

EQUITY, ACCESS & DIVERSITY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting
October 6, 2014

[These notes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these notes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

In these minutes: [Strategic plan and diversity; Senate Committee Chairs Orientation Meeting; Topics and agenda items for upcoming year]

PRESENT: Deena Wassenberg (co-chair), Geoff Maruyama (co-chair), Michael O'Day (for Kimberly Hewitt), Yi Ping, Judith Katz, Richard Graff, Andra Fjona, Priscilla Flynn, Teddie Potter, Ellyn Woo, Irene Duranczyk, Rebecca Dean

REGRETS: Naty Lopez, Susan Seltz

ABSENT: Cynthia Messer, Patrick Troup, Shakeer Abdullah, Tyler Lande, Christopher O'Brien, Anne Phibbs, Katrice Albert

GUESTS: Karen Hanson, senior vice president and Provost for Academic Affairs; Rebecca Ropers-Huilman, chair, Faculty Consultative Committee

Professors Wassenberg and Geoff Maruyama, co-chairs, welcomed the committee.

1. Strategic Plan and Diversity

Wassenberg welcomed Provost Karen Hanson. Hanson discussed the strategic plan and noted that another iteration was underway after feedback from the recent Senate meeting. She said diversity was not only a framing notion for the plan, but it also informed each of the plan's goals. Increasing the diversity of the student body, faculty and staff is discussed throughout the document, and there are ideas and suggestions for operationalization of those goals. Hanson also pointed out that while the University seeks to hire field-shaping teachers and researchers, the role of staff is important as well. Hanson emphasized that the University will do better if a variety of perspectives are included.

The committee discussed diversity within the student body and it was noted that there seemed to be low diversity in the student population given the major metropolitan area the University is in. The idea of cluster recruitment of students, in the manner of cluster hires for faculty, was posited. There was concern expressed the admission process focuses on students who are already successful, and then uses those same measures to determine who in a particular demographic will be accepted in the future. Hanson emphasized that Admissions is constantly seeking to create diversity in the classrooms. In her view, Admissions works hard to ensure diversity in the student body and is not trying to replicate classes. The committee felt that more should be done to change the admission policies to make the University a more hospitable place for a range of students and reflect

an increasingly diverse world.

Maruyama asked if there was a lower representation of students of color than the high school graduation rate in Minnesota considering that students who take the ACTs are actually more diverse than the state population. Hanson said she did not believe so and that there is a delicate balance at play: there has to be access for the students, but there must also be support systems in place to ensure success.

Maruyama said another issue that came up in the committee was low income students. Colleges are increasingly becoming cultures of affluence, and he wondered how the strategic plan could balance issues of access and culture. Hanson agreed that was an important issue, and the language in the plan was being augmented with regard to references of access and affordability.

Hanson pointed out there were elements of the strategic plan that could be cast as culture change. Some of the reciprocal engagement goals could effect culture change, and she said they were in the process of determining of how to make engagement more visible both internally and externally. The goals of reciprocal engagement could, for example, shift how the kinds of expertise drawn upon for a particular project will be sought. This in turn would affect the kind of activities students pursue. Hanson said they would be working across colleges and communities, and respect their expertise on issues where there is interconnection.

The committee asked if there was a role for the University once students enter into the workplace, in terms of educating employers about valuing diversity and assisting them in recruiting on campus. Hanson said there was much in the strategic plan that was mindful of students' pathways to careers in the community. However, she felt employers were highly alert to the value of diversity in the workforce and already placed a premium on it.

It was noted that the strategic plan is specific to the Twin Cities campus, and the question was raised as to how system campuses can share in the vision of recruiting and hiring faculty to achieve diversity objectives. Hanson said that while plans for each of the system campuses are distinctive, there is overlap and most of the work of implementing this plan will come from reallocation of funds that are already distributed in a standard process for all the campuses. The University wants to be alert to serving the different parts of the state and using the opportunities that come from the various locations.

Wassenberg thanked Hanson for the discussion.

Maruyama went on to ask Professor Rebecca Ropers-Huilman for her thoughts about how the committee could be more useful to the broader governance structure. Ropers-Huilman said she saw diversity as key to the strategic plan, but felt there was very little that could be changed in the plan at this point. However, she noted, thought and energy could now be put toward the plan's implementation. Ropers-Huilman and the committee discussed what its priorities might be as the strategic plan moves forward.

Some ideas enumerated were:

- Make the University a place where students of diverse backgrounds can be successful, and a place that attracts diverse faculty
- Ensure that commitment to diversity is recognized and rewarded by the University at individual and unit levels
- Find out why students are leaving: conduct exit interviews on the order of faculty and staff who are leaving the University
- Focus on why students are staying, not just leaving, and expand that to a broader audience
- Ensure that diversity practices are engaging with communities constructively for mutual benefit
- Examine the processes of successful colleges and units that make them outstanding in their diversity efforts
- Consider how faculty supports diverse students and make it part of recruitment, retention and tenure
- Make changes in the campus environment to reflect diversity: for example, visual representation in buildings, meeting rooms and classrooms, and printed materials

The committee discussed the idea of the strategic plan as a culture changing document, and what culture is and how it can be defined. Judith Katz said that culture change cannot be mandated but there can be accountability, and Maruyama added that the first step was making people aware. He said many colleges and departments don't realize they are excluding a good number of people and there should be tools to encourage awareness. It was noted that the Office of Equity and Diversity has a certificate program, and that perhaps the University could encourage more people across the University to acquire the certificate. There could also be people in each department who are willing to be diversity allies and disseminate ideas and value throughout their unit or department. Wassenberg said in order to have buy-in from faculty, there would need to be incentives that inform their publishing and teaching, and doesn't take them away from either.

Professor Dean said that diversity of faculty was a significant issue on the Morris campus as well. Of all the campuses, Morris has the highest diversity of students, largely in part to free tuition for Native students. However, there is very little faculty diversity due in part to its location. She noted that cluster hires are important but wondered how to effect that if the campus is only hiring six or seven faculty a year.

Maruyama suggested creating a list of principles based on the committee's discussion, which he would distribute at the next meeting for further discussion. Ropers-Huilman suggested that once the principles are established, the committee should informally advise the Provost as soon as possible. This would not require it to go to a vote in the committee, and any formal process could be around the accountability structure.

Wassenberg thanked Ropers-Huilman for her participation.

2. Report from the Senate Committee Chairs Orientation Meeting

Wassenberg asked Professor Duranczyk to report on the Senate Committee Chairs' Orientation meeting, which Duranczyk attended in Wassenberg's and Maruyama's stead.

Duranczyk said there were several key points from the orientation she thought important to share with the committee.

The committee should:

- Work closely with administrators in the area of the particular committee
- Be familiar with the strategic plan and make sure it is being used in its discussions
- Ensure everyone's input is solicited and valued, and not just put issues to a vote
- Focus on significant issues in which faculty, staff and P&A can work together to effect change
- Be aware of opportunities to create alliances with other committees and recognize possibilities for joint meetings
- Ensure that it is working in a consultative capacity and not on personal agendas

Wassenberg thanked Duranczyk for the information and for attending the orientation for them.

3. Topics and agenda items for upcoming year

Wassenberg asked the committee what they would be interested in exploring in the coming year.

Ideas included:

- Reviewing results of the campus climate survey, and how the campus climate relates to equity and diversity
- Looking at ways to create a University that is welcoming and reflects the diversity of its population
- Examining the lack of undergraduates of diversity and low income backgrounds
- Defining diversity so it can be measured
- Examining issues around recruitment of faculty of color, and best practices for recruitment
- Creating a more diverse student population, and how the strategic plan could impact recruitment and admissions policies

Hearing no further business, Wassenberg adjourned the meeting.

Mary Jo Pehl
University Senate

