

Diversity Council
Meeting Summary
April 13, 2009

Members in attendance: Eric Abercrombie, Dan Acosta, Lou Billionis, John Bryan, Stacy Downing, Karen Faaborg, Jen Heisey, Tracy Herrmann, Helen Kegler, Mitchel Livingston, Bleu Marshall, Deb Meem, Debra Merchant, Neville Pinto, Barb Rinto, Kathy Robbins, Ryan Rosensweig, Mary Stagaman, George Wharton, and Walter White

Guest: Mel Gravely

L. Billionis called the meeting to order and provided an overview of the day. He indicated that Mel Gravely would share a draft of the Diversity Council document, asked that members review it and provide feedback by April 20. The goal is to have a mature document by the May 4 meeting.

Mel Gravely reviewed the document page by page. He commented that the document was driven by the words of the council members during the retreat.

K. Faaborg raised and retracted a question about the function of the Resources Committee. M. Gravely clarified the role of the committee by stating that it did not have a financial function, rather the purpose was for the group to develop tools that could be shared to infuse diversity throughout the university. He noted that all committees may request/submit a budget to the Leadership Team to accomplish their tasks.

B. Rinto asked when committee members would have an opportunity to discuss the document. L. Billionis responded that members should review, reflect on the document and send feedback to M. Livingston's office. Suggestions will be incorporated into a refined document for the May 4 meeting.

D. Merchant asked where the CDO & Chair responsibilities came from. B. Marshall replied that it was a combination of appointment letters and information gathered from other universities with diversity initiatives. M. Livingston shared the proposed structural model for the Diversity Council. B. Rinto commented that the committees looked different. L. Billionis made the following observations:

1. There is a form/function issue – the Council originated as a result of the Task Force; we have changed and our form will as well.
2. There is an area of boundaries dynamic– our capacity to operate may be limited, e.g. issues of advocacy (as a council, we have to assess, assure, and instill confidence).
3. There is a lack of clarity – this is an opportunity for the Council to be as participatory as possible in shaping the direction.

R. Rosensweig commended the group in putting the document together. It appears that the role is moving similar to a PAC in DC. In addition, he agrees with the concept of being able to share the information.

K. Robbins suggested that this is a good time to discuss integrating diversity in the curriculum with the quarters to semesters conversion. Perhaps there is a place to insert it into the document.

H. Kegler suggested encouraging units to develop curriculum and that it is important for demonstrate the leadership set the standard.

M. Gravely recommended that the Resource Committee work on tasks across the university.

T. Herrmann raised the issue of support for incorporating diversity into curriculum and asked where this fit into the plan.

M. Stagaman indicated that she did not see many faculty members around the table and suggested that some of the work (integrating diversity into the curriculum) could be done by the Advocacy Committee. The Council should not try to dictate what happens with the curriculum.

D. Meem shared that a few years ago, a group on campus maintained a clearinghouse on courses that had LGBT issues. It was stopped due to changes in structure. A benefit was that faculty were “falling over themselves” to get on the list. It was not curricular, just information gathering.

M. Stagaman mentioned that something similar could be done with service learning and reference offering a diversity certificate.

D. Meem suggested an online registration of the courses with descriptions so individuals would know what to search for.

B. Rinto commented that she liked how the document is structured. She questioned the role of the council members and the 2/3 vote because we do not have regular attendance. She also wanted to know to whom does the Council present the white paper. M. Gravely responded that the information regarding the roles and voting of council members is designed to encourage attendance and participation. He mentioned that the white papers might be presented to an individual or an entity within or external to the Council.

R. Rosensweig thought the white paper section was inspiring. He remarked that it is not legislation. It should help us put information in the forefront, it will help with advocacy, and that it can be used to empower future legislation.

B. Rinto questioned the Focused Diversity Initiative “not currently being addressed” because everything is being touched on in some way.

L. Bilionis requested that comments and suggested changes to be submitted by April 20 to Kathy Ogden. Feedback would go to the Leadership Team for review.

J. Bryan asked if the revised document could be distributed before the May 4 meeting.

L. Bilionis thanked M. Gravely for the review of the document and provided the Chair 's Report which included the following:

- 1) information on a new diversity program at the College of Law funded by the Ohio State Bar Foundation. It is modeled after a program in New York to provide a summer cohort experience for eighth graders.
- 2) a quick update was shared about the inaugural diversity conference.

M. Livingston gave the Chief Diversity Officer's Report which focused on taking the Just Community initiative to the next level – fulfilling the diversity audit promise, broadening the recommendations, and getting greater community feedback.

The floor was opened for comments.

R. Rosensweig mentioned that the You See Potential Conference that was held at Kingsgate was a success. It was managed by a couple of UC students. He also shared that campaigning is going on for Student Government and that two slates are running on the concept of diversity.

E. Abercrombie inquired about getting the word “diversity” as a category on the main website, indicating that it is very hard to find.

Minutes approved by L. Bilionis and M. Livingston.

Future Meetings

Monday, May 4, 1:30, 419 A&B TUC

Thursday, June 4, 10:00, 310 University Pavilion

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