

Ferris State University
Academic Senate Diversity Committee
Minutes
October 28, 2003

Members present: Sandra Alspach, Kevin Miller, Tony Baker, Carolyn Cook, Carole Jones, Clayton Rye, Joseph Wist, Karen Nash, Griff McTume.

Others Present: John Thorp and Jana Hurley

The meeting started at 11:05. Dr. Alspach presented the members with a handout detailing tentative subjects and speakers for the year's meetings. The members discussed several of the upcoming meetings.

Next the minutes were reviewed, minor corrections made, and the amended minutes approved.

Dr. Alspach updated the members on the visit that had been planned for today by Tom Oldfield. Dr. Oldfield could not attend the day's meeting as had been hoped, but he updated Dr. Alspach regarding issues pertinent to the committee. That information will be shared with committee through email. Other diversity issues were discussed and reviewed such as the recent Laramie Project play, developments with the Jim Crow Museum, an upcoming one person play on the life and times of Sally Hemmings, the upcoming Equity Conference, and additional information regarding funding for diversity-related issues and events.

Next Dr. Alspach introduced Dean of Students, Jana Hurley, who provided the committee with an overview of the history of housing international students at the university. The history that Dean Hurley detailed pointed out the complexity of this issue and the challenges relating to the committee's primary concern, the housing of international students between semesters and over holiday breaks.

The committee members asked Dean Hurley a variety of questions about possible options for developing housing alternatives for this population. It was pointed out that all of the discussed options have been tried at one time, but that the changing requirements for housing that this population presents from year to year makes a universal solution difficult. Dean Hurley assured the committee of her and her unit's commitment to this population and to working with all parties involved to find viable alternatives for this population's housing needs. One promising possibility that Dean Hurley's unit and the university are considering would be to provide a year-round facility that would cater to the permanent housing needs of international students and nontraditional students, another student population that has some of the same needs in securing continuous housing. This alternative is currently under study, and Dean Hurley told the committee that it would be kept apprised of developments with this possibility. For the coming year, students who intend to stay in the area will again be invited to stay with host families, which has been the current practice for meeting these students' housing needs during break

periods. It appears that this system will be adequate for the existing international student population.

The committee members thanked Jana Hurley for her briefing on these issues, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:55.

These minutes prepared by Kevin Miller, millerke@ferris.edu.