



# 2023-2024 Annual Report



**PSU** **IDEA**  
INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & ACCESS  
**CENTER**



## 2023-2024 Annual Report

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## Dear Colleagues,

It is my immense privilege to share the second annual report from the IDEA Center. Year two has been filled with many wonderful accomplishments as we've built upon the foundation from our first year. I am proud of all the incredible work we've accomplished together over the past year and look forward to the continued work of advancing inclusion, diversity, equity, and access at Plymouth State University.

In this report you will find information about The IDEA Center, The 2022-2027 Strategic Plan diversity goals, highlights from Year Two, progress made on our new Diversity & Equity Plan, IDEA Center enrollment updates, IDEA Center persistence and retention updates, IDEA Center engagement updates, and what we are looking forward to in the year ahead. This report is meant to provide an overview, not an exhaustive list of information. If you have questions about the information found in this report, please contact me directly.

With much gratitude,



Alberto Ramos, M.A.  
Chief Diversity Officer and Director of Inclusion,  
Diversity, Equity, and Access



*The vision of  
The IDEA Center  
is to realize a  
community that  
values inclusion  
and diversity in  
all forms*

## About the IDEA Center

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### **PSU Diversity and Community Goal Statement**

Foster an inclusive community that attracts and supports diverse members and develops equitable approaches to education.

### **Mission**

The mission of The IDEA Center is to support belonging, success, and empowerment for students and employees across diverse identities and experiences at Plymouth State University and beyond.

### **Vision**

The vision of The IDEA Center is to realize a community that values inclusion and diversity in all forms, practices equity-mindedness, fosters open and constructive dialogue, and improves access throughout institutional policies and practices.

### **Priorities**

1. We ensure that inclusion, diversity, equity, and access are central to the University's mission, vision, and values.
2. We serve the campus community and surrounding communities in ways that bring people together, not apart.
3. We center the perspectives of students from historically under-served backgrounds.
4. We collaborate with areas across campus in enrolling, supporting, and graduating students from historically under-served backgrounds.
5. We partner with faculty to develop and integrate pedagogy and curriculum that further inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.
6. We support Human Resources in recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty and staff from historically under-served backgrounds.
7. We offer education and consultation that promote intercultural humility, intergroup dialogue, and strategic diversity planning.
8. We assess our campus climate regularly and help the University adjust if and when necessary.



Diversity Scholars Cohort 2, August 2023

## Strategic Plan Goals 2022-2027

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**Strategic Goal 1:** Establish a successful IDEA Center that engages the campus community

**Strategic Goal 2:** 15% increase in undergraduate underrepresented-minority students

**Strategic Goal 3:** 5% improvement in retention of undergraduate underrepresented-minority students

**Strategic Goal 4:** 3% improvement in fall to spring persistence for first-year underrepresented minority students by Fall 2025 compared with Fall 2022

**Strategic Goal 5:** 6% improvement in 6-year graduation rates for undergraduate underrepresented-minority students

**Strategic Goal 6:** Increase the percentage of underrepresented-minority faculty and staff by 3%

**Strategic Goal 7:** Improve the campus climate for diversity, equity and inclusion

# Highlights from Year Two

**14%**

increase in first time BIPOC student enrollment

**\$5,000**

in grant funds received

**49**

different events sponsored or co-sponsored

- New first time Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, (BIPOC) student enrollments increased by 14 percent.
- Retention for new first time BIPOC students improved by 4 percent.
- The IDEA Center participated in 22 recruitment events with our Admissions team this year which was a 450% increase from the previous year.
- We hosted a variety of interfaith initiatives through a partnership with Interfaith America.
- Our Diversity Scholars program was expanded from a one semester program to a four-year program and had 24 students admitted to Cohort 2.
- 50 students volunteered with the IDEA Center and 8 students were employed as either IDEA Ambassadors or IDEA Assistants.
- We received \$5,000 in grant funds for various initiatives this past year.
- 36 Diversity Education sessions were offered for campus with approximately 888 attendees and new partnerships were formed with the Lakes Region Community College and White Mountains Community College.
- We sponsored or co-sponsored 49 different events that engaged more than 1900 attendees, more than doubling our attendance numbers from the previous year.
- 26 members served on our IDEA Council this past year versus 17 members the previous year and established their first set of bylaws, drafted a new Equity Audit Tool for reviewing university policies, and drafted a new IDEA Glossary of Terms to serve as a resource for the campus community.
- We hosted our first annual Excellence in Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Awards, which was an expansion from our first iteration of a graduation celebration to include all members of the campus community.
- A new partnership was formed with the Lakes Region Community College.
- Partnerships with NH Business Review and 603 Diversity Magazine.

# January 2024-May 2026

## Diversity and Equity

### Plan Progress

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Plymouth State University has taken intentional steps to elevate attention to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. In May of 2023, The Center for Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice was renamed the IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) Center. This new name positions PSU to focus on efforts that promote access and opportunity for students and employees from diverse backgrounds. Based on the Institutional Diversity and Community Goals and subsequent goals, The IDEA Center will focus on the following action steps for the next two years:

**1 Action Step 1:** Increase IDEA Center presence with Enrollment Management at strategic college fairs and school visits to increase diverse student enrollments.

*Strategic Goals Served: 2*

Progress: The IDEA Center staff have participated in 22 strategic recruitment events, up from 4 events in the previous year. This is a 450% increase.

**2 Action Step 2:** Implement The Equity Project to focus on reducing equity gaps in retention, persistence, and timely graduation for historically underrepresented student groups.

*Strategic Goals Served: 3, 4, and 5*

Progress: The Equity Project Team began convening in September 2023 and is comprised of 11 faculty and staff members who meet monthly to address strategies to reduce equity gaps.

**3 Action Step 3:** Focus on inclusive hiring practices to diversify our staff and faculty.

*Strategic Goals Served: 6*

Progress:

- Alberto continues to serve as the affirmative action officer.
- A full-time faculty search process was established in the 2022-2023 Academic Year to include Alberto's review as a part of the process for all full-time faculty searches. That process was updated this year and continues to apply to all full-time faculty searches.
- Alberto will also be involved with some staff leadership searches as well.



Multicultural Fair, November 2023

**4 Action Step 4:** Focus on events, programs and initiatives that improve the campus climate for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

*Strategic Goals Served: 7*

Progress:

- The IDEA Center held numerous programs to implement this action step. Please refer below for data on IDEA Center sponsored programming.
- Paige is now officially an advisor for all student organizations that are identity-based.

**5 Action Step 5:** Conduct an equity audit of all University policies to promote equity-mindedness across the campus community.

*Strategic Goals Served: All*

Progress: Members of the IDEA Council and Equity Project group drafted an Equity Audit Tool that will be shared out with the campus. Review of unit policies will begin during the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

**6 Action Step 6:** Continuous improvement and assessment of existing IDEA programs.

*Strategic Goals Served: All*

Progress: All Diversity Education sessions have been evaluated using Qualtrics data. With more than 91% of participants expressing positive feedback.



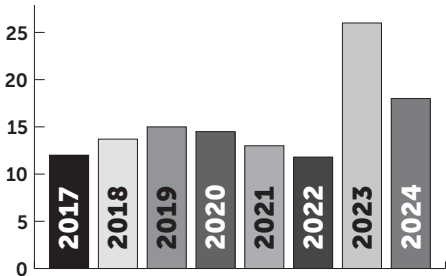
# IDEA Center Enrollment Update

## Enrollment for BIPOC students

From Fall 2017-Fall 2022, our DEI enrollments for new first time historically underrepresented-minority students have had slight positive and negative variations, averaging between 11.8% and 15%. In Fall 2023, we saw a significant increase of more than 12%. This year, we are projecting that number to be approximately 18%. While that number is lower than the previous year, the IDEA Center had a 450% increase in the number of outreach events we were involved with compared to the previous year.

## Historical data from Fall 2017-Fall 2023

- Fall 2017: 12%
- Fall 2018: 13.7%
- Fall 2019: 15%
- Fall 2020: 14.5%
- Fall 2021: 13%
- Fall 2022: 11.8%
- Fall 2023: 26%
- Fall 2024: 18% (projected)



Total enrollment numbers and percentages for BIPOC undergraduate students continue to increase. In Spring 2024, those numbers were approximately 15% of the total student body, about 472 students. In Fall 2024, those numbers will be close to 16%, about 511 students.



Empower Hours led by an IDEA Ambassador, September 2022

# IDEA Center Persistence and Retention Update

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The Fall 2022 cohort of BIPOC students had the highest retention numbers since the Fall 2017 cohort. Persistent rates for BIPOC students from fall to spring for the Fall 2023 cohort were also the highest they've been in the previous four years.

## **Retention Initiatives from Fiscal Year 2024:**

- Diversity Scholars program: This program grew to a four-year program and persistence for the 2023 cohort was 92% versus 83% for the previous year's cohort.
- We revamped our Social Justice Leadership program to become two different IDEA Center positions, IDEA Ambassadors and IDEA Assistants, allowing younger students to be involved.
- Paige became an official advisor for all identity-based student organizations including the Asian Student Union, Best Buddies, Black Student Union, Latine Student Union, and the Queer Student Union.

## **Fall 2017-Fall 2022 retention rates for new first time BIPOC Students**

- Fall 2017: 62.8%
- Fall 2018: 52.3%
- Fall 2019: 59.2%
- Fall 2020: 53.6%
- Fall 2021: 56.3%
- Fall 2022: 60.4%

## **Fall 2019-Fall 2023 fall to spring persistence rates for new first time BIPOC Students**

- Fall 2019: 88.3%
- Fall 2020: 75.5%
- Fall 2021: 84.1%
- Fall 2022: 86.4%
- Fall 2023: 89.8%

# IDEA Center Campus Engagement Update

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The IDEA Center sponsored or co-sponsored 49 different events with more than 1600 attendees between August 2023-May 2024.

## **Highlighted Events Included:**

- An Outside Perspective with Quinci Worthey
- Art for Change
- Advise for Girls with GNAR (Girls Not Acting Right)
- Be True to Yourself with Paul Brogan
- Creating a Voice for the Voiceless with Rashida Mohamed
- Empower Hours led by our IDEA Ambassadors
- Excellence in IDEA Awards and Graduation Celebration
- DiversiTea
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities TWP project showcase
- Interfaith Dinner
- Insightful Expressions
- Movie Nights in partnership with Student Life
- Multicultural Fair
- The Road Less Traveled with Associate Provost Dr. Lourdes B. Aviles
- Together at the Table, Dinner with Interfaith America
- Trivia Nights
- Wisdom Keeping: Abenaki Stories & Storytelling traditions with Anne Jennison
- Women's Herstory Month with The Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Council
- Vigil for Peace and Healing

## **Brave Space**

Two separate cohorts of Brave Space were offered in Fall 2023, and Spring 2024. Brave Space is a program where faculty and staff meet weekly over six weeks to discuss topics related to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. This past year, the focus was on interfaith dialogue & worldview diversity.

- 16 faculty and staff participated in a Brave Space cohort this year.
- 12 faculty and staff successfully completed a Brave Space cohort with many of them developing their own interfaith action plans as a result.

*“College campuses are microcosms of American culture where we must aspire to respectful pluralism.”*

### **Feedback from Brave Space Program Participants**

“I was drawn to the theme of interfaith bridge building because our world is full of conflict, and religion is so often at the root. The book and group discussions helped me better understand the history of religious conflict in the United States. I found it oddly comforting to be reminded that the U.S. has a long history of such conflict, and we’ve found our way through periods of intense discord many times before. The weekly meetings were an opportunity to practice interfaith dialog: Our group comprised many faiths and philosophies. The respectful exchanges were excellent practice for the conversations I and my student workers now try to embrace during our Writing Center work. College campuses are microcosms of American culture where we must aspire to respectful pluralism. The course gave me experience in navigating the difficult conversations we need to have in a nation where every voice counts.”

*– Jane Weber, director of the Writing Center*

“During the 2024-2025 academic year, I participated in the Brave Space reading and discussion group. It was a great experience! Our sessions were deftly facilitated by Paige Paradise and Kate Neal. It was nice to meet staff and faculty that I had never had the chance to speak with before, and to talk honestly about our own worldviews and experiences with religious diversity in our lives. Everyone came from such different backgrounds, but it truly felt like a place where we could be open with each other. I also really loved how we ended by committing to concrete actions that we would take in our personal or professional lives after, which forced each of us to really think about how to apply the ideas rather than just think about them in the hypothetical.”

*– Dr. Laura Tilghman, associate professor  
Tourism, Environment & Sustainable Societies*



April 2022

## **IDEA Council**

We had 26 members participate in our Council over the past academic year including:

- Kara Barker
- Ryan Battaglia
- Leslie Blakeny
- Dr. Alison Buchholz
- Martha Burtis
- Beatriz Caria
- Dr. Jeff Cohen
- Daniela Duque
- Dr. Wilson Garcia
- Dr. Suzanne Gaulocher
- TJ Herlihy
- Kayle Hussey
- Carl Jean-Baptiste
- Dr. Cathy Keeler
- Dr. Trish Lindberg
- Hannah Lowell
- Amber Mateer
- Dr. Alison Mitchell
- River Moon
- Dr. Rob Orf
- Lindsay Page
- Paige Paradise
- Sarah Parsons
- Alberto Ramos, chair
- Dr. Filiz Ruhm, vice-chair
- Erin Sweeney

# Diversity Education Program Update

- Number of Diversity Education Sessions for campus: 34
- Number of attendees: 740
- Number of Diversity Education Sessions for outside organizations: 3
- Number of attendees: 100
- Income generated from outside sessions: \$1,800

## Campus areas served:

- Admissions
- Athletics
- Art Education
- Ascent
- Business
- Campus Recreation
- Elementary Education and Youth Development
- Justice & Security
- Health and Human Performance
- HoMe Program - TWP
- Human Resources
- Lamson Academic Unit
- New Student Experience
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Health
- Residential Life and Dining Services
- School Psychology
- Social Work
- Student Nurse Association
- TRIO
- Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies
- Writing Center



Alberto speaking at the NH Business Review DEI: From Talk to Action Workshop, September 2023

## Outside organizations served:

- Holderness School
- Lakes Region Community College
- NH Business Review



IDEA Panther Days, August 2023

## Feedback from Diversity Education Program Participants

"I cannot thank the IDEA Center enough for enriching my course in numerous ways, including providing various workshops on implicit bias and working with the LGBTQ population, mentoring our students, and offering the IDEA grant to support our students' presentations at a state conference. Despite their busy agenda, the IDEA Center has been offering service-learning opportunities for over 50 social work and Gen Ed students to gain practical knowledge and skills in DEI topics through organizing campus events, conducting related research, attending stakeholder meetings, and more. Students and I are grateful to have Alberto and Paige and to partner with such a wonderful campus-wide institution, extending students' DEI learning from the classroom to the campus and beyond."

– *Dr. Pamela Chiang, Associate Professor,  
Health & Human Enrichment*

"I scheduled multiple training sessions with IDEA Center staff and students for our team over in Lamson, and I can't say enough about how engaging, useful, and well-planned each session was. It's been so helpful to have a dedicated place at PSU to look to for guidance and support on issues related to diversity and equity, and you can just feel the difference that it is making on campus. Thank you for all you do!"

– *Dr. Robin DeRosa, Director of Learning & Libraries*

*“Students’ questions suggested that they were interested in the topic and were keen to understand how these concepts will affect their professional lives.”*

“I participated in the Interfaith America workshop “Engaging with Religious Diversity in the Classroom” which was a quick but useful introduction to strategies teachers can use in the face of a range of worldviews. I really appreciated the real-world scenarios that we discussed, which made our conversation much more grounded and helpful.”

– *Dr. Laura Tilghman, Associate Professor, Tourism, Environment & Sustainable Societies*

“I was pleased with my students’ response to the IDEA classroom visits. The workshops not only helped students better understand and respond to DEI, but they were also able to make connections with my language courses. I look forward to continuing collaborating with the IDEA Center.”

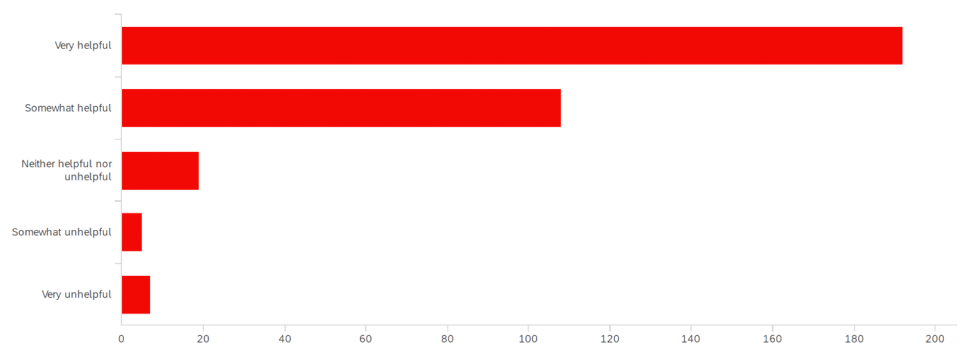
– *Dr. Wilson Garcia, Senior Teaching Faculty, Justice & Security*

“Paige Paradise, Coordinator at PSU’s IDEA Center visited the undergraduate Strategy business courses and presented students with important definitions and explanations of concepts related to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. Paige engaged students in considering examples and implications for business, and discussed how businesses are implementing these concepts. The presentation and discussion were open and unbiased, allowing students to ponder how they felt about the issues and to weigh up the value of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access for developing effective business strategy and workplace environment. Students’ questions suggested that they were interested in the topic and were keen to understand how these concepts will affect their professional lives. I commend Paige for offering a presentation that was honest and transparent, besides being accepting of all views on the topic.”

– *Dr. Roxana Wright, Professor, Innovation & Entrepreneurship*

Overall, nearly 91% of participants indicated that our Diversity Education sessions were helpful as noted in the graph below.

Q1 - Please rate the overall helpfulness of the session.







Paige Paradise, Beatriz Caria, Nahomy Palma, Daniela Duque, and Alberto Ramos at the 1st annual Excellence in IDEA Awards and Graduation Ceremony. May 2024

## Student Workers

### **IDEA Ambassadors**

The IDEA Ambassadors program is the evolution of the Social Justice Leadership program from the previous academic year. We had three students involved with the IDEA Ambassadors program this year.

An IDEA Ambassador's role can be broken down into two main areas, programming and events, and mentorship and leadership. For programming and events, ambassadors take on an essential role of hosting and planning IDEA Center events. Many of our ambassadors have areas of passion and are given the opportunity to create events to share with the campus community. Some of these have been events like Empower Hour, Art for Change, and Advise for Girls. In addition to the events programming, IDEA Ambassadors are given opportunities to participate in our Diversity Education program, where they can join professional staff in visiting different classrooms, departments, or businesses to lead a workshop on diverse topics.

The other main area of the IDEA Ambassadors role is mentorship and leadership, Ambassadors are viewed as leaders on campus, many having other leadership roles in their different clubs and organizations, and other councils and groups we offer. They give us the student perspective as active members of the community and are often asked to evaluate different ideas. Ambassadors

also play a mentor role for various groups of students that are campus seeking support, and they play a direct role in mentoring our Diversity Scholars. As a student with more experience on campus, they play a key role in supporting new first-years in adjusting to college life and more.

### **IDEA Assistants**

At the start of the spring semester, the IDEA Center opened a new student worker position, IDEA assistants. The role of an IDEA Assistant is to support the IDEA Center with much of the behind-the-scenes work of the Center. These students perform essential duties such as reception, scheduling, organization, communication, and other administrative tasks. Their work assists both the professional staff and the IDEA ambassadors.

In our first semester of the IDEA Assistant Program, we had many applicants for the position and hired 5 assistants. Since the start of the IDEA Assistants program, we have seen an increase in engagement at the Center. The hours of the Center increased to later at night, allowing students to be at the Center longer. With the assistants' focus on administrative tasks and maintaining the Center, IDEA Ambassadors were able to shift their focus to work on events and programs more, increasing the number of events and programs from the fall to the spring. While the IDEA assistants are behind the scenes of the IDEA Center, they are the backbone of the center's daily functions and essential to the optimization of the IDEA Center's work.



Members representing the Asian Student Union at the Spring Festival, February 2024



Social Work students presenting at the NASW NH Chapter Conference, July 2024

# IDEA Grants

This year, we developed a new IDEA Grants process, allowing faculty and staff to apply for grant funds from the IDEA Center to help advance initiatives focused on inclusion, diversity, equity and access. From this new process came three successful IDEA Center grant-funded initiatives.

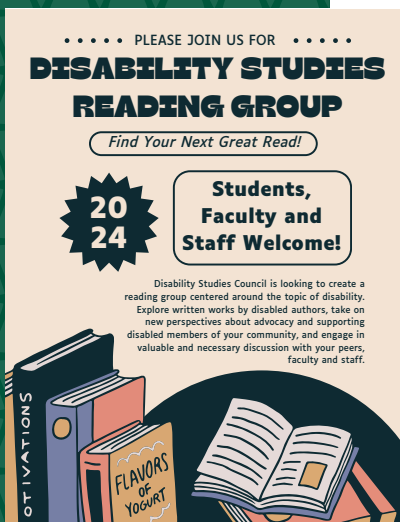
## **Grant 1: National Association of Social Workers (NASW) NH Chapter Student Presentations Dr. Pamela Chiang**

“Two groups of PSU students presented their posters in this year’s annual conference themed “Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion”. The title of the presentation(s) as below: “Women in Health Care & Kitchen Work” “The Empowerment of Women in the U.S. History” NASW-NH is the largest state conference for social workers in New Hampshire. Because of the IDEA grant, our students were able to print two posters for their conference presentations and paid for one student’s attendance (registration fee). PSU students’ poster presentations outnumbered other university students in New Hampshire in this year’s conference; we also were the largest group of attendance from one single institution.

Both posters are students' poems and collages. One of the two posters highlighted the gender disparate treatment in women's experience in health care and kitchen labor work. The other one documented minority women's contributions in the U.S., such as women suffrage movement, reproduction, and antisexual harassment.

Due to the IDEA grant, social work students were able to attend workshops of local practitioners in the topics of disability, LGBTQ suicides as well as meeting social service agencies and practitioners. The support of the IDEA grant made it possible for students to attend state-level conferences and to advance their learning beyond campus. Their preparation and participation in the conference also strengthens their research and public speaking skills in using research to advocate for those marginalized. Their presentations also bring the visibility of PSU in public in our support of students' learning, research, and faculty member's mentorship in diversity topics."

## **Grant 2: Disability Studies Reading Group** **Lindsay Page**



"In the spring semester of 2024, I was awarded a grant on behalf of the Disability Studies Reading Group. This grant allowed the group to purchase 17 copies of *Disability Visibility: First Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century*. This will be the first book the group will read together starting the Fall 2024 semester. Our group consists of faculty, staff, and students across campus.

Once we received the grant and purchased the books, we tabled in the HUB to get more folks interested in joining our group. We have several students who have already signed up for fall, and plan on putting together a social media "campaign" to get more folks involved. We anticipated having an event in the spring semester, but with the timing of events and various schedules, we were unable to launch. We plan on meeting monthly or bi-monthly to convene as a reading group.

*Disability Visibility* was chosen purposefully as it allows the readers to hear from disabled authors. The book provides multiple views and emphasizes the intersectionality of disability and various areas of identity. Our hope is that this will also bring the conversation of disability to the campus community and potentially inspire a student group and more disability-related programming through the IDEA Center."

### **Grant 3: Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Council Series of Events Kristin Stelmok**

“While only one student attended our Black History Month event, she really enjoyed it. Additionally, having had the chance to view the documentary, I (Kristin) will be able to use clips from it when I teach Dr. Martin Luther King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” in Composition (as I do in every section, every semester). While the event was small, its reverberations will support students’ understanding of the rhetoric of the Civil Rights movement for years to come (advancing knowledge of issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion).

The fifteen students present at Reproductive Rights Information Night learned a great deal about activism and reproductive justice (including access to contraception, abortion, and gender-affirming care). The Clock wrote an article about the event, and students there signed a petition in support of a new student organization—the PSU Repro Rights Action Club (RRAC). Due in part to those signatures, the club was approved by the

Student Senate and had its first event this spring. The impact of this event is both short-term (for the students who attended) and long-term (for everyone who will be involved with and benefit from the work of the RRAC). Empowering students to understand these issues and their role in activism advances the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.

Finally, **Healthy Relationships Bingo** was an inclusive event in which students learned a great deal about bodily autonomy, healthy boundaries, and consent. After the event, three students asked about the WGSS minor and several expressed interest in volunteering with Voices Against Violence. Bingo was a fun and very effective way to empower students and enhance their understanding of healthy relationships, knowledge that is fundamental to their lives and PSU’s efforts to advance the principles of inclusion and equity.”



Students at Repro Rights Info Night March 2024

# Looking Ahead

- Our biggest priorities for the coming year will be collaborating with offices across campus on recruitment and retention strategies for BIPOC students
- Continuing to advance the Plymouth State Diversity and Equity Plan.
- The IDEA Center will be taking over the leadership of International Student Services.
- We will be launching an equity audit of university policies.
- We will be sharing our new IDEA Glossary of Terms as a resource for the campus community.
- Brave Space will focus on building bridges across political divides.
- We will be welcoming Cohort 3 of our Diversity Scholars program.



## For more information

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For more information about this report and any information contained in this report, please contact the PSU IDEA Center.

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