

1996 Staff Recommendations Regarding Implementation of the 1996 Report on Involving People of Color in the Council

The NCTE Task Force on Involving People of Color in the Council, chaired by Charlotte K. Brooks, developed a range of recommendations for policies and procedures to increase the involvement of people of color in the Council, including widely publicizing the Vision Statement Involving People of Color in NCTE publications (see Appendix 1).

At the April 1996 Executive Committee meeting, the Executive Committee adopted the recommendations of the Task Force, with instructions to staff to move toward implementation in the most appropriate and effective ways, with all deliberate speed. Following are both the original and edited versions of the Vision Statement (the edited version will appear in the *The Council Chronicle* and the journals), a report listing the recommendations made by the Task Force, and a summary of the actions and proposed actions that have been made to date.

Original Draft of Vision Statement As It Appears in the Report From the Task Force

The National Council of Teachers of English values racial and ethnic cultural diversity, and it honors, respects, and celebrates the contributions of people of color. It embraces the obligation to address the educational and professional concerns of people of color. It recognizes students of color as central to the demographic changes in our classrooms. Therefore, the Council has a responsibility to recruit and educate teachers to function effectively in such classrooms. The Council will provide leadership in addressing the pedagogical issues involved in teaching a diverse student body. The Council will seek and include the knowledge of people who represent diverse cultures. Toward these ends, the Council will utilize the resources and expertise of people of color within the organization by providing avenues through which knowledge can be shared. Further, the Council set the following goals:

- Increase the membership of people of color in NCTE by the year 2000;
- Develop systematic opportunities for people of color to achieve leadership roles at all levels in the Council;
- Achieve racial and ethnic diversity in staffing at all levels at NCTE headquarters;
- Develop professional services to address the diversity of school populations;
- Continue to provide accurate visual representation of people of color in all Council publications.

With broad, visible, and meaningful involvement of people of color in all areas and at all levels in the Council, NCTE can meet the demographic and democratic challenges of teaching English/language arts in the 21st Century and beyond.

Vision Statement (Edited by Charlotte Brooks) – Involving People of Color

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- A. To the current Policy on Involvement of People of Color, add that people of color be appointed on all commissions, boards, committees, task forces and other official groups. Also add a stipulation that there be people of color among the leadership of those groups (i.e., chair).

The first stipulation is already included in the NCTE Policy on Involvement of People of Color. To ensure that the policy is carried through on commissions and standing committees, the Executive Committee Subcommittee on Governance monitors representation of people of color, with an eye towards making a direct appointment if lack of representation occurs. For regular three-year committees, chairs are informed regularly about the policy, and membership is monitored by Executive Committee and staff liaisons. Every three years a formal survey of these committees is conducted and sent to the Executive Committee to ensure that representativeness is maintained. Concerning the second stipulation above, the following will be added to the current policy on involvement of people of color:

To include people of color among the leadership of the above groups.

Presently some 23% of the Council's commissions, standing committees and committees are chaired by people of color.

- B. Include people of color among the reviewers for NCTE publications, especially those having to do with people of color.

Staff will revise the publications handbook to include a couple of sentences that will make the inclusion of people of color among the reviewer pool a policy of the program. In order to expand the reviewer pool, we will contact known scholars, administrators, and Council leaders for names of people of color who might be willing to review NCTE publications. When the subject matter of a publication is written by or is directly concerned with issues having to do with people of color, a person or persons of color will be among the reviewers.

- C. Question all candidates for new Executive Director in depth about their views on multicultural education and literacy in the profession, i.e., in classrooms, headquarters staff, and the Council membership.

NOTE: Letters C and D are addressed following letter D.

- D. Ask candidates to state and explain specific strategies to implement a policy of involvement in the Council.

The Executive Director wrote a letter (see Appendix 2) to the Chair of the Executive Director Search Committee, Charlotte Brooks, asking her to confirm that the above questions had been asked of the candidates for the position. A response is awaited.

- E. Have the Executive Director provide an organizational plan in insure incentives for promotion and career ladder opportunities for people of color.

The Executive Director has contacted the NCTE lawyer for advice in the legality of developing the organizational plan. In the letter to the lawyer (see Appendix 3), the Executive Director noted that NCTE is an equal-opportunity-employer, and that affirmative action principles are applied for incentives (promotions) and career opportunities (hiring). A reply is awaited.

- F. Recruit people of color for all staff positions. Use special efforts to recruit people of color including such special arrangements as bringing in candidates from other geographic areas.

For hourly jobs, NCTE lists vacancies in the local newspaper and with the Illinois State Employment Service and local colleges. NCTE regularly participates in local job fairs to acquaint the community with job opportunities at both the hourly and professional levels. For professional openings, NCTE lists vacancies in newspapers within the region. For openings at the coordinator

or director level, NCTE lists vacancies in the Affirmative Action Register, Black Issues in Higher Education (for language professional or related positions), and in regional or national newspapers as appropriate. For vacancies at the policy director level, ads are placed in NCTE journals also. All vacancies are posted on the employee bulletin board. All ads identify NCTE as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

- G. Institute a People of Color Fellowship Program or a sabbatical program in which graduate students and scholars of color could be brought to headquarters to work as Scholars in Residence.

Staff will prepare a proposal to be presented to colleges and universities, inviting those institutions to consider NCTE as an appropriate placement for students who must ordinarily fulfill unpaid internships and practica in partial completion of their degree work in such areas as educational administration, journalism, library science, public policy, and teacher education. The proposal will not only describe projects underway or to be initiated in the Council in which interns may become involved (e.g., editing and producing journals and books; establishing and managing online discussion groups associated with NCTE's journals; studying and helping to develop policy for web-publishing; studying, cataloguing, and indexing Council archives), but it will also indicate that we seek especially to fill internship positions in the NCTE with people of color.

Staff will also prepare a proposal to be presented to private funding agencies to support internships and fellowships for people of color in the NCTE that will carry with them cash stipends.

- H. At the NCTE elections, nominate only persons of color for Vice President on a regularly scheduled basis. This should be over and above, not in lieu of, the existing policy to include people of color among nominees presented by each year's nominating committee. Include a person of color on every slot on every ballot. Place a person of color on a cycle rotation for Vice President.

In following up on this issue, the Executive Director has taken three steps at this time. (1) He has written a letter (see Appendix 4) to an outside organization asking for a copy of their policy concerning electing people of color to national office; (2) he has written a letter (see Appendix 5) to the NCTE lawyer asking for his opinion on the legality of including a person of color on every slot on every ballot and about placing only persons of color on a cycle rotation for vice president; and (3) he has written a letter (see Appendix 6) to the NCTE President asking her to appoint a subcommittee of the Executive Committee to examine the issues of the nomination process. We are awaiting responses from the outside organization and the NCTE lawyer. The President has turned the matter of examining the nomination process over to the Governance Subcommittee.

- I. Restructure present procedure for NCTE nominating committee work, including expanding time frame for committee work.

This year we have institutionalized a nominating committee process that gives the NCTE Nominating Committee and Section Nominating Committees an early start in generating names and participating in an early October telephone conference to set their work in motion. Additionally, communication among the nominating committees and more convenient access to conventiongoers has recently been institutionalized via Sunday convention meetings of those groups in a single large room. Other changes introduced in recent years, e.g., tables for nominating committees on site at the Board of Directors meeting, will be continued.

- J. Examine nomination process, develop structural changes and meeting structures that can facilitate elections of people of color.

Please see item "H" and "I" above.

- K. Institute regular meetings at the Annual Convention for new members as part of convention and conference programs (informally, open, with printed materials and persons prepared to help with program. People of color must be involved). For example, the "cracker barrel" session could be reinstated with leaders present who would help answer questions on the organization and the teaching of English/language arts, generally.

NOTE: Letters K-P are addressed in a single response following letter P.

- L. At the Annual Convention, feature teachers from the “Teachers for the Dream” Program.
- M. At the Annual Convention, keep “Teachers for the Dream” winners involved, asking that they return to the convention in subsequent years.
- N. At the Annual Convention, ask the Emeritus Assembly to develop mentoring programs for new members (two strands: people of color and those who have been supportive of people of color; within strand one, perhaps: Marjorie Farmer, Jesse Perry, Charlotte Brooks, Miriam Chaplin, Vivian Davis, Bill Cook; within strand two: Al Gromman, Bill Irmscher, Janet Emig, Alan Purves, Nancy McHugh).
- O. At the Annual Convention, set up receptions for first timers as part of—probably the first event—convention (maybe with book publishers as host, a Scholastic-dinner like event, perhaps, where past presidents are introduced).
- P. At the Annual Convention, select “ambassadors” to assist first timers. Ask emeritus assembly members to take on this role.

The Executive Director has written a memorandum (see Appendix 7) to the current program chair and to the program chairs for the next two conventions asking them to take the above recommendations under advisement and to notify him of steps taken to implement the proposals. The President-Elect has responded saying that she is working with the Convention Director on implementing the proposals. She has also stated her commitment to involving people of color.

- Q. At the Spring Conference, develop guidelines for involving people of color in Spring Conference program planning. A policy must be adopted to assure that Spring Conference planning meets the same criteria for involving people of color as the annual convention.

NOTE: Letters Q and R are addressed in a single response following letter R.

- R. At the Spring Conference, encourage people of color to attend the Spring Conference and become involved in the planning at all levels. Special attention must be paid to the geographical areas in which the conference is held. Target promotional materials to people of color at the local level. Further, when the local arrangements person is assigned, he or she must include people of color on the main leadership committee as well as on subcommittees so as to insure involvement.

To insure involvement of people of color in program planning, the three Spring Conference groups--the Secondary Section, Elementary Section, and Conference on English Education--will devise a plan whereby they rotate in appointment of a person of color as strand chair for the conference. Every third year, one of the groups will appoint a person of color as their strand chair. This does not preclude more than one strand chair from being a person of color in a given year, of course, should this occur by dint of choice of the groups.

Regarding local arrangements, recently the Executive Committee mandated that the main local leadership group for the Spring Conference include a person of color. To further effect diverse participation in local arrangements subcommittees and other aspects of local planning, early correspondence to the local arrangements chair will include language such as the following:

The Executive Committee has called for participation of people of color at all levels of planning for the Spring Conference. You and your leadership team are urged, then, to seek such diversity on subcommittees and in other contexts. Your promotional efforts at the local level, for example, should include materials and activities targeted to people of color.

- S. Encourage Emeritus members to recruit people of color and to mentor people of color.

This recommendation was made to extend the practice of mentoring of people of color at the convention. Key aspects of this proposal are the recruitment of people of color and the mentoring

that will enable the retention of these recruited members. In Appendix 6, the Executive Director asked the President to request that an NCTE-EC subcommittee address this matter. The proposal will be discussed by the Governance Subcommittee.

- T. Encourage Emeritus assembly members to become advisors for people of color who want their work published.

Staff will write a letter to Emeritus assembly members asking them to volunteer to become advisors for people of color who want their work published.

- U. Redesign the President's Scholarship for Person of Color so as to provide a mentor for the winner. The mentor will regularly support and involve presidential scholars in the Council.

Add to the criterion for applying and accepting the President's Scholarship for Person of Color the following stipulation: The recipient of the President's Scholarship for Person of Color will agree to work with a mentor for one year. The mentor will be the NCTE President who selects the person for the scholarship or an NCTE member designated by the president. The mentor's responsibilities will include supporting the student in his or her academic goals and involving the recipient in Council activities, including featuring the recipient on convention programs.

*Proposed revisions are in **Boldface** type.*

Criteria for President's Teacher Education Scholarship for People of Color (sponsored by the Standing Committee for the NCTE Fund)

Executive Committee Action 89:98

1. *Qualified applicants must be persons of color.*
2. *The awardees must be duly enrolled in or accepted for admission to a college or university.*
3. *The awardees must have declared a major in English, English education, or elementary education, or must have stated to the president the intention of majoring in one of those areas and pursuing a career in teaching.*
4. *The awardees must have demonstrated potential for academic success.*
5. *The awardee cannot be an individual already on full scholarship, and it must be the judgment of the president that some degree of need for the scholarship exists.*
6. ***The awardees will agree to work with mentors (either the president or an NCTE member designated by the president) for one year. Mentors will support students in their academic goals and involve recipients in Council activities, including featuring them on convention programs.***
7. *The president will submit to the Executive Committee a brief summary of each nominee's background and qualifications, along with a recommendation to approve the \$1,000 scholarship award.*
- 8.

- V. Feature presidential scholars on convention program.

The Executive Director has written a memorandum (see Appendix 7) to the current program chair and to the program chairs for the next two conventions asking them to take the above recommendations under advisement and to notify him of steps taken to implement the proposals. The President-Elect has responded saying that she is working with the Convention Director on implementing the proposals. She has also stated her commitment to involving people of color.

- W. Encourage presidential scholars to publish in NCTE journals.

All recipients of the NCTE Presidential Scholarship will receive a letter from the Director of Publications inviting them to publish with NCTE. Developmental services will be offered (See Appendix 8).

- X. The "Affiliates Conference Attendance Policy" must become the policy of all affiliates.

The current policy actually does apply to all affiliates. It is as follows:

*Each affiliate is encouraged to send at least two delegates to the Affiliate Leadership Conference. NCTE strongly recommends that these include a person of color.**

*Each affiliate may, however, send up to four delegates. If three delegates are sent, at least one of the total of the three must be a person of color. If four delegates are sent, at least one of the total of four must be a person of color and at least one a person from an underrepresented group.***

**e.g., African American/ Black, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Native American*

***e.g., new teacher, administrator, elementary teacher, middle school teacher, post secondary teacher*

The Council partially funds the costs of all attendees at affiliate leadership conferences. Even if an affiliate desires to fully fund additional participants at the conferences, they cannot do so if those who wish to attend do not follow the specifications of the policy. Absent a request to change the policy in a specific way, the only question here seems to be how to handle unanticipated violations of the policy. The Executive Director recommends that any violation of the policy be reported to the Executive Committee Subcommittee on Affiliates, which would take action appropriately on a case-by-case basis.

- Y. Continue inclusive focus on involving people of color in all affiliate activities, including recruitment and retention.

The present focus will be continued, as recommended.

NOTE: Letters Z, AA, and BB are addressed in a single response following letter BB.

- Z. Address underrepresentation of college membership in affiliates.
- AA. Select chairs of different ethnicity or persons committed to diversity to chair affiliate programs.
- BB. Include Teachers for the Dream winners and 4C's Scholars for the Dream winners as featured speakers at affiliate meetings, conferences, and workshops.

Beverly Chin will send a letter (see Appendix 9) to affiliate presidents and liaison officers urging them to address the under representation of college membership in affiliates; to continue to focus on involving people of color in all affiliate activities, including recruitment and retention; and to select persons of different ethnicity or persons committed to diversity to chair affiliate programs.

To implement this recommendation, the Director of Affiliate and Member Services will annually track the Teachers for the Dream winners and Scholars for the Dream winners. These individuals and their areas of expertise will be pointed out to the affiliate leaders in the state or region where the individuals live, with encouragement to involve the Teachers/Scholars as featured speakers at affiliate meetings, conferences, and workshops.

- CC. Focus on the recruitment of people of color in any public campaign to recruit new members. Provide evidence that people of color are given a central role in the recruitment. Provide membership information and surveys on people of color. Obtain mailing lists from organizations of people of color.

To increase recruitment of people of color, NCTE staff redesigned all of its membership brochures to feature teachers of color prominently (see Appendix 10). One of these brochures was used in an August mailing to 4,500 teachers of multicultural students (see Appendix 10). NCTE is engaged in an ongoing effort to profile the ethnicity, experience, and professional interests of its membership, and is using this data to assist CCCO in developing a stratified sample for a Research Foundation-funded study of members' and nonmembers' interests. Prior to the Annual Convention, we plan a promotional photo shoot in the city of Chicago to build a large supply of photos of teachers and students of color which will be used in subsequent promotional mailings to lists of teachers and scholars composed primarily of people of color.

DD. Target programs that deal with multicultural issues.

Staff requests further clarification of this item.

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

Staff will contact NCTE journal editors notifying them of the Task Force on People of Color's request that they assist authors of color with developmental editing, if necessary.

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

The publications program has, for some time, actively sought, developed, and published manuscripts relating to multicultural themes and issues. In response to the Task Force's recommendation, we will further these efforts in the following ways:

- *contact Council leaders and ask them to propose names of promising young teachers and scholars of color;*
- *write to those teachers and scholars, inviting them to submit manuscripts/dissertations, and offer developmental support on preparing possible book proposals;*
- *send acquisitions staff to selected conferences related to issues of race and multiculturalism, and aggressively pursue and develop manuscripts from conference participants.*

GG. Develop a mentoring program for persons of color interested in teaching. Encourage new teachers and new members through a strong mentoring program. (See Appendixes 7 and 8).

HH. Develop an attractive membership brochure which features persons of color in the Council. (See "Power of Teaching" brochure from 1993.)

See current membership brochures (Appendix10).

II. Widely publicize the Vision Statement Involving People of Color in NCTE publications (i.e., in *The Council Chronicle*, in journals, as a brochure, etc.).

Currently, staff is inquiring about whether editing for the Vision Statement is desired. When this process is completed, the statement will be published as recommended above.