

Equity, Access and Diversity Committee Meeting

Monday, February 15, 2010

2:30 ~ 4:00 p.m.

Morrill Hall, room 238A

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Assembly; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate or Assembly, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

Present: MJ Gilbert (sub-chair), Anne Phibbs, Laren Beach, Vicente Garces, Patrick Troup, John Borrowes, Katie Ballering, Michelle Page, Michael Goh, Jeanette Junghauer

Regrets: Irene Duranczyk (chair), Keith Horvath, Peg Lonquist, John Mason, Elizabeth Davis, Richard Graff

Absent: Shannon McGoffin, Raul Marrero-Fente, Kimberly Boyd, Aisha El-Huni

Meeting called to order at 2:35.

MJ Gilbert chaired the meeting in Chair Duranczyk's absence. Welcome and introductions were made. November minutes were approved unanimously.

GLBT Update ~ Anne Phibbs, director, GLBTA Programs

Ms. Phibbs gave a brief history of her education and career that brought her to the University. She is now the director for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Ally (GLBTA) Programs office, which recently moved to the garden level of Appleby Hall. She said that the move is positive because there is more student traffic there than where they were located previously. Phibbs noted that the University's GLBTA office is relatively small but it is considered quite large nationally. Only 11% of colleges in the nation have paid staff for a GLBTA office. She distributed two general student program brochures to members. She said that in addition to being a place of support for GLBT students, her office works towards educating the general public as well. She stated that the issues GLBT students face are very similar to those of racism, sexism, etcetera.

Phibbs distributed a flier highlighting ally training events, which will be held on campus. She stated that four years ago there was no ongoing training available. The training now available targets students that would become educators, so to speak, and share their knowledge about the GLBT community to make the University campus a more welcoming place for everyone. Phibbs spoke of an upcoming Lavender celebration and a scholarships and awards event, both of which she distributed fliers for. She also informed members of the upcoming Minnesota Trans Health and Wellness conference featuring 50 workshops and 80 presenters. The subject matter centers on mental health issues for the GLBT community. Ms. Gilbert said everyone is welcome, encouraged members to attend and to feel free to spread the word. The University's system-wide summit will be held in November on the Morris campus this year. For more information on GLBTA events, go to www.GLBT.umn.edu/trans.

A new education initiative through the GLBTA office will be introduced this fall. The initiative provides an opportunity for students to take classes to learn about the history and politics of the GLBT experience. This coming fall, 35 students will participate at 18 service learning sites. She noted she would like to recruit students, perhaps those who may have grown up around GLBT students in high school, that are interested in being a GLBT ally. In May, Phibbs will be traveling to various states on a fundraising mission. Her travel will be funded through grants and donations.

Ms. Gilbert asked about the link between the GLBTA office and the Senate Committee on Equity, Access & Diversity (EAD). Phibbs pointed out that the University GLBT community is large and educating the community builds a stronger community for everyone. Professor Goh asked if there has been harassment of GLBT students on campus and Phibbs replied that they have seen it but what is more damaging, in her opinion, is silence.

Ms. Phibbs said that graduate students are attracted to the University of Minnesota from all over the country but our graduate programs have not expressed interest in recruiting GLBT students thus far. Ms. Ballering said there are undergraduate students interested in a graduate school with a positive GLBT climate. Ms. Beach suggested drafting a set of guidelines to use in promoting the GLBTA office, recruiting and talking about diversity. Guidelines could include information on inclusive classrooms, a list of best practices and issue resolution. Phibbs stated that the University's Graduate School gave money to different graduate groups, designed for graduate students and faculty, which includes sexuality. She pointed out that it is an academic, scholarly resource for students to tap into.

Martin Luther King Events Subcommittee Update ~ Lauren Beach

Ms. Beach began by explaining that an EAD subcommittee was created in February 2009 to look at what kind of events are being offered at the University in recognition of the Martin Luther King (MLK) holiday and how they are being promoted. The committee members are Professor Richard Graff, Mr. Vicente Garces and Ms. Lauren Beach. They drafted a report that will be sent out to members and any feedback from committee members would be appreciated. Feedback may be sent to: Lauren Beach at beach073@umn.edu or Lisa Towry at towry003@umn.edu.

The results of the report captured four recommendations:

- 1) There should be a MLK webpage as a central listing space for all MLK events. This could be done in calendar form and could include links to outside (of the University) MLK events.
- 2) Create strategic partnerships with local businesses and government in event planning and promotion.
- 3) The University should ensure that all MLK events are properly advertised.
- 4) The University should create a 'Day On' as opposed to a day off for the holiday. There could be an award event to promote and encourage community service and involvement.

Ms. Beach said she would also like to receive feedback from members on the *Legacy of Dr. King* portion of the report on page six. She said there are many reasons for people to celebrate Dr. King's life and legacy. His mission, core values and goals are reflected in those of the University. She thinks the University is not as racially inviting as it used to be and would like to promote a more inclusive campus environment. She said in order to create a culture with impact, the effort needs to be effectively promoted.

Ms. Ballering asked if there is a historical account of celebration events that they could review because it would be good to know what the events were and how well they were received to determine if the University has progressed or is it moving backwards in its efforts. She stated that it would be helpful to know if it is repeating events that were not successful in the past. Mr. Garces replied that he did review the history of MLK events and he thought them minimal considering the span of time he covered in his search. Initially, this year's MLK program was cancelled due to a funding issue but was then reinstated. Ballering asked Mr. Troup if anyone from his department could provide some history of what has been tried event wise and if it was not successful, why. Another suggestion was to look at standards across multiple learning institutions to determine what others are doing. Professor Goh asked if the University of Minnesota's campus is the largest urban set campus in the Big Ten. He said if so, the University might be competing with other events outside the campus. Beach said the subcommittee did look at that but did not include it in the report because the University events are not being adequately promoted. She said a centralized website to promote events is an essential missing link. Ms. Phibbs suggested that University leaders offer some type of celebratory/recognition event about diversity and leadership. Ms. Beach requested feedback via email from members on the report.

Graduate School Report ~ Ms. Gilbert suggested postponing this agenda item.

Budget ~ Ms. Gilbert suggested that a subcommittee be formed to work with the Vice President's Office for Equity and Diversity on budget issues that would impact equity and diversity programs. Patrick Troup, director, Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence, said he would convey the committee's concerns. Gilbert added she would draft an email directed to Kristin Lockhart, associate vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity, regarding the matter.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Lisa Towry
University Senate Office