President’s Commission on Diversity
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 9, 2010
10:30-NOON
CSU 204

Guests present: Kimberly Contag, Dalton Crayton, Steven Gilbert, Dave Larsen, Ron Nickerson, Guadalupe Quintero, Chris Tran

I. Updates and Announcements
Introductions of commission members and guests took place including announcements of diversity related upcoming events: Workshop on University Design Feb. 10, Pan African Festival Feb. 24-27, Asian Day in CSU this weekend, workshop by president of the American Democracy Project out of the Twin Cities at MSU on March 19, Study Abroad Fair going on today until noon, Nepal Cultural Celebration at MSU on February 20, and the Mankato Diversity Council Luncheon/Celebration on February 16.

II. Curriculum Issues: Gold Courses at MSU
There was a presentation by Kimberly Contag, Kellian Clink, Ron Nickerson, and Steven Gilbert on the development of Gold Courses at MSU. The idea of Purple and Gold courses came from work the general education committee did a few years ago. FA desired a review of the diversity course requirements so a small committee was formed to investigate and prepared a report that asked for courses with more “hands-on” requirements rather than just lecture about diversity issues. The new goals pushed MSU to require students to understand diversity in all forms through exposure to all types of people. To this end, two types of courses were proposed: Purple for learning about diversity in the classroom and Gold for learning about diversity through experiential education. The use of MSU colors was done intentionally to stay away from setting up a hierarchy as was common before with related and core course designations.

MSU currently offers 71 Purple courses but only 5 Gold courses with 5 more Gold courses in approval status. Another 7 Gold courses are in the pipeline. These numbers are not surprising since the Gold courses present a much bigger challenge to departments and faculty in designing
the experiential part of the course. However, it is the Gold courses that are expected to better encourage students to develop new attitudes about diversity. The major obstacle now is to aid faculty to understand Gold course rubrics and develop interest in designing these courses so there are enough to serve the MSU population by fall of 2011 when one of each course will be a requirement for students to graduate.

There was a discussion about students who already well understood diversity issues. A number of commission members commented that these students can always learn more and could gain from being with others in a class doing experiential learning. It was also pointed out that Gold courses fit well with the charge given to the commission by President Davenport.

Other suggestions were to develop a mentor system for faculty who could turn to those who already have designed a quality Gold course. It is expected that as students need these courses to graduate departments will push faculty to create courses in their own major areas.

A discussion ensued concerning the credit requirements for Gold courses. At present it seems a 3 credit course is desired although it may be possible for a student to pick up 1 credit courses to equal the 3 credit requirement. At the same time, it was pointed out that the Gold course must have students interact with diverse populations, not just with the agency that does this. The reflection piece will also be critical to the success of a Gold course. Students need to be in a trusting, long-lasting relationship with diverse people NOT just observers taking notes.

Finally, concerns were voiced about the lack of attendance at the many campus events we already have that are diverse in nature. This includes both student and faculty attendance.

Work is continuing on an agenda for the next meeting with the President.

Reggie Edwards asked the commission to support a resolution related to the plan proposed to change the CAP program. He stated the community is wondering why CAP is changing when it appears to be successful and also stated there is concern the changes are coming too fast. Mr. Edwards asked for a resolution which (1) asks the President for a 6 month delay in any changes and (2) asks the President to appoint a Blue Ribbon Study Group and (3) ask the President to consider the recommendations offered by the Study Group.

According to Commissioner Phillips – CAP has a deadline of February 15th
to respond to the President's CAP proposal.

Decided: The Chair will explore adding discussion regarding CAP to the next agenda with the president.

Decided: Meeting will be called for next week to discuss Edward's resolution and CAP proposal and CAP related agenda item.

Commissioners will receive related materials via email.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Stewart Ross and Matthew Carlson