

MEMORANDUM

TO: School of Education Policy Council
Barry Bull, Chair
FROM: Russ Skiba, Chair, Committee on Diversity
SUBJECT: Annual Committee Report to Policy Council: Diversity Committee
DATE: April 21, 2008

The Diversity Committee has met five times this year thus far, and will meet once more in May to review proposals for the Diversity and Equity Research Initiative.

The majority of our efforts this year fell into two categories, further developing the recommendations of the committee regarding the recruitment of under-represented students in the teacher education program, and beginning to address issues of the retention of under-represented faculty, particularly with respect to faculty mentoring.

Recruitment Recommendations

This year, we disseminated the recommendations we made regarding Goal 5.3 of the Strategic Plan, *Recruit and retain underrepresented undergraduate students* to the Dean's Office and Policy Council. There are two immediate recommendations and two long-term recommendations. First, we are recommending that, as a research institution, the School of Education make the recruitment of under-represented undergraduate and graduate students a research agenda through the provision of faculty and staff time devoted to the topic. Second, to address issues that have been raised regarding PRAXIS, we recommend any strategy that may result in students taking PRAXIS early in their college career, including the possibility of an administration of PRAXIS I at the School of Education. More long-term recommendations are to employ a variety of strategic recruitment outreach efforts, and to make equity in application, admission, and graduation a school-wide institutional priority.

As a result of these recommendations, the Dean offered a new \$100,000 Diversity and Equity Research Initiative. With the assistance of the Dean's Office, the Committee defined the parameters of the competition, and developed a set of criteria for the RFP, which were disseminated to the faculty on February 29, with a closing date of April 11. We received nine proposals for funding, and will be reviewing those at our final meeting in May.

The Committee's recommendations regarding recruitment were also reviewed by the Policy Council. In the process of reviewing those recommendations, the Policy Council decided to make diversity and equity issues in the School of Education a standing item on its agenda. The Committee on Diversity looks forward to hearing from the Policy Council the implications of any of those discussions, and will be happy to assist in developing proposals for programmatic or structural change in the SOE that may arise from those discussions.

Faculty Retention and Mentoring

As part of the Committee's ongoing review of Strategic Goal #5, we turned our attention to Task 5.5, *Recruit and Retain Under-represented Faculty*. In particular, the Committee began to address issues of mentoring of junior faculty, under the section that reads:

c. Strengthen mechanisms to support underrepresented junior faculty through the tenure process and dossier preparation, including a mentor program that matches new faculty with more established faculty.

In the Committee's discussion, a number of issues were raised. The need for faculty mentoring appears to be especially critical for junior faculty, but the process of mentoring appears to be inconsistent across units. As a result, the "terminal objectives" of the process of tenure and promotion may not always be clear to junior faculty. For all faculty, of course, there are multiple sources that pull at one's time. While this is an important issue for junior faculty, it may be an even more important consideration for junior faculty from under-represented groups. With a strong tradition of social justice and community among faculty from under-represented groups, there is a strong desire and perhaps even a pressure (both externally and from oneself) to be involved in activities that address important community needs. It is not always the case, however, that such involvement furthers one's research career, and it even be that such service, as important as it is in maintaining community, conflicts with what needs to accomplish in order to progress towards meeting tenure and promotion criteria. Finally, not all departments value all research paradigms equally. In order to ensure that junior faculty are on track towards tenure and promotion, mentoring must be a two-way street, so that junior faculty know the type of work that is expected in the dossier, and the department is aware of the type of research that its junior faculty are engaged in.

The Committee's discussions about mentoring were put on hold to some extent during the formulation of the Diversity and Equity Research Initiative (although some of the discussion on faculty retention and mentoring did enter into our considerations in formulating the DERI application guidelines). We will be continuing this discussion, and hope to offer recommendations in the 2008-09 academic year.

Respectfully submitted to the Policy Council by Russell Skiba for the Diversity Committee.

Members in attendance this year:

Dionne Danns, Melissa Gresalfi, Michael Tracy, Robin Hughes, Tarajeon Yazzie-Mintz, Jose Rosario, Margaret Sutton, Richard Lesh, Patty Reyes, Sunny Watson, Becky Perez, Timberly Baker, Ghangis Carter (Ex-Officio), Leigh Featherstone (Ex-Officio), Russ Skiba (Chair)