

Minutes of Committee on Diversity

October 26, 2011

Committee Members Present: Westley Dang, Lisa Ferrari, Zaixin Hong, Pepa Lago-Grana, Margi Nowak, Czarina Ramsay, Amy Ryken, Kurt Walls

Chair Amy Ryken called the meeting to order at 8:02. The minutes of October 11 were approved.

Announcements:

SDC Third Open House – Queer Student Welcome, 5:30-6:30 pm, Oct. 26 (Czarina Ramsay)

Stacey Ann Chin, a performing artist, feminist, and social justice activist who highlights through slam poetry her challenges as a queer woman of color coming out in her native country of Jamaica, will deliver a lecture, Kilworth Chapel, 7:30 pm, Nov. 14 (Czarina Ramsay)

The Spring speaker will be focusing on Islamic issues (Czarina Ramsay)

T-Town Transgender Neighbors: A Portrait Exhibition, artist reception at 4 pm, panel discussion on intersections of spiritual and transgender identities at 5 pm, Nov. 30 at Collins Memorial Library (Amy Ryken)

Link to the Ohio University student campaign against stereotyping in Halloween costumes:

“We’re a culture, not a costume.” <http://lissawriting.wordpress.com/2011/10/23/racism-think/> (Margi Nowak).

Climate Survey

Amy shared data from the 2006 campus climate survey. Of the respondents, 26% of students, 21% of faculty, and 19% of staff reported experiencing incidents of discrimination or harassment. The most common reason for discrimination or harassment cited by students and staff was job of socioeconomic status. For members of the faculty, the most commonly cited cause was gender. The current data about the campus climate are incomplete in part because of the low response rate to the 2006 climate survey.

Goals/Possible Projects for 2011-2012:

Prior to the meeting the Chair distributed via email a description of the committee’s responsibilities, faculty narratives of unintended moments of student spotlighting, and information about faculty hiring and retention collected in Fall 2010 for today’s discussion.

Narratives—Solicit More, Post to Web

The committee briefly discussed how to solicit more faculty narratives of unintended moments of student spotlighting. A relevant issue is which website can post the narratives. No specific action was decided upon.

Cascade—Binary Framing of Gender

Amy noted that the university solicits a wide range of demographic information about students via the common application, but that same information is not systematically asked of faculty and staff members. She noted that in a previous meeting the committee discussed that gender is currently framed as a binary choice on the common application and in Cascade. Lisa briefed the

committee that Cascade would be replaced by ERP, a new software package that will be customized for the best way of processing student info. What the template will look like depends on the needs of Puget Sound. The committee discussed two questions that are raised when making efforts to obtain demographic information from faculty and staff members and students: How does the survey-taker identify who is asking for information and why? And what do we as surveyors want to get from the info and why? Czarina suggested that somebody from ERP come to our committee to provide more information. Last year she worked with a colleague to survey the demography of our students, pulling in some info from previous data, yet some of the other pieces need to be refreshed. About these concerns, Lisa said that she would communicate with Alyce DeMarais, who is in charge of the ERP change-over.

Faculty Hiring and Retention

Last year the committee read extensively about faculty hiring and retention and examined faculty hiring and retention data at Puget Sound. That inquiry resulted in suggesting a new institutional practice where each search committee appoints a diversity advocate. Pepa mentioned that her Department of Foreign Language & Literature has a position opening, and she is serving in the diversity advocate role, yet the department and university provide no specific information to those faculty members who have agreed to serve in the role of diversity advocate other than what HR offers, for considering the special nature of faculty hiring and retention. She is very aware of such sensitive issues as citizenship, visa status, etc., of which candidates only give piecemeal info in their profiles, and the search committee must walk a fine line, making sure that problems won't arise preventing a new employee from working here. In regard to systemizing the hiring process, she welcomed info from any hiring committee about their experiences and recommendations in gathering info, recruiting and losing candidates, making application forms, etc. Lisa observed certain legal issues in the hiring process; in particular, only after hiring can new faculty provide the vital info as an optional choice. Amy agreed to invite, Cindy Matern, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, to the committee meeting on November 8, who can talk about the policy and institutional situation. The committee agreed that during the spring term they would collect information from faculty members who served as diversity advocates and would work to compile resources to support future diversity advocates in their roles.

Update Diversity Curriculum List

The committee did not discuss this topic. See: <http://www.pugetsound.edu/academics/diversity-curriculum/>

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50.

Respectfully submitted,

Zaixin Hong