

Status of Minorities Council

Minutes for September 11, 2006

Council Members Present: Mari Castañeda (Chair), Janet Rifkin, Ernest May, Ingrid Holm, Anne L. Moore, Juan Zamora, Tara Lindros, Laura Lovett, Andy Effrat

Topic: Recruitment and Retention Issues

Interviews: At the Provost's request, Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention, Andy Effrat, and Associate Chancellor, Esther Terry, have begun a process of exit interviews for departing faculty and entry interviews for all new faculty this year in an effort to identify how the campus can best identify particular issues for retention and recruitment. Dean Janet Rifkin wondered if it might be advisable to have a member of the Status of Minorities Council present at those interviews, or in direct communication with Effrat and Terry on findings. Preliminary findings suggest that faculty who are leaving describe a lack of support from colleagues or lack of welcoming atmosphere as rationales for departures.

New Programs: Rifkin also recommended a means of communication between this Council and some of the new faculty mentoring/advocacy programs. Mary Deane Sorcinelli, Associate Provost directing some of these programs, will be invited to meet with the Council at a future meeting. Also recommended that some means of communication with some of the departments currently piloting mentoring programs for pre-tenure faculty be established by the Council and that Council consider presenting at the Department Chairs meeting. Status of Minorities Council Chair described receiving a number of phone calls from new faculty with issues of concern, including that technological or teaching resources were not available when new faculty arrived on campus. While the "new" culture of responsiveness from Chairs should ideally help offset these issues, there was still the recommendation that Joyce Hatch in Administration and Finance be made aware of such concerns. It is important that the campus make new faculty feel welcome.

Search Committees: Especially in light of the 250 Plan, the Provost's Office has required at least one faculty of color for each search committee in an effort to assure a commitment to diversity at all stages of the search and hiring process. The Council discussed the proposal in the MSP newsletter last fall that the commitment to diversity in such recruitment efforts might be met in those cases where such service would overtax faculty of color in smaller departments or departments with large numbers of searches by setting up a committee for faculty especially interested in diversity to help with the search process.

Topic: "Expect Respect": UMass History Department response to civility issues with students in classes targeting new faculty (especially faculty of color and female faculty) produced a letter for new UMass student packets urging civil behavior in classrooms. This was proposed as part of the First Year Task Force between the Dean of Students and Student Affairs. It was recommended that Status of Minority Council members review the "Expect Respect" program at the University of Michigan as a potential model for helping to build the kind of respectful and inclusive community that welcomes all members. While the History Department letter might be a start, Council members should consider whether a wider program might be optimal. See <http://www.urespect.umich.edu/>

Topic: Search Results: The following results were reported by Andy Effrat about the previous years' searches:

Upward revision of Amherst 250 hires – another 10, so from 16 to 26 this year = net new hires, in addition to any unfilled last year

15 unfilled, 15 carry-over searches

Only 9 hired last year

Lost 45 to retirement and leaving

Last year: 106 searches approved, 60 were successful, 15 failed, so 75

About 50 retirements, departures, and deaths

Faculty issues, overwhelmed faculty

26 + 15 from last year + replacements = about 60 searches this year, could be higher – could be in the 80s or 90s

Minority candidates:

Women have held steady over 25 years, now at 40%

Diversity hires = 1/3 of 60

Women and or minorities = 63% of searches

Next year's projected search numbers:

26 + 15 from last year + replacements = about 60 searches this year, could be higher – could be in the 80s or 90s

Issues of **partner hires** may be important to consider in diversity recruitment since statistics show that a larger proportion of younger minority faculty partner with other faculty.

Commuting issues and housing costs, as well, make new recruitment, especially for minority faculty.