

Bias Response Group Meeting Minutes September 29, 2010

Attendees: Randy Abreu '11, Rochelle Calhoun, Winston Grady-Willis, Don Hastings, Mariel Martin, Marla Segol, and Mary Stange. Herb Crossman, Sulin Ngo, and Lori Parks were unable to attend. (Mr. Abreu will meet with Ms. Ngo separately as she is unable to attend meetings due to class schedule this semester).

Rochelle Calhoun called the meeting to order at 11:02a.m. Introductions followed.

Agenda for Year

Upcoming and to be planned events:

- Schools Roundtable on October 7.
- Gender Bias Intersections Panel Series. November 17.
- Sexuality panel next semester. Part of transgender awareness (Spoken Word Series). Winston will email folks with more details.
- Still trying to nail down date for the nations dialogue and conversation. CIGU plans to endorse the panel; the BRG can also endorse the panel. Note that BRG wants to support the panel--not compete with the series of events.
- Panel focusing on "targeting" (in terms of cyber harassment, New York State computer crime, etc). People are sometimes targeted because they become a public spokesperson. What is at stake when you speak for tolerance? Members agreed to find someone to speak about speaking out. Try to bring in a big name speaker at the end of January (to possibly tie in with social justice issues) or during February or March. Another alternative is to tie in with Theater of War/House of Peace (Rick Chrisman's religious life series). Mr. Abreu suggested that UJIMA might have funding for black history month; perhaps the program could be collaborative? Dean Calhoun charged the group to think of a speaker (and we will obviously have to correspond with the speaker's schedule) as well as retreat topics. The retreat will be scheduled in January, after students return to classes. One focus area: continuum of abuse.
- Retreat Planning – plan for January after beginning of classes.

Incident Reports

- September 26 – Student physically assaulted in downtown Saratoga Springs. Prior to the incident being reported, Dean Calhoun met with the student. The issue, targeting gay students, is not an unfamiliar one. In this instance the student was physically assaulted in downtown Saratoga Springs. Incidents over last two years have escalated to physical harm. Dennis Conway contacted Saratoga Springs Police; the police took the incident as a report, however there was not enough identifiable information. Members agreed that a meeting with key Saratoga Springs people is a necessity. Perhaps this is a moment to hook up with local high schools. Prior to the actual report of the bias incident, the student met with

Dean Calhoun. The issue—male gay students who feel threatened downtown—was not unfamiliar: It was also suggested that Saratoga Springs cameras might have captured the assault, or perhaps diners inside the restaurant might be able to describe the assailant.

All members present agreed to invite city officials to the October 13, 2010 meeting. It might help to have students who have experienced harassment talk with city officials. Dean Calhoun will follow up with student and Campus Safety.

- September 12 – sexist graffiti written on resident's door; toothpaste used to write slur on shared bathroom mirror. Residential Life building manager met with suite residents to discuss protocol. He then forwarded the incident alert to the entire building. Mary Stange advised that the student spoke with her, expressing her concerns. The student felt specifically targeted and members of BRG agreed that the student was not randomly targeted. BRG members felt it was important to bring the conversation back to the community.
- July 29 – Vandalism and graffiti on shed under bleachers discovered by staff member, not reported by students. No evidence available to narrow timeframe. There was no community response after first bias incident notice was distributed.
- Dean Calhoun advised the group she had heard student concerns regarding Campus Safety's interactions with students of color. The student felt there was a sense that there is a disproportionate enthusiasm in interaction with students of color. For example, in reference to the number of parties in downtown neighborhoods, only one student was arrested, a student of color. It is this kind of history that contributes to targeting students of color.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:59pm.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Davis.