Swenson College of Science and Engineering  
Multicultural and Diversity Committee  
(2012-13)

Members and Chairs  
Therence Chi (student representative), Emmanuel Enemuoh (Mechanical & Industrial Engineering), Michele Hatcher (SCSE, co-chair); M Imran Hayee (Electrical & Computer Engineering), Richard Maclin (Computer Science), Jonathan Maps (Physics), Shannon Stevenson (Biology), Alexandra Taylor (student representative), and Ahmed Heikal (Chemistry & Biochemistry; co-chair)

Meeting Schedule in 2012-13:  
Biweekly, 2:00 PM, 144 Engr with a total of 10 meetings.

Priorities as Outlined in 2011-12 Annual Report
1. **Leadership Role:** Meet with the Dean Riehl, Associate Dean Morton, Department Heads, and faculty from different disciplines to learn about their vision and means of implementation for multicultural and diversity-related issues in our college.
2. **Faculty Role in Creating an Inclusive Environment and Student Retention:** Meet with faculty members in each SCSE department to discuss recruitment and retention of under-represented students.
3. **Focused Outreach Effort:** Work with faculty members in each SCSE department to discuss their outreach efforts that may enhance recruiting and retention of under-represented students.
4. **Promoting Cultural Exchange in the College:** Meet with other existing UMD diversity-related offices to discuss means to enhance cultural exchange and awareness.
5. **Taking Advantage of Existing Resources here at UMD:** Meet with other existing UMD diversity-related offices to discuss means to enhance cultural exchange and awareness. Begin implementation of a VELCRO program [a mentoring program involving community members].
6. **Multicultural Awareness and Training of Faculty and Staff:** Work with the Dean and Department Heads to implement faculty and staff awareness on multicultural and diversity issues.
7. **Multicultural Awareness and Training of Teaching Assistants:** Work with Department Heads and their faculty to implement GTA diversity training.
8. **Students Awareness of Diverse UMD Culture:** Identify a list of approved intercultural courses to recommend to students.

Summary of 2012-13 Activities:
1. Met with Dean Riehl and Associate Dean Morton (November 2012) to discuss their vision and means of implementation for multicultural and diversity-related issues in our college.
2. Recruited a new faculty member (*Dr. Emmanuel Enemuoh*, Mechanical & Industrial Engineering) and two student-representatives (*Therence Chi & Alexandra Taylor*) to our committee in order to ensure new ideas and perspectives related to multicultural, diversity, and inclusiveness in SCSE.
3. Examined the diversity status among faculty and staff in SCSE as compared to UMD and UMN-TCs, to ensure parallels with the diversity among our students.
4. Identified and exchanged ideas with different multicultural resources here at UMD such as the Office of Cultural Diversity, MN Indigenous Youth Freedom Project, American Indian Program, and the Campus Climate Team. Our goal is to work to better align and allocate our diversity-related resources in order to best serve our SCSE and UMD communities.
5. In collaboration with Rachel Breckenridge (Mathematics and Statistics), we wrote a funded proposal for a summer Math Remediation workshop aimed at 2013-14 STEM students from under-represented groups and who are accepted to UMD already. Students are currently enrolling in this program.

6. Met with SCSE Departments in order to (a) discuss multicultural, diversity, and inclusiveness issues with faculty, (b) learn about their effort for advancing this initiative, and (c) address any questions or innovative ideas that they may have in order to attract and retain students from under-representative groups. A summary of the multicultural and diversity-related issues that were discussed with SCSE departments are posted on our website (below).

For more information, please visit the SCSE Multicultural and Diversity Committee website: [http://www.d.umn.edu/scse/administration/committees.html#diversity](http://www.d.umn.edu/scse/administration/committees.html#diversity)

**Committee Recommendations:**

1. *Invest in introductory courses:* Introductory courses such as Math, Physics, and Chemistry are where new students, including under-represented ones, are likely to struggle. Perhaps choose senior faculty members to teach these courses in order to inspire and retain those students. This will also require meeting the needs of SCSE department for additional tenure-track faculty to reduce class size and therefore enhance the learning experience and retention of our students.

2. *Emphasize the role of faculty in engaging students:* SCSE faculty should be aware of the means necessary to engage all students in their classroom in order to minimize the tendency of under-represented students to segregate. For example, group assignments, teaching labs, and research labs could provide a platform for creating inclusive environments for learning.

3. *Request coordination among multicultural and diversity offices:* Multicultural offices should play a catalyst in helping under-represented students to (i) be engaged with other students as well as the SCSE/UMD community at large and (ii) awareness of the American culture, especially for international students. Multicultural center should continue to provide opportunities not only to promote intra-cultural activities but also for intercultural engagement of all students (i.e., inclusiveness for all).

4. *Admitted students from under-represented like to be treated like all others (i.e., no preferential treatment is needed):* Once admitted, under-represented students may not need special treatment. They want to be treated by faculty and staff just like any other students. Otherwise, they feel as if they are “different” or “do not belong”. Like many other students, some of the under-represented students may need help; but they are not alone in this. Instructors should be aware of all resources (e.g., tutoring, multicultural office, Disability Office) available to support students’ success. In this case, instructors will be able to advise their struggling students on seeking help as needed.

5. *Prioritization and resources allocation are critical for achieving the goals set by SCSE/UMD strategic plans:* Leadership in SCSE and UMD should provide guidance, prioritization and resource allocation when it comes to different aspects of the Strategic Plan; diversity included. They should also recognize individuals who make differences in the life and learning of students; including those from under-represented groups. In addition, make sure that the departments have the needed resources (human and physical) to advance their mission of teaching, research, and service. Encourage and recognize new creative ideas for maximizing the benefits of existing resources in order to best serve our students/staff/faculty, under-represented included.

6. *Establish departmental first-year seminar courses (1 credit):* First-year seminar (or introduction to) courses would help create a community among students and faculty while highlighting available UMD, SCSE, departmental resources available for their success. The same course
would also help students to learn about their course options in a given discipline, career choices in their field of studies, their faculty members and their research. The course could also serve as a platform to discuss ethics, students’ retention, research opportunities in the department, and responsible conduct of research. Case studies and group assignments will facilitate teamwork, communication skills, and intercultural awareness. Please note that almost all engineering programs currently have such an introductory course. This course may be team-taught to overcome the limited human resources.

7. Invest in preparing international students with the tools for success and being productive members of the SCSE/UMD community: International students where English is their second language should be able to register for appropriate English courses in order to enhance their communication and writing skills. Awareness of the American culture can be implemented in this or related courses or related activities.

8. Numbers can be a good indicator for assessment/success: Keep track of the number of under-represented students who are admitted in SCSE (by department) and the percentage of those who graduate with a degree. Track how this percentage compares with majority students from year-to-year. This may require a staff member (full or part time).

9. Combine outreach and recruiting efforts: The college and departments should be proactive (e.g., on site visits of/to high school students) in recruiting good, qualified students from under-represented groups from neighboring communities. Leverage efforts by Admissions and Cultural Diversity offices in hosting high school students during their campus visits. This will also serve as a means for outreach and civic engagement with our communities.

Committee Agenda for 2013-14:

1. Revisit the objectives and outcomes of the Math Remediation Workshop during 2012-13. Work with Rachel Breckenridge (Mathematics and Statistics) in order to introduce further improvement in the workshop as needed. Explore new ways to expand this initiative to other disciplines (Chemistry, Biology, Physics, etc.) in order to increase enrollment in departments that have limited under-represented students.

2. Multicultural Awareness and Training of Teaching Assistants: Work with Department Heads and their faculty in order to implement GTA diversity training. Emphasize the importance of multicultural and diversity issues in SCSE to our graduate TAs and prepare them to advance UMD initiatives on diversity. Help create a mutually respectful and inclusive environment of learning between GTAs and students. Graduate student orientation and departmental culture/expectations could serve as a platform for this step.

3. Discuss multicultural and diversity issues with the SCSE staff: Learn about the concerns and challenges of our staff members in helping students from under-represented groups. Put forward a strategy to help staff members being a positive force in advancing Goal 2 of the UMD Strategic Plan.

4. Keep track of the number of under-represented students who are admitted in SCSE (by department) and the percentage of those who graduate with a degree. Track how this percentage (i) compares with majority students and (ii) evolves from year to year.

5. Identify a list of approved intercultural courses to recommend to students in order to help enhancing their multicultural and diversity awareness.