

# **International Human Rights Exchange**

## **2005**



### **The University of Capetown & The University of the Western Cape Capetown, South Africa**

### **Evaluation Report**

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**Prepared by**

**September 6, 2005**  
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... (I)n our history as a nation, we have never had a comparable moment in which, at any level of schooling, the encouragement of learning and curiosity has received less support, spiritually and practically, from the adult world (Botstein in Farnham & Yarmolinsky, 1996:55).

During times of intense political, cultural and economic conflict that spans the globe, the International Human Rights Exchange (IHRE) has sought to encourage learning and curiosity regarding human rights. IHRE combines a human rights education course and a cultural exchange consisting primarily of students from southern Africa and the U.S. IHRE impacts student worldviews, encourages learning and generates social capital. As the president of Bard College suggested above, the liberal education is especially significant today. Further, human rights education and civic engagement must be encouraged to confront the dilemmas of conscience produced by shifting educational priorities, lingering color lines, state violations of human rights, western hegemonies and intransigent global inequalities. In this context, what makes initiatives such as the IHRE even more relevant is the fact that “our students today are often distracted by the fragmented knowledge available in the internet and in the mass media” (Edward Said, preface to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of *Orientalism* 2003 [1979]:xxvi).

Idealism aside, the IHRE has included a formal evaluation process since its inception. The evaluation methodologies used to assess the 2005 IHRE include participant observation (by the evaluator and staff), pre and post test (structured) instruments, interviews, focus groups and document review. Each year, students with some interest in human rights apply for the course / program. The applicant pool contains students from the 13 founding institutions and students from other universities who apply to the program via the web site ([www.ihre.org](http://www.ihre.org)). The selection of applicants is based on criteria established and refined by the program planners and administrators.

## **Mission**

The International Human Rights Exchange is a collaborative project, founded on a commitment to genuine international exchanges, inter-institutional cooperation, and inter-disciplinary teaching and learning. It is designed to create and support an annual intensive undergraduate course in human rights aimed at 2nd and 3rd year students.

*The course seeks to promote a critical understanding of human rights as part of a broad intellectual and social movement, not simply as a code or set of laws, but a discourse in transformation and often in contest, extending to the humanities, social sciences, arts, and sciences (www.ihre.org).*

Most of the 74 participants majored in social sciences areas, law, the humanities, natural sciences and fine arts (see summary below). Fully 93% of the participants indicated that the study of human rights was “relevant” or “very relevant” to their career aspirations. IHRE faculty members have been selected by a Curriculum Committee based on a formal application process that includes a teaching proposal.

The 2005 IHRE faculty was diverse, although only 2 of the 8 faculty members were women. In addition, four faculty members were South African (1 of whom teaches in the U.S.), 3 were from the U.S. and 1 was from Zimbabwe. The issue of the rather limited diversity of the faculty was a concern among students. As will be discussed below (recommendations), several students expressed a need for a more diversified faculty (including more African scholars from countries other than the U.S. and South Africa).

**Figure 1**  
**IHRE 2005 Faculty @ faculty meeting**



This year, 74 students enrolled in the program, 72 completed the pre test evaluation instrument and 77 completed the post test survey<sup>1</sup>. The demographic characteristics of the students reveal that most (63.9%) of the participants were female (as has been the case in previous years). Ninety three percent of the participants were from South Africa, the U.S. and Zimbabwe. Sixty eight percent of the participants were juniors and seniors, 17% were sophomores and 16% had completed their undergraduate studies. The majority of students majored in the social sciences, the humanities and in human rights. Half (51.4%) of the students had social sciences majors; the remainder of the students majored in law, human rights, the humanities, the natural sciences and art. A third (34%) were born in the U.S., 30% were born in South Africa and 13% were born in Zimbabwe (23% were born in other countries including primarily Kenya, Ghana, and Russia<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Note: the data reported here are based on the self-report evaluation instruments; in some cases the numbers may not match with the data reported on the official intake instruments for the program.

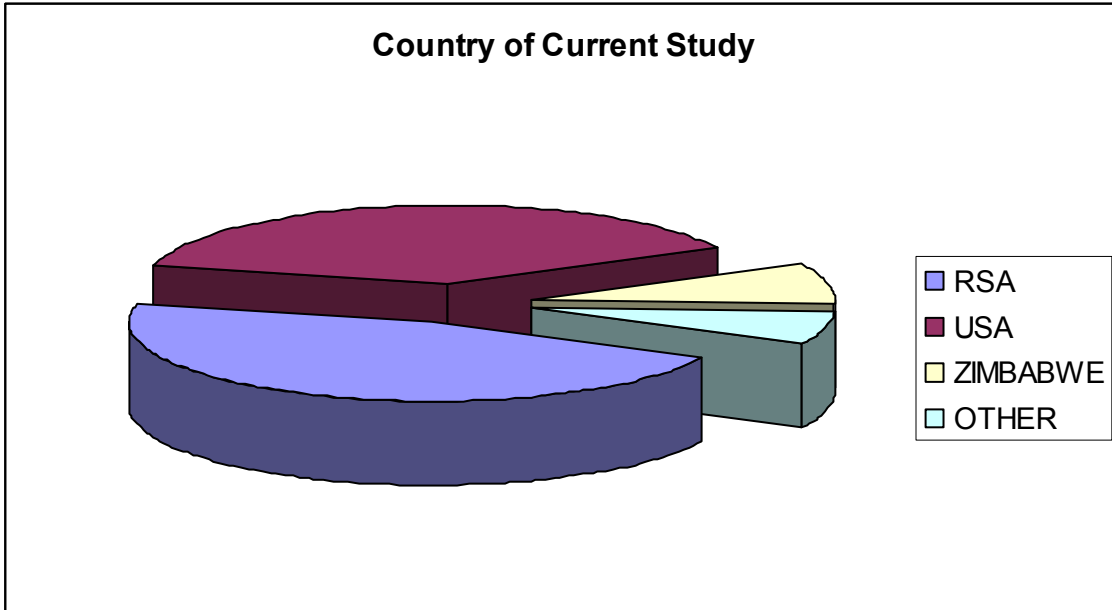
<sup>2</sup> Countries represented by only 1 student were the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nepal, Uganda, Cameroon, Croatia, France and the Maldivian Islands.

Most of the participants were female and black (Africans or African Americans). The students were studying in the following countries (at the time of their application to the program): South Africa (46%), the U.S. (39%), Zimbabwe (8%), Russia (3%), Ghana (3%), and Croatia (1%).

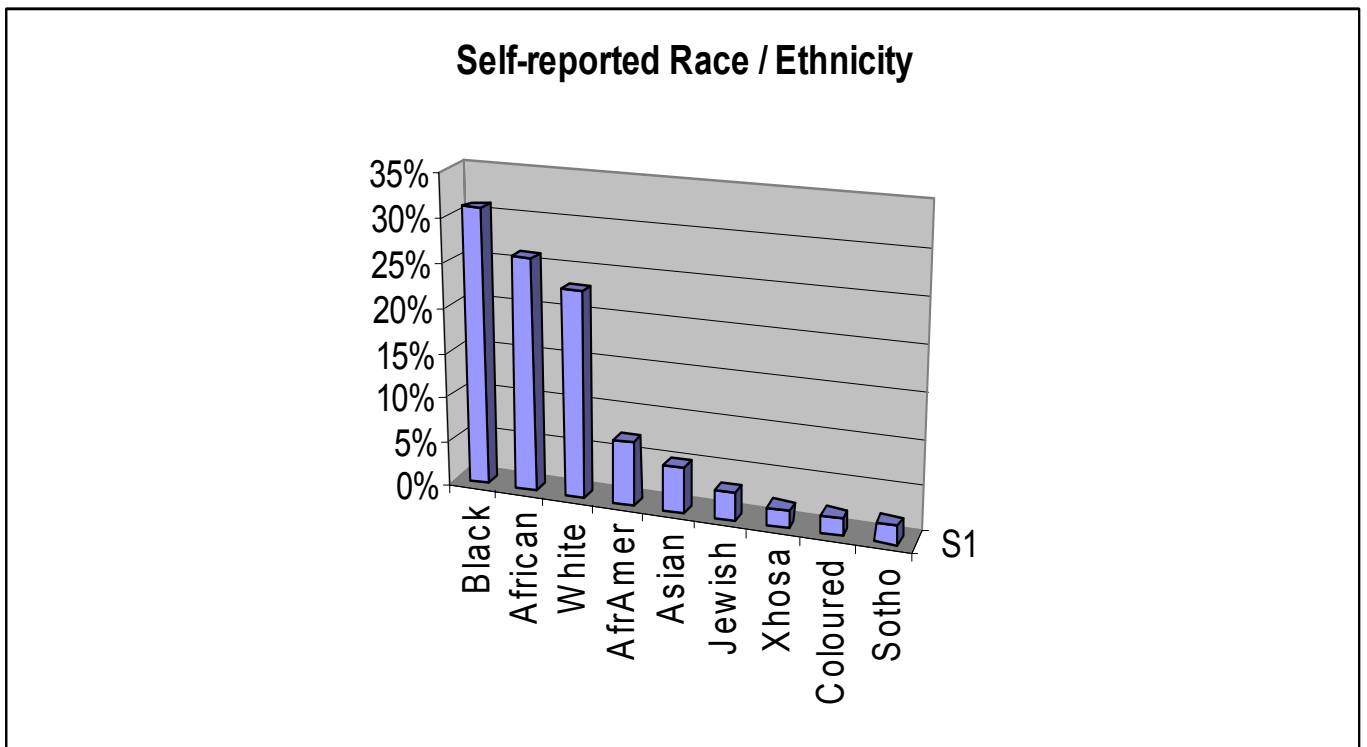
Issues related to the color line (W.E.B. DuBois, 1903) and ethnicity persist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and they even impact international programs like the IHRE. This social fact is further complicated by the fact that racial constructions and definitions vary by country and region. As a result, students debated racial essentialism, post-colonialism, white privilege, structural oppression, and color-blindness at length. This lively and informed discourse continued among students on a post-IHRE discussion forum (Internet).

The self-reported race / ethnicity of the participants was: "Black" (31%), "African" (26%), "White" (23%), "African American" (7%), "Asian" (5%), "Jewish" (3%) and Xhosa, Coloured or Sotho (2% each, respectively). Six persons did not respond to this survey item. This non-response was associated with frequent student discussions of phenotype (race), racial classification and class during the IHRE.

**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**  
**Students 2005** – *photo by Adrienne Brown*



**Table 1**  
**Distribution of Majors<sup>3</sup>**

<b>MAJOR</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
<b>Social Sciences</b>	<b>51.4%</b>
<b>Humanities</b>	<b>19.2%</b>
<b>Law / Human Rights</b>	<b>19.1%</b>
<b>Natural Sciences</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
<b>Art</b>	<b>3%</b>

<sup>3</sup> The demographic data reported here is based on the self-report information from the evaluation instruments. In some cases, the numbers may not match what was recorded on the application and intake forms.

**Table 2**  
**Demographic Characteristics**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>49%</b> 17% sophomore 32% junior	<b>51%</b> 35% Senior Honors / Graduate 16%
<b>SEX</b>	Female = 46 (64%)	Male = 26 (36%)
<b>Country</b> (where w/ you born)	23 (34%) USA 20 (30%) RSA	9 13% (Zimbabwe) 15 (22%) Other <sup>4</sup>
<b>Country</b> (where do you attend school or work)	26 (39%) USA 31 (46%) RSA	5 (8%) Zimbabwe 5 (8%) Other
<b>Ethnicity or race</b> 8 (13%) = Other	19 (31%) Black 16 (26%) African	14 (23%) White 4 (7%) African American

The “promotion of the critical study of human rights” is influenced by the factors motivating participants. The primary reasons students gave for attending the IHRE were a combination of academic, career and personal objectives. The *academic goals* included to learn more about human rights theory and practice, to broaden their perspective on the human condition, and to establish a foundation for their career intentions (see figure 1 below). The *career goals* of students (reported at the pre test) included law (20.3%), NGO / non-profit work (10.9%), journalism, human rights activism and economic development (Table 2).

*Personal goals* for attending the program were also varied. Students who expressed personal sentiments wanted to visit Capetown (or Africa), to engage in cultural exchanges with students from other countries, to develop networks and friendships (social capital), to broaden their perspectives on life and to enhance their social skills (Figure 2). Sixty six percent of the participants indicated that the program

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<sup>4</sup> Other includes Kenya (3), Russia, Uganda, Ghana, Croatia, France, Nepal, Cameroon, the Maldivian Islands, and Ethiopia.

was successful in “establishing relationships of mutuality and equality among students” (see Table 5 – below). The majority of participants (73% of those who studied in South African institutions and 92% of students who studied in the U.S.) also agreed that they had formed “lasting relationships” with their peers and counterparts (Table 9 – below).

Social capital consists of resources derived from social relationships (Lin, 2003). Lin argues that social capital is on the *increase* in the U.S. and is facilitated by use of the Internet. Putnam (1995) offered a contradictory thesis based on recent trends in the U.S. which, in his analysis, reveal a serious *decline* in civic engagement and social capital in the U.S. since the 1960's. Putnam (2000) interprets massive poll and survey data to demonstrate a loss of the interpersonal connections (social capital) among U.S. citizens. This discernible decline in civic engagement makes it necessary for educators to encourage the development of networks, increases in human rights consciousness and heightened civic engagement among undergraduates.

IHRE students gain social capital through their participation in the IHRE. In keeping with the views of Lin (2003), focus group interviews with former IHRE participants revealed that students **maintain significant contact** within their IHRE cohorts after the program has ended. On average, participants maintain some form of ongoing contact (via email) with 7 of their peers. Eighteen percent (13) of the 2005 IHRE students participated in an extended discussion of race and white privilege between August and September of 2005.

The Kellogg Commission describes *civic engagement* as linkages among educational institutions and local communities for the purpose of addressing community needs. 'Engaged institutions' are "those colleges and universities that have redesigned their teaching, research... functions to become even more sympathetically and productively involved (engaged) in their communities" (cited in Grantham, 1999:4). The design, curricula and activities that constitute the IHRE strongly encourage civic engagement and human rights activism among undergraduates - *once they return to their schools and communities.*

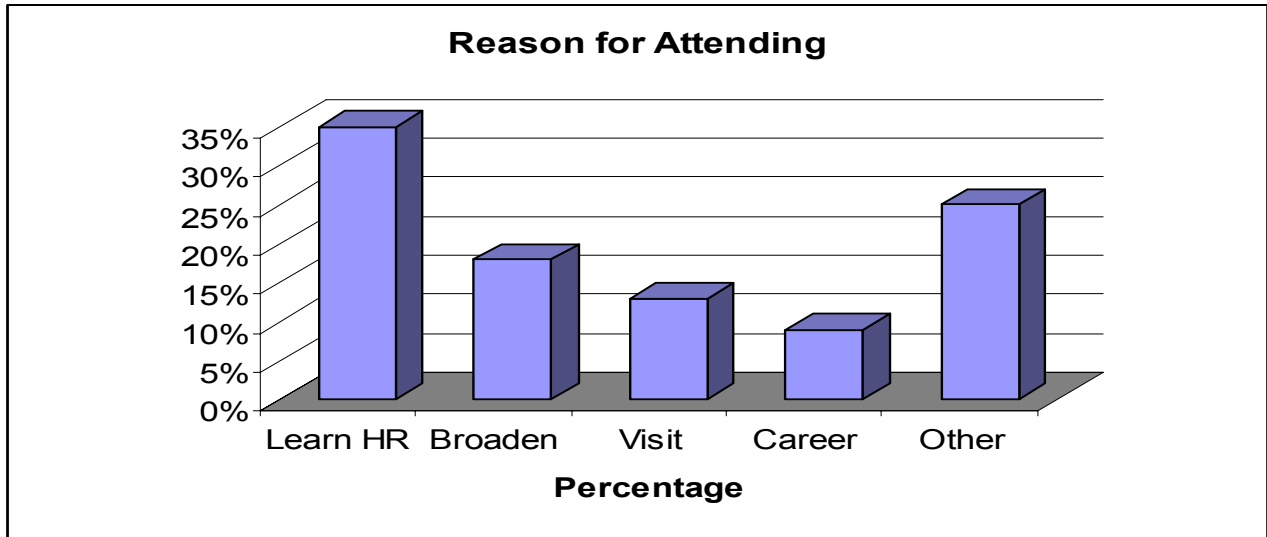
#### **SELECTED QUOTES FROM STUDENT RESPONSE PAPERS (2005):**

I feel extremely small and I realize that I am in for a difficult time full of sadness. **I also know that once I lock into a struggle that I know is right, nothing will stop me. For the first time in my life, I have involved myself with human movements.**

My understanding of the subject has basically been that **championing for human rights** is definitely the answer to most of the world's problems. However, this course has greatly enlightened me that this is not as easy or as simple as it seems. I am beginning to realize that human rights discourse is more complicated...

These insights for me, **interact with my understanding in creating a solution to human rights...** In particular, these insights underline how the judgment of men is dependent on time and place and we who are concerned. Thank you IHRE!

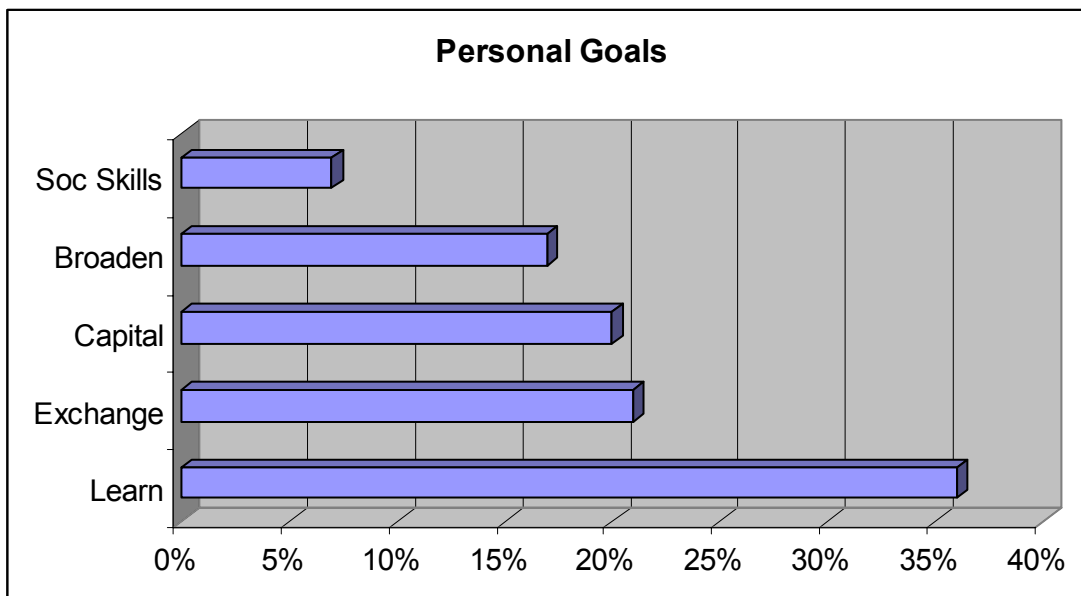
**FIGURE 5**



**Table 3**  
**Career Aspirations of Participants**

<b>CAREER ASPIRATION</b>	<b>NUMBER (%)</b>
Law	13 (20.3%)
NGO	7 (10.9%)
Journalism	6 (9.4%)
HR Activism	6 (9.4%)
Development	6 (9.4%)
Other	40%

**FIGURE 6**



On average, students entered the IHRE with very little human rights coursework. Fifty eight percent of the students had not had any specific courses in the area of human rights; 25% had one course and only 17 percent had completed two or more courses on human rights. When asked about their current (pre IHRE) levels of knowledge about human rights, 29% of participants had “very little” or “little” knowledge of human rights theory, discourse and practice. Fifty eight percent had “some” knowledge and 12% had “a great deal” of knowledge in these areas. Faculty members agreed that most of the students were well-prepared for the course materials and assignment (see discussion of faculty assessments below).

**SELECTED QUOTES FROM STUDENT RESPONSE PAPERS (2005):**

Elsa van Huyssteen raised an interesting question in her lecture: is it possible that people are so unaware of their oppression? **This question ties in with Foucault’s theory**

concerning the 'microphysics of power' and Marx's theory of 'false consciousness'.

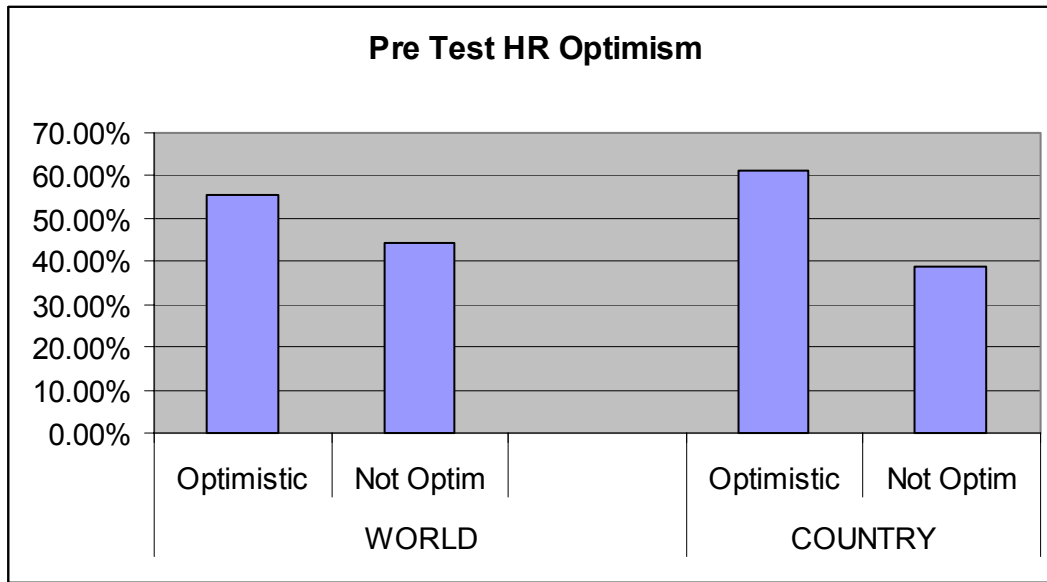
The concept that appealed to me or that struck me most powerfully was covered in Gertrude's class, especially ... *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon. It struck me quite powerfully because to begin with I'm s black female and I come from a country that is a former British colony. It took me a long time to break away from the colonialist-fed desire to be white.

The diversity I have encountered has been extremely powerful. The United States tends to be fairly isolationist and I have not recognized some of the perspectives I have heard. **My eyes have been opened to the different plights people encounter and how they view resolution... I am inspired by the fact that such a diverse group of people has come together for a common goal.**

I have always been taught and had come to believe that HIV / AIDS was only most prevalent among Africans ... (the fact that) HIV / AIDS was killing a lot of Black-American women in places like Washington, (D.C.) was a real shocker to me.

For the most part, students entering the program (pre test) were somewhat optimistic about the state of human rights in the world today (although levels of pessimism were also high – i.e., nearly half 44% were not optimistic about the current state of global human rights). Participants were **more optimistic** about the state of affairs in their own countries than they were about the state of world affairs. When asked about the state of human rights in their own countries, 61% were optimistic and 38% were not optimistic (see Figure 3). Slightly more than half (55.6%) were “somewhat” or “very” optimistic about the state of human rights in the world today.

**FIGURE 7**



The lower than expected levels of youthful optimism coincided with student perceptions of contemporary human rights discourses and violations. Participant's perceptions (post test) about the most significant and current human rights concerns facing the world today were as follows: poverty, sexual inequality (feminization of poverty, gender violence, income equity), HIV / AIDS, health care, war, underdevelopment (global inequalities) and human rights violations.

Students who studied in South Africa were more likely (than their counterparts who studied in the U.S.) to express academic accomplishments: i.e., they met their academic objectives, increased their knowledge of human rights, learned about the concept of human rights and learned skills useful in the struggle for human rights implementation. Students who studied in the U.S. were more likely to have learned about human rights, learned about human rights in sub-Saharan Africa, and were exposed to new literature in the area of human rights theory. In addition, they were

more likely to express significant personal and social outcomes: i.e., they met personal objectives, gained from the cultural exchanges, and indicated that learning was enhanced by the social environment in Capetown (see table 4).

**Table 4**  
**Perceived IHRE Outcomes**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>SOUTH AFRICAN &amp; AFRICAN STUDENTS ONLY</b>	<b>UNITED STATES STUDENTS ONLY</b>
Met personal objectives	65.4%	<b>78.3%</b>
Met academic objectives	<b>50%</b>	41.7%
Personal goals accomplished	Cultural exchange = 40.7%	Cultural exchange = <b>59.1%</b>
Academic goals accomplished	Learn more about human rights = 48%	Learn more about human rights = <b>68.4%</b>
Increase your knowledge of HR	Yes = <b>83.3%</b>	Yes = 76.9%
Learn history of HR	Great deal = <b>33.3%</b>	Great deal = 23.1%
Learn concept of HR	Great deal = <b>60%</b>	Great deal = 34.6%
Learn about HR in Sub-Saharan Africa	Great deal = 36.7%	Great deal = <b>53.8%</b>
Exposed to new HR Lit & theory	Yes = 73.3%	Yes = <b>84.6%</b>
Did IHRE influence how you think about your major field of study	Yes = 69%	Yes = 65.4%
Most sig. HR concerns in the world today (top 3)	Poverty = 32.6% HIV / AIDS = 13% Sexual inequality = 10.8%	Poverty = 26.1% HIV / AIDS = 14.3% Development = 14.3% War = 14.3%
How much did IHRE teach strategies to address HR at home	A great deal = <b>61.3%</b>	A great deal = 26.9%
Was IHRE implemented to demonstrate importance of HR in everyday life	Yes = <b>70%</b>	Yes = 53.8%
Was learning enhanced by Capetown environment	Yes = 75.9%	Yes = <b>88.5%</b>
Learn skills to use for HR	Yes = <b>43.3%</b>	Yes = 34.6%

**Table 5**  
**Perceived IHRE Outcomes / Course Objectives** (*continued*)

IHRE Objective	SOUTH AFRICAN & AFRICAN STUDENTS ONLY	UNITED STATES STUDENTS ONLY
How effective in teaching basic HR concepts	Effective (very / somewhat) = <b>83.9%</b>	Effective = 69.3%
Promote critical study of HR	Good / excellent = <b>74.2%</b>	Good / excellent = 65.4%
Facilitate student-centered learning of HR	Good / excellent = <b>71%</b>	Good / excellent = 65.4%
Establish relationships of equality & exchange	Good / excellent = <b>67.7%</b>	Good / excellent = 65.4%
Link academics & activism	Good / excellent = <b>70%</b>	Good / excellent = 53.9%
Contribute to a culture of HR	Good / excellent = <b>80.6%</b>	Good / excellent = 73%

As shown in Table 5 the majority of students indicated that the course objectives were met. In addition, students from South African institutions were more likely than their U.S. studying counterparts to suggest that the program was effective in: teaching basic human rights concepts, promoting the critical study of human rights, facilitating student-centered learning of human rights, linking academic work and activism and in contributing to a culture of human rights.

The travel arrangements, program orientation, administrative support, student life, film series and site visits were rated as “good” by both groups. The lowest ranking assessments were associated with the food (at River View Lodge), the housing (Lodge), the “town hall meetings”, computer resources and the O-focus

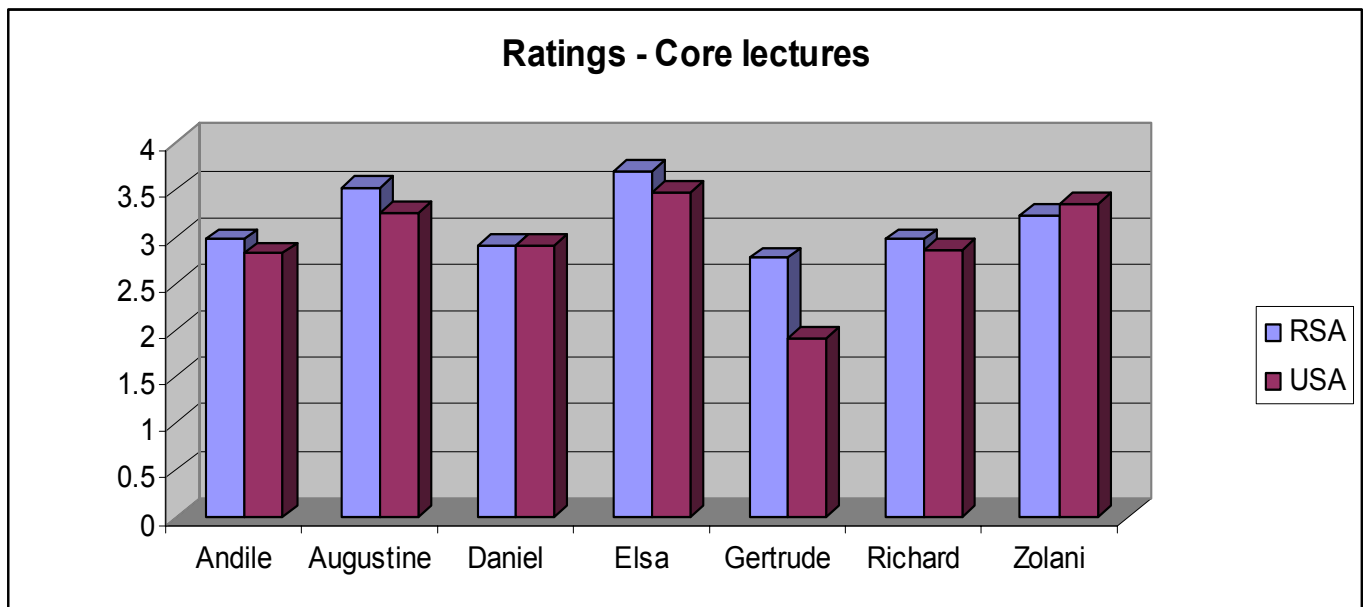
groups received the lowest collective ratings. U.S. students also rated the research projects as “fair”.

**Table 6**  
**Anonymous Student Ratings of Program Components**

<b>COMPONENT</b>	<b>SOUTH AFRICAN &amp; AFRICAN STUDENTS ONLY</b>	<b>UNITED STATES STUDENTS ONLY</b>
<b>ORIENTATION</b>	3.0 (good)	3.0
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT</b>	3.3	3.0
<b>RESEARCH REPORTS</b>	3.1	2.8 (fair)
<b>STUDENT LIFE</b>	3.3	3.2
<b>TOWN MEETINGS</b>	2.6 (fair)	2.8
<b>COMPUTERS</b>	2.6	2.2
<b>RESEARCH PROJECTS</b>	<b>3.2</b>	2.8
<b>ROOM MATE</b>	3.3	3.4
<b>FILM SERIES</b>	3.5	3.5
<b>TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS</b>	3.2	3.2
<b>SITE VISITS</b>	3.3	3.4
<b>INTERACTION (students)</b>	3.3	3.4
<b>INTERACTION (w/ faculty)</b>	<b>3.3</b>	2.9
<b>O focus</b>	2.8	2.9
<b>HOUSING</b>	2.5	2.4
<b>FOOD AT LODGE</b>	1.9 (poor)	1.4

For the most part, student studying in South Africa rated the core and elective lecturers higher than students studying in the U.S. Specifically, South African students rated Elsa, Augustine and Zolani the highest. Students from U.S. institutions rated the same persons most highly (in slightly different order - see Table 7). As for the elective faculty, Augustine, Elsa and Daniel were the most highly rated (Table 8). **The mean rating of the team-teaching was “fair”**. Based on previous experience in the program, it is important to encourage faculty to share course planning and to encourage faculty to attend one another’s sessions in each course.

**Figure 8**



**Table 7**  
**Student Ratings of Core Lecturers**

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>RSA</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>MEANS</b>
Andile	2.97	2.82	2.895
Augustine	<b>3.52</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>3.39</b>
Daniel	2.9	2.9	2.9
Elsa	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>3.59</b>
Gertrude	2.77	1.92	2.35
Richard	2.97	2.85	2.91
Zolani	<b>3.23</b>	<b>3.35</b>	<b>3.29</b>
<b>MEAN RATINGS</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>3.05</b>

**Table 8**  
**Ratings of Elective Faculty**

<b>FACULTY</b>	<b>RSA</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>MEANS</b>
Andile Mngxitama	<b>3.12</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>2.93</b>
Augustine Hungwe	<b>3.69</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>3.56</b>
Daniel Moshenberg	<b>3.08</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>3.25</b>
Elsa van Huyssteen	<b>3.71</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>3.51</b>
Gertrude James Gonzales de Allen	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>3.03</b>
Nigel Gibson	<b>2.44</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>2.33</b>
Richard Pithouse	<b>3.11</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.88</b>
Zolani Noonan- Ngwane	<b>3.29</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.15</b>
<b>MEANS</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>3.08</b>
<b>Team-teaching</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>2.795</b>

**Selected Comments - About Week 1**  
**(Core Lectures)**

From this past week's lecture I have learned a great amount concerning human rights discourse and its application

within various countries throughout the world (student response worksheet, week 1 - 2005).

I am beginning to **distinguish between the thing and the discourse** about the thing.

The lectures were educational, informative and very engaging because **students were given a chance to participate.**

Intellectually, **I have learned more about the political systems of governance, not only in South Africa but in the U.S.A.**

#### **SELECTED QUOTES FROM STUDENT RESPONSE PAPERS (2005):**

Some students expressed their concerns about the course content and coverage of human rights. While the majority of students rated the course highly, these comments need to be considered in the planning of the next IHRE.

I believe one of the main issues of concern has been that **certain lectures were focused too greatly on history while not providing substantial insight on alternatives** for the future.

It (the course) is **very one-sided in terms of arguments and debates on human rights discourse...** I don't deny that probably most of us are anti-Bush or whatever - but I think that the way things have been done have been so problematic that the course has almost lost all intellectual credibility for me.

I would like to push the classes to **tackle real issues.** I want to discuss the pressing issues of global slavery, hunger, access to housing and medicines.

During the 2005 course, the issue of race emerged as a significant issue (as it always does during successive iterations of the IHRE). One contributing theme was

expressed by African American students based on their experiences on their “side” of the color line:

Many black Americans feel completely disconnected from the discussion of human rights and I believe it is important to discuss how to form a human rights discourse which African Americans feel connected to and engaged in.

The language of rights is being used as a way to erode all of the advances made by black Americans in the Civil Rights movement. For example, equality is being understood in reverse of its original understanding under civil rights legislation... The move towards the colour-blind society is fueling this move under an idealistic view of human rights.

The fact that such strong feelings were expressed reflects the persistence of a color line – as White, African and African American students (in particular) expressed their feelings about race openly and sometimes in controversial ways - sometimes resulting in racialized, gendered class-based factions among the participants. Some white students, on the other hand, expressed their concerns about anti-Americanism, stereotyping of whites and an unwillingness to see social issues outside of a racial context.

#### **SELECTED QUOTES FROM STUDENT RESPONSE PAPERS (2005):**

It appears that most participants have fallen into their own comfort group and have probably engaged in many conversations, most of which have ended in some type of consensus. When the larger group gets together, some people appear to be a little thrown off by the fact that not everyone shares the same vantage point or opinions that they do. This creates an interesting dynamic. **Hopefully this will result in a sharing of the minds, a widening of perspective instead of shutting down.**

I consider myself a white, privileged, South African woman. I have (to a degree) come to terms with how I feel about

accepting my responsibility of my inherited privileges. I do find myself in sticky situations being made to defend my motives and acknowledge who I am ... What makes me uncomfortable is when other white people ask me to help them decide what to think or when they try to rally up support for their points of view... I feel that challenges are something they should take in their stride... **I will not try to make them be comfortable when being uncomfortable is when one changes themselves.**

#### SELECTED QUOTES FROM STUDENT RESPONSE PAPERS (2005):

It is less a specific issue than a general attitude and undertone of our conversations here which I've been **uncomfortable overhearing comments like 'that's such a white thing to say' and 'you can't possibly understand' has frustrated me because while I acknowledge that there are certain things that because of my outward appearance I cannot fully understand I don't believe that that should prevent me from trying to understand or should stop the conversation all together.**

The one aspect I'd like to challenge is our tendency to **limit discussion of discrimination and human rights to race and class issues.** There is so much to be gained and so much material to dissect by opening discussion about religion, gender, sexual orientation and myriad other human rights issues.

As a result of some of the tensions and complaints to staff, Emma Harvey and Bruce Wade (evaluator and former faculty member) conducted a group meeting (at the Riverview Lodge) to defuse some of the tensions around questions of race and privilege. The discussion seemed to have been productive and students were able to openly express their views and concerns about anti-White sentiments, White privilege and race in a South African context. While nothing was ultimately solved by the session, the discussion allowed students to express their concerns and perceptions

openly. Students suggested more opportunities to discuss such issues during the course of the program.

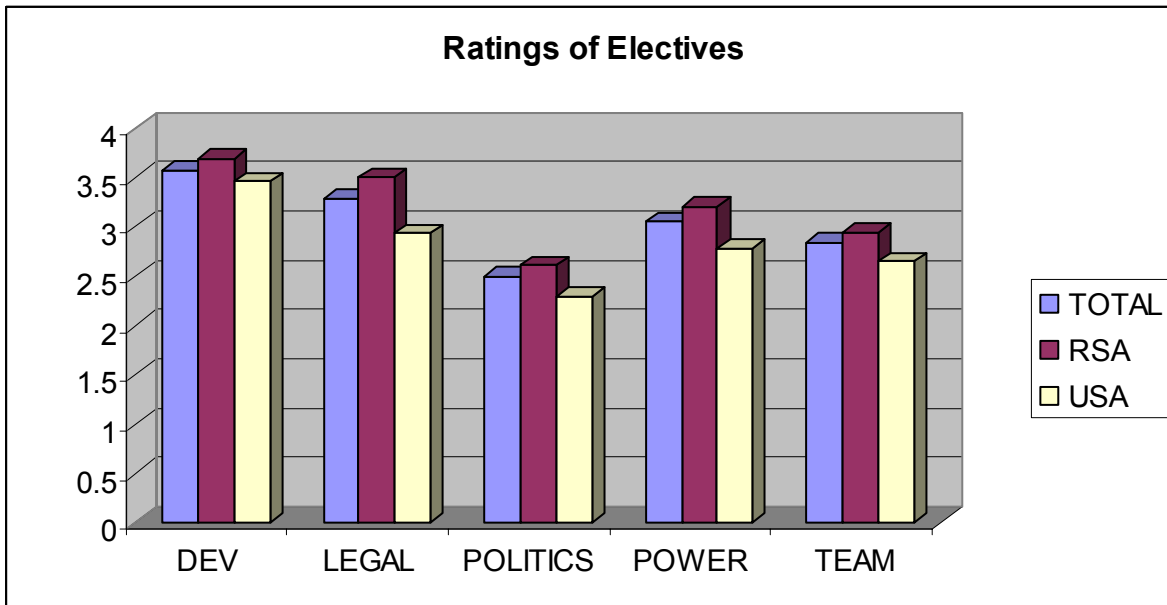
Participants were also asked how the program influenced them personally. South African (studying) students were more likely to indicate that the program influenced their worldview, their view of themselves and they were more optimistic about the ability of the world to solve human rights issues (than they were before the program). Students who studied in the U.S. were much more likely than their counterparts to respond that they had formed lasting relationships (Table 9) with others.

The experience in IHRE thus far has been absolutely amazing. **Most beneficial has been the outside engagement through conversation with people from all over the world.** I have learned volumes about the human rights issues that are important to the other participants and how culture truly impacts one's concerns, interests and solutions to problems (student reflection paper comments).

**Table 9**  
**Impact of Program on Students**

<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>SOUTH AFRICAN &amp; AFRICAN STUDENTS ONLY</b>	<b>UNITED STATES STUDENTS ONLY</b>
Influence worldview	A great deal = <b>74%</b>	A great deal = 61.5%
Influence view of self	A great deal = <b>71%</b>	A great deal = 50%
Change worldview	Yes = <b>60%</b>	Yes = 53.8%
Change major	Yes = 13.3%	Yes = 11.5%
Form lasting relationships	Yes = 73.3%	Yes = <b>92.3%</b>
Change career path / plans	Yes = <b>16.7%</b>	Yes = 7.7%
Post IHRE level of optimism / ability to solve HR issues in world	More optimistic = <b>68.9%</b>	More optimistic = 47.8%
Optimism about HR in home country	Somewhat / very = <b>58.1%</b>	Somewhat = 42.3%

**Figure 9**



**Figure 10**  
**IHRE Closing Ceremony - 2004**



Each year the program culminates with a re-orientation session that involves student discussions of their IHRE experience and a space for closure and re-emergence into their home environments. We have found that this is an important step for students to facilitate their transition out of an intense program and back to their worlds of work and study. The photo above is from the closing / re-orientation ceremony of

2004. Students were engaged in writing responses on the IHRE experience on sheets preserved that are used in future IHRE's.

Finally, students were asked to make recommendations about ways to enhance, improve or re-structure the IHRE. In terms of the academic aspects of the course, some students (especially European Americans) indicated that there was too much focus on race and racism in the course and program. On the other hand, several of the black and African American students *disagreed* that there was too much emphasis on white privilege and white racism in the course and program. Several students also commented that the course needs to begin with a lecture on the basic concepts and principles of human rights before getting into the discourses of human rights.

Among students studying in South Africa, the recommendations included improving the housing conditions and food - more emphasis on human rights activism, more diversity among faculty and students (involve more African faculty and more participants from different African nations and other parts of the world), more diversification of course topics and better computer facilities.

Students studying in the U.S. made similar recommendations. The U.S. students were even more critical of the housing conditions (cleaner rooms and facilities) and food (greater diversity, more vegetables and greater variety in the menu). One student suggested that students be more involved in the preparation of (at least some) meals. This would help students to bond and enhance the variety of food offerings.

## FACULTY

In any academic course, the role of the faculty is essential in the implementation of an effective endeavor. IHRE faculty members have been committed to excellence since the first year of the program. This year, 8 faculty members (2 females) delivered the IHRE course (core lectures and elective sections).

Only 2 faculty responded to the evaluation survey (a common issue as faculty return to their own lives and careers as IHRE ends each year). One faculty responded to the survey via email. Faculty rated the academic preparation of the students as “good” (on a scale of 1 {poor} to {4} excellent). Both faculty respondents reported that they’d met their career / professional and personal objectives associated with teaching in the 2005 IHRE. **Each person also reported that the course was effective in teaching the basic concepts and theories of human rights, promoting the critical study of human rights, facilitating student-centered learning of human rights concepts and linking academic work with activism and advocacy.**

This last set of data corresponds with student rankings of the outcomes associated with the program objectives and with comments and recommendations from other IHRE participants.

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

The role of the G.A.’s (Graduate Assistants) is another crucial aspect of the successful implementation of the IHRE. It has also been important to assess how the project influenced the lives and career aspirations of the GA’s.

All of the GA's (5) indicated that they had met most of their **personal objectives**. In the case of **academic objectives**, only one person responded that they had met their academic goals. All GA's also responded that the program had impacted their view of themselves, their views on everyday life and their worldview.

Unlike the data from the program participants, the majority of the GA's (4 out of 5) indicated that they had been provided with techniques and skills that will help them to promote human rights in their communities. This finding indicates the effectiveness of the GA orientation and training and the impact of the GA experience on former IHRE participants. The GA ratings of the course ranged from excellent to fair.

- ❑ **How effective was IHRE in teaching participants the basic concepts and principles of human rights?** Four (80%) of 5 indicated "somewhat effective". One GA indicated "somewhat ineffective".
- ❑ **How well did IHRE promote the critical and creative study of human rights?** Three persons responded "good" and 2 responded "fair".
- ❑ **How well did IHRE implement student-centered learning?** Three persons responded "fair" and 2 persons responded "good" or "excellent".
- ❑ **How well did IHRE establish relationships of equality, mutuality and exchange among American, Southern African and other international participants?** Three persons responded "poor" (1) or "fair" (2) and 2 persons responded "good" or "excellent".

The GA's reported that the IHRE was a good mix of academics with an emphasis on activist thinking. All 5 GA's responded that the program was helpful to them in terms of how they thought about their majors. Three (out of 5) persons indicated that IHRE reaffirmed their commitment to their career area (or helped them to clarify their goals). They also reported that the course made a significant contribution to a "culture of

human rights". When asked to comment on what new concepts or information they gained from IHRE, GA's responded as follows:

- ❑ **The relationship between art, human rights and politics**
- ❑ **Homophobia & gender identities**
- ❑ **Land question and conflict in Zimbabwe and South Africa**
- ❑ **Race / race relations**
- ❑ **The politics of the body**
- ❑ **The prison-industrial complex**

The best parts of being a GA included: networking with peers, meeting new people, interacting with international students and crossing boundaries. All of the GA's also reported that they had formed lasting relationships with others. They all learned a lot about working with young people and about the significance of cultural diversity.

The most difficult parts of IHRE for the GA's were distributed across all 5 respondents. The responses included: coordination of work and responsibilities, emotions, lack of teamwork, race and the rules established for them to follow in their interactions with the participants.

GA ratings on course components were lower than those of students or faculty. Orientation, site visits, supervision and closing were rated the most highly. Low ratings were assigned to the food at the Lodge, interaction with faculty and cooperation among GA's.

**Table 10**  
**GA Ratings of IHRE Components**

COMPONENT	MEAN RATING Scale = 1 (poor) → 4 (excellent)
Orientation	3.4
Supervision	3.0
Cooperation Among GA's	2.4
Interaction Among GA's	2.6
Interaction Among Participants	2.6
Travel Arrangements	2.8
Site Visits	3.2
Housing	2.8
Closing Ceremony	3.0
Interaction with Faculty	2.4
Food at Lodge	2.4

## **IHRE STAFF PERSONS**

The staff of the IHRE is the most consistent and integral element of the entire program. The staff (7 persons) has the responsibility for coordinating and planning the implementation of the program and they have to respond to multiple and inevitable crises through the duration of each IHRE. At the suggestion of Emma Harvey, Project Coordinator, for the first time the evaluation instruments were administered to the existing IHRE staff. Of the 3 persons completing the survey, all met their “academic or

career” interests. All indicated that they had learned skills that they could apply in other areas of their professional work. Each person also spoke of the great opportunity to work with a team of talented people, including their peers and the IHRE participants. One person responded that they had developed “a greater acceptance of diversity”.

Each respondent also indicated that they had learned (a great deal or some) about working with college students and about human rights. Each staff person saw the IHRE as an excellent opportunity for themselves but, more importantly, as an opportunity to work with international students and faculty – within “an amazing crucible” that addressed themes of human rights and social transformation.

# CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## EVALUATOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❑ Address student concerns over the coverage and academic rigor of the course. Each year, students also request more case studies, discussion of solutions to problems and skills-building (see page 20).
- ❑ Work to overcome student perceptions of race that stifle communication among students. Build on what themes and concepts are introduced in the student orientation by hosting on-going workshops and spaces for facilitated dialogue.
- ❑ Take steps to enhance levels of teamwork among faculty and GA's.
- ❑ Work to improve the quality of team-teaching in the course. Provide guidelines for teaching faculty and include mechanisms to facilitate faculty bonding and team-teaching.
- ❑ Improve the quality of interaction between faculty and participants.
- ❑ Make the IHRE website more of a resource for participants i.e., add space for student profiles, updates and announcements.
- ❑ Use the web site to help gather data on former participants.
- ❑ Replace the student housing - Riverview Lodge appears unacceptable.
- ❑ Improve the access to computers and the Internet for students.

## PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS

### THOSE STUDYING IN SOUTH AFRICA:

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- ❑ Improve the housing conditions. The Riverview Lodge is unacceptable (5 persons).
- ❑ Improve the quality and variety of food (dietary) offerings.
- ❑ Do a better job of establishing a foundation of basic human rights concepts and theories for students not majoring in human rights or law.
- ❑ Incorporate more skills development and activism into the course.
- ❑ Further diversity the applicant pool (add more participants from other African countries) and the faculty.
- ❑ Require that the faculty and students live in the same housing as the students.

### THOSE PARTICIPANTS STUDYING IN THE USA:

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- ❑ Improve the housing conditions. The Riverview Lodge is unacceptable (6 persons).
- ❑ Improve the quality and variety of food (dietary) offerings; add more vegetables.
- ❑ Allow the students to prepare some of their own meals - this would help students to bond and share cultures.

- ❑ Do a better job of establishing a foundation of basic human rights concepts and theories for students not majoring in human rights or law. Make the core course more objective and less polemical.
- ❑ Incorporate more skills development and activism into the course.
- ❑ Improve the student handbook to make it more informative and realistic.
- ❑ Improve the computer resources available for students – make sure Internet access is available in the dorm / housing.

## **GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

- ❑ Allow the IHRE participants to recommend potential GA's (since they know each other best).
- ❑ Expand the applicant pool to include participants from previous years (not just the most recent IHRE cohort)
- ❑ Build in role play and practice sessions to help GA's deal with difficult persons, circumstances or relationships.
- ❑ Work to enhance the spirit and quality of teamwork among the GA's.
- ❑ Diversify (broaden) the curriculum and readings to cover a broader range of academic topics and geographical regions.
- ❑ Make the academic coursework more rigorous.
- ❑ Make the academic course more challenging for the participants.

## **FACULTY**

- ❑ Continue the program – it is important work for the future.
- ❑ Takes steps to hire faculty earlier in the academic year.
- ❑ Encourage students to engage in active political action which could be very progressive under certain conditions.

## **STAFF PERSONS**

- ❑ Make better use of the IHRE alumni; build on their skills, networks, energies and enthusiasm.
- ❑ Draw on previous findings and databases for planning purposes.
- ❑ Make sure to hire people who have the ability to “multi-task”!
- ❑ The internships (process) needs to be revised (combined comments from two persons). Add more specific guidelines and cutoff dates for those applying for internship positions. Begin the internship application process sooner.
- ❑ There should be more opportunities for staff to interact (in significant ways) with the participants and faculty.

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