

# **Committee on Diversity 2003-04 Annual Report**

## **Introduction**

The Diversity Committee engaged in a variety of projects and discussions during the 2003-2004 academic year. Because our charges for the year were particularly broad and wide-ranging, it makes most sense to report on our work on a charge-by-charge basis. In more general terms, however, the Committee's work may be divided into several categories. Over the course of the year, the Committee pursued targeted initiatives such as the "facilitation of the (so-called) telephoning project" (Standing Charge I) and the review of the proposed Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment (Charge V for 2003-2004). Committee members also promoted campus-wide discussion of the University Diversity Statement through educational initiatives and participation in a variety of campus-wide conversations. Finally, the Committee reviewed and discussed a variety of data related to diversity on the Puget Sound campus and took steps to develop an instrument to collect additional data regarding staff and faculty experiences and perceptions of diversity and of campus climate.

The Committee's discussions were rich and varied, reflecting the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of Committee members. The Diversity Committee remains, appropriately, the largest standing committee of the faculty and includes a significant number of student and staff members. Because issues related to diversity cut across categories of University affiliation, it is essential to the Committee to include members representing the full range of constituencies on the University campus.

The membership of the 2003-2004 Diversity Committee consisted of Kris Bartanen (*Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students*), Devon Biggerstaff ('06), Kim Bobby (*Representing George Mills, Jr., Vice President for Enrollment*), Jane Brazell (*Advancement Services*), Julie Christoph (*English*), Meghan Coleman ('06), Marie DeBenedictis (*Occupational Therapy*), Rosa Beth Gibson (*Director of Human Resources and Affirmative Action Officer*), Natalie Jones ('03), Mikiko Ludden (*Foreign Languages & Literature*), David Macey (*English*), Blaire Notrica ('05), Margi Nowak (*Comparative Sociology*), Susie O'Donnell (*Student Financial Services*), David Scott (*Mathematics & Computer Science*), David Souza (*Politics & Government*), eboni treco ('05), and Carrie Washburn (*Representing Terry Cooney, Academic Vice President and Dean of the University*).

## **Review of Charges for 2003-2004**

*(1.) Work with the Office of Admission to support its recruitment efforts, including facilitation of the (so-called) telephoning project.*

The Diversity Committee remained in close contact with the Office of Admission throughout the year, with Kim Bobby, Director of Access Programs, representing Vice President for Enrollment George Mills on the Committee. While the Office of

Admission did not request the Committee's assistance with any new recruitment projects this year, the Committee once again arranged for faculty members to contact admitted students of color with a message of welcome and encouragement.

Working with head officers, program directors, and faculty members from almost every academic unit of the university, the Diversity Committee was able to insure that each admitted student of color received a greeting from a faculty member in his or her declared area of academic interest as well as an invitation to enter into dialog with the faculty member about program requirements, faculty expectations, and other aspects of living and studying at Puget Sound.

In the fall Of 2004, members of the Diversity Committee also met with representatives of the Office of Admission to review a draft version of the University's new *Viewbook* and made a number of suggestions about ways to foreground the University's commitment to supporting diversity on campus and to developing an increasingly diverse faculty, staff, and student body.

*(2.) Work with the Director of Access Programs and the faculty support committee to collaborate with Access Programs and the Speakers' Bureau.*

Kim Bobby, Director of Access Programs, once again served as a member of the Diversity Committee, representing Vice President for Enrollment George Mills. While the Committee received no specific requests for assistance or collaboration from Access Programs or the Speakers' Bureau, the Committee continues to stand ready to provide whatever support it can to both of these important programs.

Because the Committee has not received a formal request for assistance from the Director of Access Programs or the faculty support committee in the last two year, we recommend that this item be consolidates with the more general charge to "work with the Office of Admission to support its recruitment efforts" in the charges to the 2004-05 Diversity Committee.

*(3.) Work with appropriate offices and governing bodies to monitor and support disability/difference as an aspect of diversity.*

Committee member Marie DeBenedictis, Academic Fieldwork Coordinator for the School of Occupational Therapy, helped to organize this year's highly successful "Perspective on Mobility" program, cosponsored by Diversity Theme Year, the School of Occupational Therapy, the School of Physical Therapy, and the Community Action and Involvement Center. Participants in this program spent an afternoon navigating the campus in wheelchairs or using forearm crutches, learning about the many physical, structural, and psychological challenges involved in studying and transacting business on campus in a wheelchair or on crutches. Participants were able to experience both the invisibility and the hypervisibility regularly confronted at Puget Sound by individuals with disabilities involving limitations on mobility. Participants in this program and in a follow-up debriefing session and campus conversation expressed enthusiastic support for this program and a strong interest in seeing it repeated on a regular basis. The

2003-04 Diversity Committee encourages next year's Committee actively to support the continuation of the "Perspectives on Mobility" program and to participate in the development of additional programs that promote understanding of disability as an aspect of diversity.

*(4.) Facilitate campus-wide discussion of the University Diversity Statement and seek additional ways to publicize both the statement itself and the commitment of the campus to the philosophy and goals identified therein.*

In an effort to help publicize the University Diversity Statement, Committee members Jane Brazell, Marie DeBenedictis, and David Macey collaborated to develop a curriculum presenting the Diversity Statement. This curriculum includes a series of group exercises, discussion prompts, and worksheets that challenge participants to reflect upon their lived experience of and responses to social, cultural, ethnic, racial, and sexual diversity and to identify specific ways of putting into practice in their workplaces and living environments the principles articulated in the Diversity Statement.

Brazell, DeBenedictis, and Macey used this model curriculum in facilitating a highly successful workshop session entitled "A Reflection in the Mirror: Demystifying Diversity" at the 2004 Professional Development Conference for Faculty & Staff organized by the Office of Human Resources. The evaluations that participants completed at the end of this session indicate that the program effectively modeled strategies for identifying, responding to, and affirming a variety of different forms of diversity within a multicultural, multiethnic, and multiracial community. The Office of Human Resources has requested the Diversity Committee to organize a similar program at next year's Professional Development Conference, and the Committee is eager to identify other contexts, including new faculty orientation and student leadership training, in which this curriculum might be offered.

Members of the Diversity Committee have also participated in campus-wide discussions of diversity-related issues throughout the year. Committee Chair David Macey worked with a group of concerned students and faculty members from on and off of the Committee to organize an open forum on October ninth to discuss appropriate responses to issues raised in the wake of last fall's blackface postering incident, and participants in this forum met again on October thirteenth with President Ron Thomas to present a series of proposals for fostering and sustaining campus-wide awareness of and discussion about diversity-related issues. Again this spring, Committee members played an active role in the conversations concerning the use of racist language in the Infinite Monkeys Festival student production of *This Is My Play*.

In reflecting on our participation in these difficult, highly charged, sometimes cathartic discussions, Committee members have proposed the development of a "response team" made up of Committee members and other interested members of the University Community who would be available to help facilitate campus discussions of issues related to diversity, bias, and discriminatory harassment.

*(5.) Continue the work begun during 2002-2003 to consider 5, 10, 15, and 20-year benchmarks for both recruitment and retention of students, faculty, administrators, and staff of color.*

The Diversity Committee conducted extensive discussions of the possibility of establishing 5, 10, 15, and 20-year benchmarks for recruitment and retention and reviewed a variety of documents including the most recent reports from Management Information Services and the Office of Human Resources on the ethnic identification of enrolled students, on graduating seniors' assessment of campus climate and diversity, and on the ethnic composition of the faculty staff, charted both over time and in comparison to "Northwest Peer," "National Peer," "Next Step," and "Premier" institutions. The Committee also reviewed the recommendation made to President Philip Phibbs by the University Diversity Committee in 1990, which suggest specific recruitment and retention benchmarks. The Committee owes a special debt of gratitude to Randy Nelson, Director of Institutional Research, to Committee members Kris Bartanen, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Rosa Beth Gibson, Director of Human Resources and Affirmative Action Officer, for assembling and presenting an impressive a body of richly nuanced data about diversity at Puget Sound.

In reviewing data related to campus climate, the members of the Committee noted that although significant data is available regarding students' perceptions and experiences of diversity and of campus climate, comparable data regarding the perceptions and experiences of staff and faculty members is not currently available. Committee members Julie Christoph and Devon Biggerstaff worked together on behalf of the Committee as a whole to develop a survey to begin gathering data about faculty and staff perceptions and experiences of diversity and of campus climate. A copy of this survey is attached to this report (Appendix B). The Committee strongly recommends that the 2004-05 Diversity Committee work with Randy Nelson, Director of Institutional Research, to implement and institutionalize this survey so that adequate information will be available in the future regarding staff and faculty members' perceptions of the climate for diversity on campus.

The Diversity Committee, after serious reflection, has concluded that the question of benchmarks for the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, administrators, and staff of color should be a campus-wide discussion, involving not only the Diversity Committee but also those individuals, offices, and programs directly involved in the student, faculty, and staff recruitment and support. While the Diversity Committee lacks the resources or the expertise to set benchmarks for the University, it is eager to participate in a wider discussion of appropriate five, ten, fifteen, and twenty year goals for realizing University strategic goal to "recruit and retain an increasingly talented and diverse student body, faculty and staff" (*Strategic Priorities: Goals for This Decade*, III).

*(6.) Continue discussions with Student Diversity Center organizations and initiate similar discussions with residential student groups to gain insight into the current campus climate and to hear students' recommendations for improvement, as well as students' perspectives on the role the Diversity Committee might play on campus.*

In order to underscore its commitment to working collaboratively with Student Diversity Center organizations and with the Office of Multicultural Student Services, the Diversity Committee elected to hold its meetings this year in the new Student Diversity Center and to encourage student participation in our meetings. Committee member Blaire Notrica, Co-Coordinator of the Student Diversity Center, has kept the Committee apprised of the ongoing programs, the specific requirements, and the more general needs of the various Student Diversity Center organizations. Meanwhile, Committee member Devon Biggerstaff has kept the Diversity Committee informed of diversity-related issues that have been raised before the ASUPS Student Concerns Committee, of which he is also a member. Student Diversity Center Co-Coordinator Jessica Humann and Diversity Theme Year Student Coordinator Leiana Jagolino have also participated in the Committee's meetings and have provided valuable feedback on diversity-related programming. Committee members, in turn, have continued to be involved with a variety of Student Diversity Center organizations, providing support, encouragement, and mentorship. Finally, the Diversity Committee joined with Diversity Theme Year and a group of academic programs and departments in cosponsoring two major campus events, the historian Charlotte Opfermann's lecture on "The Final Days of the Holocaust and the Challenges of Liberation" and a public reading by the S'Klallam poet Duane Niatum.

The Diversity Committee continues to explore ways of entering into dialog with student residential communities. The Committee has actively explored the possibility of developing a series of workshops, modeled on the "Queer 101" sessions conducted by Understanding Sexuality / Bisexuals, Lesbians, Gays, and Allies for Diversity, and focusing on the University Diversity Statement and its implications for resident students. The Diversity Statement curriculum developed this year and successfully implemented at the 2004 Professional Development Conference for Faculty & Staff could and should be adapted for use with students in the University's residence halls.

*(7.) Consider active roles that the committee might take in support of those campus organizations whose goals focus specifically on supporting diversity, including Admissions, Student Diversity Center and its affiliated groups, the Race and Pedagogy discussions, Multicultural Student Services, and Disability Services.*

As noted above, members of the Diversity Committee have provided feedback to with the Office of Admission on the development of the University's new *Viewbook*, and the Committee has continued to arrange for faculty members to contact admitted students of color with messages of welcome and encouragement. The Committee has also cosponsored events with Diversity Theme Year, and Committee members have played active roles in a variety of Student Diversity Center organizations and in the Race and Pedagogy discussions. Associate Director of Student Services and Director of Multicultural Student Services Yoshiko Matsui, although not formally a member of the Committee, attended meetings throughout the year, participated actively in discussion, and provided a series of valuable suggestions and insights about issues ranging from the assessment of campus climate to the specific needs and priorities of individual Student Diversity Center organizations.

At Committee member Margi Nowak's invitation, Puget Sound alumnus Michael Pavel ('80), a member of the Skokomish Nation and an associate professor in the College of Education at Washington State University, met with the Diversity Committee on March fifth. Professor Pavel spoke movingly of his own experiences at Puget Sound during the late 1970s as a student of color with limited financial resources. His remarks underscored the important role that faculty and staff members play in providing a support network for students from underrepresented and marginalized communities, and he provided a variety of examples of ways in which the Committee as a whole and its individual faculty, staff, and student members might more effectively reach out to support students from diverse backgrounds. The Committee strongly recommends that the 2004-05 Diversity Committee build upon and expand the conversation that Professor Pavel initiated by seeking input from alumni from backgrounds and communities underrepresented on the Puget Sound campus.

*(8.) Offer feedback on recommendations forthcoming from the Campus Harassment Policy Work Group for revisions to the Sexual Harassment Policy.*

Diversity Committee member Kris Bartanen, Vice President for Student Affairs, acted as Convener of the Campus Harassment Policy Work Group, which included Committee members Blaire Notrica and David Macey. In March, the Diversity Committee as a whole reviewed and endorsed the completed draft of the Work Group's proposed Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment. Chair David Macey forwarded the Committee's remarks on the proposed Policy to Faculty Senate President Bill Beardsley in a separate memorandum, a copy of which is attached to this report (Appendix C).

*(9.) Consider ways in which to promote interaction between the campus and the Tacoma community and to build stronger relationships with other campuses in the area, partly to combat the isolation felt by students of color and aid in retention, and partly to assist in recruitment of local students and staff.*

Committee member and Student Diversity Center Co-Coordinator Blaire Notrica, President Ron Thomas, Associate Director for Student Services Yoshiko Matsui, and Associate Dean for Student Services Houston Dougharty participated in and made presentations at "Strengthening Campus Connections," the South Puget Sound Higher Education Diversity Partnership's annual conference, which took place on February 20, 2003 on the campus of Pacific Lutheran University.

Committee Chair David Macey conducted a workshop on college-level writing skills on April 14, 2004 as part of a program organized by the Education Talent Search program at Tacoma Community College to encourage and support secondary school students of color from Tacoma in the preparation for university- and college-level study.

The 2003-04 Diversity Committee strongly recommends that the 2004-05 Committee continue to support community initiatives and coalitions seeking to increase diversity in higher education in the region and that it be especially attentive to opportunities to work

with and support the activities of the South Puget Sound Higher Education Diversity Partnership.

*(10.) Begin work on developing the equivalent of a “Diversity Impact Statement” that could be considered when the University makes decisions and sets policy that might not, at first glance, seem to affect diversity but that may affect it considerably later.*

The Diversity Committee discussed a variety of approaches to developing protocols for a “Diversity Impact Statement,” but no clear consensus emerged as to the form that such protocols might take or the manner in which a reporting system of this sort might be implemented. The Diversity Committee strongly recommends, however, that the members of the University community use the University Diversity Statement as a point of reference when establishing or amending policies and when making administrative decisions. The Diversity Committee also strongly recommends that the Faculty Senate encourage all standing committees to reflect on the ways in which they can best implement in their own work the principles articulated in the University Diversity Statement.

## **Proposed Charges for 2004-05**

The members of the Diversity Committee concur in suggesting that a set of carefully focused charges with specific goals and outcomes would be most appropriate for next year’s Committee. The following proposed charges reflect the insights that have emerged from the Committee’s experience this year working with a series of more general, open-ended, and wide-ranging charges.

(1.) Continue working with the Office of Admission, the Office of Human Resources, and other appropriate offices and governing bodies in support of efforts to recruit and retain an increasingly talented and diverse student body.

(2.) Continue working with the Student Diversity Center and the Office of Multicultural Student Services to support the work of Student Diversity Center organizations, Diversity Theme Year, and other existing and emerging organizations and programs.

(3.) Work with the Office of Human Resources and the Division of Student Affairs to develop and implement additional educational programs promoting awareness of and support for the values articulated in the University Diversity Statement and the proposed Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment.

(4.) Work with the Office of Institutional Research to institutionalize the collection of data regarding staff and faculty members’ attitudes toward and experiences of diversity as an element of campus climate.

(5.) Explore the possibility of sending delegates to gather information at one of the several national conferences devoted to diversity issues in higher education or of sponsoring a regional conference dedicated to these issues.

(6.) Explore the possibility of developing a “Response Team” of students and of faculty and staff members equipped to convene and moderate campus-wide discussions of potentially bias-related incidents at Puget Sound.

## **Recommendation**

The 2003-04 Diversity Committee strongly recommends that the Faculty Senate request from the appropriate governing bodies a modest budget for the 2004-05 Committee to support its outreach and educational work on campus, its efforts to gather information about programs to support and enhance diversity in higher education, and the preparation and training involved in the development of the proposed “Response Team.” The Committee believes that the sum of \$500.00 would be appropriate to meet the costs of photocopying and printing associated with its educational efforts, of conference registration fees, and of training materials for the proposed “Response Team.”