

Minutes and Follow-Up from Diversity Committee Meeting
September 23, 2014

Present:

Jannah Nerren, Chair
Mary Catherine Breen
Kelli Drenner
Nina Ellis-Hervey
Antonio Estudillo
Brandon Fox
Ali Hachem
Carl Pfaffenberg

Absent:

Luis Aguerrevere
Jane Grayson
Carolyn Stuftt

Discussion:

The committee reviewed the report of previous committee activity for AYs 2008-2012. It was noted that such reports from AY 2012 and AY 2013 would be helpful.

Current members of the committee who had served in AY 2012-2013 reported that the focus of the committee during that year had been attracting diverse faculty to the college. It was noted that the committee had worked with Human Resources in this endeavor.

Current members of the committee who had served in AY 2013-2014 reported that the committee spent that year looking at the NCATE diversity standards and the language around it and tried to think about what makes PCOE diverse besides ethnicity. The committee worked on the creation of posters for presenting to the NCATE examiners and participated in interviews during the site visit.

A question was raised regarding PCOE policy regarding attracting and hiring diverse faculty, particularly regarding searches for diverse candidates, including the availability of money to different departments to enable them to broaden searches.

The transition from NCATE standards to CAEP standards was discussed. It was decided that CAEP Standard 3.1 would be an area of focus for the committee this year. Dr. Fox called attention to the CAEP standards page 21 as a potential starting framework, with more explicit goals to be set as committee work progresses – all agreed. Standard 3.1 focuses on preparing our teacher candidates to meet the needs of all students.

There was discussion about the phrase “meet the needs of all students” within the standard and how broad this is

Dr. Pfaffenberg suggested an investigation of our target by identifying where we are as a college in the area of diversity and then to find ways to challenge the various programs to demonstrate growth in that area. The difficulty of obtaining good, clear data in this area was identified as a problem because of the multi-faceted aspects of diversity.

There was a discussion of the new implementation of the Field Experience Module (FEM) to track diversity of placements in field experiences and clinical teaching.

Dr. Nerren suggested that the committee work with the Strategic Planning Team to include diversity as a key emphasis in the new strategic plan.

It was suggested that the committee work with PCOE recruitment committees. Dr. Nerren will be asking a member of the PCOE Recruitment Committee to attend the next meeting.

There was discussion around the following topics:

- Hard to staff schools and shortage fields - What are the trends across the area, state, and nation? Are we meeting this need?
- Data about the university – EPP NCATE data
- The PowerPoint from Dr. Abbott’s NCATE presentation
- ~~Ali talked about the context of the university and what is the understanding of diversity it is a cultural construct – we need to think about it as such –~~
- ~~Context is important – it is a waste of time to address diversity and look at culture of scholarship get a student labeled as X and then to silence the experience~~
- ~~It has to start with the college reality – what are the potentials and the problems with understanding~~

Dr. Estudillo had a previous commitment and arrived at the meeting late, but had the following to add: He believes that the recruitment of diverse faculty is tied to retention of students. He believes it is important to work to retain the individuals. It is not clear to him that the PCOE works to retain faculty from diverse backgrounds. He is currently working with Dr. Breen to identify Latino and Latina faculty and staff associations. He believes these types of mechanisms are important. And should be looked at by the committee.

Dr. Estudillo suggested that we look at universities that do this well . He stated that recruiting and retaining teacher candidates form diverse backgrounds starts with having quality faculty and staff. He suggested that we go back and look at 2012 and see if the committee work addressed retention.

~~Dr. Hachem added that we should ensure that our knowledge is up to date and that we go beyond surface level. It should be embedded in curriculum that we are promoting equity and social justice. In order to retain diverse students and faculty we should clearly recognize the benefit of having them — that message is not clear— what added benefit do we gain from this— why should we care? He stated that we are not recruiting well enough— we need to go where diverse faculty are— we need to target diverse potential faculty at conferences, seek out the sub-groups there.~~

Ali suggested the following: Since diversity, along with its “problems” and “potentials,” is a culturally constructed phenomenon, a conversation about this concept would benefit from insisting on a contextualization of the term within the institutional culture of interest (at all levels and from different angles) and its wider cultural, political, legal, historical, and economic reality. Such contextualization could contribute to a better understanding of the following: (1) the current reality of diversity (2) the lived “problems” and “potentials” about diversity (3) the reaction to standardized philosophy of diversity (CAEP) and (4) a philosophy of diversity that guide future efforts at the college level. Such contextualization can also take into consideration wider college and university future strategic goals and how diversity could be in service of these.

Action steps:

Dr. Nerren will request a copy of Dr. Abbott’s NCATE PowerPoint with PCOE demographics.

Dr. Nerren will speak with Recruitment Committee Chair and invite a representative to the next meeting.

Dr. Fox will obtain information regarding various socio-cultural variables at state and national levels - “all students in P-12”

All members will review the CAEP standards, particularly Standard 3.

All members will review the previous SFA Strategic Plans for information regarding how the plans addressed diversity issues.

Opportunities:

There are three conferences this year that might interest members of the committee. Funding sources are being investigated. They conferences are:

1. Texas National Association of Multi-Cultural Education – Texas Tech University, Lubbock TX March 24th and 25th

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu>

2. 11th Annual Texas Diversity and Leadership Conference – The Westin Hotel,
Houston, TX, April 15-17

<https://www.texasdiversityconference.com>

3. Hidden Faces, SFASU, January 31st

<http://www.sfasu.edu/multicultural/190.asp>