

University Diversity Committee Minutes
January 30, 2004

Present: David Macey (chair), Kris Bartanen, Devon Biggerstaff, Kim Bobby, Marie DeBenedictis, Mikiko Ludden, Blaire Notrica, Carrie Washburn; Visitors: Yoshiko Matsui, Ylce Irizarry

The meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m. The minutes of November 21, 2003 were approved as amended. The minutes of December 5, 2003 were approved.

David Macey introduced Ylce Irizarry, a candidate for a position in American Literature in the English Department who had asked to attend today's meeting.

Noting that student member Natalie Jones had graduated in December and that staff member Susie O'Donnell had provided notice that her work schedule would not permit her attendance this semester, Macey reported that he had contacted ASUPS President Darrel Frost and Staff Senate Chair Bruce Bechtle regarding appointments for additional committee members.

Macey reported that Prof. Judith Kay had requested Diversity Committee support for a campus lecture by Holocaust historian and survivor, Charlotte Opfermann in April. Members affirmed the contribution of such a lecture for the campus and suggested contacts for resources.

Macey reported that he, Marie DeBenedictis and Jane Brazzell had presented a workshop entitled "Demystifying Diversity" as part of the January professional development program on campus. The workshop, which included a series of exercises and discussion of the University Diversity Statement, was well-received by ten participants and could serve as a model for other training sessions. Irizarry asked if diversity workshops were also offered on campus for students. Blaire Notrica stated that a similar program is offered for student leaders in residence life (Resident Assistants, Community Coordinators, Resident Student Association officers) and orientation (both Perspectives and Passages leaders). DeBenedictis noted that Occupational Therapy students also receive such training. Macey identified Queer 101 workshops, offered to residence hall groups, as another example of student diversity training.

The balance of the meeting was devoted to discussion and strategizing for the spring semester's work. In terms of continued work on issues related to recruitment and retention of faculty of color, Irizarry affirmed that faculty of color recognize that campuses may not have large numbers of faculty from traditionally underrepresented populations, but do want to join campuses where they will be treated well. Committee members spoke to how interviews might be conducted with faculty members of color who have chosen to leave Puget Sound to learn about their experiences here.

In terms of strategies for assessing campus climate, Yoshiko Matsui observed that most assessments have been directed toward student experiences. Members of the Diversity

Committee met with some student groups last spring and summary notes of those meetings could be reviewed. Macey and Bartanen reminded the group that notes of discussions that followed the posting of the Infinite Monkeys flyer and notes of Race and Pedagogy sessions could also be reviewed as a basis for future actions.

In response to a question from Devon Biggerstaff, Kris Bartanen summarized the various sources of recent student survey data on campus climate. Bartanen and Matsui agreed to compile that information and report to the committee at its next meeting. In response to a question about comparison data from other institutions, Matsui suggested that looking to other institutions for good models of diversity programs and strategies may be as or more useful than quantitative survey comparisons. Bartanen noted that some surveys in which we participate are nationally-normed and, as such, provides comparison data. The Student Voice survey, which included a section on campus climate and 2003 and for which 2004 questions are being written currently, could include items suggested by the committee.

Macey, Bobby and Notrica agreed to work on assessment questions for learning about campus climate for faculty and staff. Bartanen suggested that checking with Director of Human Resources Rosa Beth Gibson about any relevant questions in the Campbell Organizational Survey might be one starting point. DeBenedictis suggested working through liaison-constituent groups of the Staff Senate. Macey suggested that student survey instruments could serve as models for faculty/staff questions. Carrie Washburn observed that care needs to be taken in asking questions about campus environment to focus specifically on issues of diversity, as “campus environment” can be interpreted broadly to include work environment, compensation, etc. and that probing on how campus climate could be improved is the most important focus for assessment. DeBenedictis suggested that a question such as “What have you been doing to improve campus climate?” is one that can open constructive thinking.

Several members joined Biggerstaff in affirming the importance of setting priorities and timelines for the committee’s work. Carrie Washburn affirmed the need for a plan of action and suggested that focus groups and/or for a for student, faculty and staff input could be advertised via email, the diversity-l listserve, student organizations affiliated with the Diversity Center, the Trail and ASUPS senate.

DeBenedictis reported that she is working with others on campus toward a Disability Awareness Day on March 26. This day could also be a place for discussion, particularly since it is important that disability be included in considerations of campus climate.

With Macey’s leadership, the committee looked at its spring meeting dates and generated a general outline for its work:

February 13: Bartanen and Matsui report on existing climate assessment instruments and data

February 27: Committee outlines plan for email contact with staff and faculty (survey to be conducted prior to spring break)

March 12: Committee plans focus group gatherings (to be held after spring break)

April 2: Review results

April 16: Review results

April 30: Formulate committee charges for 2004-2005.

Macey reminded the group of the ongoing Diversity Committee work, in support of the Office of Admission, when faculty members call and/or email admitted students of color. Mikiko Ludden invited members to the 2nd floor Wyatt Hall display on Japanese New Year.

The committee adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kris Bartanen