Memorandum

Date: March 9, 2010

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 2009-2010 academic year. Topics covered include the Tenure-track Search Orientation, DELO activities, the status of tenure-track searches for 2009-2010 and selected recommendations.

Tenure-Track Search Orientation

The Tenure-Track Search Orientation for 2010 was held in September in the Multipurpose Room of the University Union. On May 15, 2009, approximately 50 search committee chairs or search committee members attended and were briefed on best practices in conducting a successful search.

Tenure-Track Search Results

Out of the sixteen (16) searches authorized for 2009-2010, only two remain active. These are in the Department of Social Work and the Department of Nursing and Health Sciences.

Diversity and Equity Committee

This academic year the Diversity and Equity Committee continued the work of developing a diversity plan for the university. It is anticipated that this plan will be presented to the President and his cabinet for review, published this fall and distributed to the University community.

Additionally, the Faculty Diversity and Equity Committee have been designing and organizing the University Diversity Fair. This event is scheduled for May 21, 2010 and will highlight the diversity efforts of the colleges and divisions of the University. Awards will be given to colleges, divisions and units who show evidence of the demonstration of best practices in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts as an important element of their work.
Assisting Tenure-Track Searches

Because of the budget crisis facing the University, all but two searches have been placed on hold. Searches in the Department of Social Work and Nursing and Health Sciences are progressing on schedule.

Though there is no sign of when this budget crisis may end, I believe it continues to be important that we refine and expand our efforts in terms of how to recruit and hire faculty from diverse backgrounds. 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.

I continue to believe there is a need to rethink the monitoring function for tenure-track searches, the role of the DELO and how we might more effectively manage 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? It is now March and in one of the searches telephone interviews have just been completed. At this rate it will be April before candidates are brought to campus. Our University is not the only one seeking candidates. We cannot expect good candidates to just sit around and wait for us to complete our process.

I made these same observations (recommendations) last year and, to this point, have received no feedback. I continue to think these suggestions have merit. Additionally, we must discard the old-fashioned notion that if professor X retires, that we must search for someone just like her. Times and conditions change and, given the value of a tenure-track position and the length of the commitment being made, there must be far greater thought in making decisions about requesting, allocating and searching for tenure-track positions. The provost, deans and department chairs must play a much more active role in engaging faculty in this process.

Recommendations and Reflections

The Diversity and Equity Committee would like to be of greater value to the University, especially this administration, in advising and consulting on diversity, equity and inclusion issues. Diversity and social justice issues impact all decision of the University
and, there is a strong belief that the expertise of Diversity and Equity Committee is not being adequately utilized. The Committee would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter in greater detail with the President or his designee at his earliest convenience. Members of the Committee have been frustrated especially by not being called upon during this current budget crisis.

Additionally, there have been concerns raised about the impact of the budget crisis on the campus climate. With this in mind, FDEC has discussed the possibility of conducting a campus climate survey. There has been no campus climate survey since 2006. At that time the University pledged to conduct a campus climate survey at regular intervals. There was also discussion of holding focus groups to understand more clearly issues raised in the last campus climate survey about the particular concerns of women, gays and lesbians and populations of color. To my knowledge there has been no follow-through on this. I believe strongly that these are important issues that should be addressed by this administration and, certainly, the Faculty Diversity and Equity Committee stands ready to offer assistance in the design and implementation of a campus climate study. If we are to put meaning to our diversity commitments such a study should be conducted soon and at regular intervals after the initial effort.

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. I now understand that the person responsible for EEO matters, Linda Nolan, has been moved to Risk Management and reports to the head of that unit. It is now evident that my recommendation was ignored. Through moving the position to Risk Management, this important responsibility is buried even deeper in the bowels of the university. I raise the issue again. This EEO function, in its broadest sense, needs to be expanded and elevated to a higher level in the University. The position, buried deep in the bowels of Risk Management, 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, again, I recommend that it 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.

Finally, there are far too many cases coming to my attention of gay, lesbian populations and people of color suffering abuses at the hands of insensitive colleagues and administrators. Some of these cases have ended up at the Department of Housing and Fair Employment in Oakland, others have gone the EEO Officer to complain and some have just complained and gone away. While I recognize that complaints don’t equal guilt on the part of the University, they do suggest to me that we need to pay far more attention to our campus climate and our practices in reference to minority practices. We have a lot of work to do, but I do believe we are up to the challenge.