

SACUA'S COMMITTEE FOR AN INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY

MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 1, 2016

In attendance: Silvia Pedraza, Chair (LSA – Sociology and American Culture), Christianne Myers (Music, Theater, and Dance), Tershia Pinder-Grover (CRLT), Maria Castro (Medicine), Yin-Lon Qui (LSA – EEB), Graduate Student Representative vacant. We met in 6039 Fleming building. Tabbye N. Chavous, Director of the National Center for Institutional Diversity (NCID) and Elizabeth Cole, Associate Dean of LSA, met with us.

Absent: Jeff Moyers (Medicine), Jesus Cassida (Nursing), Robert Ortega (Social Work – SACUA Liaison), Kathleen Dow (University Library), Sandra Gunning (LSA – American Culture), Kamallesh Kumar (Dearborn - CoB), Natalie Sampson (Dearborn – Health and Human Sciences), Sarah Ahbel-Rappe (LSA – Classical Studies).

At this fourth meeting of SACUA's Committee for an Inclusive University (CIU), we met with Tabbye Chavous, Director of NCID, and Elizabeth Cole, Associate Dean of LSA, regarding the implementation of DEI's new program of Post-Doctoral Fellows.

We followed the same format of questions and issues as we did during our meeting with Robert M. Sellers. The points below were mostly made by the NCID Director, Tabbye Chavous, in response to our questions and the issues we raised.

APPLICATION THE STUDENTS MAKE:

Chavous pointed out that this year the time span between the moment when the Post-Doc programs were announced and the application being due was extremely short – one month -- because the President's DEI first had to be rolled out before this could be announced. However, they were poised to immediately announce it. The result was that, despite the short time span, in this first year there were 762 applications! This also points to how much more departments could do if they would advertise it in the national associations and the like. The high number of applicants was a lovely surprise – a signal of more to come! So generating the pool of applicants is not a problem.

Other schools that have similar programs: U of CA, Penn, North Carolina, MD – College Park, U of Chicago, MI (the Presidential Post-Docs). This shows that the diversity post-docs are becoming a strategy that is widely used to diversity the faculty and that many schools are invested in the success of these students/new faculty.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM:

The nature of the mentoring relationship needs to be clarified. The Fellow is not a mentee in the research-apprentice sense. We want them to become independent scholars, leading the research, though in the natural sciences the Fellows may start out as being part of someone's lab. Fellows will be considered who completed their Ph Ds as far back as 2014.

The application is then in the hands of the Department. They select the people, they are very much involved, as they are the ones that will read all the initial files. The Department may make a first cut saying they want 1, 2, or No Fellows, but they are very involved from the start. Then it goes back to the College Faculty Evaluation Committee (CFEC) – not the LSA Executive Committee. This CFEC committee was formed for the purpose of this program. At present, it has members from Philosophy, American Culture, ADVANCE, the Presidential Post-Docs, Psychology, and the Social Sciences. The Departments already initially vetted the Fellows with respect to academic excellence. Now CFEC will evaluate them with respect to their demonstrated commitment to diversity.

It will be possible for particular Departments to have more than one Fellow, so as not to penalize those who have been doing it well. While this program is initially for LSA, it is intended to be a model for other units on campus.

In addition to a good salary and benefits, the Fellows will receive support for their families: child care, especially important for single women, and dual career. This is also a recruitment mechanism.

The various programs of Post-Docs at present are funded separately and have different structures. With the Presidential Fellows and the LSA Post-Docs', the explicit goal is to diversify the faculty at U of M, since there is a tenure-line attached to them. The LSA Post-Docs are funded by the Provost's Office. With the NCID Post-Docs, there was not necessarily a faculty line attached to them, so the implicit goal was more of a mix, and the NCID Post-Docs could go on to other schools. Now increasingly we have Policy Post-Docs.

RESULTS OF THE PROGRAM:

At present, U of M Ph Ds are not eligible for this program. We seek to identify outstanding candidates and to bring them here. We don't need this mechanism to hire our own. Our talented Ph Ds should go somewhere else as Post-Docs, and then they can come back to U of M. These Post-Docs have a real chance of becoming a faculty member here.

With respect to the Post-Docs program, the Departments (or Schools) remain the decision-makers at all points, including tenure.

Now we are developing these mentoring best practices. For a department to hire them, they have to have a mentoring plan in place for the Fellows. LAUNCH committees. NCID will be providing complimentary supports. What should mentoring support look like?

DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL RECRUITMENT, COLLABORATION:

These Post-Docs have a real chance of becoming a faculty member here. Not only because there is a tenure-line attached to the Post-Doc, but also because success is defined not just by the hiring of Fellows but, hopefully, by their eventually gaining tenure.

Thus, it is important that a network of Ph Ds be created, so that the Fellows do not feel alone, odd, or isolated. It will be important to connect these Fellows with other Fellows, such as those in the Presidential Post-Docs.

The key criteria for these Fellows is their demonstrated commitment to diversity. The hope is that this can be demonstrated not only by their research but also by the nature of their service – to their Department (or School) as well as to other units. Rather than being penalized by their service, their service for diversity should be taken into account as one of the ways they can demonstrate their commitment to diversity. At present, some units are already doing so – e.g., in the School of Theater, Music, and Dance, faculty are asked to list their work on DEI in their Annual Report. This is brand new. We hope their contribution to DEI will be part of the criteria for evaluation in other units, in the future.

The extremely large number of applications that we received shows these applicants are being highly vetted and recruited candidates, and that the program is very competitive. The new Fellows program is attracting the cream of the crop!

We thanked Tabbye Chavous and Elizabeth Cole for meeting with us and reassuring us that the two Post-Doctoral programs that aim to diversity the faculty have been so carefully thought through and are in such good hands.

SACUA's CIU was extremely busy this Fall, meeting no less than four times. For next semester, we plan to write a short Report endorsing the excellence of this effort and asking SACUA for its support for this program, support which can only enable it to be successful.

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sylvia Pedrago". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "With my best wishes,".