Diversity Council Minutes  
Thursday, Sep. 12, 2007  

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

Committee Charge:  

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.  

The Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month initiative was discussed and it was decided that we would sponsor a radio trivia contest for a chance to win dinner for two at Jalisco. Each committee member has been requested to submit two related trivia questions to Jeffrey by Sep. 17th.  

For Disability Awareness Month (October), the committee will conduct a wheel-chair tour of the campus to identify possible accessibility problems. We discussed the possibility of having a guest speaker such as Mrs. Wanda Shipman.  

Those committee members who attend the annual diversity conference in Birmingham have been asked to keep in mind our need for a speaker in December as they attend the various workshops.  

Loden’s Chapter 10, Minimizing the Business Case, was discussed next. The discussion centered on the moral imperative for implementing diversity as contrasted with a focus on the possible financial advantages of having a diverse workforce.  

\textit{Implementation Principle #9:}  
\begin{quote}  
It is critical that we now develop the strategic and financial arguments for valuing diversity, for building the business case strengthens the probability of full adoption.  
\end{quote}  

Historically, proponents of diversity have focused almost exclusively on the moral and ethical rationale for its implementation. There has even been the popular belief that emphasizing the business case somehow diminishes the moral argument for change. According to Loden: “individuals, work teams, and organizations have benefited from valuing diversity in terms of enhanced teamwork, innovation, and profitability.”  

Long-term studies have shown that employee morale increases after implementing a diversity initiative. Valuing diversity can influence employee motivation, enhance innovation, improve productivity, increase customer satisfaction, and stimulate the overall growth of a business.
Understanding the economic business case for diversity presents a strong dollars and cents argument for diversity. The business case is necessary for the value of diversity to be adopted by the majority of the organization.

- **Minimize Turnover/Maximize Productivity**

  Dollars that are spent recruiting and training employees can be lessened by decreased turnover. This can be accomplished by creating a welcoming work environment. When diversity is not valued there may be lower morale and productivity, which can result in competitive disadvantage.

- **Customer Service**

  Improved customer service may be the most compelling argument for valuing diversity. According to Loden, “fostering a culture of understanding, respect and cooperation and the ability of employees to interact effectively with diverse customers” will improve a company’s image and reputation, and ultimately its bottom-line.

- **False Dichotomy**

  Valuing diversity can benefit both the organization and the employees. In this case, what is good for people is good for business. Valuing diversity creates winners in an organization by helping both individuals and organizations exceed their highest expectations.