As I reflect upon this academic year, I continue to be impressed by the level of support, commitment and passion that so many of our colleagues have in regard to making KU a more inclusive campus community. There are so many that go about their daily work — largely unnoticed — that make KU a very special place.

I am pleased at the initial progress we have made from the Office of Diversity & Equity. We revamped and enhanced the D&E website, established two monthly e-newsletters (Diversity Outlook and La Visión), supported two established diversity councils and witnessed the establishment of two others which now meet on a monthly basis. Created an ad hoc committee — Diversity Coordinating Committee, and initiated the Difficult Discussions pilot program. Met monthly with the Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship committee — which resulted in the development of guidelines and selection criteria and a web presence on the rich tradition of this prestigious appointment. The office sponsored the Big 12 Diversity Officers meeting in the fall; as well as this spring. Assisted in the planning and organization of the Tilford Conference hosted by KU that had a record attendance, assisted in the launching of the En Español website, supervised our half-time recruitment coordinator in Garden City, KS, assisted in the establishment of the Hispanic Alumni Chapter at KU, helped coordinate the first Community College Multicultural Leadership Symposium, and currently working with a core group of faculty, administrators and staff; along with University Relations on the development of a new video for the recruitment of new faculty and staff.

In many respects, this year was designed to create a foundation that the office can now begin to build upon for the campus community. There continue to be many other areas that we collectively need to begin exploring that will strengthen our campus. For example, we will begin to work with academic units and other entities across campus on identifying best practices, as well as areas to strengthen in the areas of diversity and equity.

I have been asked to continue to serve as the interim for the 2010-11 academic year and I look forward to working with all of you in this capacity.

As always, thank you for your words of encouragement and most importantly, your continued active and engaged support.
DIVERSITY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Last October, KU was the host institution for the annual Tilford Conference (participants from the Regent Schools) which saw a record number of attendees. During the institutional breakout sessions – colleagues from KU determined that there is a need to coordinate and communicate in a more efficient and effective manner. Within that spirit, this lead to the establishment of a core group of individuals from the Lawrence campus, KUMC and Edwards to begin exploring and learning what KU currently offers under the umbrella of diversity. The group met 3 times after the Tilford Conference.

A comprehensive illustrative list has resulted from this work. At this point, we have identified the following categories:
1) Offices/Centers
2) Programs
3) Events
4) Outreach
5) Organizations/Councils

The next phase will be to create a web-based presence. Clearly, it will take some time to get this document into a user-friendly system. This work will provide the KU community an illustrative portrait of the multiple offerings that KU currently provides and hopefully will serve us to be more efficient and effective in the future.

TAKING THE NEXT STEPS

As a result of the recently completed pilot project the next steps will be to train a select group of staff members who will then serve as facilitators for training additional staff members during the next academic year on the modules of the Difficult Discussions program. Steve Hillmer, Professor in the School of Business, and Kathleen Ames-Oliver, from HR/EO, will offer the Difficult Discussions to faculty during the fall semester. In addition, we are pleased to announce that we have established an Interactive Theatre Troupe that will be performing at different times during the next academic year – on controversial topics/issues that may occur in our classrooms, labs or studios; as well as perform scripts about the workplace environment. Plans are to unveil the Interactive Theatre Troupe at the Teaching Summit in August. The Troupe will be directed by Professor Delores Ringer in the department of Theatre and Film.

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF DIVERSITY: A SYNOPSIS

In the spring 2010 issue of New Directions for Institutional Research is a new collection of studies that suggest the success of minority college students and students’ perception of race relations on their campuses are strongly influenced by factors that actually have little direct connection with ethnicity or race. One study concludes that students’ choice of academic major plays a greater role than their race in determining how much discrimination they perceive on campus. Another study cited focuses on a campus where white students are outnumbered, concludes that high minority enrollments do not necessarily lead to increased perception of tolerance. A third study, examining the educational progress of freshmen at several institutions, concludes that first-generation college students experience some events on the campus differently than do other students. For example, they appear not to reap the same educational gains from out-of-classroom interactions with faculty members as do their peers with at least one college-educated parent. The journal issue, titled Diversity and Educational Benefits was edited by Serge Herzog, director of institutional analysis at the University of Nevada, Reno.

LANGSTON HUGHES VISITING PROFESSORS

2010 Langston Hughes Visiting Professor Adam Banks from Syracuse University has taught this spring in the Department of English at KU and gave a lecture on February 25th.

Photo provided by KU University Relations

We are pleased to announce the appointment of the 2011 Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship to Clarence Lang from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Department of African, African American Studies.

The Diversity & Equity website continues to grow.

- Message from the Chancellor
- Provost’s Statement
- Upcoming Events
- News
- Partners, Programs/OFFICES & CENTERS
- National Diversity Links
- Contact Us

If you have any suggestions to add to the website, please contact the D&E office.

LINKING DIVERSITY IN SCIENCE

The Office for Diversity in Science Training (ODST) is associated with several federally-funded programs at the University of Kansas and Haskell Indian Nations University.

Their website is available at: http://www.ku.edu/~odst/