

Diversity Council
December 4, 2013
Minutes

Present: L. Bilonis, J. Blizzard, C. Cooper, B. Elliott, K. Faulkner, T. Guerin, W. Harris, R. Hays, C. Lewis, B. Marshall, R. Martin, R. Mehta, D. Merchant, M. Schreiner, C. Short-Thompson, K. Simonson, L. Smith

Guest: S. Ono

Welcome

C. Short-Thompson opened the meeting and welcomed S. Ono to the meeting. Introductions were made.

S. Ono stated he wanted more dialogue and reaffirmed his commitment to diversity in every sense of the word. In his time at UC (3 ½ years), he has seen progress made in diverse leadership positions at the institution and activities within the units. Given this progress, there is work yet to be done on the culture of the institution, not just numerically, to move the needle. Specifically, every person should feel embraced by the institution. The past month and a half has been challenging but has also been an opportunity to be reflective and critical. He is proud of steps taken, especially hosting Michael Eric Dyson and other individuals on campus to provide an opportunity for the campus to grow. He recognized the work being done by the Diversity Council, students and others, and is optimistic. He acknowledged the university is not where it needs to be, but said not to get stuck in that mode and continue moving forward. Celebrate progress that has been accomplished. He thanked B. Marshall for her leadership during this challenging time. He took the Council's advice and is conducting a national search for the permanent CDO. Four finalists have been identified; one of which is B. Marshall. He thanked the search committee and L. Bilonis as chair to attract the pool and identify finalists. He looks forward to the process and invited feedback after the interview process. He anticipates making a selection for this position soon after the interviews are complete.

C. Short-Thompson referenced the article in today's Enquirer, "Is There a Hostile Environment on UC's Campus" and asked how the senior leadership is going to address this issue. S. Ono does not feel the article is scathing and stated that Cliff Peale was working with various administrators when writing the article. He is respectful that this is the reporter's job, and he has the right to report to his choosing. He will not take a defensive action but wants to focus on improving the environment. UC is one of the hot topics in this city because of its size and the many people who are connected – students, staff, faculty, alums, etc. The Cabinet and Executive Committee will discuss and develop a strategy.

D. Merchant stated she was impressed with the students' comments as they were very articulate in stating the need for better communication between students and faculty. It

is her hope that this information is taken into consideration and used to facilitate a strategy to improve in this area.

R. Martin stated the students have been courageous demonstrating leadership. What has been lost is the conversation around staff and the impact on faculty. Her conversations with junior faculty have not been positive and she would not be surprised to see a mass exit over the next few years. The culture felt by students stems from faculty and staff but they don't feel comfortable having a voice to express their feelings.

S. Ono said data is needed to determine strategies. This will be a focus for the CDO going forward; it is not a quick fix. Faculty and staff need to be engaged. He called attention to the announcement released yesterday about resources being committed to diversity initiatives. He asked all not to get stuck on the problem.

W. Harris shared a concern about the need to deal with the unconscious bias and the low numbers of African American males in senior position and UC physicians. S. Ono agreed but stated all ethnic groups need to be addressed. He asked the Council not to lose sight of his charge which is to advocate for all parts of diversity, not just one facet.

K. Faulkner stated every moment is a teachable moment and the caricature is one example. She believes the university has learned from this experience, and there is more to do. We must acknowledge the mistakes, learn, and then move forward.

S. Ono stated he does not want anyone to get too dispirited about UC. This incident is no different than what happens at other institutions across the country. Progress should be acknowledged while recognizing the need for improvement. We define what we want to be; not the newspaper.

K. Faulkner stated inclusion is everything. Without it, you have nothing and this is an area that needs work. Race is very hard to talk about and this incident has forced the conversation.

R. Mehta noted international students, given their cultures, do not feel it's appropriate to discuss. S. Ono stated he expects Council members to make it happen. D. Merchant shared her experience with international students stating they do not understand the American conversation about race. In their cultures, they are not given the opportunity to speak; this is a learning opportunity for them.

J. Blizzard reported that Student Senate passed a bill on 11/20/13 requesting two action items. 1) Get more students involved with the Student Senate Diversity Council, and 2) request opportunities for student involvement with the President's Diversity Council.

S. Ono asked who on the Diversity Council represents staff. He would like a recommendation from the Council on how to best address staff. It was noted that E. Ascher is the rep.

K. Simonson stated the need to develop a mechanism to have discussions in the academic and administrative units. The Diversity Plan has not been vetted in the units, and the units need help to begin these conversations. S. Ono reported at his last Cabinet meeting, he asked every member to start these conversations and they are to report back at the December meeting. This will take some time for it to filter down into the units but he asked Diversity Council members to monitor it in their units. He will ask for regular updates and it will be part of his direct reports' evaluations. There will be other institution-wide conversations occurring; the first on December 16th with the Cabinet and Deans.

B. Elliott stated there is a fear among students that if they talk about race with faculty, they may be treated unfairly. S. Ono stated this needs to be addressed but it is not a quick fix. In the interim, he asked all to give thought about creating safe spaces for students to have these conversations. The goal is for the entire campus to be safe, but for now those safe spots have to be created. Students should be able to come to Council members and others.

S. Ono asked when he should return to a future meeting and welcomed additional comments. He departed the meeting. B. Marshall thanked him for his time.

Admissions Office Diversity Recruitment

B. Marshall welcomed K. Dewberry, the new Assistant Director for Multicultural Recruitment in the Admissions Office. She shared her plans to work closely with CPS, other local schools and out-of-state schools that have a high diverse population. Her goal is to increase the student diversity pool and make sure it is a right fit for the students. She referenced a recent multicultural recruitment event and her plans to expand it and invited feedback from the Council for such events. D. Merchant said it would be helpful to have information in advance about such events and also the Admissions schedule to allow Council members to participate and support. C. Short-Thompson stated the colleges want to partner with Admissions to recruit diverse students and are eager to identify ways to collaborate. R. Mehta asked if UC is in alignment with the efforts of other schools for recruitment efforts. K. Dewberry confirmed UC is involved with very similar efforts as other schools. Interest was expressed to see the recruitment efforts of UC's 7-8 peer institutions in order to benchmark. It would be useful to compare with their numbers and identify three things they do that UC could replicate. K. Faulkner stated she is speaking to students at Hughes High School and would like to talk with K. Dewberry prior to promote the university. D. Merchant wants to ensure we are leveraging the student experience in recruitment efforts. She realizes the discussions focus around academic programs but the student experience is a vital component. She can provide additional information if needed. K. Dewberry replied they do include this information already in their conversations but is open to receiving additional information. W. Harris shared his personal experience of his daughter receiving information from colleges and universities all over the country after taking the PSAT, but nothing from UC. K. Dewberry will look into this, but also stated there is a new communications person in Admission and they are working on a robust plan to revamp communications for all recruitment efforts. R.

Hays asked if K. Dewberry would be willing to return to a future meeting to show different scenarios of recruitment efforts for students from different markets, i.e., CPS schools to out of state schools showing all the touches they get from UC. There may be other opportunities to enhance and expand our efforts. D. Merchant noted that Council members were asked to contact prospective students last spring in personal recruitment efforts. J. Blizzard stated the student experience is important and it is a big push. He asked about intentional efforts to bring CPS students to campus to engage them in various activities/events and experience campus life. This type of engagement would be a big draw to see the campus and capture their interest in attending UC. K. Dewberry replied she is not aware of such an invitation, but is working on this initiative noting there are challenges with the students' class schedules. R. Martin shared that we have a community responsibility to focus on schools with diverse population. As part of the 5 Year Enrollment Plan, there was a pilot study proposed by R. Mehta to recruit high ability minorities, even outside of the CPS schools. This should be reviewed for consideration.

B. Marshall thanked K. Dewberry for her visit and conversation and she has an open invitation to return anytime.

CDO Report

B. Marshall reported that the registration fee for the Diversity Conference will be waived for the university community. A mechanism needs to be established for registration. Community members will still have to pay the registration fee. The sessions will be more informative, practical and usable. There will be a screening process for presenters. Sixty-four volunteers have signed up in response to the call. Nominations are coming in for the Marian Spencer Diversity Award. K. Simonson suggested an update on the Diversity Plan be given at the conference. B. Marshall stated she is working on an Annual Report due out at the beginning of the year that will provide an update of the plan; it will be both numerical and contextual. It will not be comprehensive but will be as inclusive as possible.

B. Marshall apologized for not keeping the Council updated about the recent activity on campus. She has been communicating with students, faculty, alumni, etc. but neglected to update the Council.

She thanked members who attended the Safe Zone training and encouraged those who could not attend to register for a session in the spring. Contact L. Smith for dates.

The President's Cabinet and Deans will have a retreat on 12/16 to get the senior leadership grounded in the work of diversity and inclusion as well develop a strategy to engage others at the university. This will lead to the senior leaders having conversations in their respective areas. Some of these discussions have already begun.

B. Marshall reported on a new group "D&I Resource Liaisons" who are individuals identified by their VPs and Deans. They are responsible to make sure diversity and

inclusion are infused in their respective areas. This body will be a support group to share best practices, leverage resources, etc. They will have some training/on-boarding. Membership list is attached.

B. Marshall reminded the committee chairs to be working with their groups and be prepared to provide an update on their work at the January meeting. As a reminder, the committees are to review the accomplishments from the colleges and units to categorize, identify themes and best practices.

B. Marshall reported she has promoted D&I at UC through many community partnerships and publications over the last several months; these include: Men of Honor, NAACP, LULAC, Who's Who in Black Cincinnati, The Women's Book, Hispanic Scholarship Fund, and SuccessGuide.

CDO Search (B. Marshall excused herself from the meeting for this update.)

L. Billionis updated the Council on the CDO search and encouraged council members to attend as many of the interviews sessions as possible. This is an opportune time to get involved.

Minutes approved by C. Short-Thompson and B. Marshall

2013-14 Meeting Schedule – 8:30 AM, 320 University Pavilion

January 8
February 5
March 5
April 9
May 7
June 4