August 16, 2007

University Planning Council

Minutes for August 16, 2007

Present: Melissa Acker, Gwen Ashburn, Elizabeth Bagwell, Melissa Burchard, Lothar Dohse, Archer Gravely, Bill Haggard, Herman Holt, Pat Hunt, Jim Kuhlman, Bruce Larson, Judi Leffe, Bill Massey, Adrienne Oliver, Anne Ponder, Christine Riley, Barbara Svenson, Kathy Whatley, Betsy Wilson, John Wood

Absent: Amanda Alvarez, Bill Haas

Guest: Belinda Odom (Diversity Consultant)

UPC met in the Whitman Room from 10-11:30.

Ms. Belinda Odom presented a draft of the consultant’s Diversity Recommendations based on campus interviews of students, faculty, staff, and alumni conducted during the Spring 2007 semester. The assessment project was designed to identify: (1) what is working; (2) what needs improvement; and (3) suggestions for improvement. The report provides twelve recommendations:

1. Establish the organizational case for diversity (why does UNC Asheville want/need to be an inclusive campus?).
2. Set goals and strategies for achieving goals.
3. Eliminate the Diversity & Multicultural Affairs position – possibly establish a Multicultural Center that is everyone’s ‘job’ and resource.
4. Build internal systems of accountability.
5. Marry diversity efforts and goals to the budget and performance management process.
6. Develop a diversity theme for ease of communication.
7. Measure actual results against financial investment in diversity efforts/goals/programs (fund more of what’s getting results, less of what is not).
8. Develop a diversity communication plan (internal and external) to include celebration of the successes.
9. Offer ongoing staff, supervisor, and faculty diversity sensitivity training.
10. Move Affirmative Action responsibilities to Human Resources.
11. Establish cross departmental quality management teams – accountable to UPC.
12. Manage legal risk of setting goals with appropriate legal/HR review prior to implementation.

Following Ms. Odom’s presentation, questions and comments included the following:

- We need more sensitivity training for faculty and staff
- Students who reported feeling uncomfortable in class usually don’t talk directly to the instructor
- Students did not think that classroom incidents were intentional
- We need to be sensitive to the burnout issue of constantly using the same minority faculty in recruiting
We need help in defining the concept of critical mass
Lots of minorities cannot be visually detected and do not show up on reports and analyses
The report should focus more on faculty diversity issues

In concluding comments, Ms. Odom made the following points.

1. UNCA has to define diversity for ourselves and create safe environments for having discussions
2. We can set goals and be legally safe, as long as we follow the legal guidelines for defining diversity and making the case for it.
3. The recommendation to eliminate the diversity position was based on the fact that the goals and responsibilities were too important to assign to one person. Diversity issues should be part of everyone’s work plan and performance evaluation.
4. It is important to look forward, not backward, and to celebrate our successes.
5. It will take about a year to do an analysis of the return on investment in campus diversity efforts.
6. UNCA has a passion for diversity and can be a leader in the field.

UPC co-chairs John Wood and Chancellor Ponder will consult in the coming weeks about possible next steps.

The next UPC meeting will be held on September 25 from 12:15-1:45 in the Whitman Room.