

President's Commission on Diversity
March 9, 2009 Minutes
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Members Present: Diana Holz, Rich Rutkowski, Marycarmen Becerra-Nunez, Marco Becerra-Nunez, Paula Burns, Kelly Blackwood, Kim Nakano, Bryce Hughes, Jhon Valencia, Laura Griep, April Jensen, Cyndi Rapiere, Lesley Hogan, Tina Christian, Phil Smith, Livia Muller, Loretta Ferguson, Ray Lader, & Shirley Quenga

Members Absent: Deb Casey, Josh Gerstman, Jean Carmack, Alexandra Davis, Fred Mendoza, Patrick Reeves, Brad Johnson, Amanda Schaefer, Krista Fox, Joe Huang, Fia Eliasson-Creek

Guests: Students ~ Pamela Nogales, Randa Said, Brian Akpan, Jake Furfaro; Wendy Stewart, Shirley Peoples

Celebration and Recognition of a Student, Staff or Faculty Diversity Experience

- Ray reported taking some students to the Hip Hop Leadership Summit on Feb. 28th and is planning on hosting this at GRCC next year
- Jhon wanted to share and celebrate National Women's History Month
- Diana announced that the diversity proposal went to two different hearings; it was eventful; passed it to IC, going forward for a faculty vote. Starting in fall 2011, students taking 3-5 credits, diversity designated course, will meet their diversity requirement for an AA transfer degree.
- Bryce reported that the "Say I Do to Marriage Equality" event on Feb. 19th was a good program. Gay at Green River, sponsored by Safe Zone & MEC was also a good and meaningful event.
- Cyndi wanted to share her draft of the general recognition letter recognizing individuals and/or groups on diversity issues. If there are any additions or changes, please submit them to her via email. The commission reviewed the letter and agreed to go forward with it. Cyndi will send an electronic copy of the letter to both Deb and Shirley.

Indonesia Visit to the Obama School (Wendy Stewart)

Wendy Stewart, Dean of International Programs, presented a PowerPoint of her Indonesia visit to the Obama School and gave an overview of her experience.

Reflections from the Inauguration (Shirley Peoples)

Shirley Peoples shared reflections from the Presidential Inauguration and shared her various memorable collections of the inauguration of President Obama and her memoirs as a child during the Martin Luther King era. She also wanted to let everyone know of the Obama Camp who meets once a month in Kent, host forums, and invited everyone to come, share, and get update information.

CAP Peer Navigator Presentation (Pamela Nogales, Randa Said, Brian Akpan, Jake Furfaro)

Jhon and Bryce handed out the Mission, Goals, and Services of the Commencement Achievement Program (CAP) and Diversity Services. They brought with them 3 Peer Navigators and 1 CAP student (Pamela, Randa, Brian and Jake) to share their experience in CAP and how this program has impacted them.

Jhon wanted to also recognize Terri Thayer, former Program Support Supervisor who oversaw this wonderful program, now going on its 3rd year. CAP is now serving 163 students total, quite a large student population and a handful of international students.

BREAK

I-BEST Update

Diana & Laura gave a brief overview of the I-BEST Program (Integrated Basic Education Skills Training) program. There are two instructors working together to help students meet their career goals and help increase their English and Math skills towards college level credits.

Current I-BEST Choices

Child Development Association (CDA)

Early Childhood

Office Assistant

Health Care

Forestry

Aviation

Auto Body

Welding

Action Teams Presentations

Team #4 ~ Review the relevancy of minimum qualifications to effectively attract a qualified, diverse pool of applicants. (Ray- lead, Kim, Lesley & Shirley)

Ray passed out information on their team's outcomes related to the monitoring report core indicators and gave a brief overview (per handout).

The committee has currently decided to stay in a holding pattern at this current time due to the budget issues and the current amount of work that HR is dealing with in this climate. The committee met and began moving forward on the following issues to improve the hiring process to attract a more diverse population of faculty and staff to GRCC:

1. Re-envisioning the language used in the postings
2. Different recruiting methods/re-visit the recruitment process
3. Limit supplemental questions
4. Determine what qualifies at relevant work experience
5. Diversifying the hiring committees
6. Continue to look at best practices at other colleges, universities and businesses
7. Develop a training/guidelines for hiring committees and chairs

The committee currently begun looking at other institutions and their practices and will continue to work on improving the process once the current budget issues are handled and time becomes available again. The committee agreed to work with other committees that can have a more immediate impact in the current state of affairs.

Team # 9 ~ Review and Implement Dream Project Concepts (April – lead, Laura, Marco, Patrick, Mary Carmen)

April reported that Jeff Perlot and Tonya McCabe are working on a curriculum combination of service learning. Would like to offer the Dream Project next fall, enroll in course, follow model of UW. Inform local high schools of the program, apply to UW and get them in and prepare them for what college is all about. This proposal went through FCRC (our curriculum body) as a business leadership course. Good transfer from GRCC to UW. Marco also reported that Shauna Stadnik is no longer involved in the Dream Project at UW and that he is the representative now. They started with 10 students and now it's up to 100 students. Marco is scheduled to do another presentation soon.

Team # 8 ~ Create Welcoming Environment in Honor of Ethnic and Culture of Diversity (Kelly – lead, Cyndi, Bryce, Josh, Alexandra, Rich)

Kelly reported they worked with 2 groups of CAP students and 2 groups of CLEO students on Core Indicators 1 & 3, not sure with Core Indicator 4.

Kelly passed out information on their team's outcomes related to the monitoring report core indicators and gave a brief overview (per handout).

Who are we?

- Bryce Hughes – CAP Program
- Cyndi Rapier – International Programs
- Kelly Blackwood – Human Resources
- Josh Gerstman – Foundation

What is our purpose?

- Explore the current environment to measure the level of welcome for diverse groups. Make recommendations to Commission for creating a sustainable environment in honor of ethnic and cultural diversity.

What were our assumptions or internalized biases?

- Bryce – My assumption is that creating a welcoming environment means being able to see that diversity represented on campus (posters, artwork, and events). It also means a commitment by people who work on campus to continually examine themselves and their understanding of diversity. My bias is that I believe the campus is oriented toward dominant cultures and is most welcoming to students who are members of those dominant cultures. Our goals are then to understand how we make it more welcoming for all.
- Cyndi – My assumption was that GRCC has a very diverse student population and we are theoretically welcoming to all groups. However, I was fairly certain we were not hitting high marks and needed improvement. My bias is my experience with International Programs.
- Kelly – Visually biased (posters, events, attendance) – my bias is I assume this equates to a “physically” welcoming and diverse environment.
- Josh – Is our physical environment welcoming – do people feel welcome and comfortable when they walk onto campus? Are there physical barriers or obstructions? Does the look and feel influence their attitudes? How does the community at large respond to coming on our campus? Is anything keeping them away from campus?

What process did we choose and why?

- No “official” surveys (takes too long, red tape, lose momentum)
- Small, diverse focus groups (videotaped when possible)
 - i. CLEO students (2 groups)
 - ii. CAP students
 - iii. “here and gone” students (not affiliated with any campus groups)
- Limited and specific questions
 - i. Why did you choose GRCC?
 1. What keeps you attending GRCC?
 - ii. Is GRCC an environment that welcomes diversity?
 1. How would you describe GRCC to a potential student?
 - iii. Do you think students of color feel welcome here? Why or why not?
 - iv. Do you think LGBTQ students feel welcome at GRCC? Why or why not?
 - v. If you could change anything to make GRCC a more welcoming place, what would you do?

Next steps:

- Consolidate responses and look for themes
- Recognize areas we missed and follow up

- Review data from previous committees as comparison (Physical Environment in 07)
- In-state local field trips (Highline, BCC, TCC)
- Brainstorm reasonable outcomes as related to core indicators
- Review current opportunities to offer support to:
 - i. Moving CAP and Diversity Services to a more visible “space”
 - ii. Supporting year-round Diversity Services events
 - iii. Support campus efforts for dialogue
- Provide recommendations to the President’s Commission

Team # 7 ~ Provide Opportunities for Courageous Conversations (Loretta - lead, Tina, Livia, Jhon, Paula, Mary Carmen, Patrick)

Tina reported that their committee did not have a chance to meet due to busy schedules, but moved forward with some form of courageous conversations.

Core Indicator 1

Brown bags – continue to have those dialogues and also Gay at Green River. In the spring, would like to invite Tim Wise to talk about White Privilege, but not until GRCC is ready to have this on campus.

Core Indicator 4

HR increases staff of color with current practices. Kim mentioned “readiness”, our faculty/administrators in the audience stepping forward, sharing their stories, students leading these dialogues, much more hopeful.

Tina passed out information on their team’s outcomes related to the monitoring report core indicators and gave a brief overview (per handout).

Core Indicator 1: Student academic progress is comparable to that of other student groups.

- Students of color progress academically when they feel they are learning in a welcoming environment, when they have instructors who look like or can identify with them i.e. hardships in academia, institutionalized racism, being first generation college student, low income and needing financial resources, etc.

Core Indicator 2: Degree or certificate completion

- See #1

Core Indicator 3: Satisfaction at Green River

- See #1

Core Indicator 4: Ratio of employees of color/students of color

Green River’s staff/students of color ratio are lower than that of other community colleges. HR is currently working on increasing staff of color in its hiring practices. The population of students of color is also lower at Green River in comparison with some of the other community colleges.

Next Steps

Laura Griep will try to arrange our Commission meeting at the Muckleshoot Tribal sometime in April.

Next Meeting: April 13th, 2-4pm