APPROVED MINUTES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY
April 22, 2004

Present: Pat Covey, Keith Ayers, David Johnson, Jeanne Maes, Shelton Perry, April DuPree-Taylor, Harvey White

Excused: Barbara Broome, Isabel Brown, Diane Dixon-Works, Hattie Myles

Guests: Bob Shearer, Jean Tucker

Dr. David Johnson convened the meeting at Dr. Covey’s request since she would be late arriving.

Minutes of November 6, 2003 and February 19, 2004 were unanimously approved.

The following 16 Suggestions/Recommendations, derived from the University of South Alabama Employee Survey Report, were divided between Committee members for reviewing and reporting and for deciding which could potentially become action items. (Dr. Barbara Broome and Dr. Jeanne Maes emailed their reports prior to the meeting and they were distributed.) It was agreed that since Dr. Broome and Diane Dixon-Works could not attend, their items would be discussed at the next meeting.

1. Change attitudes and need for diversity training (Barbara Broome)
2. Recruit African-Americans from within the Institution (Barbara Broome)
3. Improve internal promotion opportunities (Diane Dixon-Works)
4. Recruitment should be color-blind (Diane Dixon-Works)
5. Target recruitment using African-American organizations, colleges, and social networks (Harvey White)

Dr. White recommended that we call on the Host Committee whenever they would be useful in recruitment. He would like to invite the senior African-American faculty we have to participate. He enjoys this kind of activity and volunteered to be of use any time. All agreed with his suggestion.

6. Improve advertising and marketing (Harvey White)

Setting up a separate website from the Advisory Committee on Diversity website was discussed. The website, possibly “Diversity USA,” would have the names and contact information for the Advisory Committee and Host Committee memberships, a list of faculty mentors, and other information that may be useful to the University community.

7. Expand definition of diversity (Jeanne Maes)

Dr. Maes suggested fostering an environment in which all forms of ethnic and cultural diversity is valued. She believes more work needs to be done and further developments made before it is made into an action item.
8. Current efforts are satisfactory (Jeanne Maes)

Educate those involved in interview and hiring of university faculty and staff. She believes the Committee should continue doing what is currently being done and this should be added to number seven as a continuance.

9. Improve salaries and other inducements (Pat Covey)

Dr. Covey has been working on the inducements. She introduced for discussion the question of whether you are talking about improving all salaries or just those for African-Americans? Dr. Covey said she would like to hear from the group. Dr. Johnson stated that from a dean’s perspective, particularly in certain disciplines, with a little more competitive salaries we would be able to land effective faculty, regardless of race.

Dr. Shearer brought up the Virginia Tech model. Giving incoming African-Americans higher salaries can certainly help achieve the goal of diversity, but on the other hand, it can cause quite a lot of bitterness. He feels the VPI model is worth looking into.

Dr. Covey stated that in the recent Consent Decree meeting, concern was expressed about identifying positions as open only to African-Americans because of the potential for opening the institution up to reverse discrimination law suits. In our case, we are using the Diversity Funds to pay for the positions so she feels we are on safe ground. The real question is then, “Do you sit back and wait or do you resort to paying higher salaries and offering other inducements?”

Dr. Covey reported on recent recruitment efforts of an African-American female in Engineering. She felt offering her the best salary we could plus inducements concerning her research that she will accept our offer. Dr. Harvey White offered to call her and do what he could to encourage her to come. The Committee thought that was a very good idea and Dr. Covey asked April DuPree-Taylor to also call. Keith Ayers and Bob Shearer both felt that personal touches going beyond normal recruitment can be what makes the difference.

Dr. Covey and the Committee felt that this item should definitely be an action item. We are already doing what we can in accordance with what is needed.

11. Interview existing and previous employees (Pat Covey)

We have not adopted a formal program for that but we should. Dr. Covey thinks the deans are already doing this on an informal basis but we probably need to formalize it. Dr. Johnson does do exit interviews. Dr. Covey does feel this should be an action item and a formal policy be adopted.

Dr. White asked to share some information he failed to mention before. He met with someone from Talladega and he told Dr. White their students 87% of their students go on to graduate school. Dr. White looked at their data and they have the second highest percentage of Ph.D.’s per capita in America. This school looks like a very good source for potential for our graduate programs. The school is excited about building a relationship with us. Dr. Covey reported that we are currently engaged in a cooperative program with Talladega. This should be an action item to continue to grow the relationship.
Dr. Covey mentioned that the Commission on Higher Education has a Black Scholars Program. Basically any black student in this state can pretty much go to any graduate program in this state. If you combine that with our Minority Scholarship Program, we should be in a strong position to recruit students to this University. Clearly we need to market these opportunities more on our campus. She doesn’t feel that the students know about this program and many faculty may not know about it. Dr. Covey will suggest that the Graduate School advertise this. This should definitely be an action item.

11. Enhance cultural offerings (Keith Ayers)

Public Relations reviewed the last 2 ½ to 3 years of campus activities to see what had been offered. It was interesting to note that there were far more student cultural activities than there were faculty cultural activities. The faculty activities were by and large just music and art with no real emphasis on diversity. The cultural offerings were more for students and not particularly aimed at minorities but at the student body as a whole. There were quite a few speakers/programs addressing diversity issues. He just wanted to report what he had discovered. He did not feel this is a deficit area. He feels the next item #12 Improve Mentoring is where we could have a greater impact.

12. Improve mentoring (Keith Ayers)

If we expanded the definition of mentoring very universally to say, what can senior African American faculty do to effect hiring, to effect promotion, to effect retention? He feels those are areas that have greater potential to make an immediate difference. He thinks the personal touch, one on one basis will do the most good. Should be an action item.

Dr. Johnson suggested check with the Faculty Senate on what their mentoring program is doing and suggest they recruit our African American faculty to participate. Dr. Shearer also said we should get Faculty Senate involved to support inducements for African-American recruitment. Should be an action item.

Dr. White stated that recruitment has definitely made program but most difficult is retention. He suggested having a gathering for African-American faculty and administrators. Dr. Covey said a good time would be when the new faculty come aboard in August. We should make sure the event is relaxed and casual. Dr. White and April DuPree-Taylor will come up with a plan and Dr. Covey will pay for it. Should be an action item.

Cultural Items -
Dr. Johnson suggested bringing in African-American guests through the Speakers Bureau. Increase funding for activities. Should be an action item.

Discussion followed on the issue of how paying African-Americans a higher salary would go over. It was suggested a hiring bonus may go over better than hiring at a permanent higher salary. It was also suggested that we should go to the Faculty Senate and get their ideas on recruiting incentives for hiring African-Americans. Inform them four new African-American faculty have been hired using Diversity money.

13. Add positions that may be filled with African-Americans (David Johnson)

A question was posed by Dr. Johnson that if recruiting for one position and during that recruitment you come across an African-American that is not ideal for that particular position but
is highly qualified in another area of the discipline and would be a good addition to the department, should we have a policy that would allow that department to hire two rather than one faculty member? Consensus of the group was that there should be no policy but should be dealt with on a case by case basis working with the Vice Presidents.

14. Eliminate discrimination (David Johnson)

No need to do anything more than we are already doing. Dr. Covey suggested sending out a newsletter a couple times a year updating what the Committee is doing. This should be an action item.

Jean Tucker would like to combine Diversity and Sexual Harassment workshops for all faculty and staff. This should be an action item.

Dr. Covey will definitely be working on some of these issues. Items not discussed will be on the next meeting agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.