

MEMORANDUM

TO: School of Education Policy Council, Valeri Akerson, Chair

FROM: Peg Sutton, Acting Chair, Committee on Diversity

SUBJECT: Annual Committee Report to Policy Council: Diversity Committee

DATE: April 21, 2009

The Committee on Diversity has met five times this year thus far. The majority of our efforts this year fall into five categories, three of which are continuing efforts: (1) the recruitment of under-represented students in both graduate and teacher education programs; (2) the retention of underrepresented faculty; and (3) monitoring the research grants awarded by the Committee in 2007/08. In addition, the Committee responded to the request from Agenda Committee to address the fiscal challenges facing the SOE and has monitored the progress of the state-level Commission on Disproportionality.

Recruitment of underrepresented students

The recruitment of under-represented students is an ongoing concern of the Diversity Committee. The Committee appreciates actions undertaken by the dean's office to promote taking the Praxis I test early, through outreach to prospective students. The Committee also strongly endorses proposals to offer a practice Praxis I exam to freshman during Welcome Week 2009. This will enable early identification of students requiring remediation for success on the exam.

Faculty Retention and Mentoring

The Committee supports the proposal by Policy Council to allow Associate Professors to sit on the School's Promotion and Tenure Committee, with voting rights concerning tenure and promotion to the Associate level. At least in the short term, this ameliorates the problem of having few faculty of color determining promotion and tenure of junior faculty.

Research grants

Each of the recipients of 2008/09 grants under the Diversity initiative have made progress reports to Policy Council.

Suggestions for responding to fiscal challenges

As requested by the Agenda Committee, this committee has submitted to Policy Council a set of recommendations for responding to current fiscal crisis while attending to issues of diversity. Since these recommendations have not yet been considered by Policy Council, the document is attached here.

State Commission on Disproportionality

Russ Skiba, who served on the Commission, has provided regular updates on the progress of its recommendations.

Respectfully submitted to the Policy Council by Margaret Sutton for the Diversity Committee.

Members in attendance this year: Dionne Danns, Melissa Gresalfi, Robin Hughes, Margaret Sutton, Richard Lesh, Timberly Baker, Nelda Montemayor, James Damico, Amy Hackenberg, Dick Lesh, Mary McMullen, Catherine Overbey, Jose Rosario, Ghangis Carter (Ex-Officio), (Ex-Officio), Russ Skiba (Chair)

To: Agenda Committee of the Policy Council

From: Committee on Diversity

Re: Suggestions for Improving the SOE Fiscal Outlook

Date: 12/12/08

We are happy to respond to the request of the Agenda Committee to review and offer suggestions from our perspective on how the School of Education can increase revenue and reduce costs in uncertain times.

Two important themes emerged from our discussion over the course of two committee meetings. The first is that it makes little sense in a time of frighteningly tight budgets to maintain artificial constraints that reduce admissions of students of color, or indeed students in general. Second, the recent recommendations of the Indiana Commission on Disproportionality currently being considered by the General Assembly, as well as the initial work of the task force on the TEACH INDIANA Center have highlighted the critical shortage of teachers of color in Indiana. It is difficult to see how we as an institution can contribute to rectifying this problem if we cannot even admit a sufficient number of minority students. Thus we make the following recommendations focusing on increasing revenue by increasing enrollments, or taking away barriers to enrollment:

1. Set Numerical Yearly and Five Year Targets Both Overall and for Students from Under-Represented Groups. We make progress on those issues for which we hold ourselves accountable. We believe that setting concrete goals for the enrollment numbers will help focus our attention on the need for strategic and creative approaches to meet those goals. Numerical targets should be set at both a yearly and five year basis for both the level of total enrollment, and the percentage of that enrollment we would like to see of students from under-represented groups. We would suggest that the Dean's Office provide at least yearly reports to the Policy Council and/or a schoolwide faculty meeting on the status of progress towards those goals.

2. Remove Overly Restrictive and Empirically Non-Validated Barriers to Enrollment. The recent discussion of the Policy Council on the C policy in undergraduate teacher education highlighted the importance of rethinking barriers to admission during tight financial times. Pete Kloosterman pointed out that the C policy may make a small contribution to discouraging students of color in their applications to the School relative to other criteria. Two other barriers to admission should be addressed:

a. *PRAXIS I*: Concerns have been raised in discussions at the faculty retreat, in the Committee on Diversity, and at Policy Council about the effect on minority admissions of use of the PRAXIS I as a qualification for admission to the School of Education. A range of solutions to this problem have been suggested, ranging from dropping the test, to lowering criteria, to maintaining the same criteria with increased student support or earlier testing. We would argue that it is time to move from discussion to decision, and recommend that the Policy Council adopt a formal plan for considering the concerns about PRAXIS and developing concrete recommendations about how to address those concerns. We would recommend setting a timeline of no later than the end of this academic year for the Policy Council to accept or reject a set of recommendations concerning the use of PRAXIS I for SOE admission.

b. *SAT's*: Analyses presented to the Diversity Committee and the Policy Council have suggested that increases in the minimum SAT score for undergraduate admissions may adversely affect applications to the School of Education, or applications of students from under-represented groups. As the School considers direct admission to the teacher education program, there should be a concurrent consideration of the appropriate level for SAT scores for admission to maximize student enrollments. Is there evidence that higher SAT thresholds yield better teachers? How many additional students, and in particular students from under-represented groups, are likely to be eligible for admission given a lower threshold for the SAT? Again, we would recommend that the Policy Council set a procedure and a time certain for making these decisions, so as to ensure that we are working in a timely manner to maximize enrollments in a tight financial climate.