Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 28, 2009

Members present: Laura Beadling, Ben Collins, Patti Heer, Kate Kelley, Yong Li, Samantha Poh, Cindy Reuter, Adam Stanley, Amanda Tucker, Qi Yang

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Election of Chair and other officers
Adam Stanley nominated Qi Yang for the position of committee chair. Seconded by Yong Li. Yang elected chair unanimously.

Stanley volunteered to record minutes for the 9-28 meeting.

Discussion of AA&EO-related issues
As most members were new to the committee, most of the discussion involved the committee’s basic roles and activities.

Kate Kelley asked that the committee think about whether to continue to require a Diversity Advocate to serve on every search and screen committee. If this is to continue, the committee will need to conduct training sessions for that purpose, since the number of trained advocates has diminished over the past couple of years.

Discussion then turned to possible methods of recruitment of people of color and women; Kelley noted that UWP has had more success recruiting and hiring women. In terms of university climate, Kelley stated that exit interviews of faculty and staff leaving UWP usually cite factors such as financial, geographical, and spousal considerations as the causes of their departure, not discrimination or harassment.

The question of hiring practices was raised. Kelley emphasized that in making hiring decisions, the best person for the job should always be hired – it would be improper to hire someone simply because s/he is a person of color, just as it would be to refuse to hire him/her on that basis. Li highlighted the difficulty of hiring international faculty in certain engineering fields. Given that some programs require a degree from an ABET-accredited institution, those who receive degrees from universities outside the U.S. are disqualified from consideration. Kelley explained the history of this issue, as it has been a subject of discussion at UWP in the past.

Meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Adam Stanley