Division of Academic Affairs
Diversity Task Force
Tuesday, May 4, 2021
3-4:30 PM
Via Webex

Meeting Minutes

Present: Mary Grace Almandrez, Anne Veeger, Brian Heikes, Kathleen McIntyre, Alycia Mosley Austin, Dan Persaud, Trish Morokoff, Lynne Derbyshire, Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Furong Xu, Peter Larsen, Sean Rogers, Alisa Baron, Ashley Buchanan, David Fastovsky, Molly Greaney, Vinka Craver, Julia Lovett and Anna Santucci.

Announcements:
Ashley – Stat fest for underrepresented undergrads majoring in statistics. It’s a 2 day event to engage underrepresented students who are interested in academia.

Possible action item - Is there a way we can make event information more accessible to everyone (maybe have a link on DEI page for current offerings?)

CIO in ITS creating a committee to explore diversity in IT; IT JEDI group. ITS should connect with Faculty Senate technology committee re: needs of diverse students via Shanna Peason-Merkowitz.

Graduate School, First Year Deans Diversity Fellowship
There are two in CELS, one in Music and one in GSO.

Launching an intercultural partnership in ATL and CED; intercultural competency for students and faculty.

Approval of the Minutes of the April 14th meeting:
Peter Larsen moves to approve and David Fastovsky seconds; all in favor.

Continuing Business

Agenda for Change – Moving toward meaningful outcomes - Publications will be putting out a final version by the beginning of next week with dedicated website; Provost Office is making investments in personnel and professional development. Kudos to the Faculty Senate for the reports shared at the last meeting.
Teaching, Advising and Assessment committee paralleled action items in the agenda for change.

University Diversity Council report will be shared via email by once finalized.

Further JEDI curricular developments: Faculty Senate meeting with General Education Committee report prepared by Art Meade. Further development and possible revision of C3 is being investigated. A&S working on their own ideas. Important to bring together stakeholders as General Education outcomes are assessed and reviewed.
Discussion – Individual colleges cannot have their own C3 outcome; the general education program needs to be available to the whole university - colleges may adopt an additional requirement that is in addition to the general education requirement.

**Investments for FY 2022** – Budget process still going on. URI will be investing in ‘diversity positions in the coming year. The number of Distinguished Postdoctoral Multicultural Postdoctoral Fellows has been increased to 3. Looking at creating some student success initiatives; investing in lecturers who are engaged in inclusive pedagogy in gateway classes.

Summer Professional development for faculty: Annemarie Vaccaro’s inclusive workshops; ATL workshops; STEM research mentoring workshop to engage with faculty for inclusive mentoring; Rachel Dicioccio is going to work with faculty to increase offerings for C3 General Education outcomes.

**Professional Development for Faculty** - National Center for Faculty Development, NCFDD. There are opportunities for funding and support.

**Diversity Statements in Searches** – The group reviews google doc that has been shared with committee.

Peter has created a clean versions of the Requesting Language provided and Rubric which represents a statement evaluation framework.

Trish – Peter took comments and incorporated into the 2 documents; they met as a committee and simplified the language. Each search committee will be different; this is making a recommendation. Michelle was hoping to take it to AA make it definitive but we’re not quite there yet.

Look at these revised documents to see if this is what we / AADTF wants to endorse.

David F. – For us to re-invent “JEDI” is not advisable. It’s the industry standard.

David makes a motion to use the acronym JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion); Katie second, no discussion: 16 in favor, 2 oppose, 1 abstention. Motion passes.

Any comments on the requesting language or rubric? None.

Did the committee have enough time to review this, to sign off on this? Yes.

The 3 members present on the committee are good/satisfied with it.

People have had 2 months to review hence a lot of people have weighed in on it and provided opinion. Is ready to be endorsed? Yes.

**Action Needed** – How will we make this available to search committees?

Both documents are a useful recommendation/example to use for searches. We should provide some context or guidance on how to use it though.

Re: Teaching / Research statement – we could add language to say this would also be good to request of candidates.
It would be useful to provide a cover memo – ‘the attached is provided as a guide…. Depending on your particular discipline or expectation of your searched position ….the supportive document is an important tool….’

Within the cover memo it would be useful to provide a link with resources to help educate search committee members about the importance and why it’s used, etc.

Accountability for actions is important but push the committee for accountability with results. If search committees are using this tool, but they are not increasing diversity in their colleges, it is useless. COB does not use a diversity statement but uses other tools successfully. The ultimate goal is to increase diversified faculty numbers, so how effective are our tools?

Suggestion – monitor applicant pool diversity using data from the NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates, provide best practices for recruiting a diverse applicant pool (not sufficient to advertise, must use active recruiting strategies, networking, and direct solicitation to potential applicants).

Action Item – Need to draft cover memo for diversity statement documents

UDC– Erin Earle will be meeting with HR / Anne Marie Coleman and provide a report to UDC on recruitment and retention. UDC will share with AADTF.

Trish Morokoff moves that AADTF accept diversity statement requesting language and rubric.
Peter Larsen seconds, all in favor.

Action step: Need to roll it out and integrate it into AA training.

Once the documents (memo, diversity statement request, evaluation tool) are ready, the Provost should share with Chairs and Deans as recommended language for search committees.
Deans are supposed to charge all search committees. This could become part of the charge / expectations as to how a search will be conducted.

After that the next step would be integrating this into HR/AA training materials to make it part of our standard practice.

We can monitor what happens after sharing with Deans and Chairs; how effective it is and have a contact person as to how they used the documents.

“Rubric” is a framework for evaluation, not meant to be prescriptive; each committee will be evaluating differently.

2021-2022 Task Force Membership
Some terms expire this year and Anne will reach out individually to see if you want to continue on the committee.

Individuals who have served for 2 terms as the official college representative are welcome to stay on as an engaged ‘at large’ member. We also want to offer new individuals a chance to participate on the Task Force.

New Business – No new business.

Upcoming Meetings

TBA – September 2021

Meeting adjourned 4:30 PM.