

EQUITY, ACCESS & DIVERSITY
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 24, 2006

[In these minutes: Faculty Women's Cabinet, Miscellaneous Discussion]

[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: Naomi Scheman, chair, Hawona Sullivan Janzen, Don Cavalier, Geoffrey Maruyama, Anne Phibbs, Claire Walter-Marchetti, Benjamin Clarke, Ruth-Ellen Joeres, Jooinn Lee, Margaret Moss, Joanna O'Connell, Lee Penn

REGRETS: Patricia Jones-Whyte, Audrey Boyle, Julie Sweitzer

ABSENT: Jennifer Gunn, Si Chen, Catherine Hernandez, Joseph Linder, Cathryn Watson, Andrea Williams

GUEST: Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs Arlene Carney

I). Professor Scheman called the meeting to order.

II). Professor Scheman welcomed Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs Arlene Carney to today's meeting. Dr. Carney provided members with information concerning the Faculty Women's Cabinet, which was established last fall by Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost E. Thomas Sullivan. The Cabinet reports to Provost Sullivan through Dr. Carney. Dr. Carney noted that the Cabinet's mission is to provide a leadership base to improve and enhance both the academic as well as the professional environments for women faculty on the Twin Cities campus. While the Cabinet is currently only a Twin Cities initiative, serious consideration will be given to expanding the membership systemwide with time.

Dr. Carney reported that there were 35 applicants for the six seats on the Cabinet. Candidate applications were reviewed by four women associate deans, Claire Walter Marchetti, director, Office for University Women and Dr. Carney based on previously established criteria. The pioneering members of the Cabinet are Elizabeth Arendt (Medical School); Heidi Barajas (General College); Carol Chomsky (Law School); Rhonda Franklin Drayton (Institute of Technology); Tasoulla Hadjiyanni (College of Human Ecology); and Peggy Nelson (College of Liberal Arts). In terms of selecting members to the Cabinet, great effort was taken to ensure the Cabinet was diverse with respect to field of study, background, experience, etc. Ms. Walter Marchetti serves as an ex-officio representative on the Cabinet.

The Cabinet held its first meeting in mid-December, and has had several meetings since that time. At these meetings the Cabinet has been working to identify issues that it would like to focus on. The Cabinet is currently responding the Faculty Culture Task Force report. Additionally, the Cabinet is discussing with Ms. Walter-Marchetti the role of the Office for University Women.

Questions/comments from members following Dr. Carney's update included:

- Because this is a faculty cabinet, does it only deal with faculty issues? Ms. Walter-Marchetti replied that the Cabinet definitely intends to focus on faculty issues, and particularly as it relates to tenured and tenure track faculty. This does not mean, however, that the Cabinet will not look at issues raised by faculty-like P&A, or, eventually, even issues raised by women in other employee groups.
- Are there any faculty unionization issues impacting how the Cabinet functions? Dr. Carney stated there are no issues at this time because this is a Twin Cities only Cabinet and Twin City faculty are not unionized.
- Does the University have any plans to do another salary study and collect salary data as it relates to gender, race and ethnicity? Dr. Carney stated that shortly after starting in her position as vice provost, she submitted a grant to the NSF Advanced Program for Women in Science to do a life course model salary study among other proposals, which, unfortunately, was not funded. This was not because it was not a good proposal, but because 79 proposals were received, and only seven could be funded. The proposal contained some very good ideas, which Provost Sullivan supports. Dr. Carney went on to explain a few of the ideas contained in this grant proposal. Despite the fact the grant was not funded, does not mean the ideas cannot be pursued at least at some level.
- Professor Scheman strongly supports Dr. Carney's commitment to diversity. Dr. Carney noted the importance of making diversity issues visible across the University. As an example, she reported that many of the University's 712 statements, which guide decisions about promotion and tenure, are not reflective of the values of individual units/departments. This concern has also been raised in the Faculty Culture Task Force report. Dr. Carney stated that she is committed to training people across the University about the importance of diversity and implicit biases. She referred members to an interesting URL, which addresses the issue of implicit biases: www.implicit.harvard.edu
- A member noted that a significant amount of attention is paid to promotion and tenure as faculty move from an assistant to associate professorship, but much less attention is paid to faculty as they move from associate to full professorship. Dr. Carney noted that a vast majority of departmental 712 statements have minimal text related to promotion and tenure from associate to full professorship. Guidelines to facilitate faculty making this jump are negligible in many departments. The question of why some faculty stay at an associate professorship level needs to be explored in depth.

Dr. Carney thanked members for their time, and indicated that she would be delighted to return in the future to consult with the committee.

Following Dr. Carney's departure, members continued their discussion around a range of issues. Discussion highlights include:

- There is a fine line between not having central administration dictate what needs to be included in departmental 712 statements, and the importance of having administrative clout behind these statements.
- Discrepancies around who is granted promotion and tenure vary greatly from department to department. There needs to be more equity across departments when it comes to tenure and promotion.
- In terms of recruiting minority faculty, should the quality of candidates be sacrificed in order to satisfy quantitative objectives?
- This Committee and/or the Cabinet may want to address the need for making mentoring and institutional support resources available to women faculty outside of their department as they pursue promotion and tenure. There should be support for the unit so the onus is not on the faculty ??????????????????
- Claire Walter-Marchetti reported that a preliminary charge for the Cabinet has been drafted and will be sent out to Cabinet members for their input. The goal is to have the charge suitably represent the Cabinet to the University community. Once the final version of the charge has been adopted Ms. Walter-Marchetti agreed to bring it to EAD for information.
- Career coaching opportunities exist at the University. Examples cited included the Women's Leadership Institute, the President's Emerging Leaders Program, etc.
- There remains concern by members of the University community around keeping the General College admission vision alive. With this said, and in light of the pilot project ideas that were generated at the Committee's last meeting, funding should be requested to implement these or other projects that would promote diversity at the University. If the University intends to be one of the top three public research institutions in the world, diversity and equity must be central to how the University defines itself. Professor Scheman proposed working with Vice President for Access, Equity and Multicultural Affairs and Vice Provost Dr. Barcelo once she is onboard to identify funds, which would be put toward projects and programming that would articulate the importance of diversity.
- It will be important to make sure that any projects that are undertaken not overlap with initiatives currently underway. It was noted, for example, that Associate Vice President for Public Engagement Vic Bloomfield is spearheading a civic engagement initiative. An invitation should be extended to him to attend an upcoming meeting to share information concerning this project.
- As follow-up from last month's meeting, a member noted that Vice Provost Craig Swan is receptive to discussing with EAD the best approach for developing non-traditional/alternative criteria for predicting student success. On a semi-related note, Professor Scheman noted that oftentimes the University has a tendency to rely on outside research and consultants, rather than making use of its internal resources. In response to this comment, a member suggested inviting Rich Howard to an upcoming meeting to casually converse about issues of equity, access, and diversity as it relates to the University's research agenda.

- The question surrounding EAD's effectiveness both in terms of moving its overall agenda forward and in terms of its role in the strategic positioning process was raised. Related to strategic positioning, Professor Scheman reported hearing anecdotally that EAD's input into the strategic positioning process was helpful. Some members voiced concern around the strategic positioning process in general, particularly related to the abrupt nature in which it was imposed, and the lack of consultation with governance committees. One member emphasized the importance of involving departments, committees, etc. that will be affected by the far-reaching implications of strategic positioning decisions. It was mentioned that it is not in this institution's culture to think through who should be at the table when major decisions are being made. EAD needs to be proactive in its watchdog role around issues of equity, access and diversity. On next year's agenda, EAD should be attentive to what, if any, adverse impacts have occurred as a result of the elimination of General College.
- A suggestion was made to invite the Diversity Task Force co-chairs, Professor David Weissbrodt, Professor Anne L. Taylor, and Professor Louis Mendoza to discuss the Task Force's final recommendations, and to have a joint discussion around promoting diversity at the University.
- It is important for the committee to send a consistent, clear message on the importance of diversity. The committee should not judge the success of its outcomes too harshly. In response to this comment another member stated that in order to be effective the committee needs to reach out to the deans. Consideration should be given to inviting 2 – 3 different deans to each of the committee's meetings next year, and spend 45 minutes or so discussing a topic that would be of mutual interest to these individuals.
- The 'six degrees of separation' project mentioned at the committee's April 10th meeting, if implemented, could be very powerful and self-sustaining.
- Professor Scheman noted a project idea she had involving inviting authors of books with possible controversial content (published by the University Press) to discuss their work in an open forum/public event setting. The goal would be to hold these open forums on a regular, recurring basis. On a semi-related note, Ms. Walter-Marchetti reported that OMAA attempted to sponsor an event this spring called Intersections of Faith, Free Speech and Multiculturalism, which would have focused on the Muslim cartoon controversy, but due to scheduling difficulties this event did not come to fruition. Another member mentioned a couple other venues for provocative discussions including 'Great Conversations' and Minnesota Public Radio's 'Talking Volumes'. It was suggested that the committee work with a media partner to bring its conversations to the broader public e.g. KFAI Radio, etc.

In closing, Professor Scheman indicated that she would draft a preliminary proposal outlining a course of action for EAD next year. This proposal will be sent out to members in conjunction with the minutes from this meeting. Hearing no further business Professor Scheman adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey

University Senate