

Status of Minorities Council

–Minutes for December 4, 2006

Council Members Present: Mari Castañeda (Chair), Janet Rifkin, Ingrid Holm, Ernie May, Andy Effrat, Juan Zamora, Ron Wellborn, Tara Lindros, Laura Lovett (Notetaker)

Topic: Mutual Mentoring Program at UMASS

Mary Deane Sorcinelli, Associate Provost for Faculty Development Presented the Mutual Mentoring Program, currently under development at Umass.

Facilitated with a modest planning grant from the Mellon Foundation, the Provost's office has begun to apply to further develop this project. Where Mellon had previously funded Graduate and Undergraduate programs to support students from under-represented groups, Provost Seymour suggested that UMASS can set a precedent with mentoring faculty. Indeed, the "Mutual Mentoring" presented on this campus is an innovative model. (NOTE: PROVOST SEYMOUR coined and has trademarked this term.)

The Planning grant included one-one-one meetings with 32 faculty chairs, deans and administrators, focus groups with 23 1st and 2nd year pre-tenure faculty, written feedback from 59 early career faculty at a Tenure Preparation Seminar and 57 at a New Faculty Orientation, as well as an electronic survey of 240+ pretenure faculty, Interviews with 5 College, Inc, Staff and site visits to 4 other campuses.

The planning grant ends this fall, and UMASS has been invited to apply to follow up. The website, under construction, heralds the five year growth plans for faculty as an opportunity. Information on the website will include resources on Getting started in Teaching and Research, Developing academic careers and establishing self and family in the Amherst Area.

Rather than a traditional, hierarchically-conceived mentoring model, the Mutual Mentoring Model suggests a non-hierarchical system of mentoring that allows all members of the UMASS community to teach and learn from each other.

Implementation of this model include a writing coach, time management coach as well as five departments that are building Mutual Mentoring Programs and the establishment of a Woman of Color Faculty List, the "Blacklist." The website and guidelines for searches as well as exit interviews with departing faculty and eventually interviews with all pre-tenure faculty, are in the works.

Obstacles to this include:

1. Persuading often over-whelmed new faculty that this is worth their time
2. The “Sustainability” of the programs beyond the Mellon grant.

On sustainability, models from Jacqueline Pinn’s work under Student Affairs, especially with the Office of Programs and Services for ALANA Students (OPSAS)? Additional funding from FORD< NSF, NEH for mentoring and faculty research?

DISCUSSION

Mari Castañeda brought up the issue of varied experiences and backgrounds for Faculty of Color and the need to think about Family Issues/ Work/Life supports. Especially in a “revolving door” phenomenon where family poses special challenges. Age, as well, should be taken into account, since “NEW” doesn’t always mean “Out of the gate”

NOTE: Juan Zamora noted that on the issue of terminology, Hispanics do not distinguish by color and lots of faculty from under-represented groups” might resist this label.

Mari Castañeda conceded that she uses the term synonymously with “Minority”

Janet Rifkin: From Dean’s POV, Interviewees often ask questions about research and support for research but not about teaching or mentoring. This program, then, needs to be a resource at the College/Dept level but also to allow faculty to pull mentoring resources outside the college.

Mary Dean Sorcinelli notes that this program is really a Career advancement/Development Program; it’s much larger than two people talking to each other. Chairs are really critical but more faculty, as well.

Juan Zamora urged for a Faculty Senate ‘buy-in’ to facilitate adoption.

Ron Wellborn noted cross-campus buy-in because Faculty of Color often work in Interdisciplinary ways and programs.

Mari Castañeda noted the Center for Latin American Studies is a terrific model for this which led to a discussion of THE FIVE COLLEGE NETWORK as an especially strong resource in the area for this model.

Janet Rifkin noted that Funding for Five College Centers would help with sustaining this program, CESA as a model that supports Diversity, Research and Teaching.

End of Meeting.