

College of A&S Staff Council Meeting
February 11, 2015 Minutes

In attendance: Alecia Kimbrough, Alycia Libolt, Beth Whitaker Helen Sexton, Lori Byrne, Patricia Fleek Shea Svoboda, Shawn Langan, JaMel Ways, Jamie Longwell Guests: Dean Francisco and Brenda Ensor

Agenda Items:

Diversity and Inclusion discussion from Dean Francisco

One of Dean Francisco's goals is to add value to the community as a whole and asked for the staff counsel's views on diversity and inclusion. Used the following questions to get the conversation going:

Dean Francisco asked each of us - What does diversity means to you, personally?

- Frank and enlightening discussion followed

Follow up question – What would your gut reaction be to a mandated diversity policy? (or similar language)

- More good conversation about that may not go over smoothly

For next meeting: PONDER: What should the College of Arts and Science do to demonstrate to YOU that it gets diversity?

Draft staff development funding program proposal – Review submitted apps

Beth Donovan – Alecia K requesting more information before a decision is made as the request sounds like it would be for training on care and use of equipment that should be provide when equipment was purchased. Maybe not quite professional development

Angie Okelberry – Agreed to move forward request for support in the amount of \$1000 as department has agreed to pay \$700 of requested amount

No committee reports due to time restrictions

Upcoming Events:

Spark February 17 Active Bystander with Jan Deeds

Spark March 25 12 – 1 pm Campus REC - Total Body Tone with Shelly Sorensen

Spark May 5 Communications: Nonverbal Cues with Dr. Charles Braithwaite

Announcements, Reminders & FYI's:

Meeting times are the second Wednesday of each month from 2 – 3pm.

Upcoming Meetings:

March 11, 2015 – Burnett Hall Room 313

April 8, 2015 – Jorgensen Hall Room 338 – note room number change

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Discussion on Diversity and Inclusion

Joe's introduction to the topic:

-Interviewed for dean position at the airport. He was asked what he will bring to UNL on diversity and inclusion.

-For his on-campus interview, he had thought more about the topic. Joe did not want to impose his views on the subject to others. He felt he needed to understand the UNL community and the Lincoln community before he could give a knowledgeable response. He could say that at Wayne State he helped with creating a tutoring space in the basement of a Baptist church. It was a success.

-Was asked by a faculty member in the College what he was going to do on diversity and inclusion.

-Staff are an important part of diversity, as staff members see diversity more than faculty. They are first in line to see it.

Question #1 – What does diversity mean for you?

The council members felt that people are listening to them and are being supported. They want to be included.

- (Beth) People's perspective based on life experiences. Learn from each other. Learn from international students.

- (Lori) Race and gender orientation. Economics and education play a part in experiences.

UNL: PhDs – elitists, but Lincoln is not elitist. Lincoln is a government (white collar) city.

- (Helen) People are more accepting at UNL on diversity. She sees in her department faculty affiliated with a particular political party won't waiver on the views of that group. Her family is made up of several different races, but they are very opinionated on race. The African-American members make fun of the white members, etc.

- (Shea) Diversity is a buzzword, whether it is good or bad.

-What is wrong with diversity is that it comes back to inclusion. He liked the word inclusion, because it means action.

-Acceptance is key to inclusion. Every population has diversity.

- Comments can be crude. People need to say that it is not all right. Must listen. You need to know what to ask so that it can be included.

Employers will say that we need to increase diversity, but the inclusion aspect of it is the important part.

- (Joe) Denmark has subdivided classes that you can't cross. The U.S. takes steps towards inclusion.

-(Shawn) His wife's employment is in Physics in another country. There are gender issues there, so he is sensitive to jokes that white males will make. People know he doesn't like the jokes, so he is excluded.

-Families can talk openly with each other their prejudices, and in many cases, not feel that they will be corrected.

-You can speak out and you can be heard.

-(Patty) There are different communication styles. People do not know what questions to ask. People say ignorant things.

-(JaMel) Race is her first thought when she hears the word, diversity. We must take the time to understand the differences in the cultures.

- Everyone sees color. She sees it on Facebook and on television.

-The elephant in the room must be discussed.

-Why does race have to be an issue? Why do they even have to ask the race question on forms?

-She belongs to an all-African American Facebook group that discusses their racial experiences.

-If needed, it is up to you to step outside from the things that were taught to you when growing up.

-(Alycia) Grew up in a small town, where she did not see ethnic groups. Now living in Lincoln, she is learning about diversity. You need to forget the past. Times are changing.

-How do we embrace differences?

-(Alecia) Started at UNL and worked her way up

-There are opportunities here to do this.

-Worked with middle-aged men in Canfield. She did not have a voice. When she came to Arts and Sciences, she found that she had a voice that would be heard. She believes this is because faculty are used to listening to ideas in the classroom.

-There are opportunities to be heard at UNL.

-(Helen) She worked in what is now HR. The Director of Personnel never did evaluations for her because he wanted to make it so that she could not go elsewhere. In applying for a new position, she had to explain this to Dean VanHorn.

-Some people feel staff are a necessary evil.

How did you know that a diversity effort that was announced would fail?

1. Used as a smokescreen
2. Resistance from the norm. Resistance to change.
3. Opportunity cost – It would shortchange another group.
4. Nay sayers did not buy in
5. People can't dictate to you how you are going to react.
6. Forced upon
7. No substance
8. Lack of support

Elitism

-Joe raised by grandparents, who were not educated but were successful. The #1 lesson that he learned from them is that you do not need a PhD to define who you are.

-Remember common sense; don't be an educated fool.

-Bigger meaning of success is what you do and the impact it has on others.

Next meeting – Where we should be going?

-What does Joe need to demonstrate to you? What does he need to do?

-What will work?

-What does the College need to do to demonstrate to you, personally, that the College gets it?