
SOUTH CENTRAL COLLEGE



DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

May 9, 2012

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: Mitzi Kennedy, Brian Fors, Nancy Genelin, Ann Anderson, Keith Stover, Linda Beer, Tracy Stokes-Hernandez, Ricki Walters, Kirstin Cronn-Mills, Jane Greathouse, Xavion Turrey, Al Kluever, Dan Zielske, Kathi Rusch, Laural Kubat, Johnna Horton

Excused: WC Sanders

Guests: Amy Magnus, Maria Ward & Taryn Arbeiter, St. Olaf students

Diversity Statement

South Central College is committed to fostering a campus environment of inclusion, knowledge, and understanding in which faculty, staff and students learn to value diversity and to respect individual differences that enrich our college community.

Minutes – Johnna Horton moved to approve the minutes. Ann Anderson seconded.

Introductions –

Global Connections Conference – Amy Magnus presented the Diversity Committee with the request to take on sponsoring/co-sponsoring an event or special venue as part of the 3rd SCC Global Connections Conference scheduled for October 11th & 12, 2012. After a short discussion and because the group was pressed for time a decision about the actual sponsoring was tabled until the summer retreat of the Diversity Committee. Once determined the committee will let Amy know what event or venue the Diversity Committee will be uniquely responsible for. Of course committee members are highly encouraged to sign up on the work schedule sheets to facilitate or introduce speaker sessions, cover a shift or two at the registration tables, speaker greeters or another of the various conference committee responsibilities.

Renewing Conversations about Immigration & Diversity in Faribault - a powerpoint presentation on a community survey and interviewing project on Immigration & Diversity in the Faribault community that was conducted by St. Olaf students, Taryn Arbeiter and Maria Ward was made. These students were part of a Student Engagement course and they chose Immigration & Diversity in Faribault as their research topic area.

The presentation was introduced and Diversity Committee members were asked to reflect for 2 minutes on the question, “What interests you personally in diversity?” after the reflection time, members were asked to share their answers, Al Kluever, Ann Anderson, Tracy Stokes-Hernandez and Xavion Turrey shared their reflections- giving both personal and professional reasons why they were and continue to be interested in the topic, education around and discussions on diversity both at SCC and in the communities in which they participate and reside.

Taryn & Maria gave an overview of the county and community wide issues that came up in their interviews of 40 individuals from business, education, non-profits, churches and law enforcement that made up their survey respondents. Some over-arching themes involved: assimilation vs. multiculturalism, human rights, historical and economic perspectives. The idea that continued to resonate with most respondents was that the issues raised are community and county/public issues and not just addressed by one faction of the community. It will take time and patience and continued dialog to address the multi-layered and multi-factioned issues from Education and training, to religious practices, traditions that are not the same, a desire to be accepted but not totally absorbed into the predominant culture. To view the After the Welcome Center: Renewing Conversations about Immigration & Diversity report: http://www.stolaf.edu/services/cel/students/CURI_Immigration.html

Brian Fors brought up the idea that SCC students and St. Olaf students might partner or connect on research projects like this in the future. Also SCC could potentially offer space for community forums that might be conducted to further dialogue about some of the community issues that have been identified and also continue what has been started.

Student Focus Group Results – Tracy Stokes-Hernandez and Heidi Beske presented their overview of the focus groups that were held over the last 3 months. Approximately 120 SCC students have participated in the 6 sessions. Pizza was a great incentive to get students in the room to participate and give feedback on the questions posed by Heidi and Tracy – Focus Group questions included:

1. What were things that made you feel welcomed when you first came to this campus?
2. What can be done at SCC to make students feel more welcomed? Consider art, color, events, personnel, furniture

Focus Group 2

What types of events or speakers would you like to see on campus?

What are some of the issues that can be addressed through these events/speakers?

What events have you enjoyed in the past (high school or college)?

Focus Group 3

What do you think faculty and staff need to be aware of as it relates to diversity issues?

What types of trainings do think should be made available to students?

Most students surprisingly did not know the meaning of the word diversity – did not know where to start with coming up with a definition for the word. Students were willing to tell what they thought, short, to-the-point questions. Most students are more than willing to get involved in campus activities if their instructors encourage participation, they themselves are involved or if extra credit can be offered. (see Heidi & Tracy's report for more details.)

Summer Retreat – those in attendance agreed to Jane Greathouse scheduling a ½ day summer retreat to firm up the training plan, review the status report to HLC, determine a name change or not and vote on by-laws.

Bylaws – All changes are reflected in the 4th draft of the By-Laws and will be reviewed again at our summer retreat before final approval.

Somali Presentation Discussion - the Somali Presentation that is currently scheduled to take place at SCC on Wednesday, May 30th, 2012 and is co-sponsored by SCC, Greater Mankato Diversity Council, MSU, M, Greater Mankato Growth (others?) has now been called into question from Somali community members in the Mankato, North Mankato communities – the speakers identified for the May 30th event are not from this community – they are from the Metro area and their presentation, motivation and appropriateness have been called into question by local Somali leaders. Nancy Genelin was contacted this morning and after a short discussion – a meeting will be scheduled next week between the sponsoring agencies and the local Somali leaders to learn more about the concerns of the group and to address the concerns and perhaps add another session to the days agenda to allow for more perspectives to be addressed during this workshop day. Al Kluever reported that he already has 200 registrants for this event. The actual conducting of the event will be determined within the next week.

Update/Events- We ran out of time to provide any updates and events.

The next Diversity Committee Meeting will be:

THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR