

Minutes of the Senate Anti-Discriminatory Policies Committee for 21 May 2008
526 Cathedral of Learning

In Attendance: Mark Lynn Anderson, Carolyn G. Biglow, Patricia Beeson, Jane Feuer (Chair), Kathleen O'Connor, Paolo Palmieri, Martania C. Penn, and Cindy Popovich.

Jane Feuer called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM and announced that this was her last meeting as chair (and as an elected member of the committee), since her second term on the committee will expire at the end of this academic year. She also noted that the terms of members Dalila Akkal (Psychology) and James P. Cassaro (ULS) were ending as well.

Mark Lynn Anderson moved to approve the minutes of the 16 April 2008 meeting of the ADP Committee. Patricia Beeson seconded the motion.

The chair introduced two newly elected members to the committee: Paolo Palmieri from the Department of the History and Philosophy of Science Program, and Cindy Popovich from the Program in Applied Developmental Psychology in the School for Education. The chair also mentioned that Deborah L. Brake from the School of Law joins the ADP committee, though she was unable to attend this final meeting of the year.

Lynn Fitzgerald (School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences) was made the new chair of the ADP committee by acclamation. Mark Lynn Anderson (English) was made secretary by acclamation. Chair Feuer noted that the new chair would likely convene future committee meetings in Forbes Towers.

The first meeting of the coming academic year was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, 17 September 2008, at 9:00 AM. The chair suggested that future meetings would likely continue to be held on the third Wednesday of each month, unless that slot makes it difficult for elected committee members to regularly attend.

The chair then introduced to the committee Linda Williams-Moore, Director of the Office of Cross Cultural Leadership and Development, who was invited to address the committee on the current state of the recently instituted Allies Network (AN), a program that trains and identifies university faculty, staff and administrators who seek to support the university's GBLTQ students and student communities. Before Williams-Moore's report, the chair emphasized the committee's need to continue its oversight and shepherding of this new program, particularly with respect to having as many faculty members as possible go through the training process. This charge was posed as essentially a question of information and publicity, as an issue of how to make Allies training attractive to both new and more senior faculty members. Several committee members offered to announce the next training session during the first faculty meetings of their respective departments and programs in the approaching academic year. A necessary condition for the recruitment of faculty lies with the advanced scheduling of training sessions so that professors might more easily fit the half-day session into their busy term schedules.

Williams-Moore reported that Allies Network (AN) had been brought to campus and supported by the Anti-Discriminatory Policies Committee, the Rainbow Alliance, Vice Provost and Dean of Students Kathy Humphrey, and the Office of Cross Cultural Leadership and Development, with the latter overseeing the scheduling and coordination of training sessions. She mentioned that approximately seventy employees have participated in the three training sessions that have taken place thus far (two during the fall term and one in the spring term, each limited to no more than twenty-five attendees). Shawn Brooks, Director of Resident Life, and Joellen Popma of Student Affairs, conducted the spring training session. Both Drs. Brooks and Popma have experience with implementing Safe Zones and similar programs at other university campuses, and both will continue to be involved with AN training here at Pitt. Williams-Moore passed around the Allies Network sign (with insignia) that is displayed by members of the university community who have completed AN training. The sign helps GLBTQ and queer students identify which members of the university community have had AN training and will likely be understanding of their needs and supportive of their interests. [There was some discussion of issuing a smaller sign or decal for easier display.] Williams Moore also discussed the binder of support materials and resources that is made available to each AN member, and she pointed to the crucial and effective participation by students from the Rainbow Alliance in the training process.

Williams-Moore said that she would work with the ADP committee to arrive at a firm date for the fall training session by the end of July. The fall training session will likely occur in October. She brought up the possibility of holding summer training sessions, but this prospect looks unlikely for the moment. Having a firm date for the fall session by the end of July should allow enough time for disseminating information about the program to prospective trainees.

Because there is a felt need to have more trainers available on campus, there will be a special training session to train RN trainers. This training session will take place on Wednesday, 4 June 2008, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM, most likely in Resident Life.

The discussion that followed touched on ways to publicize the fall training session to university faculty. It was suggested that AN have a web page that could be linked to various other university pages. The most sustained suggestion was to make sure that some discussion of AN took place at the new faculty orientation. To this end Williams-Moore said she would contact CIDDE Director Diane Davis to have AN made a part of the orientation. Mark Lynn Anderson suggested that perhaps students from the Rainbow Alliance might consider speaking at the new faculty orientation to explain the importance of faculty training and supporting the program. Cindy Popovich suggested that we might also consider starting a chapter of GLSHN (Gay Lesbian Straight Health Network, a.k.a. "Glisten") at Pitt. Chair Feuer praised the work and reputation of GLSHN, but stressed that our primary task must first be to make sure Allies Network is securely functioning before pursuing another initiative in support of sexual diversity.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Submitted by Mark Lynn Anderson, 27 May 2008.