

Faculty Diversity Committee Minutes November 6, 2001

Members Attending: Bernie Bates, Nancy Bristow, Cameron Dolcourt, Monica Nixon, Margi Nowak, Eric Orlin, David Scott, Carrie Washburn, Ivey West

Bernie Bates called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.
The minutes of October 23 were approved.

There were no announcements.

Unfinished Business: The Committee continued its discussion of the proposed University Statement on Diversity.

Bernie Bates reported that he had checked with Hans Ostrom (as Senate Chair) on a procedure to be followed once the Diversity Committee had agreed upon the text of a diversity statement. Hans' view was that the statement should be circulated among the entire faculty for input before it returned to the Senate for approval. Bernie indicated that after this conversation he had realized that staff and student feedback would also need to be solicited. Discussion ensued as to the importance of soliciting staff and student feedback and how this might be accomplished; the most logical way to proceed seemed to be to forward the statement to the Staff Senate and to the ASUPS, and to allow those bodies to solicit feedback from their constituencies in whatever way they deemed appropriate. Questions were also raised about obtaining final approval from the administration for this document: for instance, would approval from the trustees be required before the statement could be formally adopted? Bernie volunteered to discuss the issue again with Hans in light of these additional questions.

We then turned to a discussion of the text of the diversity statement as it stood following discussions with the Faculty Senate last spring. What follows is a summary of the points raised. The revised text as it stands after the meeting can be found by clicking [here](#) (link to the text below minutes).

- Nancy Bristow suggested that we replace the word "acceptance" with "appreciation" in the first bullet point under **We Aspire**. This suggestion was approved by the committee on the rationale that as a college campus we ought to be aspiring towards a more positive reception than mere tolerance.
- Eric Orlin wondered about the phrase "multiple perspectives" in the third bullet point under **We Acknowledge**, feeling that it sounded too much like an interdisciplinary approach to academic learning rather than an approach to diversity. Orlin suggested wording such as "a variety of backgrounds", but Nancy Bristow pointed out problems with this phrasing, especially as assuming an essentialist position. The suggestion was then made that the problem might be handled by changing "teaching and learning" to "education", since the former phrase seemed to apply most directly to the classroom experience. Monica Nixon raised the point that teaching and learning imply a more active stance for both students and faculty whereas education is a passive term. David Scott indicated that he preferred education as talking about the wider process. After a period of indecisiveness, the committee settled on education as the best alternative.
- Ivey West raised a question concerning the second bullet point under **We Act**: what do we mean by "educational opportunity" and is this language appropriate for staff who may not necessarily be here to learn, but to work? Carrie Washburn questioned the phrase "with us" at the end of that sentence, feeling that it was not desirable to divide the world into Us and Them, and the committee agreed that this phrase should be replaced by the word "here". A wide-ranging discussion ensued on Ivey's question. There was general agreement that "full educational opportunity" was a better phrasing than the "fullest potential" language that had been deleted from the earlier draft. It was pointed out that those who work here have the opportunity to advance their education, either in the classroom or out of it, and so perhaps the phrasing made sense in that context. The word "equal" was suggested as a replacement for "full", but questions were raised about adopting the generic phrase "equal educational

opportunity". Margie Nowak pointed out that "equitable" might be a better word than "equal" in this context. In the end, the committee could not agree on any changes to this language.

Bernie raised the question of whether we were ready to send the text out to the faculty, staff, and students for feedback. David Scott strongly suggested that we do so, since we are likely to get feedback no matter what language we ultimately propose and it will be our job to settle on final language once we have received that feedback. The committee readily agreed to this suggestion.

The meeting then adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Orlin

**Faculty Diversity Committee
Diversity Statement Subcommittee
DRAFT 5 (11/06/01)**

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 community through commitment to diversity as a recruitment and selection criterion.
- 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 and work here.
- to prepare effectively citizen-leaders for a pluralistic world.