

Memorandum

To: Dean Cheryl Easley
From: CHSW Diversity Committee
Re: Year-end Report AY 2008-2009 / Recommendations for AY 2009-2010
Date: May 15, 2009

Introduction

The Diversity Committee, established in April of 2007, is at the close of its second full academic year serving the College of Health and Social Welfare. The committee met monthly during the fall and spring semesters. Current members include Dean Cheryl Easley, Russell Pressley, Jackie Pflaum, Rhonda Johnson, Randi Madison, Rena Spieker, Annalisa Raymer, Melodee Monson, Katrisha Villarante (student member), Nancy Nix, Virginia Miller, Mary Weiss, and Deb Periman. In addition to our regular members, Associate Dean Susan Kaplan, CHSW Executive Administrative Assistant Harriet Paule, and Director of Campus Diversity and Compliance Marva Watson were instrumental to the committee's successes this year.

Year-end Summary

One of the committee's on-going priorities has been to increase membership and participation across the various academic units that comprise the College. This year we were pleased to add a faculty member from the Kuskokwim campus and one student member, as well as two faculty members new to UAA.

Committee activities this year began with the September all-college meeting, at which the committee made a presentation on the importance of recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, and best practices for accomplishing that goal. Marva Watson provided statistical data highlighting the dearth of diverse faculty nationwide, as well as information specific to UAA. The committee provided faculty present with handouts listing faculty recruitment and retention resources, a directory of suggested forums for advertising positions, and suggested language for position postings and candidate assessment. Attending faculty were also presented with a Diversity Committee bookmark explaining the purposes of the committee and providing the link to the CHSW website. In addition to the recruitment and retention presentation, the committee highlighted the UAA Books of the Year, *Growing Up Native in Alaska* and *Yuuyaraq: the Way of the Human Being*, and encouraged faculty to look for ways to utilize them in their courses.

In October, the committee hosted its first all-college social event, a faculty and staff "Celebrating Diversity" potluck. Participants shared their favorite cultural dishes during a social hour. Dinner was followed by a screening and discussion

of the film Alaska College Track 2, which follows the challenges faced by three Native students from rural Alaska attending our urban campuses.

Other fall projects included supporting faculty grappling with issues related to diverse cultural holidays and traditions, and supporting the National Coalition Building Institute's (NCBI's) efforts on campus. With respect to the former, the committee added to its Blackboard site a link to the Anchorage School District's cultural holiday calendar, and began the process of compiling other faculty resources relevant to diverse holidays. With respect to the latter, four committee members were able to attend one of NCBI's daylong workshops on welcoming diversity and reducing prejudice.

In the spring, the committee co-sponsored with the Ford Foundation Difficult Dialogues initiative a faculty seminar entitled "Tell Me Again Why You Need to Be Gone? Perspectives on Responding to Student Absences due to Religious & Cultural Practices." The seminar featured presentations by Bruce Schultz, UAA Dean of Students; Marva Watson, UAA Director Office of Campus Diversity and Compliance; Nancy Furlow, UAA Interim Director of Alaska Native Studies; and Gina Boisclair, APU Cardinal Newman Chair of Catholic Theology. Some of the materials from this seminar, including a 2009 interfaith calendar, were distributed to faculty attending the spring all-college meeting.

The committee also had a spring work session with Associate Dean Susan Kaplan to plan the committee's pages on the CHSW website. As planned, all members of the UAA community will be able to link off the College's website to the Diversity Committee's pages. Those pages will feature information about the committee, related diversity links, committee contact information, a faculty/staff showcase, and diversity resources in the following areas: UAA system data on students and faculty; student recruitment and retention; faculty recruitment and retention; curriculum resources: content, delivery, assessment; research resources: funding opportunities and other support; and service resources.

Throughout the year, the committee maintained its Blackboard site to facilitate communication among members and to serve as a repository for the committee's growing library of informational resources on diversity. This library will be moved into a public forum once the revisions to the CHSW website are complete. Additions to the resource library this year included information on cultural holidays, and reading lists where members may post favorite readings on diversity issues or favorite authors from diverse groups.

The committee also continued its focus on providing support for units within the College in their efforts to recruit and retain diverse faculty. This support focused primarily on making readily available to all of our units concrete information on (1) how and where to advertise a position so that it will both come to the attention of, and be attractive to, diverse candidates (2) how to structure candidate assessment documents to ensure that diversity of experience is adequately

weighed, and (3) how to structure candidate campus visits in such a way that candidates will feel they may find a comfortable home at UAA and in the Anchorage community.

Recommendations for AY 2009-2010

The committee recommends that:

- the Diversity Committee be continued as a formal committee within the College
- the College continue to provide financial and administrative support for committee activities
- the College continue its plan to provide an electronic forum for dissemination of information about, and resources compiled by, the committee, through the on-going revisions to the College website
- the committee continue to review and monitor numerical indicators of diversity throughout the College
- the committee continue to collaborate with Campus Diversity and Compliance and other organizations across campus who share the same objective
- the committee continue to work on adding members, with the goal of eventually including a representative from each unit within the College and at least two student members
- the committee sponsor at least one College-wide educational event highlighting the assets that diverse students and faculty bring to the College
- the committee sponsor at least one College-wide faculty, staff, and student event combining social interaction with a brief educational program
- the committee serve as an ongoing educational resource and clearinghouse for College faculty and staff on diversity issues generally
- the committee work with all academic units within the College to foster integration of diversity activities into all of our work
- the committee adopt the practice of including or attempting to include knowledgeable representatives and/or elders of any culture[s] highlighted at committee or College events