

Building Community Committee Notes for January 18, 2008

Committee members present: Adams, Cordova, Davis, Latta, Needham, Parson
Others: Manuela Huso, Marty Roberts

A) Website – Caryn has been working with the College web master to set up the BCC page on the College website. She will have an “activities” section added and a link to the OSU calendar. Tom will see if we have a written mission statement for the BCC that can be used as an introduction to the BCC page.

B) Communications workshop – Manuela and Marty reported on progress on planning an education/awareness program to improve open communication in the college. A first step in the program is a workshop with the FEC scheduled for the morning of February 25 in the MU Board Room. This workshop is being planned by the members of an ad hoc committee led by Manuela and Marty (also including Barbara Bond, Lisa Ganio and Jim Kiser) in consultation with Angelo Gomez and Jennifer Almquist from the Office of Affirmative Action (OAA). The goal of the workshop is to develop an understanding of the communication barriers that may lead to disenfranchisement of members of the college and to work together to illustrate ways in which those barriers can be removed. A desired outcome is for the FEC, in collaboration with the BCC and OAA, to develop a plan for perhaps a series of college-wide workshops that could provide communication tools to all members of the College. A detailed agenda for the FEC workshop will be developed soon with Angelo and Jennifer.

C) DAP action items – The committee reviewed the first 4 action items of the DAP to explore what needs to be done to implement them:

1. *Ensure diverse perspectives are brought forward when College plans and decisions are made.*

1a,b. Members of the BCC will meet with CFAC to get their opinion on how well the revised leadership structure (expanded FEC and establishment of CFAC) is working. In addition, the BCC will explore with CFAC means of improving communication within the College (although this is also an expected outcome of the college-wide workshops discussed in B above.

1c. The BCC will examine the current makeup of college and department committees. Do we need guidelines on committee formation in the college? Should committee membership be posted on the college website? Pat will obtain current membership lists of committees in the college and circulate to the BCC for discussion at our next meeting.

2. *Everyone recognizes harassment, knows what to do about it, and how to prevent it.*

We need to understand the policies with regard to harassment at the University level and decide whether these are sufficient for our needs. “Harassment” training could be part of a more comprehensive training effort on understanding and respecting diversity.

3. All members of the College community and guests will have appropriate physical access to buildings, classrooms, and all activities sponsored by or on behalf of the college.

In response to a query from Tom, Roger replied that Peavy and Richardson Halls are in compliance with ADA rules for access to facilities. Comments by members of the BCC on difficulties experienced by handicapped visitors to the College, however, suggest that access may not be as good as it should be. Mark will talk to Roger and solicit his help in obtaining an evaluation from Facilities Services.

4. Build Community within and outside the college.

4a. It was decided that the BCC needs to develop a recommendation on how open forums can be implemented on a regular basis (say once per year). One suggestion was that this task of identifying a suitable topic and organizing a forum be rotated among departments. We need to put more thought into this.

D. Building Community idea – Caryn suggested that we consider an “artists” forum as a means of broadening horizons and building community. She mentioned specifically hosting an event with participants in the “Writers Grove” project on the College Forest. The BCC encouraged Caryn to explore this concept further and report back to the committee.

E. Next meeting – The next BCC meeting is planned for late February, but before the 25th so the ad hoc communications committee can report on the agenda for the FEC workshop. Other topics for this meeting will be updates on college committees (Cordova), physical access to college buildings (Needham), artists forum (Davis), and further review of the DAP action items (Adams).