Introduction

The President’s Institutional Diversity Council convened for the 2009-2010 academic year in mid-September. Larri Mazon, director of institutional diversity, served as the Council’s chair. The Council’s charge was:

- To consider the evolving impact of diversity on and within the Fairfield University culture, and to recommend programs, colloquia, or forums in which University community members (students, faculty, and staff) can participate and engage in discussions about how diversity impacts and what diversity requires of them.

The members of the Council were:

- Rev. Gerald Blaszczak, S.J., university chaplain
- Dr. Jocelyn Boryczka, assistant professor, College of Arts and Sciences
- Dr. Stephanie Burrell, assistant professor, Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions
- Ms. Chrystie Cruz, assistant director of institutional diversity initiatives
- Ms. Karen Donoghue, director of residence life
- Mr. James Estrada, vice president for information services and university librarian
- Mrs. M. Janick Ferrier-Hickman, graduate student
- Mr. Mark Guglielmoni, director of human resources
- Mr. William Johnson, assistant dean of students/director of student diversity programs
- Mr. Larri Mazon, director of institutional diversity initiatives, chair
- Dr. Carl Scheraga, professor, Dolan School of Business
- Dr. Ann Stehney, assistant vice president for institutional research and planning
- Ms. Rama Sudhakar, vice president for marketing and communications
- Mr. Spencer Thibodeau ’10, undergraduate student
- Dr. Roben Torosyan, associate director, Center for Academic Excellence and assistant professor, Graduate School of Education and Allied Professions
- Dr. Ellen Umansky, professor, College of Arts and Sciences and director of Carl and Dorothy Bennett Center
- Dr. Renee White, professor, College of Arts and Sciences and academic coordinator for diversity and global citizenship
- Dr. Edna Wilson, associate vice president for global relations and community engagement and dean of University College
- Dr. Wook-Sung Yoo, associate professor, School of Engineering

Process and Organization

In an effort to fulfill the charge set forth by the President, members of the Council met monthly between September and May. Committees were formed and asked to meet regularly during the time in between full council meetings. Each member of the Council selected to be a part of one of five working committees: Learning Circles, Global Citizen, Student Group, Human Resources, Assessment, and
Marketing. Many of these committees were a continuation of work conducted in previous years. Each committee was asked to propose recommendations based on the charge of the President.

**Learning Circles**

The committee sought to continue to offer opportunities for members of the community to participate in learning circles. Ideas were circulated about the possibility of relating learning circles to the University focus of “A Year of Activism”. To better incorporate students into the concept of learning circles, it was suggested that individuals living in the Just Us residential community be targeted for participation.

**Global Citizen**

Chair Renee White led this committee and looked to infuse her new responsibilities as academic coordinator for diversity and global citizenship to the Council.

**Student Group**

The Student Group Committee focused on strategies to bring students together to talk about their experiences as it relates to diversity and other topics in a setting where they will feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings. As small group of honors students were gathered to develop small learning circles that are targeted to take place at the end of April.

**Human Resources**

New employees of the University were a regular topic of discussion within the committee. One of the goals that emerged was to develop programs that would introduce new employees to the culture and expectations of the University. Attention was also paid to how to inform current employees about these same topics. Beginning in January, new employees were introduced to the Council and it was well received.

Conversations have begun with Father Paul Fitzgerald, S.J., senior vice president for academic affairs, regarding the creation of “inclusive excellence” diversity workshops.

**Assessment**

The Assessment Committee spent a great deal of time reviewing data collected from a number of different surveys and reports conducted or developed by the University. The primary objective of the Assessment Committee was to provide the Council and its respective committees with the necessary information that they required in order to justify recommendations made to the President. Some of the trends reported back to the Council included:

- Students report having less interaction on campus with students who are different from them and are not continually exposed to diverse opinions, cultures, and values
- First year students are less satisfied than their peers with diversity at the University
- There is a lack of respect for the expression of diverse values and beliefs amongst students and faculty
- Faculty feel that diversity should be more strongly reflected in the curriculum
- Members of the community want more time to interact and dialogue with individuals different than themselves on a continual basis
It was recommended that the Assessment Committee seek to gather more information from division and department heads as well as deans regarding work completed by their staffs to further incorporate diversity into the University.

**Marketing**

Enhancements were made to the visual presence of the Council on the University website. A dedicated page was developed for the Council. A blog has been created. Discussions are continuing about the development of a diversity-focused newsletter published once per semester. The committee is exploring ways to make the University community more aware of the diversity statement that was developed during the previous year. A bookmark was developed and distributed to students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

**Summary**

Over the course of the year, the Council worked continuously towards developing programs and initiatives that embodied its charge. Suggestions that were raised included activities such as faculty development and student workshops, a diversity forum, a campus climate survey, and preliminary planning for a conference on diversity.

The Council spent a good deal of time focused on spreading awareness about its existence and work across campus. A diversity vision statement was approved by the University. On-going plans are in place to improve the PIDC webpage and to future develop the diversity blog. The Office of Human Resources began to introduce PIDC during new employee orientation and plans to continue this effort going forward. The Office of Institutional Diversity Initiatives, the Office of Student Diversity Programs, and the Marketing and Communications division collaborated on the production of the bookmark that was distributed across campus.

**Recommendations**

No formal recommendations were made by the Council at the end of the 09-10 academic year.

Submitted by Will Johnson, associate dean of students/director, student diversity program.