

SOMC Meeting
November 7, 2005

Attendance: Mari, Ingrid, Buju, Ernie, Gladys, Stephanie, Joan, Gianpaolo

(Mike Gargano, Lee Edwards and Anne Moore notified the Chair that they would not be able to attend).

I. Liaison Subcommittee

Mari reported that she met with Nelson Acosta from the Office of ALANA Affairs to hear about what they are doing around student diversity issues. She also reported that there is a diversity initiative in her department (Communications).

Ernie suggested that Mari meet with the Director of Admissions.

II. Research and Monitoring Subcommittee

This Subcommittee met to review the Affirmative Action report. They found some discrepancies in the data, based on what they knew about their own departments. They decided to divide up departments and contact each one to ask:

- how does the reported data compare to your department demographics now?
- is your department doing a search this year? If so, how many?
- If you are searching, what steps, if any, are you taking to increase the diversity of the applicant pool? How is your department approaching the diversity issue?
What is the composition of the search committee – do you have a person of color on the committee? Were you told that you had to do this?

The Subcommittee reported that they have had a hard time getting this information from some departments. Some are reluctant to put anything in writing, or to answer at all because they feel it is a sensitive topic. We are not sure what channels we have to get the data – is this public information? Do departments have to tell us?

From information gathered so far, it seems that each department has a different idea about what they should be doing, what is legal, “who counts,” who must be on search committees, etc. It appears there is not consistency across departments.

How can we pursue written guidelines about job searches?

Ernie suggested that we can bring this up at the Rules Committee/Administration meeting. To do this, we need to submit questions for the Chancellor and Provost. These must be submitted in writing, at least one week before the next meeting on November 28.

Ernie reported that Charlena has said that all new avenues are being explored for diversity initiatives. They have hired a service to help with this. He reported that the Administration says they are hiring 50 new faculty this year to fill replacement positions, and an additional 50 as part of the UMass 250 plan, to be based on teaching needs.

We raised the question on benchmarking. Can we add diversity requirements into the benchmarks? Some AQADs use this in their reports already. We should explore what we can do to advocate for this. Perhaps we can say we need to compare percentage of faculty of color by department as a criteria to compare to peer institutions. Perhaps we can argue that faculty hires should be prioritized in departments that teach a greater share of students of color.