

Minutes of the Diversity Committee

March 11, 2010

Members present: Kim Bobby, Ayanna Drakos, Lisa Ferrari, Margi Nowak, Susan Owen (Chair), Michel Rocchi, Justin Tiehen

Owen called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

The committee approved the minutes from February 25, 2010.

The semester having neared its midpoint, Owen reviewed the committee's progress on its proposed charges from the Senate for 2009-2010. For clarity in showing connections among the charges, she addressed them in reverse order of their presentation in last year's Diversity Committee end-of-year report:

Charge 6: "Collaborate with faculty-related diversity efforts on campus by creating liaisons to groups such as: a) the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), b) the DAC Curriculum & Faculty Advising Task Force, c) the Diversity Subcommittee of the Committee on Teaching, d) the October 14-16 [sic], 2010 Race and Pedagogy national conference."

Charge 5: "Per the new bylaws, assume oversight of the Bias-Hate Educational Response Team (BERT), address concerns about its name, and appoint two Committee members to BERT."

2009-2010 action on charges 6 and 5: The committee continues to address charge 6 in conversation with Bobby in her role as Chief Diversity Officer, and through action on charge 5. In response to charge 5, the committee has worked extensively to clarify to both the faculty and the trustees its vision for the relationship between the Diversity Committee and BERT. A revised set of bylaws have been proposed to the full faculty by Nila Wiese, former Chair of the Diversity Committee, and had their first reading at the February 22 faculty meeting. The second reading of and vote on Wiese's proposal is set for the April 6 faculty meeting.

Charge 4: "Create and maintain a website with technical assistance from the Associate Deans' Office that displays courses at Puget Sound with significant diversity content. This charge includes updating the information annually."

2009-2010 action on charge 4: Jeff Matthews and Hans Ostrom, members of the DAC, have undertaken an inventory of relevant courses and reported on their work to the Diversity Committee. The committee has yet to develop the website mentioned in the charge.

Charge 3: “Continue to sponsor informal discussions with faculty about diversity matters.”

2009-2010 action on charge 3: The committee has undertaken this as part of addressing charge 6.

Charge 2: “Continue to develop and implement a program for including diversity issues as a permanent element of faculty development and to assess and refine said program.”

2009-2010 action on charge 2: The committee will take up this charge as its task during the coming weeks.

Charge 1: “Continue to review the language of the University’s Diversity Statement in light of suggested changes from the Coalition Against Injustice and Racism and present suggestions to the Senate...”

2009-2010 action on charge 1: Owen suggested that action on this charge would be imprudent until the question of committee bylaws is settled by the faculty and trustees.

Owen commented that the committee had made progress in three additional areas, given its work on the following dates:

- A) November 20, 2009: The committee heard reports from students on the status of various student diversity groups and from Dean of Students Mike Segawa on diversity as a retention issue. These reports revealed three trends:
 - The current organizational structure of student groups through the Student Affairs division does not facilitate collaboration among the groups.
 - Student groups desire greater collaboration among themselves.
 - Students desire faculty involvement in diversity issues.
- B) December 6, 2009: The committee advised Owen on possible revisions to the new bylaw language, given concerns expressed by some trustees. Bobby introduced an organization chart of diversity groups on campus that committee members found extremely helpful.
- C) February 25, 2010: The committee reviewed the Climate for Diversity survey administered by the Office of Institutional Research and discussed the need to collect additional information regarding students’ experiences of diversity on campus. Some committee members expressed a desire to see qualitative data, preferably in narrative form, on this topic.

Bobby commented that some data for item C could come through her initiative to gather, from campus community members, accounts of positive experiences regarding diversity. She has received the more than 1000 responses to date. These responses contain answers to two questions:

- 1) How have you been enriched by diversity at Puget Sound?

2) If we created a culture of inclusive learning by 2015, what would that look like?

Owen indicated that she will include all of these achievements in her end-of-year report to the Senate.

Bobby requested more information on the work of Matthews and Ostrom to survey courses with diversity content. Owen indicated the work is in progress. Matthews and Ostrom continue to gather data and compile it in a spreadsheet to serve as evidence of forward motion for diversity initiatives.

Tiehen asked how many committee meetings remain before the full faculty vote on Wiese's bylaw revision. Committee members responded that one meeting remains. Tiehen suggested that the committee discuss the best way to present its case for bylaw revision. Inconclusive discussion ensued.

Owen emphasized the importance of turnout at the April 6 faculty meeting as a way of engaging colleagues in diversity issues. She expressed a desire for a large turnout by individuals holding a variety of views on the bylaws. Drakos asked whether students were permitted to attend faculty meetings. Rocchi responded that faculty meetings are open to all.

Owen adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 25, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ferrari