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Equity and Diversity Committee

Campus Governance

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MEC minutes 10/27/2016

Multi-Ethnic Experience Committee

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Multi-Ethnic Experience Committee Minutes- 10/27/16

Meeting with Director of Admissions

In attendance:

Jennifer Zych-Herrmann, Farah Gilanshah, Solomon Gashaw, Hilda Ladner, Jenna Ray, Tom Genova, Liv Klemek, Ruby Debellis, Nick TwoBears, and Khondoker Prio (Ahnif)

Business:

Jennifer Herrmann, Director of Admissions, came to talk to the Multi-Ethnic Experience Committee regarding diversity in the incoming classes as well as diversity in the Admissions Office. Some current “big picture” numbers show a positive trend, most recently from Fall 2015 with 28.6% students of color to Fall 2016 with 30.6% students of color. Herrmann brought a handout for everyone at the meeting to see how the number of students of color have changed over the last ten years. This handout is attached to these minutes.

TwoBears asked the question: Were there any new strategies in 2012-13 that significantly boosted the students of color population on campus? Herrmann replied that as there are staff turnover and change in the Admissions Office, the connections each Admissions Councilor brings to UMM are unique and can change once the staff have moved on. This may explain the large jump during the 2012-13 academic year.

Herrmann updated the MEC committee on Admissions staff saying that the Admissions Office is experiencing problems in diversity in the same way the rest of UMM does. Candidate pools are not diverse but search committees and the university are doing what they can. Andrew Sletten has taken over the Multi-Cultural Enrollment Coordinator position in Admissions after Cristina Montanez.

A way that Admissions is trying to diversity the student body is by having happy and successful students go to their high schools to talk about the life and culture of UMM. A suggestion was made that attending specific targeted recruiting events with student leaders may help boost the University’s students of color enrollment.

Ladner asked, “Where and how do the admissions staff receive training on students/people of color?” Herrmann said that weekly staff meetings are held and during those meetings, people from campus can be asked to come talk to the admissions staff... it’s just hard to find time to sit down with all staff as the Admissions Office always has staff out recruiting etc.

It was suggested that maybe there were other groups of people on campus that would be good to connect with regarding recruiting. The committee determined that working with early outreach

programs such as Windstep and working with university Native American student groups or a core group of Morris NA students would be an important group to have for prospective NA students visiting campus.

Herrmann mentioned that the Admissions office is working on targeting specific schools in the Twin Cities area to recruit diverse students (schools like academies, charter schools, etc.).

The MEC committee wanted an update on Chicago recruitment with Herrmann reporting that the strong ties with Chicago schools that UMM once had have fizzled out, but it is hard to break into the area to recruit. Admissions still attends some college fairs and the like, but it's expensive to attend and the recruitment numbers are not there making relationships with schools in Chicago hard to sustain.

After the committee's discussion with Herrmann, the committee asked what they can do to help diversify UMM's future student population. Herrmann pointed out that advice is helpful. If those people with channels for getting the word out about UMM, that would be a great help. MEC may be able to help with future targeted recruitment as well, although there are rules about bringing students and alumni to recruiting events and there is extra burden in the financial responsibility to include those people. Ladner suggested that a "team" of non-admissions personnel could visit schools.

At the conclusion of the meeting with Herrmann regarding recruitment, retention, and admission of students and staff of color, the committee has set the next meeting to be November 10th, 2016 and at that time, the committee will put together a new committee of non-admissions staff to be ready for a February start date. The next meeting will also include updates from division chairs from campus. Genova proposed to hold one final meeting of the semester to sum up the work that MEC did this semester and the committee agreed that this was a sound idea. Meeting date and time are TBD.