1) Present: Vinka Craver, Chris Bove, Michelle Fontes, Don DeHayes, Mary Grace Almandrez, Anne Veeger, Brian Heikes, Ashley Buchanan, Jaunetta Hill, Alisa Baron, Kathleen McIntyre, Diane Kern, Alycia Mosley Austin, Mary Cloud, Nelle Couret, and Dan Persaud.

2) Introduction of new members: Vinka Craver, Civil and Environmental Engineering and Chris Bove, first year, student senator, political science and history major.


4) Approval of the Minutes of the November 19 meeting: The meeting minutes are approved; Diane Kern motions to approve and Kathleen McIntyre seconds.

5) Updates

   CELS (Michelle Fontes) – Undergraduate Research Fellows event in CELS included a poster session with certificates awarded. 75 students presented their research with 28 (37%) students of color. This number has grown. Jackie Tisdale is talking with individual departments within CELS about student mental health issues.

   School of Education (Diane Kern) is now offering Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) as a credit-bearing course, first during J-term 2020 and then in multiple sections in the spring 2020 semester. This is open to all students as a 1-credit course. SOE is also considering a Gen Ed (3 cr.) course that would include MHFA and other mental health topics relevant to young adults.

   Student Senate (Chris Bove) just passed a bill requiring the student senate executive branch, and leadership of other student groups to take MHFA, and URI-Stander certification. The student senate will be providing resources for groups to do this.

   A&S (Kathleen McIntyre) – Upcoming events that may be integrated into your curriculum:

   Center for Humanities is supporting (via Eve Stern) writer Luis Alberto Urrea on 4/2. GWS will collaborate with Latin American & Caribbean Studies new minor program to offer a Latin American film in celebration of International Women’s Day/Women’s History Month (date TBD most likely 3/18 or 3/19).

   Honors Program - The Honors Colloquium 2020 will focus on disability. They are trying to get a wide variety of disability speakers such as Tammy Duckworth and others who integrate fashion, comedy, etc. The Provost notes that the Honors students of color are proportional to our general student population.
Black History Month - Bob Dilworth has reached out to the Provost requesting support to purchase the book *The Weeping Time* book and to support Black History Month events between 2/10-4/16.

University Diversity Council (Mary Grace Almandrez) - They are working towards securing a vendor for the campus climate survey (2021). Looking to form a working group of 12-15 individuals to work with vendor. Let her know if anyone is interested.

6) CELS Climate Survey (Nelle Couret) – **Voices of Inclusion.** This is a non-hierarchical group in CELS where everyone is on equal footing; no one is in charge. Group prepared/administered survey in spring 2019 with respondents including faculty, grads and undergrads (smallest group).

Goal is to bring in outside speakers on topics gleaned through survey and to have a conversation with the community; to assess the climate and see what CELS community was interested in.

The survey completed in spring 2019 and included 122 responses. Requests to take the survey was sent out through listservs, etc.

Respondents: 48 faculty, 27 staff, grads 42, undergrads 5.

Broken down by department, results reflected a high response by those in departments with committee representation.

Majority reported lack of support for diversity;
Lack of support for disabilities, students experiencing poverty support, mental health;
Some report lack of peer support or support of community;
Lack of faculty diversity and support for inclusive efforts;
Patchy support for grad students;
Students reported that they care more about diversity than faculty do;

The top three concerns were: Implicit bias, being an effective ally, and inclusive strategies and practices.

Since gathering the results, group members have each taken a topic in the top 6 concerns. Each member is working on identifying a speaker to come and facilitate a discussion on campus.

**Next steps:**
Partnership with CELS Diversity Committee;
Develop a seminar discussion series around these topics spring 2020;
Complete analysis of the survey results and prepare a report for CELS.

7) Chairs Forum (Provost’s Office) - is held every semester for department chairs on varying topics. This spring our theme is ‘effective strategies to hire diverse faculty.’ Mary Grace Almandrez and Gary Liguori met with Anne Veeger on this topic. They’ve noted that if we wait until the search is posted, it’s too late. Applicants need to see themselves as a potential faculty member at URI. We need a proactive and affirmative search processes to include recruitment and also selection. We need to build capacity in search committees; ability to have tough conversations with the intent of being proactive and building pipeline
ahead of time. Chairs forum is only one hour and 15 minutes long so it would be used to peak peoples interest. They’d like to bring in a speaker. Do you include a panel? What would be most helpful for Chairs to help them grow their perspective in the process. Positions description, inclusive language, where and how positions are advertised. Having someone in a position to guide search committees, not just an HR list of do’s and don’ts.

**Ideas:**

Where it's posted does make a difference, but its deeper than that. Need to help faculty to diversify their networks. Perhaps bringing a faculty member who has done something different and it’s worked for them. Someone who has figured out how to diversify their professional network. LSU as an example for a pipeline in Chemistry. First impressions are important; what type of support and services do we offer. Yes, get them in but effort is needed to retain them. Providing the Chairs funding to advertise (Chronicle, etc.) is something we could support. Mary Grace is working on securing a speaker. Do we have one of our own faculty on campus to share as an addition to the speaker? Diversify our disciplinary speakers, inviting PhD candidates or postdoc to come give seminars at URI.

If we are not asking each interviewee about diversity and having a face-to-face conversation about our community, we are sending the message that diversity isn’t important to URI.

Need to develop effective package in the short time frame for the Chairs forum.

Need to develop effective search committee training package: best practice guidelines, and how do you evaluate effectiveness of the search committee.

8) **College Diversity Committees** – Is there a way this task force can assist in revitalizing the college committees? Disability Services has a diversity group made up of undergrad, grads, staff, faculty. Group has been addressing accessibility on campus. The campus has accessibility micro-certifications for parts of buildings (e.g. lower floor) which doesn’t make sense; either a building is accessible or it’s not. This demonstrates how important it is for people with disabilities to be part of these committees.

We need to stress the importance of images and messaging, can use the digital message boards in the Union, etc. as free advertising.

What is the incentive to revitalize these college committees? A stipend? Course release? Having a budget. Submit a proposal. Something needs to motivate people. What’s in it for me/us. There has to be a fundamental piece of caring. Should there be a carrot/stick – with a consequence for not getting on board. We must recognize the cultural tax being placed on faculty/staff of color. Diversity and inclusion are as fundamental to our operations as using e-campus or Brightspace. It is not a choice. It’s structural and valued in your job. The sense of urgency surrounding this issue is sorely lacking. Funding should go to colleges who are doing something concrete.
We could provide $5K startup for an initiative and then the dean would take on the expense the following year to show that the colleges have skin in the game.

Disability access questions:
Will students with disabilities be able to pilot Brightspace? It has to be ADA compliant (i.e.) voice to text, adapts to all mobile platforms.
The 2020 honors colloquium will have closed captioning.

9) AADTF Funding
   Spring 2020 -$7K
   2020-2021 Academic year -$20K

10) Action Items:
    Academic Summit on 1/16/20, registration is approaching capacity.
    Follow up with Brightspace re accessibility
    Identify possible campus participants in Chairs’ Forum
    What can we do to support searches currently underway or planned for this spring?
    Potential plans for AADTF funding, spring 2020 and 2020-2021 AY