

# Multiculturalism at Kalamazoo College: Goals

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**Goal #2:** To offer programs and training activities that focus on the multiple layers of multicultural development: awareness of cultural differences, accurate knowledge about cultural differences, and the acquisition of skills to enable individuals to function comfortably in the environment without losing his or her own cultural identity.

A 1991 Harris survey of students' attitudes on human rights and racial relations reported a major finding that students are interested in learning more about their own and other racial/cultural groups. Students at Kalamazoo College have supported this position. This cross-cultural knowledge is generally gained through interaction or contact with persons who are members of cultural groups other than one's own. Some sociological literature suggests, however, that most Whites are raised with an idea of African-Americans (and presumably other ethnic or cultural minority groups) that fosters and maintains separation and distance between the races based on culturally learned assumptions attached to stereotypes (Carter, 1990). It is therefore imperative that the entire College community, with emphasis on those in the numeric majority, is provided the opportunity to participate in a variety of cultural experiences that both challenge these assumptions and expand the amount of accurate information related to culturally learned assumptions.

Because individuals are in varying stages of their racial/cultural identity development, a "one-size-fits-all" approach is neither realistic nor advisable. Multiple, on-going, developmental programming and activity needs to occur. Such developmental programming should address awareness issues, knowledge issues, and skill-building issues

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