

Minutes for Meeting on November 1, 2011

*Present: Kathryn Artuso, Chris Call, Toya Cooper, Jane Higa, Omedi Ochieng, Rick Pointer, Mary Docter, Silvio Vazquez*

*Guests: Angulus Wilson, Dean of Spiritual Formation/University Pastor, Fresno Pacific University  
Chandra Mallampalli, Deborah Dunn*

Jane introduced Angulus Wilson whom she met at the CCCU Leadership institute. Angulus is at Westmont shadowing Jane Higa as part of the Institute's program requirements.

Chris Call set the stage in his welcoming remarks for our discourse on increasing diversity of color and creating a more welcoming environment for our faculty. Especially noted were Deborah Dunn's remarks on the Christian virtues.

Omedi opened in prayer

Chandra was invited to share his comments, which he presented to the trustee's at the October board meeting. These comments originated from conversations Chandra, Bill Wright and Jane Higa had over the course of the past year. Chandra's comments focused on the theme of what it is like for someone new to the campus who hits the ground running and rises in a positive trajectory vis-a-vis someone who arrives and has the opposite experience and trajectory.

Leaving aside credentials, issues of potential and others concerns, what are the cultural areas that may impede growth and movement in a positive trajectory?

1. What is it like to come from a large research institute to a place that casts the net more broadly, i.e. the liberal arts (need for orientation and training)
2. What is it like to come from an international setting to a place where interaction with students is critical and students don't embrace you?

Essence of What Chandra presented to Trustees:

So if you come from a different background and you start with a huge gap, what types of interventions are legally permissible to nurture and how do we support those foreign to our community. Intervention is needed that is unique to their backgrounds.

We have to educate ourselves about people and rid ourselves of speech that may be particularly hurtful to others i.e. "The only reason they were hired was because they are a person of color." Vicious circle ... people of color come here and there is lack of critical mass, which emphasize the feelings of isolation and gives rise to thoughts that there is a systemic issue on this campus.

Jane Higa asked for clarification on the issue of international only, or other minority populations.

Rick: The issue of how to translate the culture, climate, ethos, and slice of evangelicalism is important and should be part of training for all faculties. But the issue related to international specifically for example is a steep learning curve (i.e. Tatiana) New to private evangelical Christian education. Rick appreciated the way Chandra framed the conversation in the form of interventions and points to this being a process in the journey with faculty. How this is framed can be positive in providing value for the faculty, students, departments and college as a whole. The comment of how valuable student receiving faculty is especially critical in the life of a small liberal arts experience. This points to the expectations we should prepare our students for in different teaching styles. Diversifying our student body in itself will be a significant step in helping students move toward understanding these styles.

Deborah Dunn was welcomed and introduced to the committee. The Committee was given copies of a document, *Mentoring & Diversity At Westmont ... excerpts from a larger report on mentoring* to review in advance, which comprised Deborah's major points in addressing the committee. In the spring of 2011 Deborah

began doing some work on the role of mentoring faculty and the impact upon their experiences. She invested a great deal of time in her research in preparing for this new role as overseer of faculty mentoring. She interviewed several faculty and presented excerpts from those interviews. She presented part of her research and reported that she received \$12,000 from the Lilly foundation to invest next year.

The interviews were with faculty who were here 5 years or less. 13-16 Faculty members were interviewed. Not limited to people of color.

Some of the issues raised by Deborah's research related to how this campus makes new people feel "other" (i.e. not belonging). The thing that seemed most profound is not the formal mentoring but the "buddies" they have. Example provided of one new faculty members experience where they only had one buddy and when they left, they felt really sad because they have no one to bond with.

Suggestion on how to address "otherness." Faculty is not comfortable with talking about diversity. Or they are not adept at sensitively navigating the discourse in this area because we address it on a micro-level and not in a larger institutional manner.

- We could solicit narratives from faculty that would discuss a painful situation in community here and have it be a time of listening.
- Address underlying assumptions and identify deficits in the culture. What do women add? What do students of color add?

Chris shared his experience in visiting Occidental College and how they communicate intentionality and goals for increasing diversity? Reading groups: is there ever intention on making these groups diverse? Those are more focused on areas of intention.

Omedi mentioned that the reading groups are focused on topics of interest, but there is lack of intention in identifying who's interested in which topics?

Jane observed that it still takes a certain amount of connection to find a reading group and be invited.

Kathryn noted how interesting it is that students are seen as more aggressive at Westmont and lack hospitality especially toward adjunct faculty.

Mary Docter reiterated the importance of training students to understand various perspectives.

Deborah commented on the research done on perceptions of accents and needing students to recognize the value of differences and benefits we gain. How we interact with students can be pivotal to their perceptions and to helping them move from negative to respectful.

Empirical research on quick starters and slow starters: White males seek social connections and are typically quick starters. Slow starters are isolated socially and that begins to impact everything they do.

Jane commented on how important the classroom and peer engagement is to challenging students to come to a deeper understanding of diversity issues.

IRSS language good, but you have to solve the right problem.

Chris invited Deborah to challenge us to identify the right problem, to which Deborah said that we as a committee need to take the campus to task and not be afraid to step on toes.

Chris disseminated the document Omedi drafted on recruitment and retention of faculty of color.

Jane noted the disparity between students understanding their need to be global and their apparent disconnect when they complain about faculty accents.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Silvio Vazquez