

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY AND EQUITY, 08-09

Chair: John Jackson

Staff Liaison: Brenda Brand

Committee Members: Esther Agbaje, Omua Ahonkuai, Ben Alisuag, , Christa Heyward, Lisa Lewis, Lisa Linn De Barona, Michelle Wells Lockett ,Yvonne Paterson, Andres Pinto, Aiasha B. Saalim Graham, Jorge Santiago-Aviles, Yolanda Slaughter, Howard Stevenson, Nancy Tkacs and Dennie Zastrow

Invited Guests: Valerie Dorsey Allen, June Chu, Valerie De Cruz, Gloria Gay, Johnny Irizarry, Nicole Maloy, Derek Mazique, Kevin Rurak, Bob Schoenberg and Sean Vereen

SPECIFIC CHARGES:

1. Develop more concrete suggestions for increasing diversity among standing faculty at Penn.
2. Recommend a series of qualitative methods for assessing Penn's campus climate that might be used in collaboration with the data collected from the COFHE survey, in an attempt to explain and address any potential issues.
3. Continue to work with the Office of the Provost to ensure that a version of the diversity webpage has been examined and critiqued (in preparation for on-line accessibility by 2009-2010).
4. 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 2009-2010.

PART 1: OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee met six times this academic year. It also formed subcommittees that convened separately. Each subcommittee focused on one of the three specific charges, and a fourth group was created to explore Penn's implementation of (and compliance with) the University's gender identity (non-discrimination) policy. Each subcommittee prepared a final report, and those reports were integrated into this document.

- 1. We recommend that the University reorganize the "Target of Opportunity" process such that all academic departments are specifically asked to produce lists of potential candidates that fit their self-assessed curricular/thematic needs. Such lists should be submitted to the "Target of Opportunity" Committee at the start of each academic year and used to help the committee produce more specific applicant solicitations along with general job postings/listings. This model should replace an earlier configuration that sometimes found departments asked to respond, relatively late in the process, to candidates vetted without specific attention to their self-assessed hiring goals.**

2. We recommend that the University create a relatively small two-year or three-year postdoctoral fellowship open to newly minted PhDs in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. The fellowship might be thematically organized around research into questions of “diversity” (broadly conceived). The cohorts of three to five fellows could be vetted by specific departments, formally housed in those same departments, and informally considered as potential hires upon completion of the program.

3. We recommend that the University continue to expand its commitment to quantitative climate assessment on campus and enlist a small cadre of Penn faculty in the social sciences to design mechanisms to “get behind the numbers” provided by PULSE and COHFE by utilizing qualitative empirical techniques—some mixture of focus groups and open-ended interviews. The faculty might also come up with a limited and ethical way to deploy participant-observation.

4. We recommend that the University push for each School to add a “diversity” link to its individual homepage and that Penn’s main webpage include a similar tab linked to a Presidential statement on diversity, the Provost’s page, Schools’ respective diversity pages, and other campus units with diversity-related web content. (The appendix includes a list of current Penn sites that might merit inclusion.) Faculty should also play a role in determining how the notion of “diversity” is defined online, and the site might work best as a joint venture sponsored/funded by the President’s Office and the Provost Office while administered by the Affirmative Action Office.

5. We recommend that the University rationalize and publicize its commitments to gender-neutral inclusion by listing all gender-non-specific restrooms on Penn’s website, providing more accessible information about gender-neutral housing options, updating forms inquiring about gender by offering broader options, installing private and individual-use showers/changing rooms around campus, and formally evaluating the effectiveness of the CHAS gender-neutral housing policy.

PART 2: MORE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS OF THESE RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Specific Suggestions for Increasing Diversity Among Standing Faculty at Penn

The committee wants to emphasize its commitment to the idea that Penn should continue to be explicit and coordinated in its efforts to aggressively promote initiatives aimed at recruiting and hiring a diverse faculty, efforts that work best if proactively supported by the central administration and each of Penn’s twelve Schools. The committee also wants to make sure that any expansive and multifaceted definition of “diversity” continues to adamantly include an abiding concern for promoting the recruitment and support of URM faculty. For instance, there are many ways to organize investments in diversity, and the justified call for further globalizing of the University should not come at the expense of Penn’s longstanding commitments to robust forms of URM inclusion.

Further Discussions and Recommendations:

a. We want to highlight the need for a revamped mechanism/infrastructure designed to move potential faculty candidates forward expeditiously—and with an eye toward explicit forms of transparency. For instance, the “Target of Opportunity” program might be reconfigured such that individual departments can start the process by coming up with lists of viable candidates that fit their own self-assessed theoretical/thematic needs. Instead of generating potential candidates themselves and approaching departments afterwards, the “Target of Opportunity” committee should work from departmentally generated lists of possible candidates. For departments that lack the necessary social networks to produce promising lists of candidates, the process can still be linked to a general job posting that allows those departments to help vet applications relevant to their disciplines *relatively early in the process*.

b. We recommend that the Administration champion data-driven commitments to addressing gender-based and racial/ethnic hiring disparities in various Schools across campus. This should also include continuing faculty sensitization to unconscious biases that inform how candidates are assessed.

c. We want to emphasize the need for a concerted effort to focus on interdisciplinary job candidates and to foster plans for structured postdoctoral programs with interdisciplinary mandates or diversity-specific themes. Indeed, the committee is intrigued by the idea of a high-profile university-wide two-year or three-year fellowship program linked to “diversity” (broadly conceived) as thematic focus for potential recipients. The fellowship program should also encompass an expansive and formal mentorship component. Networking and mentoring for such postdoctoral fellows (as well as for junior faculty) should be formalized and include department-specific, school-based and university-wide commitments. Penn might think of sponsoring these fellowships (similar to the University of California's "Presidential Fellowships") with the express purpose of grooming future faculty for Penn or any of its peer institutions. The University should consider appropriating (with appropriate modifications) the model developed by Yvonne Paterson, Associate Dean and head of Biomedical Postdoctoral Programs (BPP), as a starting point for strategies to diversify the postdoctoral body and the future professoriate..

Another version of this model comes out of the School of Nursing, which has been working towards adding a new mechanism for increasing faculty diversity since 2007. Their vision is to launch a national search for a promising junior URM scholar who could be mentored within one of the School’s research centers as a Dean’s Scholar Postdoctoral Fellow for two years. This postdoctoral position would be followed by an appointment at the Assistant Professor level for 4 years until initial review under standard School and University guidelines. Penn should also help fund initiatives sponsored by departments that offer Residency Recruitment Fairs that specifically seek more candidates of color and that encourage them to apply to Penn Training Programs. The Vice Provost for Research and the Associate Dean for Postdoctoral Research Training in the School Of

Medicine have been similarly engaged in developing a university-wide training program for postdoctoral fellowships that would groom under-represented minority postdocs for success as university faculty. These fellowships would provide stipends, travel, and health insurance for three years. These fellowships would also be overseen by a mentoring committee and have a defined career development plan, which would include BPP workshops on grant writing and lab management skills. The career outcome of these fellows may vary according to the school. Some schools may recruit them into their own faculty. However, for schools where outside recruitment is more customary, Penn could partner with peer institutions that have similar programs to provide a pool of potential faculty for recruitment by comparable academic institutions. The Council Committee on Diversity welcomes and encourages these proposed initiatives to mend the break in the pipeline to the professoriate that occurs at the postdoctoral fellowship level. If there are other specific programs within any of the twelve schools that are productive, they should be assessed and potentially modeled (with modifications, of course) across campus. If the programs are old enough to determine outcomes and are decidedly *not* working, they should be abandoned or revamped. Also, the Diversity Fund, although limited in reach and funding, could be improved in terms of its mode of notification about RFPs. Moreover, we adamantly stress that any notion of “diversity” should also expressly and explicitly include the LGBTPM community and Native American scholars/scholarship.

d. We recommend that the Administration consider creating a standard model for clarifying the university’s promotion requirements and retention procedures. One possible mechanism would be implementing the use of a handbook (discussed in the April 2008 report) that is transparent and clearly outlines a road map to success. The School of Medicine has a workshop on “Promotion A to Z” that might serve as one model of such a reference book. Of course, there is some ambiguity and uncertainty that will always be intrinsic to the process, but the University should make sure to address any lingering characterizations of the tenure process as somehow capricious. Moreover, Penn should consider some kind of post-decision analysis to ensure that faculty members have a sense of why proposed hires or promotion cases do not succeed. Of course, we have to be mindful of privacy issues, but there might be a way to keep the cases anonymous and use them as mechanisms for educating junior faculty about how files are assessed.

e. We recommend that the University show a stronger presence (and strengthen its visibility) with respect to diversity issues by recruiting at National and Regional Conferences (such as SNMA and BLHO) and the Compact for Faculty Diversity’s annual meeting. There are also specific conferences/venues that provide space for accessing URM pools. These should be proactively sought.

f. Our subcommittee on Faculty Diversity shared its findings with the Faculty Senate and has provided them with the full report submitted to the D & E Committee in April 2008. Both groups are in agreement on the core issues regarding a diverse faculty. It is paramount to our joint success that we explore the possibility of meeting as a full group (D&E Subcommittee and Faculty Senate) to share ideas and forge a united front for both recruiting and retaining diverse faculty at the University of Pennsylvania. This joint initiative will hopefully be formed by the end of this term, meeting once before the end of

May and then entering into fuller discussions in September of 2009. Ultimately it might benefit Penn to merge the University Council Committee, Faculty Senate, and the Trustee's relevant subcommittee in order to coordinate the work of all three units and streamline Penn's attempt to retain and recruit qualified URM faculty.

Faculty Diversity Subcommittee Members:

Michelle Wells Lockett, Convener

Valerie De Cruz

Gloria Gay

Lisa Lewis

Yvonne Paterson

Jorge Santiago- Aviles

Yolanda Slaughter

Nancy Tkacs

Sean Vereen

2. Assessing Penn's Campus Climate

The committee believes that the release of the PULSE survey to undergraduates in March 2009 signaled an important step in the right direction by having several climate-related questions included on that instrument. That being said, however, our Subcommittee on the matter has convinced us to recommend that the Administration very seriously consider the implementation of a stand-alone climate survey.

Further Discussions and Recommendations:

- a. This Subcommittee discussed the release of the COFHE Senior Exit Survey data that was presented to the April 20, 2008 University Council meeting by Associate Provost Binns. Most notably, the Subcommittee recognized the low response rate among African American and Latino students. The Subcommittee also recognized that, although undergraduates responded favorably to numerous aspects of undergraduate life, the notable outlier was "satisfaction of climate for minority students." This key statistic fell lower than Ivy League peers for underrepresented students, international students, and white students. This is something that requires continued interrogation.
- b. We recommend that the Administration strengthen its efforts to publicize future surveys to improve the validity and usefulness of future data. This can include incentivizing the survey or using/creating an ad for distribution in campus-wide publications, which are strategies that have been deployed successfully at other schools.
- c. We recommend that if the Administration continues to administer the COFHE survey that it should clarify with the Council on Financing Higher Education what survey questions on "sense of community" and "climate for minority students" actually mean/capture.

d. This Subcommittee met with Reverend William Gibson, Vice Provost on Equity and Access, on February 12, 2009 to discuss the newest instrument used to assess undergraduate life, PULSE. Reverend Gibson mentioned that the PULSE Survey would assess climate issues and would be sent to the entire undergraduate body. Rev. Gibson also emphasized that the survey was considered a softer version of COFHE in that it would take substantially less time to complete and would provide a quicker and more flexible way to assess undergraduate life. In showing the Subcommittee several of the questions, many members acknowledged the inclusion of several suggestions from the October 16, 2008 Diversity and Equity Meeting with Dr. Rob Nelson (from the Provost's Office). Most notably, these suggestions concerned demography questions involving class, race, gender, and sexual identity. Subcommittee members recognized that PULSE contained questions addressing climate, but it was one portion of a much more general survey. We believe that the climate around the institution, however, is of utmost importance in assessing undergraduate life and might demand a more specifically tailored intervention. During a Subcommittee meeting with Rev. Gibson, he emphasized that any survey instrument must be "owned" by a particular administrative body. In the example of PULSE, this body was the Council of Undergraduate Deans. When asked whether it would be possible for a climate survey of graduate students to be mounted, Rev. Gibson suggested that the Subcommittee contact the graduate school deans.

d. We recommend that the Administration dedicate a specific survey to the effort of assessing campus climate. The timeline of PULSE was such that members of the Campus Climate Subcommittee were unable to offer any additional suggestions. During the Diversity and Equity Committee meeting on February 19, 2009, members further emphasized that the Administration did not ask for input on PULSE during the critical time of content creation. It was pointed out that such a lack of ongoing dialogue creates a troubling precedent since greater input from more campus constituencies may have further honed PULSE questions, potentially making them even more useful to the Penn community.

e. We recommend that the Administration allow for a greater degree of transparency in the creation of survey content.

f. We recommend that the Administration include qualitative methodological efforts at assessing campus climate, such as through focus groups, to complement survey data. We discussed the possibility of deputizing Penn faculty with such expertise to spearhead this effort, even enlisting their graduate students to help accomplish the goal. One question that came up in our discussions had to do with the rights to such data. It seems that the University should retain exclusive rights to the data and its dissemination. Therefore, faculty and graduate students might need other incentives to take part in such a project if they may not be able to publish their findings in traditional ways.

g. We recommend that the Administration begin substantive deliberation with the graduate school deans on the implementation of an instrument to assess the level of comfort and beliefs about the acceptance of difference found among graduate students.

*Campus Climate Subcommittee Members:
Derek Mazique and Kevin Rurak, co-conveners
Benjamin Alisuag
Valerie De Cruz
Valerie Dorsey Allen
Baylee Feore,
Gloria Gay
Johnny Irizarry
Sean Vereen*

3. Continue to work with the Office of the Provost on a Diversity Webpage

Since this subcommittee's initial meeting with representatives from the Provost's office last academic year, the Provost's website was redeveloped. The Provost's page now links to a diversity page which expresses the University's commitment to diversity, a commitment that extends to every aspect of its academic, cultural, and campus life. While various schools, departments and programs have all demonstrated commitment to diversity via individual web pages, the University would be more effectively served by the development of a resource which links these separate sites, further promoting the University's strong commitment to diversity.

Further Discussions and Recommendations:

- a. One aspect of our charge entailed coming up with a list Penn units with websites that merit linkage to such a site. We came up with a list of 37 units. See Appendix.
- b. We also recommend that each School create a specific Diversity link on its homepage. A couple have already produced sites, and they should be linked to the main Diversity website. The others should be asked to create their own Diversity sites ASAP, and they should be hyperlinked with the main site as soon as they are operational.
- c. On Thursday, March 5th, the Diversity & Equity Website sub-committee met with Rob Nelson to gain input from the Provost's office. As a result of a review of the various diversity pages on notable university websites of peer institutions, we consider Cornell University's approach one of the best models—and for various reasons:
 - Prominent Diversity and Inclusiveness link from Cornell's homepage.
 - Commitment to Diversity Statement at the top of the page
 - University's diversity goals are clearly enumerated
 - History, Policies and Reports link
 - Link to University's Diversity offices and campus organizations
 - *How are We Doing?* link to Cornell's climate survey
 - Featured Programs
 - News Announcements
 - Link to courses which focus on issues of diversity
 - Ability to report bias incidents and to send comments via diversity page

d. The committee has been most concerned with helping to determine which University entity should take financial and administrative responsibility for this project. It was suggested that we gain input and seek guidance from the President's Office. Joann Mitchell has provided such guidance in the past, and we added a discussion with the University Communications Department this Spring. On Wednesday, March 18th, Aiasha Graham, representing the Diversity & Equity Website sub-committee, met with Lori Doyle, VP University Communications and Deni Kasrel, Director Web and Publishing Services, to discuss (i) the feasibility of a diversity link from the University home page, (ii) the consideration of content, and (iii) questions about which University entity should be responsible for development and maintenance.

(i) Direct Link from the University Home Page:

While initially problematic due to the finite number of tabs available, a direct link may still be achieved by placing a link just below the "About Penn" header on the left side of the page.

(ii) Consideration for Content:

There was a general consensus on the following items for content

- President's Message
- Links to School Diversity sites
- News & Events
- History, Policies, Statements
- Links to University Diversity Offices
 - Links to Diversity Programs or Courses
- Special Initiatives
- Resources and Training
- Equal Opportunity Links
- Reports and Statistics -Link to Institutional Research and Analysis page
- Portals for Students, Faculty, Staff?

(iii) Responsibility for development, maintenance and content.

The following suggestions were given by University Communications:

1) University Communications would agree to build the site using the University template, but does not have the staff to develop content or manage. The responsible office would have to invest in a staff member with the ability to write web code for updating the content as well as the ability to collect content from various constituencies.

2) The responsible office could invest in a content management system. Deni Kasrel may be able to identify an appropriate system and provide costs. The ball park figure is somewhere between \$10,000 and \$20,000. If the system were built using a Content Management System, University Communications may be willing to have one of their press officers update the content. See: Research at Penn Site (Maintained by University Communications)

3) The responsible office should probably fall under the Office of Institutional Affairs. However, does it have staff or budget to commit to establishing the University's diversity page?

e. We recommend that the University consider having the Office of Diversity and Equity oversee all elements of the website. The University might also think about this website as one of the direct responsibility of the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity.

Diversity Website Subcommittee Members:

Aiasha Graham, BSD, Publication Services, PPSA Council at Large, Convener

Esther Agbaje, Graduate Student, Government Administration, Fels

Thomas Chester, BSD HR

Nicole Maloy, Alumni Relations, Multicultural Outreach

4. Explore implementation of (and compliance with) the University's gender identity (non-discrimination) policy

The University added "gender identity" to its non-discrimination policy in 2004, but appears not to be in compliance with that policy in some areas. The Gender Identity Subcommittee met four times during the academic year. The Subcommittee took direct actions related to some identified problem areas and made recommendations regarding unresolved problem areas.

Direct Actions:

1. Ensured that University personnel working in student housing, including GAs and RAs, will be educated about transgender issues during summer pre-service training through the inclusion of relevant case materials.
2. Arranged for in-service training sessions to take place in Student Health Services, Office of Health Education, and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).
3. Surveyed other colleges and universities to assess what kinds of coverage is being provided in their health insurances for hormone replacement, gender reassignment surgeries, and other procedures needed by transgender individuals.

Further Discussions and Recommendations:

- a. We recommend that a list of all campus gender-non-specific restrooms be published on Penn's website.
- b. We recommend that the Administration provide more publicity around gender-neutral housing options, including for entering first-year undergraduate students.

- c. We recommend that the Administration address the inequity of some students being forced to pay supplements for single rooms they do not necessarily require or even prefer.
- d. We recommend that The Affirmative Action Office evaluate the effectiveness of the CHAS gender-neutral housing policy, including 1) how effectively the policy is being communicated to students, 2) how students feel about gender-neutral housing, and 3) whether there are undue burdens for students opting for gender-neutral housing.
- e. We recommend that all University forms inquiring about gender offer broader options than a “male/female” binary. Forms should also indicate “Parent 1 and Parent 2” or “Caregivers”.
- f. As many campus gender-identity concerns are monitored by OAA/EO, we recommend that an Executive Director (position vacant since December 2007) be hired as soon as possible.
- g. We recommend that all transgender health care (including hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery) be covered under student health insurance and faculty/staff health insurance options.
- f. We recommend that private, individual-use shower and changing rooms be installed in all existing, renovated, and new athletic facilities and that they be clearly marked as such.
- h. We recommend that gender and sexual diversity sensitivity training should be provided to all athletic coaches.

Gender Identity Subcommittee Members

Robert Schoenberg, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Center, Convener

Valerie Allen, African American Resource Center

Erin Cross, LGBT Center

Terrence Green, C'10

Erika Hsu, C'12

Matty Lehman, Office of Health Education

Kevin Rurak, Public Safety

Riley Snorton, doctoral student, Annenberg School

Michelle Wells Lockett, Medical School, WPSA

Dennie Zastrow, C'10

Specific Charges for next year:

1. Work with Deans to promote the expeditious mounting of diversity links on each School's homepage.
2. Identify Penn faculty with the expertise to develop qualitative methods for helping to further assess campus climate and determine how some peer institutions have used faculty on similar assessment projects.

3. Develop a feasible way of organizing a small university-wide postdoctoral fellowship program for newly minted PhDs that is tethered to diversity-related (broadly conceived) academic research.
4. Work on continuing to monitor the implementation of gender-neutral campus policies.