

Report to the Faculty Council from the Diversity Enhancement Committee, 2010-2011 academic year

The committee was made up of Leah Cohn (chair), Rebecca Johnson, April Langley, Candace Galen, Johannes Schul, and Rebecca McCathren.

1. The committee was tasked with considering the transition of the ad hoc Task force for a family friendly campus into a standing committee tentatively titled the Committee for a Family Friendly Campus (CFFC). A draft proposal was formulated and provided to full council for feedback. After modification, the proposal was approved by council and submitted to the chancellor for consideration. Details of the proposal are provided here as appendix 1.
2. In light of violence perpetrated on campus, and a lack of response through the administration on campus, the committee believed it was important for council to voice our strongest condemnation of violence. In response, a resolution against violence was proposed, and council voted unanimously to approve. Text of the resolution is provided as appendix 2.
3. The committee was concerned that no progress has been made towards the adoption of domestic partner benefits by the University System. As a result, a letter was drafted addressed to interim UM president Steve Owens and copied to vice president for human resources Betsy Rodriguez and curator Warren Erdman. This letter was signed by all members of council in attendance at our mid-April meeting, and forwarded on to the stated recipients. A PDF of this letter is attached here as appendix 3.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix 1: Family Friendly task force transition.

March 3, 2011

Chancellor Brady Deaton
105 Jesse Hall, Columbia, MO

Dear Dr. Deaton,

The Diversity Enhancement Committee of the Faculty council was charged with investigating the formation of a standing advisory committee to the chancellor to address issues of concern to our faculty, staff, and students with family obligations. In the summer of 2010, at the behest of both our committee and representatives of staff and students, your office created a Task Force for a Family Friendly Campus. This Task Force has held several productive meetings resulting in a number of suggestions. Chief among these was creation of a permanent, standing committee to take over the work of the Task Force in order to see their ideas through to fruition and to continue to address family-related needs as they are identified. The Task Force recommends that the term "family" is to be inclusive rather than exclusive, and includes families of all types.

The Diversity Enhancement Committee strongly supports the creation of a permanent standing advisory committee, tentatively entitled the Committee for a Family Friendly Campus (CFFC). The suggested charge of the committee is to:

Assess and make recommendations to the chancellor regarding the ways in which the MU campus, including physical facilities and educational and employment policies, supports the family responsibilities of students, staff, and faculty members.

We provide the following suggestions for the composition and terms of service for the committee. Service terms for most committee members, to be served and completed on a staggered basis, would be 3 years. For student members this term may not be practical, and therefore a maximum term of 3 years is suggested with the expectation that many student members will be able to serve either 1 or 2 years. Committee membership would be as follows:

- 4 MU Faculty (2 from the tenure track, 2 from the non-tenure track)
- 4 MU Staff (to represent a variety of position types; e.g., technical/paraprofessional, secretarial/clerical, crafts/maintenance, administrative/professional)
- 4 MU Students (2 graduate or professional students, 2 undergraduate students)
- 1 Administrator (e.g., deans, associate deans, or provost staff)

In addition the committee will be advised by 4 nonvoting Program leader/directors relevant to family needs (e.g., international programs, veterans center, disability services, human resources, services for persons with disabilities, academic retention services, wellness services)

It is expected that the committee may also wish to include, either as members or on an advisory basis, people from outside the University community but with knowledge and expertise useful to the committee for particular deliberations.

The Diversity Enhancement Committee further suggests that the initial composition of the committee be largely retained from among the members of the Task Force. These members would rotate off in a staggered fashion over the next 3 years and would be replaced according to the suggested composition guidelines.

Respectfully submitted,

Leah A. Cohn
Candace Galen
April Langlely
Rebecca A. Johnson
Rebecca McCathren
Johannes Schul

Appendix 2: Resolution condemning violence

University of Missouri
Faculty Council
Meeting on March 4, 2011

Resolution

Whereas, the University of Missouri strives to provide a welcoming and safe environment to all of our faculty, staff, students, and visitors;

Whereas, we condemn acts of hatred and violence to any person in our community;

Whereas, heinous and violent crimes, including sexually based offenses, have been recently committed on our campus;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Faculty Council of the University of Missouri's flagship campus condemns in the strongest possible terms the perpetrators of crimes which cause bodily harm and/or mental anguish. Further, we will not be satisfied until our campus provides a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Submitted by: Leah Cohn (College of Veterinary Medicine, chair, Diversity Enhancement Committee)

Appendix 3: Letter to president Owens



University of Missouri–Columbia

MU Faculty Council on University Policy

April 21, 2011

Steve Owens

Interim UM President, University of Missouri

MU Faculty Council on University Policy
The Conley House Faculty Council Offices

The MU Faculty Council takes our University's stated goal of creating an open, welcoming, and diverse campus very seriously. The University of Missouri prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. To quote from MU Equity "It is against University policy to treat a person differently from others because of that person's sexual orientation, or to exclude a person from participation in, or deny a person the benefits of, a University program or activity on that basis." Sadly, our great University is doing just that. Despite being identified as one of the University's strategic goals in 2002 and now again in 2011, we still offer no benefits for the domestic partners of our faculty and staff.

Our University has the distinction of being one of only 62 American Association of University (AAU) members. Yet, MU is one of only six AAU members that does not provide domestic partner benefits (DPB) to our faculty and staff. As the largest employer in Columbia and Boone County, it is disturbing that our workplace competitors (Boone Hospital, IBM, Cerner, Kraft Foods, Quaker Oats, and Barnes and Noble to name just a few) offer domestic partner benefits while we do not. The University's narrow approach to sexual orientation, through policies of intolerance such as denial of DPB, threatens to seriously undermine its stated position on diversity among the AAU and our ability to compete locally and nationally for outstanding faculty and staff.

As you know, last year the Faculty Council of MU unanimously passed a resolution urging that such DP benefits be adapted for our University. We understand that full benefits would be estimated to cost the system, at most, from 1-2% of the total benefit budget. In some public forums, HR administrators have said this is negligible relative to the total benefit costs. We emphasize that cost cannot be the overriding consideration in this matter.

Our faculty and staff have been without pay increases for three years, we have had to justify our very existence, and we have had to economize past the point where we feel each and every cut. We understand fully that the University is in challenging financial straits. Yet we also understand that MU cannot use finances as an excuse to discriminate. As Missouri's premier institution of higher education, the MU system cannot continue the hypocrisy of denying a group of employees equal access to benefits while claiming the moral high ground. This strategy, while politically expedient, will cost the system in stature, in capacity to attract and retain top faculty and staff, in productivity of current employees who feel discriminated against and disenfranchised, and in loyalty of alumnae who regardless of their own sexual orientation find the current MU policy of discrimination shameful and disappointing.

The failure of our University to pursue equal benefits for all employees has consequences beyond the economic. The failure of our University to pursue justice in this matter extends to the very humanity of our community – respect and responsibility for ensuring a culture within which discovery and excellence can flourish. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to do

