

Diversity Council  
Minutes  
November 8, 2007

Present: E. Abercrombie, E. Akpinar, C. Berryman-Fink, L. Billionis, R. Cushing, G. Dent, S. Downing, K. Faaborg, M. Hall, G. Hand, J. Heisey, A. Ingber, H. Kegler, A. Leonard, M. Livingston, B. Marshall, D. Meem, C. Miller, E. Owens, B. Rinto, K. Robbins, K. Simonson, M. Spencer, M. Stagaman

Absent: C. Collins, M. Leventhal, R. Martin, M. McCrate, D. Merchant, L. Mortimer, N. Pinto, J. Radley, G. Wharton

Chief Diversity Officer Report

M. Livingston reported on three items. 1) The university's mission statement is the third tab in the resource book. He has received an inquiry from the President's Office about the status of finalizing the document for board approval. The document does need sign-off from the Council prior to submittal to the President and the Board for approval. M. Livingston reported the mission statement was created by W. Hall, A. Lindell and A. Welsh and has been reviewed with the following bodies: African American community leaders, consultant-Trudy Banta, Student Senate, Graduate Student Governance Association, Deans Council, Council on Student Affairs, Student Affairs Cabinet, Faculty Senate, and the President's Cabinet. **Council is to review the document prior to the next meeting and be prepared to approve so it can be forwarded to the President and Board.** 2) A letter has been drafted to go to the senior leadership of the university asking for their support in identifying diversity initiatives (as defined in our resource book) in order to have a common understanding of items already in place. B. Marshall created a chart to go with the letter in order to collect the data in a consistent manner. The Office of Equal Opportunity already collects some of this information, in particular on race and gender. This effort needs to slow down in order to coordinate with the EO office. 3) There is a publication, *Making a Real Difference with Diversity*, which will be distributed at the next meeting. It shares the experiences of 20 other institutions in their diversity work. Much of the information is consistent with the Council's efforts.

Subcommittee Structure

C. Berryman-Fink received feedback from approximately half of the Council on the proposed models. She distributed and reviewed the models and tasks of the subcommittees. Once subcommittees are formed, they will be expected to give reports at the Diversity Council meetings on their progress. All need to keep in mind the mid-March deadline for submitting the five-year plan with budget. Discussion followed on the various models.

C. Berryman-Fink reviewed two proposed subcommittee models and stated people external to the Diversity Council can populate the subcommittees also. Discussion followed on the structure, necessity of having a separate subcommittee for assessment and accountability, budgeting and sequencing. M. Livingston stated that no matter which model is selected, it is important that all elements that have been identified in the

various models are incorporated into the final structure. There are three elements for the subcommittees: definition, budget and assessment. **It was agreed the final structure should be decided by C. Berryman-Fink and M. Livingston and communicated back to the Council.**

Recommendations from the Diversity Task Force (DTF) are not cast in stone; they can be modified and broadened as appropriate. L. Bilionis stated the conversation at the DTF specifically focused on race and ethnicity just to begin their work. The expectation of the DTF was the recommendations would broaden as needed. He stressed the importance of moving aggressively into other areas besides race and ethnicity. M. Livingston stated these are recommendations and not the action plan. It is the Council's responsibility to take the DTF recommendations and re-work them into an action plan that is a coherent document outlining a specific plan going forward.

#### Recommendations – Top 5 Priorities

C. Berryman-Fink referenced the last sheet of the packet which tallies up the top five recommendations of low or no cost recommendations from the DTF. E. Abercrombie voiced concern about the AACRC not being among those on the list. M. Livingston indicated that this is a recommendation that is already approved, but needs a formal letter of confirmation. **Council was asked to review the recommendation sheet in their resource book. This matter will be discussed at the next meeting.**

#### Communication Plan

G. Hand stated this is a high caliber group filled with people who represent the best of the university. There are a lot of questions around definition and clarification and how diversity will be perceived in the community. He is wrestling with two conflicts: 1) definition – we are experiencing a dialectical interpretation of definition. The Council needs to speak the same message. The proposal to inventory the senior leadership is an excellent opportunity to gain a sense of what the community thinks about diversity. He requests that this action move ahead sooner rather than later. The task of the subcommittees have conflicts. Some tasks have more to do with the traditional definition of diversity than what is in the Council's charge, which is further evidence of the need to work on the definition. How assessment and accountability is addressed is a critical development in creating the definition. Assessment and accountability measures need to be around the definition and should be the core of the Council's communication. 2) He understands the solutions need to take time, but the Council needs to be cognizant of the mid-March deadline for budget submittal. The web page should be developed immediately and include information about the Council (membership, minutes, pertinent documents). It is important to know the environment in which the Council communicates and to listen and engage them. The inventory is important to accelerate the listening and expand the subcommittees. The letter to the senior leadership should provide guidance in the request of initiatives and the chart is a vehicle to use and should be open-ended so they can report all they are doing.

A. Ingber stated you can change the culture without implementing a single program. If the university is driven exclusively by programs, the culture will not change. You need

to be open and listen to those who do not feel welcome at the university. You want people to tell you their story and how they feel when they come into contact with diversity at the university. If you don't change the culture, you don't make a difference.

#### Factors that advance/hinder diversity

C. Berryman-Fink reported on the feedback from the last meeting of the small group discussions. Two themes for advances emerged: 1) learning best practices from the industry, and 2) internal leadership and how best to use leaders in the institution to advance diversity. Hindrances: 1) gaining wide spread faculty involvement/ownership, and 2) money.

There was concern expressed that the internal community may not be open to outside companies coming in to the process. However, if it is done in a way that UC is not adopting their practices, but just gaining a better understanding of lessons they learned, it could be more readily accepted.

C. Miller stated the importance of clear communications on implementation strategies. The Council needs to be clear and deliberate on what is communicated. She feels the Council needs to start taking action. The constituency is ready to hear and see the work of the Council. However, implementation should not happen too quickly and then come up against a brick wall.

M. Stagaman stressed the importance of reaching out into the community. It could be helpful to identify a person to be a coach. She works with the City Fellow program and they could identify items to do better.

M. Hall recommended that each subcommittee identify someone who could play the devil's advocate in order to avoid group think.

#### Identifying our commonalities

M. Hall briefly reviewed her background and feels it's important to find what you have in common with people and use that as a base to come together. When differences come up, then you are more likely to understand and listen to the issues. Need to focus on commonalities in order to pull together. Diversity is a dividing word; need to find an alternate word. We cannot change the way people define the words we use, rather we need to find a more unified word. It appears some are moving to using inclusiveness and equity as healthy words.

A. Ingber loves the word diversity and likes people who are different. To him diversity is linked to celebration; it is important to celebrate everyone's differences.

The subcommittee structure will be sent out so work can begin soon.

C. Berryman-Fink welcomed new Council member, Helen Kegler, who is representing the regional campuses.

Further Notes

Given the expression of urgency in moving the Council's work forward, M. Livingston and C. Berryman-Fink met and put together the subcommittee structure and potential co-chairs.

The diversity definition which is in the Council resource book is attached with the minutes. This statement can be used as an operating definition; of course, subject to the Council's deliberations.

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

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, November 20, 10:00 AM**

Distributed: 11/16/07