



# Multicultural Faculty Commission (MFC) Executive Report of Faculty Surveys

*Background and Recommendations from the Multicultural Faculty Surveys  
conducted by the Multicultural Faculty Commission (MFC)  
in February-March 2007*

**Final Report**

**April 2008**

**Prepared by Dr. latonya “tonya” thames taylor  
Associate, Office of Social Equity  
Assistant Professor of History**

## **Executive Summary**

### **West Chester University Multicultural Faculty Commission (MFC) Surveys February-March 2007**

#### **Background**

Comprising roughly 10% of West Chester University faculty, multicultural faculty serves as a major performer indicator, which is a measurement for how a Pennsylvania state university is meeting its strategic planning targets and objectives.<sup>1</sup> For instance, "Employee Diversity" was the second highest performance indicator, generating \$808,981 for 2006-2007 performing funding.<sup>2</sup>

This survey, created and conducted by the Multicultural Faculty Commission (MFC) in spring 2007, sought to find out both positive and negative experiences of multicultural faculty that may contribute to their job satisfaction, professional productivity on campus and in their career fields and retention at WCU. A multicultural faculty member at WCU is someone who self-identified with the Office of Social Equity and Human Resources as a person from an underrepresented ethnic/racial group. For more information about the MFC, see <http://www.wcupa.edu/mfc>

#### **Demographics**

At the time of the interview, there were 69 multicultural faculty who were classified as Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors. Forty two of 69 participated in these interviews (60% or 61%). There were also three instructors who also voluntarily participated in this process. Based on the survey that indicated gender, 56% were women and 44% were men.

19 Assistant	10 Associate	11 Full	2 Not Identified
24 Tenure	16 Tenure-Track	1 Not Tenured	1 Not Identified

**Number of years at WCU:** Ranged from .5 months to 28 years.

#### **General Information about Interviews**

Unless requested otherwise by the participant, there were two interviewers (consisting of pairs of MFC members and/or two fact finders from the Office of Social Equity) interviewing each faculty member. Although not reported formally, from general conversation, the averaged interview superseded the allotted 30 minutes to answer five questions (for questions see Appendix A, page 7). The majority of the interviews occurred in a conference room of the Office of Social Equity; however, they also occurred in Lawrence Hall and by telephone. Also, for all interviews, all five questions were asked. As promised at the outset of the interviews, all data has been reported in aggregate form and no individuals are identified. (See Appendix B, pages 8-9).

#### **General Overview**

Achieving excellence through ***Diversity*** and ***Human Capital*** are two of West Chester University's five major transformations in its strategic ***Plan of Excellence***.

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas O. Armstrong, Lou Bohl-Fabian, Peter Garland, and Khalil Yazdi, "The Integration of Performance Evaluation and Planning: Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education's System Accountability Report 2003-2004": 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> State System of Higher Education, "News Release: Performance Funding, 2006-07, How the Universities Earned Funding Awards," September 18, 2006.

Respondents of the Multicultural Faculty Commission (MFC) surveys revealed that the meaning and implementation of diversity initiatives raised confusion and tension, while the overwhelmingly majority (84%) of the survey participants insisted on ongoing assessment and accountability of diversity initiatives at WCU. According to their answers, multicultural faculty have a broad view of diversity that includes ethnicity, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, and religious beliefs.

They articulate that to manage the ***Diversity*** and ***Human Capital Transformations*** and to retain multicultural talent, there is need for more visible structures and transparent procedures that measures accountability. Collectively, the answers of multicultural faculty reveal that assessment of initiatives and accountability to the university's mission are congruent with their job performance and satisfaction. The overwhelming suggestion is that assessment and accountability removes institutional structures and practices that create, disguise, and strengthen barriers to the actualization of the diversity.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of associate and full associate professors insisted that without aggressively assessment these two transformations can support a status quo that marginalizes multicultural faculty and talent.

Equally as important to note, an overwhelming majority (82%) addressed ways to solve concerns rather than focusing on the concerns they had.

Eight out of ten respondents addressed the following concerns: tenure, promotion, service, leadership, assessment and accountability, and/or campus communication.

Overall, the answers of multicultural faculty participants to the questions asked articulated the need of the MFC to work with administration and department heads to address the accountability aspect of the *Plan of Excellence* by

- recognizing that the recruitment and retention of multicultural faculty are connected to multicultural faculty's participation in campus governance and the decision-making process that allocates of campus resources;
- promoting that multicultural faculty retention is related to the reputation, competitiveness, consumer base, management and maximizing of resources, turnover costs, and funding of the campus;
- implementing plans and accountability practices that maximizes work and minimize, if not, eliminate barriers to inclusiveness and professional development;
- rewording internal job descriptions to incorporate transferable skills while not privileging prior experience as the major factor in selection because there may not be a correlation between job performance and success and because there could be departmental/unit politics that thwart opportunity of multicultural faculty to advance;
- distinguishing the management of diversity from Affirmation Action;

- managing diversity by practicing accountability; by being willing to ask if the Transformations' outcomes are being met; by being willing to address the issues that thwart outcomes; by being willing to change the campus culture;
- educating the campus community of best practices and rewarding and recognizing those departments and units that exercise presented best practices;
- charging the campus community to institutionally strengthen the structure that assesses its *Diversity* and *Human Capital* transformations.

### **Multicultural Faculty Commission (MFC) Survey Recommendations**

In their answers, multicultural faculty differentiated diversity and Affirmative Action. Fifty-three percent (53%) associated diversity with business models that highlight the necessity of an integrated workplace that values, recognizes, and maximizes the ability of all employees and students to contribute to the university's goals. They related diversity with inclusiveness and equity, but more closely associated diversity to cost effective measures that decreased conflict, increased the student population of underrepresented groups, recruited multicultural faculty, created a positive workplace, and welcomed multiple perspectives on problem solving. When multicultural faculty addressed Affirmative Action, they emphasized the legal aspects and the perception that the policy existed to address the historical discrimination faced by underrepresented ethnic and racial groups and white women.

From their responses, multicultural faculty believed that while Affirmation Action is documented because the required paperwork, but the majority (84%) articulated that there is little measurement/assessment of diversity initiatives at WCU.

The following recommendations are based on the answers of multicultural faculty. These recommendations are divided into four major categories, all of which provide strategies to create, strengthen, review, assess, and hold accountable initiatives dealing with diversity and human capital: (1) Assessment and Accountability; (2) Leadership and Training; (3) Communication; and (4) Institutional Support.

#### **1. Assessment and Accountability to link to Responsiveness**

- Offer an ¼ Alternative Work Assignment (AWA) to either the Chair of the Multicultural Faculty Commission or assign the Special Assistant to the Provost the responsibility of monitoring and managing diversity as opposed to the instead of leaving the task to individuals with other responsibilities.
- Each college, unit, and division, should articulate and write explicit annual goals for diversity and progress; this information should be on each webpage of the university.
- Review all performance systems, (including the objectivity of evaluation criteria and awards) and explore systemic barriers to success and to fully preparing employees for advancement
- Develop explicit plans to reduce the stigma of diversity and Affirmative Action Plans.

- Establish criteria to recognize and measure Best Practices in regards to diversity and human capital.

## **2. Leadership and Training**

- Extend the 360-degree feedback form to department chairs (require at least 10 replies).
- Increase management/leadership training for department chairs and assistant and associate deans and directors.
- Develop corporate mandatory diversity training-- with a focus on behavior, inclusion, inequitable treatment-- for managers and supervisors (particularly new department chairs) to be completed within six months of appointment. Highlight their attendance with certificate of completion of training (this helps record keeping).
- Encourage a representative of all department, divisions, and units search committees to attend a Workshop on Hiring by the Office of Social Equity; this ensures that the committee knows any new hiring practices and procedures that can influence the process.
- Encourage the Office of Social Equity to include on its Step 1 Process in Hiring to a list of the all search committee members. This will help to measure university-wide diversity on search committees.
- Advertise and post opportunities to ensure equity in opportunities and promotions.
- Define career paths for all management positions. Provide leadership workshops on how to become Chairs or Managers.
- Provide the opportunity for anonymous feedback about possible equity issues and work climate. Employee suggestion boxes installed near the office of every college, unit, and division and is regularly checked by the Office of Social Equity. And, develop a process for evaluation and feedback of concerns without violating confidentiality.
- At New Faculty Orientation, include multicultural faculty and information about diversity programs and resources.
- Offer workshops that review and explain areas of compliance and complaint procedures and handling. Twenty-seven percent (27%) expressed that they were not comfortable seeking counseling nor filing a formal discrimination complaint.

## **3. Communication**

- Multicultural Faculty Commission (MFC) serves as a liaison between the President's Cabinet and rest of the multicultural faculty.

- President's Cabinet and the Academic Affairs Council incorporate regularly the value of diversity and role of accountability to diversity through verbal and written communication to campus community.
- Diversifying appointments to committees and positions by having the Provost Office distribute a list of all the University Committees identifying membership and vacancies.
- Disclose in advance the criterion used for administrative appointments and screening instruments used in interim and appointed positions.
- Encourage deans to meet individually with new faculty within the first two years to ensure that the tasks assigned to and performed by new faculty are reflected in the "Statement of Expectations."
- Encourage all department, divisions, and units to share its diversity plan and post it on respective web pages.
- Encourage deans and/or Provost to share college newsletters about faculty and college's activities to foster collegiality and community between faculty of different colleges.
- Encourage deans to standardize process for maintaining each department's annual report.
- Encourage deans to share each college's annual reports.
- Encourage deans to outline key issues within colleges as well as include organizational success stories at the beginning of each fall, so faculty in the college/unit can know their charge.
- Recognize through faculty appreciation awards those faculty, particularly multicultural faculty, who provide quality teaching, research and service to university stakeholders.

#### **4. Institutional Support**

- In job searches for management positions, specify the need for skills to work effectively in a diverse environment in the job, for example: "demonstrated ability to work effectively in a diverse work environment."
- Annually monitor, explain, and report the **retention** data of multicultural faculty to relevant university stakeholders.
- Equity in the Tenure and Promotion procedures, especially interpretation of QUICs-- All departmental chairs, Dean, the Tenure and Promotion Committee, Provost, and President acknowledge that students may evaluate their professors based on unfavorable attitudes such as race, ethnicity, and class.

- Recognize the importance of service: Individuals who tie their service to the teacher-scholar model and write-up a short description of how their service reflect in their research be given the opportunity to put, what has been traditionally categorized as service, under the category of research.
- Provide more funding for the retention of multicultural students and faculty by supporting the Frederick Douglass Institute's year-round faculty development programs.
- Multicultural faculty formally participate with key entities in an open discussion on the issues that hinder the teacher-scholar model, a global perspective, and the diversity goals of the *Plan of Excellence*.
- Creation of a faculty hall on campus. A faculty hall would provide the necessary space and multi-purpose rooms that can be used for: speaker receptions; interviewing candidates on campus (lunch, meeting time with faculty); department events (such as colloquiums, guest speakers); informal/formal mentoring; and open house. There is no "center" on campus for administration, faculty, and staff to develop relationships. A faculty hall would make for a more collegial atmosphere on campus.
- Upon announcement of retirement and/or resignation, require Human Resources and/or the Office of Social Equity to conduct an employee survey to determine reasons for the exit.
- Maintain and annually publish relevant documentation of harassment or discrimination complaints and post on website (restrict to campus-viewing only).
- Ensure that all formal and informal concerns and complaints regarding harassment or discrimination are addressed promptly, sensitively and fairly in accordance with West Chester University policies.

*Note: Between April 2007 and December 2007, the MFC engaged in a number of ways to present the data while at the same time preserving the confidentiality of the interview participants. Aggregate responses of participants to questions asked found in Appendix B (page 9-10). The MFC Survey Recommendations will serve as the foundation to the 2008-2010 Strategic Plan of the MFC.*

## Appendix A

**1. Have you been able to grow and develop as a professional in the ways that you had hoped?**

- Have you been solicited to participate in various activities—what kinds?
- Have you been offered committee assignments?
- Have you been offered leadership roles in your dept., college and university—what kinds?
- Do you feel your opinions are valued in meetings? Explain.
- Do you have a voice in curriculum changes/needs in your dept. and college?
- Do you receive support for your research and teaching interests/agenda?
- Is the travel fund distribution in your dept. and college fair and accessible?
- 

**2. Do you feel that you are integrated in the life and culture of the campus community? How? Give examples.**

- at the department level
- at the university level
- at the college

**3. Have you encountered a stifling of your progress? If so, what has been the source of barriers you have confronted?**

- at the departmental level
- at the school/college level
- at the university level
- 

**4. What experiences during your hiring process had a positive or negative affect on your accepting your position?**

- In what ways did you feel welcomed and not welcomed at WCU?
- Could conditions be improved?
- What impressed you about WCU then?
- Is there anything that you're not impressed with now at WCU?
- 

**5. Is there anything that we haven't asked you that you'd like to add to help us understand the climate at WCU for faculty of color?**

## **Appendix B**

The following is aggregate to the questions asked on the survey (for full MFC Survey see Appendix A).

### **“1. Have you been able to grow and develop as a professional in the ways that you had hoped?”:**

- All respondents expressed they had been solicited for various activities. Yet, four-one percent (41%) were unclear of the value of the work, while 29% expressed that they did not believe the work was valued by department or deans.
- Seventy-one percent (71%) had been ask to serve on committees in the first semester here, but only twenty-eight percent (28%) indicated that they were serving in the leadership roles.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) believed their voices were valued at department meetings, but fifteen percent (15%) noted that their voices were valued as long as it supported the status quo.
- Fifty-six percent (56%) of multicultural faculty remarked that they performed tasks that they did not expect to perform, or was not in their general “Statement of Expectations,” but reported that once assigned they adapted. Seventy-two percent (72%) of those who expressed the change of job description expressed that the lack of prior experience did not render ineffectiveness of the job, but required more time to perform the job and this thwarted their research and teaching agendas.
- Ninety-seven percent (97%) believed they had a voice in curriculum changes.
- Ninety-eight percent (98%) reported receiving support for their teaching agenda. Twenty-nine percent (29%) reported that support for their research funding was questioned or devalued because their research dealt with minorities. Eighty percent (80%) elaborated on ways their research was supported.
- Fifty-five percent (55%) noted that they knew who department travel distribution funds worked. Ninety-two percent (92%) shared that their travel funding requests were honored. Thirty-four percent (34%) discussed limited research funds at the university.

### **“2. Do you feel that you are integrated in the life and culture of the campus community?”**

- At the department level (57%), college level (49%) and university level (46%), the answer was “yes.” In all the areas, 96% remarked that workloads and familial obligations limited their integration, not the attitudes of their colleagues, their deans, or administrators.

### **“3. Have you encountered a stifling of your progress? If so, what has been the source of barriers you have confronted?”**

- At the departmental level, sixty-six percent said “no.” Nearly 32% of multicultural faculty expressed dissatisfaction and frustration at departmental politics. Thirty-three percent (33%) of junior faculty expressed frustration at not having a mentor on the department level, while fifty-nine percent (59%) of full professors did not believe that a multicultural faculty member could become chair of their departments. Thirty-one percent (31%) expressed that their department worked by informal politics and favoritism.
- At the college level, ninety-four percent (94%) said, “no.”
- At the university level, ninety-four (92%) said “no.”

- Nearly thirty-two percent (32%) of the respondents also added that they had limited contact to administrators and the seventy-nine percent (79%) remarked a favorable perception of their deans and upper administration.
- The respondents' experiences about the barriers confronted are reflected in the MFC Recommendations.

**“4. What experiences during your hiring process had a positive or negative affect on your accepting your position?”**

- Ninety-six percent (96%) reported a favorable hiring experience.
- Thirty-seven percent (37%) reported that during their first year, they were explicitly told that their department needed diversity during the time of their hire.
- Eighteen percent (18%) were explicitly told they were “Affirmative Action” hires.
- Eighty-one percent (81%) said that conditions could be improved (97% of this answered was followed by statements that expressed that most conditions in life could be).
- Ninety-three percent (93%) reported that location and access to resources were the leading reasons why they chose WCU.
- The MFC Recommendations reflect answers provided to the question: “Is there anything that you’re not impressed with now at WCU?”

**“5. Is there anything that we haven’t asked you that you’d like to add to help us understand the climate at WCU for faculty of color?”**

- Of the responses, seventy-six percent (76%) of the issues that prohibit collegiality, development, civility, advancement, retention occurred at the department level.
- The MFC Recommendations reflect answers provided to this question.

---

***Special thanks to the survey participants, Office of Social Equity Fact Finders, MFC members, and the Academic Affairs Council (AAC).***

The following persons participated as The Office of Social Equity Fact Finders:

- Brown, Timothy, Ph.D., Chair, Communication Studies, MFC Member
- Dashield, Richeleen, Director of The Office of Social Equity, MFC Member
- Fellows, Gail, Director, Environment Health and Safety
- Harrison, Marcus, Residence Life and Housing Services
- Hilliard-Thompson, Tammy, Residence Life and Housing Services
- Howard, Angela, Assistant Director of International Programs, Graduate Studies
- Loedel, Peter, Ph.D. and Chair, Political Science
- McGinley, Vicki, Ph.D., Chair, Early Childhood and Special Education
- McKinney, Marion, Director of Residence Life and Housing Services
- Mickens, Kendrick, Dr., College of Business and Public Affairs, MFC Member
- Schneller, Barbara, J.D., Assistant Director of The Office of Social Equity
- thames-taylor, tonya, Ph.D., Dept. of History, Chair of MFC
- Winterton, Sally, Dr., Elementary Education