

Diversity Council  
February 25, 2010  
Minutes

Present: L. Bilionis, F. Bowen, J. Bryan, S. Butler, T. Guerin, T. Kershaw, R. Lee, M. Livingston, B. Marshall, R. Martin, D. Meem, D. Merchant, C. Miller, R. Selzer, A. Vamadeva, G. Wharton, W. White

Note – this meeting was rescheduled from a snow day on February 15.

Chair Report

L. Bilionis opened up the meeting welcoming new members to the Diversity Council – F. Bowen, associate vice president for Student Life and dean of students (replacing E. Abercrombie), and R. Arnsperger Selzer, program director in Alumni Affairs (replacing J. Heisey). Two additional faculty were appointed by Faculty Senate – R. Lee and J. Ricks.

Diversity Plan Task Force

D. Merchant and T. Kershaw expressed their desire to engage the full Council in the planning process for the Diversity Plan over a series of the Diversity Council meetings. The intent for these meetings is to serve as brainstorming and problem solving sessions giving the task force feedback to move forward. M. Livingston reinforced the President's expectation of a final plan which will travel through the governance vetting process. D. Merchant, T. Kershaw, B. Rinto and M. Livingston attended a pre-conference workshop at Clemson University that focused on developing a diversity plan for post-secondary institutions. It did not give a template but provided a process. Three things were learned: the plan has to be contextual, data collection is key but don't re-invent the wheel, and monitoring the plan. They stressed to keep it simple but it is important to institutionalize a system of the data. D. Merchant shared with the conference facilitator a rough outline of the university's process for developing a diversity plan and she confirmed it is on target.

G. Wharton reported that he, K. Simonson and J. Taylor attended a seminar in Columbus that focused on a 10 step guide (distributed and available on the Blackboard site) that could be used for corporations or educational institutions. The models presented reflect a high level of commitment, accountability and goal statements.

D. Merchant stated when comparing the two workshops, one focusing on corporations and one on educational institutions, it is clear that the corporation model is very directive, gets an outside entity to conduct their assessment and is objective; while the education model is very process oriented and does the SWOT analysis.

B. Marshall inquired if either workshop addressed execution of the plan. G. Wharton noted at his workshop distinction was made between Affirmative Action reports (compliance driven, much more narrowly defined in its intent) and diversity plans (much broader perspectives) and if the focus was directed towards Affirmative Action, then it

could complicate plan implementation. M. Livingston noted the 10 step plan appears to be more prescriptive in its approach versus a common element in a diversity plan and it looks like a commercial product. It could be difficult to obtain buy-in with this approach, therefore, difficult to execute. C. Miller called attention this plan misses the importance of diversity to the process of teaching and learning. M. Livingston concurred it is inherent in the education environment.

The task force asked Council members to send them data that should be considered for inclusion in the plan and they in turn will determine what will be used. It's imperative that they receive data from all constituencies so as to develop a plan that is inclusive and with correct information.

It was agreed that all Diversity Council members will be given access to the task force's Blackboard account to enable all to view material.

Assessment of the climate for the institution needs to be done. NSSE provides that information for students, but nothing is done for faculty or staff.

T. Kershaw reported the task force has met three times and are trying to narrow things down by looking at data and identifying the goals to establish for the plan (with the Council's help). He invited feedback on the groups the task force should meet with on campus to involve all constituents throughout the university.

T. Kershaw stressed the importance of getting representation from all groups to develop the plan. W. White expressed the interest of 4A. L. Bilionis shared that Faculty Senate, Student Government, LGBT, and union leaders were involved in the previous Diversity Task Force report. T. Kershaw stated representation can be reflected in other ways than just serving on the task force; the process needs to be transparent and all are welcome to voice an opinion. T. Guerin shared there is community interest in the university's activities relative to supplier diversity. M. Livingston reported most diversity plans lump external relations as a goal area which includes supplier diversity. T. Guerin lives in both the corporate and educational worlds due to the nature of his work and is exploring how this fits into the overall plan. G. Wharton shared there has been discussion about this topic and confirmed it's an area that requires further conversation. J. Bryan stated all individuals who are involved in hiring faculty, staff, student workers, etc. need to be involved.

T. Kershaw asked Council members for their feedback on the desired goals. He referenced the document prepared by M. Livingston sent out with the agenda that included goals from five different institutions as examples for consideration. R. Martin suggested putting this information out on a survey monkey to allow all members the opportunity to provide feedback. The task force can then tally this information and present it to the Council at the next meeting. M. Livingston stated the intent was not to debate the goals at the table but to take feedback from the sample institutions to allow the task force to begin developing goals for the university's plan. D. Merchant noted there are consistent themes among the five different institutions.

C. Miller asked how success is determined.

M. Livingston called attention to the third page which provides a definition of terms so all are using a common language. If you are going to measure progress, it's done by the objectives created in the units that demonstrate our achievement to the goals. When objectives are completed, they contribute to the goals we choose to pursue. That is the measurement used to determine success.

T. Kershaw said to think of this process in steps – need to identify where we want to go, where we are currently, and then develop a plan where we want to go. Therefore, it's important to get input on the desired goals. He asked if campus climate is a goal the university should pursue.

S. Butler shared her frustration with trying to identify goals without having a vision.

M. Livingston reiterated that page three addresses the issue of vision with the common language to get through this exercise. He asked if campus climate is an area the university feels is critical that should be addressed year after year to move in the desired direction.

D. Meem suggested looking at this in two ways – go to the other end of the process and what does the campus look like and if we think it ought to be the way it looks.

M. Livingston stated work needs to begin on defining the mission, vision, goals and objectives. The task force chose to start with the goals. He encouraged all to buy into the common language so as not to get wrapped up in one focused area.

For now, L. Bilonis encouraged all that during these discussions not to lose the content by getting caught up in the title -- whether it be mission, vision, objectives, goals. The university has a mission statement that speaks explicitly to diversity. A diversity definition was approved by the Board. There is much to work from. The university has a hard time with faculty being diverse and excellent; this should be a goal.

M. Livingston stated he went to the College of Business and asked them to provide the definition of terms to use for this purpose as well the university planning process, asking them how one defines the language for these words and their relationship to one another. This is their field of expertise and is not something he just made up.

**It was agreed that D. Merchant and T. Kershaw will send out to the Council the University Mission Statement and the sample goals from the five institutions asking all to select the goals that should be included in the university's diversity plan. This will be due 3/10. They will tally the feedback and report back at the next meeting for another discussion.**

**It is important that when information is provided in advance of the meeting, that members review and be prepared to provide input to guide the task force in its work to develop the diversity plan. Discussions need to be used wisely during these monthly meetings in order to meet the deadline for completion of this plan.**

#### CDO Report

M. Livingston reported both Faculty Senate and President's Cabinet approved the diversity objective to be included in the planning process for the university. He also commented UC|21 with the six goals will likely continue to be the operational model for planning; however, it will be refreshed. This is related to the Diversity Council as this information will be submitted by the units for review of recommendations to submit to the President.

#### Diversity Updates

M. Livingston and President Williams will be making presentations with executives at P&G and the Kroger Company as part of their diversity training. Visits have already taken place with Bridges for a Just Community and Fifth Third.

The Dalai Lama will be presented with the International Freedom Conductor Award in October at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

Thirteen proposals were submitted for the Diversity Incentive Grants; the selection committee has reviewed and made their selections. Notices will be going out within the week.

The Ethnic Reception has been rescheduled to March 17, 4 PM in the Mick & Mack Café.

The Diversity Conference is April 14.

A prototype is being finalized by the Communications Committee to update the diversity web page.

Minutes approved by L. Bilionis and M. Livingston.

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS:**

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