1. The Academic Priorities Council voted to approve the Center for the Study of African American Language (with nine members in favor and one abstention). The Center will foster research on language in the African American community and application of that research in educational and social settings. It will enhance the training of educators concerned with language and dialect-related issues, and support the University’s outreach mission, multicultural awareness and respect for diversity. The Center will build on the expertise of UMass and Five College faculty and can serve as a catalyst for external funding opportunities.

2. The Academic Priorities Council unanimously approved the Social Justice Education (SJE) Graduate Certificate in Teaching for Diversity. The Certificate will provide a graduate program of study incorporating social justice topics, curricular design and facilitation skills and practicum opportunities teaching UMass General Education and departmental diversity courses. It will support graduate students across various programs and can serve to enhance their skills in teaching general education courses incorporating diversity and social justice. It should be noted that courses described in the proposal require course numbers as indicated in the Faculty Senate’s guidelines for Graduate Certificate Requirements. Two courses in the proposal “Prejudice and Stereotyping” and “Social Justice Mediation” do not currently have course numbers.

3. The proposal for a Graduate Certificate in African Diaspora Studies was discussed. Yemisi forwarded a letter addressing earlier questions and the responses were also discussed. The following points are in need of clarification at the April 7th Meeting. Yemisi Jimoh will be attending that meeting to answer questions.

- On p. 3 of the letter (under point #7), it was indicated that “the certificate is not tied to and never was tied in any way to a MA thesis or a doctoral dissertation.” The letter goes on to say that “the certificate is designed to be free-standing and independent of any other graduate degree”. However, on p. 6 of the proposal, it was indicated that “A thesis quality scholarly project with the possibility of combining the African Diaspora Studies Certificate project with a master’s or doctoral thesis from a graduate program at UMass or any of the other Five Colleges graduate programs” may count for 2-4 credits toward the final independent research project. In addition, it was indicated that “the public talk for the Graduate Certificate in African Diaspora Studies may be presented as part of the Master’s or Doctoral thesis defense in those cases when the independent research for the Graduate Certificate and the thesis have been combined.”

- Clarification is needed on the number of credits required and how students would gain those credits. On p. 5, the requirements are listed as 20 credit hours. It appears that there are two required four credit courses (these courses are required to have course numbers),
one or more courses from the ADS course list (4 credits) with instructions that at least one course be selected from courses listed, two elective courses for 6-8 credits, and a 2-4 credit independent study project. If students took the two required courses (8 credits in total) plus one course from the ADS list (8 + 4 = 12 credits) plus the two elective courses (assume 2 courses at 4 credits each, so 12 + 8 = 20 credits), they will have 20 credits before the independent research project. Would it be necessary for them to undertake the research project? The compilation of credits needs clarification so that it is clear to students.

- For students in the Afro American degree program, is fulfilling these requirements a concentration or a certificate? For students outside the department, it is clearly a certificate. Inside the department, is tends to be a concentration. A “certificate is superceded by awarding a degree”.

- The Afro American degree program requirements need to be stated. The extent of overlap must be clarified. The proposal needs to clarify where courses are counted for the degree and the certificate. Please bring the Afro American Requirements. Overlap is possible but it needs to be specified.

- Course numbers need to be included in the proposal. A graduate certificate proposal cannot have courses to be determined. New courses need to be approved by the Faculty Senate. In the letter received, it was stated “all of the courses for the African Diaspora Studies certificate are in place except for the foundational courses. The foundational courses would not support our current graduate program and would be of value to us primarily as part of the certificate or as elective courses”. It was indicated that the department wouldn’t have a problem offering the courses as long as there are students in the certificate program. What is the minimum number of students needed to offer the courses? This needs clarification. Students pursuing a certificate need assurance that courses required for the certificate will be offered regularly.