

## Memorandum

**TO:** Dr. Glenn Mroz  
President  
Michigan Technological University

**FROM:** Members of the External Review Team  
John Matlock, Chair  
Janet Delecke  
Aurles Wiggins  
Karin VanDyke

**RE:** Final Summary Report of the External Review Team's Findings and Recommendations

**DATE:** May 10, 2006

Attached is a summary report titled: *External Review Team's Summary Report on Diversity Accomplishments and Future Strategies for Expanding and Enhancing Diversity at Michigan Technological University*. The report is in response to your specific charge for the external review team to examine progress made by Michigan Technological University in the areas of diversity and multiculturalism.

The document is based on our two-day campus visitation and discussions with more than 35 administrators, deans, department chairpersons, faculty, administrators, staff, and student leaders. These individual and collective perspectives helped to shape the findings, observations, and recommendations contained in this report. The External Review Team appreciated both the outstanding cooperation that we received from all participants who were interviewed, and more important, the valuable insights, suggestions, and perspectives they shared with us. We also acknowledge that this report would not have been possible without the high degree of cooperation we received from various segments of the campus leadership. Furthermore, Chris Anderson was outstanding in coordinating our visit and facilitating the task that was given to the external review team of four individuals representing higher education, the automotive industry, and the health profession.

We wish to express our appreciation for your taking several hours from your busy schedule to meet with the members of the review team on two occasions, and we would like to thank you for your frankness in identifying issues related to diversity and campus climate as well as your vision. Michigan Tech has been able to accomplish much over the past few years related to diversity and multiculturalism. However, we agree with you that there is still much that remains to be done in achieving MTU's vision and goals associated with diversity. It is our hope that our collective perspectives, insights, and recommendations will be of assistance to the campus as it moves forward. This report is our summary of strengths, limitations, and/or aspirations of the MTU community.

We hope this report will be shared and discussed with the campus community. We also are excited that a climate study is currently under way as well. We believe that the data, viewpoints and recommendations from this review and the climate study currently being conducted will be of tremendous assistance to the institution in meeting the goals that you and the campus have envisioned in your diversity planning.

Michigan Tech now faces the challenges of keeping its momentum going so that it can achieve its ultimate goal of fostering a campus environment that sustains, appreciates, and values the human potential of all members of the community. We are optimistic that Michigan Tech can continue to advance its diversity goals but it will require a significant commitment and collective effort by all members of the campus. Please know that members of this team are available to have additional discussion on the report.

**EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM SUMMARY REPORT ON DIVERSITY  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FUTURE STRATEGIES FOR EXPANDING AND  
ENHANCING DIVERSITY AT MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**

A Report Prepared For

Dr. Glenn Mroz, President  
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**May 2006**

## **Introduction**

Over the years, Michigan Technological University (Michigan Tech or MTU) has been involved in various activities relative to increasing the numbers of minority and women faculty, staff, and students on its campus, broadening its definition of multiculturalism and inclusiveness, improving the climate for diverse populations, and exposing the campus and local communities to the significant values of having a diverse campus where all members of MTU values from the educational and social benefits that diversity and multiculturalism offers. The campus has also infused strategies for diversity into various institutional planning documents.

Most colleges and universities are grappling with issues related to campus diversity—barriers include shrinking resources, rising tuition and related costs, mounting competition among institutions for students and faculty of color and women, and shifting demographics relative to K-12 graduation rates. MTU also faces additional challenges related to geographic location and to its overwhelmingly male student body at a time when many institutions are increasingly becoming majority female, and the number of students of color are rising on their campuses. While we point to these challenges, we by no means perceive them as excuses for failure at improving diversity; we cite these challenges because they are integral aspects of the milieu in which Michigan Tech exists.

In order to gain greater and more precise insights relative to where MTU stands with regard to diversity planning and implementation, MTU requested that an external review team assess both successes and challenges relative to what it has accomplished and what it hopes to accomplish in the future. The following report summarizes the perspectives and insights of various quarters of the MTU community in terms of institutional strengths, limitations, and/or aspirations as related to diversity progress on the campus.

## **The External Review Team**

The external review team comprised two individuals from higher educational institutions located within Michigan, and two individuals (who also are alumnae of Michigan Tech) from the automotive industry and health professions in Michigan. The team spent two days on the campus. Members of the team were as follows:

- **Janet Delecke**, Class Action Counsel, DaimlerChrysler
- **John Matlock, PhD**, Associate Vice Provost and Director of the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives, the University of Michigan (Chair)
- **Karin VanDyke**, Vice President of Communications, Portage Health System
- **Aurles Wiggins, PhD**, Director of Diversity Programs and Assistant to the Dean for Undergraduate Studies, College of Engineering, Michigan State University

### **The Specific Purposes of the Institutional Diversity Review**

Through a series of discussions with the Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity and team members, the following were established as specific purposes of the review, based on the goals and questions posed by President Glenn Mroz.

1. To provide opportunities for selected administrators, staff, faculty, and students to share their perspectives on the status of diversity at Michigan Tech and, where appropriate, to discuss their specific programs, priorities, and initiatives associated with institutional diversity.
2. To assess Michigan Tech's successes over time relative to diversity programming and strategic planning/implementation, and to identify both strengths and challenges related to these efforts.
3. Given the changing demographics in the United States and the increasing emphasis that the corporate community places on diversity, are there ways that Michigan Tech can maximize its efforts in preparing students to effectively participate in a diverse society and work place? What are the best ways, philosophically and operationally, to achieve these goals?
4. Do Michigan Tech's diversity goals and priorities align with its mission and strategic plans? To what extent do various constituents of the campus community agree with these actions, and are campus resources adequate to move these efforts ahead?

5. To provide recommendations for how Michigan Tech can continue to move forward with its diversity efforts so that it can optimize its commitment to achieving its goals.

### **The Process and Procedures Utilized by the External Review Team**

- The external review team reviewed materials provided by the Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity prior to the external review team's arrival to the campus. In some cases, the team requested specific documents.
- Several telephone conversations were held between the Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity and the external review team to clarify the purpose of the review and to resolve questions. Moreover, The team conducted telephone discussions involving only members of the team.
- Members of the team also read reports and information on different academic and non-academic units that were contained on Michigan Tech's Web site.
- During a two-day period, the team held discussions with groups of student leaders, faculty, department chairs, deans, and administrators and staffs of units involved in diversity/equity activities. Some of these meetings were group sessions while others were one-on-one. A schedule of participants is attached at the end of this document. We should note that we were very pleased with the outstanding cooperation of the various participants and with their willingness to have open and frank conversations about campus diversity.
- The team met several times while on campus to share and discuss insights, viewpoints and recommendations. Additionally, there was a follow-up telephone dialogue between team members to share additional

perspectives relative to the information that had been collected during the campus visitation

- During its campus visit, the team began its work by meeting with President Mroz. Furthermore, an exit meeting was held with President Mroz before the review team departed. The purpose of the debriefing was to share preliminary findings, perspective and recommendations with the President. It also gave him the opportunity to provide comments or seek clarification on the team's findings and preliminary recommendations.

### **Observations and Perceptions Shared by Interviewees**

During the two-day visit, administrators, staff, students, deans, department chairs, and faculty shared many perspectives. As expected, there were differing opinions and viewpoints relative to the current status of diversity at Michigan Tech, and its vision of the future regarding this critical area

Although there was a high degree of consistency in what individuals shared about institutional commitment, there was less agreement on possible solutions, actions, and recommendations. However, the external review team identified a number of recurring themes based on its conversations and interactions with different groups from the campus community and from reviewing various documents that were shared with the view team.

The external review team found the conversations very helpful not only in providing the background and context needed to gain a better understanding of the concerns and perspectives of the interviewees, but also in helping to formulate our recommendations for the purpose of this report. We were particularly impressed with the insights that student leaders shared with us – they are far more aware of campus issues than one might anticipate, and they had no problems articulating them and deepening the conversation on campus diversity. These student leaders reflected not only on their viewpoints but also those of the classmates as well. The external review team's primary observations and findings are as follows:

- 1. How is Diversity Defined at MTU?** Numerous interviewees described the lack of an overall definition of diversity at MTU, and stated that various diversity entities at times seem to be competing for attention and resources, thus making it difficult to establish coalitions and collaborative efforts among different groups. The team found significant frustrations among some groups who felt that MTU was not as inclusive as it claimed to be, and that diversity has not been positively associated with institutional excellence. The landscape for institutional diversity is constantly changing and definitions in terms of the emergence of new groups that want to be recognized and it's not clear to many what the institutional priorities are or whether the campus leadership was adequately addressing the concerns.

When there is a lack of clarity relative to the components of institutional diversity, confusion follows in an environment that often characterizes diversity as increasing the number of students and faculty of color or women students and faculty of color on the MTU campus – broad based diversity also includes international, sexual orientation, age and physical ability among others.

Too often the external review team found that many on campus defined diversity only as “affirmative action” efforts to get more minorities, and to a lesser extent, women on campus. This limited definition of campus diversity appeared to carry all of the negative connotations associated with affirmative action, while failing to encompass the richness of diversity or to recognize what it can mean to campus as a multifaceted, value-added resource that provides an educational benefit to all members of the community – substantial social science research and the subsequent decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in the University of Michigan’s admissions policies have validated the benefits of diversity at campuses throughout the nation.

2. **Students of Color Feel that They Are the Only Ones Expected to Change and Fit-In:** Frequent comments were made by students of color that they are expected to adapt to the existing culture, and that other than observance of certain holidays and programs (e.g., Black History Month, Spirit of the Harvest Powwow, and programs commemorating Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.), they were always expected to “fit in” and be in the mainstream of the dominant culture. As one student noted, “Students of color are the only ones expected to change, and I don’t see any commitment to institutional change. You can’t have it both ways – a desire for a diverse campus but no real appreciation of what different groups bring to the institution and how the campus may benefit.”

We also should point out that students of color expressed many positive aspects of their experiences at Michigan Tech and few expressed any deep regrets or second thoughts about coming to the campus.

3. **The Value of Diversity at Michigan Tech:** The external review team frequently heard that MTU still does not have a sustained commitment to institutional diversity and that what appeared to provide the impetus for a sense of urgency relative to diversity was driven by concerns that major corporations might not see a strong campus commitment to the sort of diversity that prepares all students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce and an increasing global community that all students will have to learn to live in. This perception cuts across various constituent groups at MTU. In some cases, we discerned some resentment that external entities were demanding that the institution change. This represented a threat to institutional autonomy.

We also sensed that the corporate concerns were a wake-up for the campus community to do something to diminish the external concerns that have been expressed. In any case, the situation seems to have had a significant impact on the campus community – in positive and not so positive ways. The salient message appears to be that diversity is more

than increasing numbers of different groups on campus (structural diversity), and that multicultural efforts have to go beyond students – diversity inclusiveness can, and should be, a major source of enrichment to the community in general.

4. **Communicating Diversity Priorities:** While Michigan Tech appears to have numerous diversity activities and initiatives, some campus constituents indicated that they desired to hear a greater and more consistent message by the institutional leadership, especially the president, relative to the importance of diversity at MTU and that it involves everyone. This view was expressed most strongly by students but the external review team also heard it from faculty and staff as well.

Students of color, in particular, seemed to feel that the prevailing thought among majority students is that diversity involves merely getting more minority and female students on campus. They said that majority students did not see a role for themselves in the diversity process at MTU, nor did they see diversity as significant in their future employment.

As one student pointed out, “there are a lot of students who can go through their 4-5 years on campus and never be touched by diversity – for some students, diversity is an option which has no impact on them. No one ever tells them why diversity is going to play a critical role in their future. I have to live with diversity every day that I am on the campus. I have no options.”

In other words, this student essentially was summarizing that his colleagues did not see any connection between campus diversity and their future careers in which industry has placed a premium on having a diverse workforce and being responsive to a rapidly changing society – one has to only look at the changing demographic projections.

In conversations with students, we were impressed at the additional

opinions that many shared regarding “all students get short changed in their education when they go out into the real world and discovered that they are academically qualified but have little awareness of the importance of diversity in the workforce – for which they have not been prepared.”

5. **Diversity and the Academics Units:** The review team found that most often diversity initiatives and programs were perceived mainly as related either to students or to extracurricular campus activities. While some interviewees expressed concerns about diversifying the faculty with more faculty of color and women, we did not see strong evidence that diversity was being infused into the key instructional mission, leaving the impression that diversity efforts are focused around student programs and activities, and around special annual programs (e.g., Black History Month) that are sponsored by non-academic units or students. There doesn't appear to be a major buy-in on the academic side.

On the other hand, faculty seemed to feel that MTU had made a major investment in sponsoring summer pre-college programs that draw minority students to the Michigan Tech campus. The review team was told on several occasions that the majority of undergraduate students of color at MTU were initially exposed to the institution via pre-college programs and that there was strong support for these activities. We should also note that three of the six deans are females – a remarkable achievement for a higher education institution by anyone's standard.

Finally, we heard the message over and over, as previously noted, that the faculty wanted to hear more from the institutional leadership, especially the president, on diversity priorities and action. What seems to be driving this? Some faculty indicated that they felt the faculty, as a group, was being blamed for any shortcomings of campus diversity and that they were perceived as obstructionists, by the leadership, to the overall advancement of campus diversity.

Furthermore, we frequently were told that fiscal constraints, campus climate, MTU's focus on engineering, technology and the sciences, lack of critical mass and geographic location were insurmountable institutional barriers that prevented the hiring of more faculty who are women or of color. While these assumptions might have some validity, the external review team sensed that these constraints were often mentioned so as to justify a conclusion that little could be done to achieve greater diversity, particularly when it came to increasing the number of women and faculty of color.

6. **International Graduate Student Diversity:** International students make up approximately 39% of the graduate students at MTU. While this represents a significant number of students in MTU's graduate program, concerns were expressed relative to better serving this population with housing assistance, immigration procedures, spousal employment (also a major problem associated with faculty hiring in general), and basic family services. While current efforts in this area seemed to be appreciated, interviewees expressed the need for expanded services in recognition of this important component to diversity as well as to the MTU in general.

Moreover, several individuals who participated in the discussions noticed that MTU simply could not afford to have reductions in this critical student population and that it needed to do a better job of welcoming international students to the campus, and equally important, to the local community in general.

7. **Faculty Recruitment, Hiring and Retention:** Expanding on observation #6, major concerns were expressed by faculty, deans, department chairs, and academic administrators about the lack of progress with hiring and retaining women and minorities as faculty at a time when there are certainly opportunities to hire them, in view of the nearly 10% annual turnover of MTU faculty. Some interviewees commented that it “

just didn't make sense not seize the opportunities to increase faculty numbers with these two populations.”

While some participants expressed considerable optimism that more female and minority faculty would be hired, we observed a general sense of pessimism among others that MTU might not be as successful as it would like to be. Location, lack of critical mass, and spousal employment were cited as reasons in addition to an unwillingness to be competitive relative to market demands based on the scarcity of women and minority faculty in the sciences. Again, there seemed to be a resignation that despite the potential opportunities, MTU would not be as successful as it hoped to be relative to hiring women and faculty in greater numbers.

8. **Institutional Climate Study:** The external review team was aware of a climate study currently being conducted by external experts, and we are optimistic that data gathered from this study, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, will yield significant insights into how various MTU constituencies think about diversity, and hopefully will supplement the findings/recommendations in this report. We believe this study is absolutely essential in the institution's efforts to move forward with campus diversity, and we commend MTU's administration for its decision to initiate this much-needed comprehensive climate assessment.
  
9. **The Department of Educational Opportunity and Staff:** Faculty, staff, and students consistent opined that this campus unit is overburdened with the responsibility for making diversity work at MTU, and that the campus expects that department, despite limited staff and resources, to be the point office for campus diversity. In general, it is imperative that diversity be a campus priority, which involves all units, not just some. Participants also expressed concerns that the Executive Director of the Office, who also serves as the Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity, and her staff are overextended because of

expectations and requests to be on multiple campus committees and searches.

The review team gathers that the department's primary focus is students – both those on campus and those who participate in pre-college programs and campus-wide multicultural events. Yet, they are often called on to participate in activities that go beyond student and pre-college program activities.

The review team was impressed, nonetheless, with the department's passionate commitment to institutional diversity efforts despite the challenges it faces. Most of the perspectives shared above, interesting enough, came from other colleagues around the campus. We also note that the Department of Educational Opportunity has the most diverse staff on the campus and it seems to work collaboratively in efforts to achieve the variety of goals that it is pursuing.

10. **Diversity Training:** In discussions with academic department chairs, it was pointed out on several occasions that despite numerous diversity training opportunities at MTU, there appeared to be considerable cynicism relative their use and efficacy. One participant indicated, “We have gotten the message from the corporate community, and it is the time to do something beyond this constant diversity training programs.” The prevailing sentiment seemed to be “we can't train our way into diversity so let's move on.” The review team was quite surprised at the reactions to questions about diversity training. However, some faculty did indicate a desire to see an increase in activities relative to learning about ways to infuse diversity into the courses that they teach.

Additionally, others commented that the issues of women faculty should be studied separately and not lumped in with concerns for minorities, although models of mentoring might work for both groups. Several faculty noted that while there were numerous diversity training

opportunities for staff and academic administrators, very few existed for students. One faculty member noted, “They [students] are the ones that are going to be at a competitive disadvantage in the workforce if they don’t understand this (the importance of diversity).”

11. **Publications and Institutional Diversity:** We observed and often heard comments that MTU has plenty of publications that promote diversity, and for some, too many. We left the campus with a large number of these publications in addition to the ones that were sent to us. Several interviewees indicated that the publications suggest much more is being done relative to campus diversity than actually is and that a common thread does not exist that connected all of the elements of diversity (it should be noted that we were impressed with the diversity fact sheet).

While the brochures do a good job of highlighting specific programs and activities, the review team perceived to be missing the link of the educational benefit of diversity to the campus community and how diversity can be an enriching experience for all to be missing. While they are very useful for recruitment purposes, they ironically convey the message that the campus is highly segmented and balkanized.

Additionally, several members, including student leaders, of the MTU community pointed out that several institutional brochures contained no minorities in them. Several members of the review team also observed this.

12. **Role of the Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity and Executive Director for the Department Educational Opportunity:** The incumbent in this role is highly regarded and well respected by the campus community in general. We heard nothing but praises for her work and her long-term commitment to advancing diversity excellence and inclusion on the campus.

On the other hand, concerns were expressed that the incumbent is overextended, that too much of the institutional diversity efforts are associated with the special assistant/executive director and her staff (see #9), and that they have the ultimate responsibility for the successes of institutional diversity at Michigan Tech. We often heard that diversity at MTU is the responsibility of the Department of Educational Opportunity and that such a perceived arrangement “lets a lot of folks off the hook relative to accountability.” To be honest, the external review team heard this too often and we are concerned that for many at the campus, it is implied that “since this person and her office does the diversity work, we don’t have to do anything.”

The external review team also has significant concerns about the organizational structure that results in the Special Assistant/Executive Director reporting to both the president and the vice president for student affairs, and how the campus perceives this dual reporting line. We are not saying that the arraignment is problematic or that there are issues with student affairs. However, the arraignment appears somewhat awkward to both the review team and it was shared by various segments of the campus community.

13. **Institutional Climate and Change:** Most students told us that although they were happy with their decision to come to MTU—only a few expressed regrets. However, many shared concerns for what they characterized as a chilly social climate. As one student put it, “I can’t really put my hands on anything specific, but I can feel it.” Students of color cited fraternities and sororities as extremely segregated and unwelcoming in addition to segments of the student community that focus considerable energies on alcohol consumption and “hanging out” at local gathering places.

We found that this observation did not differ along lines of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and international students. Perhaps

these issues will become more pronounced when the campus-climate study is completed, but we believe that the administration and faculty should be aware of these issues – especially given the emphasis on student engagement and involvement. No one should feel left out of the mix.

At the same time, the team found that there is little focus on creating opportunities for students to dialogue between and within campus groups, preparing faculty to integrate and promote diversity in the classroom and the curriculum, and in getting students ready to live, work and lead in an increasingly diverse society. If some members in the community do not feel comfortable because of the perceived climate, the entire community is impacted.

Some students indicated that their climate concerns are institutionally dismissed or not taken serious, and the typical response is to suggest that their assumptions are wrong or, as one student indicated that he was told, “You need to stop being a malcontent and get with the plan. The quicker that you figure out how you can fit in, the better off you will be.”

### **Recommendations of the Task Force**

We had the opportunity to talk with numerous constituencies during our visit and to develop recommendations based on our discussions and review of the documents that were made available. The pursuit of diversity is not an easy task, and we are keenly aware of the challenges that MTU has to deal with. The recommendations that we present below provide a snapshot of suggestions, perspectives, and ideas that emerged during the review. These are not exhaustive recommendations, but they should provide opportunities for fuller discussions and for strategic implementation. The review team’s recommendations are as follows:

1. **Student Intergroup and Dialogues:** MTU needs to explore opportunities that challenge students’ notions that diversity isn’t something that concerns them. Do we create safe spaces for students to have the opportunity to interact with each other? How do we convince

them that they have a major stake in this process, as we prepare them to work, live, and learn in a diverse society and workforce? It is essential that MTU explore ways for students to have opportunities for both formal and informal venues for interaction and dialogue in the classroom and the co-curricular programs outside of the classroom. We recommend several pilot courses that expose students to all aspects of diversity and stress the importance of students' developing crucial comfort levels with all aspect of diversity.

We should note that students at MTU, which is also the case at most higher education institutions, come from communities and high schools that have afforded them little opportunity for interaction with people from different racial, ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds. The college campus will be the first and only opportunity for most students to experience diversity before they enter a diverse workforce. We believe it is essential to expand institutional commitment to ensuring that students understand that in order to have a well-rounded educational experience, it will be important for them to achieve an understanding, appreciation, and degree of comfort with diversity and multiculturalism, for these attributes will continue to be important assets that employers will search for when they recruit educated and talented employees. Diversity does matter, and there's an institutional responsibility related to ensuring that students get exposed to it.

2. **The Role of the Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity:** The External Review Team recommends that the leadership closely examine this position to ensure that it is sufficiently empowered to operate at maximum efficiency and effectiveness. We believe that this will require greater resources, a clear separation of duties associated with being the director of the Department of Educational Opportunity, and perhaps an examination of the reporting relationships to both the president and the vice president for student affairs. It is our opinion, which was validated by the perspectives of others, that the Special

Assistant is overextended. At the same time, too much of MTU's diversity effort is assigned to a single person who does not have authority to impact the multiple areas of campus diversity. It's our position that diversity is everyone's business and that positive actions need to be taken to reflect this as an institutional priority.

3. **Diversity Inclusiveness:** The external review team recommends that steps be taken to delineate to the campus community the various definitions of diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusiveness, with emphasis on presenting these concepts in a way that focuses on the benefit of diversity to all members of the MTU community. In the absence of this, members of the community, especially students, develop the notion that diversity is incompatible with excellence, that it means only increasing the numbers of minorities on campus. The value of campus diversity has to extend beyond just race and ethnicity, so as to include gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and international members of the campus community.

We also recommend that the MTU leadership revisit its *March 2003 Michigan Tech Diversity Framework* document- what's working and what isn't? Are there modifications needed after three years? Is the accountability process effective? The review team poses these critical questions to the campus leadership. The review team firmly believes that strategic implementation and assessments are just as important as the planning stages.

4. **Diversity Publications and Marketing:** MTU does a marvelous job of producing a variety of brochures and publications that highlight aspects of diversity. What is missing is a single document (beyond the diversity fact sheet) that comprises all elements of campus diversity and discusses how it provides an educational benefit to the community, how it is tied to academic excellence, and why diversity is everyone's business. We believe that it is essential to answer the questions, "What's in it for me?"

and “Why should I care about diversity?” A comprehensive document could be used for recruitment of students and faculty, for orientation, and for fundraising.

The document could also highlight MTU alumni/ae who can provide first hand experience relative to the importance of diversity in the workforce. It should be noted that the publications that we are recommending should not take the place of the individual documents that spotlight the diversity programs of various units – we advocate adding to the toolbox, not subtracting.

Finally, we also recommend the formation of a committee that has the responsibility for examining all publication for the purpose of having institutional consistency in its messages regarding diversity, multiculturalism and inclusion.

5. **Comprehensive Climate Survey and Focus Groups:** We commend MTU for undertaking the task of conducting a comprehensive climate study. We want to reinforce the need to make sure that the results are communicated to the campus community and that there are opportunities for discussion and follow-up relative to how this information will enhance the institution’s efforts to advance diversity. We mention this because some constituents feel that the study will “end up on the shelf and that the survey is an end itself.” We believe that the climate study is a start—and that it can be instructive to the campus only if it results in comprehensive and ongoing institutional actions based on the qualitative and quantitative information.

We also strongly encourage the leadership to pay close attention to student voices – as painful as their experiences may be, it’s their reality and should not be dismissed. The review team also hopes that over the next 12 months, the leadership will assess what progress has been made

based on the suggestions and findings from not only this review but the campus climate survey as well.

6. **Greater Diversity Collaboration with the Corporate Community:**

The external review team strongly recommends that MTU place a greater emphasis on developing broader collaborations with the corporate community in seeking assistance in advancing the campus diversity agenda. On several occasions, we were told that MTU does not “push” its diversity agenda in its dealings with the corporate community. Yet, it is industry that is asking higher educational institutions to step up their commitment to diversity and prepare students for a future workforce that stresses diversity. The corporate community played a critical role in persuading the Supreme Court in the University of Michigan cases that diversity was critical to the workforce of the future as well as the nation in general.

The review team hopes that MTU will pursue programs and initiatives (both in the academic and non-academic areas) with these key players that will increase interactions and dialogues between diverse student groups and reinforce the notion that diversity provides an educational benefit to all students and to society in general. It would benefit the institution to examine how similar institutions have been able to formulate collaborative ventures related to diversity with the corporate community. Additionally, collaborative efforts can help to expose students to the importance of campus diversity in preparing students for the future as related to the workforce, civic and community engagement, voter participation, global awareness and producing leaders for a diverse democracy.

7. **Campus Leadership at Multiple Levels:** The external review team recognizes that the institution’s leadership has the ultimate responsibility for institutional diversity advancement. However, while the president plays a critical role in fostering and communicating the importance of

diversity, it is imperative that vibrant leadership (and accountability) is exhibited at all levels within the campus community. We were struck by the many comments from various interviewees about institutional inertia that attributed this state of affairs to the campus top leadership. We believe incentives can be provided that encourage those at unit levels to develop diversity initiatives. Perhaps funds can be made available on competitive bases that advance the development of proposals and activities that improve campus diversity.

In this way, diversity is more than a top-bottom process and takes advantage of bottom-top creativity as well. Campus diversity works best when units at all levels are engaged, and the campus is moved away from the perception that diversity is a matter for campus leaders only. We also want to emphasize the need for consistent and demonstrated institutional accountability from top to bottom of the campus leadership's organizational chart. One of the frequent comments that we heard during our visit was the perception of a lack of visible accountability associated with diversity achievement and the lack of consistency in holding some units accountable for diversity achievement. As one participant observed, "We all know that many areas simply ignore diversity as a priority."

8. **Co-Curricular Activities and the Classroom:** MTU has numerous celebrations of culture throughout the year, some sponsored by Student Affairs, primarily the Department of Educational Opportunity, while others are sponsored by student organizations. The external review team recommends that MTU look for opportunities to ensure that these celebrations become learning opportunities for all students. For example, there are times when faculty can assign students to attend these events and then discuss or write about their experiences.

Another example would be that prior to Spirit of the Harvest Powwow, there could be discussions or workshops led by Native American speakers or elders who would explain the significant various ceremonies. We offer

this example because students were very concerned that these celebrations not be taken out of context as to what they mean, while at the same time many also felt that their colleagues would be unwelcome at events such as African American history, international events, or programs sponsored by women's organizations. The review committee strongly encourages collaborative diversity activities between academic and co-curricular areas including student groups.

9. **Barriers to Hiring and Retaining Women Faculty and Faculty of**

**Color:** MTU is very aware of issues related to hiring women and people of color in the faculty ranks, and many interviewees articulated the problems to us. However, we also sensed resignation that not much can be done in improving the situation. Given the fact that MTU anticipates numerous faculty openings in the future, it will enjoy a great opportunity to examine this problem and develop an institutional plan for increasing the number of faculty from these populations. This is a national problem and the competition is fierce, which simply means that MTU has to be aggressive and bold in its approaches. Coupled with this effort should be the issue of spousal hiring. Perhaps a task force could work toward the goal of coming up with concrete recommendations and suggestions that could provide an institutional approach to finding creative solutions.

Additionally, we would like to see expanded partnerships with other institutions, such as the Sustainable Futures IGERT program with Southern University that offers possibilities of developing a pool of faculty of color and post doctorates. We also hope that MTU will continue to resubmit its proposal relative to an NSF ADVANCE program designed to increase the number of women in the science, engineering and technology areas. This program has been very successful at institutions that have been funded.

On one hand, we highly commend the institution for its efforts in seeking these funds. Are there corporate and private foundation

opportunities that can assist the institution in increasing the number of minority and women faculty? The review team believes that without a critical mass of these faculty, it will continue to face barriers relative to achieving true campus diversity, which has to include substantial increases in faculty who are women and minorities.

10. **Budget Concerns and Impact on Diversity:** As with other institutions, a number of factors have created a major budgetary crisis for MTU, and this trend is expected to continue into the future. However, budget concerns cannot be trotted out as an excuse for not funding campus diversity programs and initiatives since careful budget priorities signal institutional priorities relative to what is valued. Too often, we heard, “If we had funds, we could do more.” We are aware that diversity can be costly, but at the same time, what is the cost of not having diversity – a future that unavoidably will include diversity – and not providing students with the opportunities to be properly prepared for the future by not having all the necessary tools and skills.

Furthermore, there are many areas in which leaders at MTU must consider opportunities that are low cost but could have significant yields – not everything under the diversity umbrella has to be costly. Now is the time to be creative and accountable in advancing institutional diversity.

11. **The Department of Educational Opportunity:** We commend the passionate dedication and commitment of the office and its multiracial staff. Yet, we sensed frustrations with the fact that they are called on to do so much and that there is an expectation by many that they are solely responsible for achieving campus diversity. In many cases, the staff expressed a sense of powerless to effectuate changes and some felt they are called on as because they are minorities. As one person said, “I’m often the token diversity person on committee and meeting, and I can’t help but feel that I am being used by my institution and this is very frustrating.”

Responsibility and accountability must extend to other campus units and individuals not only to contribute to the effort but also to diversify their staffs. We also note that many of the programs in the Department of Educational Opportunity are on soft monies and are a major concern relative to what happens when the funds run out. We ask, what efforts or contingency plans exist for institutionalizing these diversity initiatives? And what impact would this have on MTU's diversity efforts? We raise these questions from the perspective that diversity progress will experience a major setback if soft funding is eliminated and also will cast a suspicion on MTU's commitment to advancing diversity.

After much discussion that included the consideration of various options, the review team offers as a recommendation that the Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity not have a dual reporting relationship to the vice president for student affairs and report exclusively to the president. This position has to have broad based responsibilities that cut across various campus units and the various components of diversity, and it should be empowered to do this. The president should redefine the position to reflect the increased responsibilities and accountability.

At the same time, we recommend that the associate director of the Department of Educational Opportunity be reclassified to an executive associate directorship who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the department, continue to report to the Special Assistant/Executive Director and have responsibility for the department's reporting relationship to student affairs. This individual will represent the Department relative to student affairs.

Obviously, the special assistant/executive director will still have to have interactions with the vice president for student affairs (and other executive officers) on policy issues related to campus diversity. This is

but one recommendation for consideration, and there could be numerous variations of this that the president might want to pursue.

12. **The Contribution of Diversity to Institutional Mission:** The external review team recommends that greater emphasis be placed on how diversity impacts MTU and adds to the value of its institutional mission. Much has been written about what diversity does for students, but we also believe that the institution needs to examine what a broader achievement of diversity can mean for the quality of the entire University. We have alluded to this throughout the document but there should be no doubts in the campus community, especially students, that diversity is not a trendy notion that operates in a vacuum – apart from any thing that MTU values.
  
13. **Support for Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgendered Community:** In our discussions with students, we dialogued with a number of students from this community, and they were very passionate in their desire to have greater recognition and support from MTU leadership. GLBT students, as a group, are one of fastest growing entities under the wider campus multicultural umbrella. As the group becomes more vocal in its efforts in obtaining greater recognition, it is obvious that there could be tension among students and student groups who do not support or endorse what they stand for. Other campuses have experienced this, and there are lessons to be learned that should be considered by MTU.

It is our recommendation that the MTU leadership assign or hire a counselor or staff in Student Affairs who will have this group in his/her portfolio, and have major responsibilities for working with Gay and Lesbian students and organizations. The responsibilities should be no less than half time and the individual has to have a demonstrated commitment and experience in working with the GLBT community. The campus leadership also needs to at every opportunity reinforce to the campus community that all students have to right to learn in an environment that respects and appreciate all its members. The message

has to make it very clear, consistent and unequivocal that the campus leadership has zero tolerance for those who violate this institutional belief.

14. **Other Key Recommendations:** While the external review team has shared its perceptions and recommendations based on discussions with various campus constituencies and the documents that were provided, we are aware that one cannot possibly cover all bases in terms of insight and recommendations. However, we would like to briefly point out several concerns that certainly merit further and more detailed examination by MTU's leadership. This document is a roadmap and is not a panacea that purports to be a solution to all campus concerns that were expressed to us. We strongly encourage the leadership to assess the following:

- a. **International Students:** Are the needs and concerns being addressed? The review team recommends that a campus taskforce examine issues related to international students and offer recommendations to address concerns and barriers that hinder their successful transition to the Michigan Tech and Houghton/Hancock communities. They are a critical element of campus diversity.
  
- b. **Diversity Achievement Recognition and Support:** MTU should consider ways to recognize diversity achievements which could include competitive awards to student groups and individual achievement for diversity achievement, staff awards for outstanding contributions to diversity, and faculty awards for individuals who have demonstrated commitments in expanding and enhancing campus diversity, mini-grants to faculty, staff and students who want to try innovative approaches to diversity (e.g., infusing diversity into the classroom, multiple student groups who collaborate on a diversity project, or sponsoring dialogue groups). These actions can demonstrate that diversity is valued and recognized by the campus leadership as well as units throughout the campus.

- c. **Diversity Learning and Teaching Approaches:** We believe that it is important that MTU implement efforts that will give faculty the opportunity to examine multiple ways of infusing multiculturalism in the classroom and the curriculum. Various interviewees commented that even if they wanted to enhance their knowledge of diversity pedagogy and explore ways to impact what they taught in the classroom, they could not get the assistance that they needed. The review team commends that the Center for Teaching provide the leadership for this initiative, which obviously should include an assessment component.
- d. **The Within Group Experience of Students:** While we have placed emphasis on developing activities that will enhance students' ability to interact with each other along racial/ethnic, gender, international and sexual orientation lines, we also recommend that MTU provide opportunities for students within these components to dialogue, interact and share experiences. We are basing this on exciting research findings that indicate tremendous variation within different groups under the diversity umbrella, and that some times intra-group conflicts are even more significant than conflict between groups (e.g., not all African American students have a shared or common experience based on their backgrounds and experiences, and there are tremendous learning opportunities within groups).

Additionally, many students who dialogued with the review team felt that it's the administration's responsibility to create and foster safe havens where students can interact with each other whether it is inter-group activities or intra-group (students of the same ethnicity cited frustration over their perceptions that they are accused of self-segregation when they interact with students from their ethnic group). One student summarized it all when she said, "there are not a lot of Latino/as students on campus and yet, I'm criticized when some of us

get together. I truly believe in diversity and that I should interact with all kinds of people even when I sense that they are excluding me.”

- e. **Informal and Formal Opportunities for Students To Explore Diversity:** MTU needs to explore ways to formally and informally introduce all students to diversity – in and out of the classroom. We have to continue to convey the message that students are the primary beneficiaries of the overall educational benefits of diversity and that it is connected to employment and citizenship. Obviously, our recommendations should be done in a way as not to suggest political correctness but recognizes the realities that diversity is here to stay and that will become of increasing importance to the workforce and the nation as a whole – the projected demographics relative to all elements of broad based multiculturalism certainly ensure that this reality is not going to diminish in the future.

## **Conclusion**

Campus diversity is not an end in itself; it’s a concept that provides a process to take an institution where it hopes to go in the future and how it plans to get there. Institutional diversity and excellence are complementary assets that together can vastly enrich an institution and its faculty, staff, and students. As we prepare our students for the future, we know that diversity is not going away. The demographics of the country require all students to be prepared for intellectually and culturally demanding careers, and for many future workers, the college campus will be the only place they can get pre-job exposure to our society’s demographic realities.

Michigan Tech has taken bold steps to expand and advance its commitment to campus diversity in a way that focuses not just on increasing numbers of students from minority groups and women, but in promoting an environment that becomes an enriching and rewarding climate that nurtures all members of the community, with an emphasis on inclusiveness – campus diversity will continue to expand to include new constituents. Despite the obvious limitations of the review in respect to time and to the number of

individuals that could be interviewed, the external review team hopes that it has captured the collective thoughts of those with whom we met.

This review and the climate survey study are only starting points that build on what has been done and point toward what needs to be done in the future. There are going to be ongoing and new challenges, and we know that many members of the community do not support diversity or see the need for institutional commitments to it. Yet, we sense a general campus awareness of the need to intensify diversity efforts and of the external forces, such as the corporate community, that have their own expectations for students to be prepared for the future – a preparation that includes a better understanding and appreciation of diversity as related to the workforce. Research after research has documented that comprehensive and demonstrated institutional commitments to diversity produce better and more well rounded students for the workforce. Michigan Tech has, as part of its educational mission, to ensure that its students are prepared to live and work in a multicultural America and the global community.

On the other hand, we were impressed that the campus community in general understands that diversity is an undeniable reality that is not going away, and that there is a practical as well as moral responsibility to move forward. The institution will indeed be different as the result of diversity. But it will also be better. There is still considerable work to be done, and it must involve all segments of the MTU community. The external review team is confident that Michigan Technological University can successfully meet those challenges.

As a concluding comment, the external review team would like to strongly convey the following bottom line message to the MTU campus: **Diversity should be everyone's business at MTU!**

# ATTACHMENT

# MichiganTech

## External Review of Diversity on Campus

### Review Committee Members:

- **Janet Delecke**, DaimlerChrysler, Class Action Counsel
- **John Matlock**, University of Michigan, Associate Vice-Provost, Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs & Director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
- **Karin VanDyke**, Portage Health System, Vice President of Communications
- **Aurles Wiggins**, Michigan State University, Director of Diversity Programs and Assistant to the Dean for Undergraduate Studies, College of Engineering, Michigan State University

### December 4 (Sunday)

Best Western Franklin Square Inn  
Houghton, MI  
906-4827-1700

Dinner with Chris Anderson  
Location:

### December 5 (Monday)

Review Committee to meet with:

8:00 – 8:55 am	President Glenn Mroz Location: Ballroom B, MUB
9:00 – 9:55	Provost David Reed Location: Ballroom B, MUB
10:00 – 10:55	Deans: Scott Amos, School of Technology Mary Durfee, Asst. Provost for Academic Improvement Peg Gale, School of Forest Resources & Environmental Science Max Seel, College of Science & Arts Marilyn Vogler, Graduate School Christa Walck, School of Business & Economics Bob Warrington, College of Engineering Location: Ballroom B, MUB
11:00 – 12:00 pm	Department Chairs Location: Ballroom B, MUB
12:00 – 1:00	Working Lunch for Review Committee Location: Ballroom B, MUB
1:00 – 2:30	Special Academic Programs Location: Ballroom B, MUB

<b><u>December 5 (Monday) - continued</u></b>	
2:35 – 3:05	Keweenaw Pride Presidential Commission on Diversity (PCD) Presidential Commission for Women (PCW) Women in Science & Engineering (WISE) Also invited: Jill Arola, Lois Blau, Kevin Czupinski, Helene Hiner, Mary Raber, Beth Wagner Location: Ballroom B, MUB
3:00 – 3:30	Gloria Melton, Dean of Students Location: Ballroom B, MUB
3:30 – 4:30	Faculty Senate Climate Steering Committee Location: Ballroom B, MUB
4:30 – 5:00	Break
5:00 – 6:30	Working Dinner with Students Location: Best Western Franklin Square Inn – Houghton Portage Room (7 <sup>th</sup> Floor)

**December 6 (Tuesday)**

Review Committee to meet with:

8:00 – 9:30 am	Outreach & MultiEthnic Programs (OME) Location: Alumni Lounge B, MUB
9:30 – 10:00	John Lehman, Assistant VP for Enrollment Services Location: Alumni Lounge B, MUB
10:00 – 10:30	Bonnie Gorman, Associate VP for Student Life Location: Alumni Lounge B, MUB
10:30 – 11:00	Dale Tahtinen, VP of Government Relations Location: Alumni Lounge B, MUB
11:00 – 11:45	Saleha Suleman, Director of International Programs Location: Alumni Lounge B, MUB
11:45 – 1:15	Working Lunch with Students Location: Red Metal Room, MUB
1:15 – 1:45	Les Cook, VP for Student Affairs Location: Alumni Lounge B, MUB
1:45 – 2:45	Review Committee Work Session – Summaries Location: Alumni Lounge B, MUB
2:45 – 4:00	Exit meeting with President Glenn Mroz Location: Alumni Lounge B, MUB