

Coalition for a Respectful U – NOTES from Meeting on October 2, 2009

Purpose: We are a group designed for social justice allies and advocates across colleges, departments, positions, and identities committed to a safe and inclusive campus climate for all students and employees. Meetings are used for the sharing of campus climate information and initiatives, providing support and networking to those committed to social justice, and to increase collaboration between University entities.

We heard presentations from another panel of students groups including Disabled Student Cultural Center, Queer Student Cultural Center, Active Minds and the Women's Center. Each student explained the programs being offered by each group. QSCC provides safe space for students and attention to everyone being comfortable in being themselves and becoming allies. Active Minds is a group for students with mental illness, other who have family or friends and those who want to be allies. Community outreach and education are important themes. DSCC's theme this year is that no one is normal and come to celebrate your difference. October is Disability Awareness month and another focus is a Disabilities Studies course/curriculum in the future. The Women's Center is beginning groups for international women and women of color. Each organization has a web site. Each group could give evidence to the fact that there are issues of bias and discrimination but that student organizations are discovering that they are fighting a lot of the same things and looking for ways to collaborate. They talked about crossing identities and identifying commonalities. Learning ways to communicate about their desire to collaborate and how to get the word out is a challenge.

We also spent some time talking about the column Down with American (The sexist parts) written by Ross Anderson in the 9/27/09 Daily. His writing has raised much response in the letters to the editor and the Daily's blog. Several people in attendance at the Coalition Meeting knew that DSCC was sponsoring a dialog event at 1:00 and that there would be a meeting of several cultural groups at 2:00 to talk about the Daily articles and possibly talk with Ross Anderson directly. We adjourned early so that people could attend those meetings.

Before we adjourned, however Cyrenthia distributed handouts explaining educational offerings of EOAA for this academic year and a list of EOAA Liaisons. We will talk about the systems in place for the work of diversity on campus at our December meeting. Our meeting in November will focus on a report out on the White Privilege Conference last April from Ben Falter and Lauren Silverstein who attended and news about the next conference this coming April in LaCrosse, Wisconsin and April of 2011 in the Twin Cities.

Next Meeting dates: November 6th, 323 Coffman, 12-1:30
 December 4th, 326 Coffman, 12-1:30

Please feel free to attend any or all meetings as you can. Bring your lunch if you wish.

Co-chairs/facilitators for 2009-10 year: Jerie Smith (smith449@umn.edu) and Cyrenthia Shaw (jorda382@umn.edu).