

Council on Diversity and Inclusion
4:15 February 13, 2013
Meeting Agenda
JRC 226

Members present: Karen Edwards, Taunita Stephenson, Michael Benitez, Mark Watts, Mark Levandoski, Karla Erickson, KaydiAnn Newsome, Jennifer Brooks, Pooj Padmaraj, Colleen Osborne, Jessica Trejo, Heather Lobban-Viravong, Henry Morisada Rietz

Invited guest: Lucy Chang, Marlene Jacks, Robert Mulry, Chinyere Ukabiala

The meeting was called to order at 4:17.

Minutes of the last meeting had been approved electronically without objection over break.

Introductions: Kaydi-Ann Newsome was introduced as the new representative from the Multicultural Leadership Council. The Council expressed its gratitude to Katie In for her service last semester.

We also welcomed the College's new Ombudsperson, Chinyere Ukabiala.

We had brief updates on the proposed **change to the Mission of the College**. Dean Paula Smith had communicated by email to the Council that Executive Council discussed rewording of the College Mission Statement to make the language gender neutral. The wording they voted unanimously to endorse was the following:

. . . The College pursues that mission by *providing an education in the liberal arts through free inquiry . . . [etc.] The College aims to graduate *individuals* who can think clearly, who can speak and write persuasively . . . [etc.]*

The Dean reported that Executive Council members preferred "providing an education in the liberal arts" over "educating young minds" with the following rationale: "to value education that engages physicality, spirit—all sides of human development, not just the intellectual as implied by 'young minds'." Executive Council also reasoned that "since the College claims not to discriminate on the basis of age, it also seemed off-base to specify 'young'."

The Dean's message had been circulated to the Council before the meeting and the changes were accepted electronically by unanimous consent. The SGA President reported that the SGA Cabinet discussed Executive Council's emendations and they are in agreement with the changes.

Mark Watts, representative from Staff Council reported that Staff Council had endorsed the proposed changes to the Mission Statement at their meeting on **February 11, 2013**.

Alumni Council is scheduled to consider the proposed changes at their meeting of March 2nd. The Faculty plan to consider the changes at their March 4th meeting. If this proposal is endorsed by Alumni Council and the Faculty, it would then be referred to the President and the Board of Trustees.

Brief update on **spring 2012 ad hoc Sexual Harassment Transparency Committee** was postponed.

In a brief update on **Strategic Plan**, it was reported that Heather Lobban-Viravong, Karla Erickson, and Henry Rietz met with Angela Voos and Kathy Kamp on December 19. We shared with them “Measuring Diversity and Inclusion in the Strategic Plan Implementation Process” and “Examples of Suggested Metrics.” In January, Voos and Kamp met with the Strategic Implementation “Leads” who were receptive to making diversity more explicit and to developing metrics for each plan. One of the immediate results is that “Diversity” has been added to “Project Areas” for the [Innovation Fund](#).

We announced the [Council on Diversity and Inclusion’s Website](#).

Most of the meeting was devoted to a **discussion of resourcing students**. Prior to the meeting Michael Benitez supplied the Council with a “Report on Resourcing Students,” which he summarized. He was joined by Marlene Jacks, Robert Mulry, Kaydi-Ann Newsome, and Jessica Trejo. They added four additional student groups: Queer Athletic Association, Queer Mentoring Program (formerly Coming Out Group), GOGO, Queer Leadership Council and Queer and Christian.

They reported the Office of Intercultural Engagement and the Multicultural Leadership Council have been working to expand the understanding of diversity to include not just racial and ethnic minoritized students, but also religious, socio-economic, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, and first generation, as well as organizations devoted to social justice issues who do not primarily deal with social identity issues, but focus on issues that impact those of minoritized social identities (i.e. O.P.E.N., Pioneer Diversity Council, etc.) .

The OIEL staff and MLC leadership reported on many of the exciting developments this year under the leadership of Michael Benitez Jr. These include the Inclusive Teaching diversity workshops which have been the most impactful workshops on campus for the year. These workshops have attracted over 60 faculty and staff since September 2012, leadership and cultural development opportunities (i.e. out of state conferences and additional travel to programming/events at other university and college campuses in Iowa, academic focuses programming on campus, and increased inter and cross cultural collaboration between student organizations and academic departments.

They reported that this is first time in a number of years that students have been able to attend off-campus conferences to expand their leadership and cultural competencies at Grinnell, including (number of students in parentheses):

Association of Black Cultural Centers (ABCC National Conference) Purdue University - October 27-28, 2012 (4)

Creating Change - National Conference (SRC conference for LGBT job employment and leadership) Atlanta, GA (6)

POSSEPLUS Retreat - Des Moines, Iowa (216+ campus attendees)

Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Trans Allies College Conference MBLGTACC -University/Michigan Feb. 8-10, 2013 (28)

Yale Black Solidarity Conference - February 14-17, 2013 (7) 20 applications, 7 attendees, 3 first year student leaders

Harvard Business School -African Conference February 15-17, 2013 (3)

United States Hispanic Leadership Institute February 15-17, 2013 Chicago (14)

SACNAS - Science conferences (Fall & Spring 3 conferences)

Jacks has also been exploring opportunities in Iowa and providing transportation to those local events, including a recent lecture by Michael Eric Dyson at Iowa State University, a cultural celebration in Davenport, IA., and the African American Writer's Forum in Des Moines, among others.

They reported that an application process has been implemented to identify student leaders to send to conferences who would in turn bring the resources back to campus. There is an emphasis on providing mentorship to first and second year students.

Benitez emphasized the financial support and encouragement they have received from SGA this year.

In the discussion, a concern was raised that to secure funding students have to reach out to an excessive number of sources, so the need for a smoother process and clearer protocols for funding was expressed. The SGA President Colleen Osborne reported on working with Benitez and Jacks to increase information about the allocation process. One major concern SGA has been hearing is how non-dominant students have been getting aggressively scrutinized at Joint Board meetings. In response, SGA is reforming Joint Board so that funding can be distributed equitably and more through committees, thus providing a less intimidating process.

While SGA has been able to provide funds for MLC groups, there is a larger issue of institutional support. The SGA representatives cited the example of Oberlin's Multicultural Resource Center, which has a tremendous amount of staffing. Especially with the turnover in SGA cabinet, there needs to be more support to provide continuity.

There is still a concern that we achieve a critical mass of minoritized students. Members recognized the resources and efforts the College invests in recruiting a diverse student body, but do not believe we are adequately supporting students who are here. There is a disconnect between the way the College promotes itself and the lived reality of students.

The discussion turned to the need for more mentoring opportunities and other support from the community. Several members emphasized the tremendous amount of work students put into organizing events. They would like to see more faculty, staff and administrators at their events; students find their presence and support very encouraging. It was pointed out that it would be helpful to advertise whether events are family friendly or not.

The Council considered whether having a faculty/staff advisor would be helpful to maintain continuity for many groups. It was also considered that some groups do not want non-student advisors. Faculty representatives said that if a group wants advisors, it would be helpful to the faculty member that it is done through the Faculty Organizational Committee so that the work is valued by the College. Council did not consider how administrators' and staff work might be valued by the College.

The hope was expressed that some of the issues involving continuity might be helped by the new website.

The need for opportunities for student (and others) leaders to step back, reflect and think strategically about their work was expressed. There is a sense that people are over extended and the concern was expressed that students risk burning out.

Multicultural organizations serve the dual purpose of educating the campus, but also providing emotional and social support for our various communities.

It was clarified that when we are talking about institutional support, we are specifically referring to staffing and funding. It was explained that SGA's budget is tied to tuition. It was pointed out that budgets should be tied to enrollments as well. There is the concern that budgets for multicultural programming have not increased while enrollments have. The need for an account of the various budgets and processes for funding was needed.

The concern was raised about the perceived limited amount of staffing provided for multicultural students and groups. Some staff positions have multiple responsibilities that draw their resources away from working with multicultural students. We could also make better use of some of the diverse staff that we have, such as expanding the presence of assistant coaches. In terms of staffing, the need to compare the resources and structures at our peer institutions was expressed. The Office of Intercultural Engagement will work with SGA to make a comparison.

Discussion finally turned to the idea of using the Innovation Fund to provide the opportunity to do some of this work. Mark Levandoski proposed meeting with the co-chairs to draft a proposal that would help us do a comprehensive study of the 1) budget, 2) staffing, and 3) institutional structure.