

## **Diversity Committee Minutes January 29, 1997**

**Present:** Flo Ariessohn, Linda Critchlow, Rosa Beth Gibson, Rafael Gómez, George Guilmet, Judith Kay, Patti Krueger, George Mills, Margaret Setchfield (Chair), Carrie Washburn, Carolyn Weisz

**Membership:** It was announced that James Vance was unable to continue on the committee due to increased duties on campus, and Linda Critchlow was appointed to replace him. Two students (Aileen Balahadia and Brett Kiehl) had conflicts with classes at the hour of the meetings, so they will find replacements unless we determine another possible hour to meet. Tony Belnapp has not attended recently and may need a replacement. Margaret will contact Brett.

**Announcements:** It was announced that the PBS special on minority faculty will show Sunday 11-12:30, and is being taped for us. Carrie Washburn passed around materials on a website on diversity: "diversity web" at <http://www.inform.umd.edu/diversityweb>

**Correspondence:** Freeda and Judith- applying for a grant. Put off until next agenda.

**Report and Discussion:** Margaret Setchfield and Rafael Gómez reported on their meeting with President Pierce in early December (also included Martyn Kingston and Aileen Balahadia). The President was open to the things we discussed in the last meeting and the plans of the committee. We should go ahead and shape the committee as we see fit, and she offered to come to a committee meeting. The group indicated they'd would contact her at a later date regarding the committee's wishes.

There followed a discussion of the issues raised by committee members in response to a call for suggestions before Christmas.

First, several issues which had been left off were added:

Added to section "A" by Judith Kay:

5. What is the most appropriate policy committee for the Dean of Students to work with to coordinate efforts to improve campus climate?
6. Which committee should deal with the structuring of the diversity theme years?
7. Is the Diversity Committee the appropriate group to review the diversity component of Orientation?

Other issues added by Rosa Beth Gibson:

1. ABD requirements: should we encourage the hiring of more ABD's?
2. Is there a faculty committee overseeing the hiring process?

### **General points of the discussion:**

Priorities:

Carolyn Weisz asked if all the issues are a priority. RB Gibson suggested that we might be able to have more influence now on the new Academic VP's views on strategies/policy if we do it early on. Patti Krueger stated that the issue of hiring is extremely important.

George Mills brought up the responsibility of the decision-making process of the committee: before we can discuss other issues, we need to have a structural understanding of the committee and how it fits in. George G. indicated that the committee has no real power, but functions as a "think-tank," making suggestions. Judith K. talked about shared governance: the formal (official) process, which is slow and cumbersome, but necessary, and the informal process, which involves the sharing of ideas informally. George M. suggested that we need to focus on the informal process, our "think-tank" mode. Carrie W. noted that in the past, this committee was involved with advocacy and monitoring: "We're the ones who care," and asked if this was a shift in focus to a macro policy group. It was suggested that we not set our goals too high so we won't be disappointed and can be more efficient. There then followed a discussion of previous statements by Martyn K, as he was not at this meeting. Patti K. asked us not to give up on advocacy, as we can't just talk, but rather need to accomplish something. Rafael G. suggested that we shouldn't be only a "think-tank" if it means not taking action. He asked for a clarification of the term. George G. suggested that we need to know a great deal about any issue before we can recommend

anything. RB Gibson recommended more advocacy. Margaret S. suggested we “enlarge the conversation.”

The first issue decided upon for discussion was faculty hiring. George G. asked what we can do now. RB Gibson said the chairs should be reminded of the pool of funds available for finalists since the process is too far along for much else now. (The 1998-99 hires are being discussed now.) Carolyn W. suggested we invite Terry Cooney to the next meeting and ask how he can help in this. Carrie W. talked about the PBS documentary on minority faculty and the fact that often these faculty are not at small liberal arts institutions. One problem is that these schools are recruiting to traditional disciplines and “unknown” places. Also, the pool of minority PhD’s is small.

George G. suggested we ask for an alternate list at the same time. RB Gibson stated that that was the intent; that we want the search committee chairs to identify people of color with “due diligence.” Carolyn W. asked if we can “create” jobs using Dept. incentives. RB Gibson stated that the definition of the job has a big role in who applies for it. George G. pointed out the importance of the Core Curriculum in this. Linda C. brought up the issue of retention, that after we get people here they may not feel comfortable. Judith K. asked if we could get our discussion out beyond the committee, to involve the rest of campus. Flo A. asked if this could be done through a series of questions published in the student newspaper, followed by a forum discussion. Carrie W. suggested we interview the search committee members. RB Gibson said that Chris and David tried to do that in the Chair’s meeting. The Chairs were asked to talk about their successes and strategies, and they are “hungry for new strategies.” George M. asked if there was a template, a university-wide series of steps to secure a person of color. RB Gibson answered that there is such a template, and we want to follow it, but have run into policy issues. George M. asked if the template was wrong, if it is worth it, or might we be alienating people? George G. discussed the problems with the fit with the curriculum, and suggested we need a stronger push from the administration to follow. Carrie W. asked if we can give release units to the Chairs for the search? George M. said we may not be able to justify that, while RB Gibson suggested we could do it. George M. asked if we could use someone at the administrative level to help instead of release units. RB Gibson suggested that we can do it with staff support. We need staff at a person-to-person level to deal with candidate, but it needs to be faculty with knowledge of the subject/Department. Patti K. suggested that there was resistance to outside of Dept. influences, which was echoed by Flo A. George M. suggested that there is “institutional resistance,” creating a problem which is similar to that of getting students of color. Carrie W. reiterated the importance of the curriculum, and asked if there might be openings for faculty in interdisciplinary areas. Could we redefine our searches and make them less narrow? Margaret S. stated that the template is ok, but asked what are the cultural norms? How solid is that position? RB Gibson will bring these questions to Terry C, and we can then invite him to join us.

The next meeting was set for February 12 at 4:00. All members were asked to send an updated schedule to Patti Krueger for possible rescheduling of meeting times. There will be subcommittee meetings in the meantime.

Respectfully submitted,

Flo Ariessohn  
(with thanks for correction to Margaret Setchfield and Judith Kay)