



GWDC Diversity Action Committee Meeting

Meeting Notes

Friday, April 6, 2007, 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

ProAct, Eagan

Present: Steve Ditschler (Chair), Kathy Mullarky, Long Yang, Roger Banks, Robert Crawford, Miguel Cantu, Rollie Morud, Eugenia Canaan (via phone), Jodi Julseth, Karri Blair (via phone).

Staff: Rod Haworth, Karen Quammen, Renee Raduenz, Jannina Aristy.

Welcome & Introductions

Steve opened meeting with welcome and introductions. He asked for motion to approve February meeting notes—motion was made and notes were approved. He then reviewed what the committee has worked on over the past 5 months since they started to meet. Steve introduced Karen Quammen, staff to Pathways to Employment/GWDC and also mentioned that the committee will be connected to the work of the Joyce Foundation Shifting Gears Initiative.

Overview of Pathways to Employment (PTE) Goals and Role of PTE Staff on Diversity Action Committee

Rod and Karen spoke briefly about the major goals of Pathways to Employment and how they aligned with a number of goals/recommendations listed in the GWDC Policy Advisory. Within DEED, the PTE grant is really focused on 2 goals:

1) Connecting with business, and 2) Youth transitions into the workforce.

One member expressed the importance of including people of color into the PTE efforts. Others asked about if/how PTE will work with returning vets. Karen said that they will need to address the needs of this population. Various trainings and events were mentioned that would be taking place throughout the Twin Cities focusing on supporting returning troops and their families.

Karen will be taking over lead staff support to this committee since Renee will be leaving the GWDC for a new position later in April. She will also be involved with the other GWDC committees to ensure they are including the issues facing the disability population into their work/recommendations. Karen has worked the past 15 years at Medtronic, including working in their Office of Inclusion which looked at how Medtronic included people with disabilities into their workforce.

Feedback on Committee's Revised Definition of Diversity

Eugenia presented the revised definition of diversity for the committee to review. She said that she and few other committee members edited the first version to reduce some of the redundancy and highlight the aspect of diversity that captures beyond what is visible. The committee approved the first paragraph with a few noted changes—and asked that

this definition be posted on the GWDC committee webpage. The revised paragraph should state:

“The GWDC Diversity Action committee defines Diversity as all-inclusive. It is about valuing, respecting, and embracing our many differences that distinguish us as individuals and groups, yet unite us. Diversity is beyond what is visible (race, gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and disability) but also incorporates culture (geographic location, socio-economic status, education, values, beliefs, and faith/religion).”

Presentation: Joyce Foundation: Shifting Gears Initiative and Role of Diversity Action Committee in Accomplishing Initiative Goals & Objectives

Jannina Aristy, Shifting Gears Initiative Director, gave a presentation about the goals, process, and framework for the Initiative. She stressed how important it was that the Initiative addresses cultural competence. She thought members from this committee could contribute in this effort by participating on one of the workgroups that have been formed. A sheet was passed around for members to sign up if they were interested. Materials regarding the Joyce Foundation Shifting Gears Initiative, including the grant proposal, can be found on the GWDC website: www.gwdc.org.

Presentation: Project Search

Kathy Mullarky gave a brief presentation on an innovative program called Project Search that was developed at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital. The mission of the program is to maximize the potential of people with disabilities through competitive employment in non-traditional jobs. Four distinct programs are coordinated within Project Search: a) Adult Employment, b) High School Transition, c) Vocational/Educational Clinic, and d) Replication and Dissemination. Project Search was created in the healthcare setting, but has since been expanded to other sectors such as banking and retail. Kathy also believed the program could be replicated to other populations facing barriers to employment. A CD Rom and folder were handed out to each committee member. Since there wasn’t a lot of extra time during the meeting to view the video, Kathy suggested that they view it together at the next meeting.

Summary of Data from Presentations at February Meeting

Renee compiled summaries of the presentations that were given at the February meeting and included these in the members’ meeting packets. In general, members were not surprised by any of the data presented by LMI or the State’s Demographers Office. One member thought the data was missing the “tsunami” aspect of what will be occurring in the state’s demographics (incoming minority population vs. aging exit population). Another member pointed out the fact that we can’t just look at aggregate data. If we really want to inform policy creation, we need to look at supplemental data that is more specific to what is *really* going on (e.g. research by Samuel Myers at the Humphrey Institute).

Re-schedule Next Meeting

Since the Shifting Gears Policy Academy is scheduled for May 3-4, the May 4 meeting was rescheduled to May 18, 10:00 AM—1:00 PM at ProAct.