Minutes of the Meeting of December 8, 1998

PRESENT: Members: Mr. Gupta, Professor Kasa-Vubu, Ms. Leung, Professors McGowan and Megginson, Mr. Ransom, Professors Schmerl, Smith, and Wang. Guests: Professor W. Collins, LS&A; Mr. R. Doster, Rackham.

1. The minutes of the meeting of November 24, 1998, were approved without emendation.

2. Professor Megginson reported that Professor Sylvia Pedraza of the Department of Sociology has agreed to join the Committee in January. She is well known on campus.

3. Professor Smith reported on the presentations by Jonathan Alger (AAUP, Washington office) and Elizabeth Barry (U-M Deputy Counsel) at the Michigan League on December 2 on legal aspects of affirmative action. The presentations emphasized that, despite various actions and lower court decisions in other states, the Supreme Court decision in the Bakke case is still the law of the land. Copies of various articles made available by Mr. Alger were distributed to Committee members.

4. Professor Schmerl reported that he had submitted the application for approval of the use of human subjects (members of the Executive Committees of the University's schools and colleges) to the IRB's Behavioral Sciences Committee. Although Ms. Linda Peterson, the administrator, had thought at first glance that expedited review might be possible (involving only herself and the Committee's Chairman), it had instead been decided to submit the application the full Committee. Schmerl asked for advice: should he offer to attend the Committee's meeting to answer questions? Professor Smith suggested, instead, that Schmerl should ask Professor Marvin Peterson of the CSHPE to attend, inasmuch as the proposed study is to be done with one of the Center's students, and the Center would most likely serve as the depository for the data.

In this connection, Professor Megginson reported that he had checked on what he had been told previously, namely, that an LS&A department loses a budget line if one of its members, up for tenure, is not approved: that had been confirmed by Professor Megginson's chairman. It was agreed that Professors Wang, Smith, and McGowan would check whether the College of Engineering, the Medical School, and the School of Dentistry, respectively, had similar policies, and report their findings to SACMU at the January 5 meeting.

5. Schmerl announced that he is to meet with Professor Ensminger on January 13. Professor Ensminger is meeting with all SACUA Committee chairs during January.
6. Professor William Collins, Director of the Comprehensive Studies Program in LS&A, was introduced. He said that he had no very original observations to offer but that he did want to confirm, from his own experience, that the basic problem confronting institutions wishing to recruit faculty members belonging to historically underrepresented groups was numbers. What is required is a long-term view. There has to be, he said, a "pump in the pipeline," if significantly more minority students are to be attracted to graduate and professional studies to pursue academic careers. Industry and government were proving to be highly attractive alternatives to academia. He said that the importance of minority faculty to minority students, as mentors and role models, is difficult to overemphasize; perhaps another question ought to be asked, namely, how much of what minority faculty have to do is valued as professional work by their colleagues. Committee assignments, for example, having to do with the recruitment and retention of minority students, may not strike some faculty members as valuable as the work more traditionally seen as advancing the discipline's or the department's interests. Professor Collins said that there may be some recognition of the importance of the work minority faculty members do as minorities, and of the time such work requires, but the growth of that perception was much to be encouraged.

In response to a question, Professor Collins said that he knew of some of Michigan's competitors that recruit minority faculty and ease them into their roles. For instance, Cornell provides some new members of its faculty with opportunities to do research before asking them to accept full teaching loads. Money, Professor Collins said, is of course always a factor. External support is a key factor in examining possibilities.

Mr. Roger Doster, Director of Academic Services at the Graduate School, was introduced. Asked to tell the Committee something about the NSF grant just received by the University to help recruit and support African American, Hispanic American, and Native American graduate students in engineering, mathematics, and the sciences, Mr. Doster said that the program would provide ten $15,000 fellowships per year for five years, plus tuition and health coverage. An eight-week summer program will include preparation for the GRE, a math workshop, and laboratory experience under the supervision of a professor or experienced graduate assistant. The program will differ from previous efforts in three respects, Mr. Doster said: (1) it will allow students to strengthen their math skills; (2) it will be "faculty-driven," i.e., a six-person faculty committee is now being formed to oversee the program, four volunteers and two members assigned 25% time each to the program; and (3) it will benefit those faculty who bring students onto their externally sponsored accounts inasmuch as the University will support up to half of the student's stipend. In fact, the idea is to get the students on sponsored accounts as soon as possible. In response to questions from Committee members, Mr. Doster said that there would be no problem about commingling the funds from the University, NSF, and the external account's sponsor in this way; that students were to be either U.S. citizens or permanent residents to be eligible; and that Pacific Islanders were not included in the Native American category.

Mr. Doster invited interested members of the Committee to join him and Dr. Abbie Robinson-Armstrong, Director of Graduate Minority Affairs, Committee on
Interinstitutional Cooperation, at noon at the Zanzibar Restaurant on Monday, January 11, 1999.

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