

INTERIM REPORT

Diversity Assessment Committee

School of Social Work

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

June 20, 2003

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Purpose

The Diversity Assessment Committee (DAC) was formed by the Dean of the School of Social Work, Dr. Jack Richman, in February, 2003. At the DAC's initial meeting on March 4, Dean Jack Richman stated that the DAC's task was to assess the school's climate with respect to diversity and to make recommendations for improvement. The Dean determined the composition of the DAC: five alumni (appointed by the Alumni Council president), seven students (5 full-time students whose applications were accepted by the Social Work Student Organization, and one doctoral and one part-time student who were later invited to join), five faculty members (selected by the Dean), and two staff members (nominated by staff). The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Dr. Vanessa Hodges, sits on the DAC as an active but non-voting member. The Dean determined that the DAC would be co-chaired by a student and a faculty member.

Activities

The DAC has met for short meetings on three occasions and for a day-long retreat on one occasion.

On March 4, the DAC had its first meeting. During the first part of this meeting, the DAC was welcomed by the Dean and the charge of the DAC was described. In the second half of the meeting, members discussed initial concerns that should be addressed in the data collection process. Members discussed questions that could be brought to all four constituent groups (alumni, faculty, staff, and students) such as the following: "What would be different if diversity were honored in the School of Social Work?"

On March 25, the DAC had its second meeting. Members discussed and agreed upon ground rules and the desire to make decisions by consensus, rather than voting, whenever

possible. Members agreed on a minutes approval process and to have separate sets of process minutes and action minutes, and to share action minutes with the entire School of Social Work community. A communications sub-group was formed to (1) develop a flyer listing the DAC's members and e-mail addresses and (2) investigate ways to provide updates to the School community on our work. Members met in small groups to review any communication that had taken place with constituent groups since the first meeting. Staff representatives shared the results of a questionnaire on discrimination experiences. Student representatives shared the two questions that were posted on the Diversity Caucus online forum, and in small groups students shared initial results. An alumni representative stated that he had informed alumni members that the DAC had been formed and had reported on its initial activities. A small group of alumni had expressed interest in being involved in the DAC's work. Faculty members stated that the DAC's formation had been announced to the faculty.

On April 15, the DAC held its third meeting. Members received copies of three proposals and several documents related to diversity issues in the School. The proposals were (1) to create an ombudsman position at the School (Dr. Hodges' proposal); (2) to hold a meeting in September for the entire community, hosted by the DAC and the Diversity Caucus, to update the community on diversity assessment and action activities since the DAC's formation (Diversity Caucus chairs); and (3) to offer faculty the opportunity to have curricula reviewed to ensure content that is inclusive of and relevant to diverse populations (Amy Sommer, first-year MSW student). No decisions were made in response to these proposals; members were to read them in preparation for further discussion at the upcoming retreat. Members also were informed of a proposal submitted by Dr. Hodges for funding for the "Bridge Program," an orientation activity for incoming minority students/students of color. A report was distributed describing

trends in the diversity of the school's applicants and student population. DAC members then discussed high priority issues identified by constituents and DAC members. These fell into three main categories: curriculum, climate, and leadership. A suggestion was made to add specific goals to each priority area. Members then discussed the meaning and scope of the terms “diversity” and “community” as they relate to the DAC’s work. The DAC reviewed the NASW and CSWE definitions of diversity and agreed to work from the CSWE definition.

On May 3, the DAC held its fourth meeting in the form of a day-long retreat. The goal of the retreat was to develop formal goals, a work plan, and an initial outline of the DAC’s final report. Members first engaged in a full-group discussion of guidelines for the DAC’s report and recommendations. Proposed guidelines included the following:

- Report and recommendations are as comprehensive as possible given available resources (time, personnel)
- Have rationale for making decisions when comprehensiveness is not possible
- Use existing assessment tools
- Judgments are carefully considered
- Link assessment to recommendation
- Make decisions in a proactive manner
- Report needs to be objective
- Include specific benchmarks that can be reliably measured and validly related to the achievement desired
- Include specific targets and goals in recommendations; report back on action plans
- Recommendations include target dates for periodic follow-up

Members felt that these guidelines will increase the likelihood that recommendations will be implemented and accepted by the School of Social Work community. Following this discussion, DAC members worked in three subgroups to address each of the key areas identified in the April 15 meeting: curriculum, climate, and leadership. For each target issue, subgroups discussed (1) the specific concerns that need to be covered by assessment tools, (2) proposed methods, (3) a proposed timeline, (4) resources needed, and (5) proposed assignment of tasks. Based on subgroups’ reports at the end of the retreat, the DAC determined that focus groups will be

administered in Fall 2003 to gather data on the three target issues. The DAC also discussed the possibility of developing and implementing an online survey during the summer to guide the development of focus group questions. Finally, DAC members discussed the benefits of gathering data on school climate issues at schools of social work across North Carolina and the United States, as well as resources and definitions relevant to diversity at schools of social work as defined by NASW and CSWE.

Proposed Project Plan for Summer and Fall 2003

Based on the work completed by subgroups at the retreat, DAC members agreed that work needed to continue at a regular pace during the summer in order to meet assessment objectives. The DAC also decided to request funds for two part-time positions for DAC members to coordinate the DAC's work during the summer. Dean Richman and Associate Dean Hodges approved funding. Two rising final-year MSW students who are also DAC members have been hired to these positions. Based on work by subgroups and the full DAC at the retreat meeting, a project plan has been developed for the DAC's summer work. Primary activities identified in the project plan include the activities listed in Appendix 1. Proposed activities for the fall include focus group administration, data analysis, and the development of the DAC's final report and recommendations to the Dean.

Respectfully submitted to the Dean, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and alumni of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work, June 20, 2003, by the Diversity Assessment Committee.

Appendix 1. DAC Proposed Project Plan for Summer 2003.**Research**

- UNC-CH School of Social Work
 - Locate and review pertinent existing documents (e.g., strategic plan; formal grievance procedures; Office of Minority Affairs literature; orientation materials)
 - Conduct interviews with Melva Newsom, Special Assistant to the Office of Minority Affairs; and Lynn Degitz, Center for Teaching and Learning
- Other social work education programs
 - Research what resources are provided, including web pages, policies, education, support, and organizations
 - Develop a standardized interview for key personnel
 - Conduct personnel interviews
 - Institutions in NC: MSW programs (Eastern Carolina University, UNC-Greensboro/A&T, UNC-Charlotte); BSW programs (NCCU, NCSU, Meredith College, ECU)
 - Outside NC: University of Michigan, University of Washington, University of Texas at Austin, University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University
 - These schools were selected to represent some of the more competitive, research-focused social work education programs. Programs are CSWE-accredited and include public and private programs.
- Professional organizations – resources and definitions
 - NASW
 - CSWE
- Literature review (scholarly literature)

Assessment Tools

- Confirm decisions about methodologies (focus groups and survey)
- Assessment tool design and implementation
 - Identify resources to support this work: existing survey instruments; recruit focus group facilitators, observers, and note-takers (e.g., Office of Undergraduate Research); seek faculty input
 - Design initial draft of instruments
 - Field test instruments
 - Implementation: survey (created during the summer and implemented during the summer or fall), focus groups (beginning in fall)

DAC Curriculum, Climate, and Leadership Subgroups Coordination / Follow-Up

- Collect initial reports from three subgroups focusing on curriculum, climate, and leadership by the end of June; reports need to identify what each sub-committee needs from the assessment tools
- Ongoing follow-up with subgroups

Communications

- Interim reports
- Support communication between DAC and students, alumni, staff, faculty, and representative groups (e.g., Diversity Caucus; group of students, faculty, and alumni working to plan orientation for incoming students in August 2003) during the summer