Cultural Diversity Committee
Minutes for October 8, 2009
2 p.m.-3 p.m.


Absent: Cathy Brack, Denise Donnelly, Valerie Fennell, Shif Gurmu, Cora Presley, William Robinson, Mariela Rodriguez.

Our guests were Paul Alberto, chair of the Senate Executive Committee; Linda Nelson, Assistant Vice President of ODDEP; John Day, Director of Diversity Education with ODDEP; and Julius Pryor III, a consultant hired by ODDEP to advise GSU as it prepared its Strategic Diversity Plan. Mr. Pryor gave a power point presentation on workforce diversity and 21st century trends in global diversity. He stated that GSU’s mission statement includes “diversity,” and discussed strategies to address diversity at Georgia State University. He noted that our Strategic Plan already seems to meet the benchmarks of how strategic plans should work. We need to have a common understanding of what diversity is, and this is what our Strategic Diversity Plan should accomplish. He presented a diagram of “the GSU Diversity Planning Model.”

Questioning followed. Peggy Albers asked how GSU’s work on diversity would fit into the political system of the state legislature and the Regents, since our diversity initiatives in the past have often been hampered by them. Linda Nelson answered that the Chancellor sees this pressure and wishes to work within the legislative system. Paul Alberto added that we shouldn’t allow the state legislature to determine what is permitted in our areas of diversity that include more than racial/ethnic diversity. Linda mentioned that the development of individual Diversity Plans by all of the USG institutions would create a unified front on diversity issues if schools are challenged by individual legislators and Regents.

She added that the intent is to fold our Diversity Plan into the larger Strategic Plan. She will be meeting with Senate committee chairs to ask them to recommend committee members who might serve on her Strategic Diversity Planning Committee.

Tanya Washington pointed out some legal arguments to support the University’s diversity initiatives. Diversity will enable GSU to encourage student learning and also help to produce a more efficient workforce. Also, diversity has an intellectual value as a precursor for learning, for cognitive dissonance makes for better learning.

At this point, another Senate Committee pressed us to conclude since they had reserved the room. Paul Alberto did take the time to update us on the Policy for Accommodating the Disabled. The President is moving forward with disability initiatives. Our committee recommendations to him had fallen into the two areas of policy and staffing, and he wished our committee to work on matters of policy. He would determine any staffing changes to be made.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.
Minutes submitted by:
Eva Hill and Christine Gallant