

Comic book heroes 'drawn to diversity' at AU

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Legendary comic book heroes will tackle the tough issues of diversity on the Alfred University campus. On Friday, Alfred University students will present an art exhibit and stage show that will explore the history and role of ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity in American comic books. The art exhibit will open at 7 p.m. Friday in Harder Hall and will be followed by the stage show at 8 p.m. in Holmes Auditorium, also located in Harder Hall on the AU campus. The show will be appropriate for all ages. The program will be the first in an annual series entitled "Drawn to Diversity" that will choose one medium or art form per year and explore the presence of often underrepresented populations in that specific area, explained Dan Napolitano, director of Student Activities at AU. The exhibit will feature authentic artifacts, such as original comic books, along with artwork created by Alfred University students and alumni. The stage show will be a combination of a history lecture and skits performed by Alfred students dressed as famous and not-so-famous superheroes, Napolitano said. In addition to the on-campus program, the coordinators are planning to travel to area schools in early May with a version of the program geared toward school-age children. They are currently contacting schools to arrange performance dates. While this program is being coordinated by Alfred students and the Office of ALANA Affairs, additional support has been received from several notable sources, said Napolitano, who is also director of ALANA Affairs, which brings together multicultural student groups. The students have received a Youth Venture grant from MTVU, a college-branch of MTV. Marvel Comics has also offered support for the event, he added, with more partnerships to be announced in the coming months. The art exhibit will open at 7 pm April 7 in Harder Hall and will be followed by the stage show at 8 pm in Holmes Auditorium, also located in Harder Hall on the AU campus. The show will be appropriate for all ages. Questions can be directed to Napolitano at 607-871-2175 or napolitano@alfred.edu.