Cultural Diversity Committee Minutes
October 17, 2005
2:00 Pm to 3:00 PM

Present: Julie Ancis, Peggy Albers, Brant Barber, Doris Derby, Sally Fowler, Mary Finn, Christine Gallant, Mary Anne Gaunt, Olga Jarrett, Charles Marvin, Linda Nelson, John Peterson, Doug Podoll, Cora Presley.

Absent: Perry Binder, Elisabeth Burgess, Paul Ferraro, Elizabeth Firestone, Pamela Hackbart-Dean, Kwame Lawson, Marcia Pearl, and Alan Raines.

The chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM. The minutes of the September 26, 2005 meeting were reviewed and approved as presented.

Julie Ancis presented the results of the diversity survey. There were 790 survey respondents, which represents 16% of the student population.

Out of 790 respondents: 45% were whites and 27% African American; 100% undergraduate (omitting Freshmen); 68% Christian, 15% didn’t belong to any religion; 91% heterosexual.

The issue of low survey responses was discussed; Julie noted that the survey was widely publicized. Several members commented that the response rate is crucial. The survey being online was identified as a possible cause of the low response, as well as the relatively short time of three weeks that the survey was given. Potential follow-ups were suggested, including a survey discussion forum and focus groups.

The committee discussed the issue of how to retain and graduate African American male students (the Regents’ African-American Male Initiative). Linda said that an African-American Male Staff committee has been formed with funding from the Provost, which will support networking and collaboration. Cora Presley added that there needs to be additional data to identify the greatest needs and opportunities for these staff.

Linda Nelson will provide an Affirmative Action Office report on recruiting and hiring minority faculty at the next committee meeting.

The committee also discussed the needs of persons with disabilities, and how to ensure that the University website is ADA-compliant. Susan Easterbrook said that her subcommittee is working on this issue.

The committee discussed the inadequate campus representation of Hispanic and Asian students, and the efforts being made to attract greater percentages.

John Peterson said that it would be useful to have a subcommittee to address issues of diversity among staff and faculty, with one subcommittee for faculty and one for staff. John Peterson volunteered to chair the faculty subcommittee. Christine Gallant and Mary Finn volunteered to be a member of the faculty subcommittee.

Linda Nelson volunteered to chair the staff subcommittee. Sally Fowler and Mary Anne-Gaunt volunteered to serve on the staff subcommittee.

Cora Presley asked that the statistical data on minority faculty at GSU and minority faculty at comparable universities supplied by Ellen Posey, of the Office of Institutional Research, be evaluated by John’s subcommittee for additional insights. John Peterson noted that he had reviewed the data and thought that it was of limited usefulness, since it did not make a distinction between tenure track and non-tenure track

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faculty. He indicated that he would request other data from Ellen to answer questions more relevant for improving minority faculty representation at GSU.

Update on Subcommittees:

The following subcommittees have completed their assignments and are not active at this time:

Judicial Tracking Committee, with Hazel Scott and Linda Nelson as co-Chairs, and Mary Finn and Josue Heredia as members.

African American Male Initiative Committee, with John Peterson as Chair and Hazel Scott, Kyle Burner, Paul Ferraro, Linda Nelson, Doris Derby, and Christine Gallant as members.

Campus Sexual Assault Committee, with Perry Binder as Chair and Doug Podoll as a member.

The following subcommittees are still active:

Diversity Course Requirement Committee, with Cora Presley as Chair and Kweku Omouale, John Day, Alain Raines, and John Peterson as members.

Racial Climate Survey Committee, with Christine Gallant and Julie Ancis as co-Chairs, and Cora Presley, Sally Fowler, and Elisabeth Burgess as members.

Coordinating Diversity Activities on Campus Committee, with Doris Derby as Chair and Cora Presley, and Elizabeth Firestone as members.

Cora announced that she has appointed Susan Easterbrook to be a liaison to the ADA Committee. Last year’s Disability Access Committee will yield its work to her at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM. Next meeting: 28 November 2005, Troy Moore Library, 939 GC.

Minutes prepared by Devolina De.