

Diversity Council
Minutes
June 4, 2009

Present: E. Abercrombie, D. Acosta, P. Baker, L. Bilionis, J. Bryan, C. Collins, S. Downing, K. Faaborg, G. Hand, V. Hardcastle, J. Heisey, A. Ingber, M. Livingston, T. Lolli, B. Marshall, M. McCrate, D. Meem, C. Miller, E. Owens, B. Rinto, K. Robbins, K. Simonson, M. Stagaman, G. Wharton

Chair Report

L. Bilionis opened up the meeting stating he and the Leadership Team have reflected on past conversations regarding the status of the Council and the direction it should be headed. Past discussions were very beneficial to learn where members are and believes all benefited from it greatly. It's not to discern what the core common denominator is – members want to get to work and see progress. He and the Leadership Team are in agreement. The consultant's work was very beneficial and the plan is still a work in progress; it should be finished soon and will be shared with the Council once completed. L. Bilionis stated the current structure of the Council should be retained including the subcommittees which will be more engaged and used more effectively. They will report to the Council on best ideas and actions and intercept the problems. Steps need to be identified to move the subcommittees forward. Moving action items is much more difficult and that's where we can bear down and go forward. The subcommittees should drive the Council's work. This is not all we have to do but it's a foundation. It's likely to spark new ideas along the way; seize those ideas.

A second point is to use our status in the university (as a Council and the chief diversity officer) to reach out more to the university in a direct and proactive way. One example is the Provost and VPs can ask their units to set diversity goals and report back on assessment. We can undertake collectively to get more people into the game.

New items should be introduced to the Council's agenda with this meeting and the next; identify action items and bear down hard. Next stage of meetings need to understand how we will broaden the agenda in the next year. The Council should be used to perform a function identified by the task force two years ago. Need to dive into other areas of diversity; similar to the plan for race and ethnicity. Want to think about how to augment the group and communicate across the campus. Continue with current goals and look at expanding to other goals.

The core structure is fine. The report is good. We all know what we need to do; let's get on with it.

Council Membership – This is a presidential appointed committee and needs to find a way to intersect with other governance committees of the university. The best thing to do is take the conversation off-line. If Council members have names to put forward or areas that should be represented on the Council, send this information to L. Bilionis and M. Livingston. They will take these names into consideration and if they feel it is a good idea, then they will forward it to the President's Office for consideration.

Recruitment & Retention Subcommittee Report – Faculty & Staff

This subcommittee has been divided into two components – one for faculty and staff and one for students.

K. Faaborg reported her role has changed since she left the Provost Office and moved to HR. J. Bryan has taken over some portion of the role. The subcommittee evolved over the past year to become the Provost Committee on Faculty Recruitment and Retention and additional African American leaders were invited to join. She shared copies of a revised five-year plan which has six goals. 1) Build the faculty numbers by providing funding in open and newly created positions and for retention of underrepresented faculty. 2) Build the network alliance with other universities to bring people here who can give us advice and send us candidates; some progress was made this year. 3) Build the pipeline by exploring ways of enhancing underrepresented candidates at UC. Encourage student candidates to join the UC faculty by using a mentoring program. Need to inspire departments by providing an incentive. 4) Build cluster hiring programs by finding a way to make it relate more clearly to diversity goals. People in various departments need to work collaboratively for this program. 5) Build a strong African and African American Department (now called Africana Studies). Thanks to V. Hardcastle, a new department head was hired this year who is working to build better connections in the community. 6) Build a welcoming environment. A change to the environment and culture is needed if African American faculty are to be retained. A survey will likely be done to gather data even though many have already voiced their opinions on the current culture.

J. Bryan reported on items that were accomplished this year using funds from the Diversity Council. A call for proposals was sent out for winter and spring quarters. The goal was to assist in recruitment and retention. He shared a listing of proposals that was approved. Many of which exposed the faculty and students to a more diverse population by inviting visiting faculty and tapping into their expertise. The committee will assess the effectiveness of the proposals going forward and any changes that need to be made.

L. Bilionis asked K. Faaborg what are the key steps to move forward to change the culture. Is a survey necessary if you already have information? G. Wharton believes the survey is important to gather information on what needs to be done and then follow up with concrete action steps. K. Faaborg shared it has been reported there is a feeling of isolation. G. Wharton reported tenured African American faculty are coming together saying they need to address these issues and more money is needed to fund these items on an ongoing basis. The meeting with the presidential search committee was discussed and the conversation on diversity and how they have addressed diversity in the president's responsibilities.

A. Ingber mentioned there are two ways to change the culture; one which emphasizes the positive and one that minimizes the negative. It might be helpful to include those who have left the university in the survey to gain insight as to why they left. Those who left could still have negative feelings which they share with other individuals who may be considering an appointment with UC. K. Faaborg reported she performed an exit interview with M. Gooden prior to his departure. M. Livingston shared information from his conversation with him as well. When asked if UC could counter the offer; M.

Gooden replied, “absolutely not.” He stated he was going to an institution that respected his research and be part of a family. UC did not provide that support.

E. Owens stated there is a feeling of isolation in the city as well. UC can rectify the problem on campus but there remains that feeling in the city. There is an Affinity Group Model that is good and started a leadership speaker series for African American professionals. This would be very beneficial going forward.

K. Simonson asked with the current budget situation who makes the case for the diversity budget to become a priority. K. Faaborg said this is a huge conversation and made a big impact in the presidential search committee meetings where they discussed diversity and its needs. M. Livingston praised M. Stagaman’s comments that the university should not accept anything but a diverse selection pool. M. Stagaman reported women on campus came together in the last search and did their own research and put forth a female name for consideration. The same can be done now; the Diversity Council can seek out diverse candidate(s) and put them in touch with the search firm.

L. Bilionis asked K. Faaborg what her subcommittee needs to move forward.

D. Meem stated there is not a positive feeling about UC in the community.

A&S is seen as a good thing by valuing and rewarding connections across the disciplines. Some things are not revenue neutral; they need money and the ability to hire based on diversity considerations.

K. Faaborg stated people need to be appointed in the colleges and academic units to address diversity everyday. Deans need to think about ways it should reside. Need to create an environment. We have people that are interested but they have other responsibilities; they need to be relieved of their work so they can address diversity.

There is enthusiasm to move forward and ideas to add to the list. The subcommittees need to come back to the Council with questions, help and advice. If there are budget requests, break them down.

M. McCrate questioned why should new diverse faculty be brought into UC when the current environment is not conducive to their success and they cannot be retained. Shouldn’t the money be spent on changing the culture to a more welcoming one first?

L. Bilionis said it’s about positioning ourselves to ask for goals and objectives in unit’s plans.

V. Hardcastle said it would be nice to do across the university especially without the resources. A&S is doing cluster hiring.

Need to figure out how to overcome the isolation issue.

K. Faaborg stated a need to bring in HR professionals to address the issue of retention of African American staff.

Recruitment & Retention Subcommittee Report – Students

C. Miller reported her subcommittee was allocated \$50,000 and was used as follows:

- The Graduate School to enhance the number of graduate recruits.
- The allocation for undergrads was leveraged with other resources for a series of events:
 - Junior Multicultural Day targeted at high school juniors (109) to bring them to campus for a day. They continue to be cultivated as they are now entering their senior year.
 - Salute to Excellence was for students (61) committed to attend fall '09 (no diversity funding was used for this event).
 - CPS reception for students (160) who confirmed but had not taken any further action. Staff were on hand to assist with the “business” they needed to take care of.
- Choose Ohio First grants – there is an increase in diversity of students in this pool. Scholarships are provided to these students along with other scholarships to attract these talented students.
- New multi-cultural brochure (distributed).
- Provide support for Summer Bridge Program.

Retention – There has been steady progress in retention rates, particularly with African American students; rates have improved the last three years from 70.2% to 79.2%. The gap is closing and the graduation number will change. She is working with M. Stagaman to hold focus groups for students of color to tailor retention strategies. The federal regulations for ethnicity code baseline will change which will allow students to report more than one race. They need to understand how this change will affect the reporting.

The restructuring of CAT will present a huge challenge.

V. Hardcastle reported data from A&S on “killer courses in sciences” look at first generation compared to those whose parents are college graduates. When you control the variables for preparation, first generation, grades, African Americans drop out at a rate of 20% higher than any other race. It has nothing to do with these variables. M. Livingston said this matches up with a research report on the performance gap. This was an item of discussion at the recent Governor’s discussion with CECH students. The Governor was asked by a student his plans for closing the gap. When you control for all the particulars, i.e., socio economic, background, etc. the single most compelling cause for success is quality of instruction.

K. Simonson referenced a presentation made at the Diversity Conference where 63% of African American students are concentrated in two colleges. How can that be changed? How do you grow successful programs?

E. Abercrombie asked what happens if CAT does not exist. C. Miller stated due to a bill being passed, universities can't offer remedial education. The data from the program has been fascinating. CAT entry is 25-35% African American; CAT graduates and seniors are 9%. A steering committee has been formed to address this matter and they do not suggest that UC abandon the program, but look at a subset. Students will be referred to the branch campuses or Cincinnati State and provided a centralized support system to transition to the Uptown Campus if they so desire.

L. Bilionis asked the Campus Climate Subcommittee report to be delayed to the July 20th meeting in deference to the time. He asked K. Faaborg what the Council can do for her subcommittee.

C. Miller stated the deans integrating diversity into their goals is really key. It's important that the Council reinforce the role the deans play.

L. Bilionis stated the Leadership Team will reflect on what they can do to help move things forward. They understand the problems – there are aspirations; who is going to do the work; who is going to pay? Let's not stall and say it can't be done. Bring back issues to the Council and let's figure out how to move forward recognizing the dilemma is one all are facing. These are challenges and the Council lacks the kind of resources to resolve them, but remember to come back to the Council and the answer may be found here.

CDO Report

M. Livingston reported he, T. Perzigian, and L. Bilionis will present to the President's Cabinet on June 19 a recommendation that diversity goals be integrated into the university planning process and more specifically with the UC|21 goals. He is very proud of T. Perzigian and his energy to take this to the Cabinet and Interim President Rimai for their consideration.

Major League Baseball and the Cincinnati Reds will be hosting the Civil Rights Games June 19-21. UC will be a major sponsor along with 40 other corporate entities. He distributed a list of items that UC has committed to. The Council is invited to the Roundtable Discussions on 6/19 and the baseball game on 6/20. The city is using sports as a vehicle to help this city as it struggles with its past to help heal Cincinnati. President Obama has been invited to throw out the first pitch at the 6/20 game.

M. Livingston has been working with the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center along with senators and legislators to federalize the Freedom Center. He believes it will be successful. He, V. Hardcastle and other have been working with the Freedom Center to build a more formal relationship. This is an opportunity where the university is providing leadership to the community for race and race relations in the city.

UC hosted a Higher Education Information Day for foster youth last weekend. These students have no support system and it was the goal to provide an experience to let them know a college education is a possibility for them.

OBR is interested in creating a male support center funded by the State and possibly housed at the Freedom Center and supported by UC leaders.

There are many different ways to do diversity work at the local, regional, state and national levels. The community recognizes diversity needs work and different forms of leadership.

The HLC accreditation team provided a preliminary report and in the area of diversity UC was commended for their efforts and accomplishments in advancing diversity.

The Princeton Review is a reminder that students of color feel positive about UC even though there is significant work yet to be done. All should celebrate what has been accomplished.

RWC annually presents the "Diversity is Beautiful" award recognizing one teacher for bringing diversity into the classroom. This year's recipient is Tony Malone; he quoted when given the award, "I didn't know anybody cared. I just love to teach."

Given the lateness of the meeting, there were two additional items omitted from the CDO Report (noted below).

The Bridges for a Just Community Annual Awards Dinner was held the evening of June 4. Bridges is one of the premiere diversity and inclusion organizations in the city which M. Livingston chairs. He is pleased to announce that they exceeded their goal of \$350,000 and well on their way of reaching a stretch goal of \$450,000. K. Kabat, president and CEO of Fifth Third Bank, is to be commended for getting Bridges to this point.

UC has received confirmation of a gift for \$125,000 to promote diversity through the Turner Scholars program and Cincinnati.

Minutes approved by L. Billionis and M. Livingston.

NEXT MEETING
July 20, 10:00 AM

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