Spotlight on The Diversity Committee

Here at the Chronicle we know you’re not twiddling your thumbs wondering what happens behind the scenes in Staff Council committee meetings. But you should know that Staff Council committees are working on your behalf.

Over the next several issues, we will feature the work of the Staff Council’s six standing committees. We’ll start with the Diversity Committee.

It’s not easy to figure out what the Diversity Committee should focus on, given the number of committees, councils, policies, and reports floating around campus on the issue of diversity. But that’s exactly what the Diversity Committee is trying to get a handle on. At its first meeting of the new fiscal year, members revisited the mission and purpose of the committee. From that discussion, two priorities emerged: collaborating with the college administration to improve diverse staff recruitment and retention, and promoting activities that highlight existing staff’s diverse cultures, social identities, and experiences. Suggested events include hosting a staff diversity appreciation day, recommending and sharing relevant reading materials, and gathering input from staff to assess our collective sense of the diversity climate on campus. It is clear that under the leadership of newly elected co-chairs Tony Jones and Danielle Smith, the committee will find its niche and will use the coming year to make a difference.

Abida Adnan, Kim Alston, Katie Fitzgerald, Barbara Garcia, Ana Gorman, Tony Jones, Danielle Smith, Toby Davis, and Caroline Moore make up the Diversity Committee.

Call for Entries!

Second Annual Staff & Faculty Pet Portrait Exhibition

November 13 to December 3
Nolen Arts Lounge, Campus Center

The Staff Council Activities Committee, along with the Nolen Arts Lounge, are co-sponsoring a whimsical exhibition of pet portraits to connect faculty and staff to the students of Smith College. If you would like to participate in the exhibition, please contribute a photograph of your pet(s). In addition to the photo, please include your name, the pet’s name, and the type of animal and/or breed. The photograph must be at least 4 x 6 inches in size. Send photos via campus mail to Chris Gentes or drop off the originals to him at Central Services. Send digital images via e-mail to staffchronicle@smith.edu. The deadline for submissions is Friday, November 5.

Upcoming Events

October 12 (Tuesday) Cider & Doughnuts. Stop by the front of Pierce Hall (next to College Hall) any time between 9-11 a.m. and enjoy some cider and doughnuts. Hosted by the Staff Council Activities Committee.

December 4 (Saturday) New York City Bus Trip. Open to Smith staff, faculty and their guests. Cost is $35 per person. Bus will leave Smith at 7 a.m. and leave New York at 7 p.m. Reserve your seat by November 11. Contact staffactivities@smith.edu or call extension 2678. Bus is handicapped accessible, but advance notice of special needs is required.
Join us for Days of Dialogue

In our daily work lives, opportunities for staff and faculty to engage together in meaningful conversations about social identities and their impact in our workplace are rare. The Five College community is in a unique position to be able to improve that climate. With support from all five college presidents and chancellor, human resources and diversity directors, and a committed group of campus representatives, each school will offer Days of Dialogue the week of October 18-22. Each day that week, faculty and staff can take part in sessions focusing on race/ethnicity, class/rank, gender or religion.

With over 20 of its own personnel who are trained to facilitate these important dialogues, Smith is able to offer both morning and afternoon sessions throughout the week. The Smith facilitators are our colleagues—administrative support staff, deans, program coordinators, directors, assistant directors, and others who participated in the Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) Summer Institute, a facilitator training program offered to staff and faculty by the Five College Training Collaborative. IGD facilitators are not necessarily experts in the fields of race, class, gender, or religion, but are capable of leading such important dialogues because they have invested time thinking about these issues in their personal lives, and have spent considerable time team-building with facilitators, practicing how to communicate and listen attentively, examining their own “hot buttons,” and learning to facilitate others to respectfully navigate potentially difficult conversations.

Join us for 2 ½ hours of learning, sharing, and—even in these very introductory dialogues—transforming our campus into an even richer community.

To register for a Days of Dialogue session, visit www.smith.edu/hr/hrdev_catalog.php or call Lily Kane at extension 2268.

Ana Gorman, Chair, Staff Council

Share a Meal This Thanksgiving!

The Office of Student Affairs, in conjunction with the Office for International Students and Scholars, invites staff to participate in a student/staff match-up program this year for Thanksgiving Day. Many of our international students remain on campus for the holiday break. While some make plans to spend Thanksgiving Day with relatives or friends, and some are treated to a meal out with Hrayr Tamzarian, associate dean of international students, this year we expect a greater number of students who may need to share a meal on that day. We hope this new program will serve as a cultural and educational opportunity, as well as filling a need for students remaining on campus. If this is a program that you would like to know more about, or if you would like to participate, contact Jan Morris at jmorris@smith.edu with “Thanksgiving Match” in the subject line. Thanks!

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

October 28 (Thursday) Activities Committee Meeting
Time: 10 a.m.
Place: Campus Center Cafe
Chair: Wendy Martinez

October 29 (Friday) Diversity Committee Meeting
Time: Noon
Place: 8 College Lane
Co-Chairs: Tony Jones, Danielle Smith

GET INVOLVED WITH STAFF COUNCIL

All staff are welcome to attend meetings or serve as a non-voting member on a committee. Check the Staff Council Web site for more information on meeting times, locations, and minutes from past Council meetings at www.smith.edu/staffcouncil.

If you would like to join the 18% of your co-workers who have opted out of receiving a printed version of this newsletter, and receive future issues of the Chronicle as a PDF file via e-mail, please check the box below and return this newsletter via interoffice mail to “Staff Council.” An electronic version of the Chronicle is available at www.smith.edu/staffcouncil/chronicle.