

**URI EQUITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
February 20, 2009**

Attendance: Jerry Schaffran (meeting chair), Laura Beauvais, Michelle Fontes-Barros, Kyle Kusz, Vanessa Quainoo, Jody Lisberger, Domingo Morel, Carolyn Sovet, Pamela Rohland, Grace Frenzel, Charles Watson, Gail Faris, Barb Silver, Ann Morrissey, Lynne Derbyshire, Melvin Wade, Trish Morokoff

1. Welcome

2. Approval of minutes of January 27, 2009: the minutes were approved.

3. Announcements and issues of concern

A. Grace Frenzel brought to our attention that the Theater Department's promotional materials for their production of *The Foreigner* included cartoonish Ku Klux Klan figures. This issue had also been brought to the attention of the Affirmative Action office as reported by Roxanne Gomes. Several problematic aspects were identified including the possibility that some viewers may feel harassed. There was substantial discussion concerning what might be an appropriate response. It was agreed that a subcommittee consisting of Roxanne Gomes, Grace Frenzel, and Trish Morokoff would meet with Dean Winnie Brownell and make the following requests:

- a. Posters be removed.
- b. A disclaimer be printed in the theater bill.
- c. That our group meet with members of the Theater Department.
- d. The Theater department write a letter to the Cigar.
- e. The Theater department send an email to the campus community.

B. Concern over the NY Post cartoon portraying a police officer shooting a chimpanzee and saying "They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill," was voiced. A motion was made and unanimously approved condemning the NY Post cartoon. A working group including Vanessa Quailoo, Lynne Derbyshire, Michelle Fontes-Barros, Jody Lisberger, Gail Faris, and Barb Silver agreed to work on writing an editorial response to the cartoon.

C. Jody Lisberger brought to our attention an Oliphant cartoon published in the Providence Journal with a negative characterization of a woman with lots of children.

D. The Annual Lecture on Multiculturalism will be presented on February 24, 2009 by Dr. Peniel Joseph. The title of his talk will be *Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama*. This year's lecture is sponsored by the Multicultural Center, in conjunction with the Center for Student Leadership Development, the Dr. Rose Butler Browne Mentorship Program for Women of Color, and Uhuru SaSa.

- E. Alumni of Color Coalition February 2009 forum will be held February 26, 2009.
- F. Jody Lisberger announced upcoming Women's Studies events: see <http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/upcoming.html>
- G. It was suggested that Equity Council members should forward announcements of diversity-related events to the Equity listserv. Members can then forward these announcements to their constituencies.

OLD BUSINESS

4. Academic Planning Summit Discussion

There was a discussion concerning the Academic Planning Summit organized by Provost DeHayes that took place on January 30, 2009. It was observed that there were very few persons of color attending the Summit, in particular very few faculty of color. A number of concerns were expressed, including concerns about the cultural climate for faculty of color on campus and possible demoralization among faculty. It was pointed out that a special effort should be made to reach out to ensure that faculty of color are present at such events because it is impossible to engage in academic planning without input from all groups. It was suggested that there should be a follow-up Academic Summit more specifically addressing multicultural issues.

5. Committee Reports

a. Access and Public Education Committee

No report.

b. College Diversity Committees

Barb Silver is chairing a group that is working with the RI Foundation to find money to promote a diversity agenda at URI. She presented a vision for having a summit at the beginning of the Diversity Committee initiative followed by regular formal get-togethers of representatives of the diversity committees (Divisional or college) to help network, form community, and share accomplishments.

- 6. **Date for meeting with Provost:** It was agreed that we will meet Tuesday March 17, 2009 with Provost DeHayes.
- 7. **Arming campus security:** Lynne Derbyshire reported that there will be a hearing on campus and it would be desirable for Council members to attend and make statements. This issue was referred to the Access and Public Education subcommittee.

8. Developing an agenda for the meeting with the President: this was referred to the Access and Public Education subcommittee, the members of whom will schedule a meeting for later this week. It was proposed to have an agenda prepared in order to submit it a week ahead of the March 10 meeting with the President.

9. Presidential Search: Domingo provided a brief update.

ISSUES ON FEBRUARY 20, 2009 AGENDA NOT DISCUSSED:

Public Announcement of the formation of the Equity Council
Website Development

Next Meeting:

March 24, 9-10:30, Green Hall, President's Conference Room