

2001 Audit of Implementation of Recommendations from the 1996 Report on Involving People of Color in the Council

by the Diversity Subcommittee of the NCTE Executive Committee
September 2001

Committee Chair: Leila Christenbury

Committee Members: Sharon Chaney, Sharon M. Floyd, Vivian Vasquez, Paul Bodmer, NCTE Liaison

April 1996 – original report submitted by the Task Force on Involving People of Color in the Council
September 1996 – staff recommendations on report submitted
(see Agenda Appendix items for original reports)

(NOTE: Original staff recommendations submitted in 1996 in response to Task Force Report are indicated alphabetically and in bold.)

A. Appoint people of color to commissions, task forces, and other official groups and ensure that people of color be among the leadership of the groups.

See Recommendation II at the end of this report.

Additional details: By November 2001, the Nominating Committee and other NCTE leadership groups will have computer access to an expanded database of Council members of color (including the “talent pool” file names). This database may be accessed by the Nominating Committee and Committee chairs to identify potential NCTE leaders of color by: state, region, scholastic (work) levels, and subject matter expertise. The database will be developed further as NCTE adds utilities to its core membership database software between fall 2001 and spring 2003.

B. Include people of color among the reviewers for NCTE publications.

Looking at published lists of current peer reviewers for journals and members of NCTE Editorial Board, people of color are currently included. Membership on the NCTE Editorial Board is balanced in terms of race and ethnicity, scholastic level, and experience; the Books Program staff at NCTE also tries to target review invitations/solicitations to a representative number of scholars of color. The Books Program office collects information sheets on all volunteers who have agreed to serve as reviewers for the Books Program, and these reviewers are requested to specify their ethnicity on the information sheets.

Unfortunately, NCTE has collected demographic information on only half of the membership, and current access to this data is limited to Headquarters staff. Efforts are underway to improve the database (target completion date is the end of 2002) and to make it available to field editors and Editorial Board members so that they can more actively involve scholars of color in the publications process.

C. Question Executive Director Candidates regarding views on multicultural education and leadership.

During most recent Executive Director Search (summer and fall 2000), such questions were included in candidate interviews.

D. Ask Executive Director Candidate Strategies for policy implementation regarding people of color.

Although questions regarding diversity and multicultural education were included in candidate interviews, policy implementation was not explored during the most recently concluded Executive Director Search. NCTE staff priorities for fiscal year 2002, however, call for a pilot urban initiative to develop in-depth, long term professional development resources for teachers in Washington, DC; Baltimore; and Atlanta, three cities where teachers of color are well represented. The intent of the pilot program is to support urban teachers of English language arts and invite their active participation in NCTE. The project will be underwritten by public/grant funding (some funding was used for the Urban Teachers Academy for the 2001 Annual Convention). This funding will remove expense as an obstacle to NCTE membership and participation.

E. Ask Executive Director for organizational plan to insure incentives for promotion and career ladder for people of color.

The Executive Director has contracted for a systematic salary study and position assessment for all employees of NCTE. Legal counsel advises that if the organization targets employee incentives by race

or ethnicity, it runs the risk of being sued for discriminatory employment practices by staff members who are not treated similarly. Recommendations from the systematic salary study will be implemented in 2002.

F. Recruit people of color for all staff positions.

NCTE Human Resources Director Lynn Neal has compiled an Affirmative Action survey (April 2001) and has in the works an Affirmative Action audit (previously scheduled for distribution in January 2001). NCTE regularly recruits employees at job fairs where people of color are well represented and also advertises higher-level positions in publications targeted to administrators and scholars of color. As of the date of this report, 14% of NCTE employees are people of color, a percentage which has held steady for the past three years.

G. Institute a fellowship program for People of Color or provide a sabbatical for a scholar in residence.

NCTE Executive Director Kent Williamson implemented this program to begin summer 2001; the candidate for the fellowship had to withdraw at the last minute. The program will be offered again during summer 2002.

H. Nominate an all-people of color slate for Vice President on a regular basis.

See Recommendation II at the end of this report.

Additional details: The NCTE Constitution does not provide direction to the Nomination Committee. The Diversity Subcommittee and Presidential team can, though, ask the current nominating group to field an all-people of color slate. This may be delayed due to the new Middle Level Section, whose year for nominations will be 2002.

I. & J. Restructure present procedure for NCTE Nominating Committee to facilitate election of people of color.

See A., above, and Recommendation II at end of report.

Additional details: The establishment of a long term task force was suggested by former NCTE Nominating Committee chair Steve Zelman and reported to the Executive Committee, September 2000 (letter to President Elect Leila Christenbury, 8/27/00).

K. Institute meetings at Annual Convention for new members and involve people of color.

The Newcomers' Breakfast is held during the Annual Convention, and at the Detroit and Nashville conventions, the sites of first two such breakfasts, steps were taken to ensure that teachers of color were amply represented: phone calls were made to local first-timers in areas with high concentrations of teachers of color. The Newcomers' Breakfast appears to attract an audience that is significantly more diverse than the overall convention attendee profile. For the Milwaukee and Baltimore conventions, Scholastic, Inc. is sponsoring a breakfast for the Urban Teacher Academy Scholarship recipients which will serve as a similar mentoring/familiarization function.

L. & M. At Annual Convention, feature teachers from the "Teachers for the Dream" Program and keep them involved.

The original Teachers for the Dream program was sponsored by the NCTE Fund and provided awards to local programs which brought more teachers of color into the profession; it was a short-term program and ended in 1993-94. It was succeeded by the Affiliate Teachers for the Dream Program, also sponsored by the NCTE Fund. This program provides up to four \$700 annual awards to affiliate groups that have introduced successful involvement/recruitment programs targeting teachers of color. CCCC started the Scholars for the Dream program which supports younger faculty and graduate students of color; these individuals are featured on the CCCC program and are invited annually to a reunion function to keep them involved. Each year the winners of the Scholars for the Dream Award are invited to consider NCTE as a potential publisher for their research and to take advantage of support from the Books Program staff for manuscript development.

N., S., & T. Ask Emeritus Assembly to develop mentoring programs and recruiting programs for people of color. Members of the Assembly are also asked to be advisors for publications.

See K., above.

Additional details: The Emeritus Assembly has never taken on this role. Mentorship, however, has been a large part of the TEACH2000 initiative (1999-2001) where more than 11,000 first-year teachers were given complimentary NCTE memberships as well as the opportunity to link electronically to a pool of

volunteer mentors. During the last year of the program, many participants have become active correspondents with mentor-teachers, and there is evidence that the TEACH2000 pool of participants was considerably more diverse than the NCTE membership overall. Staff is currently studying the creation and coordination of a national volunteer pool of experienced NCTE members who would be mentors for early career teachers and be part of the urban teacher initiatives in Washington, DC; Baltimore; and Atlanta.

O. At Annual Convention, have receptions for first timers.

See K., above.

Additional details: "New Face" information is solicited and noted during program proposal submission; Newcomers' Breakfast is provided at Annual Convention.

P. At Annual Convention, have ambassadors to assist first timers.

While there is no official ambassador designation, NCTE officers and leaders attend the Newcomers' and Urban Teacher Academy Breakfasts. These individuals serve as discussion leaders and guides at each table.

Q. & R. At Spring Conference, develop guidelines involving people of color in Spring Conference program planning; encourage attendance at Spring Conference by people of color.

Guidelines have been established and enforced regarding planning and local arrangements personnel; teachers of color have been on both bodies for the past years for NCTE Spring Conference planning. The Sections have agreed that each year one member of the program planning team will be a teacher of color; the order of rotation has been Elementary, Secondary, CEE. This year the Middle Level was added to the group, and one of the Middle Level planners is a person of color. In addition, the leadership team of the local committee must be made up of one person from the Elementary, Secondary, and College Sections, and if one of the three is not a person of color, a person of color must be added.

U. Provide mentor for President's Scholarship for Persons of Color.

This has been just recently addressed through an Executive Committee motion which urges past presidents to invite recipients of their scholarship to the Annual Convention and to nurture a mentoring relationship.

V. & W. Feature Presidential Scholars on Convention Program and encourage them to publish in NCTE journals.

No action taken or planned to date.

X. Make Affiliates' Conference Attendance Policy the policy of all affiliates.

The current policy does apply to all affiliates and does designate representation by people of color (see pp. 8, 9 of Staff Recommendations, May 1996, for full text of this policy).

Y. Continue inclusive focus involving people of color in all affiliate activities.

See X., above.

Additional details: Materials sent to all affiliates ask for yearly statistics regarding people of color in leadership positions and in attendance and presenting at affiliate conferences. A multicultural liaison is encouraged on all affiliate boards, and affiliates are strongly urged to send teachers of color to the bi-annual affiliate leadership meetings. Affiliates are encouraged to officially recognize members who advance diversity and multicultural issues.

Z. Address under-representation of college membership in affiliates.

See Recommendation III at the end of this report.

Additional details: NCTE staff is compiling information on affiliate membership by scholastic level, and it will be available in September 2001. It is not clear, however, if college members are underrepresented as teacher educators appear to constitute a large percentage of affiliate membership.

AA. Select people of color to chair affiliate programs.

See Y., above

BB. Include Teachers for the Dream winners and CCCC Scholars for the Dream winners as featured NCTE speakers.

See L. and M., above.

CC. Focus on recruitment of people of color in any public campaign to recruit new members.

Beginning with August 1998, NCTE redesigned all materials to reflect people of color. Current materials appear representative. A new set of membership promotions, which also reflect diversity, will be sent to more than 300,000 membership prospects during the months of August – October 2001.

DD. Target programs that deal with multicultural issues.

Programs which deal with multicultural issues are targeted through the NCTE Annual Convention, the CCCC Convention, and the Spring Conference programs, through NCTE books and journals, and through workshops offered by the Council. Resolutions on multicultural issues and diversity have been passed and disseminated, and NCTE leaders and spokespersons have written statements on the importance of diversity in both NCTE publications and for national publications.

EE. Ask editors of NCTE journals to assist authors of color.

The importance of recruiting and mentoring authors of color is emphasized in every recent journal editor search (specifically, *Language Arts*, *English Education*, and *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*). In these three cases, the editor has made a commitment to seek out new potential authors and to involve teachers of color in the work of the journal's editorial board.

FF. Recruit and assist multicultural authors to develop manuscripts that deal with multicultural issues and literature.

The mission statement for the NCTE Books Program, approved by the Editorial Board in November 2000, includes as one of its goals "to celebrate and to affirm diversity through the authors we select and the subjects we treat, and to meet the needs of today's classrooms in light of changing demographics." In the past three fiscal years, teachers of color who were authors or editors of NCTE works include: Jabari Mahiri and Min-Zhan Lu for 1999; Carol Lee, Carolyn Temple Adger, Donna Christian, and Orland Taylor for 2000; and Junko Yokata, Ildiko Melis, and Roseann Gonzalez for 2001. People of color who have contributed to edited collections are found in four NCTE books in 1999; two books in 2000 (including five Latino contributors in *Making Justice Our Project*); and three books in 2001.

NCTE staff has recently outlined further steps to fulfill FF; they involve tracking demographic data for journal subscribers, the authors of article submissions, and the published authors, and making the latter a criterion for journal success (possibly monitored by the Knowledge Base Subcommittee of the Executive Committee). Other recommendations include revising the Editor's Rights and Responsibilities document to include recruiting and mentoring authors of color.

GG. Develop a mentoring program for persons of color interested in teaching.

See K., L., M., N., S., and T. above.

Additional details: NCTE supports the "Teachers for the Dream" program and has publicized individuals who participate in those program in NCTE journals.

HH. Develop membership brochures which feature persons of color in the Council.

See CC., above.

Additional details: Latest NCTE membership brochure (circa 1998) features people of color as will the projected fall 2001 brochure.

II. Publicize the Vision Statement involving People of Color in NCTE publications. Not done and considering time lapse between the original statement and today, it may not be not pertinent to goals for 2001 and beyond.

Recommendations:

I. Create a Task Force to investigate the establishment of Commission for Diversity (motion for September 2001 Executive Committee meeting).

II. Advise chairs of all Nominating Committees and charge NCTE Committees and Commissions to provide demographic profiles of standing membership and use the prospective Leader Database.

Chairs will be told that nominations will be examined/reviewed for diversity.

When the chairs of commissions and committees submit names, if the field is not appropriately diverse, two possible courses of action are available:

1. The group is under advisement and told that the Executive Committee will provide recommendations.

2. If the group names recommendations are not diverse again, Committee recommendations can be rejected or the group must provide evidence of looking or same, (motion for September 2001 Executive Committee meeting).

III. Recommend establishment of program for NCTE student affiliates which encourages them to make links to historically black colleges and universities; support pilot program with American University and Howard University (Diversity Committee memo Paul Bodmer and Millie Davis and current NCTE Vice President).