

University Diversity Committee
Minutes from March 26, 2004

Present: Kris Bartanen, Kim Bobby, Meghan Coleman, Marie DeBenedictis, Mikiko Ludden, Blaire Notrica, Margi Nowak

The meeting was called to order at 3:35pm by Kris Bartanen, who chaired the meeting in David Macey's absence. The minutes of the March 5, 2004 meeting were approved.

Announcements:

Stereotype Wall sponsored by Student Diversity Center and (?) ASUPS
JSO continuing discussion in this group and others on campus about decorations in Wheelock, especially during the holiday season in December. Next meeting April 1, 4pm.

Burchell Taylor Lecture, April 1, 7:30 Schneebeck Concert Hall.

Perspectives on Mobility, April 9, open debriefing at 3:30, Trimble Forum.

Bartanen identified 3 agenda items:

Feedback on the draft Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment

Discussion of the telephone and email project

Staff and faculty survey

Policy Prohibiting Harassment

The draft of the Campus Policy Prohibiting Harassment is in the process of review by Faculty, Staff, and ASUPS Senates. Members of the Diversity Committee addressed a concern of Julie Christoph's about new language on pages 3 and 4, "While students should expect to be challenged, they also have the right to participate in educational discussion without being singled out, in any way, by race, national origin, age(sic) religion, sexual orientation or other protective characteristics or status recognized by the university or applicable laws." This sentence speaks to the issue of balance between harassment and liberal education. Does the language get across the point that members of the protected categories should not be seen as spokespersons for any particular group? Or is it unnecessarily specific? Margi Nowak commented that in this litigious society we require more words to explain ourselves. The Committee members chose to leave the language as is.

DeBenedictis made an editorial comment about language on page 8, section B, second paragraph, second sentence, suggesting the addition of a word to clarify the meaning. "A complaint is not considered falsely reported merely because the evidence does not suffice to support a formal charge."

Led by Blaire Notrica, discussion then followed about when the new policy would go into effect and what policy would be in place during the transition. Kris Bartanen stated that she had hoped the policy would be able to go to the Board of Trustees in May, but now thinks it will be next academic year.

Notrica: "If a person was harassed tonight, could s/he use the new policy? Could a person use the new policy to address an event that happened one year ago?"

Bartanen: "Yes. Timely or not reporting doesn't mean a complaint cannot be brought up. Often, the burden of proof is harder to meet if much time has passed."

Margi Nowak: "What if the person being harassed is not covered by one of the protected categories?"

Bartanen: "The student integrity code comes into play if the person who is harassed is not in a protected category. The faculty code would too. The Work Group chose to limit the policy prohibiting discriminatory harassment at legally protected categories."

Telephone and Email Project

Faculty members in the University Diversity Committee have taken on the role of contacting students accepted for the next academic year whose culture is underrepresented here. This was first done by phone, last year it was done by email. Lists of students are now ready. David Macey will match up willing faculty with students whose interests are similar to theirs. Please contact David if you are interested in being matched up to contact an entering student. This action may help to increase the yield number of accepted students who choose to come here.

Staff and Faculty Survey

Julie Christoph and Devon Biggerstaff have put together a draft Faculty/Staff Diversity Survey and now would like to know how to proceed with distributing, tabulating, and reporting on the survey. The Committee wishes to thank Julie and Devon for a clear and concise survey and suggest that they decide on a method of distribution (every 10th name?) and proceed. Kris Bartanen will convey to David Macey that Julie and Devon should not wait until the next meeting of this Committee to move forward.

An Announcement

The new student Orientation program in August will include diversity programming during Passages and Perspectives. Faculty and staff are invited to participate in the development and presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10pm

Respectfully submitted,
Marie DeBenedictis