Libraries Advisory Committee on Diversity

Minutes
October 26, 2006

Held at: [Kilmer Library / Room 10]
Time Start: 9:45 am
Time Finished: 10:45 am

Present: Hala Issa, Triveni Kuchi (Chair), Soo Lee, Rebecca Martinez (Recorder), Connie Wu, Paul Young

Via Videoconference: Charlene Houser, Nita Mukherjee, Nicole Warren, Chiaki Yamada

Agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Call for volunteer secretary du jour
3. Announcements/News
4. Creating and maintaining a calendar of “events to be aware of” pertaining to Diversity (especially helpful for planning diversity related activities).
5. Creating and updating the Diversity Committee Staff Resources Page. Planning the structure: content and design. Creating lists of Resources (websites, books, and so on) relevant to Diversity issues for Rutgers, Libraries and/or in general (as seen fit). This could be sub-task force.
7. Planning for events in the Spring – Co-sponsorship or otherwise
   a. Social Movements in the 60’s – planning of an exhibit at Kilmer in Spring 07.
   b. Others?
8. Planning participation at the 2007 ALA Annual Diversity Fair – Deadline sometime in February

Meeting Minutes:

1. Meeting was called to order after everyone was teleconferenced in
2. Rebecca offered to take minutes
3. Announcements/News

   Triveni is a member of the Committee to Advance our Common Purposes (CACP), which reports to the Vice President of Student Affairs. This committee is re-planning its task forces for the upcoming year. This committee will be celebrating its 20th anniversary and also the anniversary of the “Summer of Discontent: 1967 Newark
Riots.” Clement Alexander Price is the Chair of CACP. Also, the awardees of “Leader in Diversity Award” in Spring 2006 are coming together as a group based on funding from the Ford foundation. Their next meeting is in Spring 2007. Triveni will keep the group informed of any events or issues of interest to this committee.

4. Creating and maintaining a calendar of “events to be aware of” pertaining to Diversity

Nicole has been making updates to the calendar – log onto the Diversity Committee’s Sakai page to see it. She has added events and holidays (both religious and cultural). The group should check if there’s anything else to be included and let Nicole know. Triveni suggested that we use the calendar to help us plan events for the upcoming year(s). She also noted that we can plan and co-sponsor with the Teaching and Learning committee, the disabilities group, or even other RU based departments such as the AACC.

5. Creating and updating the Diversity Committee Staff Resources Page

Triveni suggested that we select a small task force for the pages. Connie suggested that language diversity could be included in the staff resources page, and Triveni added that she would like more prominent location for such information. The following items should be included on the staff resource pages: minutes, events (past and future), the skits (including the ALA poster session), links to the SCILS minority program. The items we could include examples or resources that explain or guide a person to understand a particular culture such as Asian or African...etc. Information experts can be brought into the committee as needed to help in editing and adding relevant resources. Nicole noted that the Diversity Committee’s calendar would also be useful on the staff resources page.

It was also suggested that the Diversity Committee’s membership could be rotating, so that others within the libraries can have or seek a chance to participate. Triveni will propose this to Marianne. Everyone agreed this would be a good idea.

We need to add our charge and the committee members. Triveni noted that many universities’ diversity committees also consult on collection development. In the past Lourdes Vasquez was on the Diversity Committee and she was also selecting material for diversity. We may want to see what can be done and how we might be more involved. Two other examples were addressed: women’s studies – which Kayo Denda selects for and has funding to develop the collection and Middle Eastern studies, which is only an undergraduate program at RU, and so does not have the same type of funding. We should try to be involved with the Reference and Information Services groups to see where diversity can be incorporated. It was noted that Rebecca attends the Alexander Ref group and can bring topics for discussion to that group.

Recently Access Services had customer service training. Paul talked to the group about the 4 pillars of customer service, and said that the focus was on perception – being welcoming, open and receptive, while also following up. It was suggested that
we have a link to that documentation, if there is any, on our webpage.

The sub-task force for the Staff Resources page was determined to be Nicole, Hala, Paul, and Triveni. The group will meet and plan a structure and then forward it to the group for feedback.

6. Language Diversity at RUL Webpage

Triveni will send the language survey to the group and Marianne for comments. We will include in the language survey a place for people to list reference materials/books that might be useful. There will be sections for speaking, reading, or understanding, and a place to list the languages. There will be a place to note if the person will be willing to help out – participation is not required. If a person is willing to be called upon, they can list for which languages.

Connie suggested that we include cultural interests and skills, i.e. if a person knows a cultural dance, or can play an instrument, paint, or do paper cutting, they can include that information. She suggested we call it the cultural diversity skills database. Mark Foster at LSM can do speech therapy and Paul has a legal background, and others have their own expertise. It was noted that some people may not be from a particular location, but they have a keen interest in it, or can speak the language. Ryan Womack speaks Turkish and has extensive knowledge about central Asia. It was then noted that for the language, we should be more specific as to what is spoken, written, or if the person possesses a working knowledge (such as transliteration). Chiaki, Melissa, and Triveni will make adjustments to the current questionnaire and send it out to the group.

It was decided that a request for this information would be better coming from Marianne. Everyone will be able to complete the survey online. The appropriate technical staff will be contacted for development and implementation.

7. Planning for events in the Spring/Planning participation at the 2007 ALA Annual Diversity Fair – Items 7 and 8 were combined

Triveni noted it would be nice to include other staff members/librarians for a Spring event. Last year Neera Sondhi and others participated. Connie suggested that after we receive the results of the language survey, we could have a cultural showcase/workshop of what we’ve discovered and ask others to participate. Hopefully the survey will go out by mid-December, and we can plan something in time for National Library Week in April. We should encourage our department members to participate.

Charlene suggested we include diversity in the annual Holiday party – we could cover cultural aspects such as Chinese New Year, Kwanza, Christmas, Ramadan, and Three Kings Day. Special Collections is in charge of the party this year. Hala noted that TSB has a holiday party every year in which people contribute a cultural dish. Soo will bring up the idea to Special Collections. Triveni noted that if Special Collections
agrees, we should each take on holiday and coordinate the representation of it.

Triveni also suggested having a show of films that will help generate discussion and learning about different cultures – food could be included. Nicole asked if it would be too much to try to plan a monthly event. It was decided that we would focus on a Spring event or possibly inclusion in the Holiday party for now. Triveni suggested we have a link on the homepage to draw attention to the various festivals/events/holidays that are going on for that month. It could include a brief greeting or links to a list of resources/movies, guides and so on.

Triveni will be meeting with Marianne in the next 2 weeks and will send out the survey for review. She plans to meet Marianne soon and also offer this group’s help if there are any plans for the ARL Diversity initiatives that we could/should work with, especially since Marianne was elected to become the President of ARL.

This group should continue to communicate using the RUL_Diversity listserv especially to brainstorm or add comments to ideas as they come. We should also feel free to suggest that we meet if a topic needs further discussion.

**Decisions:**

1. Continue to look for opportunities to co-sponsor events in the coming year
2. The sub-task force for the Staff Resources page was determined to be Nicole, Hala, Paul, and Triveni. The group will meet and plan a structure and then forward it to the group for feedback.
3. Language survey will be expanded to include cultural and personal skills.

**Assignments:**

1. Nicole, Hala, Paul and Triveni will meet to review the staff resources pages and post a structure.
2. Chiaki, Melissa, and Triveni will make some adjustments to the language survey and distribute them to the group.
3. Triveni to meet with Marianne to discuss various points.
4. Soo Lee to contact her colleagues in Special Collections to see if diversity could be included in the planning of the Holiday party.

**Pending:**

1. Outcome of possible collaborative efforts with Special Collections on the Holiday party.

**Next meeting: To Be Announced**