

Report on College Initiatives on Race and Diversity
May 3, 2016

In November 2015, students representing the Minority Student Advisory Board, the Black Students' Union, Douglass Leadership House and the Spanish and Latino Students' Association led a protest and presented President Seligman with a list of demands regarding the status of minority students, staff and faculty at the University. Following this protest, and in light of the national discussion of issues of race and diversity on campuses around the country, President Seligman established a Presidential Commission on Race and Diversity. He asked that Commission to review the climate for race and diversity throughout the University and to submit its final report this spring. Information about the Commission is available on its website. The Commission's Interim Report was completed at the end of January and it expects to complete its final report in September.

At the same time that the President established the Commission on Race and Diversity, he also asked the College to review several of the demands on the students' petition, charged Norman Burnett (Assistant Dean and Director of the Office of Minority Student Affairs) and Beth Olivares (Dean for Diversity and Director of the Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity in Arts, Sciences and Engineering) to co-chair an anti-racism campaign and asked Chief Counsel Gail Norris to work with others to review the Student Code of Conduct. This message provides an update on the status of these efforts.

- A revised **Student Code of Conduct** can be found here. The College recognizes that speech, and other behaviors that may be objectionable are nevertheless legally protected and not subject to sanctions under the Code of Conduct. Such speech and behavior may still be in violation of the College's Communal Principles. The College will respond to such speech and behavior whenever possible, and will likewise empower others in the community to respond to such behavior, in ways that do not fall under the conduct system. Toward that end, a new webpage, housed on the Burgett Intercultural Center's website, identifies a corollary set of resources under development for education around hate speech. This website will continue to be developed as additional ways of responding are identified and developed.
- **The anti-racism campaign**, "We're better than THAT" began its work during the semester. A committee of students and staff, led by Beth Olivares and Norm Burnett, developed the campaign, which will be on-going. Through the distribution of posters, t-shirts, buttons, and stickers at a number of high visibility events on campus, the campaign brought considerable attention to the effort to combat racism on our campus. Its website contains additional information about their activities. The group has submitted a series of recommendations to the College and the Commission, including enhanced educational programming on race relations. One recommendation, for a revamped freshman orientation program, has already been approved by the College. All incoming freshmen will be asked to complete a common reading on racism, which will then be the focus of discussion during the One-Community Program during orientation.
- **The bias-related incident reporting system** is currently live, and can be found here. During the past semester, 11 reports were submitted to the system. These reports described incidents of a sexist or antisemitic character. Although the Bias-Related Reporting system has been available since last year, and it has been publicized, it needs to become more widely known on campus. An increased effort to publicize it will begin in the fall. The College will provide regular reports to the community on the number and nature of reports to the system. Once this system is widely used to report incidents, it

will provide valuable information about what is happening on campus and thus an opportunity for administration to respond appropriately.

- The College, through the generous support of the President's Office, created the **One Community Programming fund** of \$25,000 per year, which can be accessed by students, student groups, and others interested in developing programming about race and diversity. The Fund will provide support for programs and events on campus that support diversity and inclusion. It will be specifically focused on programs and events involving students, and will give priority to those that address issues of race. You can find more information about the fund [here](#)
- **The College has designated the Douglass Leadership House (DLH)** a standing house on the Fraternity Quad, and it is therefore no longer subject to the three-year Academic Living Center reapplication and competition process. However, DLH will need to meet occupancy standards and participate in a yearly non-competitive program review process, as is required of all standing special interest housing groups and Greek groups. A committee will begin work this summer to streamline the review processes that exist for special interest groups and Greek groups and then apply the resulting review process standards to all those groups, including DLH. Additionally, the committee will determine a process for evaluating Drama House and Sigma Phi Epsilon for possible consideration as standing houses.
- The College has increased **funding for College offices**, including the Office of Minority Student Affairs and the Kearns Center and the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center for the 2017 fiscal year. These increases will provide opportunities for improved support for students; for example, OMSA will now be better able to support pre-professional and other programming initiatives and the Kearns Center will provide academic support all first-generation college students. In addition, the Intercultural Center will have increased resources to support its activities in its new home in the renovated Frederick Douglass Building when it opens in the fall
- The College, in collaboration with the Eastman School of Music, completed a **Climate Survey**. Approximately 40% of students (both graduate and undergraduate) responded to the survey. The results are currently being analyzed, and comparative information from results with other campuses will be received over the summer. Reports on the outcomes will be made available when we have them.
- The faculty of the Frederick Douglass Institute along with Gloria Culver, Dean of Arts and Sciences, are currently reviewing the **African and African American Studies major and minor**. The aim of the review is to better align the major and minor with current course offerings to enable students to better predict what courses will be offered and thereby complete the degree more efficiently.
- While space is not currently available for the requested **move of the Office of Minority Student Affairs**, the Deans and OMSA leadership are considering the possibility of additional short-term solutions, and giving serious consideration to student concerns. Any potential move or expansion must be completed within existing space, all of which is currently in use.

In addition to this summary of what has happened in the College during the past semester, a great deal of additional related information has been or soon will be made available:

- **AS&E Faculty Diversity Report** In September 2015, Peter Lennie, in his role as dean of AS&E faculty, commissioned a report to better understand the status, progress, and success of AS&E's existing policies and practices regarding faculty development and diversity. That report has recently been published and is available [here](#) In summary, the report outlines that although AS&E has made clear progress in some areas over the last 10 years, we need to improve efforts to increase the number of female faculty and underrepresented minority faculty and graduate students. AS&E's deans' office encourages all faculty and staff to review this information. Please contact AS&E's faculty development and diversity officers and report authors, [Beth Olivares](#) and [Jeffrey Runner](#), with questions.
- **Student Diversity in the College** report will be completed this month and will be made available. This report is a ten-year review, describing steps that have been taken, progress that has been made, and problems that remain.
- The [Office for Faculty Development and Diversity](#) issue an **Annual Diversity Report**. Its tenth annual report will be available later this month [here](#).
- The Presidential Commission on Race and Diversity will submit its final report in September. That report will be widely available, including on its website.

The actions and plans described here constitute progress in our efforts to address the issues raised by students in their November protest. Our goal is create a campus free of racism and other behavior that makes it harder for members of our community to thrive. We recognize that work toward that goal remains to be done.

This report was prepared by:

Richard Feldman, Dean of the College

Matt Burns, Dean of Students

Beth Olivares, Dean for Diversity and the Director of the Kearns Center for Leadership and Diversity

Norman Burnett, Assistant Dean and Director of the Office of Minority Student Affairs

Jessica Guzman-Rea, Director of the Paul J. Burgett Intercultural Center

Emily Cihon Fehnel, Deputy to the Dean of the College

Please contact [Emily Cihon Fehnel](#) with questions or comments about this report.