

Diversity Council  
December 8, 2008  
Minutes

Present: E. Abercrombie, L. Bilonis, C. Collins, K. Faaborg, G. Hand, V. Hardcastle, A. Ingber, H. Kegler, M. Livingston, B. Marshall, M. McCrate, D. Merchant, C. Miller, E. Owens, DC Padur, N. Pinto, B. Rinto, R. Rosensweig, K. Simonson, G. Wharton, W. White

Absent: D. Acosta, S. Downing, J. Heisey, T. Herrmann, A. Leonard, M. Leventhal, R. Martin, D. Meem, K. Robbins, M. Spencer, M. Stagaman, A Vamadeva

Chair Report

L. Bilonis opened up the meeting recognizing a new member and guest. V. Hardcastle is the new deans' representative and R. Rosensweig introduced Brian Shannon, diversity director for Student Government.

He indicated his pleasure in N. Zimpher offering him this role and responsibility and expressed his great pride in what has been accomplished to date including action on the recommendations from the Diversity Task Force. All should be proud of the infrastructure that has been put into place to enlarge diversity and it should be viewed as a responsibility to exploit diversity to further progress. Of particular note, is success in obtaining a budget to support diversity efforts. While recognizing these accomplishments, the work does not end. There is no such thing as a complete journey. The Council is so dedicated that some find themselves frustrated from time to time. As one reads the emails of the last couple of weeks, there is heart and passion in the Council's work. The Council is in this journey together and need one another. There isn't another group that has dedication to this cause and there is good work ahead. It is his hope that Council members leave today with a sense of strength and a sense of key priorities for the agenda. Comments are welcome.

CDO Report

M. Livingston thanked L. Bilonis for accepting this responsibility; it is a challenging one. He stated his support for L. Bilonis, as well his staff in Student Affairs. The following updates are to keep people informed of activities on campus and in the community as it relates to diversity.

Budget - All are aware of the dire circumstances of the economy here and in the larger society and the Governor's attempt to support higher education. The speculation for the budget is a cutting scenario, but it will not prevent the work of the Diversity Council. Of the \$350,000 diversity allocation, there is a current balance of \$25,000 of uncommitted funds. Occasionally, the base of this budget will likely be expanded, but it is not expected to happen in this current environment. B. Rinto inquired if the current commitments will remain intact for the \$350,000. M. Livingston confirmed they would unless the Council makes a decision to allocate them differently.

RFP for Investment Proposals - N. Pinto reported proposals were due in 11/25 and 12 proposals were received from seven colleges and one administrative unit. All are in alignment with this year's objective - student recruitment and retention. The process is in consultation with the leadership team which will be scored for funding and feedback given to those who submitted.

M. Livingston reported on behalf of M. Stagaman for the Birmingham Promise which he shared at the last meeting. He signed as an individual supporter to address issues of discrimination, racism and the like. Their goal is to get 500,000 signatures throughout the US and the world. Even though M. Livingston signed as an individual, it is recommended the Diversity Council support the University signing as an organization. M. Livingston distributed information on the Promise and it is attached to the minutes. **He asked all to review and provide feedback to K. Ogden if members support the university's committing to the Promise. Feedback should be provided by 12/31/08.**

Freedom Center - M. Livingston reported he, V. Hardcastle, N. Zimpher and a few others have had conversations with the Freedom Center about more formal relations between the two organizations. They have 5-6 possibilities that are coalescing into a strategic plan. V. Hardcastle reported A&S envisions the Freedom Center helping to raise funds to provide support for an endowed position that would work half time at UC and half time at the Freedom Center and supervise interns and undergraduates. Additionally, DAAP and CECH may partner in this endeavor. M. Livingston will work with D. Murphy of the Freedom Center to develop a plan that has programming and space implications.

Non Discrimination Policy - At the last Board meeting, the revised policy was presented to include the new language of gender identity and expression. A board member had concern due to the Affirmative Action language being removed thinking it would lessen UC's commitment to Affirmative Action. This was not the intention. Board members had no issue with the new language being added. M. Livingston, M. McCrate, G. Wharton and L. Bilionis will now work to have two separate policies - one for Affirmative Action and one for non-discrimination. Revised policies will be submitted to the Board meeting in January.

Mumbai Vigil - Students held a vigil last week to show support for the Mumbai tragedy. M. Livingston shared a statement that was read at the vigil which he signed as chair of Bridges for a Just Community. R. Rosensweig noted the event made the front page of CNN news.

Understanding Race Exhibit - This exhibit will open up in January that looks at different perspectives of race. He encouraged all to visit the exhibit. E. Owens reported Fifth Third will be a title sponsor and will be contacting other companies for joint support, UC being one of among them.

#### Focus of Agenda

L. Bilionis opened the floor for a broad discussion on how the Council would like to focus the attention of its work and effectively spend its time. At the last meeting, a template was introduced for the college level work. He shared a few of his thoughts:

- what are the key constituents and their needs to ensure a coalition,
- who would be at the table,
- what might we do to enlarge the resources beyond the \$350,000,
- how to get people to use their resources in this direction,
- what is our capacity to leverage resources.

C. Miller referenced the Choose Ohio grants and two of the three are worth \$500,000 in scholarships for underrepresented students in their disciplines. It provides an opportunity to partner with Turner and Cincinnatus and be more successful in yielding from the pool of applicants.

R. Rosensweig reported Student Government has looked inside themselves to grow diversity but asked how to tell the story outside of our own groups.

M. Livingston stated the resources will never be enough and the \$350,000 will never come close to doing the whole job. There is a need to establish connections to collaborate.

E. Owens reported his subcommittee is moving forward to showcase what is already being done for supplier diversity. They are also developing plans for alumni recruiting efforts. With UC being the largest regional employer, it needs to garner support and relay the message of the impact it has in the community. The biggest opportunity is contracting with tier two vendors and they are working to identify vendors to fulfill that contract. Then UC needs to leverage its partners to tell the story. They are developing a communication strategy and will report back at a later date.

DC Padur asked if the Council has enough diversity represented at the table to capture all facets of diversity so all students have a voice. Should the Council have open forums to hear all concerns? B. Rinto reported her subcommittee did hold open meetings to hear from other constituencies and submitted this feedback in their plan. This should be open to faculty and staff; not just students. The needs are recognized, but it is uncertain how to leverage.

R. Rosensweig reported Student Government held a Diversity Symposium and one of the biggest ideas was a Diversity Council for students to bring in their ideas. They have a group that represents a broad, diverse population and will forward the ideas to the Council.

K. Faaborg reported she is chairing a group of faculty to advise the Provost on how to diversify faculty. They are going to develop a survey for faculty who are underrepresented in anyway they think they are underrepresented. The survey results will be analyzed and presented to the Council.

A. Ingber stated diversity is represented in the most generic way. Everyone is a minority in some fashion in this environment. The narrative of the culture is held by faculty and staff, not by students. The campus won't be different until faculty and staff make the change. The funding priority should be to maneuver the culture.

M. Livingston stated at times it feels like a governing body representing our constituent body but you are asking more by creating a narrative.

K. Simonson asked how to leverage these proposals (Choose Ohio First). What can be done to increase the numbers of African American students (it went down this year)? UC is not competitive in the area for scholarships. UC needs to look at the Hispanic market as it will be increasing. Is the university committed to getting these students?

M. Livingston reported he and C. Miller have looked at the admissions standards and decided not to raise the standards and hold at the current level for now.

K. Simonson stated UC needs to tell the story of their connection, i.e., E3, Turner, etc.

V. Hardcastle stated a lot of diversity work is being done but it is not woven into UC's identity. This should be pushed until everything is integral to our work. It sits on the side and is done under a separate cover.

W. White said Cincinnati does not have a good reputation and is behind compared to other states. Kids want to go to popular universities. What have these other universities done to make themselves attractive?

M. Livingston stated the challenge is UC being a number one institution. UC use to be a "fall back" or "safety choice" institution, but that is no longer the case. There is data to support this; C. Miller reported on a survey of A&S and Engineering students and 88% said UC was their first choice. A better job needs to be done to share this message.

Abie stated it's critical that everyone accept and verbalize diversity. It does not elevate minorities; it elevates everyone in the community. Because of UC's leadership, Cincinnati has the potential to be to diversity what CCM is to music. We have the potential to recruit all over the country and elevate the academic standard. This should be the focus of this group.

L. Bilionis asked all to reflect on this discussion. The leadership group will contemplate the focus of the Council's work.

Minutes approved by L. Bilionis and M. Livingston.

#### FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday, January 22, 10:00, 400B TUC

Monday, February 23, 1:30, 419 A&B TUC

Thursday, April 2, 10:00, 310 University Pavilion

Monday, May 4, 1:30, 419 A&B TUC

Thursday, June 4, 10:00, 310 University Pavilion

Distributed: 12/18/08