

## **E&I Committee Meeting - Part I**

### **Monday, September 28, 2009**

Members Present: Peter Barbosa, Than Tran, Elaine Lemay, Che Abram, Mary Grefal, Kira Allen, Ken B, CE, KJ, Diane Hansen, Rye Huber, Aara Amidi-Nouri, Beth C, Susan Canthrell

Meeting was opened by Craig Elliott sharing the feedback from UPAC on the plan. Some of the points of concern shared were:

- 1) Part of the plan reads as 3 separate plans
- 2) It needs to highlight leaders

The remaining of the meeting was an open forum in which a large variety of issues were mentioned and discussed. These issues are summarized under the following bullet points:

- Under listed Strategy 9 (page 7) it would be useful to create an Alumni Task Force
- Under Strategy 10, maybe a new admissions program could be started with “acceptance under probation” for students from historically underrepresented groups (HUGs) with GPA below current minimum standard. (Note: this idea was further evaluated during the second meeting and it was suggested to use a positive language, such as “high potential admission” rather than “acceptance under probation,” using the same basis for the concept.)
- Previous CSPM programs were discussed as possible models. Two specific programs were mentioned:
  - ✓ There was a time in which HUGs applications would always go to the Admissions Committee composed of faculty, and no “automatic rejections” based on minimum standards were issued.
  - ✓ There was a 5-year program in which the first year was divided into two years to facilitate students who needed more support to start. Even though the program was costly and demanding, many successful students from HUGs graduated from this program.
- The fact that the current plan does not address “deliverance” of the education was discussed. An example was presented on how BU changed their deliverance policy for second language courses among students with learning disabilities.
- The plan does not list the data for SMU faculty as it does for students and for staff. Faculty data should be included.
- It was suggested that all data is presented in reference to BOTH California and USA statistics.
- On page 8, item 6, it was suggested that when student evaluations are reviewed, they take into account having a system that does not include HAND-written evaluations, as this may be intimidating for many students.
- Examples were discussed how racism and homophobia reflected in students evaluations have been used to punish faculty by reducing the term of their respective contracts. Even when students show passing rates on national board exams above all national averages, the faculty’s contract is reduced and the

- faculty placed on “probation” based on subjective student evaluations that clearly reflect personal discriminatory views from the student.
- Data was discussed about how money is the key issue in most cases of HUGs not attending school. The financial burden is the number one reason why many of these student from HUGs cannot attend school.
  - How are we dealing with admissions for HUGs? There are models that we can learn from. For example, SFSU award a certain number of points for applicants who can speak Spanish.
  - What about retention issues? The plan does not seem to address retention. Have we dealt with faculty and student retention from HUGs?
  - How are we funding initiatives? Is SMU providing seed money for some of these ideas? Would SMU be open to offer startup fund for some of the proposed plans?
  - How is institutionalized racism address? There is a major difference between racism encountered in personal interactions from that already established in the institution policies, i.e., institutionalized racism.
  - Nursing has some history of grant writing and grant award in this area. How about other programs? Can training be provided for grant writing for other programs?
  - Most faculty are extensively overworked. Can release time be awarded to allow for some grant writing in this area?
  - There are issues of communication at SMU. Some of the items of the plan are simply a reflection that there is lack of communication between programs, between staff and faculty, etc.
  - How about offering financial aid to HUGs based on models from other PRIVATE nonprofit universities? The UC system should not necessarily be our model.
  - How about radical ideas such as reserving X number of spots in admission for HUGs?
  - A suggestion was given that we should select small simple ideas to focus the committees’ effort. If some few and simpler ideas can be implemented, that would give momentum to others.
  - What about overall implementation? When are we moving from planning and discussions to actual implementation?
  - Timing is KEY. We are the right time for implementation of some of these items.
  - Where is the money coming from? If SMU is committed money must be placed into action.
  - We can do better than what we are doing!
  - We should do better than what we are doing!

## **E&I Committee Meeting - Part II**

### **Tuesday, September 29, 2009**

Present: Irma Walker-Adame, Jane, Craig, Mary G., Elaine Lamey, Peter

Press for a Diversity Officer to manage grants, to help with plan development, etc.

Most effective in other systems in a HANDS-ON and DEDICATED person and WITH AUTHORITY.

Currently we have 3 white men in charge of a diversity plan.

Adding to an existing job would not work cause of

Plan: limited, not specific goals, not about numbers, it has to include measures of qualitative experience. We could increase numbers, but that does not mean it is a positive experience.

In some programs, the issue is more than financial. For CSPM, we have money for POC, but the students do not feel welcome.

Some people do not feel safe discussing these issues behind it.

How about the Native Americans and their numbers in SMU? How do they compare to CA numbers?

How about disabled students? Do we know how to approach them? Students cannot learn if they cannot feel safe.

How about training faculty? When do you intervene? When do you refer?

When something is a priority, you make it a real priority: you provide support staff, funding is adequate, it is well-established.

Maybe the plan is a bit limited in terms of the goal we want to achieve ultimately.

WASC will ask about diversity and SMU will have to deal with this issue.

St. Mary's had a summer bridge program and the "high potential" program, which allowed underrepresented. CSPM had a previous 5-year program who have some graduates who are now leaders and very successful.