

MEETING SUMMARY

UTSI Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee Meeting

May 7, 2014; 3:00-4:00 p.m.; Upper A Conference Room

Present: Patricia Burks-Jelks (Chair; UTSI HRO/Equity & Diversity Officer), Sabrina Hurlock (Co-Chair; UTSI SGA President and Dorm Resident Assistant), Dr. Ahmad Vakili (President, UTSI Faculty Assembly), Dr. Reza Abedi (Faculty), Dr. Anusonti-Inthra Phuriwat (Faculty), Stuart Steen (Student), Brenda Brown (Staff).

Absent: Jorge Damian Parra Martinez (Student).

- **Briefing on informational diversity and inclusion materials for committee awareness.**

Training materials were distributed to committee members for review prior to the next meeting. We will discuss in more details at that time. Also think about what else we need to do in addition to rolling TV displays, coordination with dining hall for scheduling/serving meals from different cultures, etc...

- **Open discussion of diversity and inclusion issues at UTSI: students, faculty, staff.**

A few student concerns were discussed as follows: need for continuous training, more education about issues and concerns related to students arriving to UTSI from other cultural backgrounds (ex: getting a driver's license, basic info about this area, how to get a cell phone, how to purchase a car, student health insurance info, opening accounts at a local banks, etc...), how students need to deal with issues and concerns; question was also raised about whether students have issues at the dorm that have not been reported.

It was mentioned that we need to focus on how important it is for collegiality, civility, and respect to exist amongst students, faculty, and staff (this is in alignment with UTK Chancellor Jimmy Cheek's 2010 initiative on "Civility).

Stu mentioned interest in a "diversity survey" being conducted at UTSI. More discussion to follow.

Possible solutions: At the next SGA meeting will discuss putting together a "student survival guide/kit" for distribution at new student orientation (same for new faculty and staff); more education/training on diversity and inclusion; communicate with students, faculty, and staff concerning how to address concerns. (SGA will work with Student Affairs concerning new student orientation packages). Patricia will work on a "draft" communication document that will detail the recommendations of the committee that will be submitted to Dr. Moore for his approval.

- **Revisit/brief discussion of previously designated sub-committees from 01/29/14 meeting.**

We will revisit sub-committees during next meeting (following review of diversity and inclusion materials disturbed at today's meeting).

- **Miscellaneous:**

UTSI HR/Equity and Diversity webpage has been updated to include a link for committee meeting minutes and link to UTK Diversity Calendar; will further discuss possibility of a "UTSI Diversity Survey."

- **Fall Diversity and Inclusion workshop: Ms. Parrish is available Friday 08/29/14.**

- **Next meeting: Thursday May 29, 2014 at 9:00 a.m., Upper A Conference Room**