

Diversity Committee Minutes
March 25th, 2009

In attendance: Paula Meiers, Jan Moore, Monica DeHart, Zaixin Hong, Stacey Weiss, Margi Nowak, Judith Kay, Lisa Ferrari, Justin Tiehen, Kim Bobby, Harry Vélez-Quinones, Justin Tiehen, Fumio Sugihara.

Tiehen was appointed minute-taker, and minutes for the previous meeting were approved.

1. As our first new order of business, Sugihara spoke to the committee about the possibility of committee members contacting recently admitted students and talking to them about diversity-related issues, including answering questions that these students might have and directing them to the university's diversity-related resources. The point of these contacts would be to let students know that Puget Sound has an appreciation and respect for diversity and conveying to them what diversity means in our community and how it is manifest and how it is not. Discussion was largely devoted to logistical matters: questions were asked and comments were made regarding the exact format of these contacts, whether a kind of contact protocol would be provided to faculty members, when the contacts would take place, the number of students a committee member might be hoped to contact, and so on. Members interested in contacting students would be given further information via e-mail at a later point.
2. As our second new order of business, Kay informed the group that the Diversity Advisory Council's Curriculum & Faculty Advising Task Force is setting up a webpage which will include course descriptions for those classes taught at Puget Sound covering diversity in their curricula. In order to compile the list of courses to be included on this webpage, department chairs have been given surveys asking them to list which courses in their departments cover diversity, and which areas of diversity are covered. Kay indicated that the Task Force would like the Diversity Committee, as a permanent charge, to update and maintain this information on a webpage, with technical website assistance from the Associate Deans' Office.
3. From there, the committee moved on to consider two different versions (A and B) of the committee's proposed bylaws which might be put up for approval by the full faculty as the 4/6/09 faculty meeting. The difference between A and B concerns how proposed duties 5 and 6 of the committee are formulated.

Version A

Duty 5. To work with colleagues to maintain an inclusive classroom environment.

Duty 6. To activate a group that will address educationally, as needed, manifestations of prejudice or bigotry within the campus community; to collaborate with this group and provide oversight; to promote academic freedom and freedom of expression, as needed; and to report annually to the Faculty Senate.

Version B

Duty 5: To work with colleagues to maintain an inclusive classroom environment; to promote academic freedom and freedom of expression, as needed.

Duty 6: To activate, oversee, collaborate with, and report to the Faculty Senate annually on an education-focused group that will address, as needed, manifestations of prejudice or bigotry within the campus community through activities that include the promotion of academic freedom and freedom of expression.

The committee preferred Version B, in part because of its added emphasis on promoting academic freedom and freedom of expression. And so, it is Version B that will be put forward at the faculty meeting, via a friendly amendment.

4. Finally, Bobby, Ferrari, and Tichen from the subcommittee on Charge #2 (regarding first year advising) reported that their present plan is to gather diversity-related narratives from different faculty members and put those narratives into a kind of brochure or program that could then be distributed in connection with the training session for first-year advising. The hope is that faculty will find the narratives instructive. The narratives might also be made available on a university webpage, with the option at that point of further faculty members providing narratives of their own online. The subcommittee reported that they hope to collect the narratives by mid-April, and that they would give narrative contributors the option of remaining anonymous, though with a preference for contributors attaching their names.
5. The meeting adjourned.