

MINUTES

Approved 4/23/08

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 26, 2007 3:30 P.M. BEVERLY LIVESAY CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: Carol Griep; Kristina Belanger; Chantalise DeMarco; Martha Robertson; Shawn Martel Moore; Lisa Holmes; Bob DeLuca; Larry Roberts; Dave Richardson; Kristina Belanger; Constance Thompson; Patricia Carey (arrived at 4:15 p.m.).

Not Present: Leslyn McBean-Clairborne, Chair; Kathy Luz Herrera; Anita Fitzpatrick; Marcia Lynch; Heather Stewart; Patricia Carey

Others Present: Karen Fuller, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature; Steve Estes, Deputy Personnel Commissioner

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m.

Introductions and Announcements

Ms. Trueman introduced herself and said she is an employee of Tompkins Cortland Community College. At this time Committee members and guests introduced themselves.

Announcements

- Mr. Estes announced the next Commercial Driver's Training Program is recruiting to fill the next class that will begin on October 29, 2007. He provided a brief description of the program. Mr. Joseph inquired if it is felt there will be a saturation point for this type of employment. Mr. Estes said that it does not appear there would be a saturation point, presently the fields of commercial drivers, nursing field, and education are in high demand. Those interested should contact Lillian Lightbourne.
- Mr. Roberts announced Finger Lakes Independence Center and Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) are jointly sponsoring a Transportation Forum on October 31, 2007 at the Borg Warner Room at the Tompkins County Public Library. Two sessions will be held at 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Attendance at the event would make individuals eligible for one of two \$40 monthly TCAT passes. He then announced that on October 10, 2007, the 9th Annual Technology Fair for Assistive Devices for Everyday Living would take place at the Finger Lakes Independence Center from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. This event will include various displays as well as hearing screenings. Mr. Roberts said minor repairs to wheelchairs would also be available.
- Ms. Belanger spoke of her attendance at the International Association of Civil Rights Agencies and National Association of Human Rights Workers Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, and in particular, the Harvard University Executive Session at the Human Civil Rights Conference. At the Harvard University Executive Session the discussion was civil and human rights/race inclusion and criminal justice. The session addressed how to have national and international conversations between agencies, including law enforcement agencies. Ms. Belanger had the opportunity to meet and discuss the topic with several law enforcement officers, including the Atlanta Police Chief; Long Beach, California Police Chief, as well as California Human Relation Commission members, and Columbia Law School and Harvard representatives. This year the main topic was immigration issues and are looking at other topics. Ms. Belanger suggested reviewing how to work with youth. She was invited to attend the next session given by the Kennedy School of Government.
- Ms. Martel-Moore spoke of her attendance at the Atlanta conference as well, noting it is the first joint conference held. She announced that she has been designated the Atlantic Regional

Representative on the International Human Rights Board, representing states from Maryland north along the eastern coast. Ms. Martel-Moore said she accepted this position in order to assist in advocating for the New York State Human Rights Commissions. She said that a concern is that there are 35 local commissions, funded locally. Although funds come from the Federal level to the State, no funding has been made to local commissions due to a direct contract. Ms. Martel-Moore said it has been difficult to resolve the matter due to the numerous changes in individuals as New York State Commissioner (six individuals in eight years). The new State Commissioner is willing to meet with local commission representatives and have a tentative meeting set for November. Ms. Martel-Moore said she is hoping to have the support of the International Human Rights Board to work directly with EEOC. Ms. Martel-Moore shared information on attendees at the conference, noting it was very powerful. She said that she will be meeting with U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner Naoimi Earp in January and will address the lack of adequate reimbursement to local commissions from the State. Ms. Martel-Moore spoke of potential funds from the Justice Department for educational outreach being available.

- Ms. Holmes announced there will be a Senior Citizens Fair and Public Hearing on Thursday, October 25, 2007 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Titus Towers, 800 South Plan Street.
- Ms. Thompson announced that David Harris has been named Vice Provost for Social Sciences; and that Vice Provost for Diversity Bob Harris will be leaving next year. She also announced publishing a progress report of Diversity Inclusion at the college, which is available for review online.

Ms. Thompson spoke of receiving a grant for the development, recruitment, and retention of women in sciences.

She reported the supplier diversity program is successful, noting there will be a supplier diversity fair in December that will showcase products from diverse employers. Ms. Thompson spoke of their Affirmative Action Representative meetings with each college unit that provides recruitment strategies through the use of data. She reported that over the past three years there has been a 1.3 percent increase in representation within the university as a whole as well showcasing the bargaining units. She said they are now able to indicate they not only interview but hire a large amount of diverse talent within the dining services and skilled trades roles. She recommended that each division/department of any organization have meetings to discuss diversity.

Ms. Thompson reported of the launching of a Balanced Score Card initiative that will review sections of the organization to determine gaps in representation and assist in providing information that will determine appropriate steps to alleviate gaps.

Ms. Thompson reported she has resigned her position on the Society of Human Resource Management for Tompkins County. In addition, she and Audrey Cooper have announced they will resign their Co-Chair positions on the Tompkins County Diversity Consortium in January; Steve Estes has volunteered to be a Co-Chair. She said that in November she will be hosting a session regarding Best Practices for Diversity and Recruitment.

- Mr. DeLuca announced the Mental Health Department will be hosting a training at the Public Library on dialectical behavior on October 19th, which will cover working with individuals with substance abuse. There is no charge to community providers. He then announced that the groundbreaking on the single-room occupancy project has taken place which will provide 38 housing opportunities; it should be completed in approximately one year.
- Ms. Griep said the State Department of Health has redeveloped the method of communication, starting with the influenza information. They are now including a much more diverse campaign that includes a wide variety of languages.

Acceptance of Minutes

It was MOVED by DeLuca, seconded by Ms. DeMarco, to accept the minutes of June 27 and July 25, 2007, as written. MINUTES APPROVED.

DiversityInc.

Ms. Thompson spoke of DiversityInc., a publication for diversity and businesses that provides a magazine and online capability to post job openings as well as highlighting various areas of employment. She said that the publication is interested in partnering with educational/governmental entities to promote employment in our area and offer a resume database. A brief discussion of the capability of the publication occurred and that there is a possibility of a six-month trial period for the initiative. At this time both Cornell University and Ithaca College has stated they are interested and some interest has been expressed by Cayuga Medical Center and the City of Ithaca. Ms. Thompson said the suggestion is to have interested parties commit to providing between \$2,000 to \$5,000, followed by a contractual negotiation to obtain the best services possible for the funding provided.

It was MOVED by Mr. DeLuca, seconded by Mr. Roberts, that subject to availability, \$3,000 be provided for the DiveristyInc. joint initiative.

Chair's Report

Tagline

Ms. Martel-Moore stated that as stated at the previous committee discussion, two taglines were being presented for consideration as follows:

- Inclusion through Diversity
- Fostering a Culture of Inclusion through Diversity

It was MOVED by Mr. Roberts, seconded by Ms. Robertson, and unanimously approved by voice vote by members, to adopt *Inclusion through Diversity* as the tagline. TAGLINE APPROVED.

Demographic Report of Project Assistants

Mr. Estes provided the following information regarding the position of Project Assistant with the County:

- Personnel Department has fifteen positions on the books. Funding for the positions is paid by the department/division requesting the temporary use of the individual.
- At the present time eight of the Personnel Department Project Assistant positions are filled, five are people of color, three are Caucasian.
- Workforce Development has six positions on the books with two positions filled with Caucasian individuals.
- Human Rights Division has four positions on the books with none filled at the present time.
- Some departments utilize the Project Assistant positions to assist in providing training ability prior to the civil service exams.
- The maximum amount of time for a Project Assistant is eighteen months.

Mr. Estes said he would prefer to have the positions decentralized with regard to funding to reduce the workload for the Personnel Department, who is presently down two positions. He has discussed this request by bringing forward resolutions on two occasions with the Personnel Committee. At those meetings concern had been raised with regard to the top end of the wage scale for the Project Assistant position (\$20.00). The Committee had also expressed concern about whether it would conflict with collective bargaining units.

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Mr. Joseph shared information that indicated the discussion at the Legislature regarding the positions dealt with student status, insurance coverage, etc. He said that they are normally not students and the intent of the positions is to bring in persons of color into the workforce, and it is desired to bring them in at a livable wage and include health insurance.

The discussion continued, with Ms. DeMarco sharing information regarding the collective bargaining aspect, specifically that the individuals filling positions are not completing a special project but a position that potentially could be filled by a collective bargaining member, for example filling a vacancy due to a leave. Ms. DeMarco said it would be preferred to have a guarantee that the individual would be paid the rate of the vacant position. Mr. DeLuca noted that the department would still be having to pay the wages for the individual on leave as well. Ms. DeMarco noted that upon full-time hiring of an individual the collective bargaining regulations apply.

Diversity Plan

Ms. Martel-Moore spoke of the need to have three volunteers to work with her to complete the review and update of the Diversity Plan. The benchmarking areas that need to be completed are: how to measure the results of communication, rewrite of the executive summary, and the mission statement as a committee of the whole. Ms. Martel-Moore noted it would be three to four meetings to complete the task. Following the discussion Mr. Roberts, Mr. Estes, and Ms. DeMarco volunteered to assist in the work.

Public Information Update

Ms. Martel-Moore reported on behalf of Ms. Lynch that Tompkins Cortland Community College has offered to have five students work on a small production at no charge to the County that would highlight the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The project would be required to be completed this semester. A discussion regarding this project took place, noting the Committee would not meet again until November due to budget meetings. Following the discussions Ms. Thompson and Mr. Roberts offered to assist in the project. The members strongly recommended that the backgrounds and locations be diverse.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.