

Affirmative Action and Disability Affairs Committee Meeting
Minutes
2008-2009 Meeting #3
December 11, 2008, 3:30-5:00

In attendance

Laura Putsche, Dept. of Soc/Anth/JS
Kristin Henrich, Library
Gary Machlis, Forest Resources
Heather Gasser, Women's Center
April Preston, HHRCO/HR
Meredyth Goodwin, TAAP
Julie Lang, Parking
Ernie Biller, AADA Chair and ACTE
Kenneth Hart, District 1 Extension
Brenda Kotewa, graduate student
Linnea Marshall, Library
Marlene Peterson, Facilities

Business

1. Heather Gasser, interim Director of the Women's Center, gave a presentation of the Women's Center and LGBTQA office, including staff members and their roles, mission, goals, history, and purpose. She emphasized that the Women's Center does not serve only feminists, but all individuals, and that it provides outreach to a wide variety of groups, some of which are conservative. She also mentioned that aside from Rebecca Rod's salary, the university provides no funding for the LGBTQA office. The possibility of an LGBTQA office separate from the Women's Center was addressed, but someone suggested that given the current financial situation, now might not be the time to propose such a move.
2. Heather discussed partnership opportunities with AADA, including issues of concern to women (violence prevention resources and referral, campus climate and pay equity survey, donation of suits for Spring "Dress for Success program") and to student parents (access, financial aid, and retention data; sick child absence policy; campus amenities; a babysitting co-op). She mentioned that AADA can help bring attention to these issues. Heather also mentioned the lack of a student parent absence policy at the UI, and someone suggested that AADA address this.
3. A discussion arose regarding the means through which the new UI president will learn about both the Women's Center and AADA. It was mentioned that she/he will learn about them either from someone else or from members of these organizations, and that it is better if the Women's Center and AADA be proactive by writing statements regarding what each does. Gary Machlis said that the Women's Center should have an active defense strategy in case it is proposed that it be dissolved as part of the reprioritization process. Heather responded that the Women's Center and director position cannot be disbanded as a result of the 1974 reconciliation agreement, which was reaffirmed several years ago.
4. Ernie Biller mentioned the possibility that the title of the Women's Center be changed due to its inclusivity, and Heather responded that it has been discussed.

5. Ernie suggested that AADA be proactive in ensuring that the language it uses be up to date to deal with critics of programs and policies directed toward different groups.

6. Someone mentioned that sexual health issues should be addressed by the UI. Heather responded that one reason it has not is that student health is outsourced. She said that there is some alcohol education but no sexual health component.

7. April Preston discussed AADA's four recommendations regarding the addition of language prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression to the Faculty-Staff Handbook brought to the Faculty Council. She said that these were voted on as a package and were approved unanimously.

8. There is a Gender Public Advocacy Coalition web site <<http://www.gpac.org/genius>> that includes a map identifying universities that have GenderSAFE campuses by state. It was mentioned that with proposed and existing policies, the UI may be able to get recognized on this map.