

EQUITY, ACCESS & DIVERSITY
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 28, 2005

[In these minutes: Women's Cabinet Charge, Accessibility to the University, Solomon Amendment – Law School's response, Social Concerns Academic Freedom Statement]

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

PRESENT: Mary Lay Schuster, chair, Patricia Jones-Whyte, Audrey Boyle, Don Cavalier, Avelino Mills Novoa, Julie Sweitzer, Claire Walter-Marchetti, Benjamin Clarke, Andrew Hostetler, Margaret Moss, Joanna O'Connell, Naomi Scheman, Jared Warren

REGRETS: Hawona Sullivan Janzen, B. David Galt, Jennifer Gunn, Carrie Koplin, Tracy Mills

ABSENT: Jeffrey Roberts, Roxanne Beauclair, Jillian Hoover, Shay Strachan

GUEST: Professor Carol Chomsky

I). Professor Schuster called the meeting to order.

II). Members unanimously approved the Women's Cabinet charge/charter.

III). Avelino Mills-Novoa announced that today's presentation to EAD was initially shared with the Diversity Admissions Working Group, which was convened by Provost Sullivan to develop a proposal to address admission barriers as the University strives to become one of the top three public research institutions in the world.

Dr. Mills-Novoa shared the following information/statistics:

Demographic changes occurring nationally include:

- The population of people of color grew 11 times faster than the white population between 1980 and 2000.
- Between 1990 and 2000, the proportion of the white population decreased from 75% to 69%.
- The 2000 census revealed that 29% of the U.S. population is comprised of people of color.
- Twenty percent of students attending U.S. public schools identify themselves as an immigrant or a child of an immigrant.

Regional K-12 demographic projections indicate:

- The Midwest is expected to experience a 3.3% decrease in the number of high school graduates by 2013.
- In the five-state region, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota, projections estimate that the number of high school graduates will decline by 11.7% by 2013. Minnesota K-12 demographic projections expect a decrease of 10.3% in the number of high school graduates by 2013, but this statistic masks a divergent racial/ethnic pattern whereby white graduates are expected to decline by 18.7% and graduates of color are expected to increase by 51.9%.

The economic impacts of these demographic changes are significant. By 2010, Minnesota will not produce enough college graduates to both replace retirees and fill new job vacancies, and by 2015, the State will not be producing enough graduates to replace retirees, leaving no room for economic growth. This information makes it apparent that something needs to be done to increase the pool of high school seniors that attend college.

Other information shared by Dr. Mills-Novoa related to access included:

- The achievement gap for students of color starts very early. By as early as the third grade, these gaps are very apparent.
- Thirty seven percent of African American students that attend college, go to four-year colleges while 63% attend two-year colleges. Black students attending a two-year college in Minnesota have a much lower retention rate. Very few of these students will go on to attend a 4-year college after their two-year program is completed.
- A vast majority of students of color attending the University are Minnesota residents. If the University plans to recruit students of color from outside of Minnesota in order to increase diversity on campus, it has a long way to go.
- In 2003, 1,116 students of color (freshmen) were admitted to the University, and, in 2004, 1,018 were admitted. Of the African American students that were admitted to the University during this two-year period, 65% and 66% respectively were admitted through General College.
- There exists a wide discrepancy in the percentage of advanced placement exams given based on ethnicity. A much larger number of white students come into the University with post-secondary credits. For those students of color that have some post-secondary credits, they will likely have less than the white students. Post-secondary credits play a significant factor in a student's ability to graduate in four years. A member also noted that the number of advanced placement courses offered by schools varies significantly as well.

The University faces a huge challenge in terms of maintaining access. Barriers to college access include:

- Limited financial resources. The University must provide financial assistance and incentives. One of the barriers for students to attend college relates to their socio-

economic status. There is a strong relationship between income and education and education and income.

- High drop out rates.
- Poor high school counseling. Minnesota ranks 49th in the country in its ratio of counselors to students.
- Low expectations and aspirations and lack of peer support for academic achievement.
- Inequalities of familial, cultural and social capital.
- Racism.
- Inequality of resources in neighborhoods and communities.
- Inequalities in K-12 schools.
- Segregation of students.
- Undocumented student status.

In response to the very disturbing information received today on accessibility to the University and the possible elimination of General College (GC), Professor Schuster volunteered to draft an email on behalf of EAD rallying support for GC. This message would be sent to the Regents and other leaders in the administration. Additionally, Professor Schuster requested that Professor Scheman put in a proposal format the letter she wrote to Provost Sullivan concerning whether the goal of enhancing excellence at the University of Minnesota will affect student access. Once the letter is in a proposal format the Committee can endorse it.

IV). Professor Chomsky updated the Committee on the Law Schools response to the controversial Solomon Amendment. The Law School moved that its faculty join the organization that is litigating the Solomon Amendment, the Society of American Law Teachers (SALT). The Law School views this action as an opportunity to speak out more publicly about the situation and its distress about being compelled to allow military recruitment on campus in light of blatant discrimination against GLBT applicants. The Law School, in its statement, reaffirmed its commitment to non-discrimination and stated it is unhappy with being compelled into forced complicity. A committee was formed within the Law School to shepherd their efforts related to this matter through the system.

As part of taking a public position on this issue, General Counsel Mark Rotenberg advised the Law School to explain how it got to this position and lay out the issues. Many believe that there should be an institutional declaration reconfirming the University's commitment to nondiscrimination and concern over a policy that permits discrimination. This is potentially a very volatile situation. While it is necessary to be firm and do what is right under the circumstances, it is also important that it not be done at the expense of the people that are being supported.

Professor Schuster thanked Professor Chomsky for her report and asked that she keep members informed on the Law School's progress.

V). EAD members agreed that while they certainly endorse the overall idea of a statement on Academic Freedom, the use and the explication of certain examples in the

statement proved problematic for EAD. While members of EAD were overall very supportive of the Academic Freedom statement drafted and endorsed by the Social Concerns Committee, several members took issue with the examples used, particularly the Larry Summers example. In one member's opinion, the use of Larry Summers remarks as an example of academic freedom is very dangerous because it confuses the issue and what administrative roles are all about. It was also noted that the Ward Churchill example could also be viewed as somewhat debatable. Currently a movement is underway in Colorado to remove him from his position for acts of plagiarism and harassment.

EAD will leave it up to Social Concerns whether they want to continue this discussion with EAD to draft a mutually agreeable statement, which EAD would co-endorse or whether they want to leave it as is without EAD's endorsement. Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, was asked to convey EAD's concerns to the Social Concerns Committee.

VI). Other business: A member commented to the incoming chair, Professor Scheman, that over the last few years the lines of Social Concerns and EAD have become largely indistinguishable. Professor Schuster suggested that part of the May meeting be devoted to brainstorming ideas for the Committee to work on during the 2005 – 2006 academic year.

Claire Walter Marchetti noted that she has been listening to concerns about work/life balance and parental leave policies. She has been invited to attend an upcoming SCFA meeting to discuss the matter further. Ms. Walter Marchetti would appreciate the Committee's support and interest in her efforts. She is working on taking her ideas from the abstract to the more substantive. Professor Schuster requested Ms. Walter Marchetti put her ideas in writing and distribute it to the Committee for their input.

VII). Hearing no further business, Professor Schuster adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate