

Susan G. Vial, Professor, Chair  
Central Connecticut State University  
Department of Design (Graphic / Information)  
1615 Stanley Street  
New Britain, Connecticut 06050

860 832-2623  
[vial@ccsu.edu](mailto:vial@ccsu.edu)

**Presentation Title:**  
**Design for Diversity: A Visual Message Making a Difference on Campus**

In the Fall of 2007, the Central Connecticut State University Community suffered several well publicized hate incidents. The institutional environment, which is not tolerant of hate in any form, was charged with the task of addressing the incidents and introducing mechanism for composing and delivering meaningful and healing communication to the community at large and putting a stop to future incidents. In the aftermath of these incidents the usual statements were issued by administration, hearings of the accused were convened and the news media responded. In an effort to inspire and extend positive creative action the University School of Arts and Science funded a Diversity Grant Initiative. What follows, is a description of a funded visual design project that responds directly to the charge of education to superintend visual literacy and to affect change. The goal of the project was to support the quiet voice to the usually less vocal members of the campus community while sending a message of inclusion and tolerance.

The purpose of the project was to design and deliver, into the everyday visual culture, materials that would provide a vehicle for personal expression, inspire discussion and send a message of support for a diverse and civil community as well as demonstrate solidarity between audiences of students, faculty, staff and administration.

Selected senior level design students under my direction conducted the content, concept and visual research and created the final design solutions. The campaign materials include two different poster designs for display in all academic buildings, residence halls and dining areas, table tents for display on all university dining tables and thousands of metal buttons to be distributed to students as inserts in the student newspaper and to ALL faculty, administration and university workers via university mail.

My presentation will include an overview of the situation, audience profile, goals and rationale, research results, visual / conceptual solutions (some highly controversial), final works and lastly an assessment of the critical impact on the individuals and groups that make up the community.