Memorandum

Date: May 5, 2009

To: The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate

From: Terry Jones, DELO & Chair, and Faculty Diversity & Equity Committee

Subject: Executive Summary of the DELO’s Annual Report to Ex Comm

This report covers the activities of the Faculty Diversity and Equity Committee and the DELO for the 2008-2009 academic year. Topics covered include the Tenure-track Search Orientation, DELO activities, the status of tenure-track searches for 2008-2009 and selected recommendations.

Tenure-Track Search Orientation

The Tenure-Track Search Orientation for 2008 was held on May 16, 2008, in the Multipurpose Room of the University Union. Approximately 70 search committee chairs or search committee members attended and were briefed on best practices in conducting a successful search. This session included a walk-through of the Tenure-Track Search Procedures & Resources Manual and a question and answer period. In an effort to get searches started as early as possible in the fall, we will again hold the tenure-track search orientation in the spring (May 15, 2009) in the hope that search committees will be able to begin searches earlier.

New Role for Diversity and Equity Committee

This academic year the Diversity and Equity Committee went about the work of developing a diversity plan for the university. The Committee, expanded to include representatives from the six divisions/units of the university developed a plan that parallels the strategic plan and is guided by the following principles:

- Centrality. Diversity is the guiding principle governing planning and implementation at every level of the university. As such, it is indistinguishable from the university Strategic Plan. It strengthens all we do.
- Community. Education, to be meaningful, must recognize and address the diversity of the populations and communities it is mandated to serve.
- Accountability. All units and divisions of the university must have clear and effective mechanisms for achieving and measuring the achievements of diversity.
- Reward. To be meaningful, there must be established mechanisms in place to reward individuals, units, divisions and administrators who are identified as having achieved, advanced or expanded diversity mandates.
- Responsibility. The University plan, like ripples in a pond, should spiral outward to every unit or division in the university. As such, there is no one diversity plan,
but each unit would be held responsible for the development, maintenance, expansion and success of its plan. This approach, it is believed, will provide the greatest possibility that the diversity plan will be a relevant plan that guides the university in all of its work.

The Diversity and Equity Committee has completed the majority of the work on the diversity plan and is in the editing and refinement stage and will submit a completed document to the President and his cabinet for review before the end of the spring quarter.

**Assisting Tenure-Track Searches**

In performing my responsibilities as DELO, I visited with every search committee in the four university departments to assist, advise and counsel them through tenure-track hires. The primary purpose for these meetings was to assist each search committee in the development of its faculty recruitment plan. While I believe I was somewhat helpful in carrying out these responsibilities, what became clear in the process was that the task is too large for one person to complete effectively. The end result is that we have more of an advising process and less of a monitoring one. Given the need to diversify the faculty and the value of every tenure-track hire, it is imperative that the monitoring process of tenure track hires be enhanced. In fact, there is a need for the deans and associate deans to play a more active role in the recruitment and hiring process to provide some greater assurance that the priorities of the university are being paid attention to in terms of diversity and affirmative action.

The following is a real depiction of what can go wrong when the monitoring of tenure-track searches is weak:

An applicant of color who had withdrawn from following through with a campus visit was questioned as to why (s)he cancelled the campus visit. The applicant replied that he/she had called and emailed the chair of the search committee on numerous occasions with not response. Out of pure despair the applicant called the department chair and after several attempts finally got through. (s)he said that in the call he/she was just trying to get information about the position and some feeling that the department was genuinely interested in her/his application. (S)he said after several attempts in the conversation he/she was convinced that the department was not serious and was just going through the motions.

This is but one encounter I uncovered. Hopefully, it is not reflective of the other searches. However, it does send an alarm that we have no way of knowing about the quality or consistency of contacts with candidates from department to department and, especially, we have no idea of the quality of the contacts with applicants of color. This, in my estimation is something that must be addressed if we are to be considered seriously when we claim to be a equal opportunity employer.

It is time to rethink the monitoring function for tenure-track searches, the role of the DELO and how we might more effectively monitor the hiring of tenure-track faculty in the future. On paper what we have written is fine. However, it is in the implementation
that the process weakens. It might be that we should consider starting the recruitment process earlier, monitoring it more carefully and consider institutionalizing two-year searches as opposed to the traditional one year process we currently use. Who says a search must be completed in one year? If it is as difficult as some claim to attract minority candidates, and if we value diversity as we say we do, why not consider extending the period we search?

**Tenure-Track Search Results**

Out of the eighteen (18) searches authorized for 2008-2009, ten (10) have been discontinued. There have been three (3) acceptances by candidates as of the end of April, 2009. Some searches are still in process at the writing of this report. I will report under separate cover what information is available on demographics of this population.

**Recommendations and Reflections**

It is not enough just to orient search committee members in the tenure-track faculty hiring process. An effective search begins long before position descriptions are written and search committees are elected. Effective searches begin with careful consideration being given to the nature of the position, the missions and goals of the University, affected departments and the communities we serve. There should be a direct connection between the mission and goals of the university and requests for tenure-track positions. With this in mind, deans and the library director, in their calls for tenure-track position requests, need to be much more instructive and selective, with an eye toward diversity and multiculturalism, in terms of approving requests for positions. Perhaps an orientation similar to the one provided for search committee members would be appropriate for deans and the library director. This orientation should be provided before calls for tenure-track positions are solicited.

In my last report to the Executive Committee, I raised the idea that the EEO position in the University should be raised to a higher status. It appears as if that recommendation was ignored. I raise the issue again. This position, or at least the equal opportunity function in its broadest sense, needs to be expanded and elevated to a higher level in the University. The position, buried deep in the Human Resources Department, sends an unintended message about the importance and value of issues of diversity, multiculturalism and equal opportunity. This position warrants more of a high profile and should be moved to the Presidents’ office and the title elevated to that of a vice president. In many universities the EEOC function is handled by a vice president with a staff. We need to do better than we are doing currently.

Our efforts at recruiting and hiring tenure-track faculty must improve. Business as usual will have to stop and we will have to engage a new way of thinking and behaving as we tackle the task of becoming a diverse, multicultural institution. The work we have all engaged in over the past year is but the foundation of this important effort.

Before searches are approved, deans and the library director, should be more actively involved in working with search committees in developing concrete plans for ensuring
that attention will be paid to attracting diverse candidates to search pools. Such attention should come at the beginning of the process before positions are approved.

More specifically, it is unacceptable that we allow our searches to start so late. To be competitive we need to get a jump on our competitors. This is the case especially when it comes to attracting candidates of color. The competition for good candidates, especially candidates of color, is fierce and the quicker we get into the competition, the better our chances for success becomes. As mentioned earlier, in this report, the deans and the library director will have to play a much more proactive role in tenure-track hiring from the kernel of an idea about the need for a position to the offering of a position. A tenure-track position is a major commitment and a very valuable asset. We must begin to treat them as such.

As mentioned earlier, there should be consideration given to a two year search process. Recognizing that quality candidates are an investment in our future and, further recognizing the difficulty we have had in attracting candidates of color in the past, a two year process might yield better results. Such a plan would have to come with a justification, a timeline for action and a monitoring process that would protect against a waste of time and effort.