

REPORT OF THE OVERSIGHT PANEL FOR THE TASK FORCE ON RACE FALL 2003

In the mid-1990s, student discontent with the racial climate at Tufts was focused and magnified by a number of racial incidents. The Task Force on Race was convened through 1996-1997 in response to student calls for a serious study of the racial environment on campus. The group consisted of faculty, administrators, staff, and students. It was charged with examining the impact of race on our undergraduate community, and preparing recommendations that would 1) proactively increase awareness of the value of the diverse community that we strive to be; 2) recognize problematic policies, practices, and behaviors that cause marginalization of students of color; and 3) develop ways to counter these negative factors. The Task Force recommendations were divided into three categories: Institutional Policies and Practices, Academic Environment, and Student Life. The three areas overlap, but each focuses on a different area of impact. When the Task Force produced its final report in 1997, an Oversight Panel comprising faculty, an administrative liaison, and students was established that has monitored and reported periodically to the community on the timeliness and effectiveness with which the recommendations have been implemented.

Six years later, much has changed on campus, including the Administration's structure and personnel. The Oversight Panel sees this as an important moment to review the progress that Tufts has made in implementing the recommendations put forth by the Task Force. What have we accomplished in improving, creating, and sustaining an environment conducive to healthy engagement of diversity? Which of the original challenges do we still face? What new challenges should we be aware of in 2003, and what vision, goals, and efforts do they demand of us?

This report summarizes our review and evaluation of the status of the Task Force recommendations. While there have been accomplishments in implementing recommendations, and they are noted, the chief purpose of this document is to identify continuing concerns and challenges.

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Institutional Policies and Practices

Accomplishments

- 1) The establishment of an Office of Diversity Education was recommended and implemented immediately in the fall of 1998. The office has as its main focus the diversification of faculty and educational programming to encourage pedagogical and curricular transformation aimed at creating non-racist, inclusive academic environments.
- 2) In response to students' perceptions that no systematic and effective procedures existed to address bias incidents on campus, a Bias Response Team was established and has, by 2003, an apparently effective protocol to engage bias incidents with timeliness, consistency, and transparency.
- 3) Introduction of reporting by faculty on race/diversity programs or initiatives on the Faculty Information Form. Faculty are requested to note initiatives in their teaching and advising that incorporate diversity perspectives. This is, however, just one item in a long list of initiative examples, a feature that may dilute its impact.
- 4) As recommended, senior administrators incorporate the themes of diversity and tolerance into public addresses, reflecting an institutional commitment to awareness and recognition of these issues in academic and student life.
- 5) The purchase and renovation of the Hillside school, completed in 2002, have resulted in improved housing options for all incoming faculty, including faculty of color
- 6) Diversity awareness education has been introduced for senior administrators and academic leaders. (But see below under Concerns)
- 7) Effective recruitment by the Admissions Office in the last five years has increased diversity in the undergraduate student body.
- 8) At the initiation of the Executive Committee, primarily in academic year 2002-3, there is increased faculty discussion of race and diversity matters. (But see below among Concerns)
- 9) The Diversity Fund, established in 1999 provides enhanced funding for speakers and other programming addressing cultural diversity over a wide range of topics.
- 10) In addition to the Balfour grant, a \$5 million challenge grant from the Pritzker family to Tufts continues to enhance funding for minority scholarships. Over \$2.5 million in matching funds for the Pritzker awards were raised by Fall 2003. The first set of "Pritzker Scholars" matriculated in 2003.
- 11) Several programs have been initiated in the past few years to give academic support to students of color and other underrepresented students in math, the sciences, and engineering. These include: HCOP, CSEMS, first-year scholars summer program, and NERD girls.

Continuing Concerns and New Challenges

- 1) The recommendation that senior institutional leaders engage in regular training about issues of diversity and management continues to need attention. Annual training and follow-up programming to guide ongoing efforts for institutional climate change is critical.

- 2) In the area of diversity in senior administrative hires, the results are poor. Senior administrative hires have remained predominantly white over the last five years. This is a matter for considerable concern, especially since our student and faculty bodies grow increasingly diverse.
- 3) As we welcome a new Dean of Admissions in 2003, the goal of aggressively diversifying the Tufts student body must remain an institutional priority and be seen as integral to the Dean's mission.
- 4) While Tufts has seen some success in attracting faculty of color in the last five years, retaining such faculty has been and continues to be significantly problematic. Academic departments should be strongly urged by senior administration to engage in substantive examination of their departmental climate for faculty of color, and institute steps towards climate improvement. (Also see Concerns 2) and 3) in Academic Environment below)
- 5) Few departments have undertaken an internal review of how the culture of the department impacts students of color, and women in the sciences and engineering. Identification of subtle and not-so-subtle attitudes and policies could be accomplished with self-studies facilitated by the Diversity Office. Renewed and active encouragement by deans for faculty to participate in teaching/pedagogy workshops would be an important step toward changing or improving current practice.

Academic Environment

Accomplishments

The 1997 Task Force Report revealed significant gaps within the Tufts curriculum in Asian American, Latino/a, and Native American content. The Latino/a area has enjoyed the support of committed senior faculty in Latin American Studies and, not surprisingly, has moved forward with three full-time tenure track hires. (But see Concerns below)

Continuing Concerns and New Challenges

- 1) The advances made in Latino/a Studies noted above have not been matched in Asian American and Native American Studies. Tufts continues to have an urgent need for more curriculum development and more faculty in these two areas, especially in Asian American content. There is persistent student demand for more courses that are predictably offered by full-time faculty, rather than the occasional course taught by part-time or Experimental College instructors.
- 2) The 1997 Report discussed the extraordinary burden that advising places on instructors of color in general. Significant numbers of students in an increasingly diverse student body look to faculty of color for advising, both formal and informal. In addition, students of color are often referred by white faculty to faculty of color, regardless of fit. For a subset of faculty of color who teach in areas of race/diversity/cultural politics, student demands are even heavier, as these instructors are expected to provide not only coursework and advising, but also supervision for theses and special projects, and "role modeling." Demands on them for representation in institutional committees are also heavy. This situation has not improved in 2003, since retention of faculty of color has not been as

successful as recruitment. The most precious resource – time – becomes increasingly scarce for this particular group of junior faculty of color, and this can easily be said as well of our small number of senior faculty of color. Not only do we need to continue to increase the numbers of faculty of color by aggressive recruitment, it is imperative that effective programs of support and retention be implemented. We propose adoption of the recommendations proposed by the *ad hoc* Committee on Faculty Retention in 2001. We believe the imperative for moving forward will be even clearer with the report of the Kaleidoscope Group in fall 2003.

- 3) Plans and procedures to diversify the faculty at Tufts need improvement. The goal of faculty diversity is to change the intellectual and social climate on campus, as well as to increase faculty who can respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. Diversity hiring cannot be based on a superficial notion of merely increasing the numbers of faculty of color. In the years since the 1997 Report, it has come to our attention that just having individuals of color in faculty positions does not guarantee that they will be willing and/or able to engage the intellectual and developmental needs of increasing numbers of students of color. For example, some international faculty of color and first immigrant generation U.S. faculty of color do not identify with the experiences and concerns of U.S. students of color, the majority of whom are second generation and beyond. Other U.S. faculty of color may be reluctant, for a variety of reasons, to take on these added responsibilities. Thoughtful response to the needs of students of color requires that we continue faculty diversification not merely by increasing the numbers of faculty of color, but also by finding creative ways to ensure that new faculty hires contribute to changing the intellectual and social climate at Tufts for diversity.

Student Life

Accomplishments

- 1) The Culture Centers have been serving ever-larger student communities, both their own constituencies and the Tufts student population as a whole. All of the Centers have been cramped for space for years. Three years ago, the Latino Center and the LGBT Center were relocated to larger spaces in Bolles House. This is a good location, near the heart of campus, and its greater space allows more flexibility for programming and for socializing.
- 2) The Task Force called for improved informal spaces around campus for socializing. Several small areas have been established, and there are plans for more, including the Tisch café.
- 3) In years past, performing groups with predominantly students of color felt that they were consistently excluded from high-visibility events, especially Orientation. The current venue at Gantcher for the first night dinner and celebration allows for showcasing more of the student performing groups than in the past, which is a positive trend. (See Concerns below)
- 4) Campus police have established a liaison structure between officers and the Culture Centers to encourage dialogue and improved relations.
- 5) Bill Gehling has done a good job establishing diversity-training sessions for Athletics staff members, and has plans to continue such training with the support of the NCAA.

- 6) Multicultural programming sponsored cooperatively by several student groups has become much more common. Enhanced funding from the University has facilitated such initiatives.
- 7) Not only was a planned cut in the Culture Center budgets in 1999-2000 abandoned, but the budgets were actually increased. This was a welcome respite from what would have been a desperate struggle to meet the needs of a growing student constituency.

Continuing Concerns and New Challenges

- 1) Race and diversity issues are not prominently and widely distributed throughout Orientation events; rather they are injected as discrete parts that do not blend coherently into the week's activities. These initial days at Tufts are critical for impressing on incoming students the values of tolerance and inclusiveness espoused by our university. This week is an opportunity to have students engage in what may be difficult dialogue underscoring the values of listening and expressing opinions in a non-accusatory manner.
- 2) The EEOC has lobbied for years to have the Deans provide statistics on student accomplishments (honors, academic awards, Phi Beta Kappa, etc.) and problems (probation, etc.), analyzed by race and gender. This information was finally assembled beginning in 2001, however it is not clear that the process has been institutionalized so that data will be routinely collected and presented.
- 3) The Asian American and Africana Centers serve a large student population, and are really too small for their functions. The Centers appreciate their locations, and especially the comfortable, homelike feel of the houses in which they are located. Unfortunately, the very success of their outreach efforts to students means that they are strained for space. The Africana Center needs renovation and perhaps expansion. The space problem of the Asian American Center is even more dire and demands immediate attention. Fundraising for one-time expansion/renovation of these Centers would be a possible solution if Development were brought into the process and the projects given priority.
- 4) Staffing in the Culture Center offices remains inadequate. Four centers share one full-time staff member.