

Diversity Council
October 4, 2007
Minutes

Present: E. Abercrombie, E. Akpinar, T. Barr (guest), C. Berryman-Fink, L. Bilonis, R. Cushing, G. Dent, S. Downing, K. Faaborg, M. Hall, G. Hand, J. Heisey, A. Ingber, A. Leonard, M. Leventhal, M. Livingston, B. Marshall, R. Martin, D. Merchant, C. Miller, L. Mortimer, N. Pinto, J. Radley, B. Rinto, K. Robbins, K. Simonson, G. Wharton

Absent: C. Collins, M. McCrate, E. Owens, M. Spencer, M. Stagaman

Opening

C. Berryman-Fink opened the meeting giving an overview of plans for the meeting. G. Hand developed a communication plan which was distributed with the agenda. Due to the concerns that were raised at the previous meeting, Council members will break into small discussion groups to address some of these topics with the intent to reach a common understanding.

Chief Diversity Officer Report

M. Livingston reported he was “intimidated” when he first entered the room by the way the room was arranged; it was not an optimal setting. The U-shape arrangement seems to work better. E. Abercrombie and G. Hand identified the need for the Council to engage in a conversation to gain a more collective understanding before we go out as ambassadors for this effort.

M. Livingston and C. Berryman-Fink met with the President’s Cabinet but did not get an opportunity for a full discussion and only introduced the model with a brief description of the challenge facing the Council. They requested a more in depth discussion with Cabinet of the detail and expectations of President Zimpher and the Council and ways in which they can support this initiative. They plan to make it abundantly clear that Cabinet members have a fundamental role and responsibility in this initiative. They will have a report card that defines some detail and use the associated metrics. They need to be partners in this process.

The *News Record* published an article about the work of the Council of which most of the content was correct. However, it incorrectly stated M. Livingston was the chair of the Council. The intended message is not always interpreted correctly.

M. Livingston has submitted a budget request of \$100,000 for ‘07-08 of which \$75,000 will go toward implementation of the low-hanging fruit recommendations as directed by N. Zimpher. Additionally, the revenue neutral items can be acted on quickly. The Council will later address the development of the five-year plan and permanent budget for ‘08-09 and implement a communication system going forward.

Diversity Council Chair Report

C. Berryman-Fink stated that based on comments from the first meeting some documents in the resource book were revised. Packets were distributed to Council members and she walked through the changes. Any additional changes should be sent to K. Ogden. A few more members will be added in order to ensure there is adequate representation from all constituencies. The fact and figure chart added the following categories: Caucasian, bi-racial and non-identifiers. Four additional articles were part of the packet as well as the President's Report Card which has a section for diversity. As you find reading materials to share with the Council, forward them to K. Ogden for distribution.

There was concern expressed that the fact and figure chart had no section for members of the LGBTQ community. This may be difficult to track, as most people do not make that identification known. Data is not yet being collected on the bi- or multi-racial group. L. Mortimer reported this requirement is coming soon as his office uses the format prescribed by the federal government. When this directive comes, his office will be re-surveying faculty, staff and students for this new category. He also noted the fastest growing segment is "unknown". L. Bilionis noted there are self-identification challenges in gathering data and while the institution needs to adhere to the government standards, this does not necessarily mean UC should limit their data gathering to these prescribed standards. E. Abercrombie stated when the Council rolls out the concept about race, he is concerned about those outside of this area. Should the Council focus on the four traditional areas or roll out everything together? A. Ingber stated the government expects people to check the one identity box that applies closest to their race; however, most students will check all that apply. It might be helpful to have some clarification on the chart as to what each category means. D. Merchant stated she is sensitive to the discussion on data as to what information should be collected, but the Council's work should not get sidetracked on the numbers. The focus should be on why the data is being collected and why it is important to the Council's work. A foundation needs to be built first before the data is collected.

Communication Plan

G. Hand stated the document should not be called a draft yet and there is a lot of caution in the document. He asked what does the infrastructure do? It needs to be accountable and communicate accountability. In his experience with reporters, he has learned they believe the numbers say something that words do not. He shared the communication plan with the branding group in an attempt to get some branding ideas. Some of their branding essence is in the document as a result of their conversation. The number one word that came from their discussion of diversity and what they want to see from the diversity effort is "welcome".

Breakout Discussion Groups

Council members broke out into smaller discussion groups to focus on the questions outlined on the agenda. After these discussions, each group shared the results of their conversations and how they defined diversity.

J. Radley reported diversity creates an inviting atmosphere while celebrating and learning about everyone's differences. The Webster dictionary defines diversity as a condition of being different. Going beyond those differences and understanding what they mean and how they impact us. It's an action word and prompts us to do something. It enhances our understanding of different cultures. It helps progression in whatever we are doing. For many, diversity creates a fear of the unknown. How do we break down those barriers of fear of the unknown? His group recommends going back to Just Community for help.

K. Faaborg's group defined diversity as the ability to work side by side without having to assimilate. It's a level of respect for other cultures. It's not just race; it's culture as well. E. Abercrombie asked what will faculty think when we roll out diversity. He believes there are faculty who are racist. If you ask a definition question, there will be a response. If we are talking about words, we need definitions.

M. Leventhal reported his group defined diversity as going into a situation and not having to explain yourself. Diversity is having an interest, awareness, and appreciation of differences. It's an integration of valuing differences in the general community. The issue of valuing differences needs to be operationalized. Accountability in all aspects of the organization should be implemented. A successful diverse organization is where faculty, staff and students are comfortable in the environment. Environments that are bio diverse (ecological) are much more healthy and vibrant.

D. Merchant's group defined it in a very broad context. The impact can be seen in influence and opportunity in an environment that everyone feels safe being themselves.

A. Leonard reported diversity should be the new normal. The university needs to embrace these different groups. They asked if Council members are representing a particular constituency.

C. Berryman-Fink and M. Livingston highlighted some the concepts they heard and acknowledged there are many ways to establish a definition.

There was discussion if Council members should represent only their particular group. All were advised to be broader and reach out to all constituencies. No one should be pigeon holed into one set category. However, it was noted that some students seem to gravitate to their own group because that is where they feel most comfortable. L. Bilonis reminded all that this body is part of the governance structure of the university and with the ability to report back to the group you are formally representing. M. Livingston referenced the wheel on the front cover the resource book and its message is a goal statement.

Future Meetings

C. Berryman-Fink asked the Council for feedback on the best use of future meetings, specifically if the small group discussions were beneficial. A. Ingber and others agreed the small group discussions were very helpful and would like this opportunity for most

meetings. He also went on to say America has changed; it is no longer all white. It is now a textile made up of every hue of the world. D. Merchant expressed her hope that all can agree on a definition of diversity to move forward on the Council's work. Any further ideas can be sent to M. Livingston or C. Berryman-Fink.

M. Livingston stated that as he went through the diversity resource materials, he came to a concept of "pervasive ethos" that stuck with him. He asked if others could fill in the blank.

B. Rinto distributed the report, Status of UC Women. The full report can be found on the WIN web site at <http://www.uc.edu/win>.

At the next meeting, G. Wharton will share the Affirmative Action report.

If there are announcements or events to be shared, send those items to K. Ogden.

All group leaders were asked to provide a clean copy of their discussion notes to K. Ogden by 10/11/07.

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

NEXT MEETING: October 25, 10:00 AM

Distributed 10/10/07