

June 19, 2000

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Report of the Black Staff Dialogue Planning Committee Findings

Attached you will find an executive summary and a detailed report of the Black Staff Dialogue Planning Committee's findings. This report represents the Planning Committee's efforts over the past six months to capture, document and validate the experiences of black career staff at the Berkeley campus, focusing on the post-Proposition 209 period.

It is with mixed feelings that we present this report to you. We feel a great sense of accomplishment in that we achieved our goal of conducting the dialogue, making the surveys widely available and producing the report in due time. However, we are also saddened by some of the experiences that were shared and the reported reluctance of staff to participate because of fear of retaliation and apathy. This speaks loudly to the task the Berkeley campus administration has in gaining the trust and respect of black, and perhaps, other minority staff.

We greatly appreciated your involvement and interest in the dialogue process and want to thank you for having the courage to support what is often considered an unpopular issue. Please know that you have the Planning Committee's full support in presenting the issues contained in the report to campus management as we are committed to assisting with that process in any way you deem appropriate. We also remain vigilant in awaiting the administration's response to this important document that represents both the courage and the conviction of the Berkeley

campus' black staff who participated. They share the Chancellor's desire for a humane, supportive and inclusive Berkeley campus community.

Sincerely,

Black Staff Dialogue Planning Committee

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**REPORT ON**

**EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF A  
POST-209 ENVIRONMENT:  
A BLACK STAFF DIALOGUE**

**June 2000**

**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is based on data gathered from a Black Staff Dialogue held on February 23, 2000, and individual surveys and focus groups conducted for two months following the dialogue. Data were collected from over 110 staff, or approximately 12% of the Black career staff on campus. The anecdotal data clustered into five areas as follows:

1. Negative Stereotyping of Blacks  
Staff reported that comments made by white managers infer that blacks are inferior, hostile, insubordinate, and angry. Some black staff feel that often times white colleagues are afraid to approach them directly. As a result, problems are reported to the supervisor instead of being dealt first with the black employees.
2. Inconsistent/Unfair Treatment  
Staff reported inconsistent and inequitable application of policies, resulting in favoritism and lack of accountability among managers and supervisors. For example, some black staff feel that reclassifications for them took longer than their white counterparts, that blacks are disciplined more often and receive harsher penalties and sanctions than others, that they perform higher level jobs that are not recognized or compensated for, and that others whom they have trained are promoted into higher classifications over them.
3. Lack of Training, Development and Promotional Opportunities  
Staff reported that department resources and administrative leave time for education and training are not being communicated or made available in departments. For example, some black staff feel stuck in their jobs, because hiring managers expect certain skills while their current supervisors are unmotivated to see them progress and acquire these skills.
4. Unsupportive Work Environment/Lack of Respect and Civility  
Staff reported that generally there is a lack of respect and civility in some departments. For example, when one participant expressed this feeling of disrespect, the response to this individual was to say she/he was being overly sensitive rather than having a dialogue with the individual to understand and deal with the root of the comment.
5. Unfair Hiring Practices in a Post-209 Environment  
Staff reported negative personal experiences with the hiring process, generally perceiving it to be worse in the post-209 environment. Some managers believe they are not allowed to promote or maintain the ethnic diversity of staff in a post-209 environment, whereas other managers are aware of the continuing AA/EEO obligations but ignore them with no consequences.

Specific examples illustrate each of the issues raised above, reflecting a myriad of voices and experiences. Additionally, these issues and staff experiences are supported in the research literature. Quantitative campus data supports the lack of progress generally for black staff. For example, over the past 11 years, the share of the campus career black work force has dropped from 17.1% in 1989 to 14.9% in 2000, with a net loss of 5% overall.

Participants also shared their priorities for campus action. These priorities are:

- issue a statement on zero tolerance for discrimination;
- hold managers and supervisors accountable for their contribution or lack of contribution to diversify the campus;
- train supervisors on the basics of supervision so that staff of color are not adversely impacted by arbitrary or capricious practices;
- train supervisors specifically to deal effectively with cultural differences and to raise awareness about conscious and unconscious negative stereotyping and its impact;
- create effective monitoring systems to ensure equal opportunity in promotions, reclassifications, and upward mobility;
- encourage managers to use informal conflict resolution processes; and
- encourage all members of the campus community to show greater respect and civility in the workplace.

The black staff dialogue was a unique event. The stories and experiences of black staff form the foundation of this report. It is noteworthy that even though the planning committee understood the general issues facing black staff, they were overwhelmed with emotion and saddened by the pain and frustration expressed in the individual stories told by staff during this process of “data collection.” The planning committee is hopeful that the issues raised will be taken seriously and that campus administrators and relevant units will take whatever steps are necessary to address these issues effectively and swiftly.

## **BACKGROUND**

This report is based on data gathered from a Black Staff Dialogue held on February 23, 2000 and from individual surveys and focus groups conducted after the dialogue. The black staff dialogue grew out of a request from several attendees of last Fall's video showing of a campus dialogue which explored the personal impact of Proposition 209. The initial campus-wide dialogue was held in Fall 1998. The dialogue was videotaped and was part of the Diversity Video Series shown by Staff Affirmative Action Office (SAAO) and CARE Services for Faculty and Staff in Fall 1999. (See Appendix A for flyers publicizing both events.)

After the video showing, the attendees spoke eloquently to their experiences on campus, and encouraged further dialogue to explore the experiences and issues of black staff in particular. As a result, the Staff Affirmative Action Office initiated a planning process that included communication with Assistant Vice Chancellor of Human Resources Sandra Haire, Faculty Equity Associate Charles Henry, representatives from the Black Staff Faculty Organization (BSFO), the Title IX Compliance Office, CARE Services, and the staff members requesting the opportunity to talk, and to be heard. A planning committee was formed (see Appendix B).

The purpose of the facilitated black staff dialogue was two-fold: (1) to provide an opportunity for staff to share their experiences as UCB employees; and (2) for the information to be compiled into a report where issues would be identified and shared with Assistant Vice Chancellor Haire, Faculty Equity Associate Charles Henry and the BSFO. The goal was that this information could inform future activities of the campus, Office of Human Resources, the Staff Affirmative Action Office and BSFO. About 60 campus staff, most of whom were black, attended the event. The flyer publicizing the event and process can be found in Appendix C.

After the dialogue, a website was posted and advertised in The Berkeleyan (see Appendix D) to continue to gather data from individual surveys. In addition, copies of the survey were made available to staff and a focus group of black managers and supervisors was also conducted. The data collection period lasted another two months after the initial dialogue was held.

The planning committee received data from over 110 staff or roughly 12% of the Black career staff on campus. The planning committee felt the response rate was low and when they explored possible explanations for the low response, they discovered two major reasons: 1) staff did not trust the process, e.g., they felt that their responses could be traced back to them and they were afraid of retaliation, and; 2) they were apathetic, e.g., they did not feel that their comments would be taken seriously by campus administration.

## **ISSUES RAISED**

The issues articulated below are based on the experiences of the participants. Several themes were repeated over and over again by individuals in the dialogue, focus groups and the written surveys. What was powerful about the dialogue and survey was hearing and reading the stories staff had to tell and acknowledging their experiences. To maintain the confidentiality of individual staff, the planning committee took the liberty of removing identifiable names, places and dates, editing and paraphrasing whenever necessary, but taking care to maintain the individual voices as much as possible.

Individuals were asked to answer the question: "As a staff person what information or experiences do you want to share about the issues you raised, positive or negative? Give examples." The complete list of questions can be found in Appendix E.

### **I. Negative Stereotyping of Blacks**

Participants expressed strong feelings about being "judged by the color of their skin rather than the content of character" and as a result, feel excluded from the decision-making process on matters that directly affect their working environment and work performance. They feel that managers and supervisors make decisions on work related matters without the input of the staff, especially black staff, and without understanding or concern for the impact of their decisions.

Many participants commented that there is a stereotype that Blacks cannot and will not work hard and their efforts are rendered invisible, either by ignorance or by intentional disregard. Staff reported that comments made predominately by white managers infer that blacks are inferior, hostile, insubordinate, and angry. Some feel that often times whites are afraid to approach black staff directly because of fear. As a result, problems are reported to the supervisor instead of dealing directly with the black employees. Black managers also reported being boxed in to certain stereotypes. These actions demonstrated to many the persistence of negative black stereotypes in the workplace. As a result, many feel that they work in a campus environment where there is a lack of professional respect, recognition, inclusion, and objective decision-making.

#### **Examples:**

- A participant stated that when African Americans speak up about departmental and campus matters they appear to be a threat to managers and supervisors who are predominantly white, and are viewed as hostile.
- Another participant felt that he/she was not allowed to voice his/her opinion, e.g., when you voice an opinion, you were considered radical, labeled hostile and insubordinate.

- A participant cited an example of being called into a meeting with her supervisor and asked not to talk to her co-worker. The individual formed the perception that in this environment others “socialize”; however when black staff talk, they are “disturbing others.”
- Another participant commented “I often go to school at night right after work. One night I was here late, about 6:30 p.m. and one of our professors opened my door (it was marked “please do not disturb”), and started to give me instructions. I politely asked if he’d leave me a note and I’d respond to him ASAP the next day. I was reported and HAD to explain my attitude problem. Another faculty addressed me at lunch. Again, I politely told the faculty that I was at lunch and could she come back later. I was AGAIN reported about my attitude problem. Funny, all of the black women who’ve worked here have had ‘attitude’ problems.”
- One Black manager cited an experience of being put on every committee when he first arrived. The reaction from his non-black colleagues was that they saw him getting exposure they weren’t getting and assumed the exposure was because he was black, and not necessarily because he was bright or smart. He didn’t know the real reasons.
- Another black manager commented that when she was successful in a project, she received comments from peers like “You’re just all over the place. How did you do that?” She felt that the way they said it implied that she got special consideration because she was black or female and not based on merit.
- One participant noted that “There’s a lack of understanding from whites about how racist the Berkeley campus is. Fact is that most whites I meet on campus have some problems with stereotyping or believe that there really isn’t a racial problem here at Berkeley. Most respond ‘I couldn’t be bigoted because I have black friends or grew up with some blacks in the neighborhood.’ Also I’d like to address ‘cause and affect’ between whites and blacks. Example: if I make a mistake my intelligence is questioned; if I forget to do something, then the issue of laziness is addressed. My white counterpart would probably be judged quite differently in both circumstances, i.e., she/he made a mistake and forgot to do something; me (black person)...she’s obviously not smart and she’s probably lazy. If I don’t smile, I’m asked why I’m mad or I’m reported as having a bad attitude. If my white coworkers don’t smile...she just doesn’t...”
- “Whenever there is any discussion in the office having to do with a black individual, I am always asked what I think about that black individual or situation. As a black man, I am continually asked to be a representative of my race even though I may not know anything about that individual or situation. I am asked to explain another person’s behavior just because we are from the same race.”
- There were various stories from participants about meeting a person they had been in email or phone contact with on the job and having that individual express surprise on discovering

that they were black. Some black participants had similar experiences with other non-black staff assuming that they did not belong in a meeting.

- One black manager cited an example of a white customer who kept responding to his white co-worker instead of him even though the manager was in charge of the meeting and was asking the questions.
- A participant observed that during an undergraduate student recruitment event, an executive level campus administrator bungled the introduction of the only black faculty member who was on the panel. He did not have the same problem with the other panelist who was not black. The observer was embarrassed for the black professor and felt that the administrator was more comfortable dealing with non-black faculty.
- A black manager commented that if you sit down with your own (ethnic) group, you're noticed more than when you sit down with other (mixed) groups. No one will say anything directly but that observation will come back to you indirectly.
- "I'm VERY tired of the stereotypes whites have of blacks."

## **II. Inconsistent/Unfair Treatment**

Many staff complained about the lack of consistent and equitable application of policies among staff. They feel that managers do not enforce the rules equally among staff. This is seen as a double standard to black staff. There is a widespread perception of favoritism and lack of accountability among managers and supervisors. This ranged from general treatment in the office to compensation issues, including merit bonuses. Specifically, participants reported that it takes longer for blacks to get reclassified than their white counterparts, blacks are disciplined more often and receive harsher penalties and sanctions than others, their opinions and ideas are not valued, they perform higher level jobs that are not recognized or compensated for, and that others whom they have trained are promoted into higher classifications over them.

### **Examples:**

- "I remember this time when my manager called everyone except for me into the office to give them some news. I felt ignored and that I was being treated differently compared to the other staff."

- “My manager brings her child to work and expects me to take watch over this child. I know that other staff would not be allowed to do this. I feel this is unfair and unequal treatment on the part of the manager.”
- “In some units some employees get ‘punished’ for being 5 or 10 minutes late while nothing is said to other employees who do the same thing.”
- “White and Asian supervisors have made up their minds that in a situation of conflict or misunderstanding, that black staff are wrong. For example, a merit bonus for a black employee that was ‘in the bag’ was dropped when a white faculty member lodged a complaint--the merit process was summarily canceled. The employee was told that a faculty member complained, but there were no discussions with the employee about the nature of the complaint. There was no attempt to gather the employee’s side of the story.”
- “As a black staff person I am expected to do more work and not complain about unfair or unequal treatment. I feel that I am not understood or appreciated as a person. The unfair and unequal treatment causes stress which leads to health problems such as hypertension.”
- “For 19 months a black employee in a department did the work of three people. This employee and another white employee in the department were reclassified. The white staff member who had publicly acknowledged behavior problems on the job received an increase that was double the percentage of the black employee and back pay that was double the amount of time than for the black employee.”
- One participant shared her experience as a team member whose team was nominated for a Distinguished Service Award. She reported that every member of her team received an award except her. She was the only African American staff member on the team. She felt that her supervisor singled her out and that she did not get the award because of her skin color.
- Some staff reported that they were working out of classification with no compensation. When they asked their supervisors about it, they were told “we’re cross-training you” or “we’re doing teamplaying.”
- “I have had two identical reclass requests submitted for review and gotten two different classifications. This to me reflects inconsistency.”
- A participant commented “I have seen unqualified white women hired with no skills. I have seen white women get reclassifications faster than Black Americans. White women get special performance awards more than any minority.”

- Another black participant said, “In my office many white females are hired and not capable of doing the work, yet they remain on the job. And the management has the nerve to ask that we be patient and help train this unskilled individual.”
- One participant talked about the high expectations faculty had in an elite institution, that the faculty expect a lot of themselves and others who work with them. This person felt that blacks in this situation, who don’t have a college education, struggle more to keep up. Some felt that difference in class was a factor and that people were treated differently based on educational level.
- Addressing performance issues was another issue raised. One person commented, “As a manager, taking a personnel action against a minority employee is not worth the tons of paperwork.” Another responded that the long tenure with the university makes managers afraid to deal with performance issues.

### **III. Lack of Training, Development and Promotional Opportunities**

Policies on administrative time for education/training are not being communicated or promoted to staff in departments. Many participants felt they are not encouraged to attend training or develop themselves. Funding for staff development is often limited. For example a participant noted that the employees in her department had to decide between funding for earthquake safety equipment and funding for staff training.

#### **Examples:**

- “In a previous department I often found that despite management’s statements and ‘employee development plans,’ managers and supervisors were not actually interested in seeing employees progress.”
- “Person W applied for a staff internship and was not selected. She seems now to have given up and has not pursued any other career development strategies. Person X won’t apply for a staff internship because she is certain her supervisor won’t support her application. Person Y feels her supervisor is racist and sexist and won’t support her development. She has been an AAI for over 20 years.”
- “I have been placed in a unit with no possibility of growth. When applying to other jobs, I’m told I don’t have enough experience of a certain kind. Why not be allowed to learn something new?”
- “When positions are available that would allow someone within the department the opportunity for promotion, it is generally posted and filled by an outside candidate. Why aren’t we given the opportunity to fill these positions within the departments instead of hiring outside? In many cases, upper management already has the person they desire to fill the

position before it's even posted. This, in my opinion, is a form of discrimination. Especially since in many cases, you are required to do the work until the new person is hired, train them and they become your supervisor. Something truly needs to be done that would prevent this from happening on a continual basis.”

- “We are also expected to perform job duties without any training on how to do the work. Higher expectations of staff with no training cause serious morale issues. It makes me feel bad when I am expected to do a job and I'm not able to because I have not been adequately trained.”
- One participant felt, “Diversity on this campus means white women, as far as managerial and advancement opportunities.”

#### **IV. Unsupportive Work Environment/Lack of Respect and Civility**

Participants talked about the lack of respect and civility in their departments, from managers not appreciating the cultural differences of their employees to managers taking their stress out on them. Several people commented on the lack of resources to do their jobs effectively.

##### **Examples:**

- I've worked in offices where the managers get stressed out and take it out on staff. Managers need to be trained on how to organize and manage their workload so they can assist the staff they supervise with work issues. Staff feel unsupported by management.
- “There is also the issue of the environment staff have to work in. Many times there is not enough space for me to do my work in. I am not provided with trays to organize my work or other work tools necessary to perform my job.”
- A participant reported that there was a tremendous turnover in many departments, particularly African-American staff in both the professional and non-professional ranks. They would leave rather than fight, predominantly because of how they are treated.
- One participant gave this example, “...a manager that changes your job duties without letting you know and sends an email to the entire department notifying them that you will no longer be handling their request.”
- Issues related to people being from different cultures needs to be addressed. It is not only a black/white issue. People need to know that they do or say things that are considered disrespectful in some cultures. Many times people make assumptions based on what you look like. This causes assumptions that are not real. My cultural tradition is to give ‘thanks’ before eating. At a work social I was asked not to pray before the meal, that this made the

others feel uncomfortable. I felt that I was being asked to give up my cultural belief. That it was 'o.k.' to deprive me of my tradition to make others comfortable.

- There have been situations when I have felt disrespected and have expressed this feeling of disrespect to a manager or another staff person. However, my complaint is not taken seriously and I'm usually told, "Oh, we didn't mean it like that--you're being overly sensitive."

## **V. Unfair Hiring Practices in a Post-209 Environment**

Participants described negative personal experiences with the hiring process. They generally perceive it to be worse in the post-209 environment. Participants also noted the lack of black administrators at the top levels of the campus and its impact. They feel that there aren't any role models for black staff and that it is hard for people to feel a commitment to the institution without having role models to look up to.

### **Examples:**

- "Having been on campus for a long while, I have observed interviewers of jobs to be white."
- "A supervisor made a negative statement about one of their Black staff getting a job without their recommendation."
- "There is no additional outreach being done to ethnic minorities or women, particularly for top jobs. Some managers believe they are not allowed to promote or maintain ethnic diversity of staff in a post-209 environment. Other managers are aware of the continuing AA/EEO obligations and just ignore them now that 209 has passed."
- Someone described a recent job posting. Four female African American employees applied for the management position. Candidates were interviewed, but no one was selected. The job was eventually closed and never hired for. None of the applicants was given feedback about why the job was closed, or about their application for the job. It was assumed that the job was closed because no white candidates applied.
- One respondent talked about her 19 years of work experience at UC in administrative positions. Her experience in pursuing administrative specialist or administrative analyst jobs was not rewarding. She felt that when she was invited to interviews, she observed that blacks were the lowest represented in the room. In fact, very seldom were there blacks conducting the interview. The message she received from this was that blacks were not in positions of authority. She felt that people hire who they feel most comfortable with.

- Another respondent was told at an interview, “I was being interviewed for a quota, we already have someone for the job.”
- “Before Prop. 209 I was invited to interviews, however, I rarely was offered the promotion. Since the passing of this bill, I haven’t received many interviews at all. When I call the hiring department, I’m told ‘the position has been filled.’ The elimination of affirmative action has affected my ability to excel within the University.”
- “When I applied for promotional jobs in my Department I was always turned down. When I got an interview and asked for feedback, I still never got an answer, always too busy...”
- “I have been an AAIL, Step 5 for 21 years and have been applying for other jobs since 1979. Excuses for not getting jobs have been ‘We had a TAP for 6 months, and hiring you would set us back 4 months.’ ‘You are overqualified for this AAIL position.’ After filling this position for 7 months, I was told ‘you crossed your arms during the interview, but you shouldn’t have any trouble getting other jobs because you dress well.’ I had to train my replacement. ‘You don’t have any patent agreement experience.’ ‘You don’t have enough accounting experience.’ ‘She has a computer at home.’ ‘You made one typo on your application.’ After 31 years of experience, 15 of which involved doing calendar input, I was told, ‘you don’t have enough calendar experience.’ ‘You seem over-anxious to leave your department.’ ‘I can’t see myself supervising you because you are my friend.’ After informing someone of my interest in a job during the freeze, I was informed ‘I didn’t know you were interested in the job, and I didn’t know that you knew how to do legal forms.’”

## **DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS**

Approximately half of the participants who participated in the dialogue and survey completed the demographic profile (see Appendix F). Of those who responded, most (89%) were female; most (80%) were between the ages of 36 and 55; and over half were in non-supervisory administrative/clerical positions. 84% of the respondents had been in their current jobs less than 11 years, with a significant percentage (48%) in their current positions less than 4 years. About 55% of the respondents have worked at UCB for over 10 years. Approximately 42% of the respondents reported working for an academic department.

## **CITING THE RESEARCH**

The issues raised by black employees in this report are not uncommon issues for blacks or other minority groups in other organizational settings. Their perspectives and experiences are reflected in the research literature.

Taylor Cox, a professor in organizational behavior and human resource management at the University of Michigan has done a significant amount of research in cultural diversity and stereotyping in organizations. On the issue of negative stereotyping of blacks and its impact, Cox concludes from his research that “stereotyping behavior is prevalent in organizations, and where present, adversely impacts the career experiences of members of the stereotyped groups. Due to power imbalances, members of culture minority groups will be more affected by stereotypes than will majority group members. Stereotypes will be manifested in organizations by such things as lower acceptance of out-group members as leaders, job segregation based on identity group and differences in the causal attributions for both hiring and performance (between majority and minority group members).”<sup>1</sup>

Additional research is found in a report by the American Institute for Managing Diversity (AIMD) entitled Cultural Manifestations of Diversity: The Impact of Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, and Compensation Policies and Practices on the Glass Ceiling. Citing from the report, “The research (Neckerman and Kirshenman 1991) shows that prejudice and cultural misunderstandings create difficulties for minorities and women--especially those from lower income levels--who interview with predominately white employers. Although instances of classic racism and sexism have declined over the years, race and gender relations between strangers remain filled with fear, suspicion, and moral contempt (Blauner 1989; Anderson 1990). Individuals from differing social groups seem to lack common experiences and conversation patterns which typically ease interaction in interpersonal settings (Erickson 1975). In addition, verbal and nonverbal cues (Parsons and Liden 1984; Hollenbeck 1974) are often absent and/or misread, thereby exacerbating misunderstandings (Kochman 1983; Arvey 1979). This situation tends to worsen with the interjection of class differences.”<sup>2</sup>

A recent article looking at racial progress in the workplace had this comment from Mary-Jane Sinclair, a former HR executive and consultant in New Jersey. She says “racial bias can range from ‘a sense of discomfort’ all the way up to aggressive prejudice--and it’s more prevalent than anyone would want to say it is. This is still a society that is not open to people who are different from those in its dominant culture.”<sup>3</sup>

Research in the area of stereotypes and hiring patterns are consistent with participant views. Again, citing from the AIMD report, “Employers have a mental, if not written, list of personal traits desired in a potential employee. The underlying consensus of this practice is two-fold: (1) to select individuals with similar demographic backgrounds, physical features, attitudes, values and beliefs, which creates a relatively homogeneous environment and thereby reduces the level of team conflict (Jackson, et. al. 1991); and (2) to screen candidates’ personality and potential behavior at the onset

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<sup>1</sup> Cox Jr., Taylor, Cultural Diversity in Organizations: Theory, Research and Practice, S.F.: Berrett-Hoehler Publishers, Inc., 1994, pg. 101.

<sup>2</sup>American Institute for Managing Diversity (AIMD), Cultural Manifestations of Diversity: The Impact of Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, and Compensation Policies and Practices on the Glass Ceiling, 1994, pg. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Grossman, Robert J., “Race in the Workplace,” HR Magazine, March 2000, pg. 44.

means that less effort is needed in training, socialization, or monitoring them once they are in the organization (Cohen and Pfeffer 1986).”

“It is also noted that ranking among the top are those traits associated with attitude (Braddock and McPartland 1987; Committee on Economic Development 1985; Hamilton and Roessner 1972). For instance, employers report dependability; punctuality; positive attitude about work; self and authority, and the ability to work well with others as the most important attitudinal traits--especially when recruiting for lower to middle-level entry positions. On the other hand, attitudinal traits are top priority when seeking candidates for upper-level positions as well. However, other factors come into play. According to Walsh (1988) a high demand is placed on advanced levels of language, computation skills, specialized knowledge, the ability to learn quickly, and the ability to think on the spot in complex situations. Further, formal educational, sound judgment and leadership qualities are highly valued. On the surface these all seem like reasonable expectations of employers. However, Hartigan and Wigdor (1989) indicate that the average employer perceives various racial/ethnic groups and women as typically lacking in these priority job traits. Minority and women candidates, even those with the same educational levels of their white counterparts, are considered to be a higher employment risk. The general consensus is that their attitude about work and previous training in specific skills is poor.”<sup>4</sup>

Finally, in the areas of performance appraisal and promotion, “scholars note that there is evidence that some individuals are systematically held down at the lowest level of organizations. This represents a ‘sticky floor’ that retains people at low levels of pay and responsibility (Bureau of National Affairs 1992). The sticky floor holds individuals at the lower levels of employment due to job stereotypes, cultural forces outside the organization (such as child or elderly care being the responsibility of women), or to the lack of career or promotional training and opportunities.”<sup>5</sup>

## **STAFF PRIORITIES TO ADDRESS ISSUES**

In addition to raising issues, the planning committee also solicited feedback from participants as to the priorities the campus should focus on first that would make a difference to them. The question asked of them was: given all the issues you raised, which one in your opinion, needs to be addressed first? What would make a difference to you?

### **1. Zero tolerance for discrimination**

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<sup>4</sup> AIMD, Op. cit., pp. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pg. 2.

The campus needs to issue a statement on zero tolerance for discrimination and its consequences. Participants pointed out that UC has zero tolerance for violence in the workplace but not for discrimination.

**2. Managers and supervisors must be held accountable for their contributions or lack of contributions to diversify the campus.**

Some participants view Berkeley campus administrators as giving lip service about their appreciation, commitment, and support for diversity. They commented that there is no accountability for managers and supervisors who demonstrate a lack of personal and professional respect for diversity. The participants recommended that a category of knowledge and skills regarding cultural diversity be part of the performance evaluation process so that managers and supervisors are held accountable for how well they perform in this area. In the Personnel Policy for Staff Members, there is a performance expectation that every manager and supervisor be evaluated in her/his good faith efforts in affirmative action and equal employment opportunity.

**3. Mandatory training for supervisors and managers**

There are two areas in which participants were adamant about training--in supervision/management and in diversity. In the first area participants felt that employees are put in supervisory positions without proper training (there's a perception that 80% of campus supervisors have no training as supervisors). Participants felt strongly that campus managers and supervisors must be properly trained prior to being given supervisory and managerial responsibilities over others. They commented that often times individuals who are excellent technicians in their field, are placed in supervisory positions without the required knowledge, skills or experience as a supervisor.

In the second area, participants articulated a need for managers to be able to manage people from different cultural backgrounds effectively. For example, participants feel that many managers are unable to communicate effectively with black staff because there is a lack of understanding about cultural differences or styles, e.g., when black staff speak up about issues, it shouldn't automatically be assumed that it's threatening or defiant. Additionally, there is the issue of the prevalence of negative black stereotypes in the workplace and how these stereotypes impact hiring decisions, development, performance appraisals, compensation, promotional opportunities, conflict resolution, and effective working relationships.

**4. Find ways to ensure equal opportunity in promotions and upward mobility, and develop strong monitoring systems.**

Participants stated that the campus must find ways to ensure equal opportunity in promotions, reclassifications, and upward mobility for people of color. They believe that the majority of promotions, reclassifications and upward mobility are given to white women and men. They wanted strong monitoring systems to be put in place so that the process for advancement is fair and objective.

**5. Encourage managers to make greater use of informal conflict resolution processes.**

Participants commented that staff must be allowed to resolve conflicts with supervisors either at the departmental or unit level with the help of the Ombudsperson. Participants stated that when there are conflicts, supervisors are unwilling to participate in a process to effectively address the issues. There was also concern expressed about retaliation against staff when they attempt to get conflicts resolved. They stated that people need to feel safe in this workplace in order to seek help from other University resources, and that there be no backlash when they attempt to get help outside of the department. They expressed a need for timely conflict resolution.

**6. Encourage all members of the campus community to show greater respect and civility in the workplace.**

Participants commented that there is a need for more professional respect and ethics from the top down, and a need to emphasize that all human beings deserve common decency no matter where they are in the organization. The tone of voice used by many faculty, managers and supervisors towards African Americans and other staff is that of an adult to a child. This must be replaced by the use of common courtesy and manners when interacting and communicating with other adults. Talented minorities are lost because of this behavior. Participants stated, that overall, the manner in which people of color and minorities are treated on campus affects productivity, morale, retention, and upward mobility.

## CONCLUSION

The black staff dialogue was a unique event. The stories and experiences of black staff form the foundation of this report. It is noteworthy that even though the planning committee understood the general issues facing black staff, they were overwhelmed with emotion and saddened by the pain and frustration expressed in the individual stories told by staff during this process of “data collection.” The planning committee is hopeful that issues raised will be taken seriously and that campus administrators and the relevant units will take whatever steps are necessary to address these issues effectively and swiftly.

Besides the qualitative data on workplace climate, the quantitative data supports the lack of progress made by black staff generally on this campus. Over the past 11 years, the share of the campus career black work force has dropped from 17.1% in 1989 to 14.9% in 2000, with a net loss of 5% overall (see Appendix G). This is in contrast to all other groups in the work force which have been growing and which have no net percentage losses during the same period. Since the passage of the Regents’ Resolution SP-2 in Fall 1995 and the California State Proposition 209 in November 1996, the black staff work force continues to lag behind compared to the other minority work forces. The reasons for these trends are no doubt complex and cannot be understood completely in the light of one or two factors. More research is needed to explore these and other factors to fully understand why these trends are occurring.

This report will be given to Assistant Vice Chancellor Human Resources Sandra Haire, Faculty Equity Associate Charles Henry, and the Black Staff Faculty Organization (BSFO). The goal is to inform top campus administrators as well as department chairs and directors regarding the concerns, issues and recommendations raised in this report. Without serious consideration of these issues and timely actions taken to address them, the planning committee feels that Chancellor Berdahl’s goal to “seek a supportive, inclusive campus community, so that Berkeley can be a humane, caring place and a safe and healthful environment for all who work or learn here” will not be realized.

## **List of Appendices**

- A. Proposition 209 Panel Flyer (Fall 1998) and Video Series Foyer (Fall 1999)
- B. Members of Black Staff Dialogue Planning Committee
- C. Black Staff Dialogue Flyer (Spring 2000) and Participant Materials
- D. The Berkeleyan Article
- E. List of Questions for Participants
- F. Demographic Profile of Participants
- G. Campus Staff Work Force Profile