Minutes of: October 15th, 2009

Approved on: November 20, 2009

Members Present: H. Abadeh, K. Downing, R. Holland (Chair), C. Smith, Y. Xie, C. Smith


Consultant: Jeff Lee

Chair Holland convened the meeting at 3:14pm

Consideration of Minutes

Minutes of April 16th were approved with edits made earlier.

Old Business

1. The charge of the committee

One of the things dealt with last year was to look at the actual charge of the committee. The original charge said that it was “to communicate regularly and provide input from a faculty perspective to the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and other relevant administrative groups” which made it seem that SACMU is an advisory committee. This was seen to be a little misleading as the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, currently Dr. L. Monts, has no direct administrative role in diversity issues. A proposal was thus made to the committee that its charge be amended with “To communicate regularly with and provide input from a faculty perspective to the Senate Assembly and SACUA” replacing “to communicate regularly and provide input from a faculty perspective to the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and other relevant administrative groups.” This change has been approved by both SACUA and Senate Assembly. The complete charge now reads:

"To communicate regularly with and provide input from a faculty perspective to the Senate Assembly and SACUA."  

To advise and develop agendas, position papers and proposals to all elements of faculty governance (including Senate Assembly and all of its committees) with a strong regular liaison to SACUA.

To develop plans for involving faculty throughout the University in the implementation of initiatives concerned with reducing racism and promoting a more multicultural University.

To advocate for faculty perspectives and involvement in the implementation of the recruitment and retention of minority faculty and under-represented students.
To provide leadership for the faculty on issues and tasks related to the above goals. “

The Chair reminded the committee that it is not restricted from sending comments and recommendations to anybody else, but that as SACUA meets with the President and Provost on a regular basis it has the opportunity to move things forward.

The routine communication with SACUA should be carried out via the appointed SACUA liaison. Unfortunately in the recent past the SACUA liaison has not been present at the Committee meetings.

ACTION: CHAIR TO COMMUNICATE WITH CURRENT LIASON AND SACUA

NEW BUSINESS

1. Report on minority faculty participation.

   The report on minority faculty participation prepared by the Committee last year was accepted by SACUA and Senate Assembly and presented, by SACUA, to the Provost. Nothing in terms of agreement or implementation of its recommendations has come forth. For the benefit of new members the Chair pointed out the URL of the report on the SACUA website and distributed the last few pages of the report containing its recommendations.

   The committee discussed the recommendations. Some, like revision of race/ethnicity categories, the committee could help with but the Provost should get things started although nothing has come forward from that direction. Another recommendation was that as the data in the report indicated that retention rather than the recruitment was the problem a survey be made to determine why minority faculty left. C. Smith pointed out that Anthony Walesby had been asked at a Committee meeting which he attended about exit information. He indicated that departing faculty most often cited the attraction of a better position as the cause. K. Downing brought up the problem that there were mixed feelings about exit interviews: people don’t want to “burn bridges,” so they aren’t entirely candid. R. Holland suggested that this sort of exit survey should be done unit by unit as it is the unit that actually has the power to enhance retention. This could be effective as another recommendation was that each unit be evaluated annually as to their performance in minority faculty recruitment and retention. There is no data on the underlying causes of minority faculty loss but K. downing suggested that when a climate where people are supported and rewarded for doing good work doesn’t exist retention becomes a problem. She mentioned the recent issues of differences in the tenure process outcomes by race.

   Y Xie offered her observations as a faculty member in Dearborn. Before 2002, the College of Business in Dearborn had no minority faculty. From 2003 they started to recruit more minorities herself being one of the first to apply. She noted that most of new minority faculty are Asians.
R. Holland added that this is consistent with the data in the report where increases in Asian minority faculty but not African-American or Hispanic have occurred since 1994.

Y. Xie asked if the report had been sent to the Dearborn and Flint campuses. R. Holland said that if the committee can find out who exactly it should be addressed to, then it can be sent.

It was agreed that the Committee should persist in asking that the recommendations be considered and implemented. This should be done initially via SACUA but if this is again ineffective the Committee should communicate directly with the Provost.

ACTION: CHAIR TO COMMUNICATE WITH SACUA

2. Representation on the Diversity Council

To integrate the activities of the Committee in the university diversity community Dr. Lester Monts had suggested, earlier in the year, that the Committee be represented on the Diversity Council. This suggestion had been accepted by consensus that the Committee should nominate two members.

It was agreed that the current Chair and one other volunteer member of the Committee should be nominated.

K. Downing asked if the report had been sent to the Diversity Council. C. Smith said it wasn’t necessarily sent to the Council but that everybody on the Council had received it. The Council however did not discuss it. J. Lee suggested contacting the Diversity Council to see if the committee could present the study to them at one of their meetings.

ACTION: THE CHAIR WILL SEEK A VOLUNTEER AND FORWARD THE NOMINATIONS

3. Oversight of minority affairs

In discussing who should be approached to elicit responses to the recommendations it became clear that the Committee did not know who, in the senior university administration, has oversight over minority affairs. This is something the Committee needs to clarify. C. Smith noted that the committee needs to ask the Provost and get the answer in writing. R. Holland volunteered to write in a formal letter. He suggested asking the recorder (N. Joseph) to draft the letter.

J. Lee proposed taking a look at faculty that might be retiring in the next 5 or so years and see what the demographics of that group is and what impact that would have on the university as a whole in terms of minority faculty. The committee discussed the hypothesis that minority faculty may form a disproportionately large segment of the retiring cohort. The committee agreed that this would back up the report’s recommendation of a review of the hiring process and would help others see what the impact would be if this is not taken into account.
4. Appointment of consultant

A motion was made by C. Smith to formally make J. Lee, who has contributed enormously in terms of data collection and management, a consultant to the committee. The motion was seconded by H. Abadeh, and approved unanimously.

ACTION: CHAIR TO ENSURE THAT J. LEE IS ADDED TO THE COMMITTEE DISTRIBUTION LIST