

university of minnesota memo

To Penny Krosch

From Martha Kvanbeck, Senate

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The attached item was distributed at the Open Forum that preceded the University Senate meeting on Feb. 19, 1987.

Date _____

PROPOSED MOTION

Regarding the Report of the

Special Committee on Minority Programs in Support of Commitment to Focus

MOTION:

That the University Senate endorse the establishment of programs to expand and coordinate recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty on the campuses of the University of Minnesota, as specified in the recommendations of the Special Committee on Minority Programs in Support of Commitment to Focus. Recruitment should be enhanced by establishing a comprehensive, coordinated program to contact and recruit minority students, setting goals for the successful recruitment and admission of high-potential minority high school seniors, developing indices of academic potential appropriate to the educational backgrounds and experiences of nontraditional minority students, expanding and supporting contacts with minority elementary and secondary school students throughout the state, and improving financial aid packages for minority students. Recruitment of minority graduate students should be enhanced by placing the Office of Equal Opportunity in Graduate Studies in the office of an associate dean who will have primary responsibility for leadership in this area. Retention of minority graduate and undergraduate students should be improved through greater coordination and accountability of minority student programs at the University, provision of facilities commensurate with the needs of these programs, careful tracking of students' progress after entering the University, improved financial assistance to facilitate continuous enrollment of upper-division minority students, enhanced professional and educational opportunities for minority program personnel, and staff-development programs for academic and student-support personnel to improve awareness, understanding, and communication skills needed for working with minority students. Recruitment of minority faculty members should receive continued coordination and monitoring in collegiate units and campus and central administration, and faculty retention should be addressed by encouraging academic units to find ways to enhance the progress of minority faculty members in their disciplines and in meeting other professional goals. Leadership and coordination of efforts concerning minority faculty recruitment and retention and minority student academic programs should be provided through a new position in the Office of Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs should report annually to the Senate on actions taken to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee.

COMMENT:

The Special Committee on Minority Programs in Support of Commitment to Focus believes that a commitment to increasing racial diversity and success of minority students is essential to achieving excellence in an international research university. SCEP endorses the recommendations in the Special Committee's interim report and commends the chair and members of the Special Committee for their conscientious analysis of significant issues in the recruitment, retention, and success of minority students and faculty at the University of Minnesota.

(OVER)

In anticipation of a final version of the report, SCEP encourages the Special Committee to give additional emphasis to the importance of faculty commitment to, and involvement in, efforts to improve the educational experiences of minority students. In addition to the recommendations regarding the organization and management of programs for recruiting minority students and helping to ensure their graduation, there is also a need for faculty to serve as mentors, to foster learning activities with particular significance for minority students, and to incorporate awareness of minority cultures and perspectives into instruction. SCEP hopes that the Special Committee will identify specific ways in which faculty involvement should occur and specific mechanisms for assuring it.

It would also be helpful to have the Special Committee's assessment of likely costs of implementing the proposed recommendations. It appears that many of the goals of the report can be met through better coordination and increased visibility of existing programs and, thus, may not require extensive new allocations. Other recommended actions will require new financial commitments. SCEP hopes that the Special Committee will address these possibilities in its final report.

W. Andrew Collins
Chair