

2017-2018 Report of the Commission on the Status of Minorities
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Presented to the Administrative Council
September 28, 2018

Officers:

Dr. Arthur H. Garrison (Chair), At-Large Member
Dr. Lindsey Livingston Runell (Vice-Chair), At-Large Member
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Dr. James D. Jackson (Treasurer), Black Faculty Caucus Representative
Dr. Lauren Moss (Web Master), At-Large Member (College of Visual & Performing Arts)

Members:

Arthur Garrison, (At-Large)
Lauren Moss, (At-Large)
James D. Jackson, Treasurer (Black Faculty Caucus)
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Carolina Moctezuma (College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Representative)
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Toyia Heyward, (At Large)
Keshav Gupta, (College of Business Representative)
Carol Watson, (College of Education)
Cierra Davis, (Student Representative from Black Student Organization)
Corrine Smith, (Student Representative from Black Student Organization)
Julia Laudadio, (Non-minority Student Government Organization Representative)

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. Lauren Moss 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>

Meetings:

The CSM 2017-2018 meeting dates:

September 6, 2017
September 20, 2017
October 18, 2017
December 6, 2017
March 20, 2018

Summary of CSM 2017-2018 Policy Agenda:

The CSM continued to address student retention from the perspective of courses that are taken during the freshman and sophomore years rather than in junior and senior years. The commission met with Ms. Natalie Snow regarding what courses had a high failure rates in the first two years at KU.

With the complete change and reorganization of the Gen Ed which is now effective for incoming students, many of the concerns have been rectified. The courses that had a high failure rates and were predictive of student's inability to return due to financial aid ineligibility because of grade average or unsuccessful completion of required course credits were no longer required.

The CSM also discussed freedom of speech on campus and intended to support a panel discussion on campus. The initiative was abandoned, in part, due to responses from both faculty and students that they did not feel free to discuss conservative ideas in open due to fear of faculty and/or student hostility and retribution.

The CSM also reviewed research from Dr. Foo from sociology on workload distribution among faculty members. His preliminary research showed that the more racially and ethnically diverse faculty teach more students per semester. Specifically, Black faculty teach an average of 125 students, while the overall average for all faculty members is 88 students. Additionally, departments with a higher percentage of Faculty of Color, teach larger numbers of students than other departments, which are less diverse. This information was presented to the Administration as evidence of departments being understaffed.

Summary of Policy Recommendations

First, the new Gen Ed system should be evaluated, in part, to determine the success rate of freshman and sophomore students in relation to retention. Failure in the first semester is predictive of lower student retention. This is true for all students and especially for minority students whose retention is linked to financial aid eligibility which in turn is linked to GPA and successful credits earned.

Second, there is a perception among some conservative students and faculty that it's not "safe" to express their views. This of course reduces the quality of educational discourse. The panel discussion was cancelled because junior faculty (non-full professor status) refused to participate.

Lastly, faculty teaching distribution should be further investigated.

Respectfully submitted,

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