

**Diversity Council Meeting
Wednesday, March 29, 2006
Dogwood A, Belk Dining Hall
11:30-1:30 p.m.**

Attending:

Pamela Davis, Director, Human Resources
Sue Kearney, Assistant to the President for Planning & Dean of Institutional Effectiveness
Sara Milani, Director of Study Abroad & International Student Advisor
Toni Parker, Director of Middle and Secondary Programs, School of Education
Allynna Stone, Director, Teaching Fellows
Yvonne Zaragoza, Enrollment
Rhonda Zingraff, Director, Undergraduate Research and Professor of Sociology
Danny Green, Associate Vice President for Enrollment, Chair

Not Attending:

Vanessa Barnes '88, Meredith College Alumna Representative
Gail Benton, Housekeeping
Meghan Kraft, Student Representative and Diversity Council chair for SGA
Teresa Nichols '05, Meredith College Alumna Representative
Charletta Sims, Director, Commuter Life and Diversity Programs
Edith Toral, Student Representative and Vice President of MIA

S Y N O P S I S

I. Welcome – Danny welcomed the council members and took a moment to reflect on Gwen Clay's passing and her legacy as a Meredith College faculty member.

II. A Lunch Conversation – Danny distributed two recent articles. The first article was shared from *Change* magazine and it is named "Creating Identity: Safe Places on College Campuses for Muslim Students." The second article was from the *Research in Higher Education* and the publication was named "BREAKING THE SILENCE: Achieving a Positive Campus Climate for Diversity from the Staff Prospective."

Danny engaged the council members in a dialogue regarding both articles. The first article was related to college campuses engaging Muslim women in academics. The article expressed the exploration of moving beyond the current, political, and media coverage that has held Islam on the edge of the press for the past several years. The article also helped transition the focus off the media and on to women and academia. It was mentioned that Meredith is working toward similar goals by working with bright Muslim students that are eager to educate and embrace the academic curriculum. Allynna shared with the council that the Teaching Fellows program has recently begun hosting a tutoring program with a local Muslim school. The project began with the help and leadership of a Meredith College student named Afnan Boutrid. Danny also mentioned that Marium Ali recently organized an academic dialogue on

controversial issues surrounding the Islamic cartoons. It was also mentioned by Yvonne that the Meredith International Association held a dialogue on the Muslim head piece named the “hijab.” The hijab is worn by religious women.

The second article was related to the identity factors that create a positive climate for diversity. In a discussion, it was mentioned that the perceptions of staff and their work environment has an immediate connection to this article. The council mentioned that the opportunity to bring a speaker to Meredith to discuss this topic was a positive possibility. It was mentioned that Jim Johnson, a demographer from the UNC system would be an interesting candidate to speak on this behalf.

III. Student Achievement Day, Rhonda Zingraff – Rhonda informed the council of the draft schedule of events for Celebrating Student Achievement Day.

In the morning, a cancer walk and brief dedication of a new butterfly garden will be held in memory and honor of Johnanna Minta. The activities are being sponsored by Meredith College students. Programs and presentation will take part throughout the morning and afternoon. At the lunch hour, the Diversity Council will sponsor a Latin American band to perform. The band will perform from 11:30 a.m. -1:00 p.m. The band will also coordinate their performance with additional activities that are scheduled in the courtyard throughout that time: ongoing leadership ceremony, Athletic parade, and Carol Finley’s improvisation dancers.

The Diversity Council will also consider the following:

- Identify Statements for the 30 table tents for the lunch hour tables
- Create Name Plates
- Create Certificates to present to students who’s presentation relates to diversity
- Place an ad on the Meredith College Herald and recognize students whose research is related to diversity.

IV. Diversity Grants (Deadline to apply Friday, April 14, 2006) –A copy of the Diversity Grant was distributed. All applicants are asked to submit their project forms with Danny or a council member.

The Diversity Council will review the grant proposals at the following meeting and announce the recipients by the end of April. The grants will typically be in the range of \$500-\$1,500 and the projects can be for this spring, this summer, or for next fall. There has been good interest by faculty and students.

V. Study Circles –A draft copy of the Meredith College Study Circles charge was distributed to the council. The study circles program would be a campus effort to address issues related to diversity and its challenges by engaging faculty, staff, and students in dialogue and action.

The council was asked to select dates that the study circles may be implemented in the 2006-2007 academic year. The following dates were selected:

Fall 2006 -5 week sessions

Topic: Immigration

Wednesday's

October 4, 11, and 18, 2006

November 1 and 8, 2006

Spring 2007 -5 week sessions

Topic: Finding Common Ground (Diversity)

Thursday's

March 15, 22, 29, 2007

April 5 and 12, 2007

Details regarding the Study Circle opportunities will be forthcoming at the next meeting.

VI. Crash Viewings for Staff –Pam informed the council that there are possibilities for implementing an opportunity for staff to participate in a discussion in late May or June. There has been some concern over the language presented on the film as being offensive to some staff members that may see the film's comments and dialogue as offensive. Pam would like to provide a safe environment for staff to join in on a healthy discussion. Specific dates will be selected.

VI. Student Activities Fees for Staff Employees –Petition –A copy of a petition, to have the Student Activities Fee (SAF, \$25 per semester for all degree seeking undergraduate students), was distributed to the council. The proposal was shared for the council's information and it was regarding a staff member's concern about not having Tuition Remission pay the SAF fee. The SAF began in the 2005-2006 academic year and it was implemented by the Meredith College Student Government Association (SGA). The fee is managed and allotted by SGA. The letter stated that since the SAF is said to be included in the student's tuition bill, that the SAF for staff be covered by Tuition Remission.

In a discussion, it was mentioned that some staff members already attend some activities on campus as employees of the college and as required in their current job descriptions. For these staff members, it may seem unfair for them to pay the SAF for attending events that are required in their jobs. It was also mentioned that staff seeking personal enrichment in academic courses are not charged for this fee as compared to the degree seeking staff. This petitioned issue will be addressed by the college's benefits committee.

VII. Announcements-

- Patricia Martin, Speaking on Gender Issues, Monday, April 3, 2006, 10:00 a.m. Carswell and Q&A Session, 3:00 p.m., Kresge Auditorium
- 2006 NC State Undergraduate Assessment Symposium, April 6-8, 2006
- Vietnamese Chinese Delegates on campus, Tuesday, April 11, 2006
- Dialogue on the closing of Dix Hospital, Ledford 101, Tuesday, April 11, 2006, 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- Learning Outcomes Workshop, Friday, April 28, 2006
- Next Meeting is Scheduled for April 26, 2006, Belk Oak Room, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Yvonne Zaragoza