Cultural Diversity Committee  
Minutes  
March 12, 2002  
3:05 pm - 4:08 pm

Present: Kyle Bruner, Doris Derby, Justina Emmanuel, Christine Gallant, Tazar Gissentanner, Charles Marvin, Lois Mohr, Linda Nelson, Cora Presley, Joe Rau, Maria Valeri-Gold, Tracy Van Voris, Julia Marks Young.

Absent: Mustafa Elsawy, Valerie Fennell, Edi Guyton, John Peterson, Hazel Scott, Ron Squibbs, Sally Wallace, Molly Weinburgh.

The February minutes were approved as read. Christine Gallant distributed the “AYSPS Diversity Efforts and Plan,” approved by the School of Policy Studies and recently submitted to the Provost.

Christine updated the committee on the comments made by President Patton to Staff Council (SAC) about our February committee motion on February 20. SAC President Leslie Williams had told Christine that staff membership was supported by Dr. Patton and Dr. Henry. So Christine informed Dr. Patton of our final motion that 20 staff senators be elected from each staff voting district, as well as the strong recommendation by the Executive Committee and its advisory Committee of the Chairs of Senate Committees that any motion on staff membership should specify no more than 10 staff members and that they should be elected at large. When Dr. Patton addressed SAC, he told them that our motion would fail in the Senate and he did not support it. He further suggested that they work with the Diversity Committee to get a new motion for ten senators elected at large moving forward.

Christine briefly discussed the email sent that morning from Hugh Hudson to all Arts and Sciences senators urging them not to support staff membership in the Senate and the three others that either supported or opposed Hugh’s position. She forwarded them to our committee members since we were meeting in the afternoon. Noting that many senators obviously oppose the whole idea of such membership, she added that President Patton, the Senate Executive Committee and their advisory Committee of Chairs of Senate Committee Chairs all strongly recommended that our motion propose no more than 10 senators elected at large. She also pointed out what seemed to her grave drawbacks of our February motion. The number of 20 would be unacceptably high to the Senate. Worse, the method of election was not proportional representation as it was for the faculty, since some staff voting districts have under 50 staff members and others have 300 or more yet each district would have one senator.

She said that it seemed to her that the committee had the choice of allowing its February motion to go forward to be defeated in the Senate, or to substitute a motion for 10 senators elected at large that had a chance of passing. She asked if the committee wanted to rescind its February motion, and then consider the motion for 10 senators elected at large that had originally been made at the February meeting but amended. We could substitute it for the February motion, and submit it to the Statutes and Bylaws Committee which was not to meet until March 28.

Linda Nelson said that she did not think that the process that had been followed so far regarding the motion was democratic. She added that this process made the voice of the individual
committee members unimportant and was open to outside political influence; and this would continue to happen to any other issue that the committee would take forward through the same process. She expressed concern at the amount of time that the committee has spent on this motion, and asked for its history.

Christine explained that the motion to admit 10 SAC members to the Senate was first passed at the September meeting. She appointed a subcommittee of the SAC representatives and one faculty member to compose the rationale, in an attempt to involve SAC. This rationale was not completed until the November meeting, when it was approved and submitted to the Senate Executive Committee and its advisory Committee of Chairs for their unofficial recommendations, prior to being sent on to the Statutes and Bylaws Committee. Both groups urged that Senate membership be open to all staff rather than restricted to staff members of one organization, and that staff senators should be elected at large. Christine returned the motion to the Diversity Committee for its reconsideration. Its December meeting had no quorum, so no action could be taken. At the January meeting when the committee began its discussion of the issue, one of its SAC representatives said that SAC wished to recommend a “compromise motion,” and further discussion was postponed until the February meeting. SAC sent four recommendations to the Diversity Committee. At its February meeting, the committee voted to rescind its November motion. During discussion, SAC President Leslie Williams spoke in favor of the SAC recommendations, with the 8 other members of the SAC Executive Committee in attendance. The Committee voted to adopt the fourth SAC recommendation calling for 20 staff senators elected from each staff voting district. This motion was now at Statutes and Bylaws for its review.

Linda said that she did not think that the correct legislative process had been observed. She added that the Committee of Chairs was not a standing committee yet it had input into the revision of the motion; and she was further concerned that administrators and other senators were attempting to influence consideration of the motion before it had been considered by Statutes and Bylaws. Christine replied that it was a good idea to get input from those who will eventually vote on the motion. Linda commented that she did not oppose getting input, but that the input should be appropriate.

Joe Rau asked to determine the will of the committee on whether to produce a new motion, and asked if the President had said he would support a motion for 10 staff senators elected at large. Christine said yes, and asked if the committee wanted to rescind the amended version of the motion and pass the original one.

Tazar Gissentanner commented that one reason for the opposition was due to the fear of staff members voting in a bloc which would give them more voting power. Cora Presley agreed, and reminded the committee of her comments at an earlier meeting about faculty fears of the balance of power shifting away from faculty if staff were admitted. Christine added that many faculty feared that the large number of staff senators (20) would push the balance toward administrative power and away from faculty power, since there was the perception that the untenured staff would vote with their administrative supervisors.

Justina Emmanuel suggested that if gaining 20 staff senators was impractical, it would be better to compromise and ask for 10. Discussion followed by members who wanted to protest the failure to observe the Senate legislative process by letting our February
motion proceed through committee review. A vote was taken to rescind the motion. 3 approved, 7 opposed, and 2 abstained. The vote failed.

Linda updated the committee on the recent actions of her Affirmative Action Office, and said that she would make available the annual Affirmative Action Plan for the University to committee members who were interested.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.