

5-12-1997

[An Interim Report to the Community from the Faculty and Administrative Members of General Committee, May 12, 1997]

General Committee, Sarah Lawrence College

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SARAH LAWRENCE COLLEGE

May 12, 1997

An Interim Report to the Sarah Lawrence Community From the Faculty and Administrative Members of General Committee

On Thursday morning, May 8, General Committee picked up the agenda of the Senate Dinner at the President's House the night before. The Committee had already been discussing for several weeks the need for leadership and focus on the college's commitment to a more diverse community. The Senate's agenda provided new urgency.

First, we moved to implement the faculty-administration "response" to the student demand for a committee to include in the strategic plan the goals, strategies, and action steps that would renew our commitment to diversity on campus and ensure further progress. General Committee asked members of the Nominating Committee to present for election on Tuesday, May 13, names of faculty for this committee. We asked the members who represent Student Senate to arrange for the election of two students. The president will take responsibility to see that trustees and staff are included. The president will convene the committee immediately in order to have recommendations ready for an early June meeting of the Board of Trustees. To accelerate the process, the co-chairs of the Task Force groups of the strategic plan are being contacted to ascertain what discussion has already taken place about diversity and what yet should be included. The strategic plan is still in draft, open to input and response from the community.

Rather than delegating the responsibility for diversity to a Committee on Diversity, as the college has in the past, General Committee will take responsibility itself for working with the key areas of college governance: the standing committees, ad hoc committees, administrative offices, and student organizations. This is where things happen. Deans and Faculty members of the General, Curriculum, Advisory Committees, [REDACTED], and others pledged themselves (in the May 7 "Response") to an agenda that both developed and implemented the college's priorities on diversity. Students participating on these committees can play a role in the planning and execution. Senate should play a role.

Third, we addressed the subject of hiring at the college. We shared the statement of commitment to diversity in hiring developed in 1994 by The Diversity Committee, and addressed how its spirit will be implemented. We discussed a new goal and time table for increasing the number of faculty of color and will be sending specific suggestions about

numbers and timetables for discussion to the Curriculum and Advisory Committees. We discussed incentives for broader searches, modes of successful recruitment, and resources. We acknowledged the need for broader consultation within the faculty, and within the appropriate committees.

The president will take the leadership for increasing diversity within the administration and staff. We recognized that Admissions is working hard on these goals, and were pleased to note that the Admissions Committee and staff have enlarged for next year their plans for minority recruitment.

General Committee will continue to address these issues.