# Social Justice Committee Meeting Notes

Tuesday, November 8, 2011

*In attendance:* Melissa Holmes, Monique Nri, Earl Scott, Elizabeth Ross, Amy Minter, Tsuya Yee, Doris Chang, Chris Crews, Shana Agid, Judy Mejia, Karen Merson, Katayoun Chamany, Sydney Kopp-Richardson, Kate Eichorn

Facilitators: Chris Crews, Judy Mejia, Shana Agid

- **Introduction**
  - Intro to the meeting
  - Welcome back

- **Decision-Making Proposal has been set: What do members think?**
- **Committee can reassess the decision-making process within an agreed-upon time period**
  - Moments for consensus process
    - All mission-derived decisions for the committee will be consensus-based
  - Other areas (ie: small funding requests, subcommittee co-sponsorships) use modified consensus process through majority vote scheme
    - According to diagram: Full consensus, then use 90% super majority for other voting decisions
  - Asking the SJC members to tolerate not using consensus on certain processes
  - Not possible to proxy vote if not in meeting attendance
    - Agenda must be sent out to entire committee at least three days prior to the meeting to help members determine if they can make arrangements to participate
      - Can rearrange their schedule to make the meeting
      - If member is passionate about an issue and can affect the committee's decision-making process, must find a way to make the meeting
      - No way to have true consensus if proxy voting is allowed
      - Provide feedback to other members or via email, requesting the absent member's wishes/concerns are addressed at the meeting
      - Arrangements can be made ahead of time for missing members to skype into the meeting or conference call
      - *Possibility*: Re-assess meeting times to fit all members' schedules better?
      - Can committee members meet every two weeks?
      - If member cannot make a meeting, it will help build community and communication for that member to email the entire committee to inform everyone

  - **"Stand-Aside"**
    - Still some confusion on the process
    - Everyone should ideally be able to be part of the process, but this has not happened on the committee and does not always occur
    - Standing aside or blocking is a weighty decision, ideally used when someone has been unable or uncomfortable to speak back or voice a concern
    - Can be a means for members to "healthily disagree"
    - Can be used to modify a proposal or change a discussion
    - Ideally, discussions will be hashed out enough so that concerns have

been risen and a stand-aside or block is unnecessary
    - Requires guided facilitation
    - Allows for group that does not always reach consensus to invite people who have not yet spoken to the discussion

- **Constitute a quorum**[1] **for majority vote decisions?**
    - 3/4 of the committee required for quorum decisions
    - 13 member votes is quorum number for SJC
    - Issue: The subjectivity of "major/minor" decisions (Which constitute as quorum votes?)
    - Mission-driven decisions will be full consensus in order to build up as much support as possible

- **"Blocking"**
    - If one person feels like a decision is compromising the mission of the committee, use the block
    - Can be used for someone to state that something is fundamentally destructive
    - Member can block and remove self, or block and continue to eventually move forward

- **Role of Chairs, Facilitation, Social Justice Initiatives Office, and Members**
    - HOW the committee has dialogue is important in how consensus is reached
    - Needs to be mechanisms for acknowledging each person's dialogue
    - Facilitators can interject to acknowledge people's points
    - Facilitators can be intentional about how the meeting space is set up
        - Document via chalk/dry-erase board to visualize dialogue
    - What decisions are made outside of the committee space that might relate to the committee but separate from full decision-making process?
        - Are there decisions made by the co-chairs? By SJI office? By the Provost's Office? Do they impact the entire Social Justice Committee?
    - ***Need clarification:*** *How does the Office of Social Justice Initiatives function and relate to the Social Justice Committee? Full picture is needed*
    - ***Need clarification:*** *What is the membership process? WHO does the SJC recruit? HOW are they recruited? Recruitment/retention/leaving process must be addressed*
    - Subcommittees: Must members be on the SJC? How are subcommittee members recruited? Without chairs, what is the decision-making/leadership process?

- **Considering**,

1) Consensus is not divorced from power issues, the "tyranny of the majority" can become problematic,
2) Something in decision-making might not feel right to one member even when everyone else seems to think it's minor,
3) Substantive matter will be sent out with prior to committee meetings, but some sub-decisions might arise during the natural course of meetings,

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[1] A quorum is the minimum number of members of a deliberative assembly (a body that uses parliamentary procedure, such as a legislature) necessary to conduct the business of that group.

- **DECISION-MAKING PROPOSAL I:**
  - SJC will move forward with a mission-critical consensus and modified consensus decision making process.
  - A quorum of 13 people will be used for non-mission-critical items, while anything relating to the mission is consensus-based.
  - Using this process, elements of discussion will be captured on a dry-erase/flip-chart/chalk board.
  - Facilitators will be evident about restating perspectives throughout the process.
  - The process will be adopted through April, 2012, and a portion of the May SJC meeting can be used to assess and evaluate the process.
  - This process can be used for the subcommittee decision-making.
  - An agenda will be sent out to the entire SJC at least three days prior to the monthly meetings.

- **DECISION-MAKING PROPOSAL II:**
  - No proxy voting will be utilized, but there can be alternative means for members to participate in missed meetings via technological set-ups
  - Any decision proposals chairs or members are putting forward must be circulated to the entire SJC at least five days prior to monthly meetings
  - If people wish to weigh in to decision, the response must be included at the SJC meeting
  - Decisions that arise in the course of discussion can still also be voted on during meeting times, but if members have discomfort discussing non-agenda items the issues can be set aside for future discussion

***ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT AGREED TO BOTH DECISION-MAKING PROPOSALS; THIS WILL DETERMINE SJC DECISION-MAKING PROCESS UNTIL REASSESSMENT IS NECESSARY.***

- **REMINDER: Prioritized Grouped Issues from October meeting**
- **Members expressed concerns over time constraints and not addressing SubCommittees**
- **If decision-making process was not solidified, there would be less room to move forward**
- **Committees still in existence should try to meet before December SJC meeting**
- **Subcommittees will adopt the same decision-making process internally**

**Priorities Include:**
- ***Increase/retain under-represented students, faculty, and staff***
  - Increase representation of people of color (or other underrepresented groups) in senior academic and administrative positions
  - Close gap of under-represented students
  - Increase/retain under-represented faculty
  - Review termination and dismissals
- ***Hire Senior Academic Officer***
  - Officer of Social Justice or Diversity
  - Create an office of support for students of color
- ***Trainings***
  - Diversity trainings for SJC/students/University
  - Training to address infusing social justice into curriculum
- ***Student Support and Participation***

    - Begin to focus on increasing SUPPORT SERVICES, not “increasing” numbers
    - Support for students and faculty
    - More student-led involvement
    - Identify and support student issues
    - Support student social justice leadership/activism
    - Student participation in decision-making (through SJC and University as a whole)
- ***Address Power/Systems***
    - Leverage the University asking re: trans issues to address others that permeate: race, class, sexism, and S/F/S sustainability
    - Address the systems that serve as obstacles to fair and equitable practices and decisions
- ***Transparency and Process***
    - Address the opaque University processes that perpetuate inequity
    - Make more transparent major decision-making processes and increase accountability of those processes
    - Standards re academic integrity
- ***Ability/Transgender/Gender on Bathrooms and Forms***
    - Address ability and transgender challenges more fully regarding bathrooms
    - Bathrooms and gender on forms
- ***Mission***
    - Choose a theme e.g. poverty, and identify activities to participate in
    - Develop a University-wide mission
    - More promotion of the SJC and what we do
    - Develop a mission
    - Not a mission statement, but a PASSION statement