

## Senate Anti-discriminatory Policy Committee

Minutes for January 16th, 2008

Attending: Mark Anderson, Patty Beeson, Carolyn Biglow, Kelly Coburn, Lynn Fitzgerald, Dorothy Hawthorne-Burdine, Kate Seelman, Barbara Shore  
Bruce Venarde, and Jane Feuer (chair)

The chair called the meeting to order at 9:03am. The chair noted that despite the best efforts of several parties, the audio equipment provided for the planned presentation did not work.

There was a minor correction to the minutes of the December meeting as per Patty Beeson. The chair reported briefly on the next Allies Network training, to be conducted by Pitt personnel on a date this semester TBA. The chair has written an article on the Allies training that will appear this month in the University Times.

The chair also asked the committee to look at the description of the Iris Young Award and consider whether it overlaps too closely with the Chancellor's Diversity Award and the (still unfunded) Tobias-Shore Award to render the latter superfluous.

The meeting then turned to planning future meetings. In February, Patty Beeson will talk about diversity in faculty appointments and compensation. There followed a discussion about the possibility, raised in the September meeting, of considering potential discrimination against the obese in the university. The subject proved controversial and was tabled.

Lynn Fitzgerald and Kate Seelman of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences gave a presentation on disability at the university. It began with a brief review of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which empowers individuals to ask employers for reasonable accommodation of any disability. The specific focus thereafter was evacuation procedures, which are under the aegis of the office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) and Disability Services (DS). It was stressed that EHS has excellent policies and procedures in place: individuals with disabilities contact the office to create a Life Safety Plan in the event of evacuation. However, Al Rizzo of the EHS estimates that no more than 5% of the members of the university community with a disability have created such a plan. Discussion centered on the possibility that there is unintentional discrimination because information about rights under ADA and the services available at the university are not well publicized. How should the university act to educate all about their legal rights and opportunities?

The committee agreed that there are two steps to follow next: first, to ask EHS and DS personnel to come to a meeting and discuss coordination of services and publicity (the institutional approach) and secondly, to ask students or others with disabilities to share their experiences with us (the personal approach). Lynn Fitzgerald will work with Barbara Shore to arrange a presentation later in the semester.

After thanking Lynn Fitzgerald and Kate Seelman for their informative presentation, the chair adjourned the meeting at 10:15am.