Cultural Diversity Committee
Minutes

April 16, 2001
3:00- 4:15 p.m.

Present: Nannette Commander, Randy De Kler, Doris Derby, Valerie Fennell, Christine Gallant, Tazar Gissentanner, Lois Mohr, Ron Squibbs, Maria Valeri-Gold, Mary Beth Walker, Julia Marks Young.

Minutes from the February 12 meeting were corrected, and approved as corrected. Addition: Add as second sentence to paragraph 5 on the Enrollment Management Committee: “This committee is chaired by Edi Guyton.” The minutes from the March 13 meeting were approved as read.

Old business.

Staff Assessment Survey: The co-chairs met with Adrienne Smith of the Department of Management and Staff Development Services to update her on the work of the Cultural Diversity Committee (CDC) on this survey to this point, and to express CDC concerns that any future survey developed include items relating to cultural diversity concerns.

Report on the Recruitment and Retention of Ethnic Minority Tenure-Track Faculty: This report was unanimously approved by the University Senate at its March 22 meeting.

New Business.

Mary Beth Walker reported that her Department of Economics has just hired an African American faculty member, Darrick Hamilton. He has also been awarded the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson fellowship, and will be on professional leave for next year. The CDC congratulated her and her department.

Christine Gallant was unanimously elected Chair. In relation to the Staff Assessment Survey, Gallant stated that she favored the CDC serving in an advisory capacity only rather than working to help develop the survey. Working with an administrative office in such a capacity is not within the scope of the duties of the CDC. Our Senate committee has worked steadily since 1995 to develop such a survey, which is still incomplete; and it will probably take many more years to implement the results of any survey after given. It seems time to withdraw from an active role in its production. After discussion, the CDC took a formal vote and unanimously passed the motion: The Cultural Diversity Committee shall act in an advisory capacity only in the development of the Staff Assessment Survey, but strongly recommends that the Office of Management and Staff Development Services revise this survey to include items relating to cultural diversity concerns and also conduct it among the staff.

Gallant announced two issues that she wished CDC to address next year.

One will be to assist John Peterson, Senior Faculty Associate to the Provost for Underrepresented Faculty, as he begins implementation of the Report on the Recruiting and Retention of Ethnic
Minority Tenure-Track Faculty.

The other will be to seek Senate membership for staff. At present, University statutes state that only faculty, administrators, and students may be Senate members, although staff members elected by the Staff Advisory Council may serve on Senate committees. Staff Council sought membership in 1995 unsuccessfully, and their present President Leslie Williams recently stated that Staff Council still fully supported this. Gallant stated that there are now 10 staff members elected by Staff Council, but unlike the student representatives from SGA who are University senators, staff representatives can not vote on the floor of the Senate because they are non-senators. The University Senate is GSU’s only legislative body, and staff should have a vote in it. Then the staff members could work on the various committees to seek redress directly of any problems they have, rather than relying upon the Staff Assessment Survey and subsequent implementation of its recommendations. If the CDC approves this resolution, then it will work with the Statutes and Bylaws Committee of Staff Council to draft a proposed amendment; ask other Senate committees to review it; and submit the final draft to the Statutes and Bylaws Committee for its approval.

Discussion followed. The suggestions were made to ask the Planning and Development and Faculty Affairs Committees to review the resolution, and also to check with Pauline Clance, Senior Faculty Associate to the Provost for the Advancement of Women, for possible suggestions about how to proceed. The suggestion was made to recommend increasing the number of staff members in the Senate.

The CDC took a formal vote, and unanimously approved the motion: Since the purpose of the Cultural Diversity Committee is to represent culturally diverse groups within the University, and since the demographics of university staff members show high percentages of women and/or minorities in all groups, and since staff members now have no voting rights in the University’s only legislative body, therefore the Cultural Diversity Committee shall seek Senate membership for staff members as elected by the Staff Advisory Council who now serve on Senate committees.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15.