Cultural Diversity Committee
Minutes
January 8, 2002
3:05 p.m. - 4:10 p.m.

Present:          Justina Emmanuel, Christine Gallant, Tazar Gissentanner, Edi Guyton, Lois Mohr, Linda Nelson, Cora Presley, Joe Rau, Hazel Scott, Ron Squibbs, Maria Valeri-Gold, Julia Marks Young
Absent:           Kyle Bruner, Doris Derby, Mustafa Elsawy, Valerie Fennell, Charles Marvin, John Peterson, Sally Wallace, Molly Weinburgh

The November and December minutes were approved as read.

Christine Gallant introduced John Day, former Director of the Diversity Education Programs and now associated with the Affirmative Action Office, who discussed the forthcoming Ping Chong campus presentation about various student immigrant experiences. He explained that Dr. Cynthia East, Assistant Professor of Social Work, had asked his office for assistance in bringing the presentation to GSU. The play will be held in April and will run for two shows. Christine asked if any one wished to assist him through a subcommittee, but none volunteered. John said that individual involvement and faculty networking about the event might be more useful. Justina Emmanuel said that she would announce it at the next SGA meeting. Edi Guyton said that she would try to get some involvement by departmental chairws in the College of Education. Tazar Gissentanner said that the Staff Council would be interested in knowing about it; and Maria Valeri-Gold said that she would discuss it with her colleagues in the Counseling Center. Edi said that the Provost might publicize this Diversity Theater production at the next Deans Group meeting.

Linda Nelson distributed the Best Practices Report for 2000-2001 that her office has compiled on diversity efforts made by GSU’s colleges, schools, and offices.

The committee next began consideration of two motions regarding staff membership in the Senate: Motion A that would restrict Senate membership and the election of senators to members of Staff Council, and Motion B that would open Senate nominations and the election to all full-time campus staff. Discussion of this had first started at the December meeting, which did not have a quorum. At that meeting, those present had decided that the rest of the committee should be canvassed by e-mail for their preference. Christine reported that only 7 members had replied to vote or abstain, although 16 had opened her e-mail; and clearly there was the feeling that we needed further discussion. Tazar said that Staff Council was going to hold their monthly meeting the next week and wanted to draft a compromise motion at that meeting for us to consider.

Discussion then turned to possible ways that staff might elect their senators to assure a campus-wide election by staff, and still involve the Staff Council representatives as the Senate nominees. Edi suggested that when staff elect their Staff Council representatives, they should understand that these representatives might also be their senators. Cora thought that there should be separate elections for the Staff Council representatives and for the staff senators. Edi wanted to delay our final discussion until Staff Council had recommended their compromise to our committee. Joe Rau said that the Staff Council needed to consider the comments by John DeCastro (distributed earlier to our committee), who argued that the Senate nominations and election should be open to all
staff. Joe thought that the timeline for Staff Council’s response should be our February meeting, so that we could vote with their input for our consideration. Julia Young thought that there might be ways that we could combine the Staff Council election process with the Senate election process. She pointed out that faculty senators are not elected at-large but by departments, which are similar to the staff voting districts.

Edi suggested delaying further discussion of the two motions until Staff Council sent us their recommendation. Tazar withdrew her original motion to consider the adoption of Motion A (prior to the consideration of Motion B), and Julia Marks Young seconded the motion. Tazar added that she would report this to Staff Council for their next meeting, and that they would work on a compromise to recommend to our committee.

The meeting was adjourned.