

Diversity Experience Taskforce

November 15th, 2007

3:00pm Room 208

Present: Michael Gallo, Linda Holdman, Margaret Zidon, Lars Helgeson.

Michael began the meeting at 3:10.

A discussion was held about the history of the Diversity/Multicultural Experience the students here at UND receive. Linda gave us a little background: Dr. Greg Ganyon was involved in the past through a grant. Students would go out in the field and then come back and write a paper about their experience. This started somewhere around 1999-2000 and the following reservations were involved: Spirit Lake, Mahnomen, Cass and White Earth.

The idea was to also make this opportunity a recruiting tool. There has been differing opinions on what the Multicultural class should entail. Students pay a Teacher Ed fee each semester to help pay for student experience.

What is the purpose of field trips?

They are designed to broaden students' understanding of different cultures; to compare teaching methods; learn from the elders about the culture.

Some suggestions to improve Multicultural experiences:

1. Need sufficient orientation before field trips to give a history/background of the school they are about to visit.
2. Need more time in the schools for a meaningful experience...too short in the past.
3. Need structured guidelines.
4. Good ideas to have lunch with the students...would really add to the experience.
5. The principal at the site could give the UND students a brief orientation once they get to the school.
6. Take Teacher Ed packets out to schools when we do visit to encourage/develop that relationship.

It would be best if we would encourage strong relationships with the five tribes in North Dakota.

A 3 day field experience would be a great learning tool, students could stay overnight in a hotel etc.

The question was asked "Can we look to any other universities for ideas?" NDSU does a week at Turtle Mountain.

Should we be looking at other towns off the reservations for field experience?
Other towns like Warwick, ND.

What if we broke Multicultural Ed in to program areas? ECE would travel to Headstarts...White Earth has a Headstart as well Fort Totten and Mahnomen. This would mean smaller number of students for the schools to deal with; this may increase the number of sites willing to participate? Also the schools could plan on the students that are visiting to help out in an area beneficial to them...for example reading with students etc.

Need to set up a long term model that will work and keep our relationship strong...starting with the North Dakota tribes.

Last time NCATE was here 30 hours were being spent on Special Ed, we are no longer doing this and NCATE might look unfavorable at this?

Instead of one Multicultural Class, how do we include diversity throughout the whole program? Need to focus on other cultures, not just tribes. (i.e. Special needs children, Bosnian refugees)

Can technology be used to get students involved in more diversity opportunities? Virtual tours of different cultures... the students wouldn't need to leave the classroom. Speakers could be brought in. We have several students teaching all over the country that would be great resources for this. Need to contact Alumni that are teaching in culturally diverse areas of the country, they could be scheduled to come in and give presentations.

Could we do a professional development on this? 96% of teachers are white, yet the population they teach is becoming more and more diverse.

A suggestion to improve/keep relationships with the reservations: Each professor could be assigned a reservation to be responsible to keep in contact with. Any students coming to UND could be advised by that professor? So each professor would be the main contact for that reservation.

Faculty could visit Fort Totten and other reservations to make connections and encourage academic relationships.

Committee could develop a chart to prioritize steps that need to be done in order to accomplish the restructuring of the Multicultural Experience.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15pm.

Respectfully submitted.
Alana Fosse

