The new academic year is upon us, and crisp, cool mornings cannot be far behind. As I enter my second year as Interim Associate Vice Provost for Diversity & Equity, I am truly pleased with the small steps we began to embark on together last academic year. We will continue many of those initiatives, but also build in new directions, and with your assistance we will advance the campus toward being a more inclusive community. This summer I enlisted a working group to generate a definition of Diversity & Inclusion for KU. The draft statement (below, right) is being reviewed by faculty, staff, and student governance for approval. It has been shared with the Edwards campus and the KU Med Center. I welcome your feedback as well.

We recently presented the Difficult Discussions: Interactive Theatre Troupe at the annual Teaching Summit and will offer performances and new scripts across campus during the academic year. KU again hosts the annual Michael Tilford Conference, October 11 & 12. Last year, it drew 225 participants from across Kansas.

In the spring we plan to initiate a Spring Symposium on the Scholarship of Diversity. I am putting together a planning committee, with more details to come after they convene.

Finally, in this issue we highlight a great KU resource, a visiting faculty colleague, the Presidents of the Diversity Councils for this academic year, and upcoming events.

AN EXTRAORDINARY MULTICULTURAL RESOURCE
The Spencer Museum of Art contains a diverse collection of art and works of cultural significance. With more than 36,000 objects of global art and culture ranging from across Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe, the Spencer is an extraordinary KU resource. Through collections, programs, and strong academic initiatives, they actively encourage interdisciplinary exploration at the intersection of art, ideas, and experience. Abundant activities offer students and the public connection to the art and ideas: exhibitions, artist residencies, conferences, lectures, gallery talks, films, musical and dramatic performances, poetry readings, arts and culture festivals, guided and self-guided tours, digital initiatives, and scholarly publications. For schedules and more information: www.spencerart.ku.edu or contact Celka Straughn, straughn@ku.edu 785.864.0136

A Draft Statement on Diversity & Inclusion
“As a premier international research university, the University of Kansas is committed to an open, diverse, and inclusive learning and working environment that nurtures the growth and development of all. KU holds steadfast to the belief that an array of values, interests, experiences, and intellectual and cultural viewpoints enrich learning and our workplace. The promotion of and support for a diverse and inclusive community of mutual respect require the engagement of the entire university.” (August 30, 2010)
The traditional faculty search process is being questioned. That is: place position ad, accept applications, receive nominations from colleagues at other universities, review and rank candidates, develop a short list, interview top candidates, and make offer. This is the common faculty search process at most higher education institutions. Several characteristics of the process impede efforts to diversify the faculty. First, it is a passive recruiting approach: It assumes that appropriate applicants will seek out and apply for the position. This waiting for and receiving applicants is in sharp contrast to a proactive process that aggressively pursues applicants. Also, the typical faculty search process is time-limited, unlike the typical business organization’s recruiting process, which is on-going. Firms always are both on the hunt for new external talent and “building the pipeline” by grooming current employees and interns. Faculty rarely think of themselves as pipeline builders or of their graduate students as “internal talent.”

Institutions committed to diversity must adopt a different approach to faculty recruitment and hiring, and move from a passive to proactive model to aggressively pursue talented and diverse applicants. This inclusive process must involve all faculty, even those not serving on a particular committee. (Typically, only the subset of faculty on a search committee are actively involved in all steps of a search and the others do not see themselves as active agents in the search). The composition of each search committee must be as diverse as possible on all dimensions of diversity sought by the institution and department. If necessary, faculty from other departments should serve on a search committee to diversify its composition.

Training must ensure that faculty and staff have expertise in basic recruiting and hiring practices, including instruction to make them bias aware. Administration must hold all active in the search process accountable for its outcome. For example, deans should resist signing off on a hiring decision if the applicant pool lacked diversity. Finally, this model for faculty searches must be aligned with and supported by other institutional policies and practices. (Adapted from ‘The Search is On: Engendering Faculty Diversity through More Effective Search and Recruitment,’ Change magazine, July/August 2010).

Registration Now Open!

Michael Tilford Conference
October 11 & 12
Mon. Oct 11, 5:30
Dole Institute of Politics
Welcome reception, food & beverages, brief program, entertainment
Tues. Oct 12, 8:30-3:45
Kansas Union
Conference Program

Open to all faculty & staff! No cost, but you must register.

On-line registration: www.continuinged.ku.edu

Diversity Councils – Presidents
Black Faculty & Staff Council
Karen Hester, khester@ku.edu
Lambda Council
Lori Messinger, lorim@ku.edu
Latino Faculty & Staff Council
Alex Hernandez-Castro, iamalex@ku.edu
Native Faculty & Staff Council
Dawn Tallchief, dtallchief@ku.edu

Jacqueline Thomas

Jacqueline Thomas is a freelance writer and editor based in Indianapolis. Until mid-2009, she was a Senior Editor at The Indianapolis Star. She has been an Institute of Politics Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, a Visiting Fellow on the Editorial Board of The New York Times, and a Pulitzer Prize Juror.

Over her career she has served as Editorial Page Editor of The Baltimore Sun, Washington Bureau Chief and News Editor of The Detroit News, an associate editor of The Detroit Free Press, The Courier-Journal and Louisville Times, and a reporter for The Chicago Sun-Times. Thomas is a past chairman of the National Press Foundation.

Thomas holds a master’s degree from the Columbia University School of International Affairs and is a graduate of Briarcliff College. She was a 1983-84 Nieman Fellow at Harvard University and recipient of a 1997 Chairman’s Award for Innovation from the Times Mirror Company.

The Power of Diversity in Action