Director excited to listen, learn

By Andrea Thomas
Summer Reporter

Carolyn Johnson said sometimes adults ask questions but, unlike children, they are not open to whatever answers may come.

Johnson, the new director for Purdue's Diversity Resource Office, believes her abilities to listen and stay open-minded were learned while working as a public school teacher, and that they will aid her in her new role.

"You can't be around children if you're not a good listener," Johnson said. "It was so many years ago that I taught in the public schools... but it's always about people, respect and dignity."

The office's vision for diversity at Purdue involves training for diversity competencies in both the workplace and learning environment, as well as developing programs to promote diversity on campus.

Johnson, who has been the interim director for the Diversity Resource Office for the past year, said she hopes to make sure this vision is accomplished by encouraging, administrating and assessing diversity related programs.

"Diversity is essential because it maximizes the intellectual input that helps strengthen the scholarly fabric of the University," Johnson said. "The ability for each person to be an asset to the University is an important part of enriching academic life together."

Johnson plans to coordinate more diversity programs and further develop the current ones, including the lead program Learning through Experience and Awareness in Diversity.

"This program allows student-to-student interaction," she said. "The wonderful part is that each person is a contributor and each person is a beneficiary."

Alysa Rollock, vice president for human relations, said, in a press release, Johnson has been responsible for helping to build a strong foundation for the office with various programs such as DiversiKey and the Diversity Fellows, which support Purdue students and faculty.

"She has proven to be a sophisticated, creative leader who has been in on the ground level as we continue to build a foundation for diversity," she said. "She is well-equipped to help Purdue move forward to set the standard of diversity for universities everywhere."