

## **2014 Report of the University Council Committee on Diversity and Equity**

### **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.*

### **2013-2014 Specific Charges**

1. Recommend options for developing/expanding/supporting programs to build cultural understanding, inclusiveness, and support across campus related to different faith traditions.
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 Senate Committee on Faculty Development Diversity and Equity (SCFDDE) to continue to monitor the effectiveness of the school-level facilitators, and to assess the progress in implementing the University of Pennsylvania Diversity Action Plan.
4. Related to the above, aid in identifying ways to strengthen and support the newly-instituted role of diversity search advisor.
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 academic year 2014-15.

### **Priorities**

At the first meeting on October 9, 2013 the Committee agreed to focus on Charges #1 and #4.

### **Number of Meetings**

The Committee met five times.

### **Major Points Addressed by the Committee**

1. The first meeting was held on October 9, 2013 and was spent reviewing the University's response to last year's Committee recommendations. Dr. Anita Allen and Dr. Stacey Lopez were invited guests and Rev. William Gipson was also invited but was unable to attend the meeting. The Committee also discussed the 2013-2014 charges and agreed to focus on the charges related to the Diversity Search Advisor (DSA) and religious life.

2. The second meeting was held on November 25, 2013 and was spent discussing the Diversity Search Advisor role with invited guests Dr. Nancy Tkacs and Dr. James Guevara. It was revealed that some DSAs at PSOM were junior and non-standing faculty, which was not contemplated by the DSA guidelines. Lubna Mian agreed to follow-up with PSOM and Dr. Anita Allen on that point.
3. The third meeting was held on December 10, 2013 and was spent discussing the landscape of religious life on campus with invited guest Chaplain Charles Howard. The Committee agreed to revisit the DSA discussion at the subsequent meeting.
4. The fourth meeting was held on January 14, 2014 and was spent revisiting the DSA discussion for the purpose of identifying recommendations to submit to the University Council. There were no invited guests. Lubna Mian updated the Committee that a plan was developed to phase out the DSA appointments who are junior faculty and replace them with tenured faculty by the end of the fiscal year.
5. The fifth meeting was held on February 21, 2014 and was spent revisiting the discussion about religious life for the purpose of identifying recommendations to submit to the University Council. There were no invited guests. Lubna Mian informed the Committee that Dr. John Jackson would be working with the DSA's centrally.

### **Recommendations to University Council**

1. The Committee applauds the University's efforts in developing and implementing the role of Diversity Search Advisor (DSA). The Committee encourages the University to reinforce that DSAs should be tenured and standing faculty and where they are not, a plan should be in place to replace them with faculty adhering to the DSA guidelines.
2. The Committee acknowledges that the University has attempted to communicate the importance of the goals in the diversity action plan and the DSA role. However, the Committee recommends that the University find additional ways to reinforce the importance of the DSA role to all faculty in order to ensure there is buy-in for diversity search efforts. To that end, the Committee suggests the following:
  - a. Add an administrative note specifically addressing the DSA role to effort reports on individual faculty academic plans
  - b. That schools require DSA specific updates to appointment committee and search committee reports when such reports are generated.
  - c. That the University and schools consider participation of DSAs in promotion reviews.
  - d. Schools could consider making DSA activities eligible for incentives including added compensation when the time commitment exceeds anticipated hours.
  - e. The University should encourage these actions (a to d) through changes to the DSA guidelines and outreach to schools.
3. While the average time dedicated to DSA activities is 5 hours per month, the commitment is variable across schools and departments. The Committee recommends capping the number of searches one DSA can conduct at one time, and appointing more than one DSA where necessary (particularly for DSAs for whom the position is not part of an administrative role).
4. The Committee considers that religious groups are important catalysts for strengthening the Penn community and for providing for the health, wellbeing, and vitality of students. The Committee recognizes that there are disparities in the resources religious groups

receive, though it acknowledges that the disparities may be for reasons beyond the University's control. The Committee encourages the University to continue finding ways to support religious groups and the work of the Office of the Chaplain. To that end, the Committee recommends that the University increase the yearly allocation to the Faith Fund from \$10,000 to \$40,000 to ensure that the diversity of faith communities on campus, as represented by 42 groups, is adequately supported.

5. Feedback from students and the Chaplain demonstrate that there is a need to provide additional dedicated spaces for religious groups for purposes that include worship, prayer, events, and advising. The Committee acknowledges that the University recently dedicated space in Houston Hall to the Interfaith Fellows, but that this may only be adequate as a short-term solution. The Committee agrees that an Interfaith Religious Center, similar to Hillel and the Neumann Center, would strengthen the Penn community, help in the provision of care with respect to health and wellbeing, and further distinguish Penn as a preeminent educational institution. However, the Committee acknowledges that it has a limited understanding of the scope of the need. To that end, the Committee recommends that the University focus more attention on determining the space needs of religious groups, which could include:
  - a. Comparing the spaces provided at Penn with those provided by peer institutions
  - b. Forming a task force to work with the Office of the Chaplain and the Provost in determining the needs and challenges faced by religious groups

#### **Recommendation of New Topics or Continuing Topics to be Addressed the Following Year**

1. The Committee acknowledges the University's efforts to recruit diverse faculty, but recommends also focusing on the retention of diverse faculty.
2. The Committee recommends focusing on the recruitment and retention of diverse graduate students.

NOTE: The Committee considers "diversity" comprehensively, to include components of identity including but not limited to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, faith traditions, and socio-economic background. The Committee recommends including these varied identity components when examining faculty and graduate student recruitment and retention.

#### **Committee Members**

Chair: Joe Libonati, School of Nursing

Administrative Liaison: Lubna Mian, Office of the Provost

Staff: Iris Leon, Office of the Vice Provost for University life

Faculty:

Regina Austin, Law School

James Cornish, PSOM/Psychiatry

Ezekiel Dixon-Roman, School of Social Policy & Practice

Chenoa Flippen, SAS/Sociology

Wei Guo, SAS/Biology

Jonni Moore, PSOM/Path. & Lab. Medicine

Reshma Munbodh, PSOM/Radiation Oncology

Undergraduate Students:

Thando Ally, Wharton

Joyce Kim, SAS

Graduate Students:

Paule Joseph, School of Nursing

Johnna Marcus, School of Social Policy & Practice

Penn Professional Staff:

Tia Dreher, PSOM, Manager of Pre-Award CCEB

Kristin Field, Nano/Bio Interface Center

Weekly-Paid Professional Staff:

Ashley Gripper, Netter Center

Rosa Vargas, SAS, Chemistry Department