

Diversity Committee Minutes April 8, 2008

Committee Members/Representatives Present: Monica DeHart, Judith Kay, Mike Valentine, Paula Meiers, Kim Bobby, Nila Wiese, Carol Lentz, Leslie Saucedo, Lisa Ferrari, Yoshiko Matsui, Nancy Nieraeth

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Valentine at 8:05 a.m. Nowak volunteered as the minute-taker. The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and approved.

Announcements:

- The Coalition Against Injustice and Racism (CAIR) Committee now has a subcommittee to work with the Diversity Committee and the Faculty Senate to revise the University Diversity Statement.
- Posters encouraging participation in the BERT logo contest are now up around campus. Encourage participation; see details in the Trail.
Reminder: the Campus Forum on Diversity will be held on two different dates and at two different times to maximize university-wide participation: Wednesday, April 23, 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. and Thursday, April 24, noon – 1:30 p.m. in the Wheelock Student Center, Rasmussen Rotunda

Agenda Items:

- End of Year Report – Valentine passed around copies of the minutes of the October 18, 2007 Diversity Committee meeting which includes a discussion of the committee's charges. Because the entire remainder of the meeting was devoted to the other agenda item (discussed below), the committee will discuss the end of year report at a subsequent meeting
- Advisor Training in relation to diversity issues – report from co-chair Wiese concerning her meeting with Jack Roundy and the ways in which members of the Diversity Committee can contribute to this project

Discussion:

- time constraints:
 - the long-term plan would ideally involve a half-day program for first-year advisors during the week before classes begin in fall – which would be devoted to a host of diversity-related topics such as on-campus services, counseling, disability resources as well as providing training more directed geared to increasing sensitivity to classroom issues and celebrating differences
 - for this coming 2008-2009 academic year, however, the best possible scenario would probably include carving out some time for a smaller-scale presentation of this sort during the Friday of reading period
- “angle” to stress in this training: first-year experience can be very isolating for some students, particularly those who feel or are treated as “different” in some way; acknowledging this, how can first-year advisors help students to achieve their college goals?
- who is going to do this training?
 - one name mentioned (Lenz spoke of her experience with this person at an all-day seminar and gave her rave reviews) – Leticia Nieto of St. Martin's University's MA Counseling Psychology Program)
 - Jack Roundy's concern: be sure that any “outsider” speaker first gets a “sense of the campus” before launching into a presentation
- how to “frame” this training program so faculty wouldn't regard it as unnecessary? (“I already know that”)?
 - treat this as providing additional tools for assisting faculty to become better advisors

- incorporate new (printed) insights under headings that already exist in the Advisor Manual (e.g. “special populations”, “communication”)
- how to reach faculty who may never serve as first-year advisors?
 - also provide written information – especially information that came from the campus diversity climate survey and the student-generated narratives about troubling classroom experiences they have had (e.g. students being called on in class to present “their people’s” point of view; students having their hair touched gratuitously, etc.)
 - offer an honorarium for attending?
- further questions to consider:
 - what about the specific concern of the CAIR Committee: that classroom issues and problems (and not just advisor relationships and strategies) be directly addressed?
 - how to give all of these issues “timely consideration”?
 - Budget: Approaching Human Resources and Dean Bartanen was suggested.
 - Should the training be postponed to the first week of school, perhaps the first Thursday?
- A sub-committee was created (DeHart, Wiese, Bobby, Lentz) to work on a specific proposal to coordinate the goals and logistics of the training for Fall 2008. This will be presented to the full committee at our meeting on May 5.
- Wiese and Valentine will work on the end-of-year report and bylaws proposal; full committee will discuss and vote on both documents at the next meeting (April 21) so they can be submitted to the Faculty Senate.

Next Meetings:

- Tuesday April 21, 8 a.m.
- Tuesday May 5, 8 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.