APPROVED MINUTES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY
November 9, 2004

Present: Pat Covey, Isabel Brown, Diane Dixon-Works, David Johnson, Jeanne Maes, Hattie Myles, Shelton Perry, April DuPree-Taylor

Excused: Barbara Broome, Keith Ayers, Harvey White

Guests: Bob Shearer, Jean Tucker

The Committee unanimously approved the Minutes of April 22, 2004 and July 28, 2004.

Dr. Covey reported that a letter had been sent by Dr. Joseph Mitchell to the Court expressing his concerns about the Advisory Committee on Diversity. Dr. Covey stated that she was very disappointed that Dr. Mitchell made these complaints without any attempt to contact her, or any other University official, to her knowledge, for information or clarification. She said that she felt it was really unfortunate that he had not attempted to get accurate information and an understanding of the work of the Committee. She proceeded to discuss some of the issues that he raised. Dr. Covey stressed to the Committee that if they, or if they know of someone who has questions and concerns about what the Committee is doing or is not doing to please bring them forward. She stated that she will do anything she can to address the concerns and that everyone on the Committee should feel comfortable in talking about anything that they feel needs to be discussed. Dr. Mitchell expressed concern about the Senior Vice President being Chair of the Committee. She pointed out that the Court had ordered that the Chief Academic Officer should chair the Committee. Dr. Mitchell also complained, that in the last Committee meeting, Dr. Covey could not produce the exact number of tenured Black faculty. In point of fact, the Committee discussion concerned the rate of tenure of Black faculty as compared to White faculty. Although Dr. Covey did not have the information in the meeting, the data were certainly available. She had stated in the meeting, that to her knowledge, no Black faculty had been denied tenure during her service as Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. A review of the files indicated that actually there has been one tenure denial to a Black faculty member.

The Committee then moved on to discuss Recommendations to the President. There is no specific requirement that Committee recommendations to the President must be made on an annual basis. It is the Committee’s job to advise and recommend to the President as it deems appropriate. Drawing from the Committee’s discussions over its last several meetings, Dr. Covey drafted some recommendations for Committee discussion and consideration. These were emailed to the Committee for review several weeks ago

Recommendations to the President for 2004

- Clearly communicate as widely and frequently as possible the University’s commitment to diversity and:
  A) specifically enunciate the reasons for its special emphasis on increasing the number of Black faculty and administrators and its efforts to the accomplishment thereof;
  B) direct all administrators and the Office of Personnel to develop strategies for the recruitment and retention of Black faculty and administrators and to report annually on progress toward accomplishments thereof; and
  C) provide diversity training for faculty, staff and administrators.
General discussion of these items by the Committee followed. The Committee was in agreement with these items although they felt some clarification and emphasis should be stressed.

Item A - Reasons for special emphasis on increasing black faculty and administrators as opposed to other minorities.
Reason: The Court ordered this because blacks are the most under-represented group based on demographics of our region and state. Jean Tucker will check on wording of this.

Item B - For faculty, efforts to recruit and retain black faculty is being worked on at all levels (department, college, etc.). On the staff/administration side, the new Director of Human Resources will have experience and commitment to diversity. As far as reporting on progress, Dr. Covey noted that staff/administrator and faculty hiring processes are different in that faculty are normally hired on a contract starting on August 15, whereas there is continual hiring in Personnel. It was suggested that maybe biannual progress reports would be better but the Committee felt that it would be best to keep it annually. Dr. Myles stated that she felt more progress would be made keeping the natural order of things.

Item C - The Committee was in total agreement that diversity training should be provided for faculty, staff and administrators. Dr. Shearer volunteered Jeanne Maes, as she is a diversity expert, to work on diversity training sessions - April DuPree-Taylor agreed to help her. Diane Dixon-Works suggested presenting scenarios during training that captures the audience’s attention right away - use everyday examples that people may not realize are related to diversity (not just a black/white issue, but much broader). It was agreed that getting the Faculty Senate on board would be very helpful. Isabel Brown and April DuPree-Taylor will work on having the Faculty Senate adopt a resolution endorsing diversity. Training trainers could be an answer to getting everyone trained on diversity. An ad hoc subcommittee will work on this - Dr. Shearer will call this committee together.

The Committee decided to table the Recommendations to the President for further discussion at the next meeting.

Dr. Covey gave the Committee an update on Faculty Recruitment.

Dr. Johnson reviewed the information item he had sent concerning the national percentage of Black faculty referred to in a Chronicle of Higher Education article - pointing out the article includes traditionally Black institutions.

Dr. April DuPree-Taylor reported that the Reception for University of South Alabama African-American faculty would be at the Banana Docks Café on November 18, 2004 at 5:30 p.m.

Dr. Hattie Myles reported on the Association of American Colleges and Universities Diversity meeting which she attended. She said it was the best meeting she has attended and distributed copies of the materials from the meeting that she felt were most important. She said they had so much to offer that she could not attend everything and that next year more than one person should go. She hopes everyone has a chance to read through the information because it has some very good material in it. Dr. Covey extended an invitation to the committee to attend meetings they felt would be beneficial.

A sample of a faculty position ad for under represented groups that was used by The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was reviewed. A discussion followed on whether this type of program would yield
more for us than what we have in our Graduate School.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45.