

2016-2017 Report of the Commission on the Status of Minorities  
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania  
Presented to the Administrative Council  
September 25, 2017

**Officers:**

Dr. Arthur H. Garrison (Chair), College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Representative  
Dr. Lindsey Livingston Runell (Vice-Chair), At-Large Member (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)  
Ms. Jacqueline Fox, Esq., (Secretary) Office of Social Equity Representative  
Dr. James D. Jackson (Treasurer), Black Faculty Caucus Representative  
Dr. Soo Goh (Web Master), At-Large Member (College of Visual & Performing Arts)

**Members:**

Ms. Rhonda Branford –Multicultural Center Representative  
Dr. Qin Geng – College of Business Representative  
Dr. Mauricia John – Black Faculty Caucus Representative  
Dr. Lauren Moss – College of Education Representative  
Ms. Katie Sternbergh – Non-Minority Student Government Organization Representative  
Ms. Holly Tienken – College of Visual and Performing Arts Representative  
Ms. Verenice Cervantes – Student Representative from Student Organization  
Ms. Lisa Grabowski – Division of Student Services and Campus Life Representative  
Mr. Lawrence Haye – Graduate Student Representative  
Ms. Toyia Heyward – At-Large Member (Office of the President)  
Ms. Marie Joseph – Student Representative from Black Student Organization

**Mission:**

As stated in the By-laws of the Commission on the Status of Minorities (CSM):

“The CSM shall focus on the monitoring of the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, staff, and administrators of color at Kutztown University. The responsibilities of the CSM include making recommendations regarding new policies, as well as changes to existing Kutztown University policies, programs, and/or procedures to support the creation of a culturally and psychologically “safe” environment in which the cultural, educational, and intellectual needs of students, staff, faculty, and administrators of color can be met and their experience at Kutztown enhanced.”

**Website:**

The CSM maintains a website. Dr. Soo Goh is the current webmaster. Past CSM meeting minutes, events and committee updates can be found at the CSM webpage located at <http://www.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administration/university-senate/committees/commission-on-the-status-of-minorities.htm>

### **Change in Officers:**

At the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year the following individuals were officers of the CSM:

*Chair:* Arthur Garrison, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Representative

*Vice-Chair:* Lindsey Livingston Runell, At-Large Member (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences)

*Treasurer:* James Jackson, Black Faculty Caucus Representative

*Secretary:* Jacqueline Fox, Esq., Office of Social Equity Representative

*Webmaster:* Soo Goh, At-Large Member (College of Visual and Performing Arts)

### **Meetings:**

The CSM 2016-2017 meeting dates:

September 28, 2016

November 16, 2016

December 7, 2016

February 22, 2017

April 21, 2017

### **Summary of CSM 2016-2017 Policy Agenda:**

The mission of the CSM is to monitor “the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, staff, and administrators of color at Kutztown University.” The CSM continued its policy focus on the issue of minority student retention. The CSM believes that focusing on the environment of our students of color and the impact of that environment is a key factor in the success of students of color at Kutztown.

The CSM met with various university administrators to discuss public safety, student affairs and student retention and the impact of courses on retention. The CSM met with Chief of Police John Dillon, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs Warren Hilton, and Director of Institutional Research Natalie Snow.

The CSM discussed with Chief Dillon racial incidents following the election, and he said there were a few isolated incidents but no sustained problems against minority students either on or off campus. He did note that there is an issue with students feeling that the Borough police don’t like or respect them. He stated that his department has worked on outreach programs over the past year and a half to address the problem. Chief Dillon also noted that the borough has placed cameras along Main Street in their “Safe Corridor Project,” and his department is looking at placing cameras behind the Administrative building. He also noted that his department was pursuing accreditation and although his officers are paid less than the borough police, the KU police department has more officers than the borough. Regarding incidents of student violence, Chief Dillon stated that his department has initiated programs to address sexual assault, and fights involving students are usually the result of drinking and students being drunk.

The CSM discussed with Dr. Hilton recruitment and retention. He reported that because of population changes in the northeast the high school population that Kutztown draws from is in a steady decline. Since the population of white students is decreasing, but the population of African Americans and Hispanics is increasing, the pool of students that Kutztown is focusing in on are African American and Hispanic high school students. West Chester is KU’s main competitor for students and among the schools in the area (West Chester, East Stroudsburg and



Bloomsburg), West Chester's enrollment is "up significantly" while East Stroudsburg and Bloomsburg are "up slightly," while Kutztown's numbers are decreasing. As to why, Dr. Hilton said location, program offerings and university practices regarding recruitment and retention are not as advantageous at Kutztown as they are at West Chester. As to retention, the two key reasons students say they don't return is financial reasons and personal reasons. However, financial reasons could be a proxy for academic failure because lack of maintaining a 2.0 or higher impacts federal student financial aid.

The CSM continued to discuss the issues of retention with Ms. Snow. The CSM focused on how student academic failure during the first two semesters predicts graduation and return after the first year. Ms. Snow presented data on how grades D, F, W, or I (DFWI) impacts retention. She explained that DFWI in any course during the first semester is predictive of student retention from freshman to sophomore year. Since DFWI impacts student GPA at the end of the first year, that impacts availability of financial aid. She explained that student with grades of A, B, or C during the first and second semester equates to an increased retention rate. The CSM asked about MAT 17 and Ms. Snow stated that 42% of students receive DFWI which means 30% of students are more likely to drop out because of loss of financial aid. While all student have serious problems with MAT 17, African-American males struggle the most, followed by Hispanic males, African-American females, Hispanic females, White males, and White females. Asian/Pacific Islanders usually have the "most success" with respect to passage rates for MAT 17. Students with an F in any course tend to be less successful in other courses.

Additional research gathered by Ms. Snow, as requested by the CSM, found that MAT 17 has a 54% passage rate with freshman students, and MAT 17 alone can be used as a predictor for retention rates among students. Passage of MAT 17 increases when students take the course during sophomore (64%) junior (59%) and senior (68%) year. Students have a lower passage rate when taken online (47%). Ms. Snow and members discussed one factor that explains the low passage rate for MAT 17, compared to other first semester courses, is that MAT 17 is a math survey course and not an introductory course, as many believe it to be. It is a difficult course.

### **Summary of Policy Recommendations**

MAT 17 Introduction to Mathematics is course that should not be taken during freshman year. First semester freshman should not be assigned or registered for MAT 17.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Garrison  
Criminal Justice Department  
Chair, Commission on the Status of Minorities