

Diversity Working Group (DWG) Minutes

The DWG met by conference call on Sunday, February 12, 2006, at 7:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

Present: Cortez Rainey, Chair; Hamish Maclaren, Maggie Scott and Bill Auerbach.

Absent: Dan Hessey, Sarah Littlefeather, Lodro Rinzler, Babo Harrison, Shawn Wheeler, Veronica Guzman, Maria Vargas, Kai Yee, Martine Remondin, Pearl Ubugen, and David Fraioli.

There were brief introductions. Of note, Bill said that New York Shambhala Center has held programs for people who are gay and lesbian, as well as for people who speak Spanish, and that the center has established a group to explore ways to support the involvement of people of color in the sangha. He mentioned they are considering holding a series of 1-day diversity programs, followed by a larger diversity program. He also noted that he has been communicating with Mabinti Dennis concerning establishment of a scholarship fund for people of color (this proposal will be discussed upon receipt of the final proposal at the next working group meeting).

Follow up on old business:

Letter to the editor of The Dot:

The response of Laurie Bodley, editor of The Dot, to the working group is inserted in the minutes of December meeting. Laurie offered to find someone to write an article on the diversity training. Cortez gave her the names of two Center Directors who participated in the training who might be available to be interviewed. Cortez will follow up with Laurie to obtain the name of a contact person with whom people can follow up when they submit articles.

Status of email survey of center/groups:

Out of 160 e-mails to center/groups requesting an update on the status of their diversity initiative, 10 responses have come in including one from Chris Tamdjidi, Director of Shambhala-Europe, who indicates he'll help get responses from Europe. Cortez will send another e-mail asking centers/groups to respond by March 1st.

Setting up Diversity-Talk listserv:

Alan Sloan, Mark Szpakowski and John Gorman are willing to help with implementation of a Diversity-Talk listserv. There are several issues the DWG needs to explore first: Is there enough interest in diversity issues to sustain a list? Who will be the listserv moderator? Would a listserv or web-based system work better? After March 1, the working group will survey the sangha to find out whether there is interest in a Diversity listserv and survey the working group to find out if members are willing to take turns moderating it.

New business:

Creating a Diversity logo:

Cortez will contact Judy Bond to see if she can offer guidance in fostering community participation in the development of a Diversity logo.

Developing content for a Diversity webpage:

Hamish will see whether youth involved with Vajra Dawn are available to help with developing content for the planned Diversity webpage.

Shambhala Aspirations on Diversity, Accessibility and Compassionate Conduct:

In response to comments by Maggie Scott, Hamish and Cortez agreed to follow up with Centers to determine the extent to which the Shambhala Aspirations are on display.

Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Buddhism:

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship has invited Shambhala to serve on the steering committee of a conference on race and ethnicity in American Buddhism. Cortez will send the invitation to Sakyong's Council for consideration.

Diversity awareness training and trainers/new membership:

Cortez will determine which existing DWG members are still available to serve on the working group and, if needed, will invite persons who have a background in diversity training to join the working group.

The meeting adjourned around 8:30 p.m. Eastern time.