

**Minutes**  
**October 14, 2011**

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

Absent: Mary Docter

Welcome and opening prayer – Chris Call began our time together by praying from an ancient Byzantine Prayer

We reviewed minutes from the September 20, 2011 meeting and noted two minor corrections. Revised minutes will be resent to committee members.

Several members of the committee shared their hopes and dreams for diversity at Westmont.

- Omedi Ochieng shared his dream that WC be a more welcoming community for faculty and staff of color as he shared that he had seen many of his colleagues and friends leave over the course time.
- Kathryn expressed her dreams as a desire to see more ecumenical diversity among faculty and that the Church be better represented among the community. She raised the relevant question of how we can become part of the larger church in dialoguing with leaders.
- Silvio's dreams related to wanting to see a larger population of international students as well as more students from urban communities tied into their churches.
- Jane shared a desire to have the Westmont community embrace a clear understand of what it means to be global.

Chris led a discussion focusing on column B6 of the strategic working plan and distributed worksheet #1. In prioritizing the list of topics, the first item noted was determining how to make Westmont more of a welcoming home for faculty of color. The following ideas were discussed:

- Invite Chandra Mallampalli to dialog with others on this topic
- Ask Debra Dunn to share her writings and research on "Mentoring and Diversity at Westmont"
- Have Warren Rogers and Rick Pointer explain where diversity fits into the faculty search process

Deanne Liu and Joshua Canada from the Office of Student Development joined the Committee. They were asked to speak on questions related to the student experience and intercultural organizations.

- Deanna Liu reported that her organization has actively pursued discussion on the relevance of ethnic groups. She mentioned that new students are passionate about these intercultural organizations. Students recognize how helpful these groups are to expanding the conversations on campus. Many Caucasian students are also involved. The organizations have been very intentional about being inclusive with the broader community. In addition to the larger student leadership retreats, minority students feel they need additional resources, such as being able to have their own retreat.
- Joshua commented that their needs to be more intentionality in order to better navigate any tensions that may arise between the larger leadership population and these intercultural affinity groups. These groups are also very important at enabling minority students to gain identity.
- Chris inquired about any written purpose statements these affinity groups may have. It was noted that these groups face challenges every year related to redefining their roles, especially as new students are welcomed in. It was also noted that these groups should not have undue pressure placed upon them to be

## Diversity Committee, Westmont College

educators to the larger community on the issue of race and diversity.

- Joshua discussed the value of bringing in affinity groups prior to the start of classes in the fall similar to how we bring in RAs to train and equip them for their leadership positions.
- Rick asked Joshua and Deanna how students today are viewing issues of diversity (rhetoric, vocabulary) compared to their own experiences as students.
  - Joshua mentioned his observations that students are engaging on a superficial level and was even surprised to learn that some students have never really been challenged in the classroom on this issue while at Westmont. Anecdotally he mentioned the case of a senior sociology major who had never been challenged to think about some major racial issues.
  - Deanna discussed her own experience relating to the challenges Westmont students face. She was one of ten Asian students in her freshman class. Most of them never finished. In her desire to want to fit in she ignored whom she was commenting on how easy it was for her to navigate as a member of the majority population. In other words, she was not really prepared to deal with issues of identity related to the dominant culture.
  - Toya responded that from a developmental perspective students are not ready to deal with these complex identity issues. She raised the question of how can the College address this from a developmental point of view.
  - Deanna answered that in her graduate study she researched the place of dissonance in enabling students to gain a voice to speak out, yet how can we do this given the strong undercurrent of people wanting to get along.
  - Chris raised the question inquiring how we move from diversity tourists to diversity pilgrims. Followed by the question posed to Deanna and Joshua on what they would change if they had a magic wand
    - Deanna answered that some students do not possess any historical perspective on race. She mentioned Seattle University's ten-week freshman course on race. She would like to bring that course to Westmont. She would also increase her staff by 3-4 FTE to "shake up" the freshman experience by including faculty and having them involved in diversity training
    - Joshua would change the Westmont Diversity Scholarship by tying it into developmental requirements and responsibilities. He would require more students to engage with Black churches and Black history. Joshua would like to see the stereotype change that black men are athletes and he would like to see a critical mass of black students on campus

As our time came to a close, the committee was very appreciative of the commitment and energy of our guests in preparing for their time with us. Chris encouraged us to review worksheet #1 and give thought to the tracks and share those with each other via email.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm. Our next meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 1, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Silvio Vazquez