COMMITTEE FOR A MULTICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

Minutes of 10 February 1998
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PRESENT: C.B. Smith (Chair), L. Kleinsmith (SACUA Liaison), S. Hunter, K. Jones, R. Megginson, C. Ransom, J. Sanchez, R. Schmerl, W-J. Yang

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

The agenda was approved without modification.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
C. Smith reminded the Committee that Eugene Roberts, former Executive Editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer and former Managing Editor of The New York Times would deliver the Eighth Annual Senate Lecture on Academic and Intellectual Freedom in the Rackham Amphitheater at 4:00 p.m. on March 16, 1998, immediately after the Annual Meeting of the Faculty Senate.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES
The minutes from January 27, 1998 were approved without modification.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS
The members of the Committee introduced themselves since there were several newly appointed members present.

RECOMMENDATIONS
C. Smith stated that the only item that would be on the agenda for the remainder of the term would be the recommendations with respect to achieving diversity that had been requested by the Senate Assembly. C. Smith reviewed briefly the three areas discussed at the preceding Committee meeting in which recommendations for action might be developed and emphasized the importance of faculty involvement in any initiatives that the Committee might develop for increasing diversity within the faculty, staff and student bodies at the University of Michigan.

C. Ransom discussed his ongoing review of previous Committee and Task Force recommendations. He described one set of recommendations generated by a Task Force appointed by former Provost C. Vest and submitted to former Provost G. Whitaker six or seven years ago. He noted that among the many recommendations in that report was personalized recruitment of undergraduate students, simplification of the process of undergraduate admissions, and the use of focus groups to develop financial aid policies.
He thought that some of the recommendations might have been implemented in part. The Committee discussed the office in the Rackham Building in Detroit that handled on-site admissions but that had been closed in recent years.

R. Schmerl noted that he had compiled a summary of such recommendations from various University committees that dated back to the early 1960's. One such recommendations was to recruit student from community colleges. He went on to say that he thought it useful to separate recommendations with respect to the achievement of greater diversity according to a matrix that would consist of (a) policies and (b) practices with respect to the two areas of (i) recruitment and (ii) retention. He commented that faculty make decisions about faculty, and that there are vast differences in manner in which undergraduate and graduate students are recruited. He offered the opinion that faculty are most interested in graduate or "professional" students. He stated that he has come across vast differences in the recruitment practices among the various schools and units within the University. R. Schmerl suggested that the issue be flushed out by careful documentation of the recruitment and retention practices and policies for faculty and students within the individual units of the University.

R. Schmerl remarked that the recruitment and retention practices differ greatly from the policies. C. Smith suggested that faculty need to be aware of the actual recruitment and retention practices within their units and elsewhere within the University. R. Schmerl then stated that he'd like to know how the system actually works. He added that faculty also need to know about the faculty role elsewhere in the country with respect to policies and practices related to the recruitment and retention of faculty.

C. Ransom noted that the University Library has it's own human resources department. When a position comes open, the human resources department looks at the pool and makes sure that it is diverse. If the pool is not diverse, a search committee is formed to expand the pool. He stated that the question that needs to be asked is "Why was the pool not diverse in the first place?"

B. Megginson noted that in collecting data, the varied cultures of each department create difficulties. He stated that some departments run ads in many different places all over the country. Then there are some departments, like the Mathematics Department, whose members go out and personally recruit. He said that there is a need for someone within each department to assess what the recruitment policies and practices really are. L. Kleinsmith added that there are no requirements for a pool.

C. Smith stated that the university has an "open to all" policy. He noted, however, that some departments get around this policy by using hiring waivers meant to facilitate the hiring of faculty from underrepresented groups. L. Kleinsmith suggested that one recommendation of the Committee might be that the University should get rid of wavers and institute a truly diversified search process. C. Smith commented that some departments specifically target people whom they want to hire as faculty members and that the whole national search process then becomes nothing more than a "charade". B. Megginson noted that there are some disciplines that are actively recruiting minorities. C.
Smith summarized the discussion point by noting that R. Schmerl had recommended that there be an evaluation of recruitment and retention practices at the unit level.

R. Megginson suggested that once you have recruited minorities the University must take appropriate steps to keep them here. He indicated that mentoring was most important and that mentoring is something that everyone gets but minorities. He added that minorities look for other minorities, even far away from their own departments for such mentoring. He recommended that there be mentoring both university-wide and at the unit and departmental levels. C. Ransom noted that although mentoring committees might exist, people don't use them because they don't know about them. L. Kleinsmith suggested that a group outside of the department collect information from the individual departments with respect to their mentoring activities. R. Schmerl suggested that by tying recommendations to money you could do a lot more. L. Kleinsmith then suggested that there be established a university-wide committee comprised of those who are willing to serve as mentors. Mentors should then be compensated for their efforts and have staff support.

L. Kleinsmith expressed interest in any comments or suggestion that the students in attendance might have. K. Jones stated that it is encouraging for students to see minorities among the faculty who teach them. He noted that minority students see such faculty members as being more understanding. S. Hunter said that sometimes you feel like the exception in a large group and seeing minority faculty helps.

L. Kleinsmith then posed the question to the students; "Do you think that a shortage of minority faculty dissuade student from majoring in a particular area?" S. Hunter answered by saying that he doesn't believe that the absence of minority faculty dissuades students from majoring in a particular field so much as it affects performance. K. Jones suggested that seeing minority faculty helps some undecided students to decide upon a major. J. Sanchez stated that she conducts tours of the university for prospective students and that such students are often concerned about the number of women faculty, and, when there is a lack of such faculty, they are often dissuaded from majoring in a certain area or even attending the University itself.

R. Schmerl expressed the opinion that students don't care about tenure and suggested that the university should recruit visiting professors to raise the comfort level of the students. R. Megginson noted that, that's where the money issue comes into play. S. Hunter suggested that visiting faculty be brought here to see if they're hirable. He expressed concern that bringing professors here strictly in a visiting capacity is just doing patch work. R. Schmerl admitted to this but defended his idea that any minority faculty would raise the comfort level of the students.

C. Ransom suggested talking with professors who are here for summer programs about staying a couple of years. C. Smith noted that there is a new Dean of Rackham, Earl Lewis, and that there might be some positive moves made in the future.
OTHER
C. Smith expressed the hope that a representative of the Office of the Provost would be present at future meetings since it is absolutely essential that the University administration participate in the formulation of the recommendations for faculty action that will be submitted to SACUA and the Senate Assembly before the end of the present term.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m. The next meeting of the Committee will be on Tuesday, February 24, 1998 at 5:15 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Student Activities Building.

Respectfully submitted

Pedrick Jones, Secretary