

**President's Commission on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity**  
**November 28, 2012**

Attendance: E. Abreu, M. Cascarano, J. Chern, M. Colón, C. Cottle, D. Davis, C. Drost, B. Edwards, A. Gomez, H. Haines, D. Harris, A. Jeffers, L. Jenkins, L. Johns, P. Kirby, D. Mahabeer, C. Matteis, A. Mayer, C. Meneghin, B. Montañez, J. Penney, B. Peterson, D. Phillips-Clark, W. Poon, M. Re, D. Rodak, R. Royal, T. Seaboch, K. Smith, L. Smith, N. Tate, L. Whitaker

Guests: J. Anderson, L. Kasper, A. Straker-Banks

**I. Welcome:**

Meneghin called meeting at 12:05 p.m. Meneghin reminded members that there will be no general meeting in December or January. A thank you was presented to all who worked during Hurricane Sandy, and a speedy recovery to those affected by the storm.

Re made a motion that the October 2012 minutes be approved; Phillips-Clark seconded. The October 2012 minutes were approved.

**II. Standing Committees Reports**

Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity

The committee did not report.

Diversity

Cottle introduced Mr. Brian Edwards, the new Director of the LGBT Center. The committee met on November 27<sup>th</sup>. The blog is up and running. Members were asked to support it by submitting articles and other topics of interest to Penney or Peterson. The goal is to promote quality content to the campus community and beyond via social media. A suggestion was made to get students involved to solicit reaction to issues such as Superstorm Sandy or to lectures such as the Henrietta Lacks presentation. Additionally, the committee will finalize a promotional flyer for members to distribute to their constituent group containing information about the PCAEOD. The committee will also work on updating the online sponsorship application.

Mentoring

Abreu updated that the focus group questions have been prepared. The committee will be rescheduling the meetings with the union members. A powerpoint on mentoring will be presented to the target group prior to the focus groups meeting.

## Recruitment and Retention

The committee invited several campus officials to update The Commission on recruitment and retention issues (see New Business).

### **III. New Business**

#### Presentation on Student Enrollment and Retention

Guests:

Dr. Allyson Straker-Banks, Assistant Vice President for Student Academic Services

Mr. James Anderson, Director of Financial Aid

Ms. Lisa Kasper, Director of Undergraduate Admissions

Kasper provided a summary on enrollment data, including information on the evaluation of applications for incoming freshmen: For high school seniors, MSU looks at the high school gpa as the greatest predictor of academic success, followed by the SAT writing score, followed by the Math high school gpa. The average SAT score for score senders (not necessarily accepted or enrolled) was 1499 for whites; 1316 for African Americans and 1381 for Hispanics. Approximately 1.9% of high school graduates in New Jersey come to MSU. The number of African American applicants increased 2.2% over 2011, and the Hispanic applicants rose 3%.

Kasper noted that in the MSU Strategic Plan, it is expected that the MSU GPA for incoming students will need to increase, which will result in less students enrolled.

Straker-Banks provided summaries of the retention and graduation rates:

The one-year retention rates for full-time, first time freshmen are as follows:

82.7% White

83.5% Asian

80.8% Latino

79.3% African American

81.8% Overall

The 6 year graduation rates were:

64.1% White

61.0% Asian

57.5% Latino

55.3% African American

61.4% Overall

Future goals:

By 2016, increase the first year retention rate from 81% to 88%

By 2014, minority undergraduate population will increase from 33% to 38%

By 2014, the Hispanic student population will increase from 23% to 25%, making MSU eligible for Hispanic Serving institution status.

#### New Efforts:

1. Academic Advising – mandatory first year advising hold. Students must meet with their advisors.
2. New Academic policies in terms of moving students through the process. Students are advised on what courses to take each semester.
3. Outreach to high risk populations, starting at the high school level. This includes inviting students to campus.
4. Expanded academic support services

Summer costs – there is no longer a parking fee for students taking Summer classes, and there has been a reduction in the cost for Summer courses. A 13.5% reduction in Summer tuition cost has been initiated.

#### Summer Reading Classes:

The mandatory summer reading fee of \$500 is still in effect. Students have 3 chances to pass the Math remediation course. Students are allowed to go to a community college and transfer these credits in.

#### Financial Aid:

Anderson provided a brief summary. Approximately 40% students receive a Pell Grant. Due to new regulations, students are now only receive a Pell Grant for a maximum of 12 semesters.

A discussion was had regarding the issue of students needing to work part-time to pay for school or help their families. At times, the course(s) they are needing are not offered. Meneghin suggested that a connection be made with local businesses to hire our students who need to work while in school. Anderson commented that Provost Gingerich is researching the courses offered, including which ones are not offered enough.

Straker-Banks will provide the Commission with the PowerPoint slides including additional data.

## **IV. Ongoing Business**

### Facilities Accessibility Recommendation

VP Bressler requested the three priorities The Commission would like addressed in the next fiscal year. The Executive Committee is recommending the following:

1. Richardson Hall computer lab needs to be accessible

2. Handicap parking spaces on the north end of University Hall are difficult to walk to due to construction. Additionally, part of the parking lot by the Red Hawk Diner has been taken away.

3. Speech Communication classes in Life Hall are on the bottom floor, which are not accessible.

Meneghin will also remind Bressler on the changing tables issue brought up last year, as well as the previous recommendation that a higher standard be used in new buildings or renovations. Jenkins reported back that changing tables were installed at 14 Normal Avenue, which houses the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health. However, changing tables were also requested for key locations including the University Hall Conference Center, Kasser Theatre and Chapin Hall.

The issue of not having an ADA compliance officer on campus was once again brought up. Meneghin will investigate how many NJ institutions have a compliance officer.

A motion was made to approve the recommended list for accessibility and the reminder to hold higher standards in new construction was approved.

#### Affirmative Action Day

Affirmative Action Day will be held in February or March in University Hall 1070. The date will be dependent on the panelists' availability. This year's theme is "Balancing Religious Freedom and Freedom of Speech." The goal is to facilitate education and a conversation on religious freedom. It will incorporate people's perspective and cultural aspects, and touch on spirituality and religion. Meneghin is working to confirm several panelists including:

1. Dr. Dorothy Rogers, Philosophy and Religion Department, to present on cultural aspects on spirituality.
2. Dr. Jack Baldwin-LeClair, Political Science and Law Department, to present on legal aspects.
3. Dr. Harry Haines, School of Communication and Media, to present on journalism, media and global aspects on spirituality.
4. Dr. David Keiser, Secondary and Special Education Department will be the moderator.

Meneghin clarified that speakers will not be presenting their personal views or faith. Agnostic views as well as others will be presented. This will be an opportunity to education and to heighten the understanding of spirituality and cultural differences. The majority of time will be used for Q&A. it is anticipated that the audience will be comprised mostly of students. The panelists will be asked to meet with the Executive Committee in January to talk about how the discussion will be planned. Meneghin asked that any additional ideas or suggestions be emailed to her.

**V.** Cascarano motioned to adjourn the meeting; Phillips-Clark seconded; Meeting Adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by M. Colón

Minutes Amended 2/21/13