IU Peace Corps Week in Bloomington

Since it was founded in 1961, the Peace Corps has provided volunteer services to more than 90 different countries around the world. And since that date, the number of Peace Corps Volunteers recruited from Indiana University has added up to an impressive total of 979. Of these, 43 are currently in service overseas working in such areas as agriculture, business, education, health care, environmental science, and the hard sciences. Another 29 IU students are waiting for placement and training prior to entering active service.

During the week of October 10-14, Peace Corps representatives opened their campaign on the Bloomington campus with a variety of activities at different locations in the Schools of Business, Education, and Public and Environmental Affairs, and the Black Culture Center. The agency is particularly interested in encouraging more minority students to serve in an effort to bring about a more diversified volunteer population.

A highlight of the week was the two-day visit by Deputy Peace Corps Director Charles R. Baquet III, a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Somalia (1965-67), and a 26-year career foreign service officer who has served as U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti (1991-93) and as U.S. Consul General in Cape Town, South Africa. IU Bloomington’s African Studies Program and the Department of Afro-American Studies co-sponsored two presentations by Baquet. During his talk on “Perspectives on South Africa: an emerging democracy,” Baquet announced that South Africa would become the newest country to accept Peace Corps Volunteers. In his speech at the Black Culture Center, “The international stage: an African-American’s perspective,” Baquet stressed the personal rewards of volunteering and the career benefits for returning volunteers. “The chief beneficiaries of the Peace Corps are its volunteers and the communities they return to,” he explained, because returned Peace Corps volunteers have demonstrated the courage and self-discipline to live in an unfamiliar part of the world, and they offer prospective employers proven skills and experience. During his visit, Baquet was hosted by International Programs Dean Patrick O’Meara, African Studies Director Brian Winchester, and Afro-American Studies Chair John McCluskey.

Spanish and Portuguese Awarded Title IX Grant

In the summer of 1994, the IU Bloomington Department of Spanish and Portuguese received a large award from the U.S. Department of Education under its Title IX program, Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN). The grant, which covers the period 1994-1997, provides seven graduate fellowships that cover tuition, fees, and other educational costs (such as books, travel, equipment, supplies, etc.), plus a stipend of up to $14,400 per fellow, depending on financial need. The department also plans a GAANN lecture series, supported in part by these funds, to bring speakers to campus who might otherwise not be able to come.

The GAANN program seeks to attract outstanding students, especially those from groups traditionally under-represented in fields defined as areas of national need—mathematics, the physical sciences, engineering, and foreign languages. Candidates for the fellowships must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents, or show intent to become so; plan the eventual completion of a Ph.D.; seek a career in college or university teaching; and demonstrate financial need. Terms of the grant require the department to monitor GAANN fellows closely throughout their graduate careers and help to ensure that they reach their educational goals.

This year’s GAANN fellows in Spanish and Portuguese are Galen Brokaw, Lourdes Cornejo, Louise Ilgenfritz, Eric Kartchner, Cynthia Slagter, Stephanie Tural, and Jeffrey Ward. Following their first year, these fellows will receive continuing support as Associate Instructors. The Department of Spanish and Portuguese plans to use its GAANN fellowships to recruit outstanding students for three successive entering classes. In 1995-96 and 1996-97, the department will be offering GAANN fellowships to 7 new students in each year’s entering class.