Cultural Diversity Committee Meeting
Minutes
2/15/06 | 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Attendees - Peggy Albers, Julie Ancis, Elisabeth Burgess, Paul Ferraro, Elizabeth Firestone, Christine Gallant, Mary Anne Gaunt, Olga Jarrett, Kwame Lawson, Cora Presley, John Peterson, and Hazel Scott.
Absent - Brant Barber, Tineke Battle, Perry Binder, Doris Derby, Pam Hackbart-Dean, Susan Easterbrooks, Mary Finn, Chuck Marvin, Linda Nelson, Marcia Pearl, Doug Podoll, and Alan Raines

The minutes were read and approved as amended.

Christine Gallant raised the issue of the current status of the University’s program to address the recommendations on the African American Male Initiative. Cora responded that she would meet with Dr. Scott to ascertain the current status of the University’s program for AAMI and report back at the next committee meeting.

Cora Presley reported that the Senate Executive Committee has proposed modifications to the Committee’s recommendation stemming from the LGBT survey and report. Cora Presley, Paul Alberto and Susan Talburt met to discuss their proposal. Cora presented the modified recommendations to the Committee for its endorsement. She reported that Paul Alberto indicated that the Provost prefers the appointment of an advisor to the Provost over a new committee to address key issues. It was also noted that LGBT report is currently not available electronically. There was a discussion on why the creation of a new LGBT Committee, as recommended by the Cultural Diversity Committee, is not desirable; John Peterson indicated that this was the Provost’s decision as to the appropriate structure and commented that an having an advisor to the Provost, rather than a committee will allow closer contact with the Provost. The committee unanimously endorsed the modified recommendations. (See Attached).

Julie Ancis and Christine Gallant updated the committee on the current status of the Cultural Climate Survey. Early analysis seems to indicate that students favor taking a required course on diversity. Also, Julie Ancis reported that students have responded that they have either experienced or witnessed discrimination on the campus. It was suggested that the survey results be aggregated across groups in those areas where some individual groups’ response rates are low.

Cora Presley provided an update on the affirmative action report by distributing the PowerPoint used in the report delivered in November. John Peterson noted that he would like future reports by the Affirmative Action staff to report the data in a more useful form; the data, as presented in the last meeting does not disaggregate categories enough to be useful for assessment and policy formulation. Cora mentioned that the report is not very useful when it is given as a PowerPoint presentation. There was a discussion on availability of diversity data at the University. It was noted that the data is electronically available in STATSWARE but not available to general public or
GSU community. Diversity data is not easily located on the University website. John added that it should be available to faculty and staff.

There was a discussion about the availability on the University home page of data on GSU’s racial/ethnic student and faculty demographics. Cora stated that this information could not easily be found, though it should be accessible to faculty and staff. Christine stated that the only source she knew was the University’s Strategic Plan which listed student and faculty racial/ethnic percentages in its Appendices. In addition, Christine mentioned, there is no easy way to access the University Policy on the Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Faculty. Cora asked for a committee member to see how easily this information on diversity could be gained on the University home page and Mary Ann Gaunt volunteered.

The committee discussed the need for the University to centralize its various initiatives and committees relating to diversity, and the need for a person or committee to oversee these efforts to avoid overlap and failure to meet diversity standards set by regional and national accrediting bodies.

Christine said that she wanted to advise departments attempting to recruit African American faculty to seek the help of Doris Derby’s Office of African American Student Services and Programs. Christine’s own English Department had recently received invaluable assistance from Doris as well as Charles Jones, Chair of the African American Studies Department, and had just successfully completed its recruitment. Cora commented that most Arts and Sciences Departments invite Dr. Jones to meet with their African American candidates in order to apprise them of the possibilities of collaborating with the Department of African American Studies.

The committee adjourned at 5 pm.