

Faculty Diversity Committee Minutes October 9, 2001

Members Attending: Kris Bartanen, Bernie Bates, Kim Bobby, Nancy Bristow, Rosa Beth Gibson, Margi Nowak, Eric Orlin, Jac Royce, David Scott, Carrie Washburn

Bernie Bates called the meeting to order at some point before the minutes-taker's arrival.

The **minutes** of the September 25, 2001 meeting were approved.

David Scott said that he had attended **Professor Emeritus Bob Ford's** memorial service on October 8 at which Professor Ford was lauded for his many contributions as an active faculty member at Puget Sound. Scott described the testimonials to Professor Ford's influence and contributions and urged the Faculty Diversity Committee to think about its role in developing a proper legacy for Professor Ford. Rosa Beth Gibson reminded committee members of the Bob Ford fund from which retention scholarships for students of color are to be awarded and agreed to check with the development staff and report back to the committee regarding the extent to which retention scholarships have been or will be awarded.

Kris Bartanen announced a number of **theme year and other events**:

- October 7-13 Mental Health Awareness Week
- October 11 National Coming Out Day
- October 11 Take Back the Night
- October 18 True Tales book discussion
- October 23 Sam Quinones lecture, Wyatt 109, 7 p.m.

Margi Nowak announced an October 15 appearance (Disabilities: Show Some Respect) at Pierce College of Norm Kunc and Emma van der Klift. Nowak uses their web site in her teaching (<http://www.normemma.com/credo4web.htm>). She encouraged committee members to review the Credo of Support that's on the site.

Bernie Bates directed committee members' attention to the October 5 edition of **the Trail**, in which articles about the small number of Black students (less than 2%) at Puget Sound and about disability awareness (alternative presentation styles) appeared.

Bates announced having discovered the difference between "unfinished" and "old" business by referring to Roberts Rules of Order for Kids on the web (adding "+ kids" to web searches can lead to great summaries of the information we're seeking!). Advising us that unfinished business is that which the committee hasn't taken action on, Bates invited Eric Orlin to report on the unfinished business of the **faculty telephoning project**.

Orlin shared with the committee a printout of prospective students, which Paula Meiers in Admission provided. The printout includes limited information about each prospective student. Orlin asked whether calling from this sort of prospective students list is effective or whether it would be more useful to call those who've applied and been admitted. Orlin pointed out that the parents of the prospective students called may be more impressed than the prospective students themselves with the fact that faculty members are calling.

Scott asked whether calling from the list of prospective students could be made more effective by limiting the list (e.g., Hawaii, Anchorage, Access programs participants, certain high schools) to target prospective students who are more likely to be aware of Puget Sound and more likely to apply for admission.

Orlin said that Admission can sort the lists in any way we want—by location, by school, etc. He said that those most likely to apply are prospective students who have had a positive experience

with Puget Sound, e.g., a class with Hans Ostrom or Michelle Birnbaum. Targeting those with a built-in network is more effective than calling persons with no prior connection to the University. When students are on the committee, they may be helpful in limiting the list so that it's more focused—by identifying prospective students from their high schools, for example. Orlin reported that Meiers believes that a letter from student organizations to prospective students would be more effective than calls to prospective students.

Orlin reported that admitted students already receive two calls from the University, the second from a currently-enrolled student. The message to parents as a result of these two calls is clear—my son/daughter will get personal attention at Puget Sound. Given the reality that March and April are the decision months for students who have been admitted to the University, the committee discussed the best timing of such calls for faculty. March is the better month for faculty for the bulk of calling. Carrie Washburn suggested that one option would be to schedule a group of faculty members to make calls using a bank of phones (in the Admission office?) during a late afternoon/early evening in spring break week. The company of others and the lure of food might make the task less onerous. The committee agreed that sending a postcard from the faculty member a week in advance to the admitted student would be beneficial. Such an approach would, for example, enable Bev Pierson to call admitted students who are interested in science. Bates asked Orlin for a summary of the discussion and Orlin recommended that the committee focus on spring semester calls to admitted students.

Washburn asked whether we want to give up using the list of prospective students in some way (Scott's notion of targeted efforts or Meiers' notion of a letter from student organizations to all on the prospective students list) in order to try to increase the number of students of color who actually apply for admission.

Kim Bobby suggested that we could *extend an invitation* to student organizations to consider sending such a letter. Nancy Bristow followed up by encouraging the committee to be cautious about how we "use" student organizations. The organizations for students of color are their organizations, not ours. It's important that we be thoughtful about how to approach current students of color, recognizing that we can call upon them too often and that they have many other responsibilities, interests and activities to pursue.

Margi Nowak asked whether we have access to any studies which tell us why students of color leave Puget Sound, suggesting that the reasons people leave may be the same as the reasons why they are not drawn to Puget Sound in the first place. Bartanen indicated that Academic and Career Advising administers an exit questionnaire to students who take leaves of absence, often the first step to leaving the University, and that the University does follow up with students who are admitted and who choose not to come. She also said that there were two workshops for faculty on retention of students of color approximately four years ago. Washburn said that admission also contracted with an outside consultant to help the University figure out what brings students to Puget Sound and what influences students' decisions to go elsewhere. Bartanen said that the consultant presented findings at a fall faculty conversation.

Orlin and Bates brought the committee back to Meiers' question. **The consensus of the group was to focus the faculty calling efforts on the goal of increasing the enrollment of prospective students of color who have been admitted to the University and to do it in the spring.** Jac Royce pointed out that many students of color are admitted to many different colleges and that faculty efforts are best focused on admitted students.

Nowak referred to the ADA handout which she had sent to the committee via e-mail prior to the meeting. Focusing on the nomenclature we use to describe **persons who use "a different or alternative mode of functioning" than our own**, Nowak indicated that the *Trail* article ("What if they're on the 99th floor?") is a good example of the need for us to work to combat deficit thinking. She also encouraged the committee to include mental illness in our deliberations and shared

some terms with a “more positive spin” (“differently brained” and “amazingly brained”) from two events she organized recently.

Terms like these, if and when they are not just euphemisms, might have a positive impact on students whose educational experiences have been different from the majority of students’ educational experiences.

Royce asked whom to speak with about the **defective theater elevator** in Jones Hall and Gibson directed her to Craig Benjamin, the new Facilities Services Director.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosa Beth Gibson