The University Council Committee on Diversity and Equity
Draft Final Report 2009-2010

2009-2010 Committee Members:
Chair: John Jackson
Liaison: Lubna Mian
Staff: Brenda Brand
Faculty: Lisa Lewis, Yvonne Paterson, Robert Preucel, Jorge Santiago-Aviles, Yolanda Slaughter, Nancy Tkacs and Linda Zhao
Graduate students: Michelle Jacobson and Tung Wei-Shao
Undergraduate Student: Cristian Barrios
PPSA: Valerie Allen and Delores Magobet
WPSA: Connie Gordon and Michelle Wells Lockett
Invited Guests: June Chu, Valerie De Cruz, Mary Lou de Leon Siantz, Gloria Gay, Aiasha Saalim Graham, Johnny Irizarry, Nicole Maloy, Kevin Rurak and Bob Schoenberg

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.

2009-2010 Specific Charges:
1. Continue joint efforts with the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity and the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs to:
   Advocate for broader and more effective outreach efforts to recruit minority faculty
   Encourage individual schools to develop plans for diversifying the faculty
   Consider the recommendation for Deans to report on their diversity and equity plans

2. Initiate discussions with Deans to promote the expeditious mounting of links to school and university diversity programs on each School’s homepage.

3. Continue efforts to identify a small number of Penn faculty with the expertise to design mechanisms to further assess campus climate surveys such as PULSE and COHFE and determine how some peer institutions have used faculty on similar assessment projects.

4. Develop recommendations for a feasible way of organizing a small university-wide
postdoctoral fellowship program for individuals whose research is linked to broadly conceived questions of diversity.

5. Continue to monitor the implementation of gender-neutral campus policies.

6. Review and discuss the committee’s general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given highest priority for the committee’s work in AY 2010-2011.

The committee would like to begin by publicly acknowledging just a few of the University’s most recent accomplishments and successes vis-à-vis diversity/equity issues. A few of these efforts have been tethered to this committee’s specific charges in recent years, and we are very excited to share even some small credit in helping to facilitate their realization.

- The University has recently revised its written Policy of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination. The new statement is currently online.

- Penn has started to acquire, analyze and disseminate quantitative data on the campus climate for undergraduates and has also begun to plan a similar process with its faculty.

- Thanks to the Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs, the Deans, and the Office of the Vice Provost for Research, Penn has successfully launched an important new university-wide postdoctoral fellowship program linked to the theme of diversity.

- The University has extended a new health benefit to transgender students, covering the costs associated with of gender reassignment/transition.

- The University has recruited its first Native American admissions officer, which has aided admissions efforts with Native American students.

Themes/Topics Discussed This Academic Year:

- The continuing vacancy in the Affirmative Action Office;

- The timetable and architecture for the proposed Affirmative Action website;

- The new University initiatives aimed at female professors on campus;

- The degree of “community” and communication among URM faculty, students, and staff;
• The proposal to expand Penn’s health coverage for faculty, students and staff such that it might also include transgender health benefits;

• Grossing-up as a way to mitigate financial disparities predicated on the economic implications of heteronormative IRS policies;

• The configuration of the university showers in recreational facilities for increased individual privacy; the potential need for more single-sex bathrooms in recreational facilities;

• The notion of expanding our campus-climate initiatives to include graduate students, faculty and staff;

• Stanford’s adoption of an official pro-marriage position;

• The idea of institutionalizing an exit interview/survey for departing faculty/graduate students to determine their reasons for leaving;

• The University’s approach to recruiting/retaining URM faculty/graduate students and female professors;

• The absence of any tenured or tenure-track Native American faculty at Penn.

• A subset met consistently with the Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity and Equity to discuss faculty recruitment, mentorship, and retention issues.

Committee Recommendations:

• As we wait on the unveiling of a central Diversity website/link, the Provost’s office should consider housing diversity links from each of Penn’s 12 schools. This site (with these links) should probably remain even after any forthcoming Diversity website is launched.

• We support the university’s commitment to the idea of slowly expanding its new Postdoctoral Fellowship for Academic Diversity to include (in the future) as many as 6 to 8 postdoctoral fellows in its annual cohorts.

• The committee fully supports the Provost office’s valuable workshops on “unconscious bias.” We would suggest that the Provost consider asking Deans to use this workshop/training more consistently, institutionalizing it as a mandatory prerequisite for serving on faculty and administration search committees within their schools. This could be a certification process that is completed on-line and that covers participants for three or four years before any necessary recertification.
• We support the Personal Benefits Committee in its recommendation that the University very seriously consider the idea of extending its health coverage to include transgender health benefits for staff and faculty.

• We recommend that the University continue to prepare for the launch of a “campus-climate” survey among faculty. We would hope that this could prepare the way for similar initiatives vis-à-vis graduate students and staff. It would be beneficial to institutionalize and regularize intervals between the administering and analyzing of each of these instruments.

• We consider that the requisite Dean/s be approached with the idea of releasing three of four faculty members from one course each such that they can collaborate on designing and possibly executing a qualitative supplement to the statistical data culled from COHFE and PULSE. We might also consult with other Universities that have successfully deployed faculty in such efforts.

• We support the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity in its suggestion that Office of the Provost set a mandate for Deans to produce and circulate a Diversity Plan for their respective Schools.

• We recommend that the University continue to explore the practice of “grossing up” as a way to counter the financial inequities caused by the heteronormative bias inherent in IRS policy.

• We recommend that the University continue to seek full enforcement of its gender-identity and sexual orientation non-discrimination policy on all forms and publications.

• We recommend that the University continue to foster ways of improving communication and information/knowledge dissemination about diversity-related themes across campus. For example, is there any possible way to create consistent ties between this committee and the Diversity Committee linked to Penn’s Board of Trustees?

• We endorse the Target of Opportunity search/process as a mechanisms for diversifying the faculty.

Possible Charges for Next Year:

• Helping to finalize the architecture for a forthcoming Diversity website.

• Continuing joint efforts with the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity.
• Continuing to consider ways of adding a qualitative component to University efforts at assessing campus climate, including consultation with Penn faculty who might help to design it.

• Continuing to monitor the implementation of gender-nonspecific campus policies, including the possibility of installing more private showers in recreational bathrooms and providing broader housing options for incoming undergraduates who identify as transgender.

• Collecting data on current diversity initiatives within all 12 School.