

To: VPAA Neal Abraham  
Fr: Diversity and Equity Committee  
Jinyu Liu, Chair AY06-07  
Mac Dixon-Fyle, Chair AY07-08

Re: DEC Annual Report AY 06-07

September 10, 2007

Dear VP Abraham,

In AY 05-06, DEC re-considered its role in faculty searches, and reached a consensus not to duplicate information that the VPAA would give to the search committee in a separate meeting. This decision was reported to the VPAA in a memo submitted by the then chair Matthew Balensuela on May 31, 2006. In AY 06-07, relieved of its obligations to meet with every faculty search, DEC actively pursued other important projects in promoting diversity on campus.

The most significant development was that DEC became integrated in departmental/program self-study efforts. In collaboration with Kelly Hall, who provided the list of the departments and programs under review, DEC took the initiative to contact department and program chairs. DEC representatives were subsequently present in the self-study meetings at Political Science Department, Communication and Theatre Department, and the European Studies program. DEC members also met with NCATE reviewers while they were on campus. DEC defined the main goal of these meetings as an important means "1) to collect information from all departments and programs so that we can have a full sense of diversity efforts across campus, and 2) to help departments and programs develop the diversity section of their self-study reports."

DEC made a commitment to assisting departments or academic programs with appraisal of the current state of diversity within the programs, as well as with identifying ways in which they can contribute to the University's objectives and initiatives especially in the area of diversification and internationalization. The committee representatives would encourage departments/programs to look at diversity issues in various areas including student recruitment, course offerings, intellectual life on campus, and hiring. DEC would ask, for example, what were the department's budgetary inclinations on speakers of a diverse background, whether the department was satisfied with its effort to improve the diversity of the applicant pool for new hires, and what kinds of support they might find useful as they search for new faculty members. Different departments or programs displayed different levels of effort, methods, outcomes, and expectations of institutional support. Passing along the accumulated wisdoms collected from various departments/programs, DEC facilitated information sharing between different departments/programs. Certain concerns are more program specific. For example, there tends to be many more female majors than male majors in the education program. This phenomenon was a special concern of some of the NCATE representatives, and both the program and the University were advised to develop "forward-looking" mechanisms to

address the gender unbalance among education majors. In the future, DEC will continue to work together with departments/programs to develop long-term strategies to strengthen the diversity of the students and faculty members in the program.

DEC was also integrated into the process of recruiting the CFD pre-doctoral fellows. In Spring, 2007, for example, DEC representatives met with CFD candidates in English and History to answer questions, and address their concerns in a casual setting. Such meetings were appreciated by the candidates, and have achieved positive results. The committee also sought to promote staff diversity. DEC members, for example, participated in the search for the Director of Human Resources for DePauw University.

The regular monthly meetings of DEC were structured around specific topics. The gravity of attention in AY 06-07 was the attrition and retention of minority faculty members. DEC recognized the complexity involved in accounting for the recent departure of several minority faculty members who were on tenure-track or tenured. In order to better understand whether the attrition was primarily due to personal reasons, career related choices, general campus and community climate, or the combination thereof, DEC discussed and would recommend both entrance and exit interviews. Several committee members not only worked out interview questions but also volunteered to conduct experimental “informal interviews” with minority faculty members who recently left DePauw. The students took interest in the retention of minority faculty members. At the invitation of the Student Cabinet, DEC chair spoke with a group of student representatives in February, who were eager to know how they could help in keeping minority professors. Srimati Basu, a departing faculty member, made a guest appearance at the committee meeting in May. Speaking in regard to ethnic diversity among the faculty, she raised concerns about “star” minority hires vs the general infrastructure of the faculty/staff.

In an effort to make full use of the resources and support available on campus, DEC has kept in close touch with the Office of Academic Affairs, the International Center, the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs as well as the Office of Admissions. The VPAA Neal Abraham, for example, has been instrumental in helping the committee redefine its role on campus. Dr. Abraham was also present at the December meeting, providing relevant statistics and suggesting ways of interacting with departments/programs. Rhonda Hinkle-Shabbir from the International Center came to the November meeting to update the committee of the composition and concerns of the International Students on campus. Ms. Hinkle-Shabbir has also been keeping the DEC chair informed of the procedures that the International Center follows in assisting international faculty members maintain and/or adjust their legal status. Kate Knaul also sent in updates of the goals of the International Center, which, among others, aims at “providing appropriate training to new employees to be sure they are sensitive to people of other cultures and their particular needs,” and “developing greater international awareness among the non-international community, both on and off-campus.”

DEC sought to expand its points of interaction on campus. In its outreach effort, DEC became closely connected to minority organizations such as the Black Caucus. Not only

did DEC and the Black Caucus have several overlapping members but they were also often faced with similar challenges and issues. In February-March, DEC coordinated with the Black Caucus and the Office of Multicultural Affairs to address an incident involving a student and a local business. The conflict between different groups of students triggered by this incident, and the subsequent debates concerning race and minority organizations were a reminder of the difficulties of these topics as well as the importance of appropriate guidance from organizations like DEC and the Black Caucus.

DEC has also considered future plans including presenting to the Academic Affairs Department Chairs meeting, sponsoring a luncheon for faculty and staff interested in promoting equity efforts on campus, sponsoring or co-sponsoring speakers on campus, and inviting 2-3 department heads to attend the DEC meeting every month in order to hear their views and build relationships between the DEC and department heads. We hope the University will continue to assist us in our outreach effort.

The Chair of DEC for AY 06-07 will be Mac Dixon-Fyle.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jinyu Liu