



University Diversity Council Minutes
July 24, 2020
Zoom

Attendees: Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Mary Grace Almandrez, Lulu Alyrati, Jacquie Britto, Marland Chang, Erin Earle, Maling Ebrahimpour, Corey Fernandez, Michelle Fontes, Nisa Ghonem, Brian Heikes, Trish Morokoff, Holly Nichols, Eileen Orabone, Kristina Perrelli, Jen Riley, Martha Elena Rojas, Mary Stanley, Jacqui Tisdale, Annemarie Vaccaro

I. Welcome

The meeting started with Mary Grace welcoming Vice President Kathy Collins who was invited to come to the UDC meeting to discuss what is going on in the division of Student Affairs.

II. Conversation with Vice President Collins

The conversation began with Vice President Collins giving an update as to what is going on in Student Affairs. She indicated that they have been very busy with planning for what the Fall semester will look like due to the Covid-19 crisis. Many of her departments including Health Services and Housing & Residential Life have had to make some tough decisions throughout the summer to prepare for the Fall semester, and Dining Services, as well, is working with the State to have tents purchased for outside dining in the Fall. She also gave an update on what is happening in each of the Centers (i.e., Gender and Sexuality Center, Multicultural Student Services, Women's Center) that have now been moved back under the Student Affairs division. She reported that some of the Centers are going through some staffing situations and are continuing to work on them. She indicated that George Gallien, the Director of the Multicultural Student Services, left the University on July 20, 2020 and so that leaves them with a vacancy. With assistance from Mary Grace and others, she is working on hiring an interim person from outside the University to fill that position until a search is done. There also was a vacancy in the Assistant Director of the MSSC and that position was filled by Bobby Britto-Oliveira on an interim basis for one year to get some consistency at the MSSC and to get some programs up and running. She stated that Bobby has already given her a calendar with programming that will be happening at the MSSC, but in light of the COVID crisis, they will need to think about the use of their space and also have programs in person and virtually. She also wants to spend the year working with the campus community to update the position descriptions in the MSSC, as they are very outdated and need to be updated as we are in a different place as an institution and need to think about where we are going. They also purchased Constant Contact for the MSSC that will help them to send out weekly emails as to what's happening at the MSSC. Mary Grace asked if there was an update on the external review. Due to COVID, the external review will need to be rescheduled, and they will not be able to do the reviews in person. Also, Bob Samuels has left the University for another position at RISD. Cory Clark is serving as interim Director of the Counseling Center and they are getting ready to do a national search.

She then shared an update on the Women's Center. She said that about a year ago VPAS was moved over to Health Services. The main reason was that they were getting a lot of complaints that VPAS was located in the Women's Center. Those students who identified as male did not believe those services were for them. They hired Kelly Ryan to run the VPAS program. She indicated that she

believes that this is a benefit to the students at Health Services was usually one of the first places that was called and that there are other services there for the students to use. Also, they hired Christiana Molinski, who also works at Public Safety, as the part-time coordinator of the Women's Center. She will supervise the Graduate Assistant in the office, and they will be temporarily housed over in the Gender and Sexuality Center where they will be doing the programming and training. Kathy stated that having the co-location of the two Centers could be beneficial, due to the fact that the Centers have already collaborated with each other on events. Kathy also talked about the residential piece of the Women's Center stating that the Women's Center was a stand-alone building financially. However, due to the lack of students living in the Women's Center over the past few years, and the fact that the money was used to pay the Center staff salaries and programming across campus, there is a million-dollars in deferred maintenance that needs to be addressed before the building can be occupied again (e.g., new columns in the front, a new roof -- both of which are health and safety issues). So, Housing and Residential Life has taken over the building and the debt and they have worked with the remaining students to find them safe locations on campus. Then, they created an application process for who would be housed in the building. They received four applications. The plan is for the former Women's Center building to be the Talent Development (TD) Achievement House (Fall 2021). This will be a house for TD students who have a very high GPA, returning students, and they will also have specific programming around academic achievement. She also stated that this will be a two-year commitment and they will revisit it to see if this is the best place for them to be. They also worked with the other three applicants to identify group housing in different halls. Kathy also talked about prior to COVID, they invited two consultants to facilitate campus discussions about what to do next with the Women's Center. She announced that they will be coming to campus August 7-8. The discussions will be around:

- What do we want in a Women's Center?
- What do we want in 2020 and beyond?
- Where does the Women's Center programmatic program go?
- Can it be co-located with another area?

There was a question asked about whether there are any plans to have a dedicated facility for the Women's Center. Kathy stated that we need to figure out what our community wants in terms of space, programming, etc. There was a comment about a lactation space in the former Women's Center, so they want to make sure there will be another space somewhere on campus. Mary Grace asked a question regarding respondent services on campus. Kathy stated that Drake Douglas in HRL has taken this additional responsibility and has been providing services to students on a regular basis. Jen Riley stated that she would like to see the Women's Center and the Gender and Sexuality Center collaborate more with the academic units.

Next, she gave an update on the Gender and Sexuality Center. She said that they still have a full-time director, but they have a vacancy in the Coordinator position, as Annie Kosar has left the University. They have added an additional staff person, Anita Burke, who was from HRL, to assist in staff support to the Women's Center and Gender and Sexuality Center. Kathy spoke about how the Gender and Sexuality Center's budget has been paid for by Housing and Residential Life, and that she has been fighting to get that money back. She said that Annie and she are working on what to do with the coordinator position. A question was asked if the coordinator position would be filled any time soon. Kathy explained due to the COVID-19 pandemic, HRL and Dining Services had to give refunds back in the amount of \$7.9M. Because of changes in both places, they will lose revenue of \$16.4M. They have to see if they will be able to take money out of their fund balances to maintain their staffing situation. She hopes to know something by October after the housing occupancies and

what the enrollment will be, so she does not want to fill any positions until she knows their financial situation.

Due to COVID, the new Health and Counseling building was slowed down in the design process, but it will pick up again in September. Kathy stated that this is going to be a state-of-the-art building with more space, so they can add more staff. The building is being funded by Health Services' fund balance, but student fees will also have to be increased. Kathy stated her goal is to be in the building by 2022 and it may slide due to the pandemic. Another building project that is on hold is the Memorial Union. This building was supposed to be funded by a fund balance transfer from Dining Services in the amount of \$14M, but due to the loss of revenue during COVID, that is no longer feasible. Because Dining Services is an auxiliary, they are not eligible for funding from the state nor are they eligible for bonds.

Kathy also shared that there is a team that was put together for dealing with enforcement of health guidelines during this COVID crises and when students are back on campus for in-person classes. She stated that there will be consequences for students who refuse to wear a mask during class or if they throw a party off-campus. Cases will go to the Office of Community Standards and students could face suspension.

There was discussion of concerns about the different messages of communication as to whether staff are being asked to come back to campus in September. There seem to be many different messages coming from the departments and colleges about what the protocol is for coming back to campus. There are also concerns about junior faculty of color being asked to teach courses online and in person. Mary Grace will bring these concerns to the Senior Leadership Team meeting when they meet next. Mary Grace also let the group know that there was a letter sent to the President with concerns about public safety, disarming the police, regular sensitivity trainings and what kinds of training are hosted on campus, making arrest data more public, among others. Martha Rojas said that she would share the letter with the UDC members.

Another question that came up was regarding outdoor spaces for faculty to teach classes outside.

III. Update on Campus Climate Survey

Mary Grace and Jen met with the consultants regarding the campus climate survey. They clarified that it would be difficult to do any focus groups in the Fall due to so many unknowns. So, we will keep the timeline that we discussed before.

IV. Meeting Structure

There was discussion about how we are going to engage the community in our meetings. There were suggestions of having at least one meeting that would be open to the community. There was also talk about having subcommittees within the UDC and figure out how we can tie in some of the people who were on the other commissions. Once we get to a point of what our priorities are, we could have a session to talk about a more targeted topic to discuss with the community. Mary Grace also shared that she has been working with Publications on how we can communicate diversity initiatives to the wider community. CED will plan to share their annual report at their CED Summit every year, as well as communicate more often about what's going on in the different colleges (i.e., quarterly newsletter in August, December, February and May).

Trish shared that she gave a report about the UDC to the Faculty Senate and they welcomed having Mary Grace and Jen come to a FacSen meeting to talk about the UDC. Mary Grace also

shared that the University needs to do an audit on what all of the colleges are doing regarding diversity. We also need to develop a strong communication plan about what's happening, so Mary Grace suggested that representatives share updates with their groups (e.g., Martha could talk discuss updates with the Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force, Corey Fernandez could speak about the Alumni of Color Network).

Mary Grace also let the committee know that CED has been working on their vision, mission and guiding principles and will share it with the UDC before it goes out to the wider community.

The committee decided that they would meet again before the regularly scheduled meeting on August 21st. They would like to have discussions with HR, Title IX and trainings that are being offered. Mary Grace will invite the appropriate people to the next meeting. Eileen will send out a poll with some dates to see when the next meeting will take place.