

Senate Diversity Committee Annual Report September 2008 - August 2009

Among the Committee's primary activities were reviews of the Individual Unit Diversity Reports/Plans, along with suggestions for enhancing the template for reporting Diversity Plans, inauguration of the Diversity World Café series (see attached report from D. Ballam), review of 20 Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award (DDEA) nominations and selection of five awardees by the DDEA sub-committee, along with revisions of the DDEA pamphlet requesting nominations. To allow the Senate Diversity Committee to review the Individual Unit Diversity Reports/Plans, the Diversity Council, which previously reviewed these Plans, was incorporated into the Senate Diversity Committee as the Diversity Plan Review sub-committee. This did not require any adjustments to Faculty Rules as these activities are inherent in Faculty Rule 3335-5-4816 that establishes the Senate Diversity Committee.

In addition, the committee continued its review of ongoing diversity activities at OSU by inviting speakers from the OSU community. These included Linda Flickinger and Bryan S. Ford Human Resources Managers from the Ohio Supercomputer Center, who reported on diversity activities at the Center and put forth a "OSU Diversity Network Proposal". Ms. Candra A. Krisch Intercultural Specialist from the Office of Student Life at MCC discussed her position as Coordinator for Student Services and indicated that her position was to increase the presence of American Indians at OSU. Heather Allen 2008-09 Chair of the Senate Steering Committee spoke on progress of diversity issues across campus and specifically from the Provost's office, which suggests that local departments and chairs need to be more responsive to diversity issues. Judy Wu and Debra Modellmog presented a proposal for a Center on Social Difference, Power, and Justice to the Committee. The major foci would be academic research and outreach with a major and a minor tract and yearly themes.

Internally, the Committee instituted the position of Vice-Chair with the responsibility of keeping Committee minutes along with other activities as needed. The Committee also continued its tradition of inviting members of the OSU community with ongoing interests in diversity issues on campus to regularly attend meetings of the Senate Diversity Committee. Our thanks to Valerie Lee, Cyndi Freeman-Fail, and Georgina Dodge for their continuing support of efforts of the Senate Diversity Committee as adjunct members. As more colleges and departments incorporate diversity into their strategic plans, diversity continues to be institutionalized at OSU. When one searches for "Diversity" on the OSU website, there are 50,400 "hits". Unfortunately, neither the Senate Diversity Committee nor "Renewing the Covenant 2007-2012 Diversity Action Plan" are among the first ten topics listed.

Diversity World Café Summary

We held five diversity world cafes during spring quarter 2009. Approximately 80 faculty, staff and students from across the university participated in the cafes. This report provides a summary of the major themes that we harvested from the cafes.

Introduction

The central theme was that individual/self development is the motivation for the real desire for diversity--the freedom to be oneself and to be recognized as an individual along with recognizing and respecting differences among people. Irrelevant qualities should not determine people's success at the university. However, special treatment is not what is desired.

Definitions of Diversity

Several themes arose around how to define diversity.

- We need to recognize diversity is multidimensional and that aspects of it are overlapping which actually provides opportunity for interconnectedness and interdependence
- Diversity needs to be more broadly defined than currently –specifically mentioned were including age, international, disabilities, economic status, and different life stages
- How others define you may not be how you define yourself
- Diversity must include work/life balance considerations including flexible work arrangements and dependent care needs

Diversity as Part of One University

Another strong theme was that the goal of diversity is the same as the goal President Gee has enunciated for the university as a whole—to become One University. President Gee envisions One University as one where the silos that keep different units apart will disappear, thus permitting people from different units to work together without barriers. The synergies that develop will create a culture of excellence because it will free the creativity of the whole.

Diversity is about breaking down the silos that exist between individuals so that they can work together as individuals thus releasing the creativity of the whole.

If individuals are to fully provide their gifts to the university, the One University culture needs to be one where all feel safe, embraced, appreciated, respected, and valued. It needs to be a culture of caring, trust, collegiality and civility, one where all have voice without fear of reprisal and feel they belong, one that is inclusive of all.

Education/Training/Communications

One of the strongest themes was the value of education in shaping the future of diversity at the university. Suggestions for exposing faculty, staff and students to meaningful diversity education included:

- Developing as an institutional value to provide time to explore differences
- Increase good diversity education especially for those in leadership positions and new employees and students
- Provide ongoing diversity education for faculty and staff
- Require every faculty and staff member to participate annually in one diversity initiative and make this part of the annual evaluation
- Establish service learning opportunities around diversity for faculty, staff and students
- Include diversity education as part of every staff/faculty meeting
- Require a one-credit hour class on diversity for every student
- Increase communications around diversity—provide venues for on-going conversations, create a culture where honest and open dialogue including respectful disagreement can occur; teach listening skills; on-line conversations
- Provide an ongoing segment in OSU Today on diversity
- Organize and support ongoing working retreats for faculty, staff, and students around diversity issues
- Set aside a block of time where the entire university can focus on diversity
- Develop a mechanism for units that are successful with diversity to mentor struggling units

Accountability

One of the strongest themes focused on creating real accountability around diversity.

- Clear expectations must be established, perhaps even with the adoption of a Code of Conduct. The expectations must extend to all levels of the university, including leadership. Meeting the expectations must become a part of every annual evaluation.
- There must be real consequences for violating the expectations.
- There must be real rewards for those who do meet the expectations.
- Grievance procedures must be created or strengthened.
- Develop a protocol for measuring the success of diversity at the university
- Institute an annual diversity evaluation of the university by an external party

Resources

Sufficient resources to ensure success of diversity efforts must be provided.

Annual Diversity Report

- Include best practices.
- Share success stories.
- Require that faculty, staff and students in the unit be provided an opportunity for input into the unit's report before it is submitted.