

TO: President Bradley & President's Council Members

FROM: Carmen Tillery & Josh Powers
Co-Chairs, Diversity Council

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RE: Update on Work of the Diversity Council

As you know, in October of last year, President Bradley constituted, convened, and charged a university-wide Council on Diversity to assist in the development of policy related to diversity issues, the appeal of affirmative action complaints, dispositions, the development of recommendations to promote and maintain cultural and gender diversity among ISU employees and across positional levels, and the development of recommendations to promote recruitment and retention of minority students. The Council was also designed to fulfill Indiana Code requirements for such committees at Indiana's public institutions of higher education and the preparation and submission of an annual report of findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The 19 members of this committee represent a broad cross-section of the university community (students, faculty, support staff, and administration) and include representation from the larger Terre Haute community.

We wished to update you on our work to date and invite your support on next steps. As it regards the former, the Council spent considerable time this past fall and into early January crafting a vision, mission, and values document along with a definition of diversity to inform our work and first year priority attention area choices. This iterative process was a valuable one for the Council to go through both as a means of establishing clarity to our task but also to build the team orientation we believe is critical to carrying out our charge.

The document that we crafted is attached and also uploaded to our Council on Diversity website linked from the President's Office webpage. As you will note on page 2, we have six priorities for our first year (defined to end by August 2009). These priorities align with what the President charged us to attend to, although in this first year with an emphasis on issues associated with faculty and staff on this campus. We opted to go this route for this first year for two primary reasons. First, there are considerable needs related to recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff, and administration. Second, the faculty, staff, and administration are essential to the achievement of our vision and ultimately setting the appropriate tone and orientation to the support for diversity on the campus for everyone, including students.

With this in mind, we have formed three primary subcommittees charged with addressing particular diversity related aspects of faculty, staff, and administration and that are described in

more length in the attached document. In summary, though, we intend this spring and early summer to do the following:

- Assess faculty, staff, and administration recruitment processes and procedures;
- Develop a grievance/complaint appeal process to be added to the University Affirmative Action procedures, the results of which will be a recommendation for disposition to the University President;
- Engage in a focused, although not comprehensive, assessment of the campus as it regards the facilitators and inhibitors of a culture of support for diversity;
- Prepare a report for presentation to the President for his sharing with the Board of Trustees as part of the statutory requirements for Diversity Committees on Indiana public college campuses. Informed by previous studies done here at ISU on this subject at various levels and times in the recent past as well as new work we plan to do, the report will aim to identify both what we can celebrate in this arena as well as what needs attention, along with specific recommendations that can assist us in moving forward.

We seek your support in helping us to do our work. *First*, we request your assistance for spreading the word about the work of the Council and invite persons to assist us as we come to you and them with more specific needs. Relatedly, we are preparing teams of persons from the Council to provide insights about the Council's work and would request your support to be able to make presentations to key organizational stakeholder groups in your area. *Second*, we seek your insights on what you see as the strengths, challenges, and limitations within our policy and procedure structure, as well as organizational culture, in regards to our areas of focus noted above. *Third*, when our new University Diversity Officer arrives on campus, we seek your warm and supportive embrace of her or his work such that they will be seen as a valued ally and guide to helping move ISU forward with important diversity initiatives, even at those times when our warts surface.

One particular issue to which we have devoted considerable time and attention this semester is the exploration of the kinds of data we wish to collect and the type(s) of study(ies) that might reasonably be completed by approximately mid-summer. This kind of work would play a central role in describing our past, framing our present, and envisioning the future within our report. At this point, here is what we have planned:

1. Using nationally available data, augmented with internal ISU specific data as may be needed, we intend to develop a current demographic profile of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity among the faculty and administration ranks. Furthermore, we intend to benchmark this data against the other public universities in Indiana as well as key

established peer institutions to ISU. Finally, we intend to develop demographic trend data from as far back as 1985 if possible in order to gain a perspective on change over time.

2. Work with the General Counsel's Office in collaboration with the Office of Affirmative Action to develop a summary sheet of grievance genres and types that have been received in recent years. These case vignettes, disguised to prevent identification of persons or exact units, will be helpful to make visible the kinds of behaviors and policies that can lead to discrimination complaints. Both offices are in support of this source of data for this purpose.
3. We also intend to work with the General Counsel's Office on the development of a similar summary sheet on discrimination related legal actions or threatened actions that were ultimately settled.
4. To conduct a best practices study of complaint/grievance processes from among higher education institutions around the country that have demonstrated leadership in this arena.
5. Partner with a planned President's Office faculty and professional staff retention study that would allow us to track cohorts of faculty and cohorts of administration that start their employment at ISU in a given year to see on an annual basis who may be leaving and who is being retained. We envision picking 3 cohort years for which 8 and ideally 10 years of data since their initial employment start is available (given its alignment on the faculty side with a typical time length to tenure for an entry level assistant professor through some years after tenure). Our particular focus would be to investigate patterns of retention that may exist based on race, ethnicity, and gender at the faculty and the professional staff levels.
6. Work collaboratively with the Office of the President in the analysis and sense making of the *Chronicle of Higher Education Best Places to Work* study in which ISU intends to participate. This study may in part offer insights relevant to our work.
7. Partner with an external firm that specializes in the collection and analysis of qualitative interview and/or focus group data in the diversity arena to do a study of the experiences of faculty and professional staff in their first two years of employment at ISU. We felt that a study of this constituent group would be particularly valuable and based on its qualitative orientation, much richer than what a survey could realistically provide. Research shows that persons that are new to organizations actively seek to understand and learn the organization's culture since it is of critical importance to their success. Hence, they can be uniquely insightful about the culture and climate given that they have not yet become fully socialized to it. Second, research also shows that persons new to organizations are also likely to routinely assess their "fit" with that organization in these

early moments and when perceiving a mismatch, to formulate or incubate decisions to leave. A study using a representative sample of first and second year faculty (stratified to ensure representativeness by race, ethnicity, and gender), particularly if it could be augmented by interviews with actual leavers, would be a valuable window into our culture of support for diversity.

8. Partner with the same above firm to conduct a similar study with students, although this work would likely not occur this year given time constraints.
9. Conduct a national faculty and administration best search practices study not only as it regards building diverse candidate pools but also for their appropriate conduct for enhancing the likelihood of a successful diverse hire. The focus of the study would be across all phases of the recruitment, candidate review, candidate interview, candidate offer, and post-offer acceptance period up through to the time that a new faculty member begins their employment at the institution.

We hope that this document and our discussion of it at the President's Council meeting provide you adequate insight on our work and future plans such that your active support can be counted upon. As you all know, the study of diversity can be a difficult and painful one, but nevertheless is essential for ISU. We invite you to join us on this journey of discovery and ultimately to embrace what we hope you also see as a laudable and necessarily vision for an institution such as ours to pursue.