

Faculty Diversity Committee Minutes

October 23, 2001

Members Attending: Kris Bartanen, Bernie Bates, Kim Bobby, Nancy Bristow, Cameron Dolcourt, Rosa Beth Gibson, Margi Nowak, Eric Orlin, David Scott, Carrie Washburn

Bernie Bates called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. The minutes of October 9 (submitted by Rosa Beth Gibson) were lavishly praised, worried about in terms of rate busting standards intimidating subsequent scribes, and then approved.

Student member Cameron Dolcourt was welcomed to the Committee.

Discussion of Charges from the Faculty Senate:

- **Charge # 2: “Present a revised draft of the University Statement on Diversity to the Senate during the Fall 2001 semester and facilitate University-wide deliberation regarding the statement”**

Points discussed:

- Kris Bartanen provided the Committee with some past history of work already begun on this charge. The draft is now its fourth version after Kris and Carrie Washburn received feedback last Spring from the Faculty Senate
 - The task of the present Diversity Committee, then, is to take into account the most recent feedback from the Faculty Senate, fine-tune the language, and send the draft back to the FS, with the ultimate goal being University-wide affirmation of the Statement.
 - Following Bernie Bates’ request for copies of the latest draft (which were quickly passed out to the Committee), Nancy Bristow asked for a postponement of the discussion of the draft until the next meeting so that members could take more time studying the document. (Motion made and approved.)
 - Carrie Washburn asked for clarification of the process by which the Diversity Committee makes recommendations to the University: in other words, after the language of the draft statement is refined to our satisfaction, what do we do?
 - Bernie Bates offered to contact Hans Ostrom for further clarification
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- **Charge #4: “Work collaboratively with appropriate offices and governing bodies to explore additional initiatives regarding disability as an aspect of diversity”**
 - Margi Nowak reported back to the Committee about last Monday’s Pierce College presentation by Norm Kunc and Emma Van der Klift – “The Right to Be Disabled”. Although that particular presentation was aimed at a different audience than would have been the case on this particular campus, Margi spoke with the presenters afterwards and concluded that, at a later date, they might be able to put on a somewhat different presentation on this campus that could be effective as a consciousness-raising effort
 - The discussion begun at an earlier meeting concerning problematic vocabulary (“disability” is already a negative term, but there are no unambiguously satisfactory substitutes) continued, with Kris pointing out the informational resources offered by the Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities (TACID), and Margi mentioning that the language of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) already clarifies the definition of “disability” (even if it does not solve the problem of negative connotations).
 - Cameron Dolcourt, who worked this summer in a Salt Lake City office devoted to ADA work, offered to bring to the next meeting more legal information that the Committee could possibly use.

- Bernie then asked for a small number of volunteers to meet (“for coffee or tea”) to discuss the issue further prior to the next formal committee meeting. David Scott and Margi volunteered.
 - The discussion then turned to a consideration of disabilities as they impact members of the University community, with unanimous praise given to activities such as last Spring’s Disability Awareness Event.
 - Much discussion followed praising Ivey West’s contribution to University awareness of “invisible” disabilities, in particular, her department-by-department presentations last year to explain the legal and procedural issues that must be addressed before UPS students receive accommodations from faculty based on their officially recognized disabilities
 - Eric Orlin commented on how much Ivey’s personal presentation helped him see “the context” for students receiving (and being legally entitled to receive accommodations such as extended time for tests), and added the suggestion that we as a Committee might think of ways to “raise Ivey’s profile” among faculty members – especially those who may not already be aware of the implications of the ADA.
 - Kris added a further issue that this committee could make better known: the wide range of mental health issues that can impact the University’s legal and moral responsibilities in this respect
 - A final suggestion – that “consciousness-raising” presentations dealing with disability-related issues be in some way coupled with presentations of the Informal Committee on Teaching – was enthusiastically supported by all, although Eric mentioned that danger that such presentations, if done apart from more general gatherings of faculty, can easily become situations where the presenter is “preaching to the choir”
- The meeting concluded at 9:50 following a reminder of David Sousa’s presentation tomorrow (October 24) in Wyatt 203: “Rethinking Diversity in Higher Education? (subtitled Race, Class, and Opportunity in Washington State)

Respectfully submitted,

Margi Nowak