

Diversity Committee Minutes
December 8, 1997

Attending: Kevin Barhydt, Michele Birnbaum, Peggy Firman, Rosa Beth Gibson, Charles Hommel, Martyn Kingston, Pat Krueger, John Lear, George Mills, Pedro Renteria, Ben Reuler, Carrie Washburn, Carolyn Weisz.

Weisz called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
Minutes of last meeting were approved with corrections.

Pat Krueger had previously solicited Committee members schedules for next semester and we attempted to establish a regular meeting time. In January, Weisz will e-mail the date, place, and time of the first meeting of 1998.

We continued discussion of revisions to Faculty By-Laws, in response to written suggestions by Judith Kay. Regarding the new proposed duty (H. b. 6) pertaining to recruitment and retention, members of the committee discussed the use of the terms "minority", "ethnic and racial", and "underrepresented". Problems with each of these terms were discussed. Committee members felt that reports generated by administrative offices might relate to any of the groups listed in duty H.b.1. Weisz will forward the following proposal for the new duty to the Faculty Senate:

6. To circulate to the faculty annually administrative reports on the University's efforts and results achieved in recruiting and/or retaining members of groups mentioned above in b.1.

Carrie Washburn asked whether duty H.b.3. pertaining to assisting the V. P. for University Relations in securing funding for scholarships and diversity programs appropriately described the Faculty Diversity Committee's current role. Rosa Beth Gibson gave some examples of how the Faculty Diversity Committee might fulfill this duty. No action was taken.

Discussion moved to the issue of multiculturalism and curriculum. Weisz circulated a list of issues and questions posed earlier by the curriculum subcommittee and other Faculty Diversity Committee members. Michele Birnbaum observed that the questions were roughly grouped into the issues of definition, comparison (across institutions), and implementation. Ben Reuler noted that representatives from other campuses will be meeting at UPS to evaluate the Multicultural Center, and that he might be able to solicit information about how other institutions address multiculturalism in their curricula.

Committee members discussed definitional issues related to multiculturalism and acknowledged the importance of this set of questions as a starting point. George Mills suggested that we create a reading list related on this issue. Carrie Washburn suggested that we involve the faculty more broadly in the discussion of definitions. Pedro Renteria and Carolyn Weisz suggested that we need inform ourselves before facilitating such discussions with the Faculty. Carrie Washburn gave some history about a 1991 Faculty proposal for an American Cultures requirement in the core and suggested that the particular definition of the American Cultures course may have led the proposal to fail. She also described the role of faculty seminars sponsored by NEH in shaping changes in the curriculum. These externally supported seminars bring a specialist from outside the campus to UPS to educate faculty and assist with course development in a particular area.

Martyn Kingston elaborated on models of studying multiculturalism. He favors a polemic model that contrasts the "multicultural America" perspective with the "American Creed" viewpoint. Books by Nathan Glazer and Ronald Takaki reflect this approach.

Martyn Kingston and Peggy Firman will e-mail some references on multiculturalism to Weisz for circulation to other members before the winter break.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Weisz