

C.O.P.E Cultural Diversity Committee Report
April 1, 2003

Our proposed projects and the status are stated below:

Brown v. Board of Education:

- Engage multicultural nonprofit organizations to plan for celebrations that mark national and local milestones in improving civic engagement. For example, 2004 marks the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, the 1954 Supreme Court decision ending segregation.

Status: Work in progress. The subcommittee is developing a list of people who will be asked to assist in the planning of this milestone event to recognize and celebrate the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education.

“Stop Out” Program:

- Explore the feasibility of a pilot “Stop Out” program with the goals of:
 - Providing exit counseling for students of color who leave the University before graduation.
 - Increasing student retention if the exit counseling is used as a tool to inform students about their options, e.g., financial aid resources, course enrollment issues, personal counseling resources.
 - Develop a strong program that informs the University as to problem areas and how to correct them.

Status: Fast track. The subcommittee is working with Carl Brandt, interim director of MLK advising, to pilot this program, tentatively titled: “The First Generation Project.” Juavah Lee (OMAA) is developing the program. As the project progresses, we will be able to develop definitions, indicators, and measures for assessment.

Bridging the Digital Divide:

- Work in conjunction with Vice Provost Walstrom’s portal initiatives to expand website to address needs of underrepresented communities;
- Explore ways to build on existing databases to identify University resources;
- During this process, we will work with communities of color to learn what they want and expect from the U of M, as well as the strengths and contributions of what they have to offer in the area of civic engagement.

Status: Beginning stages. Working with Vice Provost Walstrom and with other subcommittees in thinking about a “C.O.P.E.” channel and how it would be organized. The typology project will greatly assist.

- **“Minnesota nice; making Minnesota better”**: working title for Sallye McKee’s proposal that we actively work to instill the ethos/philosophy of Minnesota nice in a multicultural framework.

Status: Research and development stage.

- **Identify existing University-community partnerships that have a primary or secondary focus on cultural diversity in research, teaching and outreach** and enlist their assistance with developing practical proposals for enhancing cultural diversity as a component of the University's commitment to civic engagement. This might mean we would pass through small amounts of funds to four or five programs that can help us survey students and community groups, try a few new approaches, and find out where value can be added to what is already working, for example, CURA’s NPCR Partnership and Public Health’s center that promotes public health careers and education with and for communities of color.

Status: Research and development stage.

Future Projects:

- Explore the development of an information resource for diverse communities from the ranks of retired UMN faculty and staff; the proper training coupled with the dedication and knowledge of our retirees, would result in a valuable resource.
- Build on civic engagement programs and actively encourage students of color to participate; outcomes from several national studies suggest that student retention and graduation rates increase when students work in the community.

Status: Early stages of research and development.

The Cultural Diversity Committee has a particularly ambitious agenda to work through as we begin to work toward strengthening the covenant of the land grant mission through cultural diversity.