Division of Academic Affairs  
Diversity Task Force  
Wednesday April 14, 2021  
3-4:30 PM via Webex  

Minutes

Present: Don DeHayes, Mary Grace Almandrez, Anne Veeger, Brian Heikes, Kathleen McIntyre, Alycia Mosley Austin, Nelle Couret, Dan Persaud, Trish Morokoff, Lynne Derbyshire, Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Furong Xu, Peter Larsen, Sean Rogers, Alisa Baron, Ashley Buchanan, Martha Elena Rojas, David Fastovsky, Molly Greaney, Vinka Craver, John Cruz, Mary Cloud, Michelle Fontes and Anna Santucci.

Announcements
a) Climate Survey – Response rate of 23% and thanks to all who helped publicize it. This fall DEI will report findings and hold focus groups.

b) GWS – Lynne Stephen will give a presentation on 4/14 entitled “Indigenous Women and Violence.”

Approval of the Minutes of the March 16th meeting: Motion to approve by Peter Larsen and seconded by Lynne Derbyshire; all in favor.

Continuing Business

Agenda for Change – Moving this toward meaningful outcomes.

Task Force is working on how to support diverse search process. Guidance as to what we want to see in the diversity statements and also for the teaching and research statements as well. Committee should have DEI statement in the drive shared by Peter. Draft of the proposed evaluation form with commentary and language for the statement itself.

Diversity Statements in Searches – Group reviews google doc shared with committee and discusses edits.

We want to use a statement that tells candidates what we value and tells them what we are looking for. They can document/provide evidence of what they have done or have the potential to do.

Two documents are in development:

- **Requesting statement** – we would include directions on how to write the diversity statement. This will be different for each department.

- **Rubric** for evaluating the diversity statements.

Discussion on wording of diversity statement guidance for faculty searches.
Subcommittee will re-share document, Task Force is asked to submit comments on google drive within two weeks. The subcommittee and other interested task force members will then meet to finalize the language and we will come back to this at the May 4th meeting.

Need to provide guidance for research and teaching statements as well, with the understanding that expectations for research statements will vary by discipline.

Candidates will benefit from clear guidance on what is expected, and search committees will benefit from having clear criteria by which to evaluate statements.

Guidance documents can be offered quickly, a second phase would be to work toward incorporating this into the HR/AA process and training, which would take longer. The goal is to get insight into a candidate ability/potential to contribute to DEIJ at URI. This will provide a mechanism for search committee members to accurately evaluate a required qualification as part of a high-quality selection process and ultimately make the best hiring decision.

This could be a separate statement or folded into the research and teaching statements, but the search committee needs a process by which to incorporate that information into the candidate rating systems to aid their decision. The rubric is needed to help search committees make equitable evaluations whether it is a separate statement or part of the teaching and research statements. The guidance should be explicit about why this is important for the search process.

DEI is a required qualification, and we need to ensure that this is taken seriously when they assess candidates. Having a process provides a way to do an honest evaluation. Someone on the search committee must ensure that the committee takes this seriously.

We also need to hold colleges/department accountable for having a diverse applicant pool. HR/AA should provide guidance/accountability on the diversity of the pool and push search committee to expand pool prior to going to interview stage if applicant isn’t diverse.

We need a way to indicate if they addressed DEIJ in their statements (Y/N) and then how well they did, if they did so. We would need to provide a way to translate this to the HR rubric.

Everyone should have comments on statement/rubric by April 28th and we will hear back on May 4th.
Can ask the Deans to include on their annual DEI reports about which of these practices they are using in searches for their colleges, to Michelle's point about accountability?

Meeting adjourned at 4:30.