Diversity Council Minutes  
July 24, 2006

Council Members present:

Jeffrey Faust, Allen Gainer, Corine January, David Jones, Sherry Martin, Susan McBride, 
Maurice Moore, Marilyn Nicholson.

The first order of business was to finalize the few remaining changes to the college’s diversity mission statement, the final version of which is as follows:

Our Commitment to Diversity

Our goal for diversity at JDCC is to provide an inclusive community of mutual trust, acceptance, and respect that reflects the individuals—employees, students, and visitors—who bring varied human characteristics, interests, and points of view. We strive to move beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual. We acknowledge that core differences—such as age, body size, color, ethnicity, gender, language, marital status, mental and physical abilities, political views or other ideologies, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, socio-economic status—can create hierarchies of privilege which we must avoid. We must have a willingness to create an environment where all people, regardless of differences can achieve their highest potential, thus contributing to the overall success of the organization. We recognize that learning is enhanced by interaction with diverse individuals who bring multiple perspectives and a variety of approaches to the learning process.

Committee members then participated in an Ice Breaker during which they divided into small groups to explore 4 different topics.

*What ideas do you have for future topics?*

Two principal ideas were mentioned: 1) encouraging diverse members of the campus community to have lunch with someone with differing primary dimensions of diversity than their own in order to share each other’s giftedness and value; 2) to sponsor campus focus groups to explore some aspect of diversity in an attempt to raise awareness.

*Tell us about one skill you have that has been enhanced by diversity participation.*

One member shared how he/she has been able to learn to see things through the eyes of others and what a valuable tool this is to increase understanding. Another shared how he/she has achieved the ability to be non-judgmental in interactions with others – accepting them at face value regardless of preconceptions.
Tell us about a previous diversity topic about which you would like to learn more or experience again.

Diversity Diner, a challenging video which shatters stereotypes, was brought up as an experience worth repeating. Mrs. Martin will investigate obtaining a copy of the video. In terms of an area about which we would like to learn more, world faiths were mentioned as another interesting topic of investigation, especially in terms of promoting tolerance and understanding between members of different religions such as Christianity and Islam.

Share with us a topic or presentation you have heard or read about elsewhere that you think would be of interest to the group.

1) The movie Crash, as another example of breaking down walls and shattering stereotypes. 2) A video from Focus on the Family called A man called Norman which chronicles the positive impact of reaching out to someone different than ourselves, in this case a mentally challenged man. 3) Focus on the Family's Love Won Out program presents one viewpoint regarding sexual orientation. 4) Akeelah and the Bee, an inspirational drama with an “it takes a village message,” in which the characters overcome the odds to break through the barriers of race and class by “changing the world...one word at a time.” 5) The movie Warm Springs which portrays FDR and his battle with polio. “Perhaps the most significant battle he fought with the stigma of paralysis was not in the eyes of others but in his own mind.” 6) A series of videos from the Teaching Tolerance website sponsored by the Southern Poverty Law Center [this series has been obtained by Student Support Services and is available for college-wide use as needed]. 7) The movie Stand and Deliver, the true story of a maverick teacher who helps his students to overcome the odds to achieve record-breaking math scores on standardized tests. 8) A movie entitled Molder of Dreams about Guy Doud, winner of the 1986 Teacher of the Year award.

There was a brief discussion about barriers to communication:
- the presence of one’s supervisor(s) in the council meetings and the possible resulting inhibitions
- the use of titles creating an uneven playing field in the council
- the fear of being labeled or unfairly categorized because of comments shared
- the concern that participants’ comments remain completely confidential.

Additional ideas that were brought up during the discussion included:
- showing movies with a discussion period afterwards (Dr. McBride suggested late afternoons)
- having an online diversity forum or message board
- hosting a diversity book club

1 from Internet Movie Database <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0423510/plotsummary>
The diversity acronym was discussed briefly. The possible words to use for each letter are as follows:

D—Dialogue/Dialoguing
I—Inclusion/Inclusive/Insight/Insightful
V—Value/Valued/Varied/Variety
E—Each/Encouraged/Encouraging/Enthusiasm/Enthusiastic/Everybody/Everyone
R—Real/Realistic/Respect/Respectful
S—Sensitive/Sensitivity
I—Interconnected/Interconnection/Introspection/Introspective
T—Tact/Tactful/Tolerance/Tolerant/Truth/Truthful/Truthfulness
Y—Yielding/You/Yourself/Yourselves

The meeting concluded with a brief wrap-up period. The next meeting is scheduled at 10:30 on August 11th in the library’s Multimedia Resource Center.