

Council on Retention and Graduation Steering Committee
November 16, 2006—UC 3171
Presiding: Scott Evenbeck

Present: Scott Evenbeck, Mary Fisher, Gary Pike, Rebecca Porter, Frank Ross, Michelle Verduzco, Gayle Williams, and Marianne Wokeck

1. Evenbeck opened the meeting.
2. Diversity Issues: Evenbeck began by stating diversity is a salient issue for all of us and wanted a committee discussion on the topic. He began the discussion by reminding everyone how IUPUI ranks in diversity compared to other institutions. Fisher wondered if we could get all curriculum leaders together on campus to discuss this topic. Wokeck would like to see a definition of diversity. When we say diversity, exactly what does that mean? When we use surveys, we may not be getting the answers we seek because the questions are too broad. We should start with a definition.

Williams stated that some faculty are fearful of a backlash from students who come into this discussion with their own assumptions. We should prepare faculty for discussions on this issue so they can prepare students. Porter suggested we deal with diversity in the curriculum. Diversity is not likely to be discussed in every discipline. Wokeck noted that she often receives student evaluations with comments that she spent too much time discussing women and blacks. She believes these are good comments, but new faculty members must worry about the student evaluations. We should make clear what we expect for new faculty in student evaluations. Verduzco asked if there is a template for defining what a good faculty member is. Wokeck replied that the School of Liberal Arts has a mentoring system and professional development program for new faculty members. Porter stated that all schools do not have such a program in place. Evenbeck noted that IUPUI has had a significant increase in adjuncts. How do we deal with diversity with adjuncts? Fisher said it is difficult to get the adjuncts together in one place. Wokeck said that in some schools the lecturers are carrying heavy teaching loads. This does not allow adjuncts time to do deal with the same things that faculty would normally handle.

Porter believes we need to strengthen the PULs. Evenbeck noted that they tried to insert the word “diversity” into PUL number five, but the idea was rejected. Williams worried that diversity may become a buzzword, like retention. We need commitment to make changes. For example, diversity does not necessary need to be covered in a math class, but the math faculty should be versed in the general expectations of promoting diversity. Our efforts to spread diversity might become counterproductive if faculty are forced to cover diversity in the classroom. Instead, we should focus our efforts in making this campus a place where diversity is celebrated.

Wokeck stated that we must find a better way to deal effectively with underprepared students. Since we are an urban university, we must face this problem. We should have scholarships available to serve those students. We need to have a conversation about this issue. We cannot deal with underprepared students without funding. Fisher noted that the

difficulty may be in finding donors. Pike said that in his experience it is easy to find donors for merit-based scholarships instead of need-based. Wokeck wondered if we could connect a campus signature center for life science with scholarships; instead of saying we need money for need-based scholarships we could say we are fulfilling a vision of the life sciences. Fisher explained that beginning in January interviews and other criteria will be added to the admissions process. In the past, only the GPA was used, but now the diversity issue may be worsen with the new criteria and higher GPA requirements.

Evenbeck would like to put together a list of ideas we can take to Sukhatme. Evenbeck wants to put together a document outlining our central issues, with an idea on what we can do to address the diversity issue. Porter suggested that a question on student evaluations address diversity. Verduzco said a question could address diversity and the classroom climate. Porter wondered if something could be added to the tenure packet to have faculty members list what they have done to contribute to diversity. If faculty must list what they have done, it will be more effective. Verduzco suggested this would be effective in the hiring process as well. Williams asked if we could have an office that would connect faculty wanting to do research on diversity with freshmen who could assist. Wokeck stated that the School of Liberal Arts has initiatives to do this, but the funding is an issue, as well as time since teaching loads are so heavy right now. People are reporting that they are overextended.

Evenbeck explained that Bantz raised an issue in another meeting of requiring a course that addresses diversity. Many people would like for their departments to do this. Wokeck believes diversity must be addressed in the PULs and in General Education. Williams believes having a required course lets everyone off of the hook. Everyone agreed that requiring a course is a bad message to send. Evenbeck stated this would be a good point to include in his document. He will include this point, along with the idea of including diversity in the PULs. Hamilton explained that some of the faculty proposed including “understanding diverse societies and cultures” in the PULs last year at faculty council. She noted this would be an opportune time to revisit the idea. Wokeck wants to be sure that the change in the PULs will be implemented in the classroom. How do we get faculty to apply the idea in their courses? Hamilton said this point can be taken to the faculty council. Wokeck and Fisher want to see faculty give examples of how they implement diversity in the classroom and beyond.

The idea of using a Web site to make resources available was discussed. Evenbeck noted that OPD put a lot of energy into their Web site, but has been told it has not been used extensively. Hamilton said they could add more to the Web site. Wokeck said that many people are not aware of the Web site and it is not easy to navigate. Hamilton explained that Sukhatme assigned a faculty fellow to gather information about curriculum and pedagogy to put on the site. This information should be posted fairly quickly, including information about diversity. Porter wants to be certain we post a definition of diversity to the Web site. Hamilton stated the faculty fellow is using a definition from Student Life. Ross noted that there is no consistency in diversity definitions. Wokeck said the Web site has a problem with too many dead links. We also need a structure in place to make university Web sites consistent. Students often complain that they are unable to find

information. Porter noted that this touches on the issue of IUPUI being decentralized. The campus now has a webmaster.

Williams stated that IUPUI needs a consistent mission. Until we decide what our mission is, we will not have a comprehensive way of looking at diversity. Wokeck noted that we are not convincing students that we are dealing with this issue in a comprehensive way. Ross said that it is difficult to serve students with the current situation with Ivy Tech. Right now the pipeline between Ivy Tech and IUPUI is cracked all over the place and students are getting lost in the system. Evenbeck noted that he will raise these issues in the document he is working on to make recommendations to Sukhatme. Ross stated it makes sense to address diversity in the first-year seminars. In the seminars each school can address their own issues and include diversity. Williams said the schools will have to be committed to doing this. Using part-time faculty will not be as effective. There have been a lot of administrative withdrawals from the learning communities.

Wokeck recommended all African Americans take Summer Bridge, but allow them to take a course of their interest. A colleague pointed out that it is critical to African American students coming to this campus to know other African American students in order to feel safe. We can provide that opportunity by having these students take Summer Bridge and get acquainted with each other. This would require appropriate funding and resources. The School of Liberal Arts estimated it costs about \$20,000 per Bridge session. Williams explained that they are trying to double Summer Bridge and increase enrollment.

Williams explained that some students reported egregious stories. Porter agreed with this and stated it is important that we take a swift and appropriate response. Williams said that if all students felt safe and respected on campus these egregious stories would not resonant with other students, but the stories resonant because many students have experienced discrimination. Fisher believes this touches on a fundamental problem in our society: incivility. Incivility is a cultural dynamic in our society today. Evenbeck stated that students should have a person they can go to on campus who will listen. The students have been sharing these terrible events with each other, but they don't have the ear of administration. Ross said the students need a one-stop place to go where they can deal with these issues. When he was at the University of Chicago, students received an e-mail as soon as they were admitted with a list of resources. Students need to feel that the university cares about them.

Williams stated that students should have a choice whether they want to participate in the new multicultural center. Ross said the multicultural center should be available to everyone. Hamilton noted that students were not allowed to congregate on the stairs of University College. Not everyone was familiar with this story. Many African American students gathered on the steps in front of University College to discuss what was happening with the diversity issue. Someone posted a sign that said no congregating was allowed on the steps. Fisher stated that she saw the sign. She thought someone may have posted it because people were having trouble getting in the front door. Evenbeck was surprised to hear this and said he would investigate. The smoking issue was discussed.

Several members of the council have seen people smoking on campus, even in buildings. It was agreed that something needs to be done about enforcing the no smoking ban or the problem would get worse.

Pike encouraged Evenbeck to wait for a forthcoming report before finalizing his document. Pike said the report was planned before the recent diversity issue on campus. The report would examine diversity and give recommendations. Porter would like for the report to include things such as age and socioeconomic status. Pike said the report dealt mostly with racial issues. Fisher added issues of single parents should be examined as well.

Evenbeck reviewed the handouts: A Draft Framework for Addressing Diversity, Through Our Eyes—The State of the Black Student at IUPUI (dated November 2, 2006), Progress Report—Diversity Planning and Campus Concerns, Underrepresented Students Benefit Most from “Engagement,” The Impact of Engagement and Service Learning on Minority Student Access and Persistence, Moving from Theory to Action—Building a Model of Institutional Action for Student Success Executive Summary, Final Retention Report, Gateway Course Analysis, Council on Retention and Graduation Annual Report 2005–2006, CRG Steering Committee Roster, and CRG Roster.

3. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by:
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