COMMITTEE FOR A MULTICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the Meeting of February 16, 1999

PRESENT: Professors Megginson, McGowan, Schmerl, and Smith; Mr. Ransom
GUESTS: Professor James Jackson, Director, and Dr. Evans Young, Associate Director, CAAS

1. The minutes of the meeting of February 2, 1999, were approved without emendation.

2. Professor Jackson and Dr. Young were introduced to the Committee. The main topic of discussion was CAAS's role in, and experience with, joint appointments, whether of faculty shared with LS&A departments or of faculty shared with other schools and colleges. Dr. Young, who has been with CAAS for nine years, said that formerly, the budget line was 100% CAAS in four cases he remembered (two with History and two with English), but 50/50 in another (Political Science). Negotiating joint appointments used to be difficult inasmuch as departments often made decisions without consulting CAAS. This has changed recently, and negotiations are now considerably easier and more collegial. As for promotions, the process is often traumatic for the candidates; the issue of joint appointments is one of many complicating factors.

Professor Jackson pointed out that, as far as tenure is concerned, departments are fictions: tenure is held within a school or college, not its subdivisions. For instance, two departments within LS&A had been abolished in the Shapiro/Frye administration (although one, Linguistics, had survived as a "Program"), but except for those persons who had voluntarily left the University thereafter, or retired, the tenured professors had found homes elsewhere, either in another LS&A department or in another college of the University. The circumstances under which someone can actually lose tenure are not always very clear. Even the charge of "moral turpitude" does not simplify or expedite the ensuing process. Tenure, Professor Jackson suggested, is a "mushy" concept if it is examined closely. Schmerl asked if his impression that Professor Jackson saw advantages to the mushiness was correct. Professor Jackson said that although his answer in any one instance would depend on the circumstances, on the whole, yes, he liked the flexibility and room for interpretation provided by the situation at the University.

Professor Jackson, who came to Michigan in 1971, pointed to the changes that have taken place since his arrival. He said that the Center's relative instability in its early years contributed to the suspicions in which some LS&A departments had held it. It took time and patience on all sides to correct early mistakes and find mutually supportive roles for the Center and the departments. This happened, he said, partly because over the years more and more excellent African American candidates for faculty positions in more and more departments came out of more and more graduate programs all over the country.
But Michigan was regarded as a kind of model, he said, as he found out when he served as Associate Dean at Rackham and attended CIC meetings in that capacity: other Big Ten institutions listened very carefully to his descriptions of what Michigan was doing in recruiting African American candidates and some adapted our approaches to their own campuses.

There remains, of course, much to do -- he described his hopes for widening and strengthening the Center's relationships not only throughout LS&A but with the professional schools as well, particularly Engineering and Business Administration -- but he was cautiously optimistic. There are currently 14 searches underway for faculty to hold joint appointments with CAAS and LS&A or other departments. That number is itself indicative of progress. Further, he has been encouraged by expressions of support from the Dean's office, and is sure that such support will also make an important difference.

The Committee thanked Professor Jackson and Dr. Young for their remarks and information.

3. Agreements to participate in the Committee's survey and interviews have been received from the following schools and colleges:

   College of Architecture and Urban Planning
   School of Art and Design
   School of Dentistry
   School of Education
   Law School
   College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
   Medical School
   School of Natural Resources and Environment
   School of Nursing
   College of Pharmacy
   University of Michigan-Flint

4. The final revision of the questionnaire was distributed. Revisions included a recommendation made at the previous meeting, a recommendation made through e-mail by Professor Megginson, and a revised page specifically for use with LS&A, the Medical School, and Engineering (should Engineering participate) so as to allow departmental rather than school-wide Executive Committees to respond, as Professor Pedraza had suggested. Schmerl also distributed copies of a memorandum he had received via e-mail from Professor Killion, calling particular attention to an item she felt should be included in the survey: "What action is taken if a preliminary screening of candidates indicates that few, if any, members of ethnic minorities have applied for the position?" Schmerl said that he thought this was an important question and should definitely be asked during the interviews.

5. Schmerl proposed that the distribution of questionnaires should be the responsibility of the Committee members assigned to interview the various Executive Committee members of the schools and colleges, as follows:

   Architecture and Urban Planning: Schmerl + ?
   Art and Design: Schmerl + ?
   Dentistry: McGowan + Killion
   Education: Schmerl + Ransom
   Law: Schmerl + McGowan
   Literature, Science, & the Arts: Megginson + Pedraza
   To include, if possible, but not necessarily be limited to: Chemistry, English, Mathematics, Psychology, Sociology, Medicine
The interview teams are responsible for sending the questionnaire to the indicated units, requesting that the responses be returned to the Faculty Senate office (6048 Fleming Administration Building, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1340), as soon as possible. Schmerl will send copies of the correspondence he has received to the Committee members so that they can arrange interviews of their subjects at mutually convenient times, following receipt of the responses to the questionnaire. As much as possible is to be done before the next meeting of the Committee to permit drafting and revising and submitting the report to the Faculty Senate by the end of the term.

6. Schmerl proposed that the next meeting of the Committee, scheduled for March 2, should be cancelled, inasmuch as it fell during Spring Break and it was unlikely that much progress could be reported by that date on the surveys and interviews. There was general agreement. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 16, at 5:15 p.m. in the Conference Room on the First Floor of the Student Activities Building.

7. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.