Diversity Council Minutes  
Thursday, April 12, 2007

Present:  Jeffrey Faust, Allen Gainer, Corine January, Sherry Martin Susan McBride, Maurice Moore, Marilyn Nicholson
Absent:  Kathleen Hall, David Jones, Latitia McCane, Lee Barrentine, Cornelia Miller

The charge of the council was read as the first order of business:

Create and assist in the implementation of a plan to foster a campus climate in which there is a proactive commitment to diversity as a basic value of the college. This will include coordinating awareness and training activities. In all our initiatives we must emphasize the development of good character and must model the values of inclusion, mutual respect, and cooperation.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as submitted.

An update on Women’s History Month was provided. Thematic bulletin boards were created in several campus locations and the library displayed materials related to women’s history. The library also attempted hosting a film series on Women’s History but there were no attendees. Dr. McBride suggested that in the future perhaps a certain group could be targeted and invited to a film showing which may be a good way to create greater interest.

Our emphasis on Southern Literature (National Poetry Month and Confederate History Month) has generated some interest. Jeffrey received the transcription of a letter written by a Confederate soldier who was a relative of Lygia Corley, a former JDCC student. Mr. Moore expressed an interest in using the letter for one of the bulletin boards and Mrs. Corley graciously agreed to this. Dr. McBride suggested the possibility of doing an oral history project for next year’s Confederate History observance.

The next portion of the meeting dealt with the scenario entitled An Issue of “Readiness” in chapter 7 of Loden’s book. The narrative relates the story of a Mary, diversity manager who tries to address the glass ceiling above middle management, especially for women and people of color. The piece goes on to relate how Mary receives a call from a white male manager who is upset because the plan does not address the issues faced by gay employees such as homophobic jokes. Members then discussed their opinions about Mary and her motives for the particular diversity initiative she chose.

Loden’s narrative also generated some discussion about Speak Up, a web project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Speak Up encourages everyone to take a stand against everyday bigotry by making a decision to speak out in response to inappropriate jokes at the expense of diverse individuals. The group was in agreement that Speak Up may be a good resource to use for future in-service meetings.
The film *A place at the table* was mentioned as a possibility to use for an awareness raising activity. The film, an historical documentary, highlights the stories of teenagers from diverse backgrounds who explain how their families struggled for and found “a place at the table.”

Further discussion centered around the growing problem of obesity. A statewide committee to review the state of health of Alabama school students highlights the health crisis for adults and students in Alabama. Two important findings of the report are as follows: 1) Alabama ranks first in the nation in terms of overweight and obese individuals and has the highest prevalence of diabetes. 2) The study emphasizes that unless changes are made in lifestyles and behavior, the youth of today may be the first generation in history to not outlive their parents.

A recent article from Teaching Tolerance entitled “Fat…So? Size Acceptance for All Students” is about students who experience size bias from their peers. It highlights the perspective of experts from the size acceptance community. The previously mentioned report and this article will be discussed at a future meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 13, 2007 at 1:30 in the library’s Multimedia Resource Center. The assignment is to read Chapter 8 in Loden’s book and be prepared to do the associated exercises.