Announcements

a) Gender and Women Studies series: 
   https://web.uri.edu/gws/news-and-events/

b) Academic Summit Speaker on Antiracism is confirmed - Ibram X. Kendi and we will be sharing his recent book with registrants. This will be a virtual event set up as a 'living room conversation' where he will take questions.

c) Department Chairs Forum – November 12, 2020, topic: Faculty Searches to Advance Diversity at URI
   Centered on improving searches and to create a diverse pool. Look at how we conduct ourselves in the process, and make interviewees feel that URI is an inclusive campus. After forum we will offer training sessions. Pre-search ideas for potential candidates were discussed; invite potential candidates to campus to give a seminar, etc. Then when a search takes place, they know of us and vice versa.

d) Renaming URI's new research vessel – letters disseminated.
   This vessel is under construction and will arrive in 2023. In 2019, there was a naming process for this vessel that is actually owned by NSF. The name that was chosen came from a contentious figure, Cpt. Cook’s boat. The group shared a document with Dean Bontempi, and built support (25 signers) to rename the vessel. The new naming is underway which includes a contest with children.

   URI should have a policy in place to review naming buildings and vessels. Morrill Hall, for example – named after the land grant act, funded by land taken from indigenous people to fund universities.

e) Honors colloquium on economics and disability.

2) Approval of the Minutes of the September 30th
   Motion to approve by Peter Larsen.
   Seconded by Marti Rojas.
   All in favor, none opposed.

3) Old Business – Action Agenda
   a) Update meeting with AA and HR – faculty and staff searches discussed.
      Provost office team met with Affirmative Action to discuss best practices and what we know regarding the diversity of our applicant pools and existing faculty. Looking at
whether our applicant pool is representative of overall PhD grads across the country. How can we use this data / information with the assistance of AA to move forward in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty.

We want to (AA) monitor applications to see if we’ve not done appropriate outreach; we can then halt, if appropriate, prior to the interview stage if we do not draw a diverse applicant pool. We need to establish a candidate network prior to the search. Look at universities that have a strong history of graduating diverse PhDs, establish face to face contacts, host pre-search candidates in various ways. How can we work with search committees regarding existing biases (pedigree bias, etc.)? How do we take the time and provide training to generate an interview list that is not impacted by biases. The Chairs Forum is the beginning of this, and training for faculty as they join URI. Current search committee training is focused on procedural steps rather than reflective process of conducting an inclusive search. Conversation about how we review applicants and bias against certain groups. Need to craft a position description so you’re not stacking the deck with a narrowly defined position.

We need to reconsider how we conduct campus visits, candidate presentations, etc. to avoid assessing for “cultural fit”. Many of these issues are the same problems we see at the graduate admissions stage also. Also, we need to focus on retention; previously polled new faculty and asked what they needed to know when they arrived. All new faculty felt that the last place they’d go for assistance is their Chair or Dean, after they’ve just gone through a rigorous search process (help seeking and power dynamics).

We need to build in peer mentoring (community professional development model) that alleviates fear. AADTF could have a subgroup to look at best practices. University Diversity Council is having conversations with Faculty Senate. This is a good time with a hiring lull to create something new. How can we be creative and cultivate our own talent.

How can AADTF integrate with this effort now?

Add a person with cultural competence training to each search committee to support effective practices. Not a person of color – that would be another cultural tax.

Need to include Deans in search training – they have considerable impact on search process and final decision. Have Deans charge the search committee.

There are also disciplinary specific criteria, so we need to get faculty involved in this subgroup.

There is an availability of data through NSF and IPEDS national reporting from universities, we can be accessing a lot of information prior to the start of the search. AA is enthused to work with us.

How do we mentor and support our new faculty? Need an assessment of what we have. Need to remove the pressure of going to someone who has authority over your annual review/promotion.

Possible process for improving search committee D&I effectiveness: (1) dean charges committee, which includes measurable D&I goals and not just "should" statements; (2) each search committee has at least 1 person with demonstrable cultural competence or is "certified" in some way; (3) "diversity statements" or other signals of D&I competence are required of all applicants; (4) search pools must include some minimum percentage of "diverse" candidates or search progress is stalled if these goals aren't met until an explanation is provided or the applicant pool is expanded; (5) if a "diverse" candidate does not make the job talk finalist list a satisfactory explanation must be provided for why, or AA and the dean send the search committee back to the interview pool generation step; (6) a cohort hiring model either within department or across campus is
utilized whenever possible; (7) colleges receive incentives for hiring that supports diversity goals.

b) Anti-Black Racism: An Academic Affairs Agenda for Change Discussion
Shared draft of this document.

Diversity Coordinator Positions across colleges are not the same – they have differential allocations and effort – need to consider whether college coordinators have the bandwidth to do what’s expected.
Need accountability and reporting, without undue administrative burden on colleges. We need to track what we’re doing in order to know if we’re making progress. Priorities may differ in colleges, but there needs to be accountability.
We need to have the conductor (diversity officer) but have the faculty, staff, dean on board to be successful.
Regarding framework for the plans and accountability reports - there are common goals regarding search process, infusing DE&I into the curriculum, but what they’d look like (action steps) may look different in various colleges.
Pull the coordinators together through the CED office to look at what each college is doing.
This is an evolving, living document that should be updated to reflect what is already happening. We need to take action steps and move this forward.

4) New Business

Faculty and staff hiring – invite UDC subcommittee, chaired by Erin Earle to share the work being done in their committee.
A&S diversity committee forwarded a report to CED re: policy for land grant acknowledgement and reception during commencement.
Native American Council and Library: Discussing having an official, standard land acknowledgement statement. We will bring this up at the next UDC meeting and report out after that. Add this to the agenda of an upcoming next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 PM.