

2002-2003 University Diversity Committee Report to Faculty Senate

12 May 2003

Overview:

The committee began the year with six charges from the Faculty Senate. This report discusses each of these charges. Since our work on these charges has led us to develop ideas about the future efforts of the committee, we end this report with a group of suggested standing responsibilities, as well as a group of suggested charges specific to 2003-2004.

The University Diversity Committee focused its 2002-2003 work on assessing the present state of the campus climate, the current successes and frustrations of those groups charged with building and supporting diversity, and the potential of the committee to become more proactive. We held in-depth discussions with Admissions, Disability Services, Access Programs, and Human Resources, and we began a series of meetings with student groups. In addition to the information presented in each of these sessions, the committee has received scores of specific and general recommendations and requests. In the coming year, we intend to continue these meetings, to assist these groups in their efforts, and to begin acting on some of these suggestions ourselves. Our research and actions in the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 academic years will also enable us to fulfill our charge to consider benchmarks for recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students from under-represented groups, and to suggest how these benchmarks might be met.

2002-2003 Charges:

1. Continue to work with the office of Admission staff on ways to evaluate and regularize the telephoning project.

We began by speaking with current Puget Sound students who had been contacted through the project, as well as discussing the outcome of the previous year's phoning with the Office of Admission. A subcommittee headed by Eric Orlin reevaluated the timing and the approach. In an effort to enable potential students to be personally contacted by Puget Sound faculty active in areas of study in which the students had indicated an interest, most contacts were made by email this year. The use of email widened the available pool of faculty, also making it possible to contact more students. In addition, we hoped that the use of email would lessen the feeling of pressure reported by some students.

It is too early to assess the outcome of this year's faculty contact with potential students. The committee can make that information available in fall if the Faculty Senate so requests.

The committee feels that this charge should become a standing charge.

2. Continue to work with the Director of Access Programs and the faculty support committee to collaborate with Access Programs and the Speakers' Bureau.

Kim Bobby made an extensive presentation, bringing the committee up-to-date on the work and progress of Access Programs. Some members of the committee are personally active in Access Programs, and Bobby has made many suggestions of ways in which the committee and other members of the university community can become involved. In addition, Access Programs and the Diversity Committee are eager to discuss Trinity College's POSSE program with incoming president Ron Thomas.

The committee feels that this charge should become a standing charge.

3. Present a revised draft of the University Statement on Diversity to the Senate during the fall 2002 semester and facilitate University-wide deliberation regarding the statement.

The revised statement was taken forward and subsequently endorsed by the faculty, staff, and student senates. The Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees approved the statement in February. The text follows:

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### University Diversity Statement

#### We Acknowledge

- ◆ the richness of commonalities and differences we share as a university community.

- ◆ the intrinsic worth of all who work and study here.
- ◆ that education is enhanced by investigation of and reflection upon multiple perspectives.

**We Aspire**

- ◆ to create respect for and appreciation of all persons as a key characteristic of our campus community.
- ◆ to increase the diversity of all parts of our University community through commitment to diversity in our recruitment and retention efforts.
- ◆ to foster a spirit of openness to active engagement among all members of our campus community.

**We Act**

- ◆ to achieve an environment that welcomes and supports diversity.
- ◆ to insure full educational opportunity for all who teach and learn here.
- ◆ to prepare effectively citizen-leaders for a pluralistic world.

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The statement has been posted on the university website and will be printed in the upcoming *Bulletin*, *Logger*, and *Viewbook*. The Diversity Committee and the Dean of Students Office co-sponsored a poster design contest; the winning concept is being further developed. In addition, subcommittees meeting with student groups have used the statement to begin conversations about campus diversity issues and goals.

The committee recommends continued work to publicize the Diversity Statement as a charge for 2003-2004.

4. Work with appropriate offices and governing bodies to monitor and support disability as an aspect of diversity.

The committee noted that many members of the Deaf community object to the classification of deafness as a 'disability' and, therefore, agreed to make more conscious use of the phrase "disability/difference" in place of the term "disability" alone.

The committee co-sponsored with the Office of Disability Services a film series to raise awareness of issues of disability and difference. In another education-related undertaking, the committee participated in the deliberation about American Sign Language and core curriculum requirements. In this case, two committee members with backgrounds in linguistics reported on spatial languages in general and ASL in particular to the subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee charged with making a recommendation.

The committee feels that this charge should become a standing charge.

5. Consider 5, 10, 15, and 20-year benchmarks for both recruitment and retention of different groups of students, faculty, administrators, and staff of color.

The committee devoted several meetings to learning about Puget Sound's recruitment and retention efforts. We examined studies and statistics provided by Randy Nelson that included comparisons with similar institutions. Admissions staff made two presentations about their work, the kinds of challenges they meet, and suggestions of ways in which the committee and the University in general could help them. The committee continued discussions with Human Resources begun during 2001-2002 about the recruiting and retention of faculty and staff of color. In addition, subcommittees began a series of meetings with student groups in which recruitment and retention of students of diverse backgrounds were subjects of conversation.

The committee hopes to continue this work during 2003-2004 and, if possible, to suggest benchmarks in the report to the Faculty Senate in May 2004, as well as some strategies for achieving these benchmarks.

6. Consider the appropriateness of recommending to the Senate a By-Laws change that would eliminate some of the administrative membership on the committee. [The Diversity Committee has more administrative members than other standing committees do.]

At our first meeting in September 2002, the committee noted that it is designated as the "University Diversity Committee"—that is, not a 'faculty' committee, but a committee meant to have a broader membership of faculty, administrators, staff, and students. Each administrative member represents a campus department with a vested interest in diversity. We find this membership vital and appropriate.

The charge led the committee to focus on its status as a 'university' committee, both in terms of function and of membership. In researching the By-Laws, the committee learned that in fact not all of its

staff seats were filled. When Chair Jac Royce went to the Staff Senate to seek additional staff appointments, two members of the Staff Senate volunteered to serve on the Diversity Committee, including Institutional Research Director Randy Nelson. We have developed plans for making it easier for students and staff members to serve on the committee, recognizing that better staff and student participation will help to publicize the presence and work of the committee. In addition, we spent much of the year gathering information about ways in which the committee could take a more active and public role in supporting the efforts of the many campus groups dedicated to the diversity of the University community.

Proposed Charges

We propose that the Faculty Senate approve two sets of charges, as follows:

Standing Charges:

1. Work with the Office of Admission to support its recruitment efforts, including facilitation of the (so-called) telephoning project.
2. Work with the Director of Access Programs and the faculty support committee to collaborate with Access Programs and the Speakers' Bureau.
3. Work with appropriate offices and governing bodies to monitor and support disability/difference as an aspect of diversity.

Charges for 2003-2004:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 discussants, Multicultural Student Services, and Disability Services.
5. Offer feedback on recommendations forthcoming from the Campus Harassment Policy Work Group for revisions to the Sexual Harassment Policy that would make it a comprehensive anti-discrimination and harassment policy.
6. 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.