

Objective Three: Develop multicultural skills to work more effectively with college students of diverse backgrounds.

Activity 1: Imago Dei (Azusa Pacific University's Diversity Training)

Objective:

Attend Imago Dei, a diversity training workshop at Azusa Pacific University, to develop multicultural skills in order to work more effectively with college students of diverse backgrounds.

Description of Activity:

Imago Dei took place on March 6-7, 2008 in the Los Angeles Pacific College room at Azusa Pacific University. Imago Dei is a diversity training workshop that occurs several times each academic year. There were approximately 15 faculty, staff and graduate students in attendance at the two day workshop. The workshop explores the Biblical view of diversity, Imago Dei, which means Image of God, through activities, lectures and media.

Reactions and Feelings:

I admit I was not very excited about going to the Imago Dei diversity training. However, I was pleasantly surprised and ended up really enjoying the workshop.

When the seminar first started I looked around the room to observe who was in the workshop with me. Two of the 15 participants were non-Caucasian. Approximately half of those in attendance were under the age of 35, with most of us being in the College Student Affairs program. The other half of the participants were easily over 45. Of the 15 people, 3 were men. Seeing all the older women in the room, all I could think about was how prejudice these women probably are and how some feelings were going to get hurt over the next couple of

days. I was so very wrong! From issues of race to sexuality, these women are some of the biggest advocates for diversity on campus. Several of the women shared of issues within their own families that had caused them to seriously re-think their prejudices. One, in particular, stuck with me. One woman shared that her best friend's son (who was like a son to her) had been afraid to tell her that he was gay because he feared she would not want anything to do with him. She shared that she had never completely understood how love could overcome prejudice until that moment. She went to this young man and shared with him that no matter what she loves him. This story touched me so much because similar situations have happened to me with the high school students I work with. They tell me their deepest secrets (they are gay or they are addicted to cocaine) and all I can do is see this precious child of God sitting in front of me, begging to not be rejected. I love the idea of Imago Dei-viewing diversity through God's perspective. God created each of us uniquely, in His image. Who are we to say one is better or worse than another?

The other activity that really impacted me was the "Tale of O". First we watch a video about O's (minorities) living in a world of X's (majority culture). The video itself was not too impressive, but the point got across. After the video we filled out a worksheet and discussed it with a small group. The four boxes we had to fill in were: Times I felt like an O, Time I felt like an X, Strategies for Empowering O's, and Strategies for O self-empowerment. The group of three I was in talked and talked and talked. We shared stories of feeling like an O, feeling guilty for being an X, and times when we have been both the X and the O at the same time. I do not remember all the stories, but I walked away from this activity encouraged and empowered.

Of course there is always room for improvement, but overall I feel this diversity training is an asset to the APU community. I hope this workshop continues to be available to faculty and staff, so our university can continue to grow in the area of diversity.