

September 17, 2010

Dear David,

I am writing to you to propose that the Diversity Essays Project be discontinued. Since we received funding from the APA we worked hard to identify people to produce essays for the project, but found it difficult to find people who would commit to it. We did have, as of a year or so ago, two people who seemed promising, one who was working on an essay on disabilities issues, and another who was working on American Indian issues. Since potential writers sometimes seemed uncertain about what sort of essay to produce, I thought that if we could bring these two to completion we would have some good essays available for use in teaching that would be good models for other potential authors. These two people did some initial work that we reviewed and reacted to, but then let things go. One, after a long silence, contacted me in the spring to say she had finished and defended her dissertation, and could now turn to her essay. Then, late this summer she emailed me saying that she felt had to “drop this project. I have moved on to other things and cannot find it in me to write this up.” When I contacted the other, who had been the most responsive person in general I dealt with, from whom I also had not heard in quite some time, he wrote I “keep getting sidetracked with things that I need to meet yearly review requirements and all that.”

I’ve come to the conclusion that while the Diversity Essays Project was a great idea, it is unrealistic. The complexities of academics’ lives and pressures on them make producing an essay for the project very difficult to do. I consulted with my steering committee and the members concurred with my recommendation to propose discontinuing it.

It is with some regret that I propose discontinuing the project. We spent a good deal of time and effort in the work we did on the proposal and getting it approved by the APA Board, and in working on criteria and soliciting participants. But despite our efforts it isn’t working out.

Of the \$3600 we received in funding, \$2400 is still held by the APA. I had \$1200 transferred to an agency account at Minnesota State University in Moorhead when it looked like we had several essays likely to be finished before long. Once I hear from you with regard to whether you see any reason not to discontinue the project I’ll have MSUM send a check to the APA for the \$1200.

Sincerely,

Mark Chekola