COMMITTEE FOR A MULTICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

Minutes of: February 5, 2008

Approved on: February 18, 2008

Members Present: B. Brush, P. Coleman-Burns, Katy Downs, B. Evans (Chair), R. Holland, J. Matlock, C. Smith (SACUA Liaison); K. Avant (recorder).

Members Absent: A. Ismail, W. Lu, R. Ortega, L. Monts

Guests: J. Lee

Chair Evans convened the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS FROM EARLIER YEARS
The reports from 1994 and 1995 included survey and attitudinal data and measures so they were able to gather more data about minority faculty at the university. They also compared U of M at the time with other comparable universities in the U.S. Nonetheless, the university’s efforts to recruit and retain minority faculty members were not informed by these studies. No actions resulted from the 1994/95 surveys.

The issue was brought up that various things could influence minority recruitment and retention at the university such as state economics, the U of M climate towards faculty, competition for minority faculty in other areas of the country, and the observation that U of M doesn’t directly recruit minority faculty.

FACULTY POPULATION REPORT—2008
The report indicated that there has not been a significant change in hiring rates for Blacks and Hispanics since the 1994 survey. In addition, retention rates for Blacks and Hispanics have declined since the 1994 survey.

The report also shows evidence that much of the diversity among U of M faculty occurs as a result of the number of non-U.S. citizen minority faculty members.

It was also noted that the university does not “raid” or recruit for senior faculty who are minorities but do so for other faculty groups.

FRAMING THE REPORT FOR PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS
Chair Evans suggested that the committee focus on the trends in the data that have taken place from 1994 to 2008. The committee agreed that it is important to highlight the trends in minority faculty retention rates as opposed to the number of minority faculty that is hired into the university.
Committee members expressed concern that university faculty is diverse when viewed from a global perspective because there are many non-U.S. citizen faculty members. But, when viewed in terms of domestic diversity, the university is lagging and does not “closely reflect the population of the state and country.” Professor Coleman Burns raised the concern that if the university defines diversity in global instead of domestic terms, this may depress the university’s efforts to diversify faculty using domestic candidate pools. Committee members expressed interest in knowing if the findings of the report change when only U.S. citizen minorities are included in the report analysis.

Chair Evans said that it is important to develop a mandate that faculty and/or staff think about ways in which to address issues of diversity, develop policies to address the issue, and create long-term strategies to that end. Professor Matlock agreed but added that it is also necessary to find out who is accountable for addressing the various aspects of the faculty diversity issue, including but not limited to faculty members, the administration, or the Affirmative Action Office. Chair Evans added that each department and school should create their own strategies and action-driven diversity goals because each school and department faces different challenges in terms of diversity.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS ON FOCUSING THE REPORT
It was agreed that further recommendations on how to focus the report so that it can be presented to SACUA and the Senate Assembly would be emailed to Chair Evans by Friday, 8 February.

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenya Avant
Secretary Pro-tem