



Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Community, Diversity, and Social Justice Report  
*Spring 2005*

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*Report of the  
Community, Diversity, and Social Justice Committee  
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Spring 2005*

The goals of the Social and Behavioral Science's Community, Diversity and Social Justice (CDSJ) Committee were to identify and address issues of inclusion, diversity, and equity that are lacking in the overall academic and working environment for faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students. The Committee met several times since October to analyze and discuss data provided by the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment and Office of Institutional Research. The Committee membership included five faculty, one professional staff, two classified staff, three graduate students and three undergraduate students.

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*Challenges of the CDSJ Initiative in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences*

- The small number of survey respondents created some ambiguity for committee members who were hesitant in relying on the data to accurately assess and identify problematic areas especially within the student area. To address the problematic student data the Committee intends to organize student focus groups to better address particular areas of concern.
- In general, Committee members were committed to the goals and mission of the CDSJ initiative, but low attendance suggests that, for a few members, the committee was not always a top priority. Perhaps this lack of commitment was caused by previous committee experience where much time and effort was put forth with little change or action. Regardless, the amount of time needed for members to invest in the College's CDSJ Initiative, without release time or assistance of a fulltime RA position, will play an enormous role in the Committee's future success. The availability of financial resources to achieve our goals in a timely manner continues to be a concern for the Committee.
- The difficulty in establishing the level of participation by the undergraduate students on the Committee proved to be a challenge. We invited undergraduate students to join the committee to include them as part of our community. However, the undergraduate students were faced with unintended confusion and exclusion by the committee's focus on staff and faculty issues, due to unclear goals and objectives on the part of the Academic Affairs CDSJ Initiative. How do undergraduates fit into the missions and goals of the Academic Affairs CDSJ initiatives versus the Student Affairs CDSJ? Students expressed concern of not having a strong enough voice to address their classroom experiences within Student Affairs.

### *Introduction to Goals of the College CDSJ Committee*

The Social and Behavioral Science's CDSJ Committee's goals and recommendations are presented in four parts: Faculty, Staff, Graduate Students and Undergraduate Students. In order to achieve our goals as outlined in the report, the Committee first and foremost asks that the Dean direct each department in the College to establish a standing CDSJ committee. Given the size and unique aspects of each department, these committees should be designed based on the needs of the department. The departmental CDSJ Committee will be charged with continually addressing issues related to the CDSJ initiative and provide an outlet for faculty, staff, and students to direct questions or concerns. The Committee membership should include faculty, staff and students who are committed to Community, Diversity and Social Justice.

Keeping in mind that the recommendations in this report are change goals at the college or department level, we want to be clear that some of the issues presented cannot be fully addressed without the University taking an active role in our efforts as we begin the implementation stage of our recommendations.<sup>1</sup> Some of our goals are short-term for the first year of implementation, while others are more long-term commitments to build on what we have learned and to allow for future adjustments as the climate and demographics of the college change.

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<sup>1</sup> Particularly important to classified staff's work issues such as inaccurate job descriptions, lack of advancement opportunities and diversity of its employee group.

## FACULTY

Submitted by Bernie Jones, Maureen Perry-Jenkins and Randall Stokes

### Goal

*The primary goal related to faculty is to increase the diversity of the faculty in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.*

### Data

- Data from the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Office (EOD) indicate that out of 154 full-time, tenure system faculty in 2004, 21 (13.6%) were minority.\*
- In addition, the EOD faculty utilization report indicated that the Psychology department was “underutilized” in the area of minority faculty. This means that given the pool of qualified minority candidates in the social sciences, the departments should have higher numbers of minority faculty in.
- The most highly qualified candidates of color, however, are sought after by many institutions, and recruitment is very competitive. This means that successful recruiting will require a number of special provisions.

### Recommendations

- Departments should develop databases of minority scholars identified through: 1) professional organizations, 2) current faculty contacts, 3) the development of stronger relationships with programs known for developing minority scholars, and 4) contact with leading minority scholars with reputations for mentoring minority graduate students.
- Given the competitive market, departments should consider hiring minority candidates at an earlier stage in their careers.
- Departments should write advertisements in a way that does not foreclose considering minority candidates who might be in precisely the areas for which candidates are being recruited.
- The University Administration should provide Dean with explicit funding conditions for special opportunity hires that would allow departments to approach qualified candidates as they arise.

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\* Another report, from the *Factbook Table Race/Ethnicity Gender by Job Classification* (Office of Institutional Research?) indicates that in the Fall of 2004, CBSS had 211 faculty. 127 were men, 84 were women. Of the men, 7 were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4 were African American, 5 were Hispanic and 107 were white. Of the women, 4 were Asian /Pacific Islander, 4 were African American, 2 were Hispanic and 73 were white. One female faculty member did not report her race/ethnicity, and 4 male faculty members did not.

## Goal

*To pay special attention to issues of faculty retention, especially retention of faculty of color and women*

## Data

- We have not found any data that documents faculty retention rates at UMass Amherst; these data will be important to have as we document our progress in areas of faculty hiring.

## Recommendations

- Set up a data collection system in the college that tracks data on faculty retention and break down these data by gender and minority status of the faculty person
- Departments develop mentoring systems for junior faculty, particularly for minority faculty.
- Departments limit service obligations and course preparations for junior and minority faculty during the pre-tenure years.
- The College becomes better prepared to respond to external offers.

## Goal

*To develop a more supportive environment for female faculty in the College, especially untenured female faculty*

## Data

- In the larger Academic Affairs Community, Diversity, and Social Justice Assessment Report (AACDSJ), data indicated that women report significantly less work satisfaction, harmony at work and a less positive diversity climate than men. These same patterns emerged for female faculty.
- In an effort to understand these issues further, a focus group of female faculty around campus was convened. Data from this group indicated that across campus some female faculty were experiencing unfair treatment around work and family issues and differential treatment from graduate and undergraduate students. Given the small sample size, inferences to the issues in the College could not be made.

## Recommendation

- Convene focus groups with female faculty, including a good number of junior female faculty, to discuss issues from the larger AACDSJ report and to explore possible issues of concern for this group.

## **CLASSIFIED STAFF WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Submitted by Wendy Matys, Susanne Hale and Deborah Reiter

### **Goal**

*To create a work environment that is respectful, equitable and inclusive for classified staff and to encourage professional growth of classified employees.*

### **Data**

- Fifty-four percent of classified staff in the College felt that their job descriptions do not accurately reflect their duties. The University's antiquated job classification system used for classified employees job descriptions needs to be revamped.
- Ninety-six percent of classified staff felt that their workload has increased. At the same time, 77.4% did not feel that their pay was fair for the work they do.
- Twenty-nine percent of classified staff *observed* unfair treatment in their workplace due to classism and 35.5% *experienced* unfair treatment due to classism. Forty-two percent feel their supervisors do not adequately address inappropriate behaviors as they occur in their work environment.
- Thirty-one percent of classified staff felt that the sense of community was weak and could be improved. Fifty-seven percent felt issues of community should play a central role in their department.

### **Recommendations**

- The College establish a policy requiring all current and new supervisors to participate in workshops and/or training offered by Workplace Learning and Development or the Center for Teaching. The objective is to bring about awareness of classified staff's work climate and job duties, to address issues of classism and sexism and familiarize supervisors with the union rights of the staff they supervise.
- Departments include staff in the decision-making process of hiring or appointing faculty, professional or other classified staff who will be in supervisory positions. Search committees shall be required to arrange candidates to meet with staff and to include staff evaluative comments and feedback of candidates in their deliberations.
- The College explores the possibility of an annual evaluation process of supervisors by, employees.
- Creation of a college website for classified and professional employees. The website would include links to promote awareness of their rights pertaining to classism, harassment and empowerment, as well as to provide a link to the University Staff Association's website. Also, included would be a resource library, a community bulletin board to share ideas and shortcuts to work-related issues and links to commonly used University sites.

- The College offer community based wellness workshops developed through Workplace Development and Training or other outside resources.
- The College develop classes/workshops targeted at enhancing and/or developing computer and administrative skills of SBS staff. Offer classes in website design, database management, spreadsheet software, PeopleSoft systems to give staff additional skills for any future employment opportunities that might arise. Workshops should be held within the College's physical area.
- The College create an annual award for classified staff based on community and/or department service to encourage and stimulate professional growth.
- Departments encourage staff to take University classes, attend lectures and participate on Committees by granting release time.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS: IMPROVING THE WORKPLACE

Submitted by Ralph Faulkingham, Brian Kapitulik and Brad Mapes-Martins

### Goals

*The committee has three goals for improving the workplace for graduate student employees: 1) Decrease the incidents of sex and race/ethnicity based harassment and unfair treatment, 2) Increase awareness among graduate students of how CDSJ issues impact their work as teachers and researchers, and 3) Increase the diversity of graduate students in the College.*

### Data

- Overall, CSBS TAs report experiencing and observing more harassment or unfair treatment than TAs in other schools and colleges at UMass. This is especially true of ALANA students (46.7%) and women (35.8%).
- Despite our general expectation that CDSJ issues are central to our disciplines' research and teaching, only women and ALANA TAs appear more committed to CDSJ in the way they teach than TAs in other schools and colleges.
- Table 3 of the Graduate School's annual *Fact Book* shows that college-wide there is virtually no change over the past decade in the percentage of graduate students of color (13.5%), although there is significant variation from one department to the next. Both anthropology and sociology nearly doubled the percentage of graduate students of color over the decade, while most departments showed an actual decline. The April 2000 national census reports that Americans of color constitute 27% of all US citizens.

### Recommendations

- Conduct interviews to gain a better understanding of the scope, context and details of harassment experienced by women and graduate students of color. This sensitivity is central to help us make more concrete plans for action.
- That the College require all new TAs to receive training on diversity issues either through the Center for Teaching as part of new employee orientation, or in departmentally-based orientations.
- Increase efforts at the departmental level, at least up to the national demographic profile, to recruit and retain more graduate students of color. Actions include: 1) Offering more fellowships and TAs to ALANA students, 2) Closer coordination with the Graduate School's Office of Minority Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention and 3) Increasing the number of faculty of color, who can serve as mentors for students.

## UNDERGRADUATES: TEACHING & LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Submitted by Susanne Hale, Mollie Lorberbaum, Lauren Russell

### **Goal**

*To cultivate a safe and respectful learning environment, to gain from undergraduates accurate and timely information about their classroom experience, and to increase the diversity of undergraduate students in the College.*

### **Data**

- Nearly one third of SBS ALANA students report their instructors making stereotyping remarks about their racial or ethnic group (Latino 29.2%, Asian 33.3%, Black 28.1%) (OAPA, 2005, p. 2).
- Forty-two percent of Latino students and 28% of Black students reported feeling excluded or silenced in class because of a personal characteristic such as race, gender, ability, social class, or sexual orientation (OAPA, 2005, p. 1).
- Twenty-five percent of Latino students and 16% of Black students felt unfairly targeted or singled out by course instructors because of their race/ethnicity (OAPA, 2005, p. 2).
- In fall 2004, 17.2% of SBS undergraduates were ALANA students (OIR, 2005, p. 4). In contrast, it is estimated that in less than ten years, nationally nearly half (42%) of high school graduates will be from racial minorities (Lombardi, 2005, P. 18).

### **Recommendations**

- Conduct focus groups with ALANA students in order to identify and understand the nature and source of the problems mentioned above. Consider for the future conducting focus groups on class or gender with other groups of students according to the responses and data gathered in the first round of focus groups.
- Develop a timely and effective method for students to report about incidents and teaching patterns they find culturally insensitive.
- Develop a more robust survey instrument (based on the results of the focus groups), to gain a clear and accurate picture of student experience in the classroom. Find an effective way to increase survey participation, perhaps by administering it through an expanded course evaluation form or a mid-semester email survey. In order to monitor progress toward our goals, this survey should be administered annually, starting in spring 2006.
- Based on the outcome of the focus groups and surveys, develop an appropriate response, which may include dissemination of results to instructors, expanded teaching support, and/or CDSJ training. Provide proposal-writing support and incentives for participation in the Center for Teaching's Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom Program (TLDC) at the department and college-wide

level.

- The University mandates that all new instructors receive training on CDSJ initiatives through the Center for Teaching as part of new employee orientation.
- Increase efforts to recruit and retain undergraduates of color by coordinating closely with the new diversity recruitment staff in Admissions, by providing incentives for departments who offer needed support to ALANA students (e.g., advising, mentoring, tutoring, liaising with financial aid, etc.), by recruitment of faculty of color, and by increasing Teaching Assistantships for graduate students of color.
- Work toward creating a mentor system in College which will provide rewards and incentives for faculty of color who mentor ALANA students, as has historically happened informally and without reward.
- Create a college-based organization for ALANA students and faculty of color that would provide a safe space for networking, resources and support.

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