The Race & Ethnic Affairs Council  
Wednesday, October 1, 2008  
10:00 am – Mining Room of the PSC

**Attendance:**  
M. Keith Thompson  
Mick Viney  
Keith Hale  
Carlos Wiley

**Chair and Recorder:** Keith Thompson

**Minutes:**

1. **Introductions**

2. **Review of the Council’s Mission and Duties (for new members)**  
Deferred until a larger attendance can be secured.

3. **Selection of Chair**  
Keith Thompson will serve as chair and minute taker until someone else wishes to assume the role.

4. **Update on General Education Task Force and Discussion**  
Keith Thompson provided an update on the task force. Three documents were distributed:  
- A draft UW-System document listing shared learning goals (related to general education) for all UW campuses  
- A response to the draft document written by the task force  
- A statement created by the task force at the end of the last academic year (April 2008) regarding several concerns of the task force in relation to teaching and student admission

The council members present responded favorably to the concept of the UW-System shared learning goals (there was a similar response by the General Education Task Force). There were some comments regarding terminology used in two of the listed goals: “intercultural knowledge and competence” and “knowledge of human cultures and the natural world.” Carlos Wiley felt “intercultural knowledge” refers primarily to domestic racial and ethnic issues, while “knowledge of human cultures” would be inferred as international cultural study. There are significant differences in the study of the two and how they must be approached in teaching students. Carlos specifically referred to the taboo that frequently accompanies discussions of race and ethnicity in past and current US history. This is in contrast to discussions of race and ethnicity in regard to international relations that typically do not create discomfort in students or faculty. The council seemed in consensus that the two subjects do require separate treatment. However, some of the accompanying description from the draft document that went with each of these main goals was not fitting and should be edited.

Response to the statement by the General Education Task Force was critical. The statement proclaims 5 critical problems at UWP: (1) grade inflation and lack of rigor; (2) a lack of direct assessment measures; (3) mediocre teaching and low faculty morale; (4) low admission standards; and (5) lack of adequate resources for promoting academic excellence. The full document may be found at the General Education Task Force website (listed as the April 17 proposal):

Mick Viney was very critical of the 3rd and 4th bullet points. He pointed to the ad-hoc committee that reviewed admissions trends with the conclusion that there was insignificant change in the quality of students entering UWP over the past few years. It was agreed that the appropriate indicators (hard data) for much of the concerns of the General Education Task Force are lacking. However, it was pointed out by Keith Thompson that the task force represents a wide variety of departments with wide exposure to the events on campus. Among the task force members and the faculty to which the task force has been able to discuss the issues, there is a perception that all of these problems do exist at UWP. At the very least, the perception of problems is significant and would account for much of the low faculty morale that has been observed by the task force members.

A broad discussion followed which touched upon many of the available resources to counter these concerns (the TEC especially for improving teaching) and the need to mentor new faculty so that they better adapt to the culture and needs of UWP.

5. **Tasks for the 2008-2009 Academic Year.**
   The UW-System has initiated a diversity award with three categories: Individual, Team, and Institution/Unit. Carlos Wiley has been tasked by the UWP administration to solicit applications from UWP and forward them to the chancellor to nominate at the system level. Carlos would like the council to assist in this process.

   The solicitation for applications will require a due date of November 3 at which time the applications will be made available to the council members for review. The council must review the materials, meet, and select the applications to be sent to the chancellor by November 10. UWP must submit its nominees to the board of regents by November 21.

   Carlos and Mick Viney will create the campus wide solicitation and Keith Thompson will schedule a council meeting at an appropriate date to discuss application and create recommendations for the chancellor.

6. **Next Meeting**
   The next meeting will be sometime during the week of November 3 through 7 (or early on the morning of the 10th) probably in the Mining Room of the PSC.

7. **Adjournment**
   The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.