

Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes

11/06/09

In attendance

Collin Dahl-Veenstra, Jeff Matthews (guest), Hans Ostrom (guest), Steve Soule, Zaixin Hong, Lisa Ferrari, Susan Owen, Ayanna Drakos, Margi Nowak, Michel Rocchi, David Sousa, Yoshiko Matsui, Pepa Lago-Grana, Justin Tiehen

I. Susan Owen announced that:

- The Board of Trustees had met and declined to approve the proposed changes to the bylaws governing the Diversity Committee. There was discussion of what this entailed for the committee for now – namely, that we’re still constituted as a committee under the “old” by laws – and what it entailed for the future. Owen mentioned that a “next step” meeting was going to be held regarding how to secure Board approval in the future.
- BERT had met and discussed ways to address faculty concerns about the organization.
- In connection with the 2010 Race & Pedagogy Conference, a letter had been sent out to faculty regarding spring classes covering topics relevant to the conference.

II. The minutes of the previous committee meeting were approved.

III. Hans Ostrom and Jeff Matthews from the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) were present to discuss their work in putting together a list of present classes across the university that address diversity. Ostrom and Matthews mentioned that:

- The list was compiled by asking department chairs to indicate which classes fit.
- The list will be made available to students to use in selecting classes.
- The list also could be used in connection with grant applications and recruiting prospective students.
- Perhaps one problem with the list as it currently exists is that it does not include a “historical” category (e.g., pre-1500).
- DAC had been in communication with Jack Roundy about adding a diversity component to the annual first year advising session. Perhaps this list of classes could play some role in that.

IV. This led into a general discussion:

- Michel Rocchi asked who originally set up DAC and gave it its charges. The answer: Kim Bobby in her role as Chief Diversity Officer.
- Ayanna Drakos mentioned that one problem for students is that they do not have enough engagement with their faculty advisors. She noted that at

the University of Washington, the Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity has a program that sets students of color up with certain advisors, and suggested that something like this could be done at Puget Sound. In the discussion that followed Hans Ostrom mentioned the Ally Program at Puget Sound and suggested that perhaps this could help play such a role.

- Susan Owen asked how classes from the sciences which do not directly address diversity (e.g., physics) were handled with respect to the list. Jeff Matthews replied that again, the decision of whether to list a class was left up to the department chairs.
- Lisa Ferrari used the example of an English class on *Jane Eyre* in order to ask about the criteria for inclusion on the list (the idea being that, at least at first blush, the connection between *Jane Eyre* and issues of diversity at least isn't obvious). The response again was that no real criteria for inclusion were offered by DAC, but instead the decision was left to department chairs.
- Justin Tiehen asked whether departments asked DAC for guidance in figuring out which classes to list. The answer: No, not really.
- David Sousa asked how DAC's plans with Jack Roundy regarding first year advising were related to the Diversity Committee's own efforts on this front. In the discussion that followed it was mentioned that Roundy had indicated it would be difficult to add a diversity component to the first year advising session, because that session was already so full. In light of this, plans have been made instead to have some sort of session in the spring semester for new professors, and this spring session (instead of first year advising) would include a diversity component, perhaps one making use of the narratives collected last year through the Diversity Committee.

V. Before adjourning the meeting, Ayanna Drakos announced that on Tuesday, 11/17, the Puget Sound Black Student Union will be hosting a fundraising event: *Jerkin in Tacoma*.

VI. The meeting adjourned at 1:50.