

President's Commission on Diversity
May 1, 2012
Meeting Minutes

President Benson's report on the BOT approved Five-Year Diversity Strategic Plan.

- We are thrilled the BOT has passed and endorsed the plan. The President's Commission on Diversity (PCD) has done great work and I thank all of you. The implementation of the plan will take multiple years. The issue is to fund the plan. An Action Plan for next year was put together for the BOT. Items were pulled from the College Strategic Plan and the Diversity Strategic Plan in hopes the BOT will see what we would like to accomplish with funding. I am hopeful the BOT will give the necessary funding needed to accomplish these items. Tuition will determine if the plans are funded. Tuition will be our only source of funding the plans.

PCD Q & A

- John Bello-Ogunu: If we do not receive the level of tuition requested, will you as the President be able to provide the Commission with the seed money needed to begin the implementation process, regardless of the tuition outcome?
- President Benson: We will come up with some seed money; we do not know how much money. The money is not in the budget, we do receive non-recurring funds from time to time, as one-time money. However, we do not have recurring money or lines.
- John Bello-Ogunu: In terms of the implementation cycle, when will we know if there will be any funds available?
- President Benson: We will know in June. We will be building the budget and lobbying for this Action Plan.
- Andrew Lewis: If some funds are allowed for the plan to be implemented, how will the priority of those funds be determined? Will the decision be made by yourself or the EVPs? Will the plan come back to the PCD to give us the opportunity to prioritize the items?
- President Benson: I would suggest putting together a smaller group (steering committee) to work with me to sort out the priorities. Let's get through the next few months to see where we are regarding funding. My prediction is the Action Plan will go through. However, the question is how much will be funded.
- Brian McGee: I spoke with the Co-Chairs about a need to look at prioritization within the funding plan the PCD provided to the President. Comparing the cost of the strategies is not something the plan provides at this point. We do not know if some recurring monies in certain areas are more or less important than a highly ranked larger amount requested in another strategy. These are questions we have to work through in order to understand the Commission's recommendations so decisions can be made on what can be funded.
- Joe Kelly: Earlier in the year we discussed a line item in the budget devoted to Diversity, the PCD would like to request the BOT make this a permanent line.

- President Benson: Yes. Now we go into the negotiation phase, it is my hope that funds would be bigger than it is currently.
- Clara Hodges: Diversity is so important to the College and this committee. What would be the possibility of this committee meeting with the BOT to stress the importance of what we are trying to do and how we want to see it come to fruition?
- President Benson: It is a good idea for the full committee or a subset to meet with the BOT. The target items are salaries, Diversity, IT, departmental budgets, and faculty/staff positions and the North Campus.
- Joe Kelly: What are your thoughts on using the Campus Climate Survey as a base line instrument on campus?
- President Benson: As long as it will be used as an instrument to learn from and as a benchmark. I am behind it if it is done well. I would like to look at it to make sure I am comfortable with it.
- Tom Trimboli: It is Important for the PCD to understand the budget problem. A lot can be done without money. There are items in the DSP we can go forward with, regardless of the level of funding. For example, how do we increase the employment pool for various jobs? How do we get infused into the College that diversity needs to be a part of all the major decisions the College makes? How do we make this a more welcoming environment? How do we get data back to access how we are doing?
- Tom Trimboli: President Benson, what do you expect the PCD's role to be in monitoring function as we proceed with the DSP?
- President Benson: I have not thought through the monitoring process. I do know the monitoring process must be done regularly and annually. This institution is doing so many things for free without additional compensation and necessary Faculty. 30% of our courses are being taught by Adjuncts; there is nothing wrong with adjuncts, but this puts us off the scale relative to quality institutions in the U.S. We should be at 15%. There needs to be a voice saying we are not paying people properly and not hiring enough people to do the job. You are doing more than you should be doing now based on your job descriptions and based on what you are being paid at this institution. I want the best people here and I don't want you to leave. Because so much has to be done and so much has been left undone for so many years and this includes Diversity, I don't think all of us doing a little bit more can solve this problem.
- President Benson: I want to help you do your job. The Finance meeting will take place on June 4th in Columbia. This meeting is open to the public; representation from the PCD at that meeting to show support would be helpful.
- Marcia White: What can the PCD do prior to the June meeting?
- Elizabeth Kassebaum: The BOT will hold a Finance Committee Workshops on May 24th prior to the June 4th Finance meeting. Forward all correspondences to me and I will get it directly to BOT.

Action: Co-Chairs will draft a memo to the BOT from the PCD regarding funding of the DSP. Co-Chairs will circulate to PCD members before forwarding to Elizabeth Kassebaum to deliver the BOT before the May 24th Finance Committee Workshop.

- Joe Kelly: Ask Elizabeth to provide the Co-Chairs with a schedule of the BOT's Finance Committee meeting dates.

Action: Elizabeth Kassebaum will provide the Co-Chairs with a schedule of the BOT's Finance Committee Meeting dates.

- John Bello-Ogunu: Goal 3 of the DSP calls for the creation of a supportive environment that is diverse, inclusive and welcoming. The 1st action item states, "increase public promotion of diversity at the College by the Senior Leadership Team". What can the PCD expect from the President and the Senior Leadership Team as far as helping to create a strong portrait of collective responsibility in advancement of diversity at the College is concerned?
- President Benson: I will speak out at every opportunity, be it Town Hall Meetings or talking to the press. The Executive Team will encourage all Divisions to develop a culture particularly around hiring pools so that we are attracting the right individuals. It will be a part of routine day-to-day operation. When the Diversity Plan is funded, I will begin to speak out more than I have been.
- John Bello-Ogunu: Can we hope to see routine statements throughout the College's official publications on its strong commitment to diversity?
- President Benson: Yes, you will see routine statements on Diversity.
- John Bello-Ogunu: Thank you, President Benson for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with the President's Commission on Diversity. Commission members, there isn't anything the PCD can do about prioritization and reprioritization of the actions items submitted in the plan until after the outcome of the June meeting.