Cultural Diversity Committee
November 1, 2006
10:00AM-11:30AM

Minutes

Attendees: Peggy Albers, Marva Carter, Douglass Covey, Susan Easterbrooks, Paul Ferraro, Christine Gallant, Skye Hardesty, Olga Jarrett

Absentees: Julie Ancis, Elisabeth Burgess, Pedro Carrillo, Doris Derby, Mary Finn, Mary Anne Gaunt, Amina Kirk, Gary Longstreet, Linda Nelson, Jeremy Paden, John Peterson, Doug Podoll, Cora Presley, Alaycia Reid, Natsu Saito, Leslie Taylor

The meeting called to order at 10:12AM

The minutes of the October 4, 2006 meeting were approved as read.

Christine Gallant introduced Douglass Covey, the new Vice President of Student Services, to the committee.

She discussed several recent Signal articles that were relevant to the issues raised by last year’s racial climate survey, and stated that she believed that the report’s recommendations are gradually being implemented on campus.

Next, she reported on the Executive Retreat held on October 20 by the President, the Provost, and the Senate Executive Committee, where our racial climate survey report was discussed. Cora Presley, Julie Ancis, Elisabeth Burgess, and Christine were invited to answer questions about the report and to focus on what they thought most important about the report findings. Julie addressed issues of racial/ethnic clusterings and possible interventions. Cora said that some respondents noted a problem with bias in the classroom, and that this should be further addressed. Christine stated that the report’s low response rate of 15.8% meant that it was not generalizable. She thought that the campus should implement the report recommendations for 4-5 years, and then when the next racial climate survey was given there should be a strong concerted effort to raise its response rate to 40-50%, reminding those present that the report noted many ways to improve response rates.

Douglass Covey updated our committee on the University’s plans for new housing for the Greek organizations in townhouses, on property that the University already owns just past the Georgia Bookstore. Then we will seek graduate housing. The University has decided not to require Freshmen to live on campus in Fall 2007. He also reported that he had been working to broaden the Incept program by going to student organizations to get a bigger recruiting pool. Spotlight programming also has recently been made more inclusive; and the student group working as part of the housing staff has also been broadened.

Next, Susan Easterbrooks reported on the current need for the ADA/504 Subcommittee, that will seek ADA-compliant access to the campus for the disabled. She estimated that $7 million would be needed to bring structures at GSU to ADA standards. A campus compliance review was completed last year, and she recently sent a summary of the compliance report to all Deans and Vice Presidents so they might begin the process of finding ADA compliance issues in their own buildings. The first issue of concern for the ADA/504 subcommittee is to encourage GSU to hire an ADA/504 Compliance Officer who does not have a conflict of interest, for the present compliance officer is also Director of Disability Services. GSU currently does not have an employee in a position of authority who could dictate compliance with ADA/504 standards in the
process of renovations or new construction. Susan brought up several examples of cases where GSU has had to spend extra money after discovering that new construction projects were not ADA compliant.

Christine commented on the helpfulness of the form provided by MaryAnne Gaunt that detailed the ethnic percentages from the area’s top 50 feeder high schools to GSU.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05AM

Minutes prepared by Attiyya Mujahid