Minutes:

1. **Update on General Education Task Force (GETF) and Discussion**
   Keith Thompson provided an update of the efforts to endorse the director of ethnic studies for membership in the General Education Task Force. An endorsement had been made to the task force, but was declined. Follow up meetings between the director of ethnic studies, the chair of the task force, and others had resulted in a decision to pursue the matter further, however, it was announced that the general education task force would be dissolved at the end of the spring 2009 semester and its mission would be carried on by the University Undergraduate Curriculum Commission (UUCC), which ended the immediate concerns about the membership of the committee.

2. **New Data on Failure and Withdraws of Freshman Students**
   Keith Thompson brought some data collected by the Office of First Year Experience that shows significantly higher rates of failure and withdraw from courses among 1st year students of color. The data was discussed for the rest of the meeting.

   Discussion points:
   - Carl Allsup pointed out that the university already had inadequate resources for students of color. As the university has expanded its enrolment in students of color, it has failed to expand those resources causing them to be even more inadequate.
   - Vickie Dreesens asked if any of these students had been interviewed to find out the causes that led them to withdraw or fail a course. How would the university address the problem if it did not diagnosis the causes.
   - Carlos Wiley pointed out that the statistics would probably be similar at other universities within this region of the country. Change requires a commitment from the university to reform institutional characteristics that create difficulties for students of color. He pointed out problems with classroom climate has an example. Few white faculty have any training in how to talk to or approach students of color who are having problems. Perceptive differences between white students and students of color require greater care in how they are talked to.
   - Carlos also pointed out the remedial math program which has a high enrolment of students of color and a very high failure rate among students of color. This program is outsourced to Southwest Tech. Why doesn’t UWP make the investment to teach this program themselves? It makes it difficult for them to address problems when they do not directly manage the courses.
   - Carl Allsup stated his experience that certain programs on campus has distinctly racist attitudes that students of color bring down the academic performance of the university. He also pointed out repeated patterns of advising students to put off the ethnic studies courses until their final semester(s). (Note – The existence of the double and triple
counting courses encourages this advising practice because students will be more likely to get into those high-demand classes when they reach the stage of earlier registration that coincides with their final semesters. The double and triple counting classes are an example of an institutional practice that encourages an undesirable racial outcome: that in an effort to minimize their total credit load, white students will delay ethnic studies education until later in their academic career. Of course this does not dismiss other motivations beyond double and triple count considerations.

- Tameaka Bryant pondered the role of student senate and creating initiatives that could help the first year students: mentoring programs, orientation sessions, etc. Carlos Wiley stated that he wished to put more effort into reform of faculty mindsets and university curriculum practices. The limited time and resources available for the various diversity representatives is an important consideration in deciding the priorities for change.

- Carlos Wiley also pointed out recent research he had come across called the Holland personality test which has shown correlations between interactions with diverse populations and the development of attitudes about diversity. Carlos pointed out that STEM fields traditionally showed the least interactions with diverse populations and this tended to make that group the least comfortable in dealing with issues of diversity. The liberal arts area tended to have the most interactions and had the highest comfort in dealing with diversity. This trend correlated to his experiences with the colleges of LAE and EMS at UWP.

3. Adjournment
   The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.