Council for Diversity and Interculturalism  
Meeting Minutes  
October 17, 2012

The monthly meeting of the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism of 2012-2013 was held on October 17, 2012 in the Gordon Ball Board Room at the Brenda Lawson Athletic Center. Present at the meeting were Chancellor Jimmy G. Cheek, Herb Byrd, Tyvi Small, Carolyn Hodges, Adam Cureton, Tyler Johnson, Marcus Jones, Keith Kirkland, Margie Nichols, Anton Reece, Marva Rudolph, Mike Wirth, John Zomchick and Brian Thomas.

I. Remarks from Chancellor Jimmy G. Cheek

The Chancellor provided updates about the progress of diversity. He shared that the diversity of the undergraduate students are the highest in recent history. There has been significant progress made in the diversity of Women, Asians, Native Americans, and Hispanics. Unfortunately, African Americans had decreased by two faculty members. The graduate population is viewed to be “fairly healthy,” but we need to work harder to improve it.

The Chancellor also provided an update about the Vice Chancellor for Diversity search. He shared that the general goal of the candidates were for a more diverse faculty and student body and to help with civility efforts. Tyvi Small asked what the Chancellor was looking for in this new Vice Chancellor for Diversity. The Chancellor answered that with three questions. Do they want to be here? Are they good at what they do? Do they have ideas to make things better in the next 3 to 5 years? He also expressed that he was also looking at how this person would fit within the existing cabinet. Margie Nichols added they were looking for someone with experience in developing and implementing Diversity Plans.

Anton Reece asked the Chancellor to give his thoughts on relationship building efforts toward the LGBT population. The Chancellor addressed that by stating we need a more diverse faculty and his efforts toward working to address the issue of domestic partnership benefits. Keith Kirkland indicated that he was glad to hear of the efforts and felt that a task force may help to pursue this issue further and to add transparency around efforts taken to address it. Marcus Jones asked the Chancellor what can we do about interculturalism? The Chancellor responded by saying get involved on campus.

II. Update from Commissions

Commission for LGBT people
Keith Kirkland shared that the LGBT’s involvement in a seminar exploring LGBTIQ Diversity at The University of Tennessee Knoxville Carolyn Brown University Center, which was held over fall break, went very well and was very successful. For more information and other news on the LGBT activities, please visit http://lgbt.utk.edu/.

III. Employee Engagement Survey

1
Herb Byrd passed around a result sheet of a recently Employee Engagement Survey and that was reviewed. Keith Kirkland raised a question to Dr. Byrd concerning a previous Employee Engagement Survey that members of Commission for LGBT People had been referencing. Dr. Byrd provided an explanation of the various employment engagement surveys that had been done recently and how they connected to the one under discussion which is being reviewed by a committee appointed at each UT campus.

IV. Committee Sign-Ups

A sign-up sheet was passed around for members to sign up for one of the four committees (Membership, Communications, Diversity Plan, and Climate). Each committee will have co-chairs, along with five other members.

V. General Discussion

Herb Byrd conducted a small group discussion to find out “What would you like the Council for Diversity and Interculturalism to accomplish?” This was broken up into Quick Wins, Greatest Impact, and Long Term goals.

Quick Wins

- Get Commission Chairs in place and ensure that they have a representative attend CDI Meetings
- Get Diversity Plans/Progress Reports Completed
- Provide Support for the new Vice Chancellor for Diversity
- Start “Best Practice” resource with new Vice Chancellor for Diversity
- Create training for faculty/staff that helps us begin a dialogue on Diversity to be known across campus as the premier group for diversity issues
- Follow up with Commission representatives to attend meetings

Greatest Impact

- Get academic/non-academic unit Diversity Plans completed
- Create a blueprint/roadmap for Diversity
- Create an implementation: Accountability plan for Diversity
- Create functional web presence
- Complete Diversity Plans and provide feedback
- Post Diversity Plans to website
- Raise visibility as a resource avenue to gauge what students, faculty, and staff want done in terms of diversity

Long Term

- Consider hosting other CDI groups from other SEC schools
- Clearly and concisely define diversity and its purpose
- Develop and fully implement strategies to increase faculty and staff diversity
- Develop and implement activities to break down intercultural barriers among students, faculty, and staff
- Recruit a more diverse work force by collaborating with Human Resources and Academic Affairs

VI. Next Meeting

The Council will meet on Wednesday November 28th at 3:30 p.m. in the Gordon ball Boardroom, Brenda Lawson Athletic Center.