SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

September 10, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Dwight Davis, Susan M. Fredricks (by phone), Patreese D. Ingram, W. Terrell Jones, Aldo W. Morales, Laura L. Pauley, Angela L. Pettitt, David L. Shupp, Jane S. Sutton, Kathleen Tully, Sing H. Wong

Member Absent: Kyle Peasley

Visitor Present: Barry Bram, representative from Council on Engaged Scholarship

The meeting started at about 8:30 AM, 315 Grange Building, University Park.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Comments by Laura L. Pauley (Chair)

Laura introduced herself as Chair of the EECE committee for this year, and Aldo Morales, Vice Chair. She then asked all members to introduce themselves. Laura presented the priority form for the year, emphasizing item A.2, “Input to Gen. Ed. Review: “How can engaged scholarship contribute to student understanding of a diverse and accepting society.” Laura presented the minutes of last April meeting for approval. The minutes were approved by unanimously.

EECE Committee High Priorities for 2012-2014

“Best Practices” for Chairs of Faculty and Staff Search Committees. Aldo and David offered to work on the revisions to this report. Later in the meeting Aldo presented an update of the report that his sub-committee prepared. (See final paragraph of these minutes.)

Input to Gen. Ed. Review: “How can engaged scholarship contribute to student understanding of a diverse and accepting society” - Barry Bram. (See report.) Jane, Katie, and Laura will prepare a draft committee statement for discussion at our October EECE meeting.

Climate for LGBT Faculty and Students: Patreese gave an overview of who was involved on previous activities. Last year Karyn McKinney (last year’s Vice-Chair) and Susan led the effort in developing the LGBT survey and in preparing a report. Angela and Susan offered to work on the report this year. Angela will contact Karyn to get updates including the survey.
developed last year. Angela will give an oral status report at the October EECE meeting and future actions will be decided.

- Campus Climate for Differently Abled Individuals. Dwight volunteered to spearhead this effort. He will check with Maria Truglio (last year’s member) who suggested this issue. Laura asked Dwight to check with the Disability Office at Penn State for input on this matter.

PRESENTATION FROM BARRY BRAM

Barry’s presentation focused on how “engaged scholarship” and “service learning” can lead to a high impact educational experience. In September 2011, the Service/Learning/Student Engagement Task Force was formed. The task force prepared a report in May 2012. Interim Provost, Dr. Pangborn formed the Council on Engaged Scholarship in October 2012 to consider the implementation of Student Engagement at Penn State. Barry explained how out-of-class experiences (internships, community service, study abroad) can enrich students’ educational experiences. Barry also mentioned that the University will look for external funding to implement these changes in the curricula. The chair and the vice chair of the EECE committee were tasked to write a half-page report to the full Senate on this matter. This report will be combined with other Senate committee reports in Spring 2014. Barry offered himself as resource for the committee.

Dwight asked if Barry’s group discussed the outcomes of this project. Barry replied that there is plenty of literature to support “engaged scholarship” and “service learning.” Dwight wondered if there was inventory of courses with these components already offered by Penn State and if any college is using these concepts. Barry replied that some colleges, within the University, do more than others. Laura wondered if there is any benchmark from any other universities. Jane stated that “Teaching International” has been integrated in some courses at Penn State York. Another example was posed by Dwight who explained that a course teaching nutrition to small children could be used by the larger community.

REPORT FROM DR. TERRELL JONES

Dr. Jones gave an update of diversity issues. As an example, he encountered a group that was comprised of five generations working on a diversity project. These individuals bring different diversity experiences during the group discussions. Dr. Jones also stated that Penn State is among the top “Teach for America” contributing schools. (“Teach for America” is a national teacher corps of college graduates and professionals who commit to teach for two years and raise student achievement in public schools.)
REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONS

- Commission for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equity. Sing reported that there was an LGBT retreat two weeks ago where the group outlined the initiatives for the year. Among them was the “Gender & Sexuality Minor,” which is of interest to about 30 students. David asked if there are identified “gender & sexuality minor” courses. Sing replied that there are already some courses at University Park that deal with this issue, and he thinks that there are enough courses to fulfill this minor. Dwight asked about job placement for this minor. Sing also mentioned that his group is working on establishing half of the space in the Ally House, West Halls, for gender neutral living arrangements, with an all-inclusive living environment. On April 11-12, 2014, there will be an all University conference on LGBTQ Issues.

- Commission for Women. Susan updated the committee on her work. CFW has not met yet this year. The first meeting of CFW will be on September 25. The CFW Status of Women at Penn State has been published at http://equity.psu.edu/cfw/docs/cfw-status-report-2001-2011

- Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity. Patreese mentioned that her group will be co-hosting the Promotion and Tenure Symposium for underrepresented faculty.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Laura asked if any presidential commission would present a report to the full Senate this year. To Sing’s inquiry about what such a report would entail, Laura suggested looking at the CFW report to the Senate on March 12, 2013. Laura also suggested that the Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity present a report to the full Senate. Patreese will take the lead in preparing this report. The report might include the Student Debt Report being prepared by CORED. Dwight asked if there any other issues that the Senate would consider.

Laura asked for discussion about Barry’s comments on “engaged scholarship.” Angela stated that, at Penn State Shenango, Human Development and Family Studies students use a “poverty simulator.” Dwight explained that students should have the ability to apply classroom learning in the “real world” in an environment with people of different backgrounds, using sensible approaches without imposing students’ own beliefs. Laura offered a reflection indicating that students bring back a lot of experiences to the classroom. Jane told the committee the great role of internships and how students also bring back their experiences from that venue. Laura also suggested changing the “Road Scholars” tour to include these types of experiences for new faculty. Patreese wondered if the use of technology can get people from other countries closer together, as for example using Skype. Sing suggested more active learning and perhaps using the Learning Center as design center that could help with this
endeavor. Dwight suggested that faculty has the responsibility of bringing diversity into the classroom.

Finally, Aldo provided an update of the report that was returned from the Senate Office, “Best Practices” for Chairs of Faculty and Staff Search Committees. He also mentioned some of the flaws of the report. Laura observed that the survey results show that the “Guidelines for Recruiting a Diverse Workforce” appear to not be followed in all faculty hiring. She suggested investigating the involvement of the Affirmative Action Office during the hiring process and reviewing the hiring procedures as published by the HR Office to determine where the breakdown in expected practices occurs. Terrell suggested contacting the Educational Equity office so that they can offer some guidance. Aldo and David will work to collect information on the hiring procedures.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM.

Submitted by Aldo Morales