

## MEMORANDUM

TO: School of Education Policy Council  
Bradley Levinson, Chair  
FROM: Russ Skiba, Chair, Committee on Diversity  
SUBJECT: Annual Committee Report to Policy Council: Diversity Committee  
DATE: April 19, 2007

The Diversity Committee met six times this year. At our final meeting, we will be finalizing a set of recommendations on improving recruitment efforts at the undergraduate level for students from traditionally under-represented groups.

The majority of our efforts this year fell into two categories, making recommendations regarding the recruitment of under-represented students, and defining the role of a diversity committee.

### **Recruitment Recommendations**

We continued to focus on Goal 5.3 of the Strategic Plan, *Recruit and retain underrepresented undergraduate students*. Last year, we completed the report, "What Color is Your Teaching Force? The Status of Diversity in the IUB Undergraduate Teacher Education Program." Both the Dean and Policy Council requested a more detailed set of recommendations. A draft of those recommendations was submitted to Dean Gonzalez for presentation at the final faculty meeting this year. We will be completing work on the draft at our final meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup>.

There are two immediate recommendations and two long-term recommendations. First, we are recommending that, as a research institution, the School of Education make the recruitment of under-represented undergraduate and graduate students a research agenda through the provision of faculty and staff time devoted to the topic. Second, to address issues that have been raised regarding PRAXIS, we recommend any strategy that may result in students taking PRAXIS early in their college career, including the possibility of an administration of PRAXIS I at the School of Education. More long-term recommendations are to employ a variety of strategic recruitment outreach efforts, and to make equity in application, admission, and graduation a school-wide institutional priority. The draft of the recommendations submitted to Dean Gonzalez is attached.

### **Structure of the Diversity Committee**

In the course of these discussions, questions about the role and function of the diversity committee arose on a regular basis. Some of these discussions probably mirrored the discussions in other committees about whether our functions were identified correctly. In the end, the committee came to a consensus that we do not believe any of our roles should be delegated to other committees, or vice versa. But two major issues arose on a regular basis. First, it is apparent that there is a marked under-representation of senior

faculty and administrators on the Committee. On the one hand, it is certainly commendable that junior faculty, staff, and graduate students are willing to make the strong personal commitment to working on issues of diversity and equity on this committee. On the other hand, the absence of more senior faculty, who typically have greater access to and knowledge concerning the institutional paths to creating meaningful change, has raised questions about whether the Committee on Diversity is simply a “visionary” committee, without any real power to engage in meaningful action. In turn, such a perception may create concern about the extent to which the School is truly committed to operationalizing the extensive set of goals and actions listed in Goal #5 of the Strategic Plan.

The second issue is one of distributed leadership. While the presence of a Committee on Diversity is important in an institution, the Committee has noted a tendency for other institutional units to defer all actions or issues concerning equity or diversity to the Committee on Diversity. To the extent that such issues involve overall policy or big-picture issues, such referrals may be appropriate. But it is important to reiterate that if, like academic excellence or fiscal responsibility, cultural competence represents a core value of the institution, that responsibility must be shared by all departments and committees in the School and issues of diversity, equity, and cultural responsiveness must be seen as an integral part of the agendas of all units.

We were fortunate to have Vice President Charlie Nelms join us for a discussion on the issue of distributed leadership on diversity and equity issues. The timing of the request from the Long-Range Planning Committee to consider committee roles and functions was also fortuitous in focusing these discussions. The summary of our thinking on these issues is contained in the memo to the LRP Committee, attached. We hope to continue a dialogue with the Policy Council on the best structure for the Committee on Diversity in order to be able to best ensure distributed leadership on these issues.

Respectfully submitted to the Policy Council by Russell Skiba for the Diversity Committee.

Members in attendance this year:

Dionne Danns, Rob Kunzman, Robin Hughes, Paulette Dilworth, Melissa Gresalfi, Michael Tracy, Carol Ann Hossler, Alfreda Clegg, Lynn Greenfield, Ghangis Carter, Natalie Barman, Sunny Watson, Leigh Featherstone, Alena Treat, Nita Levison (Ex officio), Russ Skiba (Chair)

**Progress Report  
Committee on Diversity  
Recommendations on Disproportionate Undergraduate  
Representation in Teacher Education  
March 30, 2007**

Last year, the Committee on Diversity issued a report (“*What Color is Your Teaching Force? The Status of Diversity in the IUB Undergraduate Teacher Education Program*”) finding serious under-representation among African American, Latino, and Native American students in applications, admission, and graduation from the IUB Teacher Education Program. In response to that report, the committee was asked by the Dean’s Office and Policy Council to work on a series of recommendations and submit them this year. Our discussions over the last two years have focused on preparing those recommendations.

Those discussions led us to two classes of recommendations: a set of specific recommendations for programs that could be implemented in the near future by the School, and longer term recommendations for structural change. It is important to note that these recommendations are part of the broader responsibility of the Policy Council committee structure and the Dean’s Office, not the sole responsibility of the Committee on Diversity. We recommend that the Policy Council consider them and forward them to the appropriate committees for further consideration and implementation.

**Immediate Recommendations**

**1. Make Underrepresented Undergraduate and Graduate Student Recruitment a Research Agenda:** The IUB School of Education is a research institution and, as such, our desire to improve the proportionality in recruitment and graduation of students of color should be considered a researchable question. Possible interventions can be addressed as researchable questions, and the evaluation of any strategies that are implemented can and should be treated as a researchable question

*Recommendation:* Provide a one to two course a year release for at least three years for one faculty member to make the improvement of recruitment of students of color a research agenda. That faculty member should have at their disposal a half time position, probably a staff position, to assist them in the work. The goal would be to identify the most effective strategies that have been identified in the literature for improving recruitment outcomes for students of color, identifying a set of measures that would indicate improvement, and evaluating the effects of underrepresented recruitment strategies that were implemented. This work would of course be expected to result in publications and national presentations for the faculty working on the project. The Dean’s Office should contact the Office of Institutional Development and Student Affairs in order to explore possible sources of funding that would help defray some of the costs associated with this initiative.

**2. Address the high failure rate of underrepresented students taking the PRAXIS examination:** Discussions of underrepresented admissions into the IUB Teacher Education Program return again and again to the central roadblock represented by PRAXIS I.

Indeed, those difficulties have been documented in an excellent article by Dr. Christine Bennett and her colleagues only recently in the *American Educational Research Journal*. Too many students of color wait until they are ready to apply to the School of Education to take PRAXIS I, only to fail after completing two years of college. Although the tutoring programs that have been put in place hold some promise, it is also imperative that we help prospective students pay serious attention to PRAXIS I earlier in their college career.

*Recommendation:* Expand current efforts to reimburse students of color for taking the PRAXIS I examination, especially if they take it early in their college careers. Hold an administration of the PRAXIS I in the School of Education and publicize it as an event in order to increase the seriousness of the issue, and at the same time emphasize the support that the School of Education is willing to provide in helping students pass PRAXIS I.

(Note that the PRAXIS I and the state policies that drive the exam might also become part of the research agenda defined in the first recommendation, should that research team determine that PRAXIS I remained a significant barrier to underrepresented admissions).

### **Long-Term Recommendations**

In addition, the committee will be making recommendations in the following areas to the Policy Council, for consideration by other committees or implementation by the Dean's Office.

1. *Employ strategic recruitment outreach efforts (in conjunction with Recommendation #1 above)*

- Employ class valedictorians and salutatorians from high poverty/high underrepresented prospective student areas who have chosen to attend IUB as "ambassadors" for recruiting visits to their high schools. Recruit the top 5% of students from those schools, attempting to increase their consideration of teaching as a high priority profession.
- Employ teachers and administrators of color who are committed to a more statewide teaching force as ambassadors to the program, as above.
- Provide release time or enhanced service credit for faculty who are engaged in efforts to improve the diversity of the School of Education student population or the climate in the School.
- Develop long-term partnerships with HCBUs and HSIs and Teacher Cadet Programs

2. *Make equity in application, admission, and graduation a school-wide institutional responsibility.*

- Restart and continue institutional support for Project TEAM as an exemplar of a highly successful program in this area.
- Have ETS routinely analyze and disseminate data on application, admission, and graduation rates, disaggregated by race.

- Departments should use such data to examine their own practices and develop and submit a plan in order to improve their rate of application, admission, and graduation for traditionally under-represented student populations.
- Hold an interdepartmental forum with one representative from each department to discuss novel methods of minority recruitment, or methods that have been found to be successful
- Include efforts to increase the diversity of the unit one of the areas to be addressed in the evaluations of department chairs and SOE administrators (e.g., “List any efforts your department/area has made in the last year to recruit or retain students, faculty, and staff from under-represented groups.”)

We are fully cognizant of the resistance that recommendations such as the last may engender. But ultimately, the discussion hinges on the extent to which equity and diversity are indeed core values of the School of Education. If so, the personnel and fiscal resources we are willing to devote, and the extent to which we are willing to hold ourselves accountable for achievement of our objectives, stands as positive or negative evidence of the extent to which we truly intend to operationalize the values we espouse.

To: Enrique Galindo, Chair, Long Range Planning Committee  
From: Russ Skiba, Chair, Committee on Diversity  
Date: 4/6/2007  
RE: Committee Redundancy Review

Thank you for the request to consider the charge and functions of the Committee on Diversity as part of the upcoming revision of the Constitution of the Faculty. We have indeed been engaged in a year long process exploring the meaning of an institutional diversity committee and will bring some of that discussion forward in our conclusions and recommendations.

1.) We did not feel that the Committee on Diversity overlapped to a significant extent with other committees, that we should take on charges from other committees, or should move our responsibilities to other committees.

2.) In reviewing the current charge in the Constitution, however, the Committee strongly felt that the current wording does not and cannot represent the charge of the Committee. The current description of the Committee on Diversity in the Constitution reads in part:

“This committee shall institutionalize diversity initiatives that become a lasting form of institutional commitment demonstrated to external and internal constituencies of the School of Education.”

In reviewing all of the committee descriptions in the Constitution, it is striking that this is the only committee charged with institutionalizing efforts. Other committees are charged with making recommendations, developing plans, providing advice, or reviewing policies or dossiers. Indeed, without a budget or paid staff, a Policy Council committee has no means for institutionalizing any policy or initiative. The appropriate function of a Policy Council committee is advisory or oversight. Thus we would recommend that the first sentence of the Committee on Diversity description be changed to:

“This committee is responsible for monitoring the progress of diversity initiatives that demonstrate the extent of the School of Education's commitment to diversity to its external and internal constituencies, and making recommendations as to how that commitment can be more comprehensively operationalized.”

3.) In conversations during the course of the year, the Committee has questioned the exclusive use of the term *diversity* for describing the role of this committee. Diversity is in and of itself something of a vague and undefined term, suggesting that our goal is simply to have a more diverse population. There are however, a number of issues of cultural responsiveness, equity, and social justice that such a committee must consider if it is to adequately represent and advocate for the concerns of those who have been historically marginalized in our society. Thus, we would recommend, as part of the constitutional revisions, that a discussion be engaged on both the Committee, the Policy

Council, or both on the extent to which these other terms should be included in the name of this committee.

4.) A perennial concern of the Committee on Diversity has to do with issues of distributed leadership and authority. In an ideal world, a diversity committee would not be necessary, as all of the other institutional structures would, as a matter of course, integrate cultural values into all of their policy initiatives and decision-making. Since it is unlikely we will reach that point in the near future, some form of oversight committee will continue to be necessary. Yet it is important to balance the practical need for the continued presence of this committee with the principle that, if diversity is a real value for the School of Education, it must be a responsibility shared by *all* institutional structures, not simply the Diversity Committee.

At this point, it is important to note the Committee has a severe under-representation of senior faculty or administrators, raising real concerns about the extent to which institution-wide commitment to diversity initiatives is being demonstrated. Thus, we would recommend, as part of the constitutional deliberations, a re-evaluation and consideration of the type of structure for the Committee that would best ensure that leadership on and commitment to issues of diversity, equity, and social justice is well-distributed throughout the School of Education.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment. We welcome further discussion with the Long-Range Planning Committee or Policy Council.