Diversity Council Minutes  
Wednesday, March 5, 2007

At the request of Dr. Nicholson, Dean Hall read the committee’s charge as a reminder to the members of our purpose.

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.

Members shared their thoughts about the “One vs. Fifty” Black History Event.

• student participation was excellent
• it was very informative
• everyone had fun
• the stage décor was nicely done
• it was carefully planned

• the overall effect was very positive
• prizes were a great idea
• the questions were well researched and covered a wide range of topics

An update was provided regarding the plans for commemorating Women’s History Month. Both campus libraries will be creating thematic displays. The Brewton campus library will be hosting a series of related films. Mr. Moore will contact the various student organizations about having them create bulletin boards around the national theme “Generations of Women Moving History Forward.” Members of the Diversity Council will judge the bulletin boards. The club with the winning bulletin board will receive a pizza party as first prize.

In terms of Southern Literature Month to commemorate National Poetry Month and Confederate History Month, Jeffrey will contact Dr. Gill to see if this theme could be adopted by Lyrical Lounge during the month of April. Dean Hall will contact Mrs. Albritton and Mrs. Lancaster to see if they might encourage their Honors English and Speech students to participate. The usual means of promotion will be utilized: e-mail, Warhawk Word, and the library website.

Dr. McBride provided some comments regarding the role of this committee in identifying and removing barriers of all sorts, not just historical or philosophical ones. Members briefly discussed the challenges faced by individuals confined to wheelchairs. They face not only physical obstacles such as having to use a particular restroom stall or maneuvering their way over or around curbs, they also encounter social barriers caused by the discomfort of others with whom they interact. Although progress has certainly been made in recent years, society at large is generally slow to value diversity. According to Loden:

Valuing diversity can be a source of discomfort for many individuals when first introduced in an organization. This is because it is a paradigm that challenges individual and organizational biases about core identity, values, and how we interact with each other.
Implementation Principle #8

_The diversity mindset is what separates effective facilitators and managers from those who play at or pay lip service to the need for change._

Valuing diversity has to become a part of what we do at the college, not just something we discuss. We must be interested in the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and needs of others by developing active compassion and proactive policies. How quickly we are able to implement diversity is a telling reflection of the core values and character of our employees. Again, according to Loden:

- *Valuing diversity requires long-term culture change.*
- *Valuing diversity is good for people and good for business.*
- *Valuing diversity implementation must be inclusive, not exclusive.*
- *Valuing diversity benefits everyone.*

The group activity originally scheduled for this meeting has been postponed until our next meeting which will be held Wednesday, April 11 at 1:30 in the MRC in the library.

The next assignment is to read the rest of Chapter 7 (pp. 65-68) and all of Chapter 8 in Loden’s *Implementing Diversity.*