

## PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY

### Minutes of the President's Advisory Committee on Diversity

Friday, February 7, 2003

#### Agenda:

Discuss sub-committee action plans, which resulted from meeting with President Geoffroy.

Discuss strategy for approaching campus climate survey

Discuss key topics and issues that came from the Friday's Conversations Kickoff.

#### Discussion of PACD members:

Item #1a: The Student Retention Sub-committee identified that numerous university offices had already developed processes for trying to capture departing or at risk students. The next step for the Student Retention Sub-committee is to coordinate a meeting of the Financial Aid Office and Admissions Office and perhaps even athletics. Those three entities have a mechanism for tracking students.

Item #1b: The subcommittee agreed that the exit interview process was vital to understanding the reasons why employees and students leave the university. But they also felt PACD needed to support the actions of the Subcommittee on Campus Climate and move forward with Susan Rankin's climate survey. At that point in time one of the members announced out that Jackie Litt has secured a grant and was conducting a climate survey of her own to address faculty. Several PACD members expressed concern that PACD efforts to utilize Susan Rankin's survey instrument would be viewed as unnecessary duplication. Walt Gmelch agreed to touch base with Jackie Litt and will get back to Todd Herriott with regard to the status of that climate survey.<sup>1</sup>

Item #1c: Community Relations subcommittee. The committee has been studying the feasibility and interest in recognition for diversity achievements across the campus. In consultation with President Geoffroy, input from the community at large and PACD colleagues, the Community Relations

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<sup>1</sup> Update: Walt Gmelch has confirmed that Jackie Litt has not embarked on a separate exit survey project. As of this update, Susan Rankin has been asked to the campus to discuss her proposal and an appropriate division of labor between Rankin and members of the ISU community.

subcommittee is getting back together to develop a plan and structure for how ISU would recognize achievements in diversity.

Item #2: The Campus Climate subcommittee agreed that the exit interview process was vital to understanding the reasons why employees and students leave the university. The subcommittee will work closely with Walt Gmelch to determine next steps relative to any work in which Jackie Litt may already be engaged.

Item #3: PACD members discussed a number of topics that came out of “Friday Conversations,” which were held on January 28<sup>th</sup>. The topic of the definition of Diversity was noted as a frequently raised issue in the table discussions. It also raised a number of concerns from the members of the PACD committee. There was expressed concern that the President didn’t advance the proposed definition that was presented to him last fall. Committee members felt as though it captured the essence of the meaning of diversity and certainly the meaning of diversity for Iowa State. ([Link to definitions](#)) An opposing viewpoint was that diversity needs to be more narrowly defined and presented with expectations that could be measured. There was strong objection to that, because of the risk of excluding certain populations. Many of the members further discussed the fact that we need to make ourselves uncomfortable in order to make diversity work and sometimes having a definition that doesn’t allow for measurement or finite comfort means that we are still continuing to focus on living with privilege and living in the context of finding the easy way out with numbers. Next Steps: Carla will go back to the President to see what his views are on the concerns that have been raised regarding the proposed definition, and Walt and Carla, as members of the Friday Conversations Planning Committee, will try to influence making the discussion of definition part of future Friday Conversations.<sup>2</sup>

The second item that came up during the Friday Conversations had to do with the fact that members reported hearing that participants in the Friday Conversations hadn’t really even heard of the President’s Advisory Committee on Diversity. PACD members recommended there be more public relations put together to promote the committee. Furthermore, the committee wants a public relations tool to promote the committee’s agenda and its priorities. Next Step: Carla and Walt will try to identify a student, who as part of an internship or

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<sup>2</sup> Friday Conversations on Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, will be “What Diversity Means to Me.” See this site for more information.

work-study program, can assist PACD with promotion and with public relations efforts.

NEXT MEETING: Tentatively Scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Place to be announced when schedule is finalized.