

Minutes of the Senate Anti-Discriminatory Policies Committee for 8 September 2009 1101 Scaife Hall

In Attendance: Mark Lynn Anderson, Patricia Beeson, Anthony Bauer (Chair), Paula Davis, Rebecca Harmon, Emilia Lombardi, Carol Mohamed, Sharon Nelson-Le Gall, and Cindy Popovich.

Excused Committee Members: Deborah Brake, Dorothy Hawthorne-Burdine, Paolo Palmieri, and Bruce Venarde.

Anthony Bauer called the meeting to order at 9:45 AM.

Approval of Minutes

Emilia Lombardi moved to approve the minutes of 21 May 2009. Patricia Beeson seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Scheduling Meeting

Chair Bauer asked the members to decide the most convenient meeting times for the committee during the fall term. The committee came to a decision that the ADPC will convene the second Thursday of every month at 3 PM. This means that the committee will meet on October 8, November 12, and December 10. A mention was made of the difficulty of getting to Scaife Hall for some members. Besson said she would look into finding a meeting room in the Cathedral of Learning.

Introductions

As this was the first meeting of the academic year, every member present briefly introduced herself or himself to the rest of the committee, including newly elected member Rebecca Harmon from Health and Rehabilitation Science and new pro-tem member Sharon Nelson-Le Gall from Psychology.

Secretary's Minutes

Mark Lynn Anderson briefly explained to committee members his procedures for taking minutes, including the distribution of minutes to members in advance of the next meeting. He asked members to send any substantive revisions or corrections to the minutes before the subsequent meeting, though small changes can wait until just before there is a motion for the minute's approval. Anderson reminded members the detailed minutes of all meetings are publicly available on the website of the Faculty Senate.

Planning

Chair Bauer opened the floor for discussion of the committee's agenda for the coming year, including any work continuing from the previous year. The remainder of the meeting was taken up with the discussion of two ongoing areas of committee investigation: employee medical coverage and diversity training.

Exclusion of Medical Benefits for Sexual Reassignments

Anderson mentioned the on-going issue of health coverage for medical expenses related to sexual reassignment procedures, as well as Lombardi's on-going work with this

committee to have the exclusion removed from the current policy. Lombardi briefly explained her previous investigation of this issue and her conversations with the Office of Benefits (See ADPC minutes of 17 April 2009.) Lombardi recalled that she was told that no changes in the policy could be immediately forthcoming since the current policy had just recently been revised and that, once in place, changes could only be made during a period of subsequent review.

Members of the committee speculated on the difficulty of asking for changes given the necessity for an underwriter's approval. Beeson suggested that she or others might meet with John Kozar (Director of Benefits) to continue a conversation and gain further information. Rebecca Harmon inquired as to what, exactly, the committee was asking. Lombardi explained that the current coverage explicitly excludes medical procedures related to transsexual medical procedures, that such an exclusion was discriminatory, and that it could be widely interpreted to exclude counseling if that counseling was deemed related to sexual reassignment. Lombardi made clear that we have no known incident of actual exclusion, but that such exclusion is possible and currently codified. Several recommendations came from this discussion. Cindy Popovich advised that the committee find out when the next review period for coverage will take place so that we could be ready at that time. There were also recommendations that we work in tandem with the Benefits and Welfare Committee of the Faculty Senate, and that we consult the language of the American Medical Association's recent support for coverage of transsexual procedures in cases of GID diagnoses. Carol Mohamed stressed that it was important to know exactly who is responsible for determining and setting coverage policy. Sharon Nelson-Le Gall added that we need to know if the University is fully self-insured, and Bauer closed the discussion by saying that he would take this matter up directly with John Kozar.

Other Continuing Concerns of the ADPC

Beeson mentioned that Cynthia Golden, Director of the Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education (CIDDE), is very interested in developing seminars related to cultural competency, though her interests are principally with instruction in the classroom and multicultural pedagogy. (A further discussion of cultural diversity issues occurred later in the meeting. See below.)

Beeson also mentioned that her office is currently doing an administrative review on re-writing the University's non-discrimination policy in the wake of last year's changes to the sexual harassment policy (See ADPC minutes for 5 December 2008). Chair Bauer asked if this was an issue for which we needed to go to General Counsel. Beeson responded that we could do so if the matter comes once again to the ADPC committee.

Cindy Popovich asked whether Allies training had yet been scheduled for this term. No one on the committee had been notified. Carol Mohamed said she would contact Linda Williams-Moore in the afternoon and e-mail to committee members any current information about the training so that they could distribute it to their respective programs and departments. Mark Lynn Anderson explained the committee's need for continuing to monitor the timely scheduling of Rainbow Alliance training sessions, particularly sessions for faculty. A short explanation of the program and the history of ADPC

involvement followed for new members. Nelson Le-Gall asked if there was not some program supportive of GLBTQ faculty. Anderson mentioned QueerFac, and Nelson Le-Gall said that the committee should be pursuing ways to support faculty diversity through transforming the current climate of the University so as to be more inclusive and supportive of minority faculty members. Beeson indicated that this was precisely the other area of continuing concern for the ADPC.

Diversity Training and Cultural Competency

The committee returned the issue of support for a diverse faculty. Nelson-Le Gall said that this is something that must be dealt with across the faculty, and she pointed out that the Office of the Provost had a committee to deal with issues of gender discrimination. Paula Davis said that one of the obstacles here was an entrenched assumption of universal enlightenment on the issue, but that we need to find ways to bring all faculty members into a discussion. Several members of the committee inquired how we might best get information about diversity out and how we might institutionalize an awareness of currently available resources. Paula Davis mentioned the transformation of managerial strategies for producing a new culture situation through new rules of organization.

Nelson-Le Gall maintained that we currently lack these opportunities to address issues of cultural exclusions on our campuses. Part of the problem, she said, was getting information about the issue out to the faculty. Mohamed mentioned that Allies training was now part of the brochure for new faculty. Nelson-Le Gall said that she was seeking ways of creating widespread talk about issues of cultural competencies (or the lack thereof) through venues such as *The University Times* and other media more publicly dispersed across the University community. Anderson said that there were two separate approaches and projects being discussed. The first is how the committee might support or participate in specific projects or policies related to changing how the University works with respect to inclusion; the other is a project of consciousness raising. The latter, according to Anderson, is a more nebulous and politically fraught project. Nelson-Le Gall pointed to PACWC (Provost's Advisory Committee on Women's Concerns) as an administrative initiative that seeks to make gender discrimination a matter of institutional concern. She related a story about a prominent University administrator who, when asked about the issue of minority inclusion, responded only, "We have that diversity seminar."

Carol Mohamed mentioned the workshops that are supported by her office, and she suggested that we might find ways to better co-ordinate various information and programs related to diversity. She also suggested that the ADPC might benefit from a presentation by Dean Larry Davis of the School of the Social Work and Director of the Center for Racial and Social Justice. A suggestion was made for, perhaps, an invitation to Dean Davis to attend our January meeting. As an example of the way information is not always properly disseminated, Popovich pointed to her recently becoming aware of a multi-cultural sorority on campus. No one present had been aware of this sorority either. Paula Davis emphasized that real change will come when there is emphatic intent behind policy. Lombardi mentioned that Allegheny County has just instituted anti-discriminatory policies and the ADPC might find this example instructive.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 AM.

Submitted by Mark Lynn Anderson, 4 October 2009.

Revised by MLA, 31 October 2009.