Minutes of: April 16, 2009

Approved on: October 15, 2009


Guests: Anthony Walesby, Billy Joe Evans.

Chair Holland convened the meeting at 2:10PM.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES
Chair Holland welcomed guest A. Walesby to the meeting. The minutes of the March 19th meeting were approved with edits.

OLD BUSINESS
The Committee discussed the minutes of the March 19th meeting. L. Monts clarified that he does not have, nor does he assume, any control over distributing the Committee’s report.

ANTHONY WALESBY
A. Walesby introduced himself and presented an overview of the Office of Institutional Equity. The office has three campus-wide duties: ensuring the non-discriminatory statement is followed, investigating complaints and concerns, and providing training for those in leadership positions.

A. Walesby discussed the annual affirmative action plan that the federal government requires from Universities and other institutions. The plan is data-driven and the report includes a data analysis of faculty and staff hiring. Through the analysis, the University sets a hiring goal. The goals depends on the pool, so if certain minorities are not already represented, they will not be included in the goal. For faculty, the hiring goal is established according to a data set provided by the University of Chicago. The government requires the University to use the data set, although it is not always actual, but useful in specialized areas. Staff analysis is compared to census data. The goal and data is shared with deans and department chairs.
The Committee continued to discuss the recently changed federal race categories. Individuals are first asked a two-part question, whether or not they are Hispanic, and then questions about their race. Although these new categories will not change how the University deals with data, this new categorization may misrepresent individuals. We can expect to see drops in students who formally classify themselves as African-American or Black, such as Caribbean students, who will technically be classified as Hispanic.

There is also confusion as the University, and all other institutions who must file this affirmative action annual report, can label employees however, but must eventually translate their categories while following. For example, although a dean is also a faculty member, deans are just considered administration, not faculty, when filing.

The Committee discussed exit interviews. IER sends a letter to all faculty members who leave, asking their experiences and reasons for their leaving. The letters are optional and are received by the IER, which shares them with deans and department heads. This process will hopefully eventually be carried out online. Retention interviews have been piloted for staff, and will soon be carried out campus-wide. L. Monts pointed out that it is more important to determine what can be done to improve the University environment while faculty and staff are still with the University, rather than after they leave. Exit interviews have been carried out at other universities with few, concrete results. He also noted that single, African-American women express the most dissatisfaction with the University community.

This past year, making sure each job applicant receives equal consideration is the main priority. The University has had 300,000 applicants for 55,000 staff positions, 70,000 more applicants than last year. On the faculty side, A. Walesby and IER is very concerned with impending retirements, as a significant number of minority faculty are eligible for retirement.

The Committee thanked A. Walesby for attending the meeting and invited him to revisit the Committee next year.

NEW BUSINESS
The Committee discussed its relationship with L. Monts’ office. The Committee’s charge states, “To communicate regularly with and provide input from a faculty perspective to the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and other relevant administrative groups” as one of the Committee’s functions. It was agreed that the charge should be reworded, as the relationship between the Senate Assembly’s committees and administration is very different than when the charge was written. L. Mont’s pointed out that his office’s main focus is undergraduate education, not faculty matters. He advised that the Committee reevaluate where it fits and to determine where it can provide and receive maximum cooperation and efficiency. Since the Committee is a working, not advisory, committee, it will benefit from going through various levels of administration and sharing issues, rather than having a direct relationship with L. Monts’ office.
A motion was moved to ask to modify the charge to “To communicate regularly with and provide input from a faculty perspective to the Senate Assembly and SACUA.” The motion was passed three to one. The request will be included in the Committee’s annual report to SACUA.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30PM.