

WHOI Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2007 – 13:00 to 14:30, Watson 201

Attending: Beth Andrews, David Gaylord, Kerry Heywood, Annette Hynes, Di Jin, Bernhard Peucker-Ehrenbrink, Peggy Rose, Amelie Scheltema, Tim Verslycke, Shona Vitelli, Sheri White (all WHOI Diversity Committee), and Tina Calisto-Betti (Human Resources Office, HR).

Co-chair Shona Vitelli welcomed everyone present, gave a brief summary of our last meeting and introduced Tina Calisto-Betti, the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer as a guest from Human Resources to the committee meeting. Committee members introduced themselves to Tina.

Sheri White gave a brief report on the Diversity Movie Night last Thursday (“Something the Lord Made”) that about 20 people attended. The committee decided to work as closely as possible with the Wednesday “Movie Night” committee of students and postdocs at WHOI, the USGS and the MBL. We hope that such collaboration will create synergy between the two groups. Initially, we plan to propose movie titles to the “Movie Night” committee and ask them to schedule four “Diversity Movie Nights” per year, preferably in late June, late August, October and February. Our committee will advertise these movie nights through flyers, the WHOI Headlines, our website and email.

Shona briefly reported on the status of the committee logo that is currently being drafted by Katherine Joyce (Graphics) who will merge our “most popular” design ideas. Shona also mentioned that the letter to the Presidential Search Committee that highlights the importance of diversity at WHOI has been submitted. Shona also encouraged the committee members to comment on the proposed introduction text for our web site.

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the role of the Human Resources Office in hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. Tina handed out the old and new version of the voluntary self-identification form that is used to fulfill Government reporting requirements regarding the administration of civil rights and regulations. The traditional race/ethnicity classification scheme (Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, White) has been replaced and expanded (Hispanic and Latino, White, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Two or More Races). Most significant is the addition of a “two or more races” category. Filling out this form is voluntary and most new employees complete it. Those who do not are automatically categorized as “White Male” as required by Government regulations. Tina also handed out a printout of the EEO/Affirmative Action (AA) information that is available online on the HR web site. One significant change that was made in this area was the elimination of an on-site ombuds person at WHOI. The Ombuds person that reported directly to the President and Director of the Institution has been replaced by an ombuds hotline (Openline: 508-566-OPEN [6736]) that is operated by a company specializing in EEO/AA issues. The reasons for making this change are not entirely clear to the committee, nor is the effect this change is having on the efficacy of this confidential advice to WHOI employees. We also need to find out whether our previous ombuds person (Karen Rauss) remains involved, through the hotline, in giving WHOI employees confidential advice. Concerns were voiced about the loss of a direct link between an ombuds person and the WHOI Directorate.

Tim Verslycke questioned Tina Betti on the procedures and initiatives used by the HR office to increase diversity of the WHOI workforce. Tina explained that WHOI compares the gender and ethnic diversity of its workforce against benchmarks of the U. S. Census. These benchmarks vary according to position, because advertisement differs regionally depending on position. While staff scientist positions are advertised nationally/internationally and are benchmarked against the U. S. population, workers in – for instance - skilled trades are advertised mostly regionally and are more adequately compared against the ethnic diversity of Barnstable County. If WHOI does not meet these self-imposed and Government-approved benchmarks, HR develops initiatives to meet those benchmarks in the future. HR does not have a special budget to support these initiatives. Tina also explained how HR is striving to optimize the use

of the ~\$50,000 advertising budget to reach underrepresented groups most effectively. Online advertisement is often significantly less expensive than print advertisement. However, HR currently is not tracking the success of various forms of advertising. Shona suggested using established ties to Alumni, Trustee and Corporation members. She also pointed out that gender- and ethnic-specific training of work groups is currently not done at WHOI. Such training is offered by outside groups, such as the CRTLT Theater at the University of Michigan. Unfortunately, the cost of CRTLT Theater performances (>\$5,000, plus expenses) is rather high. Amelie proposed to ask historically Black Colleges where their seniors are looking for positions. She also pointed out that a brochure about WHOI as a workplace might help scientists attending meetings to encourage suitable candidates to apply for open positions. Beth Andrews emphasized that WHOI internal events, such as the potluck dinner sponsored by the International Committee, foster cross-cultural understanding.

Bernhard invited the committee members to comment on the most recent draft of the Diversity Status Report. The goal is to finalize this report by the next meeting.

Finally, Shona asked for volunteers for the Diversity Day on August 15. Shona and Judy Fenwick, together with a small group of volunteers are organizing this event. Shona also encouraged participation in lab tours for students who will be visiting MIT and WHOI on July 7. Julia Westwater has taken over the local organization of this event from Regina Campbell-Malone who recently graduated. Most likely, the students will tour WHOI in the morning and early afternoon of July 7.

The Committee agreed to meet again on July 31 at 2:00 pm in Clark 271.