

Committee on Equal Opportunities
Visit to Kentucky Community and Technical College System
Summary and Recommendations
September 27, 2005

Approved by the CEO: October 17, 2005

Executive Summary

Purpose and Process: The purpose of the campus discussion was to allow the Committee on Equal Opportunities members to review district 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 conducted a discussion with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, September 27, 2005. The CEO met with the KCTCS president, and the presidents of the community and technical college districts. The discussion was designed to give committee members an opportunity to hear from district presidents about the strategies being implemented and their success or associated challenges. The campus discussion was not meant to gather scientific, empirical data, but rather, to learn first-hand about the success of equal opportunity plan implementation at the KCTCS district and campuses.

Core Focus: The report begins by identifying the general focus of review and discussion with the presidents. The committee's goal was to learn about the system's strategies and leadership in implementing strategies to achieve the objectives of the KY Plan.

Report Summary: The Kentucky Community and Technical College System include 16 community and technical college districts. The purpose of the 16 districts is to unite, where possible, approximately 52 community and technical college campuses. The institutions stretch across the commonwealth from Paducah (far west) to Ashland (northeast) to Whitesburg (southeast), Kentucky. KCTCS has an ambitious agenda to improve the quality of life of Kentuckians by expanding opportunities provided by the state's two-year public colleges in a seamless system of higher education that allows students to transition among programs and institutions as they pursue academic and technical degrees and to engage in workforce training.

KCTCS also has a goal of doubling its enrollment by the year 2020. KCTCS enrollment currently exceeds expectations; over the years KCTCS has noted an enrollment increase of more than 30 percent since 1999.

Dr. Michael McCall, president of the KCTCS, is committed to assisting the system to reach its diversity objectives. He stated that the college and district presidents are also committed to focusing on diversity at each of their respective institutions to create a diverse and supportive campus environment for students, faculty, and staff.

Recently, the system has shown progress towards implementing the objectives of *The Kentucky Plan*, but a number of institutions and districts continue to fail to make progress. KCTCS Vice President for Finance, Mr. J. Kenneth Walker, distributed a summary document of the latest internal evaluation of progress for districts as of September 16, 2005. Of the 16 institutions, 10 noted some improvements since the last Degree Program Eligibility Status Report.

Located throughout the commonwealth, the KCTCS campuses stretch from Paducah (far west), to Ashland (northeast), to Whitesburg (southeast), Kentucky. Collectively, KCTCS leads Kentucky's public institutions in the enrollment of African American students (5,386 in fall 2003). Overall, the enrollment of African Americans continues to rise at KCTCS, although preliminary data for fall 2005 indicate a slight decline in first-time freshman enrollment. .

President McCall shared with the CEO that KCTCS, like other institutions, also experience challenges when attempting to recruit and retain African American students, faculty, staff, administrators, and professionals, but he is hopeful that the challenges can be overcome.

Strategies used most recently among the KCTCS districts reveal varying degrees of success. For example, Dr. McCall implemented a new program, the KCTCS Fellows Program, as a result of discussions he had with the institutional presidents. The program is intended to place greater emphasis on hiring minorities in positions at the community and technical college districts. As an incentive for better performance by districts, the program funds the salaries of minority employees for up to 2 years. Currently, the program has 7 fellows across the system.

Since 1998, the enrollment of African American undergraduates has remained steady. The district presidents expressed frustration about the process they must rely on to identify the ethnic background of students. Some students do not self-identify as African American or some other race. The CEO encouraged the presidents to be innovative in finding ways to improve their reporting of the racial identify of students. KCTCS partners with various alumni, community leaders, and educators to strengthen relationships between the African American community and KCTCS. The presidents noted individuals whose exemplary work has assisted districts to attract and retain

African American students. The strategies used were noted as being a good first step in creating the kind of campus environment that supports and encourages diversity.

The district presidents and the KCTCS president was asked whether they would support developing a program to help general a larger pipeline of credentialed individuals (similar to the SREB Compact for Faculty Diversity) to address the needs within KCTCS. The presidents indicated an interest in exploring the idea. They agreed that this could be one of many strategies used to increase the pipeline of properly credentialed minorities going into professoriate and administrative positions.

The districts have shown some degree of success in increasing the representation of African Americans at the executive level; however, the CEO noted that more diversity is needed in critical areas. It was noted that one of the 16 district presidents is African American. The committee recognizes that high-level positions do not frequently become available but encourages the president to pursue innovative opportunities to increase African American representation in the districts and at the system administrative offices. The district presidents could support diversity through initiatives such as creating unit diversity plans, building a diversity monitoring committee, through the Upward Bound Program, the Governor's Minority Student College Preparation Program, and offering incentives to hire new faculty, staff, or professionals.

CEO Recommendations to KCTCS

An observation made by the CEO that does not rise to the level of being included as a recommendation is that when visits are made to other institutions the individuals appointed by the president to act in his capacity of liaison to the Committee on Equal Opportunities is allowed to sit at the table and to speak to the committee. However, the KCTCS did not allow Mr. Fortson, the KCTCS liaison to sit at the table nor was he allowed to speak to the committee. This was noted as somewhat of an unusual and puzzling situation during the discussion with KCTCS.

Admissions and Diversity

1. The CEO noted that the greatest improvement shown by KCTCS districts is in student enrollment. But noted that although the technical colleges and community colleges are combined as districts, enrollment of African Americans at the technical college campus of the district is still lacking. The KCTCS should consider increasing their recruitment efforts and review policies and procedures to develop consistent guidelines that can be used system wide.
2. The committee observed that based on the discussion, the technical college side of the district is not held to high standards of accountability for lack of performance, having the appearance of perpetuating the old separate but "unequal" rule of segregation.

3. The KCTCS president and Board of Regents should put in place a strong accountability system that assures diversity (students, faculty and staff) at both campuses of a district. District president's performance evaluation by the KCTCS president should include their performance on diversity.
4. Recruitment efforts are not consistent across KCTCS districts. The KCTCS president should require a desk audit of recruitment efforts, policies and procedures to ensure efficiency of implementation and productivity and develop consistent guidelines that can be used by all districts to improve performance.
5. The KCTCS should investigate the value of establishing a recruitment committee to focus exclusively on the recruitment of underrepresented minority groups at the KCTCS districts, particularly for technical college programs.
6. The KCTCS should develop and renew its relationship with Kentucky State University in order to provide greater access to programs for qualified students interested in pursuing bachelor degrees.

Communications

1. Currently, there appears to be conflicting interpretations within the system of what diversity and diversity planning entails. The KCTCS should communicate to the districts a uniform interpretation of diversity and diversity objectives.
2. Regular progress reports for each district should be shared directly with the KCTCS president, furthermore, each district president should evaluate their EEO staff and Diversity/Multicultural Department head on her success toward implementing diversity initiatives and strategies, focusing on the indicators identified by the Kentucky Plan.
3. The KCTCS central office should first identify and then communicate "best practices" to establish an expectation that opportunities be made available for all students and employees to develop to their fullest potential; this expectation should be regularly communicated to the districts and explicitly included as a part of the district president's annual evaluation.
4. To facilitate program success, diversity events should be included on the KCTCS master calendar; students, administrators, faculty, staff, and professionals should also be aware of the office or individual(s) they need to visit if they have concerns, difficulties, or questions regarding the campus environment.

Professional Staff Advancement and Upward Mobility

1. The KCTCS should conduct a desk audit of the programs in place for promotion of diversity to ensure proper implementation; and, if appropriate, implement additional innovative strategies to increase the representation of African Americans

at the highest level of policy development, particularly since such positions become available infrequently.

2. The KCTCS central office should implement a recognition/rewards program that publicly acknowledges the success of districts for achieving diversity objectives. District residents are encouraged to recognize and reward deans, chairs, and provosts for achieving diversity objectives. Likewise, district presidents are encouraged to hold deans and chairs accountable for diversity by including it as part of the annual evaluation.
3. A formal, well-communicated program should be established to assist junior faculty and staff interested in pursuing professional development opportunities.
4. The KCTCS should complete a desk audit to confirm that the affirmative action/offices of multicultural affairs are properly structured and are effective in addressing the needs of employees.

KCTCS Recommendations and Concerns to the CEO

1. The CEO should encourage comprehensive universities (particularly KSU) to discuss potential opportunities for collaboration with KCTCS. The exercise might result in increased opportunities for KCTCS students to enroll in bachelor programs at KSU and KCTCS districts may reap the benefits of increased diversity.
2. The CEO should consider developing a program to assist KCTCS to build a pipeline of persons qualified to serve as faculty and administrators; similar to the SREB Compact for Faculty Diversity.
3. The CEO should encourage the Council to work with KCTCS to allow and provide incentives for a university to offer its program--(for example social work in Louisville- with faculty not losing credit for teaching in Louisville) on a district campus. The arrangement should not conflict with an institution's right to serve a particular region (consider some type of dual enrollment).