

OFFICE FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION TOWN HALL BROWN PAPER OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION:

On February 17, 2011, The Office of Equity and Inclusion, in conjunction with other UNM departments, programs and organizations, co-sponsored a Town Hall meeting. The purpose of the Town Hall was “to engage in a positive and constructive discussion about university and community partners continuing to collaborate and support one another in work focused on diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice.” The following information highlights the concerns, comments and suggestions made at the Town Hall. It is meant to give the reader an accurate if broad scope of the discussion that took place and is not meant as a comprehensive report of the event.

ACCOUNTABILITY, RESOURCES & THE FUTURE OF UNM

This is a summary regarding the Town Hall’s participants’ concerns with university accountability, distribution of available resources—including funding—and the future of the university. The overall opinion reflected a desire to see more transparency regarding university policies on diversity, funding and resources.

- **Accountability:**
 - Departmental accountability for equity and inclusion
 - Deans, chairs, need to be held accountable
 - Accountability for diversity should be in Performance Evaluations
 - Metrics, action plans, need to be transparent
- **Building the Accountability Structure:**
 - Issues are encountered throughout all levels
 - Leadership needs to be transparent
 - Faculty members need to be included
 - Involve staff
 - Engage individuals that have unconscious and innate racism
- **Resources:**
 - Funds are provided for what is valued

- Where's the money coming from for initiatives that receive support
- Money should be provided to fully fund diversity initiatives
- **University of the Future:**
 - University needs to be responsive to increasing demographic changes
 - UNM has diversity, lauds its diversity, but that diversity has not been nurtured
 - We have an obligation to be responsive to the diversity on our campus
 - Impact on the Institution reducing diversity offices because they anchor diversity
 - Diversity is part of our framework of success
 - Diverse leadership should be nurtured and grown
 - Mentoring is critical to success
 - UNM as Research University/Very High, HSI in minority/majority state is in a unique position
 - Anti-racist education needs to be institutionalized
 - Need to address question of whose knowledge is valued and part of curriculum
 - Graduate education needs to be improved for URM students
 - Must address what does it mean to be an HSI
 - Need to improve connection with communities of color
 - Gender and Academia issues should be addressed
 - Build student empowerment and leadership

ACADEMICS, EQUITY & UNDERREPRESENTED FACULTY:

This summary reflects a general consensus that underrepresented faculty is not properly supported at the university and that this lack of support directly

impacts their levels of success. Embedded in the need for sustained faculty support, is the need for fair hiring practices. The Town Hall participants felt underrepresented faculty hires should be a university priority. In order to address the issues of sustained support and underrepresented faculty hires, the university must acknowledge and address its discriminatory practices.

- **Academics:**
- Research:
 - forums and gender equity
 - support and funding
 - highlight commonalities
 - outreach and practical applications of research and education
- Curriculum:
 - what counts as knowledge
 - whose interests are served and what policies are in place
 - anti-racist education
 - dignity
 - college of education training of future teachers / training of students
 - curriculum reflects value
- Faculty:
 - department accountability
 - meaningful resources
 - transparent leadership
 - transparent performance evaluation
 - leadership training and development
 - retention
- **Equity and Social Justice:**
- Institutional Justice:
 - a desire to bring equity to scholarly excellence
 - treat people with dignity
 - UNM as place of transformation
 - fair treatment
 - equity is not equality
 - deeper understanding and commitment to the principles of social justice
 - social justice includes social, educational, political and environmental justice
 - acknowledge its existence at all levels
 - organize and collaborate with others
 - address internalize racism at the K-12 level for most impact
 - institutional racism is at every level

- **Internalized Racism:**
 - outreach
 - peer reviews and treatment
 - administrative level involvement and accountability

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT & EMPOWERMENT AT UNM:

This summary concerns student involvement at UNM. Students are the foundation of the university and, therefore, the university needs to focus on student recruitment and retention, specifically students of color. Student empowerment, activism and outreach are crucial in sustaining an effective and healthy collective, organizing environment. The university has to meet the needs of all students and build an environment where students can feel as if they are a major part of the university.

- **Student Involvement:**
 - Are students apathetic?
- **Outreach:**
 - How do we communicate to student?
- **Student empowerment/Student activism:**
 - How can we get involved?
 - Where do we go for that help?
 - Where can students go for support for this type of capacity?
 - Mentorship
- **Organizing:**
 - Creating space for students, providing dialogue and facilitating.
 - Give incentives for students to come
 - Town Halls, workshops, working groups.
 - Creating Allies
- **Recruitment:**
 - Reaching out to collaborate with other students and Organizations.
 - Work as a pipeline for High Schools/Middle Schools.
 - Recruitment events out in the community.

- Open and inclusive events off and on campus.
- How many NM students are getting in? Receiving Financial Aid?
- **Retention:**
 - Collaborating with multiple student orgs, community orgs, and faculty.
 - Supporting student resource centers.
 - Low number of African American students
- **Students Perspective:**
 - What are the issues students face?
 - Getting their story, concerns, and comments on issues?
 - By and for students
 - Diversity in the classroom

HISTORICAL & CONTEMPORARY OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AT UNM:

This summary addresses the unique history of the racialized communities at University of New Mexico and their collaborative efforts to create and sustain initiatives in support of students from these communities. The summary also identifies the work the university must do to continue to do to be responsive to these communities, including the larger New Mexico Community.

- **UNM History:**
 - Cross-cultural collaboration in support of ethnic centers
 - Creation of Ethnic Centers
 - Driven by NM Community
 - Ethnic Centers as models of serving underrepresented students
- **UNM's Connection to the New Mexico Community:**
 - The creation of the UNM Ethnic Centers was driven by the NM Community. There was a connection to the community
 - UNM connection to the larger community is strained

- UNM must work to strengthen ties to the community
- Work with Public School District to mentor/groom students to move into higher education
- Critique of school-to-prison pipeline
- UNMH can continue to reach out to provide Health services
- UNM students must engage with the community
- Provide financial aid to New Mexico students
- Research must be in collaboration with and benefit the community (a PhD means nothing to many in the community)
- Hold the next town hall in the community

CONCLUSION:

The Town Hall meeting was an opportunity for various communities to demonstrate solidarity in addressing important issues that threaten the viability of a university that “promotes equity for all members...and embrace critical diversity, holistic learning, inclusive excellence and social justice; and, in this way, foster a climate that imbues diversity as an asset.”