

Access & Equity Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
Large Conference Room
December 2, 2009
10:30 a.m.

Committee Members:

Ms. Linda Becote
Mr. Antonio Boyle
Mr. Jackie Brockington
Dr. Warren Carson
Ms. Daphne Carter
Ms. Gay Coleman
Mr. Richard Dawkins
Ms. Bobbie Felder
Ms. Teresa Mack
Mr. Vincent Myers
Ms. Lottie Otto
Mr. Robert Pickering
Ms. Pat Singleton-Young
Mr. Carl Wells
Mr. Reginald Wilburn

Staff:

Mr. Michael Brown
Ms. Lorinda Copeland
Dr. Argentini Anderson

Visitors:

Ms. Caroline Canty
Dr. Rodney Cohen
Dr. Frankie Felder
Ms. Kathy Taylor

The meeting was held in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

1. **Introductions and Welcome**

Mr. Michael Brown called the meeting to order at 10:38 p.m. and introductions were made.

2. **Approval of Minutes**

The motion was made (Wells) and seconded (Boyle) to approve the minutes as written and the motion carried.

3. **Discussion/Presentation of the McKnight Model and South Carolina - Dr. Frankie Felder, Clemson University**

Dr. Frankie Felder, Senior Associate Dean of the Graduate School, was tasked with developing a Graduate Diversity Action Plan for Clemson University. This plan is a result of her concern that less than 5% of Clemson's graduate school population is African-American, which is no different than when she arrived at Clemson 23 years ago. Dr. Felder communicated with Mr. Michael Brown, Director of Access & Equity with the SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE), regarding her concerns and the legal history (desegregation) of the state as she was writing the plan. She has shared a draft with Mr. Brown to gain a letter of support from CHE. Mr. Brown suggested Dr. Felder meet with the Access & Equity Advisory Committee to share what Clemson is doing. Dr. Felder stated hopefully she could entice the Access & Equity Advisory Committee to think of ways for everyone to collaborate.

McKnight Model

Prior to her arrival to Clemson, Dr. Felder worked with the McKnight Programs in Higher Education (now called the Florida Education Fund). These programs were funded by the McKnight Foundation because the McKnight family made a lot of money from their businesses in Florida and wanted to gift Florida with money. During this time Florida was one of the states

federally mandated to desegregate their institutions of higher education. The education, political, and business leadership decided to use the endowment (21 million) to create the McKnight Programs in Higher Education to impact the education of minorities in the state of Florida. The programs are funded by the interest and the current endowment is 30 million dollars. Dr. Felder gave an overview of the program's components.

McKnight Doctoral Fellowship - (formerly the McKnight Black Doctoral Fellowship) has expanded to include more diversity (Hispanics). Since 1983 280 Ph.D. students (90% African-American) have graduated from Florida schools. Students are fully funded and the program has expanded to provide student support which accounts for an 87% graduation rate versus 57% nationally. Students complete their PhD's within 5.5 years opposed to 7 years nationally. The program is a national program and students can apply from anywhere. At one point the program expanded to fund law school students resulting in 502 minority students graduating from law schools and working in Florida law firms.

Centers of Excellence – The Statewide Brain Bowl and the McKnight Achievers Society are the two primary programs. The Statewide Brain Bowl consists of high school student teams competing in a knowledge competition and members of the winning team receive a full scholarship to a Florida school. The goal of the McKnight Achievers Society is self-esteem building and promoting a culture of excellence. The students, K-12 (no C's), are recommended by an adult and perform community service and participate in cultural/artistic talent competitions.

McKnight Junior Faculty Fellowship Program – This program takes minority faculty who are ABD (all but dissertation) and negotiates with the Presidents and Deans of their respective colleges their release for one year to complete their dissertation. During this release their salary and benefits are continued and a replacement fund account is given to the university to hire a temporary replacement. Dr. Felder stated this program has been minimized (4 or 5 awards per year) because the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship program has been so successful that the need is not present anymore.

Dr. Felder thinks there is a need for a McKnight type model in South Carolina and is interested in seeing who in the state can help reenergize and think outside the box beyond the normal program structure model. Dr. Felder stated there is a process at Clemson for seniors with a 3.5 grade point average that allows them to take up to 12 hours of graduate level courses which are double counted (undergraduate and masters degree). Dr. Felder stated this would be a great model and it doesn't matter if students take the graduate courses at USC or South Carolina State or where the courses are transferred to as long as everyone is working together. Dr. Felder stated seamlessness (collaboration in keeping students moving through the system) is the key when working with middle school students and in her opinion seamlessness is K – graduate school/faculty because she is interested in seeing more students obtain a Masters or Ph.D. in particular areas.

Ms. Lottie Otto asked if the model considers C students who can also become CEO's if given the opportunity. Dr. Felder responded the C student would enter the Centers of Excellence to help them move higher than a C. Mr. Carl Wells stated the key element that made the McKnight model successful was the endowment from the McKnight family and asked where the financial support would come from and how is support gained from the college presidents. Dr. Felder stated the structure of South Carolina and Florida is the same and stated it is important, in addition to partnerships, to leverage people/relationships and money by connecting with businesses, foundations, and organizations. Dr. Felder stated budgets are being diminished nationally but major programs are still successful all over the country and she would like to see more discussion on how South Carolina can get there. Mr. Brown stated although funding is

small, collaboration would be power in numbers because more can be accomplished. Dr. Felder responded for a collaborative effort the decision should be made on 3 things within the next 3 years in the state of South Carolina that will get done. Mr. Brown stated the Access & Equity statewide goals would have to be revamped so an institution won't be penalized for collaboration. Dr. Felder responded the McKnight Programs in Higher Education (now called the Florida Education Fund) were successful because it was a state effort, not institutional. Dr. Felder stated she hopes she encouraged the advisory committee to think creatively and that her primary focus is to complete the Graduate Diversity Action Plan for Clemson. Dr. Felder extended an invitation for other institutions to collaborate with them because a closer association and collaboration around the state is wanted.

4. **Discussion of the Adult Education/Knowledge Network New Front Door**

Mr. Brown reported the "New Front Door" is an initiative to advance adult education because statistics show 85% of future jobs require a high school education and beyond. The "New Front Door" is developing additional ways for students to enter higher education because this population is not increasing. Mr. Brown stated he will present a detailed presentation during the next meeting.

5. **Discussion of the Access & Equity 2010 Conference**

Ms. Caroline Canty, president, of the South Carolina Professional Association for Access and Equity (SC PAAE) reported the conference was scheduled for April 7 – 9, 2010, at Pawleys Plantation on Pawley's Island and the location was selected because it was economical for SC PAAE and conference attendees. Ms. Canty also told the group SC PAAE recently held an event, SC PAAE Honors, to honor four trailblazers (Councilor Lottie Gibson, Dr. William Diggs, Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter, and Representative Seth Whipper) and to also raise scholarship funds. Dr. Rodney Cohen, president-elect, of SC PAAE asked the advisory committee if they were receiving emails from SC PAAE and if not would add them to the distribution list. Dr. Cohen invited the advisory committee to visit the organization's new and updated website at www.scpaae.com and also stated he would like to see collaboration between state and private institutions. Ms. Pat-Singleton Young volunteered to serve on the local logistics committee for the conference since she lives near Pawleys Island.

6. **Other Business**

Mr. Brown stated additional budget reductions were not expected for FY 2009-10 after the 5% budget reduction approved on December 15, 2009, by the SC Budget and Control Board but there would be a budget reduction at the beginning of FY 2010-11. Mr. Brown announced South Carolina State University would be hosting a parenting conference in February 2010 and asked the committee to let him know when events (not just access & equity) were scheduled on their campus so he can forward to institutions. Mr. Vincent Myers asked if video conferencing was available for meetings and Mr. Brown responded arrangements would have to be made with a technical college because CHE didn't have the capability.

7. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorinda Copeland
Recorder