

# Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes

## Cowan Hall Conference Room

April 28, 2008

Present: Ellen Swaney, Stacey Gonzales, Kathy Jaynes, Margaret Meggs, Rolf Groseth, Jaakko Puisto, Denise Brewer, Ligia Arango, Jim Longin, Jamie Underwood, Jan Wiberg. Excused Absence: Lanny Wilke

- I. **The meeting was called to order** at 1:00 p.m .
- II. **Introductions** were made around the table.
- III. **Ellen Swaney presented** various ideas and information concerning diversity from around the state including the concept of National Indian Education for All. Ellen explained that the NIEA is more of a moral imperative than something that's legally mandated. The goal is to teach all Montana students about American Indian culture and history. In 2005, Gov Schweitzer and the State Legislature set aside \$4.4 million for NIEA. A portion of this money will be disbursed to tribal colleges to prepare written histories of their tribes. The hope is to integrate NIEA throughout the curriculum.

In addition she told the group about the upcoming *Indian Education for All Best Practices Conference* in Billings, May 8-9. Topics will include Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians & Implementing Indian Education for All at the Classroom Level. The conference is sponsored by OPI.

Another upcoming conference, *The National Conference on Indian Education*, will be held in Rapid City, SD, July 8-10<sup>th</sup>. The national conference will bring together all stakeholders to address the unique needs of American Indian and Alaska Native children.

Ellen mentioned various resources available to the committee including the American Council of Education. She added that she would send committee baseline data for 1992.

- IV. **BOR Policy 1902** (Minority Achievement; Montana University System) was discussed. This policy describes the BOR pledge to (1) enroll American Indians and other minorities in proportion to their representation in the state's population, (2) increase American Indian employment, and (3) to improve the overall curriculum by infusion of content which enhances multicultural awareness and understanding. Ellen emphasized that Item (3) of this policy is of special significance and she requested more feedback from the committee on this:

Suggested training areas for item (3) include:

1. Education
2. Justice
3. Health
4. Economic Development

V. **MCA 20-1-501**(Recognition of Indian Cultural Heritage) was discussed

VI. **The MSU-Northern Diversity Action Plan** was discussed. This is a two year plan (we are currently in year one). This plan was developed in response to Policy 1902 which required Campus Diversity Action Plans from each Montana campus.

VII. **Group Discussion**

Ellen's other suggestions –

“host conferences” that could move around the state providing training on diversity.

Indian Education endorsement for all and also the development of an Inter-Unit Committee on Indian Education for All.

diversity training at MSUN should consider 4 populations:

1. students – coursework, program
2. faculty – sensitivity training
3. frontline staff- especially financial aid employees
4. administrators – require supervisors to go to training

Ellen agreed to do a workshop for MSUN –a video series- but noted that she would need a 3-4 hour block of time for it to be effective. This will be scheduled prior to Dec of this year.

VIII. **Other Items**

Comments by other Committee Members-

Ligia suggested some form of “how to experience the culture” rather than just instruction.

Stacey Gonzales discussed the grievance procedure and that students needed an advocate; that this needed to be developed and clarified. She suggested that we check the MSU model.

There was also a comment about including students on the Diversity Committee

Jim Longin discussed Indian Education for All. Ellen felt it would be a good idea to partner with the four Indian colleges and Northern and do a partnership for leadership.

Someone commented that some 20% of Northern students are Native American.

Jim said we have at least a \$12,000 grant from OPI and maybe another \$12,000 for seed money to help us develop training, education, and programs supporting diversity.

Other Comments/Suggestions -

Don't come up with short term solutions – imbed

How about a staff exchange between Indian Colleges and Northern

In building diversity on campus, start with those who are already committed to diversity

Do a better job of marketing Northern to Indian students

Set priorities and timelines; put people in charge so that the diversity committee actually accomplishes something

Invite Native American guest speakers to our classes

Ask Native American Alumni to come back and speak

Make sure that the Diversity Committee does not focus entirely on Native American issues but considers other diversity issues as well such as age, handicap, sex

Review the MSUN strategic plan to see what it says about diversity

Ellen suggested that we google on our own to discover other resources

IX. **Meeting Adjourned** at 3:30 p.m.