

President's Commission on Diversity
March 5th, 2007
Meeting Minutes

Jorge called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm.

Members Present: Louise Hull, Amanda Schaffer, Gail Himes, Rich Rutkowski, Josh Gerstman, Lesley Hogan, Jean Carmack, Loretta Ferguson, Diana Holz, Jorge Ramirez, April Jensen, Veronica Garaycoa, Fia Eliasson-Creek, Susan Davis

Guests: Kelly Blackwood

1. *February 8th In-service Day activities*

Jean commented that she felt Dr. Banks did a great job of mixing humor and touching stories allowing him to positively deliver the “heavy” message. Loretta really appreciated the global aspect of Dr. Banks’ presentation. She commented that the MEC is working on writing up a summary of the day’s events and to please send any contributions to her. The write up will also include a book list that Dr. Banks recommended. Louise stated that it was her understanding that if the library didn’t already have a book on the list available at the library; the book had been ordered. Lesley will take the lead on forming a committee in order to have discussion on how the campus can carry the message forward and further work on the issue of diversity. She proposes getting this group together multiple times through out the year. Loretta shared that the MEC will be joining with the Diversity Services for bi-monthly brown bag sessions to continue conversations about diversity. Veronica shared that she had contacted Kim Nakano, and Kim is working on developing a calendar of diversity events on campus. April reported that she has been working on incentives to have faculty members embed diversity studies into their curriculum. Louise said she felt that new faculty could be the key in the potential of raising and keeping awareness of diversity as a campus issue. Diana Holz distributed a grid that combined all the input from the campus community members that are participating in different diversity initiatives. She offered suggestions on how to provide funding for tools to enhance diversity. Some of the suggestions included covering conference registration fees, book purchases, etc. Veronica commented that she felt Dr Banks gave a great speech, but she would have liked to have him give ideas of what should happen next. Jean said she felt Dr. Banks’ second session was more faculty focused and that is why she chose not to attend. In having conversations with other staff members she has learned that her original assumption was not truly accurate. She asked if any of the commission members had attended and if so would they please share with her any handouts from the session.

2. *Report on the recent visit to UW to visit Dr. Banks/ Multicultural Center*

Jorge reported that he was part of the group that visited the UW Multicultural Center; others included April Jensen, Ron Wheadon, and Deb Casey. Michael Honey gave a presentation while the group was at the center. The session started with a video regarding Dr. Martin Luther King’s involvement with labor issues. April commented

that the center was not a physical structure that could be toured; it was more a group of faculty getting together to work on diversity issues.

3. *Diversity Institute (Kelly, Jean, and Tina)*

Jean stated that six employees from Green River Community College attended the South Puget Sound Higher Education Diversity Partnership Conference. The employees that attended include: Kelly Blackwood, Dana Davis-Wix, Kellie Lewis, Krystal Rush, Jean Carmack, and Tina Christian. Jean asked the commission members what R&D meant to them. Some members responded “research and development.” Jean shared that the president of Bates College shared at the conference that R&D to him means Respect and Dignity. He challenges his staff to practice R&D every day. He has even sent a staff member home without pay for not approaching others with R&D. Jean stated that she felt frustrated that the commission hadn’t moved from planning and talking to action. Tina supported this sentiment. She went on to distribute a handout of her subcommittee’s work. Tina feels that the commission is the right place to have these tough, uncomfortable conversations that will help the college move toward action. Diana stated that she feels that is what the commission’s mission is to put ideas into action. Jean commented that she would like to see more deans, the EVP, and the President get out there and support the diversity movement by walking the talk. She is willing to continue her support of the “grass roots” work that is happening on campus but feels these efforts would be more successful if there was more support from the upper management. Tina began to talk about other colleges we could use as models such as Everett Community College and South Puget Sound Community College. She talked briefly about what those colleges are doing to support diversity on their campuses. She concluded by talking about Washington State University (WSU) and how that campus has a VP of Diversity with a staff of 50 to address diversity issues and initiatives on the WSU campus. Rich asked the commission if they felt he had given them the wrong charge. Fia responded by voicing her frustration as she feels it has taken two years to get the reporting of subcommittee work out, and she wants to see some action. Veronica said her opinion was that the faculty and staff haven’t been informed about what the commission has been doing. April asked what Everett and South Puget Sound were doing that makes them appear so progressive Tina responded by saying they are integrating diversity in all parts of the framework by supporting students of color in an effort to let them know they are wanted. Tina feels the administration members at those colleges are very active. Veronica added that Everett really trains on diversity and it is infused in all aspects of the campus. Jorge asked if the commission felt the administration at Green River Community College (GRCC) is not supportive. Jean asked why the diversity certificate has been so difficult to get approved and has been met with such negativity as she feels our student need those credits. Diana stated that GRCC is faculty driven and that is a mixed blessing, but she feels overall the administration has been very supportive in addressing the diversity issues our campus faces. Louise commented that maybe we need to stop thinking that the certificate needs 100 percent buy in to move forward. Maybe the IDC (Instructional Diversity Committee) needs to move on getting the certificate approved with or without specific divisional endorsement. Fia stated that in her opinion the administration needs to step in and

champion the need for diversity. Louise asked Rich and April if they have the authority to make diversity a graduation requirement. Rich explained that the board has that authority. April added that she can make it known she is supportive but can't neglect the faculty process. She then briefly explained the faculty process in recommending graduation requirements. Lesley stated that what gets measured needs to get done. And that it isn't all up to the faculty; the administration needs to lead the charge. Jorge urged the subcommittees to communicate any problems they were having to him. Fia asked if he had followed up with the subcommittees and their work. Gail stated she felt the commission was not doing what it was asked to do. She went on to say she feels some of the reports/recommendations given thus far are weak and that the process of reporting has taken too long. She attributed this to poor leadership of the commission in allowing the reports to be full of fluff and therefore not useful to the commission. Diana thanked the commission for having this tough conversation as she feels is a productive way to get issues out in the open so they can be addressed. She reminded the commission that the co-chairs of the commission are here to help. The subcommittees are to make it happen. She asked the subcommittees what they needed from the co-chairs. Loretta stated that she has been here for three years and has heard a lot of great ideas but feels there is a lack of communication on campus. She talked about how Dr. Banks referred to a need to bridge faculty and staff. She suggested we ask questions of people on campus. Louise voiced her frustration in what she perceives as the commission's lack of ability to implement recommendations and taking action. She suggested the need of money to implement recommendations. She asked what the commission's next step will be after it states all of its recommendations. April said she would love to see a list of specific activities and how they could be implemented before she could assess funding issues. Jorge stated the commission can make budget requests as part of the campus' budgeting process. Rich read a couple of the recommendations from the access for students of color sub committee. The recommendation was to offer a coordinated students program so students can form cohorts. Another recommendation was to create an interactive financial aid DVD on how to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. Rich asked the commission if they were ready to implement those recommendations. He further noted that the recommendations have not been prioritized and asked the commission to strategize how to overcome the certificate issue. April said she felt that was a great suggestion. Jorge stated the subcommittees should be willing to meet between commission meetings. Josh agreed it was important to have the subcommittees working between meetings so that action could be taken on the reports when the commission does meet. He asked what the commission was going to do to get to the questions people have. Fia voiced that the report was poor and needed to be updated. Veronica suggested that representatives from the departments that would be discussed at the commission meeting be invited to attend the meeting. Josh suggested that a commission member go to them rather than them coming to the commission. Jean supported the idea of prioritizing the recommendations and asked Louise if she felt there was some way the commission could help get the issues surrounding the approval of the diversity certificate addressed. Louise said she would welcome assistance as she is feeling rather alone on this issue. Gail stated the recommendations need to be revisited so the commission

can move to the implementation stage of the process. Diana stated information needed to be gathered, who would need to be involved in the implementation, and what else it would take to implement. She stated it wasn't until the last meeting she became aware of the issues surrounding the diversity certificate. Jorge stated he is hearing that some clarity needs to be given as to what the subcommittees' next steps will be. Gail asked what the goal for today's meeting would be. Diana responded by saying that today was a chance for commission members to say some things and closely look at what has been submitted and what had been done. Some subcommittees still need to report on what actions have taken place and this will expose what work has and has not been done. Jorge asked the subcommittees to please meet between meetings. Diana thanked everyone for the work they had done. She is pleased to hear the IDC meets so frequently. She wanted to note the college has been moving forward in addressing issues involving diversity for example the college just had an in-service day which had the primary focus of diversity. She feels that although the campus culture is changing. She understands that change is never fast enough. But she feels proud to be able to say to herself that "I was part of making this change happen!" Gail said she would like to talk about how the commission can support Louise. Louise gave an update on the Diversity Certificate endorsements and issues. Jean asked if having some of the commission members come to a division meeting would help. Louise thanked Jean for the offer but quickly said no it would not be appreciated by the division. Susan and Louise discussed the process on submitting the diversity certificate to the FCRC. Diana suggested that Louise just proceed with paperwork and get it submitted to FCRC/IC. Diana feels the more something is debated the longer the process takes. Rich said it was helpful to hear the stories from different individuals so the commission can hear that things are happening. He urged members of the commission to interact with faculty and talk in support of the diversity in the curriculum issue. He asked the commission members if they felt they had enough information to comfortably communicate with faculty on this issue. Jean asked what the con side of the diversity in curriculum issue is. Louise said one of the first comments that would be made by faculty is does that put us on a slippery slope of requiring diversity as a graduation requirement. Diana and Louise both voiced concern that comments to support diversity as a graduation requirement could be interpreted by some faculty members as they were being told what they had to teach. Rich challenged the commission members by asking how many people they would talk to about these issues between now and the next commission meeting. Susan wondered if there was a way to get students to voice in on this issue; she suggested an article in The Current or movement by some of the student clubs. Gail asked Louise to please prepare a pro/con listing on the issue so that commission members could use it as a resource while having conversations. Louise agreed to do so. Diana talked about the work she has been doing on the Early Childhood Education (ECE)-AAST degree in which she is embedding the diversity certificate requirements. The end result will be an ECE and Cultural Diversity degree. Fia would like to see an updated version of the report. Jorge agreed to follow up with each subcommittee regarding what work still needs to be completed and what support the co-chairs could offer. Diana stated she feels it is appropriate that the next version of the report include action items. Through his meetings with the subcommittees, Jorge will confirm that

the information he has is the latest work completed by each subcommittee. He went on to confirm that his record of subcommittee roster was accurate. Diana clarified the ESOL and Multiple Coding subcommittee membership. Amy responded that Ron Wheadon and Jean Jewell were asked to serve on that subcommittee.

4. *Continue draft report/reviews from section that have not reported.*

Jean distributed paperwork on the Immigrant Student Scholarship Fund. Josh talked about different scholarship opportunities available to under represented populations.

Veronica distributed framework for Diversity Assessment and Planning and spoke to the handout briefly.

The Hiring and Recruitment subcommittee also gave a brief update on their work. Kelly Blackwood has joined the Department of Personnel list serve called the Washington State Diversity Network; she also attends, when her schedule allows, a monthly recruiting event known as the Puget Sound Diversity Taskforce Recruitment Exchange. Lesley spoke to the fact that the Human Resources (HR) office has been working to adopt an automated application process. She feels this is in the final stages now. They have also compiled a listing of 30-40 new websites to be utilized as a recruitment tool. Lesley had asked the business office what they thought about moving the affirmative action tracking and record keeping to HR; this function will now be administered by the HR staff. She concluded her report by saying that all but three supervisors had attended the mandatory position analysis training.

Jorge distributed a handout showing the work of the student services subcommittee. He also stated that the presentation the physical environment subcommittee had prepared would be held over until the next meeting. Fia offered the suggestion of having Sam Ball include Diversity as part of the master planning. Jorge said he agreed and reported he had been working closely with Sam. For example, the commission has representation on the signage committee. There was discussion of artwork on campus. Tina said there was multicultural artwork on campus, but she feels much of it is "hidden." The committee has some suggestions on signage, pathways, and exteriors of buildings. Loretta mentioned that the committee is also looking at issues such as the elevator in the student center not being big enough for some of the larger wheelchairs to access. Jean said she would like to know where on campus the multicultural artwork is located. Susan Davis responded by saying there is a brochure that is clearly numbered and mapped out so that individuals could tour the campus and see the artwork. Susan volunteered to bring copies of that brochure to the next meeting.

Susan talked about hearing a presentation by Angela Davis on campus recently where Angela talked about what's the point of a difference if it doesn't make a difference?

Recorded by: Amy V. Warren