify and investigate the extent to which UWM was providing an accepting and accommodating environment for individuals from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, and to make recommendations to the administration to address the issues and concerns highlighted by the task force.

Over sixty faculty, academic and classified staff and students were either nominated or volunteered to serve on the task force. More than 5,000 current and former employees of UWM were asked to participate in a survey. The work of the Task Force should be completed during the Spring 2004 semester.

Larry G. Martin, Professor in Administrative Leadership, is the chair of the Task Force on Race & Ethnicity.

MAC Proposes Action

On Friday, December 5, 2003, the Multicultural Affairs Council (MAC) met to discuss concerns regarding the recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation of a diverse student body at UWM. The MAC agreed that while we have made some progress over the last ten years, areas for improvement remain.

The following action items are being proposed by the MAC and shared with the UWM community in an effort to assist the campus in closing the gap between students who succeed and those who are less successful in graduating from UWM. Our hope is that these action items will ignite a campuswide dialogue which will result in a strategic plan designed to improve the graduation rates of all UWM students.

MAC Action Items:

- * Collect data to ascertain effect/impact on students participation in pre-enrollment activities, e.g., STAR.
- * Increase the enrollment of admitted students of color to equal that of other students and collect data on reasons why admitted students do not attend UWM.
- * Provide and actively promote opportunities for students to better acquire and manage financial resources to meet education-related needs.
- * Provide and actively promote opportunities for students to better manage time and balance other responsibilities, which impact their academic experience at UWM.
- * Expand the reach of UWM precollege programs to begin working with future UWM students at the elementary school level.
- * Present a report card on progress toward attaining the student goals and action steps in the Milwaukee Commitment at the Chancellor's plenary session annually.
- * Provide an update along with goals, objectives, and expected outcomes for the student success center, as recommended by the Black and Gold Commission.
- * Provide an update along with process goals, objectives, recommendations and timeline for the Task Force on Race and Ethnicity report.
- * Infuse moral and civic learning as an integral part of the learning experience at UWM to fully prepare ethical and committed citizens for the world stage.
- * Include UWM alumni, particularly alumni of color, in the effort to enhance the academic achievement of UWM students.