Multicultural Student Center Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 5, 2007
2:30 p.m., Bolton 196

Present: Ruth Russell, Michael Powell (chair), Yohlunda Hill, Edwin Maldonado, Linda Huang, Dao Vang, Nicole Morales, Sergio Piceno, Ramona Sledge, Diane Amour, Victoria Pryor, Susan Fields

Sergio has been added to the membership of the committee, and will be attending meetings from now on.

Michael led the discussion on recruitment and retention strategies for students of color. He mentioned that LipmanHearne presented preliminary findings on recruiting African American and Latino students last week. There were no surprising issues and the presentation was a validation of what we already know: UWM’s recruitment efforts need to be proactive and intentional.

To improve the recruitment of students of color, we/UWM will be required to change how we currently “do business,” i.e., how we should work smarter, not harder. Each office described its current role in this area:

- AASAS – Assists DRO in recruitment of students; does not conduct recruitment on its own; and sends letters to African American applicants and admits.
- RHC – Assists DRO in recruitment; involves student organization volunteers/recruiters; can do more in this area.
- LINKS – Reaches out to and recruit at high schools; attends U-Visits; and has a staff of 20 mentors to plan activities.
- AISS - Recruited a lot more on reservations in the past. Due to lack of staffing and resources, this is not possible anymore.
- SAASS – Assists DRO in recruitment; recruits in Milwaukee depending on resources, and is proactive in Southeast Asian (SEA) communities. Recruiting in schools was not effective because staff couldn’t see only SEA students. Now, DRO helps with bringing SEA students to UWM for campus visits. SEA population, which spreads out across the state, has grown throughout the years in WI and UWM. However, the number of SAASS staff (2) has not increased since its inception.

Comments and suggested strategies include:

- Student organizations can help out. They provide the best ambassadors. Best recruiter is another student.
- Why is American Indian group not included in the LipmanHearne study?
- It’s frustrating that offices are not able to do what they want to do in order to utilize critical time and resources in contacting students. There are different kinds of calls to make. Everyone agrees that efforts should be coordinated.
- DRO is not aware that LINKS and student organizations are recruiting at schools. It is important for students/student organizations to convey accurate information to prospective students.
• It’s effective to mail postcards to admitted students from currently enrolled students. They can then follow up with phone calls on a timely basis.
• Students hear more about MATC, Alverno College, UW-Madison, etc. Perception of UWM is low in some communities.
• Best time to call students is during the holidays, but no calls are made during that time. Decisions are sometimes made in a vacuum, not involving frontline staff.
• Biggest and best recruitment tool is retaining and graduating students. A revolving door for student of color is not good for recruitment. We cannot talk about recruitment in isolation; it should be a holistic approach.
• More coordinated, more focused, and more intensified recruitment efforts are needed.
• UWM should recruit multicultural students like recruiting athletes. It takes time and personal touch. It’s about relationship-building.
• Recruiting at faraway reservations should be included in the budget and planned ahead instead of on a last-minutes basis. UWM hosted a meeting of tribal leaders in the past, but not with American Indian education leaders.
• UWM should have four targeted, separate recruitment plans – not a generic one for all multicultural students.
• We need to know the criteria for scholarship awards so recruiters can better approach students regarding scholarship opportunities.
• Students of color feel uncomfortable on campus. They only feel comfortable in their own organizations or with LINKS. If they don’t feel comfortable on campus, they won’t graduate from UWM.
• Although data showed that students of color are not isolated in classes, the perception that they are “one of the few” in classes is very real.
• In April 2007, campus climate survey will be distributed. This is a unique opportunity to state things as is and for campus to use this data to effect change. It is important, therefore, for everyone to participate.
• Some students are upset because students of color have places to go, e.g., American Indian students can go to AISS for help, food, and hanging out.
• Although it’s OK to have an inclusive booklet or brochure, there is a need to add a companion race-specific pamphlet or section to that booklet/brochure. Now that students are checking multi-racial categories, they may not be getting brochures from multicultural offices.
• There needs to have a committee that plans and coordinates recruitment trips with multicultural offices for students of color.