Cultural Diversity Committee
Minutes for September 2, 2010
3:00-4:00 p.m.

Present: Peggy Albers, Julie Ancis, Eric Blacknall, Doris Derby, Susan Easterbrooks, Christine Gallant, MaryAnne Gaunt, Joel Glogowski, Beth Gylys, Gabe Kuperminc, Layli Maparyan.
Guests: John Day, Linda Nelson.


Since there was not a quorum, the committee could not approve the January, February, April 8 or April 22 minutes.

Matthew Robison, Assistant Dean of Students, reported on the Safe Spaces Zone initiative that he co-chairs, a recommendation of our 2005 LGBT Campus Attitudes Survey. Started in Spring 2005, it originally was housed in the Counseling Center and now is located in the Intercultural Programs of the Division of Student Affairs. Such “Safe Zones” are now fairly common in universities across the country. The present initiative seeks to give support to the LGBTQ community at Georgia State, and to build allies in the non-LGBTQ community. It provides training for 52 centers across campus, and also gives sessions on “train the trainer.”

Julie Ancis noted that she is faculty advisor for the “CPS (Counseling & Psychological Services Department) Pride,” a student affiliate of the American Counseling Association’s AGLBIC. The students organize an annual conference.

Layli Maparyan suggested the possibility of Safe Zone working with “Black Out” (an organization for African-American LGBTQs) in the Women’s Studies Institute.

Next, Linda Nelson provided the history of the creation of the Diversity Strategic Plan from last Fall to the present. The Provost asked her to develop this Plan in alliance with the Chancellor’s Diversity Strategic Plan initiative. The Diversity Strategic Planning Committee (DSPC) has also been working with Paul Alberto and Pam Barr, co-chairs of the University Strategic Planning Committee (USPC). In February the DSPC was asked by the Provost to create a Diversity White Paper which would include our own committee’s Faculty Diversity White Paper, and completed this in May. The final Diversity Strategic Plan is based on this Diversity White Paper, and provides the institutional context for our Goals and Metrics in the areas of faculty, students, and staff. The final draft has just been approved by the DSPC and sent to the USPC. Linda will send a copy to this committee first because of our input to it, and then will present it to different groups for reactions and input.
Christine Gallant, a member of the DSPC (along with Cora Presley and Tanya Washington from the Cultural Diversity Committee), noted that our Faculty Diversity White Paper was expanded by the DSPC to include gender, and is now about 2-3 pages in the Diversity Strategic Plan. Our White Paper will be used as a basis for the annual Action Plans of the next five years.

Susan Easterbrooks next updated the committee on the Disability Discussion Paper. She and her Disability Initiatives Committee held focus groups of faculty, students, and staff; and she pulled together from her files 15 years’ reports on GSU’s non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act to draw upon for her Discussion Paper. In it, she asked for an upper-level administrator to coordinate all the disability initiatives and offices across campus. The Senate Executive Committee has decided that this is an initiative that must be addressed at once, rather than waiting to include it in the University Strategic Plan, since compliance with federal law is involved. Linda suggested that this Discussion Paper could be added to our Diversity Strategic Plan so it could be a permanent document in the University Strategic Plan.

Susan added that Disability Awareness Day is on October 13 with campus activities in the Student Center.

There being no other business, the committee adjourned.

Recorded by: Christine Gallant