

**Committee on Equal Opportunities
Visit to the University of Kentucky
Summary and Recommendations
October 16-17, 2006**

Adopted by the CEO: February 20, 2007

Executive Summary

Purpose and Process: The purpose of the campus visit is to allow members of the Committee on Equal Opportunities to review institutional activities that support the objectives of *The Kentucky Plan for Equal Opportunities*. The CEO is charged with monitoring institutional progress toward implementing *The Kentucky Plan for Equal Opportunities* and the Partnership Agreement with the U. S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. Monitoring is completed through data analysis and campus visits.

The CEO visited the University of Kentucky October 16-17, 2006, to meet with campus leaders, students, faculty, and other members of the campus community. The meetings were designed to give committee members an opportunity to hear from selected members of the university community. Campus visits are not meant to gather scientific, empirical data, but rather to learn first-hand about the success of equal opportunity plan implementation on the UK campus.

Core Focus: The CEO visit report begins by identifying the general focus for review and discussion with institutional leadership and the campus community. The committee's goal was to learn about the university's strategies and leadership in implementing the objectives of the plan and recommendations from the previous two campus visits and the results of those efforts.

Report Summary: University of Kentucky is one of two public postsecondary research I institutions in the commonwealth of Kentucky that offers programs at the undergraduate, masters, doctoral, and professional level. The main campus is located in Lexington, Kentucky. The 670 acre campus is located south of downtown Lexington, and is easily accessed from all regions in Kentucky and contiguous states. The campus is divided into three parts: north campus contains primarily residence halls, central campus houses classrooms and offices, the W. T. Young Library, the Lucille Little Fine Arts Library, and the King Library, and, south campus contains additional residence halls, athletic and recreational facilities, the Chandler Medical Center, and the College of Agriculture.

Strategies used to implement recommendations from the 2000 campus visit report reveal varying degrees of success. In October 2002, the university initiated the development of a three year strategic plan, "The Dream and the Challenge." The plan was developed to guide

the actions of the university from 2003-2006. The recommendations of UK's Top 20 Task Force provided the framework for the strategic plan, with input from other task forces and commissions. A three-year period was selected so that the university could be flexible and respond aggressively to the demands of a rapidly changing environment and a more diverse and interdependent global society. The plan includes a mission statement, and is guided by nine core values. Three of those core values were highlighted in the discussion:

- Mutual respect and human dignity;
- Diversity of thought, culture, gender and ethnicity;
- A sense of community

The university is now implementing its 2006-2009 Strategic Plan which continues the earlier theme but focuses the university community on "Embracing and Nurturing Diversity". The new Strategic Plan is consistent with the Public Agenda for Postsecondary and Adult Education. The 2006-09 plan objectives include:

- Adoption of an organizational structure that supports diversity, makes explicit the shared responsibility of the entire community, and facilitates the achievement of its aspirations;
- Collaboration to establish a coherent, focused, university-wide implementation strategy to achieve diversity;
- Affirmation that the universities' core belief regarding the value of diversity is manifest in the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and campus climate; and
- Declaration that the university will use its community engagement efforts to affirm the value of diversity and promote dialogue regarding pressing social issues.

The university reported that its student enrollment has steadily increased over the years, a total of 26,439 students enrolled in fall 2005, including 1,301 African Americans (151 first time freshmen, 951 undergraduates, 279 graduate, 57 first-professional, 12 house staff, and 2 post-doctoral). It was projected that 27,240 students were enrolled for fall 2006, including 1,392 African Americans (293 first-time freshmen, 1,052 undergraduates, 263 graduate, 63 first-professional, 12 house staff, and 2 post-doctoral). The actual enrollment for fall 2006 will not be known until January 2007.

University leadership noted in their presentation that the president identified two key indicators to promote and support The Dream and the Challenge: Enrollment and persistence goals of the Kentucky Plan, and the employment goals of UK's affirmative action plan. They reported that UK has made steady progress on the Kentucky Plan goals since the CEO conducted the 2000 campus visit; it was acknowledged that the university continues to face challenges.

The university reported that undergraduate enrollment of African American students has shown a steady increase, with a slight decline in 2005 (925 in 2002, 980 in 2003, 1,042 in 2004, 951 in 2005, and 1,052 projected estimated for fall 2006). However, the university

experienced a series of declines and small increases in African American student enrollment between 1998 and 2002 (974 in 1998; 945 in 1999; 1,004 in 2000; 962 in 2001; and, 925 in 2002). Generally the university made progress on the

enrollment objective of the Kentucky plan. Retention rates for first year African American residents increased between 1999 and 2002, before dropping in both 2003 and 2004. Overall, although the percent decreased slightly the number of African Americans retained reflected continuous progress as per the Kentucky plan. The pattern of retention of first-year African American students was similar to that of whites from 1997-98 through 2002-03. In 2003-04 retention of first-year African American students began a downward slope compared to whites continuing on a slightly upward trend. A similar trend is observed for retention of all undergraduate African American and white students. The six-year graduation rates for whites reflects an upward trend, ranging from 52.9 percent in 1997-98 to 66 percent in 2004-05 compared to the performance by African Americans ranging from 42.2 percent in 1997-98 to 49.3 percent in 2004-05. While the graduation rate for African Americans is significantly less than that of whites the university has shown steady improvement.

A program used by the university to facilitate the student retention and advising process is the Academic Program Evaluation and Exploration, degree audit reporting system for advisors and students. The program compares a student's work –at any point in the student's career – with the requirements of her academic program and prepares a comprehensive report detailing student progress. The program also provides an option to develop "what if" scenarios that can be used to select majors or to change a major. The program is readily available on the UK website.

The responsibility for providing guidance in meeting the objectives of the Kentucky Plan for Equal Opportunities in Postsecondary Education is vested in the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity. The office promotes an environment free of discrimination and inequity in accordance with the university strategic plan, and federal and state equal opportunity statutes. The office serves the areas of academic programs, research, service and employment. The office provides a full array of services relating to campus environment, discrimination, harassment, in-service training, accommodations for the disabled, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and employment.

To facilitate the university's planning process a President's Commission on Diversity was established to advise the president on issues, policies and practices that affect the institutions commitment to diversity. The group reports regularly to the UK president on the status of diversity issues, specifically, racial and ethnic diversity in employment, working environment, compensation, and campus leadership. The ultimate role of the group is to propose initiatives to ensure racial and ethnic diversity at UK which fully engage faculty, staff, and students in all programs and recommendations for enhancing recruitment and retention of minority faculty and staff.

The committee recognizes that high-level positions within an organization do not frequently become available but encourages the president to pursue innovative opportunities to increase African American representation. Like most flagship institutions, University of Kentucky needs to increase the pace to diversify its compliment of executives, faculty and staff and overcome longstanding challenges to sustain an increased representation of African Americans across the campus. The CEO noted that increased diversity at the executive level would benefit the university, particularly at the policy level. Also some faculty and staff reported feeling overwhelmed because they are few in number compared to the African American and other minority students requiring mentors, service on committees and work groups.

The data showed that the representation of African American faculty fluctuated between 1999 and 2004 with no clear pattern of performance or representation –the pattern for faculty depicts increases and decreases almost annually, while professional staff showed a constant upward trajectory for the same period. The report for 2004-05 shows a small increase (three) in faculty over the previous year. UK administrators indicated that the largest and fastest growing category of positions held by African Americans is the area of professional staff; however, the African American applicant pool remains relatively small.

The university took various actions and implemented various initiatives to address the Ky Plan goals, including:

- Research and analysis regarding the success of African American students
- Increased the number of undergraduate admission staff, budget
- Reallocated \$500,000 to diversity linked scholarship funds
- Proactive scholarship campaign
- University Senate approved revised admissions process and criteria
- Relocation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Cultural Center

The university has taken a proactive and practical approach to developing an active and positive relationship with the local African American community as well as African American communities across the Commonwealth. For example the university regularly hosts symposiums and disadvantaged business enterprise recruitment fairs – enabling minority and women business owners to place bids on projects associated with the university. Most recently, the symposium hosted by UK attracted over 200 individuals.

The university also reported that it planned a major change in its approach to diversity by creating a new position of Vice President for Institutional Diversity (reporting to the provost). The UK Board of Trustees approved the creation of the new position at its October 10 meeting. The university plans to fill the position by spring 2007. While the position will have a direct report to the Provost it will also have a dotted reporting line to the office of president – this allows the position to provide information and have discussion directly with the

president, ensuring that critical information is not lost through the reporting/communication process.

University officials reported that the president's commitment to the *1997 Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act* (House Bill 1) encompasses a variety of programs that support diversity initiatives (for example, the First Year Experience, Academic Advising and Student Support Services, a commitment to increase the number of African American students, faculty, administrators, and staff in undergraduate, graduate, and professional colleges and programs).

Overall, evidence presented by the university supports a conclusion that since the 2000 campus visit, the university is experiencing a moderate degree of progress but continues to face challenges in several key areas. The variety of initiatives and programs developed and implemented to attract African American and other ethnic minority students to UK show promise and have had the effect of increasing the level of excitement and support across the campus. Among the programs having a positive effect are: the First Year Experience, the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Cultural Center, the William Parker Scholarship, the Center for Academic Resources and Enrichment Services (CARES), the Lyman T. Johnson Fellowship, and the SREB Doctoral Scholars Program. The strength of the approach is the university's willingness to continually assess program impact and make changes. The "Come See for Yourself" program appears to have the strongest influence on student decisions to attend UK. The program should be expanded.

The focus group discussions and the general presentations acknowledge a general feeling that the level of performance by UK is on an upward trajectory. Comments indicated that there are areas that, if strengthened, will yield greater levels of diversity, and satisfaction among students, faculty, and staff.

Recommendations by the CEO

General

1. The university should strongly consider, as it implements the new Vice President for Institutional Diversity position, making the position part of the president's cabinet. However, if that is not possible the president should establish a reporting structure that allows direct report to the provost and a dotted line report to the president.
2. The new Vice President for Institutional Diversity should quickly develop relationships within the university community, particularly among the African American leadership where credibility is key to student recruitment, support for university programs and activities, and maintaining the university reputation.

3. The University of Kentucky athletic programs employ a strategy to identify, during summer camps, budding athletes and follow their development and maturation through middle and high school thereby automatically developing a pipeline of potential recruits with known attributes. The university should strongly consider adopting university wide the strategy (routinely used by intercollegiate athletics) to identify promising students during academic summer camps, seminars, or other opportunities and share the data base with the colleges and departments so that promising students can be cultivated for enrollment at UK.
4. The committee strongly encourages the university to develop innovative strategies to increase the representation of African Americans at the highest level of policy development, particularly since such positions rarely become available.

Student Issues

1. Students noted that student morale had increased as the university announced a resurgence of enrollment of African American students in fall 2006, but are concerned that the university's focus on increased diversity will wane quickly when public attention is no longer on the issue. They suggested and the committee agrees that the university should expand its effort to bring larger numbers of ethnic minority students into the institution.
2. Students noted that the increased number of African American faculty across some departments and colleges is encouraging and suggest that the university expand its efforts to bring greater levels of diversity to the faculty of all colleges and departments on campus. Students stated that not enough African American faculty are employed by UK colleges and departments. Some students claim, depending on major, that they have never had an African American professor for a class during their tenure at UK.
3. Students indicated that more programs are needed to support the increased number of Hispanic students enrolling at UK. Like African American students Hispanic students face difficulties with retention and program success. The committee suggests that the university review available programs to determine whether some type of combined support program structure that include other ethnic minorities is warranted.
4. Students indicated that it is unclear how students who are enrolled at the university on a scholarship but lose the scholarship because of GPA, but raise the GPA back to the scholarship level may regain the scholarship. The committee suggests that the university provide clear and concise information regarding the student privilege to reclaim a scholarship, i.e., are the funds awarded to another student or are they available to the student over the entirety of their four-years at the institution.

5. Students noted that the CARES Program is currently housed in a structure that severely restricts ease of use by students and suggest that the university reconsider the location and place the program in quarters more centrally located and where parking is available. Also, the students noted that current staff levels do not allow counselors to attend to student concerns and do outreach in a timely manner.

Recruitment, Admissions, and Retention Initiatives

1. The university should promote financial access for students; financial aid is critical to students that may have lost access to scholarships or fall within the gap of not qualifying for federal grants/aid but have no scholarship. The availability of funds should be made known to students by the Financial Aid Office.
2. The university should refine and build on the success from fall 2006 of increased admission and enrollment of African American and other minority students. Concern was raised regarding consistency of commitment and allocation of resources to allow the diversity recruitment plan to fully blossom into a process that mirrors the overall enrollment process.
3. The university should increase its presence and connectedness in the African American community and continue to use targeted marketing materials, however, the materials should be integrated into the general marketing program of the university to ensure that a consistent message regarding diversity is received by the public.
4. The university should identify scholarships to support transfer students from the community and technical colleges, and align scholarship policies with time to graduation, particularly if the average time to graduation is six years.
5. The university should investigate using detailed retention data by department and college, to strengthen retention strategies and evaluate the value of a retention committee to focus exclusively on the retention of underrepresented minority groups at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
6. The university should consider the value of linking several key programs/services (degree audit, faculty advising, and retention) to officially inform the student of their status toward fulfilling the requirements for graduation at the beginning of each academic year. A formal process of notifying students of their status should increase retention and the graduation rate.
7. The university should consider reviewing the case load of counselors who assist sophomores and juniors –faculty and staff indicated that the counselor to student ratio is approximately 1:300. There is concern regarding the effectiveness of the interaction and limited individual attention to students.

Communication:

1. The university should utilize more effectively the relationship channels identified for recruitment activities to also establish a reliable link with the leadership in African American communities –these relationships are critical to building the level of trust needed to consistently increase the applicant pool and enrollment of students at UK.
2. A consistent message of inclusion is not presented by colleges and departments across the university. The university should promote consistency of messages from departments and colleges. Focus group discussions indicated that some departments promote the Postsecondary Education Public Agenda and the UK Business Plan to reap the benefits of a supportive diverse environment; however, other departments do not.
3. The university should consider establishing a central location that faculty and staff may obtain information and provide input/suggestions regarding the Research Challenge Trust Fund (bucks for brains). Some faculty, who are presently not involved, advocated for an opportunity to have information and input regarding various Bucks for Brains programs at UK.
4. Faculty and staff suggested that the university investigate the advantages of having an ombudsman -an individual that has credibility among African American and other ethnic minorities, to receive input on important issues and interface with the president.
5. The university indicated that the CARES program is open to all students but mandatory for scholarship recipients. Students believe that the CARES Program is currently available only to scholarship recipients. The university should review its communications strategy to ensure that all students are encouraged to access the CARES program to obtain critical academic support services.

Advancement and Upward Mobility

1. The university should consider implementing a public recognition and financial rewards program that acknowledges the success of deans and chairs for achieving diversity objectives, i.e., the recruitment and retention of African American faculty, students, and staff. A rewards program should benefit the entire department or a program within the department.
2. The committee strongly encourages the inclusion of a diversity accountability measure in the formal evaluations of deans and chairs (this approach may help departments and colleges to view diversity as a priority and also support item#1 above).

3. The university should make known its formal program to assist selected junior faculty and staff with career advancement or completion of a terminal degree (the UK program is not well-communicated to junior faculty or staff).
4. The provost should review the impact of the university's policy regarding service on formal committees on the limited compliment of African American faculty. During focus group discussions African American faculty noted that, given their limited numbers, the frequency at which they are asked to serve, as minority representatives, is overwhelming and fatiguing because they must also maintain a traditional course load in addition to serving on multiple committees.

Recommendations or Concerns to the CEO

1. The CEO is encouraged to recommend to the Council on Postsecondary Education that institutions discuss and develop a policy regarding financial aid/scholarships (stacking). There appears to be evidence that awards of student financial aid/scholarships, many times, is greater than the cost of attendance at public postsecondary institutions in Kentucky. The lack of a coordinated policy in this area reduces the availability of funds for other students.
2. The CEO should encourage KSU and UK to further explore opportunities for collaboration, particularly increased opportunities for graduate and professional programs, allowing UK to reap the benefits of increased diversity.
3. The CEO should encourage universities to explore including a stronger role for service learning in the tenure and promotion systems -service learning is central to and should be directly linked to town and gown and the success of partnerships within the university community.
4. The CEO should modify its campus visit format to require institutions, to the extent possible, to invite more African Americans and minority graduate and professional students to participate in the focus group discussions, invite participants in prior visits to participate in future visit focus group discussions, and allow more time for the student and faculty/staff sessions.

Discussions with Constituent and Focus Groups

President and Leadership Team: The highest priority of *The Kentucky Plan for Equal Opportunities* and the Partnership Agreement with the U. S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, is to create campus and community environments that are inviting and supportive of diverse student, faculty, and staff populations. Mr. Terry Allen, Associate Vice President, Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity, Dr. Kumble R. Subbaswamy, Provost, and Mr. Frank A Butler, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration

presented opening comments for the university, including the 2003-06 Strategic Plan, "The Dream and the Challenge," and highlighted initiatives to achieve the objectives and commitments outlined in *The Kentucky Plan* and the Partnership Agreement.

Mr. Allen noted various programs and strategies implemented at UK since the committee's last visit, discussing both gains, as well as declines, made in the last few years. Two important key indicators of UK's strategic plan, embraced by President Todd, were highlighted: enrollment/persistence and employment. It was noted that the president anticipates that UK will be a prominent research institution by 2020. Critical to the institution's success are the core values and objectives; key indicators of the UK Strategic Plan, and the *Kentucky Plan* goals. The general presentation included a discussion of the undergraduate student enrollment, retention and graduation goals and objectives for participation and success of African Americans in graduate programs.

Goal five of the UK Strategic Plan is to nurture diversity of thought, culture, gender, and ethnicity, supported by objectives to improve the climate for diversity and to create a diverse workplace and learning community. Indicators of success are increased enrollment and persistence and employment of ethnic minorities. Success of one ethnic group is not intended to mask the lack of success of another ethnic group. The university's expectation is to continue to focus on ethnic groups singularly and collectively to create an increased presence among the student body, faculty and staff. To facilitate the continued effort the university Board of Trustees adopted the official diversity policy in June 2005.

In general, the university's undergraduate enrollment objective for Kentucky resident African Americans is 7.0 percent and by 2004 the enrollment was 6.1 percent; the first year retention goal is 77.6 percent compared to a performance rate of 65.8 percent (although the percent went down the actual number retained increased); retention goal for all undergraduate students is 78.9 percent compared to actual performance of 76.9 percent; the six-year graduation rate objective is 57.7 percent with actual performance is 49.3 percent; and, enrollment of African Americans in graduate programs objective is 5.3 percent compared to 6.8 percent enrolled. The employment picture is somewhat more difficult to attain a consistent pattern of performance. The objective for employment of African Americans in executive/administrative/managerial positions is 5.0 percent with actual performance at 3.7 percent; objective for employment of African Americans as professionals is 5.0 percent with actual performance at 3.7 percent; and objective for employment of African Americans as faculty is 3.0 percent with actual performance of 3.4 percent. The university experienced continuous progress on a majority of the objectives evaluated.

Initiatives identified by the university to assist with implementation of strategies to improve performance are; established a research and analysis on success of African American student committee, increased undergraduate admissions staff and budget, reallocated \$500,000 to diversity linked scholarship funds, created a proactive scholarship campaign, implemented

revised admission process and criteria, and relocated the M L King, Jr. Cultural Center, and increased recruitment activities in locations with high populations of African American students. To facilitate and assure that policy is consistently implemented the university created the task force on racial diversity and equality, created a new position of Vice President for Institutional Diversity (to be filled in 2007), and sponsors a disadvantaged business enterprise recruitment fair. All of these programs are designed and intended to send the message that UK desires to create and nurture a diverse community characterized by fairness and equal opportunity.

To further strengthen and enhance its ability to realize success the university noted the most recent action of the Board of Trustees (10.10.06 meeting) adopting Goal IV “Embrace and Nurture Diversity” of the strategic plan, which states

- o The university will adopt an organizational structure that supports diversity, makes explicit the shared responsibility of the entire community, and facilitates the achievement of its aspirations,
- o The university will establish a coherent, focused, university wide implementation strategy to achieve diversity,
- o The university will ensure that its core belief in the value of diversity is manifest in its curriculum, extracurricular activities, and campus climate, and,
- o The university will use its community engagement efforts to affirm the value of diversity and promote dialogue about pressing social issues.

Student Body Representatives: Because of scheduling difficulties a limited number of students participated in this focus group. Fewer student leaders participated at UK than in the student focus group sessions at other institutions. There was a great sense of pride among the students that the UK student body president is African American. Students stated that they believe that the institutions’ focus on the recruitment and admission process has benefited the university; however, they declared that UK must now shift its attention to student retention, including scholarships. They acknowledged that African American student’s morale was high, and attributed it to the increase in African American student enrollment from the previous year. They stated that many incoming students have difficulty locating African American professors for support; several stated they had not taken a course from an African American professor until their junior or senior year. Students also suggested that incoming students may not be aware of who to contact if they have questions or require direction or guidance.

Several students proposed that a direct correlation might exist between student involvement on the campus and retention; they suggested that UK may benefit from a longitudinal review of incoming students’ progress compared to campus involvement to determine the value added. Several students attending the session identified various support networks for African Americans, and other minority groups: The CARES center, and MANRRS. They identified the

Office of Multicultural Student Affairs as a resource, but said that very few students utilize the services.

Students informed the committee that the scholarship office was relocated to the admissions office, with a different effort and focus for specific colleges. Students said that they were unaware of a centralized university effort related to scholarship. Students believe that prior to the scholarship office being relocated students' were able to renegotiate a "lost" scholarship, however, currently if grades drop, the scholarship is taken from the student. Hispanic students stated that more efforts are needed to attract Hispanic students to UK and to then secure their successful completion of degree requirements once enrolled. The students recognized the UK MLK Center as a positive resource for students of various backgrounds.

With regard to housing and program support in the residential area, they noted that there has been an increase in the number of African American resident assistants. They noted however that more residential assistants could be beneficial. Students did not identify any concerns about the living environment offered by student housing. Students noted the improved/renovated state of the housing units available on the UK campus. They made no mention of a hostile relationship with campus police nor did they indicate that they feel unsafe on the UK campus. Students did not report any concerns regarding their interaction with the immediate community adjacent to the UK campus or a hostile relationship with local law enforcement personnel. None of the students identified difficulties regarding the availability of representative entertainment, seminars, lectures, or other activities sponsored by student government.

Recently, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Cultural Center was relocated, at the suggestion of students, to the lower level of the entry in the book store and student center. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Cultural Center was originally created in 1987 to serve as a meeting location for African American students, however, today, the center serves as home to many traditionally underrepresented groups exemplifying the ideals and dreams of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The MLK center offers workshops to student groups, academic classes, and athletic teams at UK. Programming delivered by the center serves as a vital resource for cultural, educational, and social activities reflective of the diversity at the University of Kentucky.

The students recognized the Black Student Union for offering programming for freshmen, as well as other minority students. The organization also makes an effort to meet with deans, provost, etc. to offer student input and feedback. Approximately 215 students attended the BSU meetings. They asked how they could get involved. Students also believe that when they are involved in campus activities they are more empowered, and are able to increase their networking and public speaking skills.

The group concluded their comments by complimenting incoming freshmen -incoming freshmen this year are more involved. All of the participants attending the focus session responded that they would recommend UK to their friends, although they insisted that there is a major retention issue. Many said students leave UK for various reasons including, freshmen are homesick, low grades, and financial responsibilities.

Recruitment , Admission, and Retention: The Office of Undergraduate Admissions, Recruitment, and Retention is responsible for providing students with accurate information to assist them in determining whether UK will provide the type of environment that will enable them to successfully meet their educational and career goals. University administrators also promote financial access for students, assist students with financial aid and work study programs, and remind students of deadlines. Greater success will come as the university increases its promotion of financial access, particularly for students that fall between the gap of qualifying for federal grants/aid and not qualifying for scholarships (including students that may have lost access to their scholarship).

UK has developed a variety of support programs to enable minority students to successfully transition into the educational community. After the disappointing experience in fall 2005 the university redesigned its enrollment process to more clearly integrate tactical priorities for diverse students consistently into the overall enrollment process, including formative relationships, early contact, maximum staff/resource utilization, geographic focus, parental involvement, and academic summer workshops and camps. Some examples are the Freshman Summer Program, Come-See-for-Yourself, the William Parker Scholars Program, Critical First Year, and Project CSI (Career Shadowing and Internships). Academic college recruitment teams have been deployed by the Colleges of Agriculture, Communications, Education, Engineering, Business, and the AMSTEMM program. These teams are expected to assist with activities, strategies and best practices to help minority students acclimate to the UK campus. The MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences) program in the College of Agriculture, the Office for Multicultural Student Affairs, and the law, medical, and dental schools are said to have experienced a high degree of success. However, because of difficulties experienced in the field of agriculture nationally a diversity enrollment coordinator was hired to focus specifically on the recruitment of African American students.

UK has also developed a number of retention initiatives since the 2000 visit, including changes in the admission requirements for incoming students, a focus on academic programming, promoting financial access for students, and encouraging departments and colleges to become accountable for contacting incoming students. One of the more successful programs is the summer bridge program. Research by the university revealed that the freshmen summer program is very important to student success and should be expanded as funds become available. First time students, as well as transfer students, attend advising and orientation sessions to network and obtain relevant contacts that may prove

advantageous to their locating future support systems, if needed. Information is shared weekly with colleges regarding student status, scholarships, and admission to major program areas.

UK offers tutoring and study skill sessions to students that seek academic support services. Recipients of the William C. Parker scholarship enroll in UK 101, a freshman orientation course and attend mandatory meetings with counselors several times a semester. A difficulty experienced by the retention program is that Parker Scholars, only, are required to see counselors. Students not on scholarship are not required to see counselors and thus miss out on critical advising and access to program support. Requiring non-scholarship students to participate in project CSI could increase the retention rate significantly—however, additional funds would be required to provide more counselors.

The UK Summer Bridge program provides some incoming students a preview of the university, prior to the fall semester. The fee of the one-week orientation covers meals, housing, tuition, and courses; a limited number of scholarships are available for students unable to pay the fee (approximately \$300.00 of \$3,000.00 total per student). Students participating in the program have a higher retention rate (80-90 percent) than those that do not. The general consensus among the group was that the areas' resources are being deployed strategically to support the tactical priorities of the university to the greatest extent possible. They also agreed that additional resources are required if the programs are to be successful over the long-term.

Professional Programs (Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Engineering, etc): Ten students participated in the focus group. Because of scheduling conflicts only three undergraduate students attended the professional student focus group; of the remaining seven professional students, there was representation from the colleges of law, medicine, and dentistry.

The professional students expressed concern regarding support and assistance and stated that they were unaware of where to go if they had problems. Their belief is that the multicultural affairs office may respond to undergraduate students, however, graduate and professional students' needs may not be served in that particular office. The professional students maintained that the original office and staff support that served African American medical students was dismembered and they had not met the most recent staff employed in this position. As the new person is identified, the university should immediately communicate the location of the services available for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, and place the information on the university website, as well as post the information in a conspicuous place.

Undergraduate students attending the focus group session were very complimentary of the progress made by UK, after the fall 2005 enrollment decrease and amid negative publicity.

Students noted the increased enrollment and stated their appreciation of the efforts of the university, however, the students also communicated that the endeavors of the institution should be on-going, and not a single public relations act.

Some professional students noted that change in the environment seemed to come slowly and they sometimes feel disconnected from the larger campus. Most said that they have a good relationship with the administration and that most professors have been supportive of their needs. They indicated that the university should recruit a broader base of individuals earlier in the process and consider a more intensive recruitment process. None of the students indicated that they felt the environment in their program areas was in any way hostile. The perception among some students was that because of their limited number it would be difficult to report incidents or a hostile environment without their professors being able to identify them and take some form of retribution.

In conclusion, the students mused that in addition to the limited number of African American students who excel in math and science, the very limited number of African American faculty in these programs may contribute more significantly to the flat or declining enrollment.

Graduate, Research, and Other Programs: The University of Kentucky, a Research I institution, has a full array of graduate and research programs with an agenda to become a top 20 research institution by the year 2020. Many of the university's programs are experiencing difficulty attracting African American students and faculty. It was noted that the recruitment and admissions process for graduate programs is much different from the process at the undergraduate level. There is a limited amount of travel in support of recruitment for the graduate programs. Most graduate programs conduct their own recruitment process rather than utilizing a central recruiting strategy. There is no formal strategy to identify promising students from UK undergraduate programs (with diverse student populations) and begin to groom those students for graduate school, rather programs focus externally for students, noting that the graduate programs need to infuse intellectual capital from other areas to be considered strong. Most participants point to the pipeline as the primary reason for so few African Americans enrolled in their programs.

When queried about how to build the pipeline and what actions the programs are taking to enroll their share of the students in the "leaky" pipeline, most indicated that funding is a major concern. They noted that funds to create competitive stipends for graduate students and that financial support is critical. Stipends are critical because the best students do not expect to pay tuition/fees to attend graduate school, therefore, they typically go to the highest bidder—UK is unable to compete. The Lyman T. Johnson fellowship program is good but the level of funding does not give UK a competitive edge. The program is open to all students.

Another difficulty experienced by the university is the competition from private industry. Typically, private industry will provide a stipend for students but in exchange for a

commitment to come to work upon completion of the degree –this erodes the pipeline of promising students to move on to obtain the doctorate. To be successful the institutions need more African Americans and other ethnic minorities to create a critical mass across departments and colleges. Some departments are attempting to build collaborative relationships with historically black institutions, a major source of qualified students of diverse backgrounds going on to graduate school. However, UK is again competing with other TWIs also looking to increase the representation of African American students in their programs. None of the programs could cite an instance where an exclusive relationship has been developed to serve as a reliable gateway for qualified students to enter graduate school at UK.

When asked what students who attend UK say about the graduate programs, most agreed the lack of a critical mass of students, lack of a diverse faculty compliment result in students not feeling comfortable in the environment. Many in the focus group suggested that one approach might be to undertake a method similar to that used for international students to attract more African American students. A program that seems to have benefited from special efforts to attract African American students and faculty is Entomology. The program that is experiencing the most difficulty is Mathematics –there are no African American graduate students or faculty in this program.

Finally, formative relationships for recruiting, uniformity/collaboration among colleges regarding the approach to recruiting, funding for stipends, stretch goals, recruiting from a broader base, early identification of students in UK undergraduate programs, alignment of the admissions process, and better utilization of the existing scholarship/fellowship programs were some opportunities identified by the focus group as possible improvements to attract more diversity in the graduate programs.

Academic Deans and Chairs: The deans and department chairs stated that they are dedicated and strongly committed to the diversity goals developed by the university, and noted that they aggressively recruit ethnic faculty. At the time of the campus visit there were no African Americans employed in the position of dean at UK. However, there is an associate provost and an assistant dean of public health. They also acknowledged that they have both successes, as well as failures, in faculty recruitment, student recruitment at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

An administrator in the College of Medicine indicated that in the past, 25-30% of the department consisted of minority students each year and credited the college wide efforts to recruit regionally, nationally, and at historically black institutions. Furthermore, the administrator stated that off-campus recruiting is the key, along with devoting funding to the Lyman T. Johnson Scholarship, and research assistantships.

The deans and department chairs noted that very few African American Kentuckians apply to medical school in Kentucky -less than 20 each year. The extraordinarily small pool of African Americans illustrates a pipeline issue. Or it might relate to a lack of intensive recruitment by the university of academically proficient African American students. Approximately 11 African Americans apply to UK's medical program; the dean noted that there is limited leakage to out-of-state programs. One response to the under-representation of minorities in the pipeline, UK created a Pre-Matriculation Program to Medical School. The program runs through summer to attract minorities to UK. Additionally, members of the medical school faculty and staff collaborate with North Lexington's Johnson Elementary School to promote medical opportunities to students in grades 3-6.

The deans and chairs noted that a corollary issue exists when they attempt to recruit African American students to UK; students often state, "This place doesn't look like the right environment for me." As a result, the medical school began concentrating their efforts on attracting young students to campus. African American students in the National Medical Association assist with recruitment efforts to introduce minority elementary students to medical school.

Similarly, the Robertson Scholars, as well as Girls in Science programs, were identified as initiatives developed to encourage female and minority students to pursue careers in STEM areas where they have been habitually underrepresented (for example, science, technology, engineering, and math). Both programs were considered good models for increasing African American representation at the University of Kentucky. The College of Social Work stated that they have fewer African Americans, overall, because of the absence of financial support in the form of scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships.

The College of Law shared with the CEO that the CLEO Program (Council on Legal Education Opportunities) provides federal funding for minority students. Also, a similar program (KLEO) created by the Chief justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court offers five scholarships for ethnic minority students each year at each of Kentucky's public law schools. During the past ten years, the pass rate for African American UK law students has been above the national average. However, recruiting African American faculty has been challenging.

The Dean of the College of Fine Arts reported some success but explained that the African American faculty representation totals 10-15 percent; the department is currently working to diversify the curriculum. An African American playwright was recently hired, and a new course will be developed and taught in upcoming semesters: African American theatre in America. There was no discussion regarding the diversity of the student body.

The applicant pool was described as very shallow for African American students in the College of Pharmacy. The department launched an innovative program five years ago to recruit middle and high school students. The students contacted as part of the program are

just now beginning to graduate and the success of programs to build a pool of potential students can now be measured. Only 2 of the 132 students recently admitted to the program are African American. A total of 10 African American students and 19 minority students are currently admitted to the pharmacy program. The dean acknowledged that this is the greatest number of minorities to enroll in the history of the program. Also, two new African American faculty were hired -one is an SREB Doctoral Scholar and the other is assistant dean.

Focus group members in the College of Agriculture stated that the cooperative extension program serve all 120 counties, however, there is a serious challenge to recruit African Americans as extension agents. The two most notable efforts identified by deans are the internship programs, which recruit approximately 20 students, as well as the agent-in-training program, developed to encourage minorities to pursue a career in agriculture (although this is not a permanent position). The dean also stated that the department plans to develop an urban extension area to introduce cooperative extension throughout Jefferson and Fayette counties. There was no mention of collaboration with the 1890 land grant programs to secure extension agents. Nor was there discussion of collaboration with the Kentucky State University cooperative extension program and best practices used by that program to identify and employ African Americans in the position of extension agent.

The College of Business created a new program that attracted 7 African Americans, out of 51, to the class. The dean reported that the top three salaries of African Americans graduating from UK's College of Business was more than \$80,000. The department has enjoyed great success in recruiting African Americans. Additionally, African American students work with faculty and administrators to recruit minority students to UK. The college also collaborates with Mr. Porter G. Peeples, Sr. at the Lexington Urban League; currently, Mr. Peeples, Sr. serve on the advisory board. The department anticipates that 30-50% of the faculty will retire in the next few years. Currently, only one (non-tenured track) African American of 82 total faculty is employed by the College of Business.

Committee members noted that the president and provost should consider using incentives to encourage department chairs and deans to increase the level of diversity within the faculty ranks.

Research - Bucks-for-Brains Programs: Twenty-two African American students participated in the UK bucks-for-brains summer research program. The objective of the program is to encourage students to consider careers in scientific and research areas. Programs like the RCTF SRP when properly administered helps to build the pipeline of prepared ethnic minority students to pursue careers in the STEM program areas. UK is making progress toward building a critical mass but the pipeline issues significantly influence the participation rate. Significantly more work needs to be done to successfully build a reliable pipeline of prepared students.

The RCTF program allows students to interact with peers across colleges, there is no formal process for researchers to talk about best practices, the communication among researchers is helped by common interest through the NIH grant, summer programs are a good resource to help identify students early, but students are lost as they mature. The university does not track the students participating in summer programs as a resource to build the pipeline.

Engineering, based on an environmental/policy scan has begun to provide open access to some labs to remove bias. Because of the nature of the research being conducted some labs cannot be made open access. While the program is aggressively pursuing summer programs many students do not take advantage of the opportunities. In other instances students seem reluctant to interact with mentors. Because there are few African American faculty in the engineering program the mentors are primarily Caucasian. Similarly, there are a limited number of African American students in the program.

The College of Public health believes it is having good success attracting African American students and faculty –the college is five years old. The program provides financial aid (a key factor) and mentors for students. The environment is continuously monitored and strategies implemented to improve the comfort level for students and faculty. The Dental program is experiencing a limited pool of applicants, is working closely with undergraduate programs to increase the pool, has a high graduation rate, have heard from students that the debt load is a hindrance to enrollment, and the program provides some scholarships. In the admission process the program looks at a variety of characteristics in addition to the test scores. Pediatrics also experiences a small pool of applicants, use Health Careers Opportunities Program (HCOP summer program) as a resource to identify potential students and build pipeline, use internships and the children’s hospital as resources to attract competitive students to the program. The program is looking to build relationships with several historically black institutions to attract more African American students.

The STEM programs are beginning to work more with middle schools to build interest in science. The LSAMP grant will allow UK to make greater strides to develop the pool of prepared students to enter the undergraduate program and begin to build their career in medicine, engineering, research, and other science/math related areas. Most faculty working with the RCTF program have gone to middle schools to speak with students about careers in science. Most focus group participants agree that the career model in the sciences/engineering is different, i.e., typically one of solitude, student must be comfortable working in such an environment.

The agriculture program seems to be the most successful at implementing programs that over the long term have produced sustained results. The agriculture program does not have a great number of African American students or faculty but see evidence that the strategies implemented several years ago is generating interest among African American students to focus on careers in the field. Dr. Holloway (no longer at UK) made advances toward building collaborative relationships with schools and generating interest among students to consider

opportunities in agriculture. Agriculture embraced an observation by Dr. Holloway that the absence of people that look like her in the college hurt the university's effort to attract African American students and faculty. Strategies are now in place to help build diversity into the curriculum, students, and faculty.

The conclusion offered by focus group participants is that UK must be more competitive by offering scholarships, research assistantships, fellowships, and career opportunities in order to attract more African American students and faculty into the programs; a more active program of marketing careers in the STEM/RCTF areas must be undertaken by the university to engage students at the elementary/middle school levels; and implement a formal program to identify, track, and encourage students who attend the summer programs to take the proper courses and prepare for careers in the STEM areas.

Faculty and Professional Staff: Over forty African American, Caucasian, and other ethnic groups attended the focus group session. The faculty and professional staff engaged the committee in an open dialogue regarding their experiences at UK from the perspectives of the institutional campus and the campus community. An objective of *The Kentucky Plan* is to increase the number and proportion of African American faculty and professional staff at public postsecondary institutions. The university cites competition nationally, a limited pool of potential candidates, and internal institutional variables are critical influences on recruitment and retention of African American faculty and staff. Building diversity in these areas remains one of the institution's most difficult challenges. A number of those participating in the discussion said that the university had identified various initiatives to address a variety of issues and the work is encouraging.

Faculty attending the focus group session began the discussion with dialogue focused on the student population. The group acknowledged that UK regularly assess performance on admission, high school preparation, and retention of students, that the campus experience is different, but the support programs are quite helpful to students who take advantage of them. For example, a task team undertook an assessment of stereotyping, pressures, unusual experiences of African Americans/ethnic minorities, and climate. Following the assessment the task team met with the provost to discuss the findings, recommendations, and implementation schedule for strategies/remedies. It is expected that strategic implementation of strategies will begin in spring 2007. One administrator stated that based upon research obtained from student surveys and focus groups (conducted by UK), African American students reported feelings of loneliness, and stated that they felt that stereotypes were still prevalent among the majority groups at UK. It was acknowledged that other important information was gleaned from the surveys and focus groups that may help to further improve the campus environment.

Faculty and staff attending the session voiced concern that certain areas of the university did not provide support for students in a consistent way, but noted that all UK faculty have a

responsibility to offer assistance to African American students. One faculty member stated that support for African American students in the medical school has been disrupted by reorganization/relocation of the minority administrator, previously responsible for that service. The dean of the medical school should act with efficacy to complete the reorganization and inform students how to access these vital services.

It was the general consensus among faculty and staff that departmental leadership is very important to success. Several examples were offered: sometime the personality of a department may change because of the departure/addition of a single person; interaction is voluntary and forced interaction will often times change the personality of a department; UK embraces diversity, is comfortable, is encouraging but isolated faculty must go outside the department for support; the teaching environment is good not different from average experience but in departments where few African Americans are employed there is isolation, pressure to serve as role model or mentor but it does not count toward tenure and promotion. There appear to be an insensitivity/marginalization by some department chairs toward inappropriate comments, marginalization of research –no separation of gender/color; and, the culture, in itself, of some programs is a major stumbling block for African American faculty and staff. For example, several faculty noted that they regularly overhear disparaging remarks made by white colleagues regarding African American students. When the incidents are reported to some department chairs, it is dismissed as minor occurrences with no additional follow up.

African American faculty explained that they receive no recognition or reward for the support offered to a vast number of African American and minority students; they stated that UK does not recognize, and denies the importance of the contributions they offer to minority students. African American faculty frequently interact and offer ethnic minority students an intellectual climate to discuss research interests, thesis, and dissertation topics that may not be valued by majority faculty.

The group noted that while progress has been made in the recruitment of faculty, opportunities for upward mobility and career enhancement for professional staff are not well publicized or well communicated. Support for African Americans is inconsistent from department to department and strategies aimed at retention are fragmented. Several in the focus group suggested that the university could make better and more strategic use of opportunities to make special hires. They suggested that UK review policies for use of the special hire funds, resources that are currently limited and restricted to “spouse hires,” and expand the funds to include other minority hires. The use could also include opportunities to expand diversity for professional positions. Participants suggested that the university could benefit from implementing a formal system to regularly and intentionally evaluate the culture/environment of departments as a means to improve the educational community.

The chair of Hispanic Studies stated that many challenges exist when positive changes are being implemented, and suggested that a coordination of efforts is required by both administrators and faculty members. The university should more actively engage the Hispanic community, faculty and students in discussions of campus environment concerns. The CEO should expand its approach to be more inclusive of other ethnic groups. Success will come only if there is a critical mass among all ethnic groups that allow the university to build on its successes over the long-term.

The assistant dean of the College of Agriculture shared with the committee a number of initiatives and successes implemented to recruit African American faculty, staff, and students. He noted and emphasized that diversity efforts work best when there is support from the top. The department appointed a task force to address the recruitment of African Americans; the role of county extension agents was recognized, and their role of having direct contact with students helps UK. The dean acknowledged that, "as an African American faculty you're pulled pretty thin", minority faculty at UK sometimes serve on many committees while their Caucasian colleagues only serve on a few; cliques do exist but it is part of the culture of an institution (some good/some bad), regionalism is a problem, unfortunately serving on committees is not part of the merit evaluation, credit or acknowledgment is not typically received, and it helps a lot if African American faculty like other faculty have thick skin. He confirmed that the research of some minority faculty tend to be marginalized by their white colleagues, university wide. However, the department has a responsibility to help all faculty mainstream their research, success depend on the leadership. The College of Agriculture has a mentoring group for each faculty member through which advice, assistance, and guidance is offered to those in the process of publishing.

The group noted that a formal constituted Black Faculty and Staff Association does not exist at UK dialogue around strategies to address difficult situations. However, faculty occasionally hosts forums to dialogue around strategies to address specific issues. Also, the faculty host focus groups for students of color to discuss relevant topics. African American faculty and staff noted that, like their Caucasian colleagues, they must also rely on friends at other institutions for guidance and support. The faculty and staff say that their varied responsibilities are sometimes overwhelming; however, they also understand the significance of offering a support system to minority students. Some concerns should be left to the individual faculty or staff person to go directly to the provost or the provost staff to seek intervention. And there should be a role for the faculty senate to clearly support diversity. Currently, as a key policy group, the faculty senate has not offered an opinion on this subject nor does it play an official role.

Based on the discussion, there was consensus among faculty and staff participating in the focus group that the highest ranking African American official in the president's cabinet lacks the confidence of most African Americans on campus to effectively deal with issues they have identified and thus African Americans rarely schedule meetings to discuss concerns or

problems that require immediate attention. It was suggested that one way to deal with this issue is to hire an ombudsman but the idea proposed by the university to hire a vice president for diversity may work as well. Both faculty and staff agreed that the new position should have resources and authority to deal effectively with issues and have a dotted reporting line to the president.

At the conclusion of the focus group, faculty and staff commended the CEO for their visit and suggested that additional conversations and dialogues are needed within the educational community at UK. An African American faculty member ended the discussion with the following declaration, "Departments should not have to have an African American at the head to promote diversity at UK." The faculty member noted that in some areas on campus the state of race relations and the campus environment "indifferent" and that more accountability is needed institution wide to increase diversity and mobility and to effectively improve the campus environment.

General Discussion with Campus/Community Representatives: Members of the committee had dinner with the UK Campus Environment Team (Equal Opportunity Panel) and other task forces created by the university to address special initiatives and breakfast with selected members of the local community. The groups engaged in general conversations about the university's success in engaging the university community and the local Lexington community in collaborative efforts to improve the campus and town and gown relationships. A number of topics had been discussed by the campus environment team in reference to its charge, including some long standing concerns. Meetings are posted and open to the university community as well as relevant groups, organizations, and partners in the Lexington community. The groups regularly offer recommendations to the president for consideration and action. Recommendations by the CET are tempered and integrated into recommendations offered by other task forces or special committees to insure a holistic approach. The CET believes that the recommendations of the CEO during its most recent visits are being implemented by the university and show promise but the challenge of sustained success is daunting.

Local community leaders were complimentary of the university's efforts to become more involved with the African American community. They noted that the university had embraced its painful past as a tool to move forward. The community feels that the university exhibits an earnest effort to engage the African American community and its leadership in the long-term efforts to build a collaborative relationship that will overtime generate a strong belief among African American students and parents that UK has an interest in their educational success. The group raised one concern that echoed similar comments among the focus groups "the university top cabinet members does not include an African American". The university, however, did provide information in the opening session, that an African American is regularly included in the presidents cabinet meetings The group suggested that a person be identified and given a charge to develop collaborative relations with leaders in the African

American community, be given resources to implement strategies and programs that directly benefit the African American community, and who would regularly participate, representing the university, in major initiatives and activities of the African American community. They noted that the success of the university and this individual rest on the person's ability to build trust among African American leadership and churches.

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