

Diversity Council
November 13, 2008
Minutes

Present: E. Abercrombie, C. Berryman-Fink, L. Bilionis, S. Downing, K. Faaborg, G. Hand, J. Heisey, A. Ingber, H. Kegler, A. Leonard, M. Livingston, B. Marshall, M. McCrate, D. Meem, D. Merchant, B. Rinto, K. Robbins, R. Rosensweig, K. Simonson, G. Wharton, W. White

Absent: D. Acosta, C. Collins, G. Dent, T. Herrmann, M. Leventhal, R. Martin, C. Miller, E. Owens, DC Padur, N. Pinto, M. Spencer, M. Stagaman, A. Vamadeva

Chair Report

C. Berryman-Fink reported the focus of the Council has been mostly on implementation of the President's Task Force recommendations and how to allocate the budget to support those goals. It's easy to overlook what's going on in the larger picture of the university. She highlighted some events taking place on campus; this is not an exhaustive list.

- Hosted Ohio Regional Summit for International Education
- College of Law Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights celebrated its 25th anniversary with a conference
- Select UC women were accepted in the '09 class for higher education collaborative training
- Clermont is holding a multicultural art program
- RWC has a faculty member participating in an exchange program in Cuba
- \$1 million grant from Head Start to CECH to train Spanish-speaking and English-speaking teachers
- Generational Diversity program from College of Nursing

These events demonstrate the university's involvement in diversity at large as it all ties under the diversity umbrella in the broad definition of diversity. Need to find a way to capture these events. This could be a future agenda item.

CDO Report

M. Livingston reflected on the historical election of Obama as it is a very special point in time and history. UC was pivotal with hosting Obama just hours prior to his election. It is his hope that as diversity work continues that the burden is lifted. D. Meem noted the gay/lesbian issue is still of great concern to many.

On 11/11/08, the city of Cincinnati hosted members of the organization, Birmingham Promise, at the Freedom Center. Their goal is to get 500,000 signatures across the country to pledge against discrimination. M. Livingston signed the commitment in his role as VP & CDO. The goals of this organization are very similar to those of Just Community and Bridges.

Conversations are continuing with the Freedom Center regarding UC developing a closer working relationship. He, N. Zimpher, T. Perzigian and V. Hardcastle will be meeting with representatives of the Freedom Center on 11/25 to explore various possibilities.

All should have received the diversity publication which highlights the recent work of the Council. M. Livingston called attention to the LGBT statement which reports a search process is underway for the full-time staff position. This is incorrect. Concern was expressed that the community will now have this mis-information and it will hurt the credibility of the Women's Center and the Council. M. Livingston stated he would issue a statement noting the error and it does not change the current status of this recommendation which is under consideration for future funding.

RFPs for the incentive proposal are due 11/26. Proposals will be reviewed by N. Pinto with assistance from the leadership team and then shared with the Council.

Short term recommendations for graduate, family and international housing will be submitted to N. Zimpher by 12/1. Long term, permanent recommendations will be worked on after this date. M. Livingston noted the Council has been vocal about this aspect of diversity and appreciates the support.

M. Livingston reported on the development of a religious observance policy. It has been shared with the various governance groups and feedback is due 11/21. Faculty Senate will be discussing the policy at its meeting today. He has received initial feedback from Senate that the faculty are in opposition. K. Faaborg stated they should not be a stumbling block. The existing practice involves him and T. Perzigian sending a notice out to all faculty at the beginning of each quarter asking them to exercise flexibility when students have conflicts. This proposed policy is in alignment with peer institutions and obliges both the faculty and students with more aggressive language. C. Berryman-Fink voiced her support for the policy.

Announcements

D. Meem reported on the upcoming MUSE concert.

R. Rosenswieg reported Student Government's diversity director is bringing together 20-30 students to develop student-based initiatives. These will be brought forward to the Council.

A. Ingber reported Xavier is hosting a Fulbright Scholar to speak on Muslim/Hindu issues. M. Livingston will be arranging for him to speak at UC in the next few weeks.

M. Livingston reported on the resignation of G. Dent from the university. He recognized his commitment to the diversity efforts and his support as co-chair of the Assessment and Accountability Subcommittee.

Diversity Plan/Template

C. Berryman-Fink asked how to engage the leadership across the university in diversity planning. She and M. Livingston have visited with the various governance groups sharing best practices. The leadership team has developed a rough model (handout) in terms of how to proceed in developing a university-wide plan and it represents some of the work already being done and work yet to be done – values, priorities and strategies to achieve priorities. A process needs to be developed so each unit will create a plan. Assessment tools need to be provided to gauge progress.

K. Simonson distributed a plan that was developed by the Assessment and Accountability Subcommittee in their attempt to create an institutional plan laying out the basic outline with some guiding principles, rationale and standard diversity goals. They invite feedback from the Council which will be incorporated in order to have a full plan for the 1/22/09 Council meeting. He encouraged all to refer back to the reference materials in the binder to use as a guiding factor. He specifically referenced the document “Making a Real Difference”, chapter 5 and the appendices.

C. Berryman-Fink noted the challenge is identifying the leverage to ensure all units make a plan. K. Simonson noted some type of engagement is needed; perhaps something similar to UC|21. The Diversity Plan (circles) passed out calls for a mechanism to be embedded in the culture of UC. The plan seeks to define how to create an environment where everyone can be successful.

G. Wharton reported the Affirmative Action plan speaks to underrepresented groups and is very limited in its focus, but it is important in the university's mission. M. Livingston agreed this plan is a legal requirement, but does not meet the overall diversity need.

K. Simonson stated once the plan is complete, it needs the endorsement of the president and board. C. Berryman-Fink asked how to engage faculty and staff in creating plans (macro) in their individual units. K. Faaborg suggested identifying senior faculty, who are respected, in each college/unit to lead this effort for their respective units. They take it over and it becomes a grass roots, bottom-up effort and it works when the faculty recognize and support it. The deans can be asked to identify senior faculty who have already made a commitment. L. Bilionis suggested a macro/micro approach in developing plans to work in their environment to enable individual units to identify the key areas of initiatives that will penetrate. How do we get them to recognize this as an opportunity? Who do we communicate with on items to be on the short inventory that should change in their unit? Is there a set of conversations that needs to be stimulated? One of the key strategies is to get buy-in. Conversations are needed now before proceeding to finalize the plan. How should this be encouraged within the university's current finances? It appears the budget crisis drives our core values. Quality needs to be pursued; it needs to be a product from the top down. The departments need to be empowered to conduct searches and the opportunity to hire will be the incentive. However, a retention plan for faculty is needed. Exit interviews need to be done in order to capture the data as to why faculty leave. L. Bilionis stated we

have to recognize the principle objective which is to unleash other people's resources – talent, time, etc. What can we do to help them figure out what to do? The role of the template is to allow us to draw these opportunities into focus in each of the units. K. Faaborg reported her group agrees the environment needs to change, but how to move this forward is the challenge. Her group represents a wide range of constituents and could be the starting point of identifying strong leaders in the units.

M. Livingston instructed K. Simonson to work with his subcommittee taking into consideration feedback from the Council and develop a macro/micro strategy and submit an outline on how to proceed to the leadership team.

Minutes approved by C. Berryman-Fink and M. Livingston.

Future Meetings

Monday, December 8, 1:30

Thursday, January 22, 10:00

Monday, February 23, 1:30

Thursday, April 2, 10:00

Monday, May 4, 1:30

Thursday, June 4, 10:00

Distributed: 11/18/08