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2010 U. S. Census

Submitted by: Patrick Novotny

11/11/2009

Question:

I would like to have clarification from the University's administration on the University's participation in awareness education among faculty, staff, and students in advance of the 2010 U.S. Census. Which office or offices will be coordinating the University's awareness education of faculty, staff, and students prior to the 2010 U.S. Census? Will faculty and staff have opportunities to attend informational sessions or training to assist students in locating state or federal government information to answer questions students have in advance of the 2010 U.S. Census?

Rationale:

The Governor's announcement of the Complete Count Committee on Thursday, October 15, 2009 has the charge to "educate and coordinate community awareness and action for the upcoming 2010 federal census" and to establish "a census education program that will motivate community residents to get involved and respond for more accurate census results."

Response:

Michael Moore (COE) Chair, Senate Executive Committee, asked that the minutes serve as the additional response to this RFI.

Minutes: 2/15/2010: Gary Means (Provost) has asked Darin Van Tassell and Todd Deal to work on this. Means said, "The University has been involved for some time in working with the community on the census, so I was somewhat in error that we weren't doing anything." Means asked Van Tassell, from a faculty perspective, and Deal, from the student engagement perspective, to comment. Darin Van Tassell (CLASS) reported that "a PR campaign and a real educational campaign" were underway. Jayne Perkins Brown is coordinating the efforts on campus. Van Tassell noted that "students are to be

counted where they live. There's not a question about citizenship, or legal status, quite frankly, the census is about residence. And where students go to school is where they should be counted. Their parents should not be counting them at home. In fact, our international students should be counted here. They need to fill out the census, and part of us we need to do is to help educate them." Patrick Novotny and Van Tassell are organizing a faculty census day, or perhaps a census week, with faculty talking to students about the importance of the census. E-mails will be sent and a University website created. "Here's why it matters," Van Tassell said, "and it doesn't just matter from federal dollars and, quite frankly, Georgia's only one of five states who stands to gain congressional seats and representation, but the South is also one of those areas that's the least likely to have a good count. We've lost millions of dollars in the last decade. The estimates are for every thousand people that are miscounted you lose on average about \$50,000 to \$100,000 per area. I can tell you just a quick example, a caveat—in the 2000 census the city of Statesboro showed about 22,000 people in the city limits. That includes this entire campus. There's no way that can be accurate, and that is literally amounting to hundreds of thousands and pushing into seven digits. Now that's a big deal." Todd Deal (Student Leadership and Civic Engagement) said that the best way to reach students is peer to peer. Deal is working with Perkins Brown, Dean Georj Lewis, Dean of Students, and Marketing and Communications Marla Bruner, as well as the Inspire Student Leadership Consultants, a group of twelve students who will have several different initiatives. This group will do presentations for the community leaders in the residence halls to train them to talk to the residents, make presentations for student organizations that request them, and sponsor a census fair—a big event around Georgia Southern's Census Day. (This date is still to be decided. The National Census Day is April 1st, 2010.) There will also be t-shirts, buttons and the promotion of this Census Day. A certain percentage of the residence halls will actually receive the census forms, and there will be census staff members here in the Union for three hours a day March 22nd through April 16th to answer questions for both on-campus and off-campus students. Dean Hale (COBA) asked if there was a campaign to contact the parents, to keep them from double-counting. Van Tassell responded that there was.

Dr. Gary Means: GSU presently has no formal plan for awareness education among faculty, staff, and students in advance of the 2010 U.S. Census. It is expected that faculty teaching in the relevant areas would discuss this in their classes. I understand Dr. Novotny's interest and I would be pleased if he would be willing to assume a coordinating role in any effort. I would be happy to discuss this with him or any other interested faculty member.