Division of Academic Affairs  
Diversity Task Force  
Tuesday, January 21, 2020  
3-4:30 PM  
Ballentine Hall, Thomson Boardroom  
Minutes

1) Present: Vinka Craver, Chris Bove, Michelle Fontes, Don DeHayes, Mary Grace Almandrez, Anne Veeger, Brian Heikes, Jaunetta Hill, Alisa Baron, Kathleen McIntyre, Alycia Mosley Austin, Mary Cloud, Nelle Couret, and Dan Persaud, Trish Morokoff, Lynne Derbyshire, Gifty Ako-Adounvo, John Carl Cruz, Mary Greaney, Peter Larsen, Sean Rogers, and Martha Elena Rojas.

2) Approval of the Minutes of the December 18th meeting. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

3) Unfinished Business from December 18th meeting:
   a) AADTF Funding: Plans for Spring 2020 – Come with ideas for spring semester. We are currently funding Annemarie Vaccaro, leaving $7K for spring semester efforts. Possibility of supporting/funding one or two colleges with the intent of ‘reinvigorating’ their College Diversity Committees.
   b) How do we increase diversity in the curriculum and the environment?
   c) Communication plan to increase awareness, using images and sign displayed in common areas. Increase visual representation of diverse community. Increase use of art/images to represent the population. Commission pictures to replace wall of white men (prior presidents, deans).
      i) CELS – looking into how to best provide training to recruit and onboard a wider range of students.

Options discussed:
Provide an opportunity for each college diversity committee to write a proposal for a funded activity, to advance a diversity agenda (academically oriented), with a commitment of support from the college. Focus on ways we can continue to make advances in faculty hiring or reinvigorating college diversity committees - AADTF would then review proposals and select awardees.

Fund programs to bring ABD graduate students to visit URI, give a seminar and gain familiarity with URI. Some universities bring in groups of individuals, sometimes multi-disciplinary groups that have some shared experiences and some time in their own discipline. This would be a way to expand faculty networks. We need to make sure that we have faculty buy-in to ensure attendees see real interest on the part of hosting faculty – must have a strong departmental commitment.

Funding to bring in some scholars in the area of diversity and inclusion to revitalize and add new ideas to our community. This would increase the diversity of our network by inviting scholars to visit either individually or as a group, to present work and get to know URI.

Continued support of the successful Diversity and Inclusion badge program in the Graduate School. A portion of the funds from this year could be used to recognize the contributors/facilitators of that program. Could consider committing multiple years of funding to this effort.

Social events for new faculty are important for building community. May be too late to plan a social event for the spring, but could plan event for fall 2020 (seems like most events are in the spring, so fall might be better).
Could support multiple efforts. Carve out fund for continuing efforts, with the balance available for one-time programming.

Provide structured support for multi-cultural faculty fellows and other new faculty, training for departments searching for a fellow or any new faculty member from a diverse background.

Improve images and messaging around the university to be updated to better represent our community.

**Next Steps:**
Small subgroup willing to take these areas to flesh them out:
- Sean will write paragraph on pre-faculty group
- Trish will take college diversity committee
- Alycia will take the badge program
- Dan will take images and digital messaging
- Janelle and Marti will take event/speaker
- Mary Grace will take training for the departments

Most certainly we will provide some type of recognition to the Diversity and Inclusion badge program’s facilitators.

4) **Updates:**

**Director of Diverse Faculty Recruitment and Retention**
One round of interviews took place in the fall but after careful consideration the committee has decided not to move forward with any of the interviewed candidates. The committee is now considering how to move forward.
Discussion is ongoing regarding what is needed at URI and how we can lead with this type of position.

**Brightspace Accessibility**
URI team met with Brightspace to learn about accessibility. This is a big improvement over Sakai. ATL Brightspace team will meet with any student interested in learning more.

5) **Reading** – Woods Hole Diversity and Inclusion Report and Recommendations
The pipeline in Oceanography lacks diversity, so diverse faculty/staff tend to be very isolated when they are recruited. This is also a URI issue. There are more affinity groups for undergrads, but for grad students, it is more isolating.

We need to create opportunities for social events, but we struggle to have someone take that charge. We did this a few years ago, but it hasn’t been continued. It is not feasible/realistic to have an individual take this on as a volunteer activity. We need someone (HR) to take this on, inclusive of the faculty onboarding process.

Having a large event is a good start, but smaller circles can be very effective - e.g. working mothers - but the group has been too busy to find a meeting time.

Would the new director (DDFRR) take the lead on ensuring that departments have adequate training to make sure that new faculty are entering an inclusive climate in the department. - Yes, but this person couldn’t do it alone. We need faculty ambassadors to support colleges and search committees.
Department Chair workshop on April 16 will be focused on how to create community and a welcoming environment in the department. The *Advance* grant had an effective approach. Monthly luncheons are a suggestion. How can we implement those strategies without the grant funding and the dedicated personnel?

In the Psychology department female faculty created a group that supported new female faculty members.

Can we create a network of women of color, or faculty of color across other institutions in the region?

Can we do something to support this year’s new faculty? Luncheon sometime this semester? Opportunity to gather, possibly could rotate between colleges. Would need to be more of a reception so attendees can circulate.

Scheduled meetings, Green Hall (either President’s Conference Room or Great Room depending on size of the group).

2/19/20 @ 3 PM  
3/18/20 @ 3 PM  
4/21/20 @ 3 PM

6) The meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM.