

Diversity Council
December 14, 2009
Minutes

Present: E. Abercrombie, D. Acosta, L. Bilonis, J. Bryan, S. Butler, C. Collins, R. Cushing, S. Downing, H. Ghebre-Ab, T. Guerin, G. Hand, V. Hardcastle, J. Heisey, A. Ingber, H. Kegler, M. Livingston, B. Marshall, R. Martin, M. McCrate, D. Meem, C. Miller, N. Pinto, K. Robbins, P. Shannon-Baker, K. Simonson, M. Stagaman, A. Vamadeva, G. Wharton

Guest: G. Williams

L. Bilonis opened up the meeting noting the President would be joining soon.

Diversity Statement

M. Livingston distributed a new draft of the statement which will ultimately appear in the Diversity Plan and will answer the basic and fundamental question of “What is diversity to UC?” It needs to be a clear, concise and powerful statement. He has solicited feedback with various groups which has been incorporated into the statement. It has been shared with the President’s Cabinet and Student Affairs Cabinet. It will go to the Diversity Task Force for their deliberations and to include in the Diversity Plan. He invited feedback.

- V. Hardcastle stated it is too long and perhaps the paragraphs could be titled to guide the reader as follows: statement, why, vision.
- J. Bryan asked for clarification on the last sentence in the fifth paragraph; specifically “enhance diversity relations”. M. Livingston replied it addresses relationships not only with minority suppliers, but with the larger community. One example is the collaborative efforts with the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. It was called to attention that no one uses the term “diversity relations”. M. Stagaman suggested language that reflects UC is a leader in the region creating a climate in ways of working that is diverse and inclusive and cite examples such as supplier diversity. **L. Bilonis asked M. Stagaman to craft the appropriate language.**
- C. Miller asked if there was better language to use for the first line in place of “learning community” that describes UC. Some suggested using “academic community” but then that leaves out the learning that occurs in other venues of university life. Some suggested removing it all together, but others preferred to leave it in. It is felt as if we are trying to define the university and that is not the intent of the statement. It was decided the task force will have to decide on the appropriate use of this language.
- R. Martin referenced the third paragraph, “...moves beyond simple tolerance to embrace...” Does this reflect where we are now?
- R. Martin referenced the fifth paragraph and the word “encouraged” and believes the language should be stronger. All agreed.

President Williams

L. Bilonis welcomed President Williams to the meeting. G. Williams acknowledged time he already spent with L. Bilonis and M. Livingston learning about the university’s diversity efforts and recognized the significant work of the Council. He is pleased UC is ranked in the top 20 for diversity by *The Princeton Review*, but that’s not enough. Not many institutions have an enviable record in terms of diversity efforts. There is still much work to be done and he thanked the Council for all they have accomplished to date. He offered himself, his office and anything

he could do to enhance diversity efforts. It takes people who are truly committed. People may be reluctant to be leaders but there is a need for leaders. Diversity is more than just bringing in a few Black and Hispanic students; the university needs to change. He referenced a NASULGC report he worked on and which was distributed to the Council at the beginning of its work – *Now is the Time*. This report shows the kinds of questions that should be asked to provide the framework for discussion. He shared some of his experiences at other universities as well his book and personal story. Diversity work is all about making sure people have opportunities. It's part of the fabric and expanding one's world view. Students will be disadvantaged if they do not deal with a diverse experience. You can have true academic excellence and diversity at the same time; this is critically important. He does not want to hear people tell him they do not have the resources; it's not about the money; it's about commitment. Top level administrators will be evaluated on their diversity efforts. UC needs to do a better job of recruiting African American and Hispanic faculty to the institution and have a climate where they can succeed. There is no university that has a great track record, but he will work very hard on making a dream a reality. Questions were invited.

- D. Meem asked what he envisions for the Council as this body is looking for an identity. G. Williams replied he will rely on the Council to identify issues and make recommendations on solutions. The Council will be his eyes and ears. From his experience at other institutions, the issues are the same, but the culture changes from place to place.
- M. Livingston stated that looking at the higher education landscape, one does not see success in the formative stage. One sees an image of a better place and it's frustrating not being there. G. Williams replied not to get too comfortable being in the top 20; it's not enough.
- M. McCrate shared the Council is trying to prioritize its efforts and asked from his diversity experience what area has he seen have the most impact. G. Williams replied having diverse faculty, but in reality it hasn't worked that way. Most success comes from recruiting students of color, particularly when there is a good sized cohort. Do minority students feel a part of the institution? Diversity of the student body affects faculty recruitment and is critically important.
- C. Miller shared some statistics of the current freshman class – 54% male and more African American males graduate than African American females. She asked if he had any thoughts as to why UC is an anomaly and how it can be used to our advantage. G. Williams had this experience at CUNY with the Engineering school that attracted more males than females. He asked if safety could be an issue for females and be a detractor.
- E. Abercrombie asked for a sense of his Iowa experience – goals that were and were not met. G. Williams replied his focus was primarily on faculty and staff hiring and working with the colleges leveraging their resources. He did not just grant funds to any request. Those requesting money had to show how they were using their own resources first.
- V. Hardcastle shared that there is a lack of strong voices from the various under-represented groups. It's not in the UC culture as it has been at other places from her experience. G. Williams agreed it varies at institutions. Some of these voices, however, can be very polarizing.
- A. Ingber stated he appreciates the President's passion and life commitment to diversity. Diversity has been seen primarily as a race component and the Council has been working to broaden it beyond this and asked how does this fit into his larger picture. G. Williams replied he sees diversity as a large umbrella and everyone is a part of it. No group should be excluded.

No other questions were raised and L. Billionis thanked G. Williams for his time.

Feedback from President's Visit

K. Robbins called attention to his reference about diversity not being about the money; it's about commitment. M. Livingston shared his experience from a conversation at a President's Cabinet meeting. The President replied to one of the VPs that very same message. He will not release funds until the requesting party shows commitment on their part by putting something on the table. The President stated his success depends upon the efforts of his vice presidents.

Diversity Statement

R. Martin asked if the statement could include the reference made by V. Hardcastle about embracing those different voices of the under-represented populations and allow them to speak loudly. The next step for the statement will be with the Diversity Plan Task Force and then ultimately be included in the Diversity Plan for the President's approval.

Diversity Plan Task Force

M. Livingston reported D. Merchant, B. Rinto and T. Kershaw have agreed to lead this effort with a group of nine individuals on the task force. There are two conferences that selected individuals will attend in January on how to craft a diversity plan so as not to reinvent the wheel. Additionally, it is likely a consultant will be brought in to share his experience in developing the plan for Virginia Tech. This is the plan that has been serving as UC's model in the developmental stages. R. Martin suggested a consultant from the Cincinnati area be brought in as the Cincinnati culture is very different from other regions in the country. This would be a very important perspective.

University Planning Process

M. Livingston reported on recent activity in the vetting process to gain endorsement for integrating diversity into the planning process. He has presented this as a "top down/bottom up" strategy and it gives those at the unit level an opportunity to identify their diversity objectives with their supervisor. The Faculty Senate enthusiastically and unanimously endorsed the effort. VPs will get reports from their units and prioritize those goals to submit to the CDO who will share it with the Diversity Council for endorsement prior to submittal to the President. M. Livingston will take the proposal back to President's Cabinet on 12/18 for their endorsement. It will then become part of the planning process for 2010-11. M. Stagaman called attention to the language "top down/bottom up" as some may have issues with it. **L. Bilionis asked her to phrase it in a more powerful way.**

Budget Update

M. Livingston reported those who received allocations last year were notified that those funds will be available again for the current year and all should have received written notification last week. One exception is the allocation for faculty recruitment and retention which is pending a decision from the President.

L. Bilionis asked N. Pinto about the status of the incentive awards. N. Pinto reported the focus of the awards last year was the recruitment of underrepresented students and this will continue in the second round. Those who received grants last year will report on their awards in February 2010. He proposed moving forward in January inviting proposals and using the same team for evaluation and selection of recipients as last year.

M. Livingston asked N. Pinto to share his thoughts on a different use of funds allocated to the Graduate School for graduate student recruitment. He proposes developing a diversity DVD to send to those interested in pursuing graduate education.

Diversity Conference

B. Marshall reported the conference is scheduled for 4/14 and the theme is "Diversity and Inclusion: Imperatives for Excellence". The call for proposals has gone out and is located on the diversity web site. She encouraged all to submit proposals for participation which are due 12/30. M. Livingston will present with L. Billionis and K. Robinson from P&G on how to build an organization-wide diversity plan. P&G is looking to change its image around diversity and is using the UC Magazine diversity issue as a guide.

Announcements

E. Abercrombie acknowledged the loss of L. Bates Parker as one of the leaders and strong voices on campus and in the community. An endowed scholarship has been established in her honor.

Minutes approved by L. Billionis and M. Livingston.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Monday, January 11, 1:30

Monday, February 15, 2:00 **note time change**

Thursday, March 18, 1:30

Monday, April 26, 1:30

Thursday, May 27, 10:00

Monday, June 28, 1:30

Thursday, July 29, 10:00

Distributed: 12/22/09