

Bonace: Administration supportive in an 'invisible' way

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The survey, released in February 1995, found the climate at WSU to be intolerant of gay, lesbian and bisexual students.

The report documented results of focus group meetings made up of volunteer students, faculty and administrators at WSU, revealing that homosexuals were best tolerated when they kept their sexual preferences secret. The report also noted the "perceived lack of support for gays and lesbians from faculty and administrators."

WSU has taken measures to combat problems related to sexual harassment and minority discrimination, but it has been more difficult for administrators to express support for gays and lesbians.

Administrators last year discussed asking the Public Employees Benefits Board of Washington State to extend benefits to unmarried domestic partners, including same-sex partnerships such as bonace's, but no one from WSU brought the issue up at the board's hearing in January.

"The theme is to be supportive, but in an invisible way," said Valerie Jenness, a WSU sociology professor and co-author of last year's survey.

WSU does have anti-discrimination statements that include sexual orientation, and ASWSU approved a petition last December to grant committee status to GLBA.

"Our commitment is to treat all of our faculty

and staff and students equitably," said Geoff Gamble, WSU provost. "It doesn't matter what categories they're in."

Regardless of the administration's views, bonace is still leaving - and no one has been selected to fill her position as director of GLBA. An advisory board meeting is planned for Tuesday with Ernestine Madison, vice provost for human relations and resources, to discuss recommendations for filling the position.

"I want to facilitate an easy transition for the students in our program," said bonace, who hopes to be involved in the decision.



Staff photo by Shinichi Sugiura
bobbi bonace is leaving WSU.

New technique enhances language instruction

By Brooke McKenzie
The Summer Evergreen

People pointing and staring may make some people uncomfortable, but it's all part of communication.

In the fall, students will begin to use new techniques in the study of foreign language.

Students will use new technology, developed by Carolyn Fidelman, project director, in observing the body language used by native speakers.

The method, called Face to Face with Change, is based on method acting, which uses elements of communication different than what is taught using a book.

The technology allows students to access computer labs with equipment such as laser disks connected to computers showing video clips of people engaged in conversation.

Students may utilize the technology to their benefit and analyze conversation. The computer may be manipulated so that students can examine certain tones or speeds in the conversation.

Students who use these methods observe conversations of native speakers and their body language. Gestures people use include gazes and distances between parties while conversing.

The program was developed because of the insufficient technology used in the past.

Many people are required to learn a foreign language, but give up because they do not achieve proficiency in the language, Fidelman said.

Many students have no real desire to know the people of that culture, she said.

In everyday conversation, people use body language unconsciously and this has a tremendous influence on the understanding of the language, Fidelman said.

She said there was a study in 1990 that indicated 5 percent of Americans who take foreign languages do not go the country where

the language is spoken.

People who visit the country of study benefit and add to their understanding of the language by interacting with the people, Fidelman said.

Previous teaching methods were not as effective because they were using the written language instead of spoken, she said.

One dilemma for students who do not understand the differences in body language is people may be offended by cultural differences.

For example, the Germans lock gazes when they talk and they point their fingers. Americans may interpret these signals as offensive.

"This new method humanizes people in other countries, allowing students to understand these differences," Fidelman said. "It shows that in a way, we are all the same."

The software that will be implemented are in the French and German languages. In the future they hope to create a program in Spanish, she said.

Equipment and materials for the new program cost \$18,000 and was paid for by a grant out of the fund for the improvement of post-secondary education, a division of the U.S. Department of Education.

A clause in the grant stipulates that the WSU Foreign Language department will report their results to conferences. "Since we have gotten the grant, we have agreed to use the equipment and share the results encouraging the use at other institutions," Warren Roby, director of the language program, said.

The program allows students to incorporate techniques used by native speakers while learning the inflections of speech. For example, voices are raised in questions or arguments.

Cassette tapes were previously used for instruction, but these didn't incorporate things such as body language.

The conversations featured in the software are between a variety of different combinations of people, and this greatly influences how peo-

ple interact, Roby said.

"The beauty of the program is that it will be used for beginning and intermediate levels of foreign language students, and we feel this will give them a good foundation in the language so they can speak it better," Roby said.

To train teachers to implement the equipment, Fidelman taught foreign language classes, allowing the professors to learn how to use the new techniques, this was not only a benefit to the students, but also for the teachers, Fidelman said.

After a week, the students evaluated the program and had never experienced this kind of teaching before, Fidelman said.

One important part of the training is that the teachers work closely

with the software so they know which to use, and what conversations fit into their course work, Roby said.

The programs show inflection which is valuable in learning the rhythm of language, and tone changes when asking questions. These vary in different cultures.

In the past, the students had no desire to meet people from that culture for reinforcement, which is incredibly important, Fidelman said. This contributes greatly to cultural understandings, because meanings are different in other cultures.

There is no other software program like this available. There are other texts for this kind of study which show gestures, but this is very trivial, she said.

The laser disks, and on-screen video show native speakers in natural speech, nothing is staged, Roby said.

When the program is implemented, it is unknown how long students will need to use the lab. In the beginning of the semester teachers will use the equipment in their classes, and later on students may just use the lab, Roby said.

"We have had a good response to the program so far," he said. "Students in past semesters were very enthusiastic and wished they could have used it while they were taking classes," Roby said.

This technology is important because it can launch discussions within classes on cultural differences and how people think, he said.

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