

To: FCSM Electorate

Members of the FCSM College Council

Dean: David Vanko; **Acting Associate Dean:** Howard Kaplon; **Biological Sciences:** Sarah Haines, Vonnie Shields; **Chemistry:** Alan Pribula, Ryan Sours; **Computer and Information Sciences:** Yuanqiong Wang, Siddarth Kaza; **Mathematics:** Honi Bamberger, Gail Kaplan; **Physics, Astronomy, & Geosciences:** Rajeswari Kolagani, Phuoc Ha; **At Large:** Brian Fath (Biological Sciences), James Saunders (MB3); **Students:** A. Mickey Dehn (Graduate Student), Derek Morgan (Undergraduate Student)

FCSM Department Chairs

FCSM Secretaries – Please post one copy

Member-at-Large of the University Senate: Jay Zimmerman, Mathematics

MINUTES OF THE FCSM COLLEGE COUNCIL MEETING

February 19, 2010

The FCSM College Council met in Smith Hall, room 306, at 1:30 p.m.; Ryan Sours, Chairperson presiding.

Attendance: Vonnie Shields, Harald Beck, Alan Pribula, Ryan Sours, Siddharth Kaza, Rajeswari Kolegani, Phuoc Ha, Derek Morgan

Absent: – David Vanko, Howard Kaplon, Sarah Haines, Yuanqiong Wang, Honi Bamberger, Gail Kaplan, Brian Fath, James Saunders, A. Mickey Dehn – all notified Council in advance

1. Meeting called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chair, Ryan Sours.
2. Minutes from the December 11, 2009 were not approved due to low attendance.
3. Announcements from College Council Chair, Ryan Sours
 - a) Two architectural firms were interviewed in January, and EYP was selected to do the space programming and planning for the Smith Hall renovation and expansion project. The EYP team will be on campus the week of March 1 for several information-gathering meetings.
4. No announcements from Dean, David Vanko
5. Old Business – postponed due to low attendance
6. New Business
 - a) Roland Roberts, FCSM representative on the Diversity Action Committee (DAC) addressed the Council
 - Purposes of DAC include supporting TU diversity action plan and campus-wide diversity action program
 - DAC reports to the diversity coordinator council which reports to President Caret
 - The goals of the DAC were outlined
 - More info can be found on Debbie Seeberger's website at http://www.towson.edu/odeo/diversity_resources/diversity_advanc_committee.asp
 - FCSM needs to develop a diversity plan – be proactive rather than reactive
 - b) Debbie Seeberger and Art King addressed the Council
 - Presented results and feedback from last year's Reflective Process (see attached)
 - Will return in April to discuss diversity planning with Council

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by A. Mickey Dehn, 2009-2010 Recording Secretary

Reflective Process
COLLEGE Feedback: FCSM¹

Participants were asked to indicate their personal approaches to diversity, as well as those of the department, college, division (academic affairs) and university.

- Individuals consistently rated their personal approach to diversity as being more inclusive than that of their department or college.
- Individuals rated the university approach to diversity as being more inclusive than the department, college, or division.
- This supports the notion that thinking about the diversity at the department level may be an important approach within the college.

What did you find most useful about the Reflective Process?

- As a new staff member it was helpful to identify people in my college who place a high level of importance on pluralism and understand that the work surrounding diversity is never done.
- The conversation was interesting but not as honest as it needed to be.
- An opportunity for conversation with people from outside my department.
- Hearing the opinions of others concerning diversity issues on campus.

What concerns did you have about the Reflective Process?

- Part of diversity is recognizing that everyone is different and chooses to participate in things in different ways. Thus, the leaders should not force everyone to contribute their thoughts/ideas to the meeting if they choose not to.
- The number of people who felt that simply hiring one or two people from under-represented groups meant that they were a diverse department and that there was not more of a conversation that pushed these people to examine the environment that may or may not exist within their department.

Other comments

- To keep the diversity within the department or college is to recruit from the main agencies but, consider other minority agencies. Get stats within each division to see if we are keeping up with the diversity in the various departments. Address these issues if a division or department is not attempting to be diverse. One other comment that I would like to make is exit interviews when someone terminates the university. Sometimes you may get great information from that person in a confidential manner.
- I think that every department should be tasked with coming up with a strategic plan for addressing social justice and cultural pluralism on a regular (weekly/bi weekly/monthly) basis. This should be a conversation that is constant and encourages self-reflection and awareness. Once a year is not enough!
- I have worked with diverse populations of students, faculty, staff and the administration over four decades

¹Based on post-Departmental Meeting Evaluation

Reflective Process

College Themes: Fisher College of Science and Mathematics

Campus Climate

- Some participants believed that TU's prior administration was not visibly committed to diversity. They reported being surprised by the new more visible emphasis on diversity.
- It was noted that a few years ago, the faculty felt that they had a "voice" with the administration, but when that person left so did the position. In order to be successful, the administration needs to consider hiring a full time position dedicated to things such as but not limited to: fighting for grants, planning new faculty orientation, and leading the charge in introducing curriculum change as it relates to diversity.
- Participants noted that adjunct and part time faculty members do not always interact with tenure track faculty. They believe that this should change.
- Faculty members do not often have an opportunity to meet faculty members from other departments within their college. A networking session outside the immediate department may be beneficial.
- It was noted that TU does not have a campus-wide maternity policy. The university is not where the participants felt it should be in terms of handling gender differences and maternity or parent status.

Recruiting – Faculty

- Faculty members mentioned that candidate diversity could be a plus to be considered during faculty searches. Some were told not to discuss this or consider this during the hiring process.
- It was mentioned that some of the college's search committees are aware of and had used ODEO's suggestions to run ads in diverse locations (e.g., printed periodicals or web sites geared to reach different groups), while other committees did not.
- Departments within the college handle searches differently. Some departments invite faculty and students to participate in the interview process, others do not encourage involvement.
- It was noted that during the hiring process diversity issues that need to be addressed are not always discussed and some of the time the strongest candidate is not selected.
- Several faculty members suggested that plans be developed by each department to facilitate reaching a broader range of applicants when filling faculty positions. This should be an ongoing process that is done prior to the start of a search or series of searches.

Professional Development

- Questions posed by the group---- How should diversity be introduced in the classroom? How do they make course material more inclusive? Will they be trained? Some mentioned using Blackboard and introducing learning journals as methods to obtain student view points.
- Participants reported that a course in sensitivity training may be required to assist faculty members to move forward with this initiative. It should also be included in new faculty training.
- What training can be provided to faculty members that would help to increase awareness and build confidence when addressing diversity in the classroom?
- A relatively new faculty member noticed that international students in his classes didn't feel comfortable speaking up in class when they don't understand. He wondered how he could help these students better navigate his class.

Reflective Process

College Themes: Fisher College of Science and Mathematics

Retention – Faculty

- Participants were unclear with regard to how new faculty were introduced to campus and department policies and procedures. It was suggested that junior faculty be mentored by senior staff/faculty.
- There was a common theme that doing outreach programs with the community was counterproductive to the tenure process.
- One recurring theme was that administrative decisions, with regard to tenure and where the emphasis is placed on professors' performance, undermine diversity. Several comments were made that tenure track rewards research and grants while only considering a small percentage of performance in other areas.

Recruiting – Students

- Participants shared that faculty need to go out of their way on some occasions to try to recruit students, especially for graduate and postgraduate programs. Some feel as though recruitment expectations on faculty are unreasonable.
- Participants stated that they believe that TU needs to get more involved with high school students to help inform the students about alternatives and career options. It was suggested that TU bring people who are new in their field to campus to talk with students about their educational paths and career beginnings.

Retention – Students

- Faculty members reported that some Caucasian students have dropped out of classes because they do not understand their professor. Participants felt that students need to learn to persevere and work with these faculty members to prepare for interactions once they enter the workforce.
- Some students are unable to purchase textbooks or expensive computers which are recommended by OTS due to their cost.
- Some faculty members noted that while it would be nice to use multiple approaches to reach more students, it isn't feasible. There is only so much time in class, the subject matter (more technical courses) didn't allow for different approaches, etc.
- It was suggested that maybe a questionnaire could be provided to students to allow them the opportunity to provide feedback/input to professors in a safe environment.
- Some participants reported that the University did not have enough formal support for students who are "disadvantaged" (e.g., those dependent on social services for guidance). They believe that state or federal programs are in place to help get the students into college and to provide funding. Once here, if they had problems with the support organization there wasn't a formal place, like DSS, for these students to get assistance. Aside from individuals trying to help them out, they are basically on their own.
- Growth brings challenges. The student population has grown, but the money to support student services has not. More students would be retained if there was a better system to provide tutoring.
- Some faculty members noted that cultural backgrounds of students may prevent them from seeking out or asking for help. Professors should be aware of this and take the initiative to be more accessible and willing to interact. They should make it a point to let students know they can come to them and that they are willing to work with them.