



320 STEPHENS HALL  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

June 11, 2012

ROBERT ANDERSON  
Chair, Academic Council

*Subject: President's Advisory Council on Campus Climate, Culture, and Inclusion,  
Faculty Diversity Working Group briefing paper on promising practices for faculty  
diversity*

Dear Bob,

On May 14, 2012, the Divisional Council (DIVCO) of the Berkeley Division discussed the briefing paper cited in the subject line, informed by reports of our divisional committees on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations (BIR), Faculty Welfare (FWEL), and Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities (SWEM). DIVCO and the reporting committees all underscored the importance diversity, equity, and inclusion to the University. We support the overall goal of the recommendations in the briefing paper.

With respect to faculty diversity, we note that our campus has already adopted a number of the practices recommended by the working group. Furthermore, the Berkeley campus has undertaken a series of campus-wide studies to further our understanding of the underlying issues and refine our strategies for addressing them. That said, DIVCO went on to discuss a number of specific concerns about the recommendations.

In our discussion, DIVCO affirmed BIR's interpretation of APM 210-1.d:

Our Committee has interpreted the relevant portion of APM 210-1.d as follows. Contributions to equity and diversity are defined in terms of a candidate's accomplishments, not by her or his gender, ethnicity, or other characteristics. Accomplishments that relate to equity and diversity are to be recognized—rightly so—as valuable contributions; as such, the above paragraph [relevant provision of APM 210-1.d] is a response to the academy's regrettable under-valuing of these activities, at least historically. In other words, it is an admonition—one, we would hope, unnecessary on this campus—not to dismiss or discount, for

example, a social scientist's research because it concerns issues of primary relevance to a non-majority population.

We found a number of the recommendations to be rather bureaucratic. Specifically, we find the recommended data collection to be burdensome, and lacking sufficient justification for how the data will be used. Our discussion echoed BIR's commentary:

Assessing progress on diversity and inclusion at all levels is important. Hence, as a broad principle, we endorse this. At the same time, however, this section of the Briefing Paper is vague both about what information is to be collected and how precisely it will be utilized ... Collecting information that will not ultimately affect decision-making is wasted effort. Hence, we would have liked to have seen this section fleshed out in terms of identifying what these reports should cover, what metrics would be used to assess progress, and how the information collected would be used to make improvements.

SWEM underscored a concern about limitations on the utility of the data itself:

... in regard to practices #3 and #4, SWEM would like to underline an expressed concern of the Working Group, which is that one serious limitation for any reporting on URM composition at any level lies in changes to the gathering of data itself. As we understand it, foreign-born faculty will no longer be tracked as such in system-wide personnel files, making it impossible to distinguish between them and domestic URMs—one of the populations our diversity practices have been designed to serve. The result will be catastrophic in terms of actually assessing the success of these practices.

We are also concerned about the call for training for members of academic personnel committees. In the absence of a specific curriculum, it is difficult to assess the value and effectiveness of the proposed training. Further, we are not persuaded that such training is indicated. Given the challenges recruiting qualified faculty to serve on these committees, we are reluctant to add another requirement, particularly one supported by anecdotal evidence only.

In sum, we support the overall aim of the briefing paper. Our campus has already implemented many of the recommended practices. We are, however, concerned about the value and efficacy of a number of the practices proposed by the working group. Thus, we reaffirmed our commitment to working with campus administration to study the issue, and devising local strategies as indicated.

Sincerely,

*Bob Jacobsen*

Bob Jacobsen  
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate  
Professor of Physics

Cc: Benjamin Hermalin, Chair, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations  
Yale Braunstein and Calvin Moore, Co-chairs, Committee on Faculty Welfare  
Pheng Cheah, Chair, Committee on the Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities  
Aimee Larsen, Manager, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations  
Diane Sprouse, Senate Analyst, Committee on the Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities