

NMSU Interfaith Council

April 7, 2011

Welcome and Announcements

In attendance: Phillip Hernandez (Wesley), Brandon Pelton (CRU), Jim Lehman (Holy Family), Rod Thompson and Sarah Heartsong (Unitarian Universalist Church), Sabine Green (Pagan Student Union), Daisy Maldonado (Muslim Student Association), Sid Druen (Reformed University Fellowship), Bruce Vandevender (NMSU Campus Activities), David Hansen (Religious Society of Friends), Jim Ficklin and Scott Bird (LDS), Michael La Torra (Buddhist Group-Zen Ctr of LC), Jeanne Lutz (Peace Lutheran), Beatriz Ferreira (Baha'i Faith), Sal Melendrez (Newman Center), and Jerry Kane (Hillel-Temple Beth El). In addition, Karen Schaefer with interns: Alex Crampton, Sarah Montes, and Hege Riise (NMSU Counseling Center)

Opening Prayer: Phillip Hernandez

Presentation- "Improving Services to NMSU Students" Karen Schaefer (NMSU Counseling Center) with interns: Alex Crampton, Sarah Montes, and Hege Riise

We talked about improving services, especially to those students who are not fully represented or in minority groups. Desired input from the NMSUIC about referrals and spirituality may or may not be integrated into the student counseling process. They have a survey that they will be sending out to the members of the IFC. Issues of confidentiality were discussed. The IFC is available as a resource to the Counseling Center to provide insight into the faith background of the person requesting help. We need to make sure that the counselors are aware that we are here as a resource. Suggestion made that the Counseling Center have open houses for advisors and staff so that they will be aware of the services that are available. Another barrier expressed was that students perceive that there are only other students there and aren't aware of the qualifications/credentials of the counselors/interns working there. There are also challenges with the student being comfortable in making the disclosure of their faith, especially if it is a religion/spirituality that is discriminated against for their faith background.

Approval of March 2011 Minutes- moved, seconded and approved by consensus

Old Business

Student Interfaith Dialogue- Thanks and feedback. Students expressed desire to put this on every semester. Thoughts? Sarah reviewed the feedback received from the evaluations at the end (see the minutes from IFD planning 3-6-11). Brought to the NMSUIC the desire expressed to have the dialogue every semester. We discussed this in depth, whether we want to do it. Talked about how rejoicing in our differences while also bringing out our commonalities is important.

IFC Membership Review and Voting- There are some groups that haven't been able to attend at least 4 out of the 8 meetings. Michael La Torra from the Zen Center explained his absence.

The discussion produced some feedback for the group in that the IFC recommended if the representative of the faith can't be here they send an alternate because their voice is really valuable for us to have at the table. All present made note that this can be an option, while it is not preferable it is acceptable because we do want a broad representation from as many faiths as possible. Phillip Hernandez, Wesley Center, also talked about what happened. There was a silent vote taken and there was consensus that both groups continue as members of the NMSU IFC.

Next meeting- The NMSU President will host. There will be invitations sent out electronically and each group needs to respond with an RSVP so there will be enough food. We are encouraged to bring a student with us.

New Business

Campus Activities: (Bruce)

- Cultural Events are happening right now
- May 7th Commencement ceremonies (10:00a and 2:00p)
- April 14th Army pass and review (at horseshoe... there will be guns firing, etc)
- Bookstore going to be ready first part of the semester
- Housing- New residence hall up by the Ed Services building- should be ready by January
- Student Registrations- April 30th with Student Services Fair in Corbett. Student organizations can have a table there. There will be one in the morning and one in the PM for each date they are doing the registration so there will be 16 opportunities to table at those events. Bruce will send us the dates.

Treasurer's Report and Dues- We have 16 members and 10 have paid, 6 outstanding. Make check to NMSU Interfaith Council of \$50. Balance \$1035.37 in our accounts.

Children's Reading Foundation- Brandon met with Terry Miller who may be in contact with our groups and she's trying to help kids to read and encourage parents to be more a part of that process.

Individual Group Updates- Requested that they be done over the e-mail with the group.

Rev. Jeanne Lutz closed with the prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 09:29. Next meeting location to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Heartsong, Secretary, President Elect