Cultural Diversity Committee Minutes
September 12, 2007

Present: Peggy Albers, Eric Blacknall, Marva Carter, Fred Childs, Douglass Covey, Doris Derby, Jeremy Diem, Susan Easterbrooks, Valerie Fennell, Dana Fox, Christine Gallant, Shif Gurmu, Skye Hardesty, Olga Jarrett, Gabe Kuperminc, Gary Longstreet, Doug Podoll, Cora Presley, Ruth Stanford, Leslie Taylor, Upkar Varshney, Lauren Bradford.

Absent: Julie Ancis, Elisabeth Burgess, Pedro Carrillo, Bernadette Hartsfield, Kathryn McClymond, Linda Nelson.

Meeting called to order at 10:05AM

Christine Gallant amended minutes from the meeting on April 20, 2007 to add: “Christine Gallant was elected chair via electronic vote.” The minutes then were approved as amended.

Christine updated the committee on the resolution on the Regents subsidizing domestic partners insurance. The Senate will revote on the proposal on 10/14/07. She stated that UGA will vote on it 10/30/07; MCG will vote on it 10/18/07 or 11/15/07, and Georgia Tech has tabled the motion.

Susan Easterbrooks reported on the Disability Initiatives Subcommittee that she chairs. It was formerly the ADA/504 Committee that was advisory to the Provost. The Provost has since formally disbanded it since it has been re-formed as our Senate subcommittee. Among the subcommittee’s future initiatives are securing repairs of some of the University sidewalks that are difficult for the disabled to traverse. The subcommittee has received assistance from our Office of External Affairs, who met with the City of Atlanta to inspect sidewalks surrounding the university. The results of the inspection are pending approval from the City of Atlanta.

Leslie Taylor discussed another of the initiatives. She is working with her students in Physical Therapy on a web-based and physical map for the disabled that will give the accessibility sites for the campus buildings. Funding was provided by the Provost at the beginning of this semester to support this project. The committee would also like to implement a GSU website for disabled individuals. Currently the subcommittee has created focus groups and is interviewing students, faculty and staff with access problems to identify solutions to bring GSU in accordance with the ADA federal mandates.

October is Disability Awareness Month, and the subcommittee plans on having various activities in front of the Student Center. The subcommittee has employed a doctoral student in the College of Education to assist with activities that will simulate being disabled. Funding for this event will be used for promotional materials like pens, pencils, and notepads. The date will be announced.

Doris Derby, chair of the AAMI Subcommittee, introduced her Assistant Director, Dr. Eric Blacknall, who is the academic advisor for the Brother Keepers program, a mentoring program for African American males at GSU designed to help them adjust to college. Doris stated that the 2005 Undergraduate Racial Climate Survey included the responses of nearly 100 African American male students, who wrote that they desired a campus mentoring program. Christine gave the AAMI subcommittee the charge of developing a faculty mentoring program for our African American male students, and suggested that they might begin by researching national programs that offered such mentoring to minority students. Doris stated that she would be attending a conference that identified best mentoring practices to serve African American males, and could get ideas there also.
The office of African American Student Services and Programs will be honoring the life of the late Dr. Asa Hilliard. The office also plans to publish a newsletter for African American males at GSU.

Cora Presley said that based on the 2005 Climate Survey the subcommittee on the “Perspectives” courses recommended that there is a need for diversity in the curriculum which may be misapplied within the Perspectives courses. She also noted that the initial guidelines for Perspectives courses were not presently being followed (i.e., graduate students teaching courses that are supposed to be led by faculty). The subcommittee plans to compose a letter to the Undergraduate Council to address these problems, and will forward a draft of the letter to Marva Carter and Doug Podoll for feedback.

Olga Jarrett requested that the University’s faculty evaluations include a question on the faculty member’s respect for diversity, for this was a recommendation of the report on the 2005 Climate Study. Christine said that she would inquire about this from the Faculty Affairs Committee.

Douglass Covey thanked the Cultural Diversity Committee for their support of students and their concerns with the initiatives of these two subcommittees.

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m.