

Minutes of the University Diversity Committee  
March 5, 2004

Present: Kris Bartanen, Devon Biggerstaff, Kim Bobby, Daneka Childs, Julie Christoph, Meredith Crews, Sean Duade, Rosa Beth Gibson, David Macey (chair), Margi Nowak, Michael Pavel ('81), David Sousa, Austin Stockwell, Barbara Weist

David Macey called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. at the Student Diversity Center.

The minutes of February 27 were approved, with the draft of the campus climate survey questionnaire appended.

Upcoming diversity-related events were announced:

- *Angels in America* Salon on March 9, at 6:00 in Trimble Forum
- Perspectives on Mobility, on April 9, 12-3:30 in WSC 101, to be followed by discussion in Trimble Forum
- University Leadership awards nominations, due March 23

Barbara Weist was introduced as the new UPS Web manager, and she asked for input on new ways to represent diversity—particularly for the Fall 2004 revisions to the external University site. Discussion centered on possibilities for expanding the range of diverse members of our campus community (including alumni) who are represented in the pictorial profiles.

Macey led the committee in offering a special welcome to Michael Pavel, class of 1981, whom the committee had invited to speak about perspectives on diversity at UPS. Macey invited Pavel to review and expand on some of the issues he'd talked about with Margi Nowak in the fall, regarding his recommendations for helping underserved students and continuing to build a positive climate for diversity at UPS.

Pavel began by offering two observations about diversity at UPS. First, that UPS is a diverse place in which all people are unique and differ from each other in a variety of ways, including race, orientation, and worldviews. Second, that this community is reflective of the broader global community, and that, as in the global community, it is not possible to protect each other from conflict. Pavel suggested that we have a lot to celebrate and a lot to work on, and that we need to remember that diversity is reciprocal, and that aiming for a critical mass of American Indian and Alaskan Native does a service to the entire campus community and not only to those students.

Nowak asked Pavel to discuss some of his memories of being a student at UPS—both pleasant and unpleasant.

Pavel explained that one important piece of social context for the time he was at UPS was US District Judge George Boldt's reaffirmation of the rights of American Indians in Western Washington to fish and hunt in their accustomed grounds. This was a time of violent conflict, in which many non-Indian fishermen were put out of business. Many

students at UPS whose families were involved with fishing resented Pavel's presence on campus and made him to feel as though he was not worthy academically or socially to be a member of the campus community. Pavel suggested that when assessing campus climate with respect to diversity, it's important to see what's going on in the popular press; when people read about issues related to such topics as race and same-sex unions, they feel comfortable talking about those issues on a personal level with students perceived as having a connection to those topics.

By way of solution, Pavel suggested that those of us committed to supporting diversity on campus make a point of helping students from underserved populations understand expectations for social and academic participation in campus life. Responding to questions by Christoph and Macey, Pavel explained that this education can happen in a variety of ways but is most effective when appropriate to the student's cultural background. For American Indian and Native Alaskan students, storytelling works well as a mode of instruction. No one way can work, and Pavel gave examples of how he personally learned on campus by sitting down and talking with a professor about a paper, sitting and not talking with another professor who respected Pavel's need for silence. Pavel emphasized that a spirit of sincerity sometimes speaks more powerfully than words alone.

David Sousa asked what recommendations Pavel has for encouraging American Indians and Native Alaskans to come to UPS.

Pavel responded that we should first say thank you to them for their interest. We should also know how many American Indians and Native Alaskans have graduated from UPS in recent years and who was a success and why. Pavel argued that, given our location and the ties we have with the community, it is imperative to have more American Indians and Native Alaskans on campus because of their importance to this region, culturally and environmentally. Pavel suggested that schools on and near reservations can be instrumental in the future in encouraging American Indians and Native Alaskans to come to UPS.

To support American Indians and Native Alaskans on campus, Pavel gave several examples of how people here—students, staff, and faculty—came to him at key points in his life and helped in meaningful ways, giving him work, helping him overcome homesickness and feelings of exclusion from the lifestyle of wealthier students. These personal connections were what enabled his success at UPS.

Macey asked Pavel for his charges to our committee. Pavel responded that UPS has great potential and that we need to have a strong sense of vision and philosophy, not to think only in terms of fixing problems. Within the American Indian and Native Alaskan communities, there is a philosophy that all children are gifted and talented, and elders play an important role in helping each individual reach his or her full potential. Having elders, conceived in several ways, is important to the strength of the community. We as a committee need to think of ourselves as the most important committee on campus. We need to be a source of warmth and comfort to the diversity of this campus, and we can do

that in our own daily work but also through small but meaningful things like institutionalizing letters welcoming students of color to campus.

The committee, along with the several guests, thanked Pavel for coming. The next committee meeting will occur on March 26.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45.

Respectfully submitted,  
Julie Christoph