

**Committee on Diversity
Minutes
November 19, 2012**

Committee Members Present: Amy Ryken (chair); Ryan Coleman, Kyle Cramer (visitor), Lisa Ferrari, John Lear, Mark Martin, Aislinn Melchior, Jill Neely-Moore (visitor), Margi Nowak, Czarina Ramsey, Carolyn Weisz.

Intro/Announcements

Chair Ryken called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. The minutes of the November 5th meeting were approved by voice vote, with an addition of a comment about division requirements by other institutions.

Following approval of the previous meeting's minutes, format for the meeting would explore the following: (i) announcements, (ii) BERT update, (iii) a proposal to extend transgendered health benefits, and (time permitting) (iv) a discussion of a diversity requirement on campus.

Announcements:

Amy Ryken: The February Board of Trustees meeting will be held 14 – 15 February 2013, and will include a three hour workshop on diversity issues on campus. Primary focus will be on the Campus Climate Survey results. Carolyn Weisz volunteered to attend.

Carolyn Weisz: The Keck Foundation (via Jane Kenyon) will be soliciting proposals from the institution, and Carolyn suggested that issues involving diversity be part of the in-house "competition" (as only one proposal per institution will be considered by the Keck Foundation). Brainstorming among committee members produced several possibilities: extending from Race and Pedagogy Conference "Transforming the University," supporting student projects and faculty release time, thinking about involving science disciplines in this area. Carolyn will look into this further.

Czarina Ramsey: reminder of the Tuesday 22 January 2013 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Speaker.

Some discussion of time conflicts of between committee business (for possible December 3 meeting) and interviews with candidates for the Chief Diversity Officer was discussed. The consensus was that being able to meet with CDO took precedence.

BERT update:

No update.

Transgendered health benefits discussion:

Jill Neely-Moore and Kyle Cramer presented their ideas/progress to include health care benefits for employees covering treatment related to gender identity disorder and gender dysphoria (see attached proposal). A complex and wide-ranging discussion followed.

- Inclusivity is important, and the proposed changes fit very well with the University diversity strategic plan.

- Will demonstrate to students that the institution stands behind its rhetoric on a commitment to diversity.
- John Lear asked about the cohort of comparison schools.
- Human resources has worked collaboratively to seek information about the costs of adding such benefits.
- Jill Neely-Moore distilled down the discussion: can we afford such a program; what effects the program will have on recruitment, retention, and engagement; and how best to balance financial choices.
- Consensus is that the financial impact would be modest, and the payoff substantial in terms of visibility.
- There was some discussion of specific medical needs for such an addition to Puget Sound health benefits, but again Kyle Cramer made clear that the financial costs are minimal (at least for drug/hormone treatments).
- There remain several layers of negotiation and discussion before this can become officially part of the Puget Sound health benefits program, but the time to begin these discussions is near.
- Despite some concerns about zero-sum book-keeping, the committee felt that this proposal should be put to the Senate in the form of a motion.
- In the near term: the committee would like to see the language of such a motion, the language of peer/comparison schools (though it appears that few to none have such a program in place at present), and put to a voice vote and off to Senate.
- Other thoughts: how does Human Resources make decisions about this kind of program, what trade-offs exist, and what will be the impact of the Affordable Health Care Act on this proposal?
- Certainly an “endorsement in principle,” due to an institutional commitment to diversity, is very possible. But it is hoped that such a proposal can become part of our health benefits in the near term.

ACTION

The Committee on Diversity endorses this proposal because

- 1) Of its relationship with the university’s commitment to diversity as articulated in the Diversity Strategic Plan, and
- 2) In support of the committee’s charge, “To participate in the development of initiatives that enable the university to hire new faculty from historically under-represented populations and to support better the retention and success of such faculty.”
(Faculty Bylaws 2012-2013, page 10, section H. b. 2)

The Committee on Diversity suggests that the Faculty Senate review the proposal and consider endorsing it as well.

Ayes: 8

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 1

Diversity requirement discussion:

- Discussion revolved around the two page handout on this topic circulated. What options? How to frame?

- What could be “study sites” on campus? Diversity related courses? Responsibilities toward creating curricular surveys? Dedicated first year seminars?
- Important to compare to what is being done at comparison AND non-comparison schools.
- Carolyn Weisz read aloud an interesting perspective written by an alumnae (Sandra Bryant) published in “Arches” that suggests that “explaining” what it is like to be underrepresented (to majority students) possesses its own burden. See page 18:
http://www.pugetsound.edu/files/pages/arches/arches_autumn_2012/#/18/
- The Campus Climate Survey had data that agrees with that sentiment; should be kept in mind.
- How best to promote an atmosphere of “Cultural Competency”? Carolyn Weisz suggested promoting more “Student Voices” essays. Czarina Ramsey suggested making available a video of student comments at a recent Diversity Summit.
- Czarina Ramsey suggested promoting more student submissions to “Black Ice” and other student publications. Thus, finding student-run venues to obtain frank input is critical.
- John Lear wondered how a diversity requirement intersected with faculty hiring practices.

The meeting was adjourned soon at 5:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Martin

In Fall 2012 Donn Marshall, Jill Nealy-Moore, Kyle Cramer, and Amy Ryken met to explore whether or not Puget Sound benefits included transition services. Working in collaboration with Human Resources they sought background information about current coverage and costs to include transition services. This recommendation is based on a review of the information received.

Proposal: In support of the Diversity Strategic Plan, the University of Puget Sound will include health care benefits for employees covering treatment related to gender identity disorder and gender dysphoria. These benefits will include sexual reassignment surgery, hormone treatments, and related counseling needs.

Rationale

- The importance of the proposed health care benefits for affected individuals cannot be over emphasized. Healthy staff and faculty make for a healthy, productive work force.
- Providing this coverage recognizes the medical necessity of these treatments.
- Providing this coverage is a specific example of the implementation of our Diversity Strategic Plan. This benefit will be a concrete signal that transgender employees (and by their modeling, students) are welcome here. This coverage will specifically support Goal 1 (*We will increase the recruitment and retention of students, staff, and faculty from underrepresented minority groups*) and Goal 2 (*We will create a campus environment that fully welcomes and supports social diversity*) of the Strategic Diversity Plan.

Projected Cost

Available data suggest that this is a rarely utilized benefit. Lifetime prevalence rate for sex reassignment surgery is estimated at .032%, or 1:3,134, but one that is critical to the health and productivity of affected colleagues. Consultation with Aon Hewitt led to the estimate that the general range of cost for clients to provide this coverage is between 0.05% and 0.20%. At those rates, the estimated cost per covered life at Puget Sound would be between 17 and 70 cents per month. A two-step process will be used to confirm the actual pricing of adding this benefit. First, the request will be sent to Premera's Actuary for review and pricing, and second, a product configuration team will review this customization request. Thus, the cost estimate given here could vary potentially based on Premera's own review.

Summary

The cost of covering the health care associated with treatment for transgender employees appears to be quite modest. As Puget Sound reaches for increasing social diversity as defined in our Strategic Diversity Plan, including this coverage offers a low-cost way of demonstrating our commitment to full inclusion. Providing the proposed coverage is also in support of our efforts to improve recruitment, retention, and productivity of employees, and providing healthy, thriving models for students.

Appendix A

Employers Providing Transgender Benefits

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| City of Tacoma | | |
| City of Seattle | Deloitte LLP | Walt Disney Co. |
| City of Portland | Ernst & Young LLP | Wells Fargo & Co |
| City of San Francisco | Ford Motor Company | Yahoo! Inc. |
| 3M Co. | Google Inc. | |
| Aetna | Johnson & Johnson | |
| American Express | Kraft Foods Inc. | |
| Apple Inc. | Medtronic, Inc. | |
| Bank of America | Microsoft | |
| Barnes & Noble Inc. | Nike Inc. | |
| Cisco Systems Inc. | Nordstrom Inc. | |