

Diversity Committee Minutes

March 27, 2003

Committee Members Present: Kris Bartanen, Kim Bobby, Nancy Bristow, David Macey, Margi Nowak, Jac Royce (Chair), Carrie Washburn

- Jac Royce called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.
- The Committee began by reviewing and adopting the minutes of its meeting of February twenty-seventh.
- The Committee noted that the Phone Project, in which faculty members recruit high school seniors from racial and ethnic groups underrepresented on campus, will begin soon.
 - Jac Royce will discuss with Eric Orlin the details of this year's the Phone Project.
- Nancy Bristow reminded the Committee that the feminist scholar, athlete, activist, and scholar Nora Beck will speak at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April eighth, in Wyatt 109.
- Other campus events of which the Committee took note include;
 - Mark Largent's lecture, "Nip it in the Bud: The Seductive Allure of Eugenics in the United States," at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, April third, in Wyatt 109.
 - Turkish-German author and journalist Zafer Senocak's presentation at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, April fourth, in Wyatt 109.
- The Committee next received a report from the subcommittee (Kim Bobby, Nancy Bristow, and David Macey) charged with gathering feedback from Diversity Center organizations.
 - So far, members of the subcommittee have met with Community for Hispanic Awareness (CHisPA), Empowering People of Color (EPOC), and Understanding Sexuality (US).
 - Meetings are scheduled within the next two weeks with the Black Student Union (BSU) and the Jewish Student Organization (JSO).
 - The subcommittee plans to follow up with organizations that have not yet responded to its inquiry about the possibility of meeting to talk.
 - The subcommittee described the work it has undertaken.
 - Members of the subcommittee pose general questions about campus climate, particularly as it bears upon diverse communities at UPS, and then invites students to offer thoughts, reflections, and suggestions about work that the Diversity Committee or its members might do to improve the climate on campus and to support particular communities and organizations.
 - The subcommittee will present a detailed report of its findings by the end of the semester.
 - The Committee discussed ways of institutionalizing the kind of consultation that the subcommittee is currently undertaking.
 - The Committee might in the future invite Diversity Center organizations to identify members who could serve as liaisons to the Diversity Committee.
 - The Committee might also designate members to serve as liaisons to specific student organizations.
 - The Committee might also establish an ongoing link with the ASUPS Diversity Committee.
 - Carrie Washburn noted that faculty members and students will rotate on and off of the Committee in the near future.
- Next, Jac Royce and Margi Nowak reported to the Committee on their lengthy discussion with the Curriculum subcommittee that is investigating and will make a recommendation about the place of American Sign Language (ASL) in the new Core Curriculum.
 - This conversation provided an opportunity to dispel misconceptions about ASL (e.g., that it is a form of English).

- Particular attention was paid to Deaf Culture and its status as a “foreign” culture as defined by the new Core Curriculum.
 - Margi Nowak noted that methods of defining a “culture” have changed over time and that the debate over the status of Deaf Culture reflects, at least in part, different disciplinary assumptions about what “culture” means as well as different conceptions of deafness (*i.e.*, whether it is a “difference” or a “deficiency”).
 - Both Jac Royce and Margi Nowak called attention to the role that expert testimony from linguists and teachers and scholars in the fields of ASL and Deaf Cultural Studies might play in helping to assuage concerns over the legitimacy of ASL as a “foreign” language as defined by the new Core Curriculum.
 - In general, the Curriculum subcommittee appeared receptive to the argument that proficiency in ASL should be accepted in fulfillment of the “foreign” language requirement of the new Core Curriculum.
- Finally, the Committee accepted Kris Bartanen’s proposal that Student Affairs take the lead in spreading the word about the University’s recently approved Diversity Statement.
 - The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.
 - The next meeting of the Diversity Committee will take place at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, April tenth, in the Misener Room of the Collins Library.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. David Macey, Jr.