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MBC Celebrates Diversity

The Mary Baldwin College community values diversity in its myriad forms. By embracing the vast range of human experience and perspective, we learn about our world and ourselves. The MBC Statement of Inclusive Community is the guiding principle in the college's commitment to multicultural understanding, and it is a critical part of many college ceremonies such as Charter Day and New Student Convocation. This pledge embodies our commitment to sustain a rich, supportive, multicultural living and learning environment:

We, the community of Mary Baldwin College, strive to celebrate humanity in all its wondrous and complex variation. Because we value diversity, it is our mission to sustain a community where all may flourish. We are safe to embrace our shared experiences and our differences. To this end, we treat all with respect and compassion.

- President Pamela Fox created and guides the President's Council on Diversity and Inclusive Community, an interdepartmental group that meets regularly to discuss ways to ensure that MBC is truly a place where all may flourish.
- One in three of Mary Baldwin's residential students is a member of an American ethnic minority (33%): African American, Latina, Asian-American, and others.
- About 2% percent of our students are international and have come to us from a range of countries such as Chile, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, Kenya, Ireland, Myanmar (Burma), Mexico, Nigeria, Panama, Romania, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, South Korea, Venezuela, and Vietnam, among others.
- Mary Baldwin appreciates a longstanding exchange program with Doshisha Women's College in Kyoto, Japan. The Doshisha-MBC exchange provides a truly integrated experience with intensive language and cultural studies, and social immersion.
- Many faculty members have international roots and, as citizens of the MBC community, share the culture and traditions of those places with us. They hail from Brazil, Bulgaria, Cyprus, El Salvador, India, Malaysia, and Peru, among others.
- The college's curriculum reflects the world's diversity with minors in African American Studies, Asian Studies, and Women's Studies, and more. Minority students excel at Mary Baldwin and include achievers such as Carnell Cherry '03, who graduated with the highest grade point average in her class and Giannina Garces '02, who as a junior was named a Gates Millennium Scholar. Ethnic minorities are well represented on the Deans and Honors lists and at scholarship awards banquets.
- At some point during four years at Mary Baldwin, 40% of its residential students hold one or more of the 250 leadership opportunities on campus. Minority students have been president of the Student Government Association, Honor Council chair, leaders of honor societies, and are active in every arena of campus life. Seven of the last 11 recipients of the President's Award (student leadership award) have been a student of color.

- Events that celebrate diversity and highlight traditions of distinct cultures contribute to the college's tapestry of experiences and knowledge. A few of these are:

Ajani: A ceremony to recognize Mary Baldwin students who have shown extraordinary commitment to creating a multicultural campus community.

Las Posadas: A traditional Latin American celebration that commemorates the night Mary and Joseph sought shelter for the birth of Jesus. Mary Baldwin's Las Posadas moves around campus and encompasses celebrations of Chanukah, Ramadan, and Chinese New Year.

Kwanzaa: An African-American celebration highlighting seven principles through song, dance, storytelling, and drumming. At MBC, the traditional celebration of harvest 'first fruits' is symbolized in our recognition of first year African-American students.

- Mary Baldwin offers creative programs for American ethnic minorities such as the Ida B. Wells learning community for new students, Project SOAR (Survival Opportunities and Resources — an African American and Latina student orientation program), Big Sista/Little Sista, and Umoja House.
- All students are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to study abroad, which is an important step in the Mary Baldwin College Advantage (www.mbc.edu/admission/spotlight/mbca.asp). Recent travels have included educational trips to Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Mexico, and South Africa.
- The roster of student clubs and organizations also demonstrates the college's cultural variety. Black Student Alliance, African Student Collective, Caribbean Student Association, Latinas Unidas, and Kuumba Players are a few of the student-inspired groups people can join to learn about, express, and celebrate multicultural awareness — and express pride in their ethnic heritage. A listing may be found online: www.mbc.edu/student/AAMA/minorityclubs.asp.
- The Office of African American and Multicultural Student Affairs provides support for students of color and promotes programs that encourage cross-cultural understanding. The office strives to engage the college community in discussions concerning diversity and offers guidance and direction regarding racial sensitivity, equity, and ethnicity. One important measure of its success is increased retention of students of color — and the feeling of acceptance felt by the students it nurtures.