

Diversity Council 11-21-12 (This meeting had an agenda of one item only: Religious Guidance Policy)

Present: Dennis Carr, Donna Koenig, Celia Maximin, Anayeli Jeminez, Max Jensen, Bob Baldwin, Barbara Susman

Draft notes by Barbara Susman

Religious Guidance Policy the discussion included the following points:

- Are there Oregon or city or county laws to which we must adhere?
- Nancy, Celia, Elizabeth, and Barbara will meet in January 11th to work on policy and bring it back to the full council.
- Reviewing Dennis Gilbert's letter, we clarified we want this to be an enforceable policy providing behavioral guidance. We are responsible to the taxpayers.
- Joe will check with faculty contract to make sure language is ok.
- Free expression of thought has limits if it is viewed as harassment. Balance of free expression and civility.
- Need to clarify the difference between expressions of our own beliefs vs. academic freedom in the classroom. Does this policy inhibit academic freedom?
But if a faculty member is teaching and pushing a belief that students say makes them uncomfortable and they ask faculty to stop and he doesn't, that seems to be harassment.
- Take a look at Workplace Conflict policy on COPPS "workplace conflict formal complaint process." Let that inform the policy. Important if we want to have policy that has some teeth.
- We need to be sure to distinguish "public areas" – more so than in current document. What about holiday tree with names for donations or consciously provocative artwork in public spaces? What about reception areas very near people's cubicles?
- Student clubs are already supported in other policies, including various religious groups. College has provided space for religious groups to reserve as well.
Do we need to just clarify that this policy does not cover those areas? Donna will check with Kate Berry concerning about reserving college space for club events. Anayeli will get reference for student clubs. They'll feed info back to sub-committee.
Do we want to just include a list of related college policies and where to find them?
- On sentence, first page, 5th paragraph, last sentence, "Depts should also exercise good judgment..." Halloween decorations & Xmas trees could be offensive to some. Concern to protect academic freedom. Goal is to think through and provide for sensitivity, not to censor. We need to co-create a policy that we feel the college can stand behind.
- "Holidays" (2nd to last paragraph) subject to union negotiations. Could there be flexibility? If it's bargaining issue, it could be considered by unions & HR. Students will see about bolstering Students section of Religious Holiday (and other) sections and will get input to subcommittee before Jan 11th.
- Positive goal statement at beginning or end about desired intent – ie referring to college mission, vision, core values. Give foundation and background for this.