

**Arts and Sciences Diversity Committee
Final Report
5/19/08**

Co-Chairs:

Gustavo Mejía (Modern Languages)
Cindy White (Communication)

Members:

Stephen Adair (Sociology)
Ali Antar (Physics/Earth Sciences)
Sherinatu Fafunwa-Ndibe (Art)
Eleanor Godway (Philosophy)
Katherine Hermes (History)
Carlos Liard-Muriente (Economics)
Joshua Perlstein (Theatre)
Pamela Perry (Music)
Warren Perry (Anthropology)
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Moisés Salinas (Psychology)
David Spector (Biology)

Dean's Representatives:

Felton Best (Philosophy)
Robert Wolff (History)

Dean Susan Pease formed the Arts and Sciences Diversity Committee in the fall of 2007. The Dean's office developed a list of suggested members from across the School of Arts and Sciences. The list, which included both tenured and untenured full-time faculty from every rank, was presented to the co-chairs for input and approval.

The Dean's office charged the Committee with the task of examining how the School of Arts and Sciences could address diversity issues at CCSU. The work of the committee was therefore limited to programs and initiatives that are under the aegis of the School of Arts and Sciences. Specifically the Committee was asked to examine issues and challenges related to diversity and to develop goals, programs, and initiatives that might help the School address these.

The Arts and Sciences Diversity Committee appreciates Dean Pease's initiative in asking for an "unvarnished" account of the School of Arts and Sciences successes and failures in the area of diversity. We thank her for her commitment to understanding issues related to diversity, meeting the challenges raised by these issues, and recognizing the opportunities that will arise as we work to address these together.

The full committee focused its efforts on three primary and related areas: Student Experiences, Faculty Hiring and Experiences, and Curriculum. This report includes a general set of recommendations as well as recommendations specific to each of these areas. All programs, ideas, and recommendations in this report are intended to benefit students, staff, and faculty in Arts & Sciences.

We urge Dean Pease, as she reviews the following recommendations, to meet with the committee. Specifically, we propose that the Dean and her staff meet with the committee for a half-day retreat to consider the full report. We also counsel that she consider questions of diversity that extend beyond federal affirmative action criteria. We believe Connecticut state anti-discrimination criteria provide good guidelines for assessment of diversity.

We have enjoyed working together on this committee and look forward to working with each other, the Dean, and our colleagues in Arts and Sciences on these and related initiatives. We are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to strengthen the support in our School and our University for a diverse student body, diverse faculty, and education for cultural competence.

I. General Recommendations

A. Continuation of the Arts and Sciences Diversity Committee

The committee recommends that the Dean of Arts and Sciences institutionalize the Arts and Sciences Diversity Committee. The Dean should work with the current committee and other interested parties to decide how best to structure and organize the committee. As soon as the major gifts officer for the school of Arts and Sciences is hired she or he should meet with this committee. These meetings should continue on a regular basis.

B. Fundraising for diversity

The committee recommends that the major gifts officer assigned to the School of Arts and Sciences include consideration of diversity in all fundraising efforts and in particular focus on supporting programs to recruit and support (with both financial aid and programmatic support) students from lower income school districts and minority students. Such fund raising for diversity should include securing financial support to send faculty speakers to schools that have been identified as potential sources of qualified lower income and minority students.

II. Recommendations: Student Experiences

A. Academic support services and diversity

The Dean's office, (perhaps in collaboration with the Provost's Graduation and Retention Council), should immediately compile a list of academic support programs available to all students and evaluate their functioning, specifically from the perspective of increasing access to CCSU for a diversity of students. The committee further recommends that the Dean's office identify both strong aspects of existing programs and gaps and then target fundraising resources accordingly to provide stable (i.e., not grant) funding to these programs.

B. Honors Program evaluation

Given that the Honors Program represents the major merit-based financial aid effort of the University and receives substantial support from the School of Arts and Sciences, the committee recommends that the Dean convene a group of faculty to evaluate the role of the Honors Program in supporting diversity among the student body.

C. Departmental early intervention programs

The committee recommends that the Dean of Arts and Sciences support, with reassigned time and/or extra pay for faculty, departmental programs to provide intensive early intervention with students, especially minority students, facing difficulty in first year courses that serve as entrance points to majors.

D. Data Gathering Initiatives

(We recommend that this committee, with appropriate administrative support, and/or the Dean's office gather these data over the next year.)

1. Career path study. The committee recommends a study to determine whether CCSU and post-CCSU career paths differ significantly for students based on race/ethnicity and/or gender. By CCSU career paths we mean choice of majors and route of switching between majors. By post-CCSU career paths we mean the decisions made around the time of graduation to apply to different graduate or professional school programs or to enter various career paths directly.

2. Student perception of faculty. The committee recommends a qualitative study to evaluate whether student perception of faculty efforts in and out of the classroom varies in a significant and systematic manner by student race/ethnicity or gender.

E. Admissions Initiatives

Although admissions is a University-wide concern the majority of undergraduates enter through Arts and Sciences, and the committee recommends that our school undertake a discussion of what groups of students we can best serve and how best to recruit and serve different groups of students (see also points I A, B, and C above).

In addition the committee recommends that the Dean participate with other administrative and faculty leaders in initiating a University-wide discussion of admissions policy, including which groups we can best serve, diversity of the student body, the roles of transfer students at Central, appropriate ways of targeting and recruiting students, and faculty involvement in recruiting and admissions.

III. Recommendations: Faculty Hiring and Experiences

A. Hiring and Recruitment Initiatives

The committee recommends these for immediate action.

1. Require departments to reflect upon diversity within their fields prior to the approval of any new or replacement tenure-track hires. Department chairs should apprise the Dean of what possible steps can be taken to increase the likelihood of attracting a diverse candidate pool.
2. Encourage all proposed members of search committees to undergo diversity awareness training prior to review of job applications. This training should extend beyond the affirmative action “charge” administered to search committee members currently. Qualified CCSU faculty and staff, chosen by the Dean, should conduct diversity awareness training. These individuals should receive compensation in the form of reassigned time or supplemental payment.
3. Request that the Personnel Office fund additional job advertisements to increase the likelihood of attracting diverse candidate pools.
4. Consider the possibility of targeted hires in interdisciplinary fields (e.g., Africana Studies) for the purpose of fostering diversity within the curriculum and searching in fields with diverse job candidates.
5. Require that search committees have an external, voting member. The committee suggests that all departments nominate tenured members to serve in an “at large” pool of faculty from which external members may

be appointed by the Dean to search and other committees as needed. Each department should provide at least as many “at large” nominees as it has faculty senate seats. Individual members should be appointed in the preceding spring by their departments.

6. Take immediate steps to diversify the Dean’s Office as new or replacement positions are filled. The Dean’s Office should also consider diversity questions as it recruits representatives for open houses (e.g., ensuring that some faculty present speaks Spanish).

7. Urge a fast-track approach to approval of searches and hires that will diversify the school.

8. Explore alternate methods of recruitment and hiring to foster diversity.

B. Data Gathering

We recommend that this committee, with appropriate administrative support, and/or the Dean’s office gather these data over the next year.

1. Past hiring pool data for the purpose of understanding how diverse our search pools are and for what reasons women and minority candidates have been eliminated from searches. These data should be available from the Office of Diversity & Equity.

2. Data that describe diversity within graduate programs by field, to identify those areas in which the Dean should invest additional resources recruiting and retaining diverse faculty.

3. Quantitative data about promotion and tenure practices within the School and University. Specifically, we need data broken down by race and gender, across decisions for tenure, promotion to associate, and promotion to full professor. These decisions must also be analyzed at the level of recommendation: DEC, department chair (if separate from DEC), dean, university P&T, and president or provost.

4. Exit data on tenure-track faculty who leave CCSU to determine if the campus climate is a barrier to faculty retention.

IV. Recommendations: Curriculum

A. Endorsement of the University Diversity Committee’s Proposal on Diversity Course Designation.

The committee endorses the Senate Diversity Committee’s proposal which seeks to strengthen the university’s offerings on diversity.

The proposal specifically seeks to address an initiative circulated by President Miller (Item #46 of Diversity Initiatives): “There should be full funding for a

general diversity requirement based on the FYE model, which includes stipends/release for faculty/staff conducted training and incentives for faculty to teach diversity sections.” To address this initiative, the proposal seeks to train faculty so that they are able to offer specific sections of courses that will be explicitly oriented toward improving student’s respect for diversity. Specific sections of courses will be assigned a “D” designation. The committee intends that students will not be required to take any “D” courses, until there are a sufficient number available. Two faculty members, Beth Merenstein and Moises Salinas, are initiating an effort to receive diversity training and develop an appropriate curriculum that will be incorporated into their courses and assessed next year.

The General Education Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee is reviewing the objectives of General Education and is in the process of formulating a recommendation to more explicitly emphasize “respect for diversity” as a student outcome.

B. Revise the University Requirement (Skill area 4) to include a service learning, community partnership or civic engagement element.

A considerable body of literature indicates that fostering civic engagement improves multicultural competence. Currently all first-year students are required to take PE 144, while transfer students may either take PE 144 or substitute another skill course for the requirement. We suggest the requirement be changed so that all students must either complete PE 144 or complete a service-learning or community-partnership course.

C. Create a Periclean Scholars Program on campus.

According to the Project Pericles website (www.projectpericles.org), the project “encourages and facilitates commitments by colleges and universities to include education for social responsibility and participatory citizenship as an essential part of their educational programs, in the classroom, on the campus, and in the community.” Currently 22 colleges and universities are included in the program. We suggest that the School of Arts and Sciences join the Periclean Scholars Program. Initially, the revision of the University Requirement described above might be sufficient to warrant membership in the program. As the program develops, the Dean’s office could encourage and support departments and programs that initiate “democracy projects” in the surrounding communities. Ongoing student participation in such democracy projects might form a basis for the design of a Periclean Scholars minor program.