

Minutes*

Faculty Consultative Committee
Thursday, March 2, 1995 (Part II)
2:00 - 3:00
Room 238 Morrill Hall

Present: John Adams (chair), Carl Adams, Sheila Corcoran-Perry, Lester Drewes, Sara Evans, Virginia Gray, Kenneth Heller, Robert Jones, Morris Kleiner, Harvey Peterson, Michael Steffes

Regrets: Thomas Burk, Dan Feeney, James Gremmels, Geoffrey Maruyama

Absent: Roberta Humphreys

Guests: Associate Vice President Josie Johnson, Dr. Nobuya Tsuchida (Academic Affairs)

[In these minutes: Discussion of minority faculty issues; meetings with the Regents]

1. Minority Faculty Issues

Professor Adams adjourned the Senate Consultative Committee meeting at 2:00 and reconvened the Faculty Consultative Committee; he welcomed Associate Vice President Josie Johnson to discuss recruitment and retention of faculty of color. Dr. Johnson introduced Dr. Nobuya Tsuchida, Director of the Office for Minority and Special Student Affairs, who does much of the statistical work for her office.

Dr. Johnson began by distributing copies of materials she had presented to the Board of Regents at their January meeting and said she wished to explain to the Committee her report.

Her office, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Associate Provost with special responsibility for minority affairs, was created in 1988, following many months of study of issues of importance to students and faculty of color and how to increase diversity at the University. The first occupant of the position was Dr. Delores Cross. She and the office established goals for minority faculty hiring in 1989, recommending that the University double the number of annual minority faculty hires by 1994. They also recommended increasing the number of students of color to 10% of total enrollment, and improving by 50% the minority graduation rate by 1994. Dr. Johnson's February, 1995, report to the Board was on the success of meeting those goals.

In terms of the faculty goal, Dr. Johnson told the Committee, they were pleased to be able to report that the University had met the goal. The goal was to hire 144 faculty of color between 1989 and 1994; 144 were hired. In comparing the University's accomplishments with peer institutions, they learned that at one Big Ten institution, faculty of color made up 12.1% of the faculty. Minnesota is just above Wisconsin; they have 8.9% faculty of color while Minnesota is at 9.2%.

*These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate or Twin Cities Campus 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.

Perhaps most constructive, Dr. Johnson suggested, would be to review the concerns expressed by faculty of color. Her office had a series of retreats with faculty of color and inquired of them about their scholarly satisfaction, ways the University might help improve their performance, how it might recruit more faculty of color. They also interviewed faculty who had left the University, to find out WHY they left.

The concerns of current faculty were as follows:

- They are asked to serve on too many committees. This may be a complaint typical of all junior faculty, but when the University is making an honest effort to have diverse representation on committees, and there are so few faculty of color, they feel overwhelmed. Many feel that committee membership gets in the way of other things they MUST do, such as research and publication, partnering with senior faculty, and so on.
- There is a dichotomy of sorts; while on the one hand, they feel they are asked to serve on committees as well as work with students and the community, on the other hand they do not feel they are provided the opportunity to serve on MAJOR committees. Nor do they believe they obtain the kind of administrative experience many faculty believe they should have.
- They believe their research and interests, in other than Eurocentric fields, are sometimes not taken seriously nor valued. As a result, the work they are interested in does not receive the credit that other work might.
- They feel they have few opportunities to work with (Caucasian) colleagues to produce scholarly research and to be exposed to the kind of research they need to be involved in. A number have expressed concern that they have a piece of work, they do the research and writing, but there is no one with whom they can discuss this gender- or race-centered material. They have had to find colleagues at other institutions with whom to share it and from whom they could obtain critiques.
- They feel that they are assigned to teach too many lower division courses. The opportunity to do work at upper division and graduate levels, as many would like to do, is not made available.
- They feel that the pressure brought on them to teach courses with smaller enrollments has an impact on how they are viewed by their colleagues.
- The promotion and tenure review does not take into account the outreach efforts they believe are of value to the University, in that much of their outreach and student contact work is not valued for promotion and tenure.
- They feel isolated, in some disciplines, from their majority colleagues. They occasionally feel devalued both by the colleagues in their field as well as by students.
- Students can raise complaints that are taken seriously by their departments without due process.
- Many are also concerned about the limitations that have been placed on U2000 issues that they

have raised, such as about the level and kind of students the University will be recruiting and whether there will be financial assistance available for students.

Her office has been involved in a number of activities, from bridge funding to efforts to develop new methods of teaching. The President has preserved funds for faculty who wish to do research in the areas of ethnic or gender studies; Professor Robert Jones chairs that effort. Her office has had discussions with the deans whose departments have been involved in these efforts; in every case, the deans felt the efforts had been worthwhile.

They have made a set of recommendations to the University.

- In recruiting new faculty, efforts must be made to see that the distribution of the faculty of color is more even. The picture now is skewed; in order for students to obtain a broad understanding of, and respect for, scholars of color, they need to be distributed across disciplines.
- The University should establish mentoring plans for faculty; they need to be mentored by senior colleagues in their department, people who understand the politics of their department, who understand what they need to do and emphasizes they need to place on what they do. Dr. Johnson related that she learned that outreach and community service may not be of high value at a research institution. One of the senior members of the administration has said very clearly that what matters, for faculty, is teaching and research; outreach has lower priority. Many faculty of color have a close connection with their community; if the University appropriately says they must cloister themselves to produce the kind of work that will be properly evaluated, faculty need to know that. They need to have people working with them so they are not misled into believing there is a 1/3-1/3-1/3 evaluation.
- Financial support is needed for research work, as the President has provided; they need to know the funding is there and that the University values their research.
- The "environment"--for lack of a better term--needs to be one in which people really feel they are part of the system. There are too many faculty of color who do not feel they are a part of the academy; they feel marginalized.
- The mentoring community needs to figure out how to protect faculty of color from excessive service-oriented activities during their probationary period, if service is not given significant weight in promotion and tenure decisions.
- The University needs to look at an entire category of scholarship that may not fit the classical model; it is being called the "eminent credentialling" model as far as American Indian scholars are concerned. It reflects a need to have American Indian scholars come to the campus and teach in American Indian Studies; they are people who have not have gone through the same scholarly process that others have. This is something that needs to be thought about.

The last time she met with the FCC, Dr. Johnson recalled, she brought the report from Dean Skok's committee, which had pulled together recommendations from across the University about students, faculty, curriculum, and administration. She thanked the Committee and invited questions, asking if the

concerns sounded familiar.

One Committee member expressed concern about the issue of committee service; every committee appointed at the University tries to have a reasonable balance of gender and race; achieving gender balance is possible, but the same people of color are repeatedly chosen for committee service; "we wear them out." The Committee must hear from people like Dr. Johnson about this issue; one Committee member counseled a colleague NOT to accept committee assignments because it would do harm to her career. Yet the University needs a balance on committees.

Dr. Johnson agreed there is a dilemma. One of the things they have looked at is the amount of time it takes faculty of color to get through the promotion and tenure process; if more faculty of color can get through the process, so the pool is larger, the problem would be solved. That is what they are trying to do--create a larger pool. The last group of faculty who were hired, she related, have a better retention rate than earlier groups, in part because the University is paying more attention to the concerns she outlined earlier.

Dr. Tsuchida reported that information provided to the Regents in 1994 demonstrated that some minority assistant professors took more than seven years to get tenure; more alarming was that many minority assistant professors did not stay at the University long enough to be considered for promotion. The biggest problem the University faces is the high attrition rate among assistant professors.

One Committee member inquired if the University makes special efforts to identify and recruit minority faculty; does not the fact that it succeeds make those people that much more attractive to other institutions that are ALSO looking for faculty of color? Does the University provide a platform of prominence from which people can leave? This is partially true and partially not, Dr. Johnson said, and she related incidents involving the unhappy experiences of black women at the University who subsequently left. This would have been a richer institution had they not left, she said, and the University community would have had a better understanding of diversity--which is more than race and gender. It has a lot to do with manner, style, cultural differences in problem-solving, speech patterns. Often the University does not fully appreciate the many elements of diversity. It may make the University feel better to say that minority faculty and administrators went some other place, but many of them would prefer to stay at Minnesota; it is a prestigious institution and one they are proud to be associated with.

They interviewed faculty of color who left, to find out why. The story is not different for faculty than for administrators. Is this a race and gender issue, or is it true for all? One Committee member recalled talking with white male colleagues who had chosen to leave; this place, it was said, does not generally make people feel good.

Many of the concerns Dr. Johnson reported, said one Committee member, are the concerns of the faculty, period. Not just faculty of color. Young faculty are concerned about these issues. In some cases, there are issues distinctive to faculty of color, but in many cases they are not.

One could probably show statistically, and perhaps by interviews, which of the issues are disproportionately a concern of minority faculty, pointed out one Committee member. It is also true that while majority faculty can recognize the problems, they don't know how to fix them. This is an argument

for addressing the issues. On the specific question of retention of assistant professors, a number of units have been providing mentoring; the problem that they are dealing with is a "sink or swim" mentality that is harmful to everyone. There is an agreement between two CLA departments on a joint search; before conducting the search, there was a very explicit agreement about the mentoring--in part because of the dangers of a joint appointment, where people are asked to do 200%. There will be a joint mentoring committee that will have the right to intervene with either or both departments on the individual's behalf, to serve as a buffer and communications mechanism. It may be the kind of device that could be useful in other programs. It also seemed, on reflection, to be the kind of support that should be provided to everyone!

What they have found, Dr. Johnson said, is not that minority faculty are so different; it is just that when one adds the factor of color, the problems increase. "We cannot ignore the fact that we have an attitude about people of color," she reflected. It is not until people have more exposure, more opportunity to see the similarities rather than to focus on the differences, that the attitude will be overcome.

One of the reasons for the joint appointment concept, she told the Committee, was because when African-American Studies was created, the idea was that it would not stand alone but would have joint appointments to infuse information in the work of scholars in other disciplines. What has happened is that it hasn't worked as well as it was hoped, and the idea needs re-examination.

One Committee member recalled hiring a Native American scientist in a department, and has seen emerging some of the issues raised at this meeting. It is helpful to bring them to everyone's attention.

A question was then asked about the table of data on minority faculty hires for the last five years. From October 1993 to October 1994 there were only 15 minority faculty hired; in the years before that, there were significantly more. What is the reason for the decline? Another Committee member noted that there had been fewer hires altogether; these data did not adjust for the total number of faculty hired in any one year. It is still a concern, Committee members agreed.

Dr. Tsuchida said that the comment about faculty leaving the University for a whole array of reasons is basically true for minority faculty as well; those individuals did not leave for reasons related to their race or the environment alone. There were deaths and retirements, as well as industry salaries that were much higher. The University, however, hired 32 new assistant professors of color between 1992 and 1994; during the same period, it lost 27 minority assistant professors. He also noted that from 1992 to 1994, the University hired 47 minority faculty members; it LOST 45 minority faculty during the same period, for a net gain of two. It is unlikely that statistics about majority faculty would be the same.

Dr. Johnson noted that what they have said is that if faculty leave for reasons that improve their life conditions, that is to be encouraged. What they do NOT want minority faculty to do is leave the University because of environmental issues or lack of respect. They recently had a meeting with African-American faculty, who met with the President's African-American Advisory Committee to look at issues of critical measures. A number of faculty--not junior faculty--expressed concern about issues of environment, how they are perceived in their department, the lack of interaction among colleagues. There isn't a sense of collegial relationships. If that also doesn't exist for other faculty, either, Dr. Johnson pointed out, then the University really needs to do something about it. That will be the only way

it will keep people and make them productive.

2. Other Business

Professor Adams then inquired if Committee members would be willing to attend a special meeting, either during Spring Break or later, in order to deal with the enormous backlog of business that has built up. It was agreed that there would be an attempt to find a date acceptable to as many Committee members as possible.

The Committee must also decide how it wishes to respond to the invitation from the Chair of the Board of Regents for more frequent meetings. Committee members deliberated again the wisdom of meeting with the Chair of the Board of Regents, in addition to the quarterly reports from the FCC chair at the meeting of the Board, whether they should meet with the President and expect him to be the representative of the faculty, and whether the President CAN represent the faculty to the Board, with the conflicting pressures on his office. One Committee member pointed out that the Committee should either take advantage of the opportunity or quit complaining that it has no representation to the Board.

The President has indicated that the decision about whether to meet with the Chair is entirely up to FCC.

The meetings should be with the chair and vice chair of the Board of Regents, it was agreed.

Professor Adams thanked his colleagues for their comments and adjourned the meeting at 2:40.

-- Gary Engstrand

University of Minnesota