The Race & Ethnic Affairs Council  
Wednesday, December 10, 2008  
10:00 a.m. – Mining Room of the PSC

Attendance:
M. Keith Thompson  Vickie Dreesens  Matthew Ross  
Carl Allsup  Anna Mroch  (for Tameaka Bryant)

Chair and Recorder: Keith Thompson

Minutes:

1. Update on General Education Task Force (GETF) and Discussion
   Keith Thompson provided an update on the task force.

   Update:
   The GETF has approved in concept the creation of a bridge program for under-prepared students (which would occur in their first semester at UWP) and a matriculation standard for admission into the general education program. The reason for this action is the recognition that a large number of students entering UWP are being placed into remedial math and English classes, but are still allowed to enroll in general education classes without restrictions. In several cases this is leading to underprepared students being subjected to coursework in which they are not academically ready, resulting in failing grades and discouragement of the students. There are also concerns that it makes the general education courses less effective and lowers the morale of general education instructors as they are not well attuned to and have not structured their classes for the abilities of underprepared students. Specific details of such a program will be worked on later. As of now, the idea only exists as a concept.

   Discussion:
   Recognizing that a disproportionate share of underprepared students are students of color, Carl Allsup expressed strong concerns that complete segregation of underprepared students from the regular college program will develop emotions of alienation and rejection in those students of color. It is important that some progress towards the degree can begin in the student’s very first semester. They should not be made to feel that they are repeating work at a high school level and there is an issue of an extra semester if university costs. Carl predicted that that much controversy will arise from this issue as details are put into place.

   Matthew Ross related his experiences as a student required to take a remedial math course. He expressed great dissatisfaction with the environment of the math placement exam and the teaching of his remedial math course. He feels under-challenged and bored by the course. Carl Allsup expressed concerns about the ability of many math faculty to teach fairly to students of color. There was some discussion of the fairness of the math placement exam, but little is known by the council members about its content or administration.

2. Update on Budget Issues
   Keith Thompson provided an update of the Budget Task Force. Currently the task force is brainstorming ideas to save money, however a significantly large percentage of the money source that must be cut belongs to faculty salaries. The UWP administration will place its highest priority on saving current faculty and staff positions. As a result, it is felt that little or no new hiring will occur. At this time, there are roughly 50 search and screens that have been initiated.
across campus. Additionally, courses with low enrollments will most likely be cut and faculty will be asked to teach higher enrollments. Overload teaching will be encouraged and some campus initiatives such as the first year experience may suffer if those offices cannot be supported on a full-time or even half-time basis.

3. **Other Business**
   The Plan 2008 Final Report was briefly discussed. None of the council members present had comments.

   The latest NSSE data has been analyzed and UWP continues to show weak performance in the exposure of students to ethnically diverse bodies of people or to have their perceptions of the world and society challenged.

4. **Spring Meeting Schedule**
   Keith Thompson compiled a schedule of open times based on the council’s faculty member’s listed courses. It was decided that a regular monthly time should be adopted for meetings. Two options were suggested:
   
   - The first Monday of each month at 3 pm (Feb 2, Mar 2, Apr 6, and May 4); or
   - The first Friday of each month at 10 am (Feb 6, Mar 6, Apr 10 – conflicts with April Break, and May 8).

   The Mining Room will be reserved if available.

5. **Adjournment**
   The meeting adjourned at 10:50 am.