

Posted 2013-03-14

Committee on Diversity (CoD) Minutes
February 25, 2013

Committee members in attendance: Aislinn Melchior, Amy Ryken (Chair), George Tomlin, and Carolyn Weisz.

Meeting called to order by Chair Ryken at 8:30 AM. Because of the small attendance, we deferred approving minutes of February 11th until the next meeting.

Announcements:

Ryken acknowledged the successful hire of Chief Diversity Officer/Dean of Diversity and Inclusion Michael Benitez who will become a resource to the CoD.

Ryken and Weisz also described the 2-hour diversity workshop held with the Board of Trustees on February 14th. Ryken described the goal as raising awareness and generating dialogue and reflection.

Chairs Meeting on April 24th:

Ryken told the committee she had spoken to Dean Bartanen and that we would have about 50 minutes to talk about diversity in the curriculum with department and program chairs at 8 am on April 24th. CoD members discussed revisions to the handout Ryken had created and issues to cover in the meeting. CoD members discussed whether the conversation should be broad or more focused, and decided on a middle ground. It was decided that the handout should include information about requirements at other institutions, data from CoD's examination of Puget Sound 5-year curriculum reviews, ideas about possible structures of such a requirement, and questions including the central issue of what the learning goals for students should be and what themes related to diversity should be reflected in the title of a curricular requirement.

In reviewing responses to the 5-year curriculum review questions, CoD members noted that most responses were framed in relation to language in the University's mission statement related to knowledge of self and other and/or to multicultural awareness, and that a smaller number of departments articulated an intentional focus on systemic issues of power, privilege, oppression, and/or equity – issues critical for preparing students for democratic citizenship.

CoD members also discussed what feedback we wanted from chairs and directors and identified the following questions. What requirement or courses would fit with or enhance your departmental curriculum? What is happening in your department currently that the CoD may not know about (e.g., may not be in your 5-year curriculum review)? It was also noted that the Office of Institutional Research might have information about diversity in the curriculum, and Ryken indicated that she will talk to Ellen Petersen about this.

Ideas about the purpose and structure of the requirement were discussed. Advantages of a graduation requirement included reaching every student, providing infrastructure attention and resources for course development and refinement, and the role that

Posted 2013-03-14

curricular focus might play in recruitment and retention of underrepresented students and faculty. Several structural options were discussed. CoD members felt that models of optional curricular enhancement such as developing or identifying optional “diversity pathways” in the core lacked the ability to reach all students and risked pigeonholing diversity courses. It was noted that students who currently seek out diversity-related courses are able to find them, but many students do not do this. CoD members thought a model requiring a single common course for all students would not be supported by faculty or reflect the range of teaching interests of faculty.

Two models considered promising were a) a one-unit overlay graduation requirement, and b) a two-unit overlay model requiring one lower-division and one upper-division course. In both cases, courses could be taken within or outside of the core, and particular courses might be developed, recommended, and/or required by departments for majors. It was noted that internships and/or independent study experiences might also be used to fulfill these requirements. Ryken agreed to incorporate these changes into the document for consideration at the next CoD meeting.

Chair Ryken announced that Donn Marshall and Pepa Lago-Grana would attend the next CoD meeting to discuss work by a committee on the topic of undocumented students.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 AM.
Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Weisz