

AU diversity 'Super Heroes' bringing their message to Brooklyn school

5/17/07

Fighting ignorance with their unique brand of diversity education, six Alfred University students will be presenting a comic book-based education program to a Brooklyn school on Monday, May 21. Alfred University's Drawn to Diversity program is a multi-faceted presentation which combines a comic book exhibit, history lecture, and drawing lessons for youth of all ages. Art classes at Brooklyn's Passage's Academy at Girls and Boys Town will be the first New York City site for the program which it is hoped will be scheduled for a series of shows in NYC-area libraries in early August. Drawn to Diversity's mission aspires "to build an appreciation for diversity and to champion equality by exploring various media and art forms." This particular program features college students dressed in colorful costumes portraying some of the more notable, and sometimes controversial, depictions of ethnicity in American history, explained Dan Napolitano, director of Student Activities at AU and creator of the program. Evidence of the inaugural year's focus of comic books is obvious as much of the show features capes, masks, and lots of action but the program has developed far beyond the comic pages, he explained. Napolitano noted the program expanded to include newspaper comic strips in 2007 and has already begun developing 2008's exploration of advertising images such as Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, Chiquita Banana, and more. "We have established our credibility in the past with support from Marvel Comics, MTV, and legendary newspaper cartoonist Morrie Turner," said Napolitano. "For our exploration into advertising we are hoping to find a corporate or marketing partner from that particular community." Passages Academy is a Department of Education high school program for incarcerated youth between the ages of nine and 17. Passages Academy is housed within the Department of Juvenile Justice facilities. Students arrive at Passages Academy through Supreme and Family courts action. Alfred University is a small liberal arts university in western New York State with a world-renowned fine arts and engineering programs. The students performing in Drawn to Diversity are originally from New York City and while at Alfred, contribute to their community through various extra-curricular social and educational programs. More information can be found at www.drawntodiversity.com.