SGA Roundtable: Diversity
Began: 7:00pm
Adjourned: 7:48pm

Present
Matthew Burns- Diversity Club
Marissa Pierre- Diversity Club
Alex Holstetler- Impact Club
Alex Mills- PRIDE
Lanita Williams- BCA Advisor
Star Wynn- NPHC
Shirley Headen- NPHC
Kaitlyn Wright- Alpha Delta Theta
Jacob Foster- Catholic Campus Ministries

Mayeesa Mitchell
Michael Cantor
Joshua Gilstrap
Sarah Field
Steven Edwards
Paul Kittle
Greyson Whitaker

Mr. President called the meeting to order
Mayeesa Mitchell explained her role as Student Services and Diversity Chair
Mr. Paul Kittle explained his role as chair of the Diversity Committee

Greyson: Multi-cultural center was brought up at the Community Affairs Board meeting. Will this be a room or a building on campus?

Paul: The school is going to be planning for the next 10 years this summer. VP Gail Tuttle mentioned last semester that she wanted that to be part of our strategic plan going forward. We don't know if we will get an entire building. Most likely, it will be held in somewhere like the student center. The beginning will be to hire someone to head up the department. Areas we were lacking in was LGBTQ programming, resource libraries. That is definitely a vision for the Office of Student Life in the next 10 years.

Greyson: Broad thoughts on diversity. How would you define diversity on this campus? How does it look like on our campus?
Matt: I don't just think of cultural diversity. When I look at our student population we are definitely diverse in certain areas but there are areas that we really like like socioeconomic status and race/diversity.

Steven: LBGT is not a quantifiable quality. There are a good amount on campus. LBGT students do not know that this is a safe campus to go to. I have gotten emails from students and parents asking if this is a safe school to go to as someone who is a part of the LBGT community.

Star: We lack in a diversity of thought.

May: How do you think we could change that?

Star: Broadening the class options. Having a more diverse faculty as well.

Greyson: Do you mean having more courses added to the Gen Ed requirements.

Star: No, I think that there should just be multicultural class options. Like Multicultural Psychology.

Steven: Having a diversity program as an option. Separate classes that have something to do with diversity in the system for registering for classes. A majority of the GBS classes require that students go abroad but that is not always an option financially for students. Maybe it could be an option to take a diversity class or a GBS class.

Greyson: Going back to what Matt said, how do you think we could advertise a more diverse culture on campus?

Shirley: It starts with office of Admissions. We have some great students but we are lacking that diversity of thought. Having different questions in the application process that may spark having them about diversity.

Kaitlyn: Opening up more opportunities though CAT like going to museums. See what the area has to offer.

Alex: Another way to spark diversity of thought. For a new building, have students have an input into the campus and that will spark creativity.

Marissa: I agree with Shirley. There should be something that we make students aware of the diversity we do have on campus. It definitely starts with admissions.
Matt: Students feel like they don’t fit in. Nurture an environment where people do not look, dress and think the same. We have a lot of people who come from the same background and have similar experiences.

Ms. Williams: People need to involve themselves and not turn away because they see Black Cultural Awareness as the name of a club.

Star: Other schools have diversity weekends where students can come to campus to learn about diversity. We could do something like that.

Steven: During orientation, having a poster board that includes diversity on campus. This will help make students comfortable in asking these questions.

Greyson: We can definitely do that at Activities Fair. When talking to students about what your organization is about, give them literature and invite them to a meeting. On that note, what do you do currently to advertise to students on campus:

Jacob: We are only offered Campus Concierge and the Panther Pause. This is part of the problem. It is very difficult to get the word out because people become desensitized to these things.

Steven: It is hard to have diversity of thought because everything on campus has to go through the school. Students know not to put up posters or handouts. There needs to be a space on campus where students can advertise.

Marissa: The best thing for us is word of mouth. Obviously you can’t reach everyone that way so it would be nice to have someone else

Steven: Other campuses can write with chalk about meetings. It could be valuable to have at least one area on campus where student art is celebrated and student messages can be there.

Sarah: I agree with Steven. Having a place where students can express themselves would be nice.

Ms. Williams: We should have a bulletin board where students can post.

Steven: I don’t think the bulletin board by slane is a really effective one. It’s dark and students don’t really regularly walk by it.

Alex: Maybe we can do that on the bridge on the Greenway.
Paul: The Greenway is owned by either the state or the federal government.

Shirley: To say how important it is, a lot of reason why people go to campus is to be free to express themselves. There’s been times where I’ve felt constrained so there definitely needs to be a place where students can express themselves.

Star: This could also help to boost the retention rate so these students know that there is a place for them and they don’t leave.

Steven: International students only have a small cubby. They need to be able to feel at home. They need a place where they can have monthly dinners that the whole campus can be invited to. Also, I wish there were more resources for the multifaith room.

Michael: Is international students represented in diversity club.

Matt: Not really, they have an international club though.

Greyson: All of us can make these students feel welcomed, especially the international students.

Paul: We are hosting seven exchange students through the office of study abroad. This is the first semester we have done that.

Greyson: Did anyone have any more questions?

Star: NPHC volunteered with Underhill Street project but the end of ther street now belongs to high point but people are dropping tires there now. They want to clean it up but that isn’t their property anymore. Is there anyone I can talk to about that.

Paul: I can talk to Dr. Scarborough about that.

Jacob: Almost 20% of students identify as Catholic. There are about 60-70 people who come to mass every week but I always talk to people and they don’t know it exists. Is there anyone I can talk to about getting that out there?

Greyson: of course we have Campus Concierge and Panther Pause but like you said people do become desensitized to that. They are looking into the boards in Waneck for students to advertise on there and the kiosks are also an option.

Steven: Something that can make a the proposal of the multicultural center get off the ground. Maybe we can submit a resolution to the senate that will show the student support for the center.
Paul: That is certainly an option.

Steven: I already wrote one up if anyone wants to see (laughs). Also the activities fair is really crowded and students get really overwhelmed. Maybe we can have a fair specifically for diversity, religion and service organizations.

Kaitlyn: I can bounce off of that. People get food, the calendar, find out who the concert is and leave. Maybe we could have it outside on the promenade instead so we can be more spread out.

Paul: After the first chapel there's still a religious expo, right?

Kaitlyn: Yes.

Steven: I feel bad about not knowing that. We definitely have an inter-club communication problem.

Sarah: We could have a newsletter that is given to all senators when they come to the meeting that lists clubs event for the next two weeks.

Jacob: That's a great idea. It will also make the senators more of a liaison between SGA and the specific club.

May: I can create an email with all of us on it so we can at least know about each other's events.

Matt: What’s the next step with the resolution?

Greyson: We will have senators co-sign it and then present it to the senate and have them vote on it.