Minutes of: May 12, 2010
Approved on: October 7, 2010

Members Present: H. Abadeh, K. Downing, R. Holland (Chair), K. Kearfott, N. Mirkin, Y. Xie; N. Joseph (SACUA Student Support)


Chair Holland convened the meeting at 10:07am.

Consideration of Agenda and Minutes

The committee discussed minor edits to the minutes from March 25, 2010. Minutes were accepted as amended. No items were added to the agenda.

New Business

1. Diversity Council

   R. Holland felt that the committee cannot say much about Diversity Council when none of the committee’s members have been to Diversity Council meetings. He was unsure whether or not they keep minutes, so he does not know what they are doing either. K. Downing will most likely be going to their retreat.

2. Minority graduate student conference

   K. Kearfott discussed last time about the women in engineering meeting to plan a minority conference and she suggested extending that outside of engineering. She said there could be something separate, like a conference of minority graduate students on campus. This way the students could be brought here, identified, and start connecting to UM. Somehow, there should be follow up with them, in their respective departments. Starting this sort of relationship with them would hopefully help them start feeling like UM is a good place to go. The committee agreed that the problem is that it becomes so multidisciplinary. R. Holland suggested that it could be done two to three units at a time, or just STEM. Or STEM broadly interpreted. R. Holland suggested doing it in reverse order of minority presence in UM faculty. K. Kearfott said that if it was done with STEM students then we might be able to utilize some of these resources that are available on campus like the advanced project and other resources and staff. K. Downing also suggested recruiting the WISE staff.

   Y. Xie asked about the same opportunity for Dearborn and Flint campuses, and the committee agreed that it is important for them to participate as well. R. Holland felt that the best mechanism to do this would be to flesh out the idea a little bit and then send it to SACUA asking them to probe the administration, and then draft something else in more detail later.
The committee is focused on trying to get faculty, so this is why trying to get graduate students interested is important. R. Holland said that if the problem is retention rather than recruitment, then junior faculty would be the people to address. From seeing a bigger group through a conference, they might recognize that they have a future here. K. Downing said that it seems like something that President Coleman would be interested in, especially because she comes from the sciences. R. Holland said that she did help in this respect when she was at Iowa.

K. Downing talked about how there are people on campus (i.e. John Burkhart) who do inter-generational kinds of conferences, bringing in big scholars in the area and freshly minted PhDs or assistant professors. They pair them together and do a couple days worth of activities and so on. K. Downing shared that this has been really successful. N. Mirkin suggested that the committee align with other groups. Pertaining to the report that the committee put out, she felt that we might not be in the place to do it ourselves but there are lots of resources on campus to seek the help of.

R. Holland said that he would draft something up and send it around to the committee. The letter will be addressed to SACUA initially, could be CCed to President Coleman. The Associate VP would also get a copy.

3. Summer meetings, new members, new chair

R. Holland asked the committee if they want to meet during the summer. He suggested that the committee not schedule anything unless something comes up, and the rest of the committee agreed.

On the issues of recruiting more members, there are supposed to be 12 people on the committee. The committee discussed having more diversity in membership. The committee thought to tell B. Frost because he is the SACUA liaison.

4. AAUP

R. Holland mentioned that Gary Rhoades would be giving a talk today at noon entitled, “Academic Freedom and Shared Governance in Hard Times.”

Old Business

1. Minority faculty separation survey

This survey is supposed to be updated with the new year’s data. K. Kearfott said that Jeff Lee is no longer employed by AAUP. J. Lee was responsible for updating it, so the committee was unsure what to do about that. J. Lee was also supposed to undertake the report update. R. Holland said last time he talked to him, he said he had the data just had not done anything with it yet. So, the committee needs to check who is replacing him and where that information is.

2. Minority Faculty Report Update

R. Holland said that the report was shown to the Provost through SACUA, and all that was heard was that it had a favorable reception. K. Kearfott asked if the committee could be sent a digital copy of the report. Actually, the report is online and available on the RPC SACUA website.
N. Mirkin discussed that though the recommendations of the minority report were not followed up, at least it is there. She felt that the survey would be a great thing to do because it would complement the report, so she thinks the committee should focus our efforts on that. The committee can have SACUA staff help with that survey. R. Holland said that the committee can send C. Smith a message initially and then think of a strategy.

N. Mirkin also asked about the end-of-the-year committee report. R. Holland said that he would do it and send it out to the rest of the committee.

N. Mirkin discussed the possibility of having a meeting of the chairs of all of the SACUA committees. The committee discussed this and R. Holland proposed that past and present chairs attend so they have an idea of the history of the committees.

TO BE DONE

End-of-the-year committee report- R. Holland

Draft a letter to SACUA proposing the conference.

Send C. Smith message regarding survey.

The meeting ended at 10:58am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Namita Joseph
SACUA Student Support