The monthly meeting of the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism of 2010-2011 was held on September 21, 2011 in the Gordon Ball Board Room at the Brenda Lawson Athletic Center. Present at the meeting were Marva Rudolph, Annazette Houston, Anton ReeCe, Herb Byrd, Charles Houston, Avery G. Howard, Kasey Robinson, Vincent Anfara, Jenny Moshak, Maxine Davis, Tyler Johnson, Pia Wood, Tyvi Small, and Tracy Childress.

I. Commission Reports

Commission for LGBT Persons

Jenny Moshak reported that on October 22nd, the Commission for LGBT Persons will host “Outstanding,” a seminar exploring LGBTIQ Diversity and the University Tennessee. The seminar will be held at the Black Cultural Center.

Ms. Moshak also reported that the Commission for Women met with the Provost. Each of the three commission chairs had further discussion about the chief diversity officer position.

Ready for the World

Pia Wood stated that International Education Week is November 14th-18th. She invited everyone to participate. International Education Week is not a festival. It is a week-long series of events including service learning, volunteerism, and faculty Fulbright reception.

SGA

Avery Howard shared that the Student Government Association is also planning International Week activities.

Kasey Robinson provided the following update:

- TeamVOLS sent 3 groups of 22 students on Alternative Fall Break Service Trips (Atlanta, Birmingham, & Tuscaloosa) in which all participants reported being exposed to and learning from diverse communities and individuals.
- Diversity Week was a great success, including events such as: The Gay Marriage Debate on October 10th, MOMIX Dance Theatre on October 11th, Bobby Seale on October 13th, and a forum, “Everyone is Gay” on October 14th.
- Office of Student Activities Assistant Director, Phillip Smith, will serve as the Diversity Initiatives Coordinator for the National Association of Campus Activities (NACA) Southern Region Conference in 2012.
Faculty Senate

Vincent Anfara reported that the Faculty Senate expanded the anti-discrimination statement for Human Resources after negotiations with the Office of General Counsel. The statement now prohibits discrimination based on gender identity. The change in the definition impacts the Knoxville campus, not the entire UT system.

Additionally, the Senate expanded teaching duties to include advising and mentoring. He added that the Council may be interested in advising and mentoring as it relates to a more diverse student body.

BFSA

Charles Houston reported that the BFSA welcomed Bobby Seale as its speaker for the 50th and Beyond Seminar. Annazette Houston later added that the feedback from the 50th Anniversary gala has been positive. Ms. Robinson added that as an observer, the program was impactful and powerful. Ms. Moshak added that she was impressed by the talent of the student body.

II. Employment Engagement Survey Follow-Up

Herb Byrd communicated the Council’s request to utilize more inclusive language in the upcoming Employee Engagement Survey to Linda Hendricks. Specifically, the Council requested that questions regarding gender identity and marital status to include responses for “transgendered” and “partnered” respectively. The request was denied.

Council members generally agreed that the refusal to amend the survey language to include more inclusive terminology seems inconsistent with the Chancellor’s focus on civility. Marva Rudolph stated that the Survey will go to all system employees and non-exempt staff the on Knoxville campus.

The Council decided to send a letter to the Chancellor detailing its concerns regarding the language used in the Employee Engagement Survey and the message that it sends to UT staff and faculty. Vincent Anfara, Jenny Moshak, and Marva Rudolph will draft the letter. The Council will ask each of the Commissions to endorse the letter.

III. Campus Diversity Data

Kent Wagoner from the Office of Information technology will attend an upcoming Council meeting to discuss data that is available to the Council. The goal of the discussion is to find ways to use the data in support of the Council’s objectives throughout the year.

Council members discussed the Diversity Advisory Council. Generally speaking, Council members felt under-informed about the effort. Additionally, there was a degree of concern regarding the composition of the Diversity Advisory Council. Theotis Robinson will be invited to attend an upcoming meeting to provide an update of the group’s work over the past several months.

Also, Council members will review the diversity statement that it developed several years ago at a future meeting.
IV. Other Business

Diversity Summit

Several members of the Council attended the October 12th Diversity Summit. The Knoxville Area Chamber of Commerce took a leading role organizing the event. Accordingly, the panel discussion and dialogue focused on diversity in the workplace. The presentation was geared for local employers. Ms. Moshak stated that while she was unable to attend, she sent a representative from the LGBT Commission who reported that LGBT issues received proper consideration among the diversity issues discussed.

Veterans Issues

At the last meeting, veteran’s issues were highlighted as a potential area of need that the Council should work to address. As a first step, Tracy Childress will seek information from Ashley Blamey about the Task Force in Support of Student Veterans and forward that information to the Council.

V. Next Meeting

November 16, 2011, Gordon Ball Boardroom, Brenda Lawson Athletic Center