

EQUITY, ACCESS & DIVERSITY
MINUTES OF MEETING
JANUARY 23, 2002

[In these minutes: Welcome and Introductions, Background Information pertaining to the Committee's Formation and History, Ideas the Committee may want to Address this Year, Recurring Meeting Schedule, Ideas for next Meeting.]

[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: David Born, Chair, Beverly Balos, Rose Blixt, Don Cavalier, Kathryn Brown, Julie Sweitzer, Eric Burgess, Carol Chomsky, Warren Warwick, Srilata Zaheer, Vanessa Bailey, Dan Kelly

REGRETS: Amele Olufunke

ABSENT: William Bradshaw, Mariam Frenier, Jacquelyn Zita, Kristin Saxelby

OTHER(S): H. J. Taylor, Director, Office for University Women

GUEST(S):

I). Professor Born called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present. Committee members were then asked to introduce themselves and comment on their role and experience with respect to issues of equity, access and diversity.

II). Professor Born called on Julie Sweitzer, Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action and Law Professor Carol Chomsky to provide members with background information on this Committee's formation and history.

Equity, Access and Diversity was born out of some long-standing Committees, Disabilities Issues and the now defunct EEOWC as well as some temporary subcommittees that are no longer in existence. Prior to the establishment of the Committee on Equity, Access and Diversity there was no Senate Committee that dealt specifically with race. The formation of this Committee validates and allows for a more comprehensive approach to dealing with issues of equity, access and diversity.

III). Committee members brainstormed on issues to be addressed during the academic year and what kind of approach it should take in dealing with these issues. The following items were discussed:

- Work to establish a positive climate to deal with issues of equity, access and diversity. The general consensus of the Committee was that while there is a need

- to be able to deal with issues as they arise, there is also the need to proactively deal with larger, broader, more systemic issues.
- The men's and women's athletic issue as it relates to whether the two departments should be merged in view of financial difficulties.
 - Be involved in the search process for the new Associate Vice Provost for Multicultural and Academic Affairs.
 - Identify and examine the University of Minnesota's Admissions Policy. This policy impacts composition of the student body and has other implications as well.
 - Employment and hiring policies for faculty and staff as it relates to equity, access and diversity with an emphasis on preserving diversity.
 - Concern that the charge of this Committee is too large to be effective. As a result, there may be a need to form subcommittees to deal with the many issues potentially facing this Committee. It may take several meetings to sort out the direction this Committee wants to go and determine where it wants to devote its energies. It was further mentioned that because the Committee can't do it all maybe it should focus its efforts on policy matters as opposed to programmatic undertakings.
 - Determine whether this Committee serves as a consultative and/or resource group.
 - Address and expose the issue of 'white privilege'.
 - Discuss not only failures, but success stories and best practices identified in the 'cultural audit' process. A 'cultural audit' is a process that uses tools such as surveys and focus groups to ask questions of employees and students in an attempt to uncover employment and /or academic environment issues. Common themes resulting from the surveys and focus groups are then identified and steps taken to address them. The 'cultural audit' is a needs assessment, self-reflection tool being undertaken by various units at the University of Minnesota as well as other institutions throughout the U.S.
 - Committee involvement in University outreach programs. For example, have the Committee play a role in outreach programs in an attempt to recruit individuals that typically would not attend the University due to cultural barriers.
 - Do a better job educating students on the value of diversity and culture.
 - Establish this Committee's role as that of a policymaker and also as a resource council. Hence, once policies are adopted, this Committee would make sure they are enforced. For example, this Committee could impact how much diversity is talked about in the compact planning process and during an administrator's review process.
 - Create guidelines for administrators to issue equity impact statements that would focus on whether proposed actions would meet the goals of equity, access and diversity before they are undertaken.

IV). Professor Born asked Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, to poll Committee members concerning a recurring meeting schedule with the next meeting to be scheduled within the next two to three weeks.

V). Ideas for the next meeting:

- Invite Vice President Robert Jones to talk about the search process for the new Associate Vice Provost for Multicultural and Academic Affairs.
- Invite Mindy Kurzer, former chair of the EEOWC, to talk about the role of the EEOWC and how agenda and action items were identified.
- Invite Joe Massey, Chair of the Faculty Consultative Committee, to speak to the role and structure of a Senate Committee.

VI). With no further business, Professor Born adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate