General Committee Charge

The Committee on Diversity and Equity aids Penn in fostering and taking full advantage of its diversity as well as in strengthening ties across all boundaries to enrich and enliven the campus community. The Committee shall advise the offices of the president, provost, and the executive vice presidents on ways to develop and maintain a supportive atmosphere on campus for the inclusion and appreciation of diversity among all members of the University community. The Committee will review and provide advice regarding the University’s equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and policies. The areas in which the Committee shall report to the Council include diversity within the educational and work settings, integration of staff and faculty into the larger campus community, and ways to foster a campus environment that is inclusive and supportive of difference. The Committee also will advise the administration on specific diversity issues that may arise on campus.

2012-2013 Specific Charges

1. Work with the Office of the Provost and with the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity (SCFDDE) to assess the impact and effectiveness of school-level facilitators and their interactions with faculty search processes to identify university-wide barriers to the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty; and to monitor the implementation of the University of Pennsylvania Diversity Action Plan.

2. Monitor University processes documenting recruitment, retention, and graduation of underrepresented minority graduate and undergraduate students with the Office of the Provost and any other appropriate university offices.

3. Assess progress on gender-nonspecific campus policies relating to faculty, staff, and students.

4. Assess the efforts to build cultural understanding, inclusiveness, and support across campus related to one of the following: different faith traditions, race, socioeconomic status, gender identity or sexual orientation.

5. Review and discuss this Committee’s general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given the highest priority for the committee’s work in AY 2013-2014.

PRIORITIES

After reviewing its charges, the Committee set three priorities for 2012-2013:

- Efforts to increase student diversity, in particular, PhD student diversity. PhD students were chosen as the focus given that they contribute to faculty diversity nationwide and undergraduate diversity had been the focus of prior Committee work.
- Efforts to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity among students, in particular, undergraduates. Undergraduates were chosen given the importance of reaching the largest number of students and addressing these issues as soon as possible in their educational careers as well as the availability of clear intervention points.
- Efforts to increase faculty diversity, in particular, to get a sense of how the nascent Diversity Search Advisor program is going.
The charge related to gender-nonspecific (i.e., transgender) policies was not made a priority of the Committee this year because it was thought that several groups on campus are actively working on the topic and considerable progress is being made (e.g., the introduction of gender-neutral toilet facilities across campus).

NUMBER OF MEETINGS
The Committee met six times.

MAJOR POINTS ADDRESSED BY THE COMMITTEE
The Committee addressed multiple topics, often by inviting speakers to address specific topics as noted below:

1. In November, University Secretary Leslie Kruhly presented the Committee with its charges for 2012-2013, and Lynn Lees, Vice Provost for Faculty, reviewed the University’s responses to last year’s committee recommendations.

2. In December, the Committee discussed its charges and set priorities for the year. Although Committee members indicated their primary interests and the idea of subcommittees was introduced, in practice, the priorities were addressed by the Committee as a whole.

3. In January, Andy Binns, Vice Provost for Education, provided an overview on University processes to increase the number of traditionally underrepresented students in PhD programs at Penn. New to the established “pipeline” efforts are the 2012 Ivy Plus STEM conference, Penn’s decision to partially fund the McNair Scholars program after it was not refunded by the federal government, and the development of partnerships with HBCUs, in particular, Tuskegee University.

4. In February, the Committee engaged in a lively discussion about cultural sensitivity awareness among members of the undergraduate community. Potential intervention points identified New Student Orientation, Division of University Life programming, online training for incoming freshman prior to their arrival on campus, and workshops for Residential Advisors and Graduate Advisors through the college house system.

5. In March, Martin Redman, Executive Director of College Houses and Academic Services (CHAS), spoke to the Committee about the diversity of RA and GA staff and the diversity training provided to them (two hours of a 24-hour training are allocated to diversity and this session is facilitated by volunteers from the Greenfield Intercultural Center). He reported that some College Houses offer additional training and estimated that about 180 of the events for residents are related to diversity (e.g., religious ceremonies and cultural traditions).

6. In April, the Committee met. First, Andy Binns, Vice Provost for Education, provided an overview of data re: PhD students, including time to degree, percent completing degree, admissions data and some exit climate survey results. Following this overview, there was a joint meeting with the Senate Committee for Faculty Development, Diversity and Equity. The focus was on their review of Diversity Action Plans and our survey of Diversity Search Advisors.

IN ADDITION
The Committee co-chairs:

1. Referred to the Benefits Committee an issue related to the equitable application of Penn’s in vitro fertilization coverage as it applies to potential fathers as well as potential mothers.

2. Were provided with an advance draft of the gender equity report.
RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

1. As in AY11-12, we enthusiastically commend the administration’s diversity action plan focusing on recruitment and retention of diverse faculty. We recommend that consideration be given to ongoing implementation of the plan including such elements and strategies as:
   a. Working with the Office of the Provost and the Deans of the different schools to assess records and processes documenting recruitment, retention, and promotion of underrepresented minority faculty
   b. Encouraging participation by all faculty in small group and online workshops on unconscious bias, covering all types of bias, including racial, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and religion, and making such training mandatory for all search committee members
   c. Work with the Deans of the different schools to ensure that faculty members charged with development, implementation, and monitoring of School Diversity Action Plans be given appropriate compensation and release time
   d. Continuing and strengthening the University’s pipeline initiatives for enhancing recruitment and retention of diverse and underrepresented minority individuals’ participation in University life at the pre-college, undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral level.

2. We commend and support the efforts of the administration to assess student and faculty perceptions of campus climate as it relates to a thriving, diverse, academic community with mutual appreciation and respect. We recommend that consideration be given to such elements and strategies as:
   a. Disseminate the results of student and faculty surveys to relevant University groups and committees and broadly solicit participation of members of those groups in relevant follow up initiatives.
   b. Compile the data such that like questions are summarized across multiple groups of interest (faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students).

3. We recommend that attention be given to increasing improving cultural sensitivity and awareness among all members of the Penn community.
   a. Begin with an initial focus on undergraduates and identify opportunities to provide cultural sensitivity education.
   b. Adopt a broad focus, extending beyond the usual gender, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation, to include (at least) socioeconomic status and religion.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF TOPICS OR CONTINUING TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED THE FOLLOWING YEAR

1. Devote effort to examining options for developing/expanding/supporting programs to increase cultural sensitivity and awareness among undergraduates.

2. Continue to work with the office of the provost and other appropriate offices to monitor University processes documenting recruitment, retention, and graduation of underrepresented minority graduate students.

3. Work with the office of the provost and with the SCFDDE to continue to assess school-level facilitators and barriers to recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty and to monitor the progress of the newly developed University of Pennsylvania diversity action plan.

4. Related to the above, follow-up on multiple points raised in the inaugural survey to DSAs. Training and meeting options could be enhanced. Continue monitoring the appointment of Diversity Search Advisors and their activities. Focus on distinguishing their roles from those of
Diversity Officers, and look closely as issues related to placing DSAs within their own departments and/or having them at ranks lower than Full professor.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Co-Chairs: Judy Shea, Perelman School of Medicine, and Susan B Sorenson, School of Social Policy & Practice
Administrative liaison: Lubna Mian
Staff: Gail Oberton
Faculty: Nader Enghata, School of Engineering and Applied Science; Tulia Falleti, School of Arts and Sciences/Political Science; Chenoa Flippen, School of Arts and Science/Sociology; Grace Kao, School of Arts and Sciences/Sociology; Joe Libonati, School of Nursing; Ezekiel Dixon-Roman, School of Social Policy & Practice
Graduate students: Akeesha Washington, Graduate School of Education, Paule Joseph, School of Nursing
Undergraduate Students: Adrienne Edwards, Nikhil Kumar
PPSA: Sharon Bryan, Kayla Crawley Haidara
WPPSA: Michelle Wells Lockett