Committee for a Multicultural University

Minutes of: November 6, 2007

Approved on: November 27, 2007

Members Present: B. Evans (Chair), C. Smith (SACUA Liaison), R. Ortega, J. Matlock, L. Monts, E. Arents (recorder).

Members Absent: B. Brush, P. Coleman-Burns, Katy Downs, R. Holland, A. Ismail, W. Lu

Materials Distributed:

1. Draft agenda
2. Committee purpose and membership, available umich.edu/~sacua/cmu/cmuindex.html
3. Draft minutes for the meeting of 16 October 2007
4. Proposed meeting schedule for Academic Year 2007-2008
5. “Human Capital Report” of the University of Michigan Human Resources, available http://www.hr.umich.edu/humancapital/
6. Excerpts from the 2006 SACUA report on faculty composition
8. “Race and Ethnicity of Faculty Members,” data set available through The Chronicle Technology Forum

Due to a miscommunication about the meeting location, call to order was delayed until 12:10 p.m.

Consideration of Minutes

Committee members reviewed the draft minutes of the 16 October meeting. The meeting minutes of 16 October were accepted with changes by consensus.

Future Meeting Schedule

Chair Evans reminded all members present that Committee meetings will be 11:30-1:00 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Due to scheduling conflicts, all members present agreed that the next scheduled meeting, originally 20 November, will be postponed by one week. The next meeting of the Committee will be 27 November at 11:30 until 1:00 p.m.

Charge to the Committee

There was discussion of the charge to the Committee, and the relationship between the Committee for a Multicultural University and the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI). Dr. Smith noted that there are two types of Senate Assembly committees: some committees are advisory to a University Vice President (according to Regents’ Bylaw), and some
Committees are advisory only to the Senate Assembly. Currently, the Committee for a Multicultural University is a Senate Assembly committee, although Senior Vice Provost Monts and Associate Vice Provost Matlock are ex-officio members. Members discussed the possibility of changing the original charge to the Committee to include a more formal, perhaps advisory, relationship to the Office of Vice Provost Monts. The matter was tabled for future discussion, upon members’ review of the original charge.

COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

Chair Evans reported that during the first meeting of the Committee, members had identified as a Committee priority the completion and analysis of the report on faculty composition begun in Academic Year 2006-2007.

As it has been suggested that the most productive analysis would include comparison between UM and other institutions, Dr. Smith noted that an early task of the Committee should be the identification of those peer institutions most appropriate for comparison. Chair Evans distributed a selection of data available on the website of The Chronicle including information about the race and ethnicity of faculty, listed by institution. This information might prove useful in comparing UM with other institutions. Senior Vice Provost Monts said that he can access any statistical information about the University of Michigan that the CMU might find useful.

There was discussion about the climate of the University. There was consensus that statistical information about faculty members of underrepresented groups is important, but that it does not tell the “whole story.” Faculty who are members of underrepresented groups are often set apart from the norm, in processes from assignment of lab space to tenure and promotion decisions. Unfortunately, these issues occur without being recorded in any measurable way. Committee members discussed the possibility of inviting faculty to closed session meetings of CMU to share their experiences. All guests would remain completely anonymous throughout the process. Discussion of these testimonials could be included in a quantitative analysis of faculty composition and climate, or it could be a CMU report independent of the ongoing research. It was agreed that a public forum might not be the most appropriate or successful means to addressing these issues. The CMU could represent those without a voice.

This kind of collection of testimonials has been completed successfully at other institutions, addressing issues such as race/ethnicity and gender issues. This could be an ongoing, continuing project of the CMU. There was discussion of the terms of classification of different underrepresented groups. The SACUA office will most likely hire someone to complete the statistical analysis. Senior Vice Provost Monts will share with Committee members some standard reports for review in future discussions. There was discussion of the report by the President’s Advisory Commission on Women’s Issues (PACWI). The CMU report might use this PACWI report as a guide. Mr. Monts asked whether there was a counterpart to the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) database for the Midwest, or for regions in the US outside of the South. There is no counterpart to the database. Mr. Monts said that he will report back to the Committee about accessing the SREB database. CMU members discussed the possibility of creating a database for the Midwest. Past efforts have been unsuccessful.
CMU members discussed the dangers of modeling efforts of one issue after the efforts of another. For instance, feminist sentiment on campus is very different from anti-racist sentiment. The two issues have similarities, but it is important to remember the differences.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

CMU members discussed the current membership of the Committee. Chair Evans and Dr. Smith said that if current members know of individuals who would contribute to the work of the Committee, there is no reason why they should not be invited and nominated as CMU members.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Arents
Secretary Pro-tem

The next meeting of the Committee for a Multicultural University will be Tuesday, November 27 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in 6039 Fleming (Student Relations Meeting Room).