



DAC Newsletter:

Student Fellowships

Applications are now being received for our DAC Student Fellowship.

The Diversity Action Committee (DAC) Student Fellow is awarded to a current Siena College student whose work will result in a workshop, presentation, conversation, or other interactive format with faculty to address issues of diversity in curriculum, classroom culture, pedagogy, and practices for faculty and relevant staff. The purpose of the DAC student fellow is to empower and cultivate expertise on the part of the student fellow and to foster interactive learning environments among students, faculty, and relevant staff.

The award of **\$500.00** is to support at least one of the following areas:

- * Travel to a conference related to diversity
- * Travel to an exhibition, show, or event related to the above topics
- * Hands-on research on one of the above topics done on or off-campus, which can be translated to this format

Applications are due on Wednesday October 1, 2014.

Applications should include, in 1-2 pages:

1. Project description
2. Idea for interactive outcome project
3. DAC representative with whom student will work as a mentor (reach out if you need help finding one)
4. Two references who can speak to the academic qualities and engagement of the applicant.

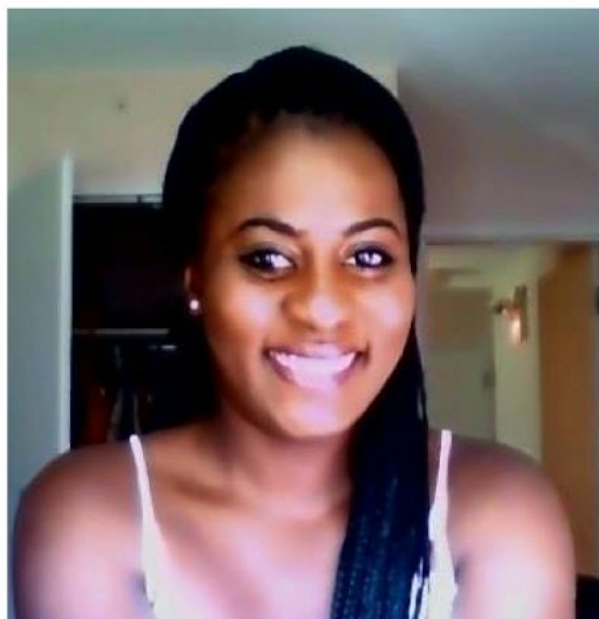
Meet our previous DAC Student Fellows at our April 1 Open Forum. Below, you will hear from Jess Murphy, DAC Student Representative, about the Fellowship that was awarded last semester to Lydie Kenge, for her Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Project. You will also hear from our very first Student Fellow, Luke Lavera, who was awarded a Fellowship to support his participation in Camp Pride. Luke lead a workshop for faculty on how to be more trans* inclusive in the classroom.



The DAC Student Fellowship is a financial award given to a Siena student interested in increasing their knowledge of diversity and promoting change within the Siena community. These students will examine issues related to gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, and/or disability. The award can be used for travel costs to a conference or exhibition related to diversity, or towards hands-on research on diversity.

Serving as a student representative on DAC, I have become more aware of the importance of and issues concerning diversity at Siena, and think opportunities like the DAC Fellowship are integral to creating change on campus.

This year, Lydie Kenge was awarded the DAC Student Fellowship for her Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service project. The mission of this project was to bring together a diverse group of individuals and institutions across the Capital Region, as well as the Siena College community, in a collaborative day of service and empowerment that would embody and celebrate the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. The day consisted of groups of students from Siena College, as well as local middle and high schools, going out into the community and engaging in meaningful service at various sites such as Mercy House, Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless, and The Ronald McDonald House. Upon their return to campus, students participated in a reflective workshop in which there were discussions involving diversity, both in general and specific to the community and the sites visited prior to the workshops.



These workshops served as an interactive and safe learning environment for both Siena students and younger students from Albany, fulfilling the purpose of the DAC Student Fellowship. The fellowship provided Lydie with the opportunity to see her project come alive, and the opportunity to promote diversity on campus as well as in the community. It is important that students have these opportunities to engage in inter-group dialogue with their peers because it allows them to communicate across cultural barriers and celebrate their differences through learning, conversation, and better understanding.



With the fellowship granted by the Diversity Action Committee, I was able to pay for my travel expenses when attending Camp Pride at Vanderbilt University last summer. Camp Pride is a camp program run by Campus Pride, which trains student leaders to help their schools to be more LGBTQ friendly and welcoming. The training consists of workshops, program ideas, resources, and a sense of a strong community. At camp, everyone's identities were respected and everyone felt welcomed, and in a perfect world, all colleges and universities should be the same way. I was the second student Siena College has sent, and it is something we will continue to find funding for in the years to come.

From Camp Pride, I was able to develop a presentation on how to be more Trans* inclusive in the classroom, which I offered to faculty in February. In other words, how can we build a community that welcomes everyone's gender identity and respects every individual here at Siena? It is important to respect everyone's gender identity by respecting their gender pronouns and speaking in a gender-neutral way when we are not told by the individual their gender identity or gender pronouns. This helps in making the individual feel welcomed into the conversation and prevents them from feeling shut down. It is also important for faculty and staff to push for changes on our campus so that students as well as employees feel that their identities are being validated.

As a Franciscan institution it is our duty to embrace diversity in all kinds of ways and by being welcoming to Trans* identified individuals, we are doing the work that Saint Francis would want us to do. Changes like gender neutral single use bathrooms around campus, letting students use their preferred name when registering for classes and their student ID card, among other things, will increase Trans* awareness on our campus and also help Trans* identified individuals feel like their identity is confirmed at our institution. Being a Student Fellow of the Diversity Action Committee to me means being part of changes to come—changes that will bring our Siena community to be more inclusive and more welcoming to all of its members.

PLEASE CONSIDER APPLYING FOR THE FELLOWSHIP!

QUESTIONS? Contact Fanny Söderbäck or Laurie Naranch, Co-Chairs of DAC