

**Committee on Equal Opportunities
Campus Visit
Kentucky Community and Technical College System
Somerset Community College
November 13, 2007**

Amended and Adopted by the CEO: February 19, 2008

Executive Summary

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

In 2006, the committee began conducting community and technical college campus visits. To facilitate the process, the CEO met with the president of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and the presidents of the community and technical colleges. The first campus visit was conducted at Jefferson Community and Technical College. Each campus visit experience helps the committee to adapt future college visits to address the campus environment and strategies implemented to achieve the four objectives in *The Kentucky Plan*.

The third community and technical college campus visit was conducted at Somerset Community College. SCC is a comprehensive, two-year college. With the main campus located in Somerset, Kentucky, SCC is one of 16, two-year, open admission colleges of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). SCC was originally established as a member of the University of Kentucky Community College System in 1965 with 300 students. The 2002 merger of Laurel Technical College, Somerset Community College, and Somerset Technical College produced a comprehensive community and technical college. SCC's purpose is to make postsecondary education opportunities available to Kentucky citizens and workforce education. SCC is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

Somerset Community College is comprised of two campuses (Somerset and Laurel), and four centers (McCreary, Casey, Clinton, Russell). The committee visited the Somerset and London/Laurel campuses. The four centers of SCC play an integral role in the statewide mission of the KCTCS and provide access to affordable postsecondary education and workforce training for adult learners. The college offers distance learning opportunities through online classes, televised courses, and off-campus sites throughout southern

Kentucky. During academic year 2006-07 Somerset Community College served students from 63 of Kentucky's 120 counties.

Core Focus: The report begins by identifying the general areas of review and discussion with the college's administration and the campus community. The committee's goal is to learn about the college's strategies and leadership in implementing the objectives of the plan and the effectiveness of those efforts.

Report Summary: SCC is part of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and is governed by the KCTCS Board of Regents. SCC has a local board of directors. The CEO visited the Somerset and Laurel campuses of SCC November 13, 2007.

The institution offers a variety of academic and technical programs to prepare students to transition to a four-year degree or to enter the workforce. The college offers associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates in over 20 academic program areas, adult education, developmental education, workplace essential skills training, and distance learning.

Dr. Jo Marshall, president of Somerset Community and Technical College, provided opening remarks highlighting the mission statement, the KCTCS vision, the 2006-2010 KCTCS strategic plan and the SCC strategic plan. Dr. Marshall identified four objectives of the SCC plan: communication, access, leadership, and learning environment. Additionally, she noted that SCC is committed to achieving broad diversity goals and objectives established by the KCTCS, as well as specific objectives identified in *The Kentucky Plan*.

Based on the information presented by Dr. Marshall, the institution believes that it will make progress on four of four objectives in the 2006-07 evaluation, and three of four objectives for the 2007-08 evaluation. SCC made progress on four of four objectives in the 2005-06 evaluation, and one of four objectives in the 2004-05 and 2003-04 evaluation periods. SCC's plan performance improved considerably after the community college and the technical college became a single institution. Dr. Marshall acknowledged that, although the objective regarding the enrollment of African American resident undergraduates has been achieved each year, student enrollment fluctuates. Similarly, the number of African American executives, administrators, and managers also oscillated. While the percentage of African American faculty increased between 2004 and 2006, the number and percentage decreased slightly in the 2007 evaluation period. Finally, the percentage of African American professional staff increased from 2004 to fall 2005, remained constant in fall 2006, and was expected to show a slight increase in fall 2007. When compared to the other objectives, the greatest rate of growth over the years for African Americans has been among professional staff. *The Kentucky Plan*, as it relates to SCC, examined the following: recruitment, enrollment, scholarship activities, student advising, student leadership, student access, and student success.

Dr. Marshall stated that SCC has an open door admission policy. The college offers student support services, a student retention officer, student ambassadors, and a

leadership seminar for student leaders. The seminar is facilitated by the president and the director of cultural diversity. Students are encouraged to participate in the Multicultural Club, dual credit and dual enrollment programs, the minority student breakfast forum, minority student leadership opportunities, and international travel to Italy.

SCC offers student leadership as well as student advising services. These services include, but are not limited to, the following: student ambassador program, student government association, black student leadership caucus, financial aid workshops, and new student orientation at the beginning of each semester including a diversity workshop, ready to work program, disability services, veteran’s affairs, and career counseling.

SCC administrators reported the following information regarding enrollment, retention, and graduation of African American students.

Reporting Period	First Time AA Freshmen	Total AA Enrollment	Retention of AA Fall to Fall	AA Graduates
2003-04	3	54	87.5	10
2004-05	6	42	66.7	33
2005-06	11	41	66.7	11
2006-07	7	50	37.5%	14
2007-08	28	67	50.0%	

SCC administrators highlighted special services for transfer students, including advising services at six campus sites/centers, with transfer agreements with Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, Union College, and the University of Kentucky. A “transfer center” is also provided in the Harold Rogers Commons Building at SCC. Representatives advise students and staff on a regular basis. Future plans of the college include development and implementation of a Minority Student Recruitment Plan, community based instruction for minority youth and civic groups, development of a “road show” to increase minority enrollment at the Laurel campus with a special focus on technical programs, expansion of the Governor’s Minority Student College Preparation Program to include year-round programming as well as a math/science track, and development of a minority student peer counseling program.

Dr. Marshall indicated in her presentation that SCC will focus on the employment objectives by examining faculty and staff recruitment initiatives (job posting locations, the KCTCS Fellows Program, and community networking), as well as retention and professional development (faculty/staff welcome reception, cultural competency training for new hires, collaboration with higher education institutions, faculty/staff survey, etc.). Additionally, several diversity training and professional development programs were highlighted that have been presented to the SCC community, i.e., Cultural Competency Continuum, Building Community around Diversity, and Black and Catholic in the Jim Crow South.

According to SCC administrators, the percent of full-time minority employees (African American, Asian, and Hispanic) has increased over the past three years, with African Americans representing 1.91 percent in 2005, compared to 2.19 percent in 2007. In the future, SCC plans to review the procedures in the area of employment to ensure a procedurally efficient and equitable process, enhance recruitment efforts with the objective of attracting more qualified applicants, and establish a mentoring program for new faculty.

Beyond the SCC campus, the institution plans to engage in collaborative events to promote diversity. Community outreach includes the GMSCPP, visiting artists in residence, the International Festival; International Flag Display in fall 2007, community based instruction and training, Martin Luther King Community Celebration, MLK Community Breakfast, Black History Month activities, and engaging and empowering minority community and religious leaders. Finally, the following speakers, activities, and events were a part of the SCC community: the International Festival, the Galen Concert, Danny O'Flaherty, Dr. Tonea Stewart, and Robert Todd Duncan.

Overall, evidence presented by the college supports a general conclusion that the institution is experiencing a mild degree of progress but continues to face challenges in key areas. The variety of initiatives and programs identified to attract African American and other ethnic minority students to SCC show promise and may have the effect of increasing the level of excitement and support across the several campuses. The strength of the approaches will be the college's willingness to continually assess program impact and make changes. Additional strategies are essential to advance postsecondary education and to include SCC as part of the community of Somerset.

The focus group discussions and the presentations seem to support a general feeling that the level of performance by SCC is on a slight upward trajectory. Comments indicated that there are areas that, if continually evaluated and strengthened, will yield greater levels of diversity and satisfaction among students, faculty, and staff.

Recommendations by the CEO

A requisite to conducting visits at the community and technical colleges, the CEO first met (September 27, 2005) with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System president and presidents of the 16 community and technical colleges to discuss the campus visit process and challenges facing the system. A report that addressed the areas of admissions and diversity, communications, and professional staff advancement and upward mobility was developed, adopted, and forwarded to the president of KCTCS. At the February 2006 CEO meeting, KCTCS representatives reported that the system was making progress toward addressing the suggestions/recommendations included in the campus visit report. The system approach to the general recommendations serves as an overlay for visits at each community and technical college and influences the identification of recommendations included in each report.

For example, the system office developed a plan to identify a director of diversity at each district and to provide partial funding for the position. All districts now have directors of diversity. The role of the position is to help the district to focus more clearly on programs and activities that enhance the district and system's ability to attract ethnic minorities and African Americans in particular. The strength and influence of the position on matters that directly affect the levels of diversity and equity of opportunity vary across districts. The campus visit would then explore the status of the system recommendation and its influence on matters of policy.

General

1. A stronger communications/marketing strategy should be employed to build collaborative relationships and opportunities to solidify a more positive experience with the broader Somerset community, and to help dispel the complex history that seems to curb participation in postsecondary education at high levels by racial and ethnic populations in the Somerset area.
2. Employ a more a concerted effort to manage and preserve heritage and tradition at SCC while nurturing a new more attractive and inclusive environment.
3. Aggressively pursue the appointment of ethnic minorities to the SCC board of directors. The current board should have a greater presence of African Americans compared to the strong presence of African Americans in the community and college service area. As opportunities become available, the institution should work closely with the system office to secure additional ethnic minority representation on its board.
4. The committee suggests that the director of diversity be regularly invited to attend (as a member) the president's cabinet meetings. The committee believes that it is essential that the director of diversity or another African American executive be engaged in policy discussions and development. This will also ensure that each campus is consistently and effectively addressing the needs of ethnic minority students, faculty, staff, and administrators.
5. SCC should conduct a desk audit of its advising policies/procedures to assure consistent interpretation and implementation of policies and programs across the three campuses.
6. Based on focus group discussions, customer service in the financial aid office presents challenges for students attempting to obtain advice and counseling. SCC should periodically conduct impromptu service audits of the financial aid office to determine whether current policy and procedures are yielding the level of service envisioned by the administration.
7. SCC should not ignore the reported perceptions of the public, students, faculty, and staff regarding the marginalization of minorities at its campuses and centers. Such information should be embraced and communication/marketing strategies implemented to promote diversity through campus activities and programming. (There

seems to be perceived negative images/stereotypes regarding the institution's openness to embracing greater diversity.)

8. SCC should take a proactive and practical approach to developing an active and positive relationship with the local African American community as well as African American communities throughout the service area. For example, the college regularly hosts symposiums or seminars that may be marketed to attract more minority and women business owners.
9. SCC has an open admission policy and a consistent and strong enrollment record. However, the strategies employed by the institution seem to yield very few ethnic minority enrollments, particularly African Americans. SCC should evaluate the recruitment efforts, policies, and procedures to ensure efficiency of implementation and productivity. A stronger focus on the recruitment of ethnic minority groups for all campuses may enhance these efforts.
10. SCC should seek to build a stronger relationship with Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky State University, and Morehead State University to provide greater access and transfer opportunities for qualified students interested in pursuing a bachelor's degree.
11. The KCTCS, with assistance from CPE staff, should better inform institutional administrators and focus group participants of the nature and intent of the campus visit by CEO. This should aid in the development of focus group conversations.

Communications

1. Students were complimentary of the institution, various programs, and the availability of parking at each campus. Students believe that more information is needed in the area of financial aid and how to finance their postsecondary education.
2. SCC should seek to provide uniform services across the campuses and provide information to that effect at whatever central location students use to retrieve such information. There were conflicting interpretations or lack of clarity among students of the services provided at each campus compared to those offered at the main campus.
3. A number of students indicated that some but not all major diversity events are posted to the institution's main calendar of events. The college should, by policy, include the major diversity events and activities on the SCC published master calendar. Students noted that events information is posted to bulletin boards, but all SCC students may not access the area where the bulletin board is located.
4. SCC should clearly communicate to students who to contact on each campus should an emergency arise (student safety).
5. Some students noted that sometimes information provided by advisors/counselors conflicts with current policy and procedures. SCC should talk with students to

determine whether these are isolated incidents or a problem that needs to be addressed.

Employment and Career Advancement

1. To promote diversity, SCC should implement a recognition/rewards program that publicly acknowledges the success of campuses, departments, and individuals for achieving diversity objectives. Deans, chairs, professional staff, and students should be recognized for accomplishments that support the campus efforts to embrace diversity.
2. Implementation of a formal junior faculty and staff career development strategy may assist the institution in attracting and retaining a strong complement of African American as well as other ethnic minority faculty and staff.
3. SCC should conduct a casual survey of the community in which each campus is located to determine whether the community exhibits external signs that indicate a welcoming environment for ethnic minorities. The committee was unable to discern with any level of confidence the attitude of the surrounding communities toward increased diversity (faculty, professionals, and students).
4. SCC should immediately review its process for selecting faculty at the three campus locations. Because of the relatively few African Americans represented among the faculty at the three campus locations, the president and the institution should embark on a path to immediately increase the representation of African American and other ethnic minorities among the faculty.

Recommendations or Concerns to the CEO

While the committee's practice is to include a diverse group of its membership to conduct campus visits, the team that conducted the campus visit at Somerset Community College was devoid of Caucasians. Students, administrators, faculty, and staff who participated in the focus group sessions indicated that the make-up of the CEO team (African Americans) was surprising, a little unsettling, and left them wondering whether the conversations would be jaundiced.

1. It was suggested that the CEO should possibly, in addition to the information provided currently, establish a meeting with the system and institution leadership prior to the campus visit to discuss in more detail its campus visit itinerary. This will allow campus leadership to better explain the purpose of campus visits so that participants will better understand the process and provide more useful information.
2. The CEO should encourage the comprehensive universities to more actively engage in discussions about opportunities for collaboration. Greater opportunities for student transfer and bachelor's degree completer programs are two examples that should be more fully explored.

3. The CEO should actively/directly share the names and contact information of SREB Compact for Faculty Diversity Ph.D. completers as a resource to community and technical colleges to further increase diversity among the faculty, professional staff, and administrators.
4. The CEO should encourage the KCTCS to pursue, on behalf of all community and technical colleges, a program of discounted or free credits to support career advancement or professional development for community and technical college faculty and professional staff.

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's Office for Civil Rights is to create campus and community environments that support and encourage diversity among students, faculty, and staff.

President Jo Marshall and SCC administrators gave introductory remarks that highlighted the institution's commitment to diversity. Opening remarks by the president focused on SCC's mission statement, the vision of both KCTCS and SCC, and the KCTCS and SCC strategic plan. Dr. Marshall introduced four objectives of the SCC strategic plan: Communication, Access, Leadership, and the Learning Environment. She noted that the institution is committed to achieving the goals and objectives established by the KCTCS, as well as specific goals identified in *The Kentucky Plan*.

The presentation noted collaborations with educational institutions and organizations and highlighted programs and strategies implemented to meet the objectives of *The Kentucky Plan* and *The Partnership Agreement*. The president indicated that she believes SCC will meet three of the four objectives during the upcoming evaluation period.

Somerset Community College consists of two campuses: the main campus in Somerset and the London campus. According to SCC administrators, the service area includes the following 11 counties: Laurel, Pulaski, Clinton, Wayne, Cumberland, Russell, Casey, Whitley, McCreary, Adair, and Clay. The Laurel campus is divided into two campuses: the north campus, and the south campus.

Building on the KCTCS strategic plan, SCC administrators developed a Three-Year Diversity Action Plan (July 2005 – June 2008). The plan was approved by the SCC Leadership Team, January 2007. The plan offers a definition of diversity, introduces the vision of SCC, and focuses on five guiding principles:

1. Recruiting, retaining, and increasing the number of African American and minority faculty and staff.
2. Recruiting, retaining, and increasing the number of African American and minority students.

3. Enhancing cultural competency through formal dialogue and courageous conversations.
4. Preparing students to work in a diverse, multicultural, global society.
5. Leading the larger community to embrace diversity.

The plan addresses the most critical issues associated with enhancing SCC's efforts to increase enrollment and success among ethnic minority students, to promote diversity and multiculturalism, and to continue to develop a supportive and welcoming campus environment.

President Marshall discussed the five strategic goals of the plan. According to the plan, page 1 of 6, "The goals and objectives will guide the institution's efforts to increase cultural diversity until 2008. The Office for Cultural Diversity will provide focus and direction (leadership) to unite faculty, staff, students, and the community where possible around the prefaced vision of our College." The plan addresses critical local diversity issues that include institutional engagement and accountability; employee recruitment, hiring, and retention; student recruitment, retention, and success; curriculum modification; community outreach/collaboration; campus environment; and expected outcomes.

The institution regularly organizes special events and includes diverse performers to participate in student activities, for example, the International Festival, the Galen Concert, Danny O'Flaherty, Dr. Tonea Stewart, and Robert Todd Duncan.

The African American population on which SCC relies for its enrollments are limited, for example the population of Adair County is 2.5 percent African American, Clinton County is 0.10 percent, Clay County is 4.8 percent, Cumberland County 3.4 percent, Casey County 0.33 percent, Laurel County 0.63 percent, McCreary County 0.63 percent, Pulaski County is 0.07 percent, Russell County is 0.58 percent, Wayne County is 1.4 percent, and Whitley County is 0.34 percent African American. This limited availability is reflected by the representation of African Americans among the institution's enrollment as identified in the table on page 3 of this report.

The president concluded her remarks by identifying some of the challenges that the institution confronts and commented on the intent of the institution to continue to work diligently to address them. Some of the challenges identified are the limited number of diverse groups in the Somerset community and surrounding counties, uncertainty regarding the number of African Americans in neighboring areas impact of small numbers of diverse populations on attempts to create a diverse educational community, and building the town and gown relationships.

Student Focus Groups: The CEO engaged in discussions with students at three locations: Somerset north campus (community college prior to merger), Somerset south campus (technical college prior to merger), and the Laurel campus. The first student focus group, held at the main campus, was comprised of ten students and explored activities associated with the north and south campuses. The majority of students were Caucasian with one African American, one Latino, and an international (a majority of the

students were student leaders). The students indicated that they received an invitation, by e-mail, to attend the session (the invitation may not have been extended to all students). The second student focus group, at the Somerset south campus, was made up of six students, including one African American and one international student, while the third student focus group, held at the London campus, consisted of five students, including one African American, no Latinos, and no international students.

Students at two of the three locations visited agreed that SCC has witnessed significant improvement in diversity in recent years, specifically in faculty diversity. Students stated that they feel more comfortable now. Students at each of the three campuses were very complimentary of the faculty and stated that many of the professors go out of their way to offer assistance and provide extra attention to meet the needs of students; many faculty members have an open door policy. Similarly, confidence was expressed in the agenda as expressed by President Marshall for the future of diversity at SCC.

Students were interested in how the committee defined diversity and, following some discussion, expressed concern as to the narrow scope of diversity recognized by the CEO. Students were more inclined to define diversity using a broader definition and expressed concern that the true climate and accomplishments of SCC cannot be captured if the committee is only interested in knowing the status of African Americans. The committee noted the concern and indicated that a study is underway to assist the Commonwealth to transition from remedial planning to a broader diversity planning effort.

They noted that the primary mode of communication is the SCC Web site and bulletin boards. Information on financial aid is displayed on the student bulletin board; however, students at the Somerset north campus indicated that the message board is inundated with communication—sometimes to the point of becoming confusing. Some focus group members stated that mail delivery is not timely and, while e-mail is widely used, many students do not have ready access to e-mail. Some students indicated that accurate information about financial aid and scholarships is the most difficult to obtain—different people provide conflicting information. Students at two of the three campuses indicated that because of the lack of complete information some students believe that they are unable to finance their education at SCC. Several students also stated that the financial aid staff members were not always helpful. Some had bad attitudes and could be abusive of their authority. One student reported that she had a good experience with financial aid staff on an ongoing basis. The students indicated that staff in the financial aid office should be more helpful in developing a better working relationship because, as one student suggested, “When students are confronted with a negatively charged atmosphere they often leave.”

One student observed that additional scholarships for African American and other ethnic minority students may significantly improve retention; several students stated that SCC should hire an advocate or ombudsman to focus on financial aid and scholarships. Some stated that individuals have a negative perception of the campus environment for African American students and that very few African American students enroll at SCC. Student participants at the main campus were very complimentary of the CEO visit and stated that

the information shared between their peers at the focus group was a culture shock. But they also maintained that the CEO should expand the breadth of its review to include diversity in its broadest sense.

The student ambassadors were also referenced in the focus group conversations. The ambassadors consist of student representatives selected by the institution to promote the institution and provide good will; two of the sixteen ambassadors are ethnic minorities. The ambassadors have not been asked to assist with recruiting diverse groups; they are asked to attend specific campus functions and events. Some students do not understand the role or have a negative perception of the ambassadors and may be afraid or unwilling to engage them in conversation. Some students indicated that some advisors provide inaccurate or misleading information about classes.

Students at the Somerset south campus (technical college prior to merger) suggested that focused social programs would help increase the retention rates of African American and other ethnic minority students. Event time and location are important factors in having good attendance; for example, it was noted that the Student Government Association is reportedly having problems attracting students to campus events. Additional observations made by focus group participants include interest in the availability of day care services for single parents interested in pursuing postsecondary education and an ombudsman, centrally located, for students to visit when they have problems or concerns. Also, students suggested that the shuttle bus should operate more frequently to transport them to class and across campus.

Overall, students stated that their experience at SCC is positive, but suggested that they would like to see a more diverse faculty, diverse curriculum, and a week-long or month-long diversity and cultural training program. Students at the Somerset north campus pointed out that a new diverse group of students, from Germany, were enrolling at SCC. It was also noted that a large majority of the students enrolled at SCC are nontraditional. Focus group members at the Somerset south campus (technical college prior to merger) stated that a large African American community resides in Monticello and suggested that the institution focus more effort toward reaching out and recruiting students from that community.

A white female observed that there are not very many African Americans or other ethnic minorities in Laurel County. According to several students at the Somerset north campus, many in Somerset were unaware of the services offered by the community college until recently. SCC has taken steps to increase signage at strategic locations within the community. Students indicated that they would like to see more African American faculty at each of the three locations visited; it would improve the environment and help to attract more students with diverse backgrounds.

Focus group participants at the Somerset south campus (technical college prior to merger) and Laurel campuses repeated many of the statements offered by the group at the Somerset north campus. It should be noted that one student government participant from the Somerset north campus also participated in the discussions at the Somerset south

campus. Concluding their conversations, students expressed confidence that the current administration is doing a lot to support diversity.

Faculty and Professional Staff: The focus group included faculty and staff from the Somerset north and south campuses, as well as the Laurel campus. A total of 41 faculty and professional staff participated in the focus group, 29 at the Somerset north and south campuses, and 12 at the Laurel campus. Minority representation included two African Americans, and three Hispanic/Latino participants. It was explained in each focus group session that one objective of *The Kentucky Plan* is to increase the number and proportion of African Americans employed as faculty and professional staff at public institutions. The committee noted that, because of a perceived limited pool of qualified applicants and internal institutional variables, recruitment and retention of African Americans to faculty and staff positions has been a challenge at Kentucky's public postsecondary institutions, including SCC.

Several faculty and staff offered dialogue about race relations and inclusiveness at SCC. One faculty member stated that three African American faculty, among 145 total faculty employed at SCC, is not sufficient and more efforts are needed to promote diversity. Another faculty member noted a concern that *The Kentucky Plan* is too limited in its exclusive focus on African Americans and suggested that the focus should be expanded. The committee assured the faculty that it is concerned about the broader ethnic minority groups but also has a responsibility under "remedial planning" to have a special emphasis on African Americans and that the CPE and institutions are conducting a statewide study that should result in a broader diversity planning effort in the future. Another SCC staff person indicated that a more directed effort by the institution to recruit African Americans to the campus may bear greater fruit.

The focus group was very complimentary of Natalie Gibson, the director of cultural diversity at SCC, and believes that since her employment, the institution has made significant improvement when compared to the past administrations.

When asked to discuss the employment search process, a staff member stated that after being on four search committees, she could not say with certainty that any of the African American candidates were invited to campus to interview for a position. The staff person noted that maybe the CEO could offer assistance. Members of the focus group noted that the institution confronts challenges recruiting applicants from outside the immediate region, and currently works in a culture with limited diversity. They must make a conscious effort to engage the community to assist in addressing this problem. Administrators stated that SCC recruits faculty and staff from across the state, with a focus on larger markets. Additionally, SCC recruits from other institutions and at conferences, meetings, and college fairs/events. After the initial introduction is made, school officials follow up with a letter and e-mail.

The group also discussed professional development, employment enrichment activities, and opportunities for promotion. Based upon the discussion, opportunities for professional development are discipline specific, and may not be available to everyone.

Faculty and professional staff take advantage of the six hours of free classes to better prepare for career advancement. SCC provides computer courses and e-mail for employees as additional opportunity for professional development. Some in the focus group seemed to believe that they must leave the KCTCS, or at least the institution, to get a promotion, and then they return to KCTCS. In comparison, one staff person stated that funds are available to support professional development for faculty of technical programs and the institution has been very supportive. An example of other professional development initiatives is that KCTCS is hosting a new horizon conference allowing faculty to attend at no cost.

Finally, the focus group engaged in a dialogue regarding town and gown relationships. One member responded that Somerset is a homogenous community, and has been for a long time. There needs to be a long-term plan and directed effort to bring together the forces needed to create the kind of atmosphere that strongly encourages diversity. Several focus group members pointed to Mrs. Gibson and other SCC staff embracing and working with the black churches to build relationships that should result in more minority students enrolling at SCC. Mrs. Gibson's presence at the institution has resulted in a better working relationship with the Somerset community and increased participation in the Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration. In the recent past, African American ministers have not been actively involved in programs and activities on the SCC campus. The Somerset Chamber of Commerce has also been invited to join the institution in activities, but the chamber response is tepid at best.

Faculty from the Somerset north and south campuses stated that they view themselves as one campus. However, several of them shared the following concerns with members of the CEO:

- Teaching load
- Credit hours versus contact hours with students
- Inequitable workloads

When asked about the representation of African American males on campus, a respondent stated that the number of African American males is reflective of the community, with the majority of students from Pulaski County. Also, SCC needs to increase its efforts to serve the Latino population in the area. Overall, cultural diversity remains a challenge at SCC and the Somerset community. The institution noted that plans are to apply to NSF for a grant that would provide funds to offer scholarships to Latino students. In the past three years a total of three minority faculty have been employed by SCC: one Filipino, one Kenyan, and one Latino.

Overall, members of the focus group believe that SCC has made progress; however, staff and faculty believe there is a lack of community at SCC, and some students feel as though they are not accepted. The department of physical therapy has an assessment committee with a diversity initiative in place. The department forwards mailings to all high schools in the area and attends local recruiting events. Several in the focus group

reiterated that they are not pleased that there are only three African American faculty at SCC.

Faculty and staff at the London campus reported that one African American faculty member divides her teaching appointment between Somerset and London. To focus on progress, recently an African and Filipino were hired in the departments of chemistry and biology. None of the 12 focus group participants at the London campus were African American.

SCC London administrators discussed student class size; currently, no class exceeds 40 students. A total of 1,600 students attend the London campus, including 14 minority students: seven students are African American, two students are Indian/American Natives, two students are Asian, and three students are Hispanic. Administrators indicated that although all students are recruited, special attention should be focused on recruiting African Americans and other minority groups. The school currently attracts students from Clay, Knox, Laurel, and Rockcastle Counties. One member of the focus group stated that the London campus has not been recruiting effectively in Laurel County. A significant challenge is competing with Eastern Kentucky University which recruits very heavily in the London/Corbin community. Another staff member stated that he was unaware of the distribution of African Americans and whites at the SCC London campus. One member of the focus group stated that one challenge might be that Corbin has a reputation for being inhospitable to African Americans. The administrators were pleased to share with the CEO members that two of the previous SGA presidents were African American (an indicator of acceptance and respect for diversity among the students).

Over the years the London campus has had difficulty attracting ethnic minorities. A focus group member stated that when searches have been conducted typically African Americans do not apply. Members of the CEO indicated that perhaps the SCTC-London campus administrators might seek to engage the external community to increase opportunities for minority faculty and staff. The pipeline of minority students may increase as a direct result. The real challenge is to confront, embrace, and recast the heritage of the London/Corbin community.

Conclusion: The team complimented the president for her commitment to increase the level of diversity at SCC and commended the institution for embracing the commitments and objectives of *The Kentucky Plan and the Partnership Agreement* while seeking to create an environment that embodies a broader spectrum of diversity. The president of the institution is relatively new and shows a lot of promise but must co-opt the campus community to support the greater ideal of embracing diversity as a community-building exercise with promise and long-term rewards.