COMMITTEE FOR A MULTICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the Meeting of 1/5/1999

PRESENT: Members: Professors Killian, McGowan, Megginson, Schmerl, and Smith
Guest: Mr. Derrick Scott, Director, Minority Engineering Program Office

1. The minutes of the meeting of December 8, 1998, were approved without emendation.

2. The discussion of the implications of the reversal of a budget line to a unit's central administration (i.e., the dean's office) when tenure is denied to an applicant was continued. Professor Megginson had previously reported that such a reversal is indeed the policy in LS&A, although its actual implementation appears to be negotiable from one case to the next. Professor McGowan reported that, inasmuch as the School of Dentistry is administratively a department (i.e., the School's various "departments" and programs are not recognized as such by the Regents and do not have budgets other than what they are allotted by the dean), the same is true there. Professor Smith reported that each case in the Medical School, which does have departments, is negotiable with the dean, but insofar as the Medical School has no by-laws of its own, this does not amount to a policy. Professor Schmerl suggested that the implications of these practices for the recruitment and retention of faculty from underrepresented minority groups should be explored with members of the units' Executive Committees during the study about to be launched of the units' strategies for that purpose.

3. Announcements and Reports.

   (a) The IRB Behavioral Sciences Committee decided that the study to be conducted of units' strategies to recruit and retain faculty members from underrepresented minority groups amounted to "program evaluation," not research, and therefore took no action on the application for approval of the use of human subjects. Professor Schmerl said that he regarded this as permission to proceed.

   (b) The Divisional Review Committee had turned down the Committee's application for financial support of the study. The Committee is left with the promised $1,000 from SACUA for the expenses to be incurred, most significantly, for the time of the student to be recruited by Professor Marvin Peterson.

   (c) Professor Schmerl reported that he had been asked by Professor Ensminger to make a very brief presentation about the Committee's plans to the Senate Assembly at its meeting of January 11, 1999. He asked other members of the Committee to attend if they could, in anticipation of questions that might be raised at the meeting.
4. Mr. Derrick Scott of the College of Engineering was introduced. He said that the problem of recruitment and retention of minority faculty members at the College was being discussed once again, after a hiatus in that discussion of some years. Mr. Scott distributed a table from a recent report, having to do with the number and percent of minority instructional faculty, research faculty, GSI's, and GSRA's at the College, 1992-1997; a similar table showing these categories by gender, over the same time period; and a table showing the number and percent of (undefined) faculty by gender for the entire University, the Medical School, LS&A Math and Science, and Engineering. Each table documented the relative absence of African Americans. Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and females from these categories. Asian Americans are relatively very well represented at the College of Engineering. Copies of Mr. Scott's data are available on request. In response to a question, Mr. Scott said that the data did not distinguish between citizens and non-citizens, but that all persons included in the data were, to his knowledge, permanent residents of the U.S.

The ensuing discussion emphasized the choices minority students and graduates of engineering programs are beginning to have available to them, in particular, graduates of doctoral programs. But entry-level salaries in industry in certain engineering fields are also far more attractive than graduate-student stipends. Nevertheless, acknowledging those realities still leaves open the question of the University's and the College's relative standing among their competitors for well-qualified minority students. A recent issue of "Black Enterprise," for instance, does not include the University in a list of the top 50 institutions highly recommended to Black undergraduates, whereas Central State, Hampton, Florida A. & M., and Florida State are included. In response to a question whether any of what are usually considered Michigan's peer institutions are on the list, Mr. Scott mentioned Stanford.

The College of Engineering is about to launch a study of the issues affecting recruitment and retention of minority students, to help determine the reasons why some of its competitors (e.g., Georgia Tech, Stanford, Penn State, MIT, and Cal Tech) appear to be more successful. Professors Tony England (Electrical Engineering and Computer Science) and Alec Gallimore (Aerospace Engineering) are participating in this review. Among the objectives of the study is to find ways to help minority students to be more successful at the undergraduate level, thus encouraging them to undertake graduate work. A five-year action plan for diversity is being developed.

The Committee thanked Mr. Scott for his presentation and materials.

5. There being no New Business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 19, 1999, at 5:15 p.m. in the Conference Room on the First Floor of the Student Activities Building.